

COVID-19 Update

Supporting residents experiencing a housing crisis; connecting to short-term and permanent housing

Britta Fisher, Executive Director, Department of Housing Stability

Bob McDonald, Executive Director and Public Health Administrator,
Department of Public Health & Environment

Agenda

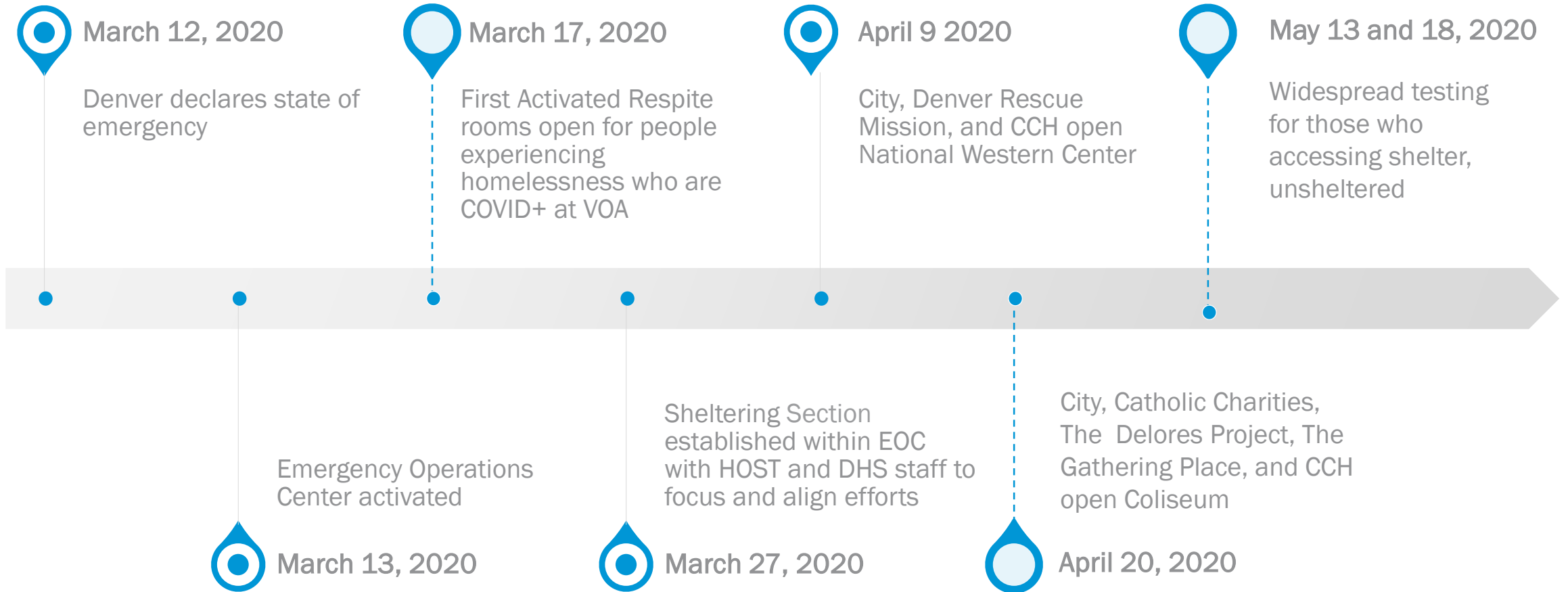
COVID-19 actions across several functions:

- Homelessness Resolution
- Rehousing Strategy
- Housing Opportunity
- Housing Stability

Partners in the Sheltering Mission

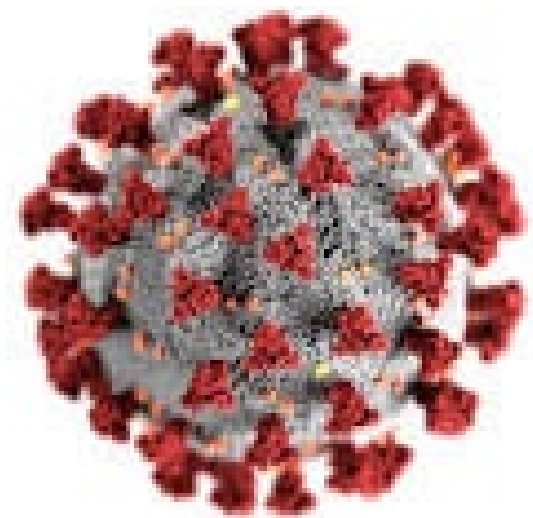
- Homeless Leadership Council
 - Catholic Charities of Denver, CCH, Colorado Village Collaborative, The Delores Project, Denver Rescue Mission, The Gathering Place, St. Francis Center, The Salvation Army, Urban Peak, Volunteers of America
- Bayaud Enterprises (Shelter operations and transportation)
- Catholic Charities (Coliseum Operations)
- Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (Activated Respite, Protective Action, Medical Support at NWC and Coliseum)
- Colorado National Guard (Support for auxiliary and nonprofit shelters)
- Denver Rescue Mission (NWC Operations)
- Denver Human Services (Activated Respite, Protective Action, and Dispatch)
- Denver Parks and Recreation (Transportation)
- Hospitals (Referral partners)
- The Delores Project (Coliseum Operations)
- The Gathering Place (Coliseum Operations)
- The Salvation Army (Meals)
- Volunteers of America (Activated Respite)
- Community based service providers (Referral partners)

COVID-19 Response Timeline



ONGOING: Close coordination with Homeless Leadership Council and other stakeholders

Existing shelters
previously had
capacity to
serve 2,134
guests



Reduced
capacity to
serve 935
guests

1,199 beds or 56% reduction





- Adjusted to provide spacing
- Operating capacity: ~890 guests



- Additional congregate capacity with spacing: 300 guests
- Hotel rooms as shelter alternative: ~150 rooms



