



Results From The Coordinated Assistance and Resources for Encampments Pilot Program (C.A.R.E), Including Lessons Learned And Recommendation For Next Steps

Presentation For Mayor Muriel Bowser

April 26, 2022
Washington, DC

Presentation Outline

☒ **Background on Encampments and Summary of Findings**

☐ The Purpose Of C.A.R.E and Selection of Pilot Sites

☐ C.A.R.E Pilot Results

☐ Pilot Lessons Learned & Concerns By DHS and Outreach Teams

☐ Options and DMHHS Recommendation For Next Steps

What Are Encampments?

Encampments are:

- Tents, structures, or abodes (places of residence) located on public, private, or Federal property without sanctioned approval.
- Mass accumulation of personal belongings that are present even when the resident(s) are not.

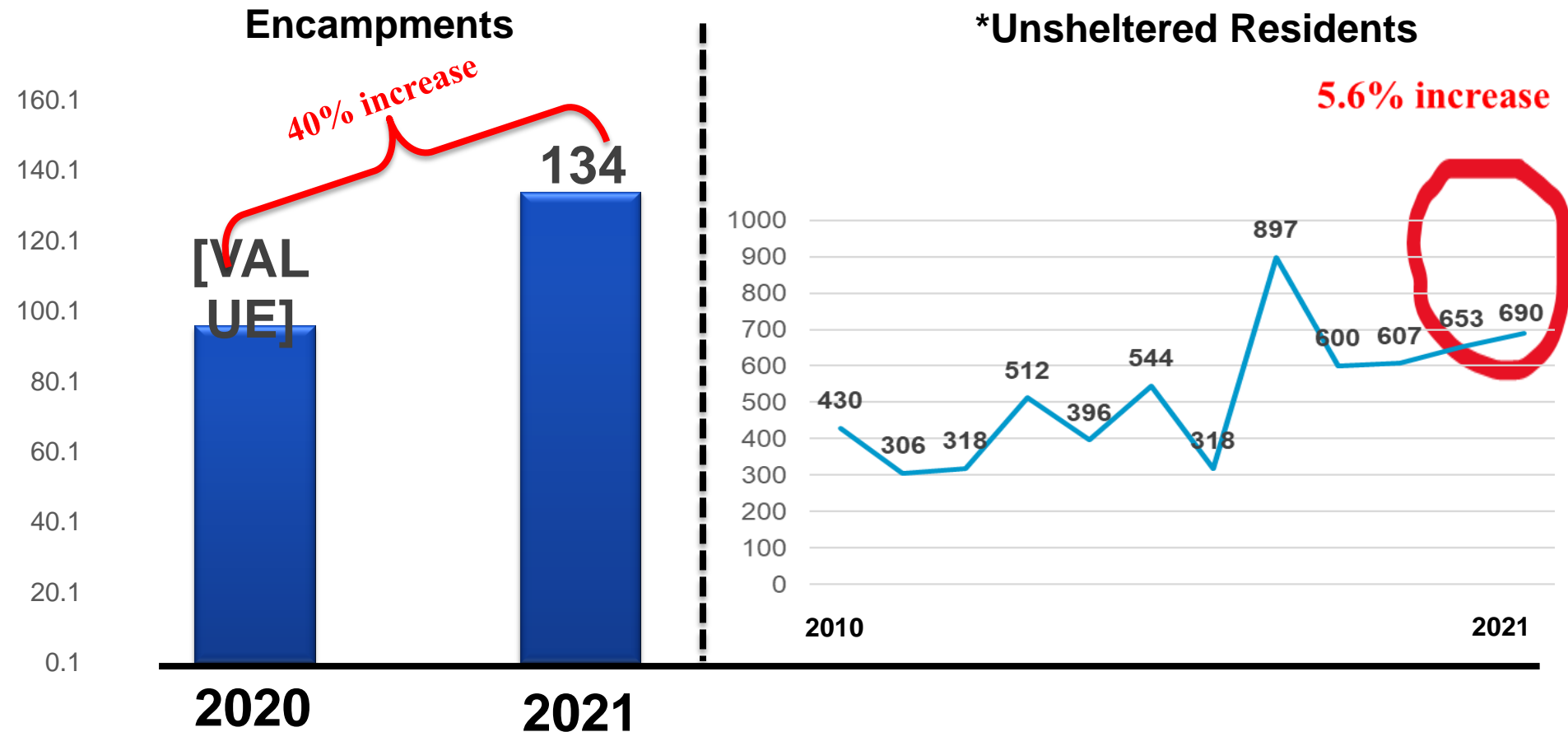


Encampments are not:

