



COORDINATED RESPONSE TO THE HOUSING CRISIS EXACERBATED BY COVID-19

CITY OF SAINT PAUL & RAMSEY COUNTY

PRESENTATION TO THE SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL
ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE
AUGUST 19, 2020

BACKGROUND ON HOUSING CRISIS

St. Paul is in a housing crisis, city council says.

Here's what it's doing about it.

Pioneer Press - July 19, 2018

<https://www.twincities.com/2018/07/19/st-paul-city-council-affordable-housing-plan>

No St. Paul apartments available for families earning \$30,000 or less, report finds

Pioneer Press - August 1, 2019

<https://www.twincities.com/2019/08/01/no-st-paul-apartments-available-for-families-earning-30000-or-less-report-finds/>

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BACKGROUND ON HOUSING CRISIS

St. Paul set to open winter shelter, close homeless camp

MPR - October 31, 2018

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2018/10/31/homeless-winter-stpaul-opens-shelter-closes-camp>

St. Paul, school district team up to help low-income families pay rent: City, school district team up to reduce number of disruptive moves.

Star Tribune - February 4, 2020

<https://www.startribune.com/st-paul-school-district-team-up-to-help-low-income-families-pay-rent/567565222/>

Final development deal reached on Ford site in St. Paul Deal announced for largest redevelopment in St. Paul history

Star Tribune - November 12, 2019

<https://www.startribune.com/major-announcement-planned-for-ford-site-in-st-paul/564801312/>

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OUR COORDINATED RESPONSE PRE-COVID

- Since 2018, our team has been actively responding to encampments through coordination and outreach to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

City of Saint Paul

- Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- City Council
- Department of Safety & Inspections
- Parks and Recreation
- SPPD
- Public Works
- Planning & Economic Development
- Libraries
- City Attorney's Office
- Emergency Management

Ramsey County

- County Board of Commissioners
- County Administrator
- County Social Services
- Saint Paul-Ramsey Co Public Health Clinic 555 Outreach Team
- Ramsey County Sheriff's Office Homeless Outreach Team
- Ramsey County Probation
- Ramsey County Veterans Services
- Emergency Management
- Ramsey County Emergency Housing