- Non-congregate hotels for those at highest risk from COVID
- Capacity: 703 rooms



- Non-congregate hotels for those medically referred for isolation
- Capacity: 107 rooms



Utilization Snapshot

Program	Unique Clients Served Since Opening	Nightly Average Utilization
National Western Center (Single Men)	3,448	631 guests out of 765 beds
Coliseum (Single Women)	926	173 guests out of 300 beds
Activated Respite and Protective Action	1,672	485/754 rooms filled

Auxiliary Shelter Transition

- To meet needs after closure of National Western Center:
 - Transitioning Coliseum to serve 300 men nightly
 - Supplementing capacity for women and transgender guests through ~150 additional hotel rooms
 - Reopening Existing Shelters
 - Reopening Catholic Charities Smith Road Shelter for women (82 beds)
 - Reopening Denver Rescue Mission facilities (Holly Center and 48th Avenue) for men (360 beds)
 - Continuing ongoing strategies
 - Rehousing support
 - Connection to Protective Action and Activated Respite as available
 - Seeking additional shelter and hotel capacity

Unsheltered Homelessness Support

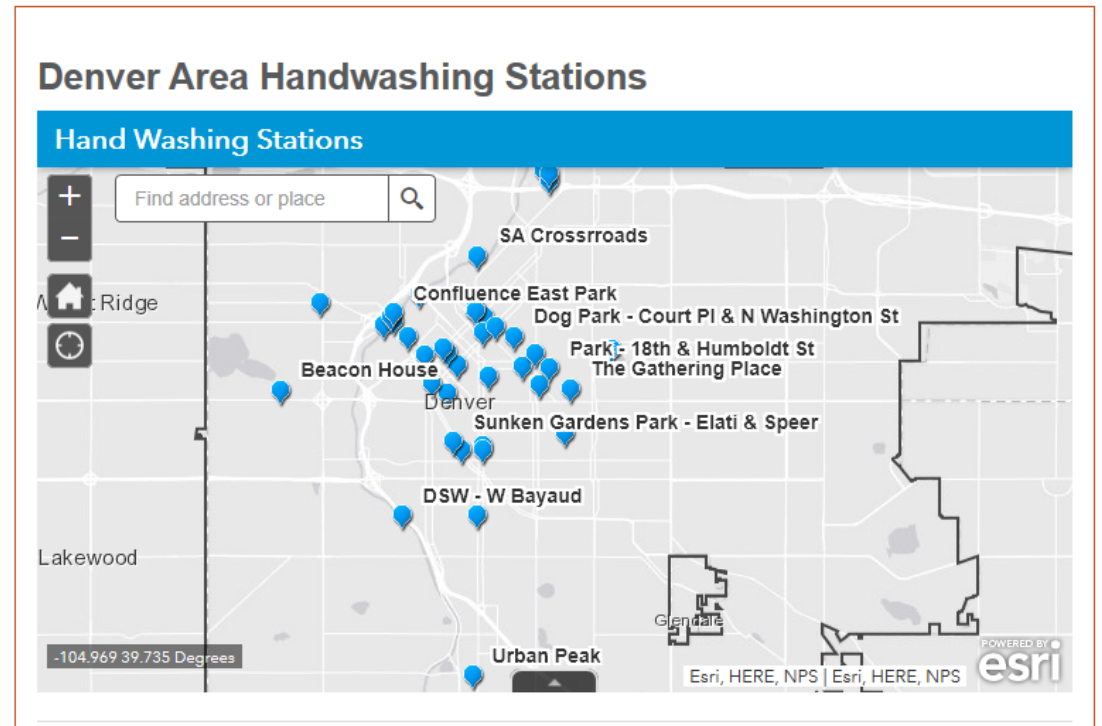
- Partnership across city and partner agencies to serve those experiencing unsheltered homelessness, including:
 - Expanded testing and partnership with Denver Street Outreach Collaborative supported referrals to hotel/motel rooms
 - STAR pilot program with DPD brings more person centric response to community needs utilizing medical, mental health and peer support
 - Collaborative public health task force to strategies and implement interventions such as testing, sheltering, hotel referrals, etc.
 - HOST, DDPHE, Denver Public Health (Denver Health) and Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

Cross-Agency Coordination on Unsheltered Homelessness

- HOST
- DDPHE
- DOTI
- Parks and Recreation
- DHS
- CPD
- City Attorney's Office
- Denver Police
- Denver Fire
- Denver Sheriff
- Mayor's Office
- Denver Public Library
- Department of Finance

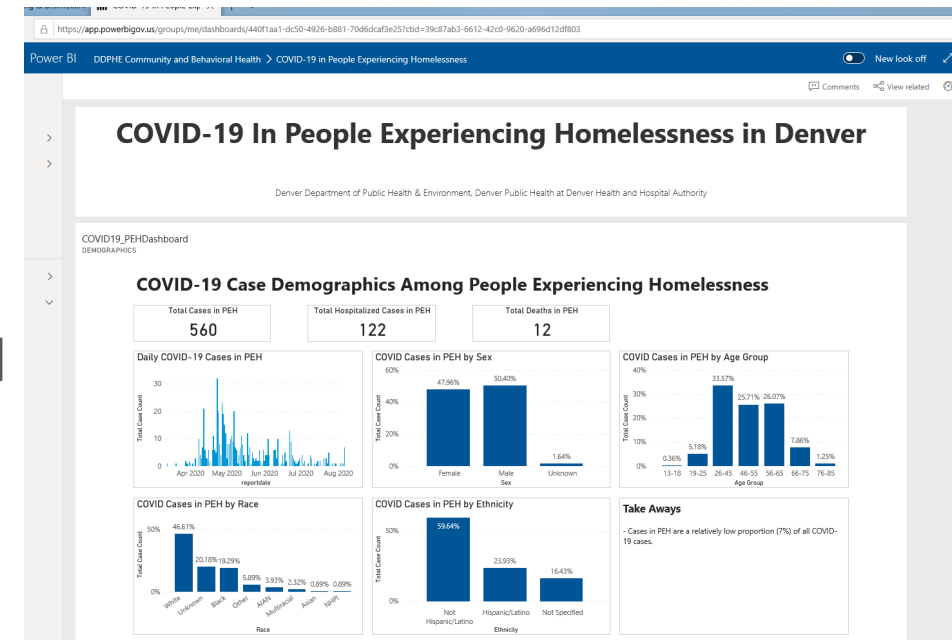
DDPHE Work Supporting Persons Experiencing Homelessness