- Easily Moveable by one person
- Loitering
- Bulk trash (311)



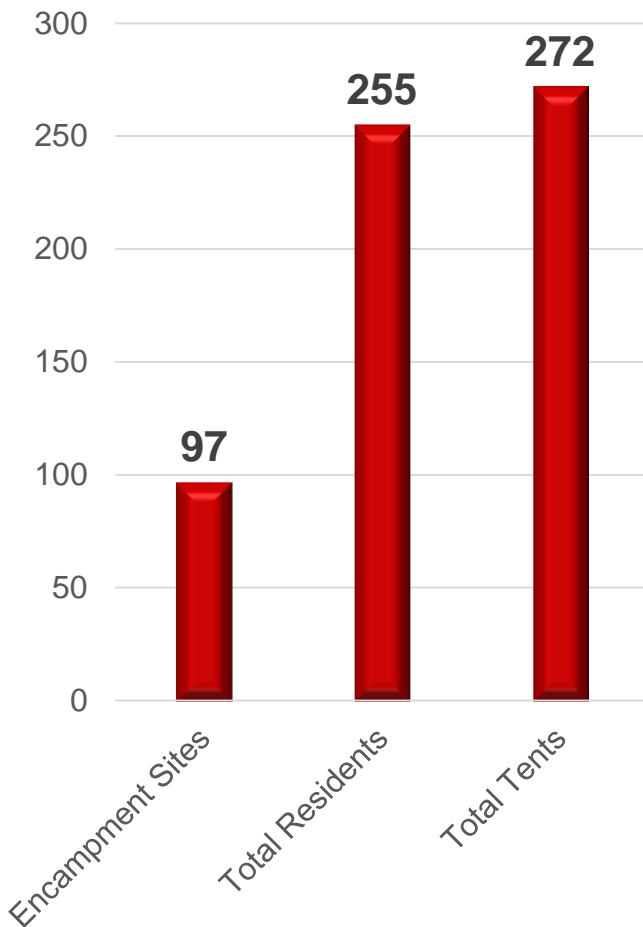
In the First Year Of The Pandemic, The Number Of Known Encampments Across The City Increased By 40 Percent, While The Actual Number Of Persons Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness Appears To Have Grown At A Slower Rate