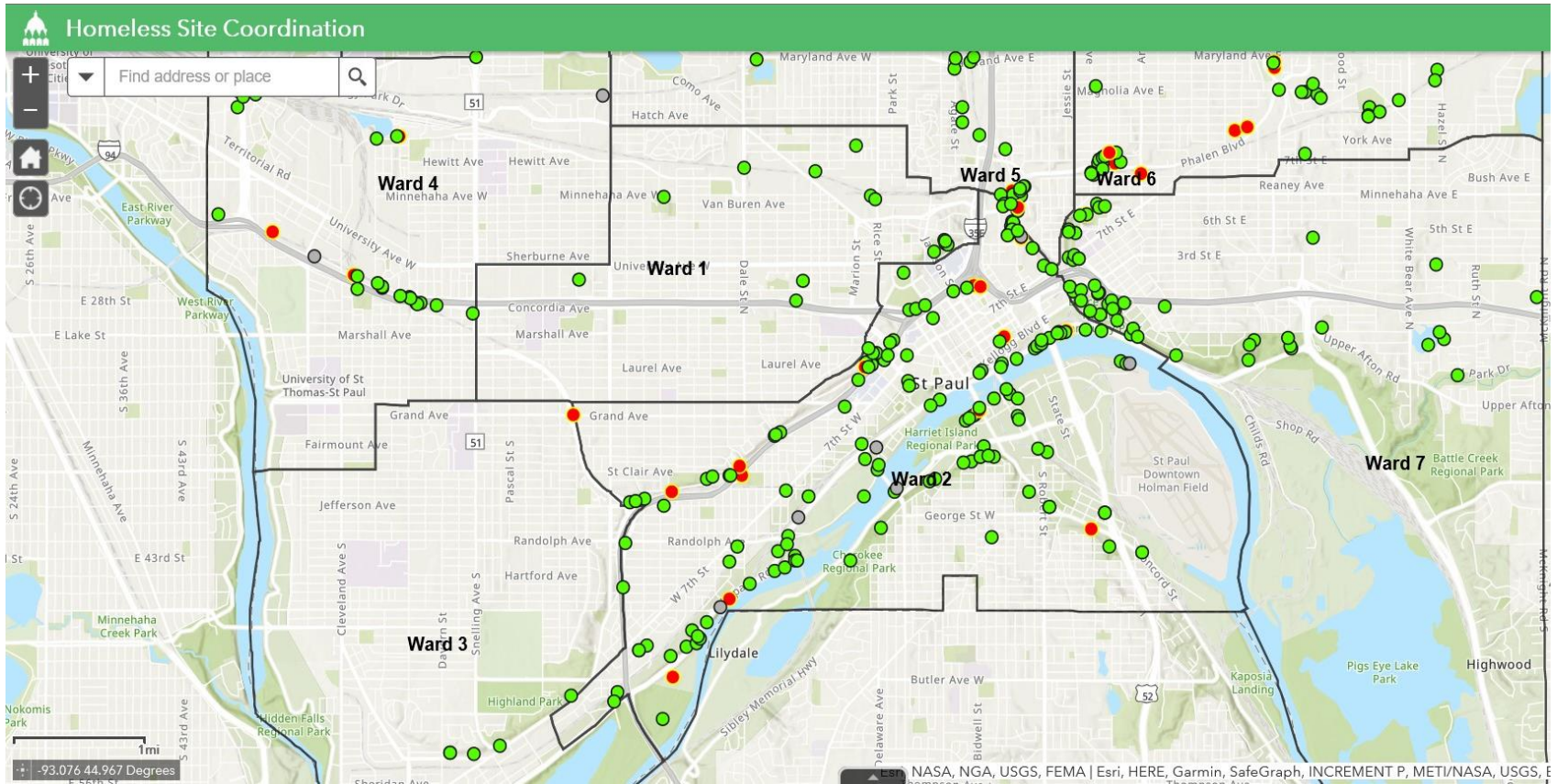
Partners

- People, Inc.
- Radias Health
- Listening House of St. Paul
- Mothers First
- Catholic Charities/Higher Ground
- Model Cities of St. Paul, Inc.
- Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities
- Downtown Alliance
- Metro Transit
- MNDOT
- Faith community
- Saint Paul residents and businesses

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OUR COORDINATED RESPONSE PRE-COVID



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COVID-19 EMERGENCY ORDERS

- March 13: Governor Walz declares a peacetime emergency in Minnesota in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- March 17: Ramsey County and City of Saint Paul declare local State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- March 25: Governor Walz issues Stay at Home Order for Minnesotans prohibiting subjecting encampments "to sweeps or disbandment by state or local governments as such sweeps or disbandment increase the potential risk and spread of COVID-19."
- April 29: EO 20-47 permits local governments to close an encampment if it has "reached a size or status that is a documented threat to the health, safety, or security of residents."

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OUR INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- To reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community, **Ramsey County** has:
 - Depopulated large shelters to 50% and move to hotels
 - Set up temporary isolation and quarantine sites

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OUR INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- The City of Saint Paul:
 - Temporarily halted clearing encampments in alignment with Governor's Orders.
 - Provided temporary sanitary services at select encampment sites.
 - DSI staff, SPPD's COAST, Mental Health Resource Team, Police Outreach Program, and Ramsey County's Homeless Outreach Team, along with non-profit outreach partners engaged in daily safety and needs assessments.
 - SPPD's Downtown Unit assigned officers daily to maintain public safety.

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IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