- Ongoing inspections of overnight shelters
- Outbreak response and interventions
- Improvement of public toilet/handwashing access
- Regulation, partnership with, and expansion of syringe exchange programs and outreach
- Wellness Winnie mobile-wellness program



DDPHE Work Supporting Persons Experiencing Homelessness (cont'd)

- Universal testing events for shelters, employees, and unsheltered
- Close coordination with service providers regarding disease outbreaks and public health orders
- Procurement of face coverings for service providers and clients
- Addressed HIPAA barriers to ensure effective communication regarding new cases
- Created dashboard with data for people experiencing homelessness



COVID-Specific Supports from DDPHE for Persons Experiencing Homelessness

- Daily coordination with Homeless Leadership Council
- Coordination with partners on health and testing task force
- Daily on-site consultation with National Western and Coliseum
- Development of 20+ COVID guidance documents and resources for service providers
- Support process for referral to activated respite rooms
- Support testing of sheltered and unsheltered people and staff

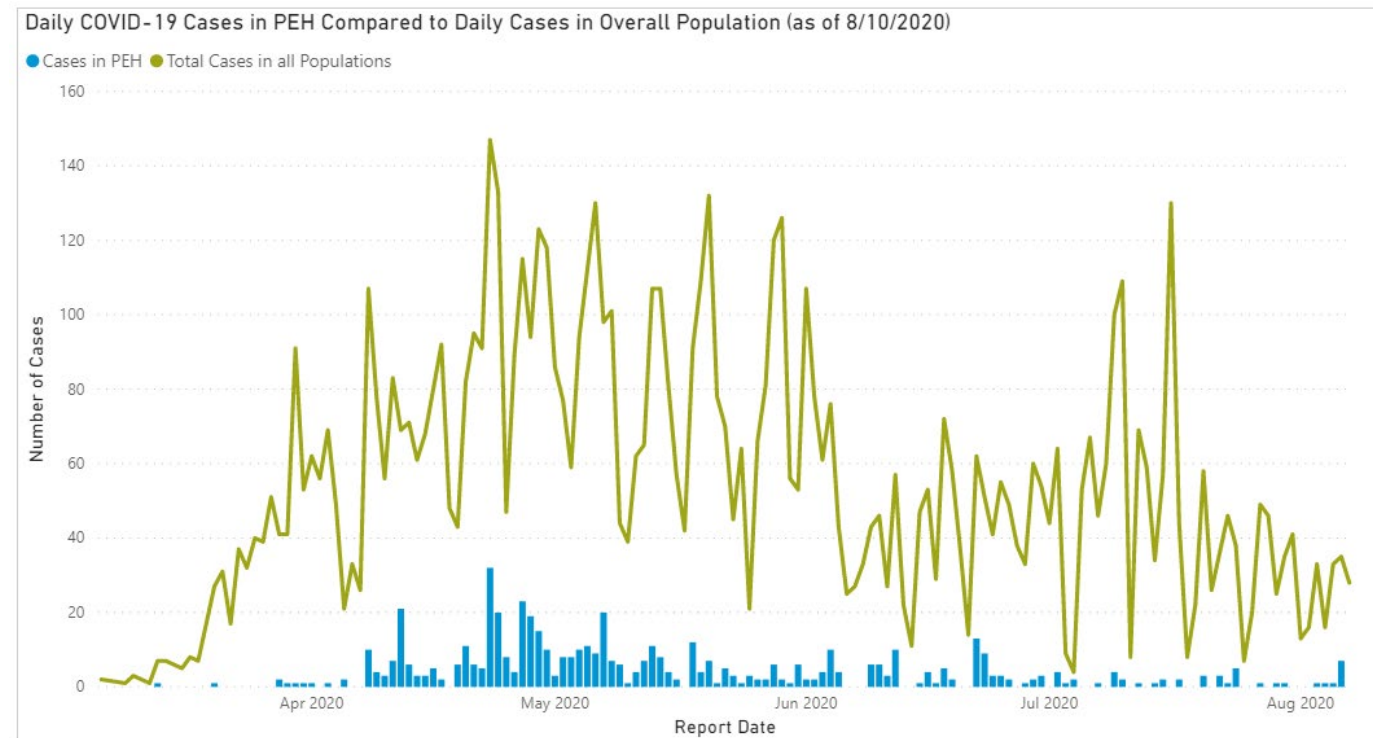


Summary of COVID-19 Cases in PEH

- While Denver had a peak of new cases in April 2020, the number of daily cases among people experiencing homelessness has declined since then.
 - **549** of the 8,342 Denver COVID cases are in PEH* (6.58%) as of 8/10