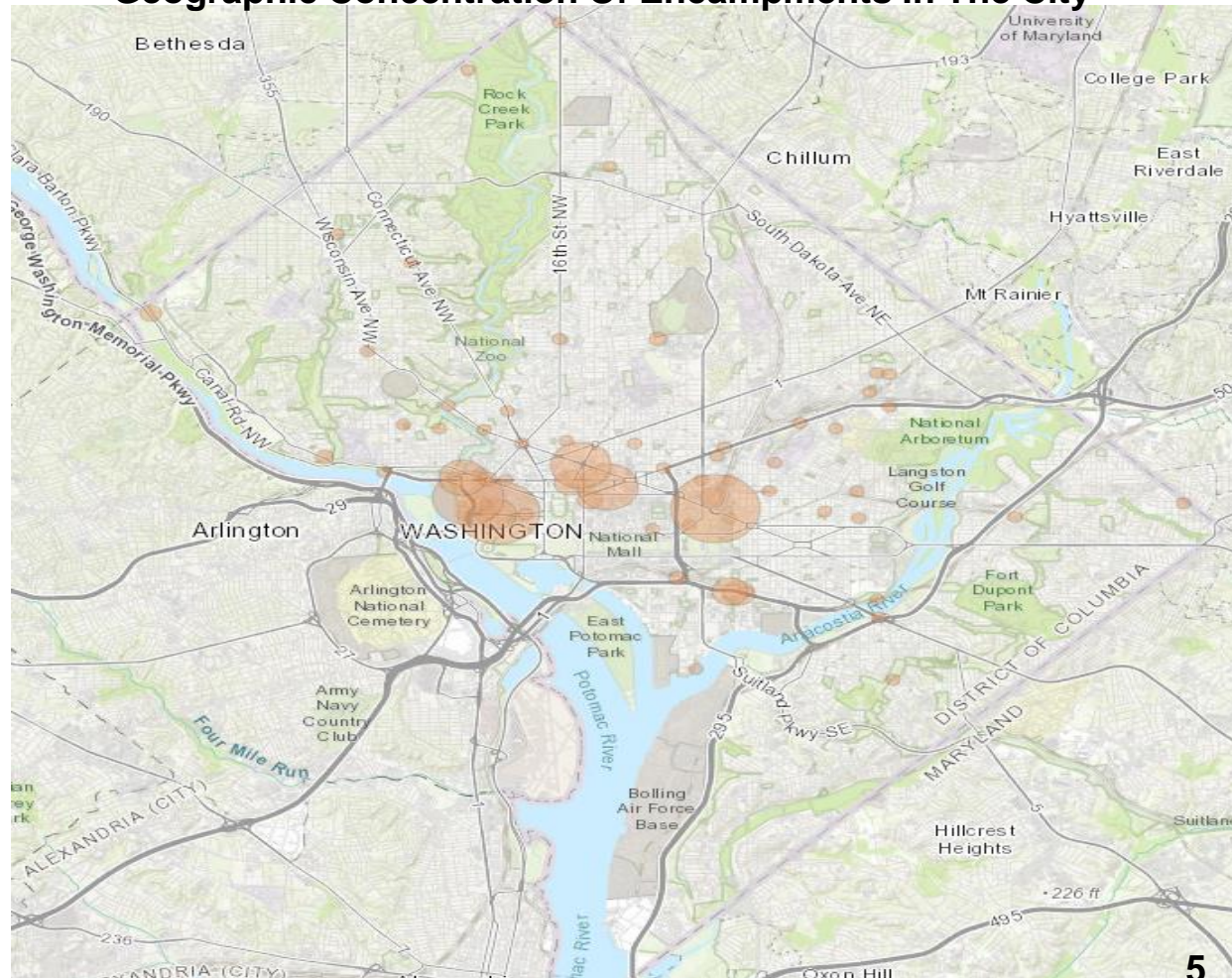
Source: Data on number of encampments was collected by the District's outreach providers and the encampment team in the Deputy Mayor's Office for Health and Human Services (DMHHS). *Data are from the District's Point-in-Time (PIT) count of persons who are living on the street, in tents or otherwise. The count occurs in January of each year.

As Of April 2022, There Were 97 Encampments Sites Across The City Comprised Of At Least One Tent - 255 Residents Are Connected To These Sites