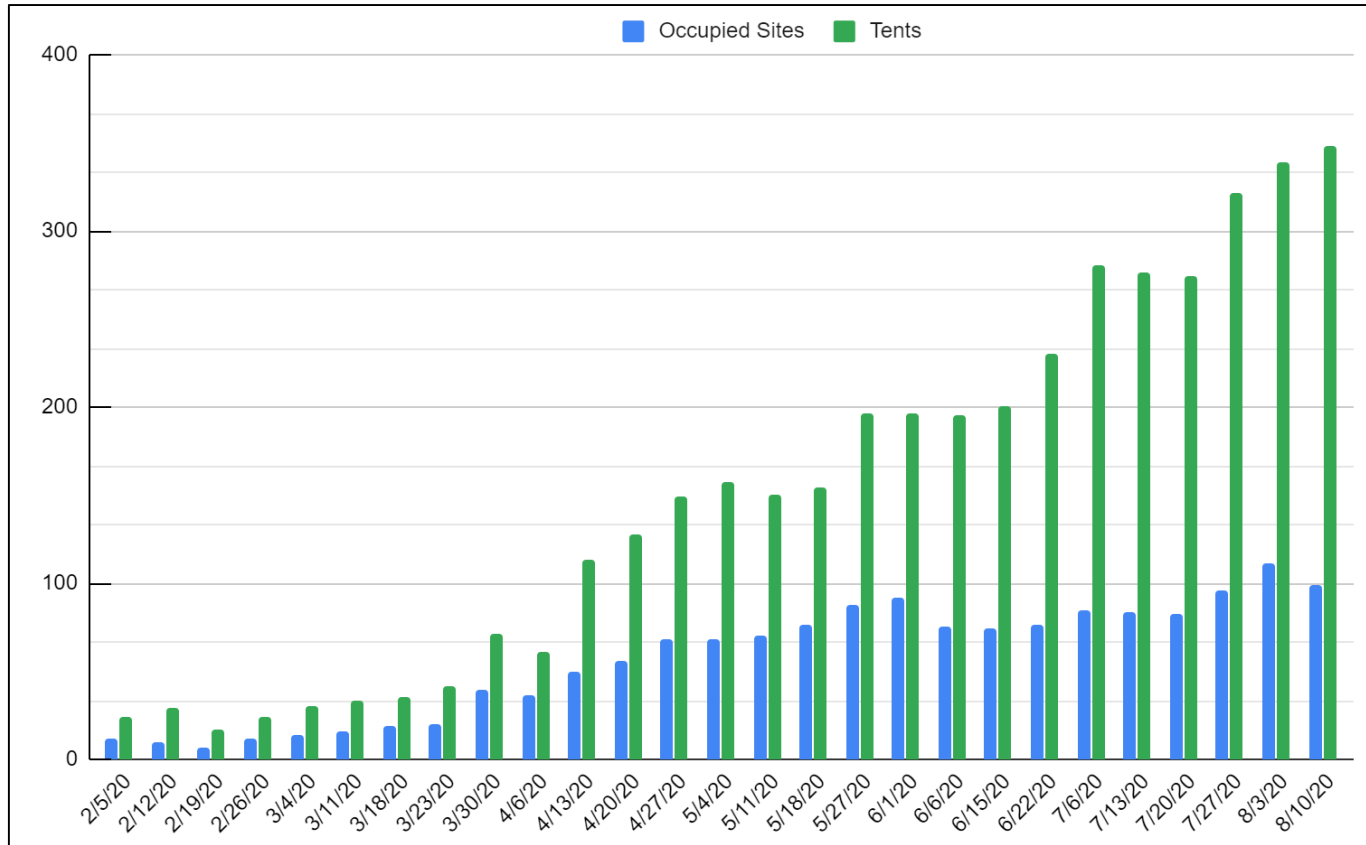
Ongoing Challenges:

- Continued and rising unemployment
- Continued need to social distance in congregate settings
- COVID-related impacts reduced some previous options (couches or space with friends/extended family reduced)
- Availability of public spaces for "day space": respite, take care of personal hygiene needs and meet privately with outreach workers (closure of libraries, reduction of services at many non-profits)
- Availability of low-barrier indoor shelter space for specific subpopulations

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IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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OUR PLAN: LEVERAGE RESOURCES

- Continuum of Care - \$6.8 million
- CDBG 2020 - \$6.89 million
- ESG (Saint Paul/Ramsey County JPA) - \$500,000
- CARES (Ramsey County) - \$16 million
- CARES (Saint Paul) - \$10 million
- CDBG-CV - \$4 million
- ESG-CV (Saint Paul/Ramsey County JPA) - \$7.9 million

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OUR ACTION PLANS

GOAL

Build upon and continue the ongoing partnership between the City and County with collaboration among our partners to effectively deploy our COVID-related resources

ACTION PLAN 1:

Longer-term and permanent options to serve individuals experiencing homelessness

ACTION PLAN 2:

Immediate response needs to address the dramatic increase of individuals with no housing as a result of the COVID pandemic

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ACTION PLAN 1

- **Issue to solve**

- Significant increased need for shelter, housing supports, and housing options for individuals experiencing homelessness as a result of COVID-19

- **Primary strategy**

- Design and establish new shelter spaces/establish shelter for subsections of encampment demographics and cultural-specific populations

- **Additional Strategies**

- Freedom House repurpose
- Mobile Assessment Vehicle
- Tiny House and other housing ideas

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ACTION PLAN 2

Issue to solve: Significant increased need for supports for individuals experiencing homelessness as a result of COVID-19

