

Housekeys Action Network Denver - City Budget Proposals Summary

Denver City Council is in discussions on the Mayor's proposed 2023 City Budget until a final vote on November 14th 2022. Yet again the Mayor's budget puts the largest present of City money - 36% - into police and jails. And yet again, low-income housing is getting a drop in the bucket of the money.

We, Housekeys Action Network Denver, have written seven budget proposals for City Council to amend the Mayor's budget and move money from police, jails, and faulty shelter systems into housing and health resources. These proposals would double the number of very low-income (under 30%AMI) housing units created in 2023 (from 219 to 419), would triple the number of hotels parched and converted to housing (from 2 to 6), and would improve and establish public health infrastructure (including water fountains, bathrooms, and showers) for sanitation in our City. See full proposals attached.

Read more on our budget proposals below:

Hotels for Housing

City acquisition of two additional hotels for housing and shifting the hotels planned as "navigation centers" into housing.

Cost - \$17mil (plus shifting the use of the \$23mil planed for navigation centers)

The City budget currently has 23mil dedicated to hotel acquisition for "navigation centers." It appears that these navigation centers will turn hotel rooms into group rooms with 4 beds and will be treated as temporary places to "navigate" to housing, not as housing to live in. No one should not be forced to live with a group of 4 random people. People should be able to live with family or friends you wish to live with, but not forced into a group living in a small shared room. Living as a shelter guest without the rights of housing leaves people in continual instability. Furthermore, navigating to housing does not work unless the housing exists for people to move into. Instead of creating "navigation centers" with this 23mil, this money should be brought up to 40mil and these funds should be used to buy four hotels to be turned into housing. **There is no reason to create navigation centers to transition people to housing that does not exist, when these buildings could become the housing itself.**

City Master Leasing Housing

The City of Denver will master lease apartments and then lease these apartments to houseless people who will pay $\frac{1}{3}$ of their income to cover part of the rent costs.

Cost - \$5mil

139 elderly, sick and disabled people were just kicked out of their rooms at the Quality putting 49 of them on the streets, shelters, cars, or temporary unstable hotel stays. These are just some of the most vulnerable houseless people in our City who desperately need housing. These people face many barriers to securing housing. **By the City doing the work to secure units and offset costs so that residents can afford the housing based on their income, housing can be secured faster and cheaper than most other avenues.** Long term, the City or other public entities owning the housing and renting at real costs is the most cost effective, stable, and accessible housing method, but in the meantime before that is secured master leasing is the fastest and cheapest way to secure housing.

Water Stations

Broken water stations fixed and new water stations installed at key locations.

Cost - \$166,450

Out of the 136 public water fountains mapped during the summer of 2021, only 41 or (30%) were functioning and there are no accessible water sources during the winter.

Water fountains will have extra pour spots at ground level and bottle filling spots, vandalism and frost resistant. Some fountains may be plumbed through public facilities but with water fountains outside.

Showers and Laundry

Bayaud Enterprises and Showers for All laundry and shower truck programs

Cost - \$582,880

There are two non-profit organizations doing great work providing showers and laundry services in Denver. However, they do not have the funding needed to provide the level of service they could. **Both Bayaud Enterprises and Showers for All run laundry and a shower trucks which go to places where people without housing can access them.** These programs should be fully funded. The ability to shower not only protects physical health, but also mental health and people's ability to get a job and avoid stigmatization.

Bathrooms

Install 5 Portland Loos. Open all permanent facilities. Better maintain existing facilities.

Cost - \$1mil

There are not enough public bathrooms in the City, especially in areas where encampments are common. Based on a mapping project of all public facilities in Denver we found that there were no bathrooms available overnight and 80% of the bathrooms were seasonal. 43% were not ADA accessible, and 55% lacked soap and water or hand sanitizer. When we surveyed unhoused people, almost half (47.9%) reported having to "hold it" to find a decent bathroom every day. Tourists in Denver also complain about the lack of bathrooms.

Trash Crew

Trash Crew including trash collection infrastructure for areas where people live without housing or proper trash infrastructure.

Cost - \$264,000

In 2018 a program was created through Bayaud Enterprises to hire houseless and recently houseless people to clean trash in areas with high houseless populations needing that additional cleaning support. This program was eventually shifted to focus on BID contracted areas and then eventually ended. This program should be brought back and revamped to **hire more houseless folks at a living wage, and to focus on encampment areas with large populations and without existing trash infrastructure.**

Recreation Center Passes

Free day passes to the Denver Recreation Centers for houseless people.

Cost - \$25,000

Recreation Centers can provide a critical space for exercise, showering, and keeping healthy when without housing. Passes should be given to houseless people for free access to Recreation Centers. The PLAY pass (free and reduced pass for low-income people) application will also be made more accessible.

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