District Encampment Sites

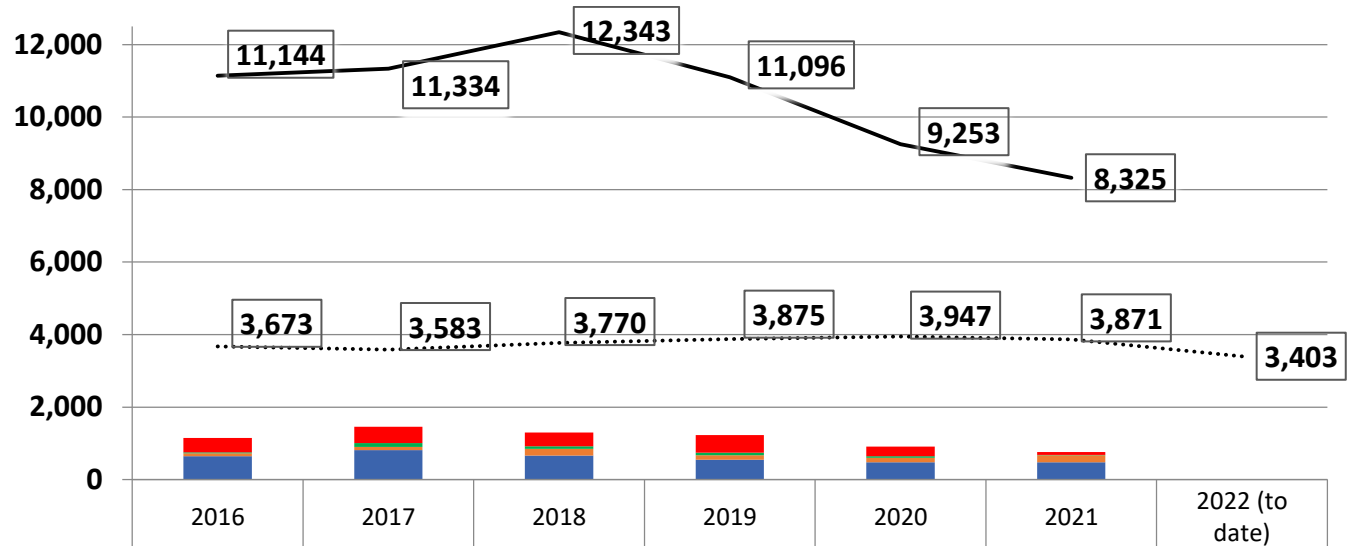


Geographic Concentration Of Encampments In The City



...This Partially Reflects the Imbalance Between Unaccompanied Adults Experiencing Homelessness and The Housing Available To Them

- ❑ The magnitude of individuals relying on the District's homeless system over the course of a full year (black solid line), far exceeds the number at which single unhoused adults are exiting with housing (dotted line). [Stacked bars show different resources/programs used to exit the system].



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (to date)
Other (Unsubsidized Housing, Family Reunification)	400	452	376	490	264	81	
Targeted Affordable Housing Assistance	23	104	77	70	47	7	
Rapid ReHousing Assistance	83	86	185	122	120	202	
Permanent Supportive Housing	643	815	662	547	479	474	
Individuals Served (Annual Count)	11,144	11,334	12,343	11,096	9,253	8,325	
Individuals Served (PIT Count)	3,673	3,583	3,770	3,875	3,947	3,871	3,403

Source: Data provided by Interagency Council On Homelessness based on the Annual Point-in-Time Count and System Performance Metrics. Note that the dotted line is based on a given day in a year, whereas the data represented by solid line is the total for the full calendar year. PIT data typically understates churn in any system which measures presence and length of stay.

Meanwhile, The Proliferation of Tented Encampments Has Given Rise To Numerous Challenges

- ❑ As the size of encampments increased, major issues emerged with health and safety conditions, notwithstanding the resources the District spent to address these problems. This includes:
 - Bio-hazards
 - Rodent infestations
 - Spikes in illegal activity from persons who prey upon those living in encampments
 - Sporadic, but sometimes deadly violence
- ❑ Increased health/safety concerns and competing public uses for the encampment space have created flash points with residents of the surrounding communities who would like the areas used for encampments to be returned to the intended use.

Summary Of Findings

- ❑ The C.A.R.E pilot program has targeted 55 percent of the current number of residents who are living on the street in tented encampments across the city
- ❑ The DMHHS' encampment team and outreach contractors successfully engaged 80 percent of these residents with an offer of support services and housing
- ❑ Those who rejected the assistance offered by the program generally did not offer specific reasons for their refusal to engage
- ❑ As of April 25, 2022, among the 111 residents with whom the team successfully engaged, 88 percent were either placed in leased apartments (95 residents) or provided bridge housing (3 residents) while the lease up process continues
- ❑ Encampment locations with unresolvable public health or safety concerns, were effectively closed after housing offers were made to all residents at the sites

Summary Of Findings (continued)

- ❑ Participants in the C.A.R.E. Pilot who received housing were placed, on average, nearly 3 months faster than those who received housing through the citywide housing program
- ❑ There were residents who were not initially included in the program but came to the sites after the list of participants had been developed (referred to as residents who "backfilled"). These individuals were added to the pilot, and most were successfully engaged.
- ❑ The sites in the Foggy Bottom area experienced the largest number of “backfills” – 14 residents. This represented 19 percent of the total residents at these sites.
 - Approximately 86 percent of the residents who "backfilled" agreed to engage with the outreach team and are either in, or currently on the path to stable housing
- ❑ The process of transitioning housed residents from a local subsidy to PSH is protracted and, if not addressed, will increase the local cost of the pilot.