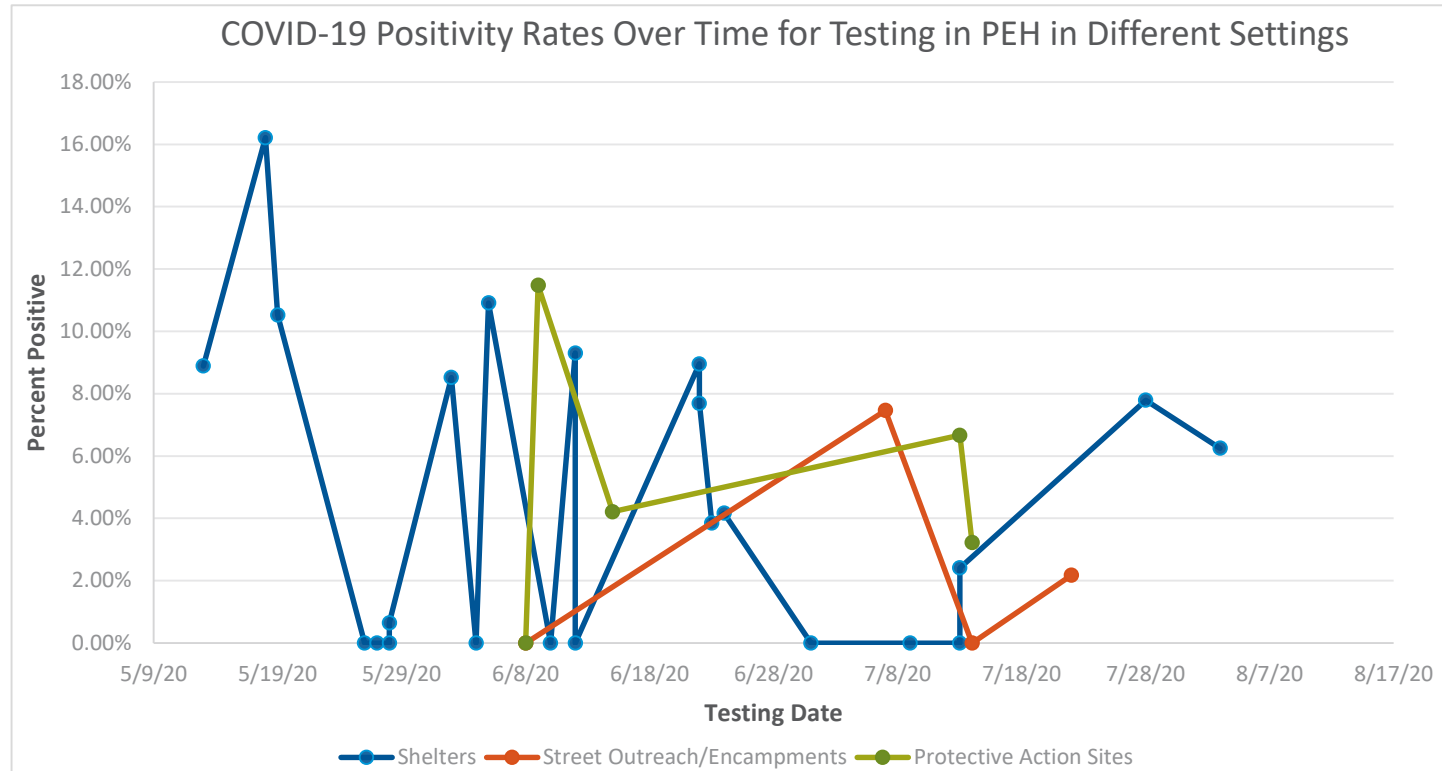
**This case total comes from all completed case investigations, not the total caseload for Denver as housing status is usually unknown until a case investigation is completed.*

Source: Denver Department of Public Health and Environment



Summary of Testing in PEH - Positivity Rates Over Time

- In general, positivity rates in PEH have decreased over time
- Encampment testing began in June while testing in Shelters began in mid-May closer to the time of peak cases, so it is expected that there would be higher positivity rates in May and early June.
- The chart to the right includes 32 testing events serving PEH between 5/13 - 8/3 (including DDPHE and DPH events)
- The average overall positivity for all events included in the chart is 5.04%
 - The positivity rate in the general population for the same time period (5/13-present) is 4.03%



**Note, testing events are not conducted every day. Each dot on the chart represents a testing event. The dots at 0% represent true zeros where the positivity rate was 0% for the given event.*

Lessons Learned on 24/7 Sheltering

- Sheltering in place/trauma-informed and person centered
- Lowering anxiety with assigned beds they can rely on each night
- Improved relationship building leading to rehousing platform
- Encouraging new people to come inside
- Effectiveness of having integrated primary and behavioral health care

Investment to Date on COVID-19

- Since March 2020, Denver has spent more than \$56M on the COVID-19 emergency response
- Approximately 50%, or roughly \$27.9M has been to support the sheltering mission for people experiencing homelessness
- City is leveraging federal funding from FEMA to support emergency response, but city has already received some additional federal funds through CARES Act
 - Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF): \$126.8 allocated to City, portion supporting housing/sheltering
 - Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG-CV): \$11,101,623
 - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG-CV): \$4,012,373 total, \$1,203,712 for HOST
 - HOPWA Funds: \$373,541

Next Steps

- Continue testing across facilities serving people experiencing homelessness
- Work with partners on rehousing strategy that leverages all investments
 - Understanding continuum of need and aligning resources
 - Examining prioritization strategy
 - Implementing Housing First programs
- Support 24/7 sheltering at existing facilities moving forward
- Expand sheltering options beyond emergency to address capacity gaps
- Pursuing safe outdoor spaces for those who are unsheltered