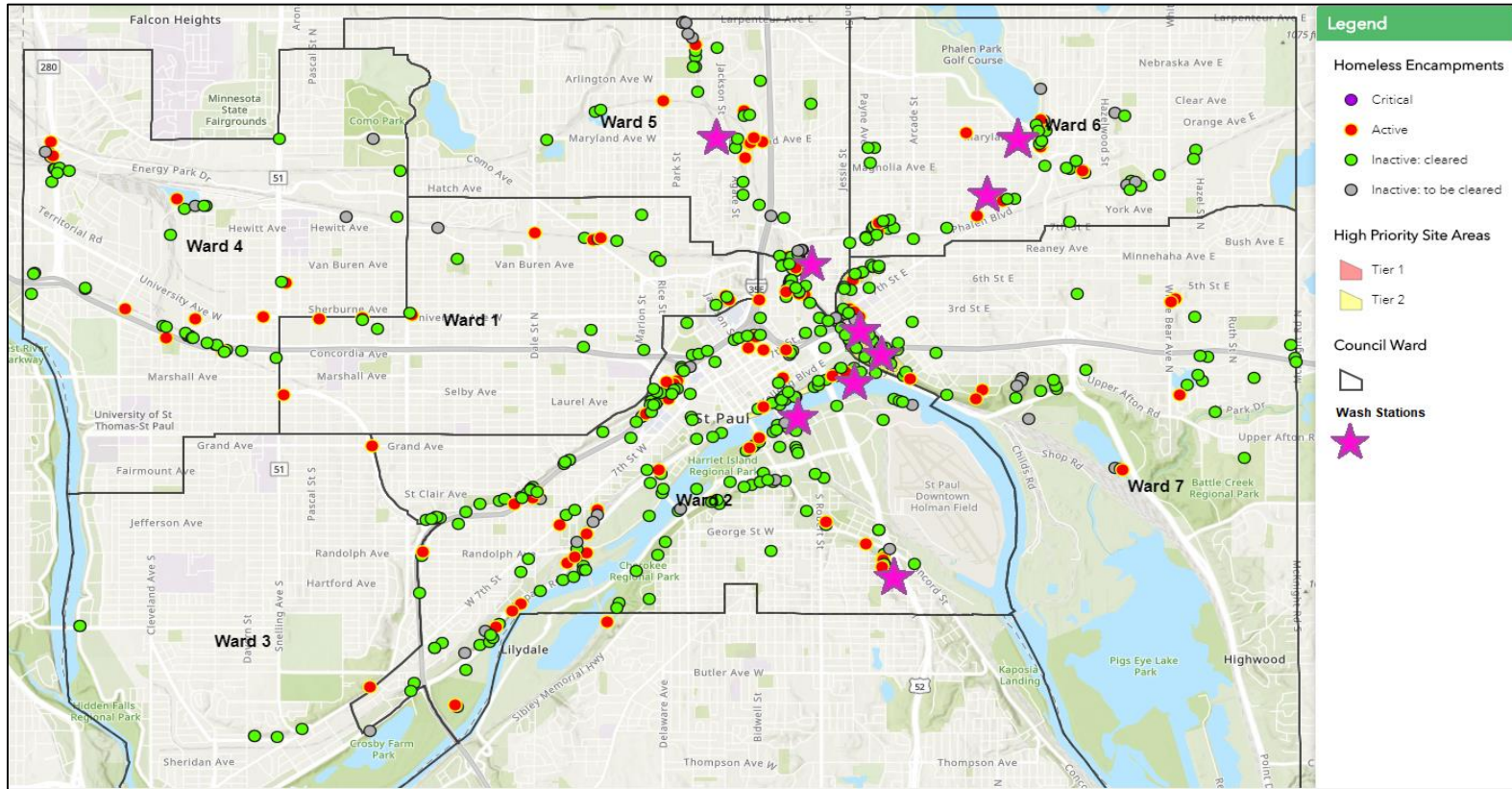
Primary strategy: Rapidly mobilize resources to protect public health and safety including:

- Services: meals, sanitary services
- Healthcare and mental/chemical health assessments
- Safety and security
 - SPPD added patrols
 - Block by Block contract
- Day space
- Women shelter options

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SANITARY SERVICES



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AREA OPERATIONAL PLANS

Encampments Located Near the Intersection of 35E and Kellogg Blvd.

The encampments currently located at the Minnesota History Center stairs and at the bottom of Cathedral Hill have been identified by the City of Saint Paul as a significant threat to the safety of camp occupants and the public.

Threats include a serious potential for a pedestrian/high speed vehicle accident, reports of criminal activity victimizing occupants, open drug use, and unsanitary conditions including used needles, feces and large amounts of garbage accumulating in the area.

The close proximity of these sites to Catholic Charities Higher Ground and Dorothy Day Opportunity Center have negative impacts on their day-to-day operations, as well as their broader mission, to break the cycle of homeless for their clients.

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AREA OPERATIONAL PLANS

The Lowertown Area (Mears Park, Tot Lot, Union Depot Station)

This crisis has dramatically increased the demand on Saint Paul Police Department services in the Lowertown Area, and created safety and livability issues for those operating downtown businesses or who reside downtown.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Maintain two officers for presence in Mears Park from 7am – 1am
- Maintain two officers to continue conducting hourly checks and keeping a presence overnight from 1am – 7am
- Assign two additional officers from 10am – midnight
 - patrol and monitor foot traffic on Sibley between 4th and 5th Streets
 - patrol and monitor Tot Lot
- Place a trailer camera at 4th Street & Sibley Street facing north to monitor Sibley Street and the Tot Lot
- Collaborate with Metro Transit Police, Park Security, and Ramsey County Sheriff to assist with extra visible presence
- Contract with Block by Block for Downtown Ambassadors

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QUESTIONS

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