Presentation Outline

- ☐ Background on Encampments and Summary of Findings
- ☒ **The Purpose Of C.A.R.E and Selection of Pilot Sites**
- ☐ C.A.R.E Pilot Results
- ☐ Pilot Lessons Learned & Concerns By DHS and Outreach Teams
- ☐ Options and DMHHS Recommendation For Next Steps

C.A.R.E Pilot Was Designed To Test The Efficacy Of A Housing First Approach For Residents in Encampments

- ❑ C.A.R.E was conducted under the authority of the Deputy Mayor's Office for Health and Human Services (DMHHS) in coordination with the work provided by staff at Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), and several outreach contractors
- ❑ DHS funded outreach providers – Miriam's Kitchen and Pathways to Housing
- ❑ The purpose of this pilot program was to test the efficacy of the “housing first” approach in expeditiously moving residents from tented encampments into safe housing
- ❑ In some cases, encampment sites were then closed after residents were moved into housing because of public safety or competing use issues

The Housing First Approach Is Based On A National Model

- ❑ According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, “Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness.”
 - Goal is to establish permanent housing as the platform.
 - In doing so, this approach helps address the residents’ hierarchy of needs by prioritizing housing first.
 - From this platform, residents can then pursue personal goals which will improve their quality of life and allow progress towards greater independence.
- ❑ Resident choice and the provision of the necessary supportive services are critical elements of this model.

The Framework For C.A.R.E Was Designed To Address Several Policy Questions

1. With focused outreach and direct connection to housing supports, to what degree and how quickly can residents attain an apartment of their own?
2. How does the pilot approach compare to the normal housing process for persons who are single and experiencing homelessness but presently living in shelters and hotels?
3. What proportion of residents in the pilot who are offered housing will agree to accept an apartment rather than remain on the street? And for those who opt to remain unhoused, what factors appear to be driving that decision?
4. After residents experiencing homelessness are housed, is it a viable approach to close these encampments, especially in areas of the city where there are elevated health/safety concerns and competing public use issues?
5. How did the program treat those who are experiencing homelessness but are not on the pilot “by name” list developed by DHS staff and contractors?

Encampment Pilot Protocol Requires A Structured Approach For Identifying Residents For The Pilot, Securing Housing, Preparing The Sites For Cleanup, And Closing Some Encampments

- ❑ The District's encampment pilot provides intensive case management and behavioral health/substance use while working to connect clients to appropriate housing opportunities. Activities include:
 - Creating by-name lists for pilot locations and implementing more robust data collection
 - Assessment of whether the site evinces a rise in health and safety risks and should be closed to future encampments
 - Provision of trash/biohazard collection and restorative cleaning at the pilot sites, directly addressing some of the adjacent community's concerns
 - Increasing outreach and behavioral health/substance use supports to improve residents' connection to housing. Residents who agree to participate are engaged in intensive case management
 - Increasing meaningful service connections and provide a direct path to stable housing.
 - Closing the site when necessary and legally permissible, following efforts to house all residents at the pilot

Four Pilot Sites Were Selected Based On Size, Health And Safety Risk, And Competing Use Of Public Spaces

Pilot Sites	Estimated Number of Tents Jan. 2020	Estimated Number of Tents Dec. 2020
NoMa (M and L St NE Underpass)	30-40	40-50
NJ Ave and O St NW	3-5	27-30
21 St and E St NW	12-15	25-30
25th St and Virginia Avenue NW	1-3	*3-6

*Site started to grow substantially in Feb 2021 and now has 15+ tents.