Rehousing Strategy

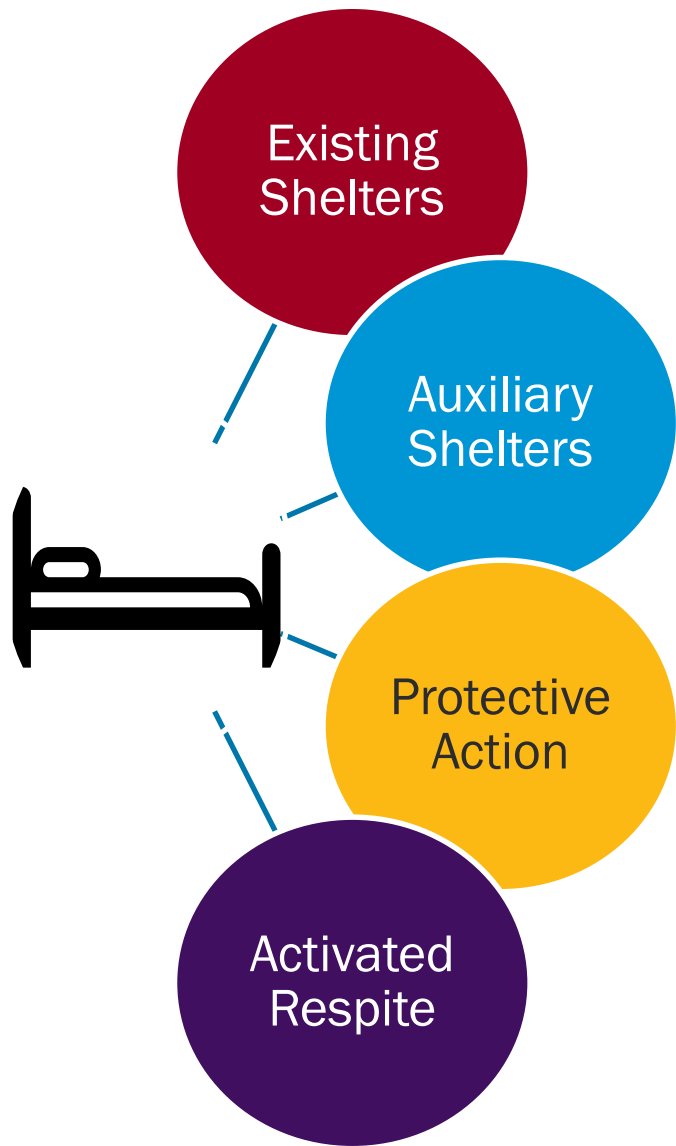
James Ginsburg, Deputy Director, Housing Stability and Homelessness Resolution

Overview of Strategy Development

- HOST engaged Corporation for Supportive Housing to make rehousing recommendations
- Goal: Leverage new federal resources to develop rehousing strategy that supports stability, reduces ongoing shelter capacity needs, and limits exposure to COVID-19 among people experiencing homelessness
- Process:
 - Interviewed 10 agencies individually
 - Discussed at Homeless Leadership Council
 - Reviewed national best practices

Key Themes

1. Updated prioritization and assessment process needed to meet COVID-related objectives
 - Targeting those who can resolve quickly with early resources in parallel with more vulnerable households
2. Opportunity to leverage 24/7 sheltering as rehousing platform
3. New funding for COVID response creates opportunities for strategic investments, but must align with requirements/timelines
4. Transition plan as temporary facilities close requires rehousing surge and sheltering investment



Shelter and permanent housing options

Shelter System Transformation

- Transition to 24/7 through operating and rehab support for existing facilities
- Shelter acquisition and operating support to address capacity gaps

Short-term rental assistance (~6 to 12 months)

Rapid Rehousing, Rapid Rehousing as bridge to PSH or voucher



Housing Stability

Stabilizing residents at risk of displacement, connecting residents to housing resources

James Ginsburg, Deputy Director, Housing Stability and Homelessness Resolution

Expanding Access to Financial Assistance to Keep People in Their Homes

- Working with Temporary Rental & Utility Assistance (TRUA) partners to meet increased need
 - Requests for TRUA have increased by **~270%** on average since prior to COVID
 - Served **996** unduplicated households in 2019 and **1,240** unduplicated households Jan – July 2020
 - Amended contracts to remove barriers to access (e.g., requirement for resident to pay portion)
 - Continuing to work with community partners to improve program administration
- Utilizing \$5M in Coronavirus Relief Funds for Rental/Utility Assistance and Mortgage Assistance Programs
- Partnering with UC Berkeley and the City's Office of Social Equity and Innovation to develop and evaluate outreach strategies and use among vulnerable groups

Coordination of Housing/Foreclosure Counseling, Legal Services and Other Resources

- Bi-weekly COVID-19 interagency meetings to align housing stability strategies
 - State Division of Housing, CHFA, Colorado Health Foundation, Enterprise Community Partners, CSH, etc.
- Weekly multi- agency and organization working group providing information and resources for residents facing eviction
 - HOST, NEST, DHS, HRCP, County Court, Sherriff's Office, Colorado Legal Services, Enterprise Community Partners, etc.