Scope And Preliminary Costs Of Pilot Sites

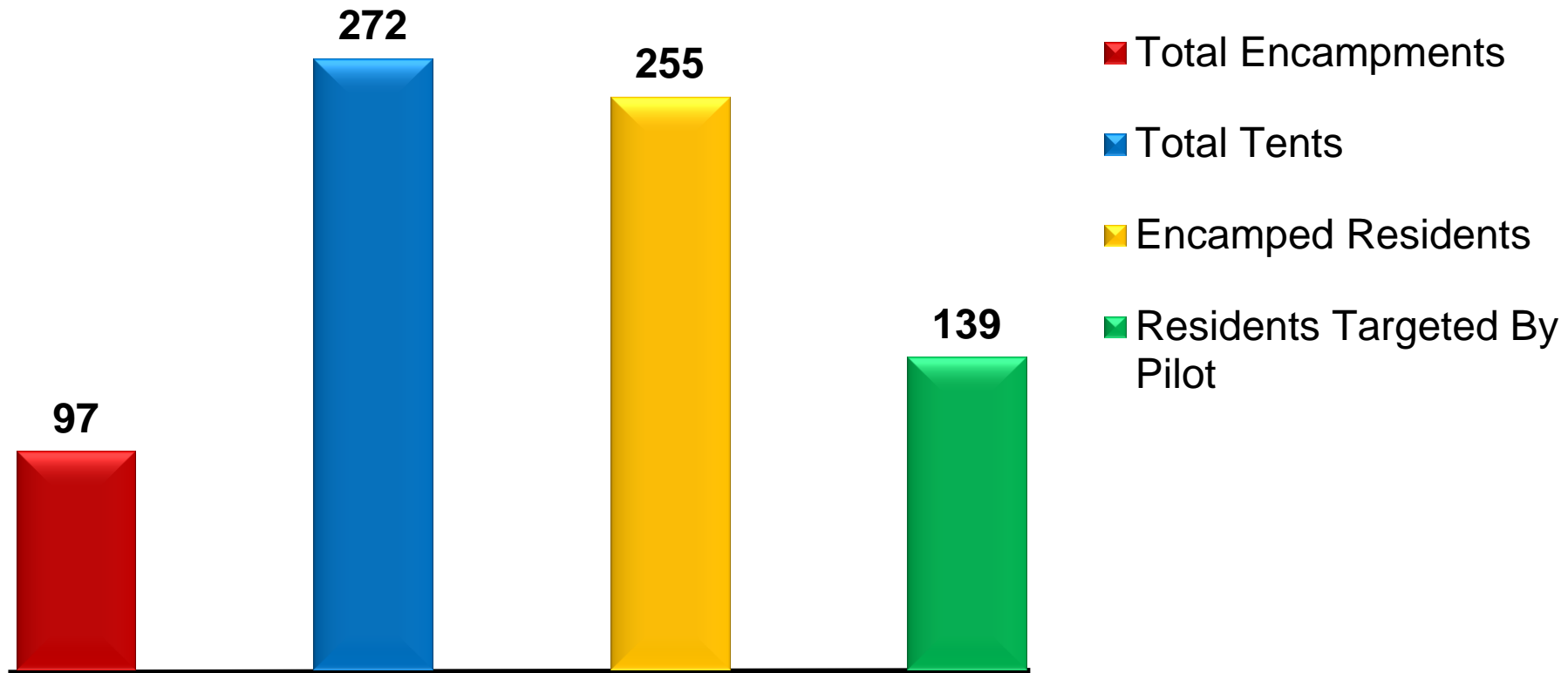
Pilot Plans	NoMa (M and L St NE)	New Jersey and O Street Park	21 st and E Street Underpass	25 th and Virginia Avenue
Target Population (By Name List)	45	32	34	28
Estimated Percent Eligible For PSH	91%	88%	71%	54%
Budgeted Rental Cost For Pilot Sites	\$1,062,600	\$553,000	\$424,800	\$770,600
Current Rental Cost of Housing for Pilot members as of April 25, 2022	\$949,288.92		\$370,909.38	
End Dates For Pilot (Work at Foggy Bottom sites continues)	May 31, 2022			