Housing Opportunity

Creating and preserving affordable housing, promoting access to housing opportunities

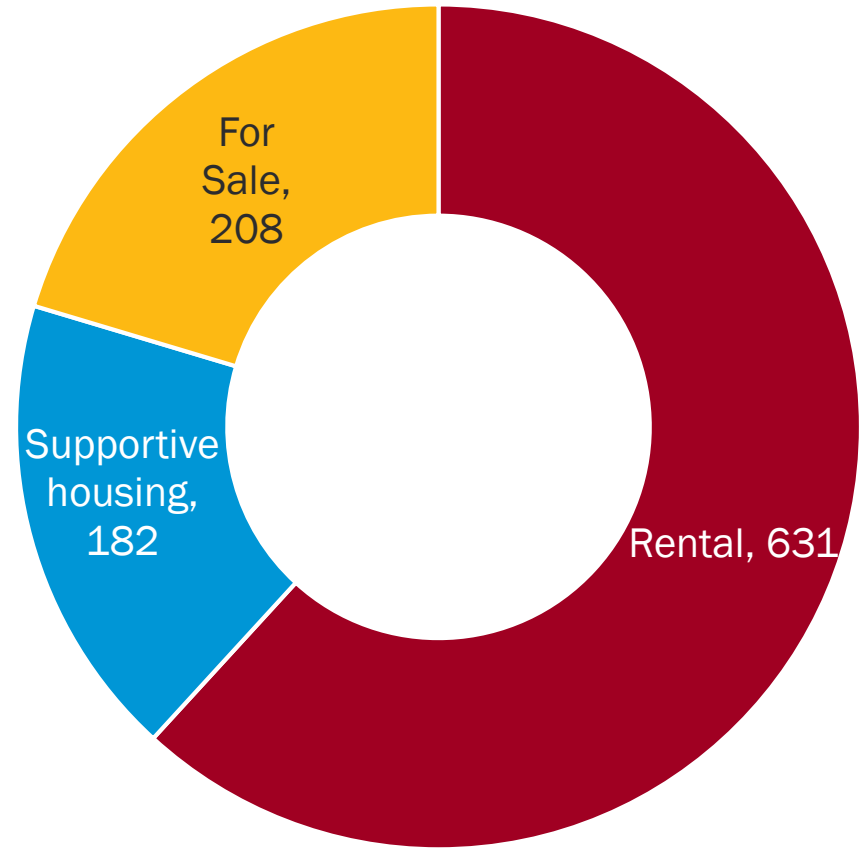
Debra Bustos, Deputy Director of Housing Opportunity

Impact of COVID on Housing Development

- Coordination with other housing developers on strategies to address potential market changes
- Short pause to assess market uncertainty, investor response to markets, understand developer concerns and develop strategies for efficient fund deployment
- Competitive Application Process delayed to 2021
- Current rolling application open to developers - improved application, updated lending guidelines; published on HOST website

Continuing to Support Pipeline of Affordable Housing Opportunities

- 13 affordable housing projects in the pipeline scheduled for 2020 closing
- Located in 7 council districts
- Expected to produce 1,021 total units
- Total dollars invested: \$17.5M



2020 Development Plans Realized

Ground breakings – under construction

294 units delivery 2021 /2022

Total investment: \$7,015,000

- Spring 2020 - Central Park townhomes
 - 132 home ownership units
 - \$2.64M
- May 2020 - Kappa Tower II
 - 70 units
 - \$700K
- La Tela Condos
 - 92 units
 - \$3.675M

2020 Grand openings

Units available for occupancy: 388

Total investment: \$6,320,000

- Swansea Townhomes
 - 32 townhomes
 - \$1.75M
- Fusion Studios (D3 program)
 - 139 micro apartments
 - \$600K
- Elizabetta - March 2020
 - 91 units
 - \$1.82M
- Atlantis
 - 60 units
 - \$800K invested
- Walnut Street Lofts
 - 66 units
 - \$1.35M

Continued Pipeline Growth of Affordable Housing Opportunities

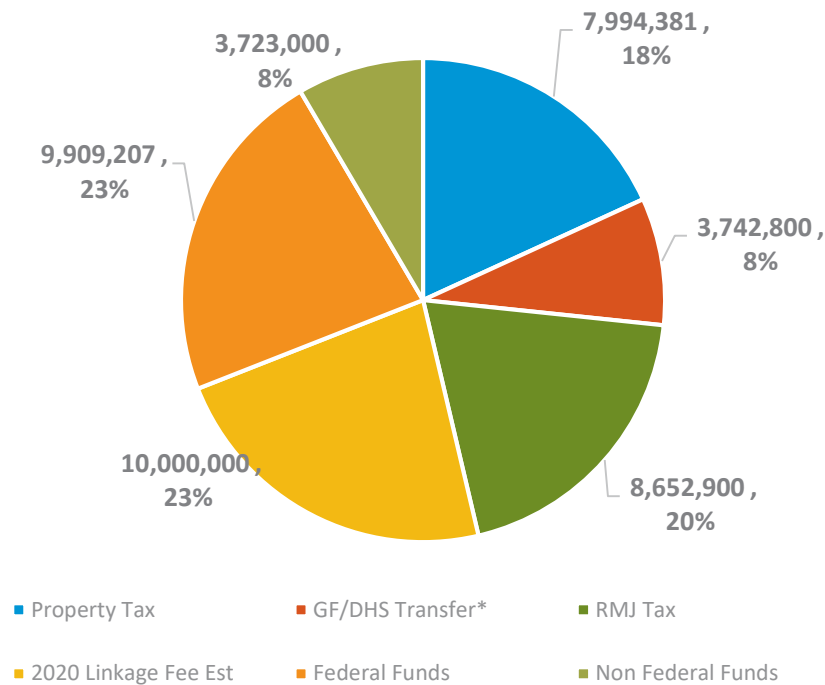
- Supporting departmental work around rehousing strategy
 - Continuing to prioritize supportive housing, 30%AMI units, and family units
- Delivering D3 program
 - 7 site acquisitions approved by the DHA Board this year
- Updated funding applications and PAB approach to align with City priorities

New Opportunities through Low Income Housing Tax Credits

- CHFA 9% Tax Credits
 - May 2020 – Awards announced
 - Four Denver developments awarded tax credits representing 416 units
 - HOST anticipates loan applications for gap funding
- CHFA 4% Tax Credits / State Tax Credits
 - August 2020 - 8 projects submitted applications to CHFA
 - Awards expected to be announced in Nov 2020
 - Anticipate several applications to HOST by end of 2020/early 2021

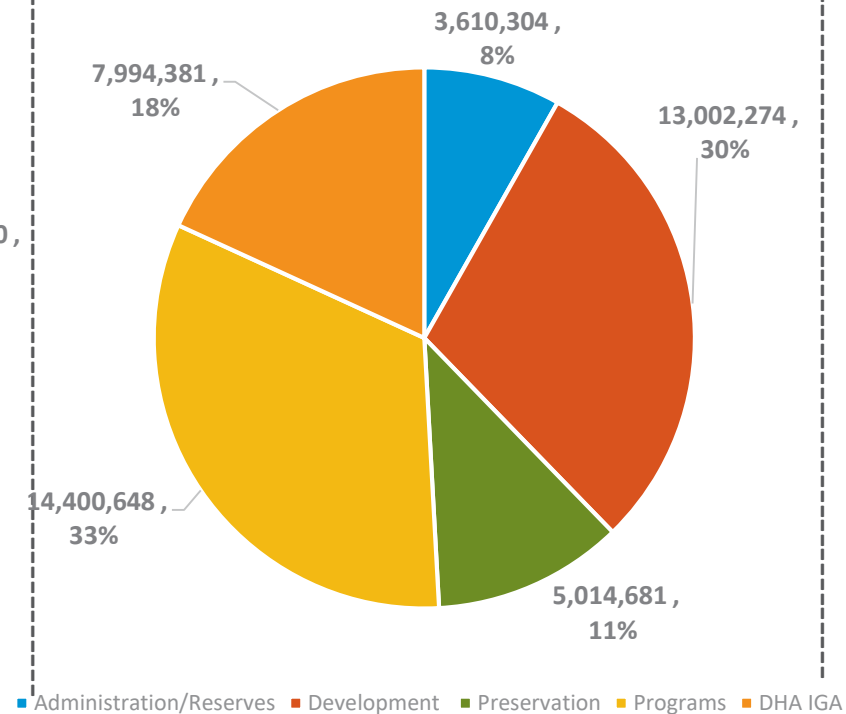
2020 Planned: Housing Investments

Budget by Funding Source



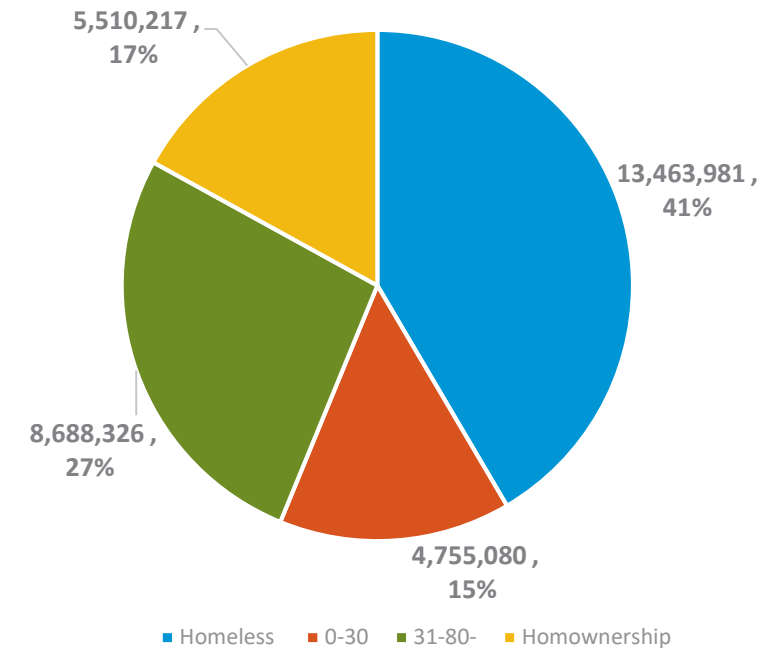
Total Budget: \$44,022,288

Budget By Investment Type



Total Budget: \$44,022,288

Budget by Spending Priorities

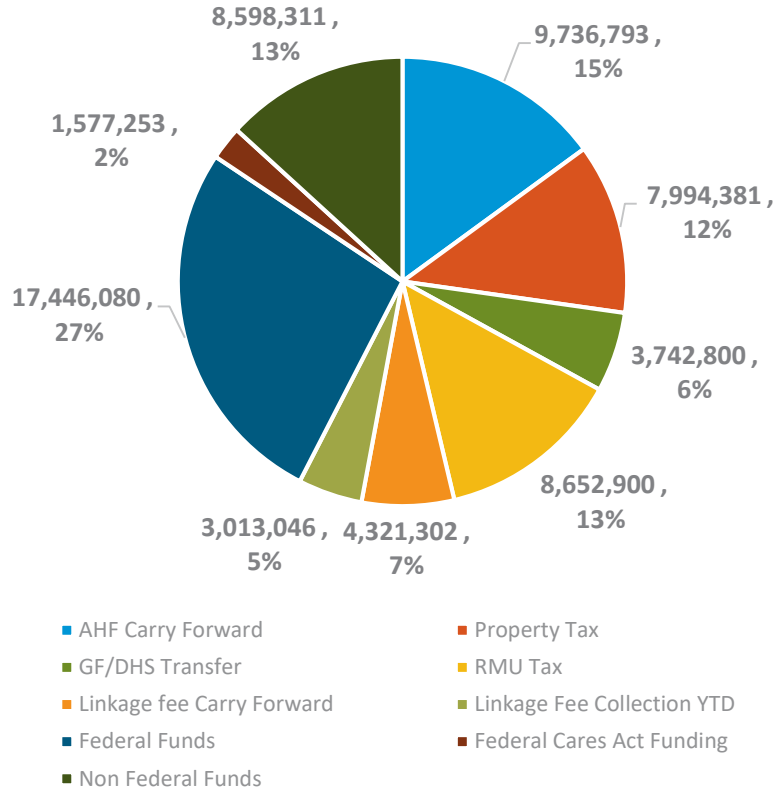


Total Budget: \$32,417,603

Variance: Administration and DHA IGA not included

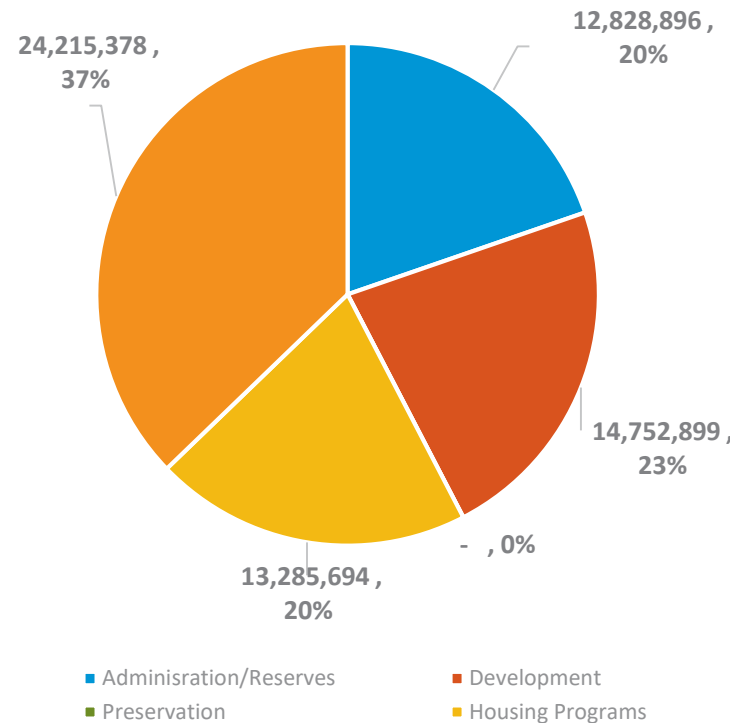
Housing Investments Actual YTD: July 31, 2020

2020 Budget by Funding Source



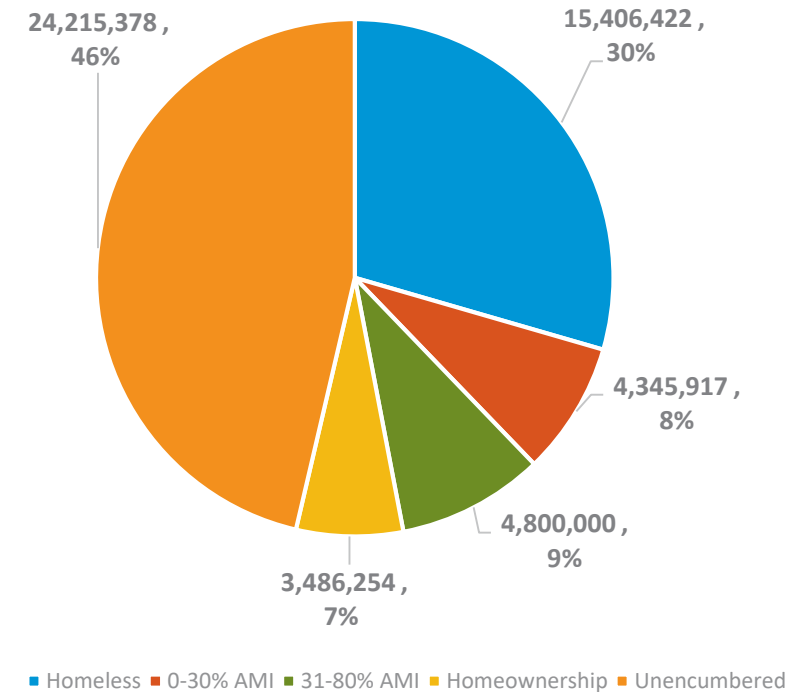
Total Budget: \$65,082,866

Actuals by Investment Type



Total Budget: \$65,082,866

Actuals by Spending Priorities



Total Budget: \$52,253,957

Variance: Administration and DHA IGA not included

2020 Policy Activity

- Affordable Housing Zoning Incentive Program underway
 - Peer City Report review
 - Advisory Committee meetings underway
- Preference Policy
 - Assessing opportunity to pilot with community partner before formal investment
- Rental Registry – discussions with CW Gilmore on Registry program parameters

Summary

Britta Fisher

Strategic Plan Update

- Current context around planning for housing and homelessness very connected to COVID-19 recovery planning
- Recommendation from stakeholders and Executive Committee to create a one year action plan for 2021 as a bridge to a 5-year plan for 2022-26
- Public review draft anticipated to be released in September 2020, finalized by year end
- Housing Stability Strategic Advisors expected to be seated by October 2020

Closing Thoughts

- City and partners stepped up to stand in a significant gap, thank you!
- Emergency strategies were needed to support those who were most vulnerable, limit transmission of virus for those experiencing homelessness and community broadly
- Access to stable housing is critical
- Experience gives us lessons learned about 24/7 sheltering, need for services
- Resources are needed to do this long-term – from keeping people stably housed, to rehousing strategies, shelter capacity and strong 24/7 operations

Questions/Discussion