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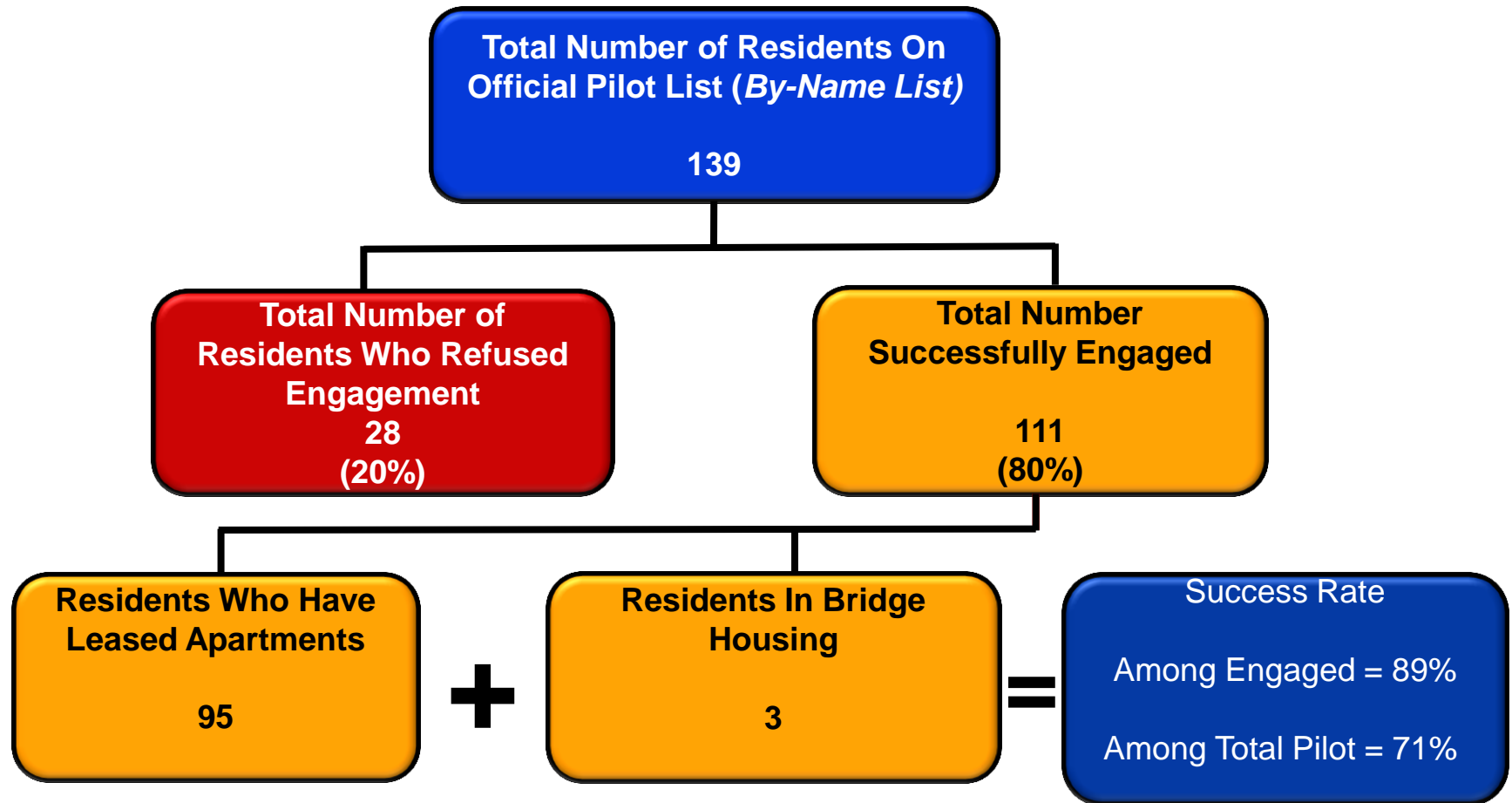
As Of April 2022, The Pilot Program Has Extended Outreach And Expedited Housing Services To Approximately 55 Percent Of The Current Total Of Residents Staying in Encampments Who Are Unhoused And Living On The Street

Number of Encampments, Tents, Encamped Residents, and Pilot Site Residents as of April 2022



Notes: Since residents repeatedly move and are sometimes unwilling to engage in outreach services, it is not always possible to accurately capture the number of unique encamped residents. The number of tents at a site does not necessarily represent the number of residents residing at a given site as some residents have multiple tents for storage or to rent out to other residents.

Among Pilot Site Residents Who Elected To Engage With C.A.R.E. Services, 88% Have Leased Apartments Or Reside In Bridge Housing (Hotels)

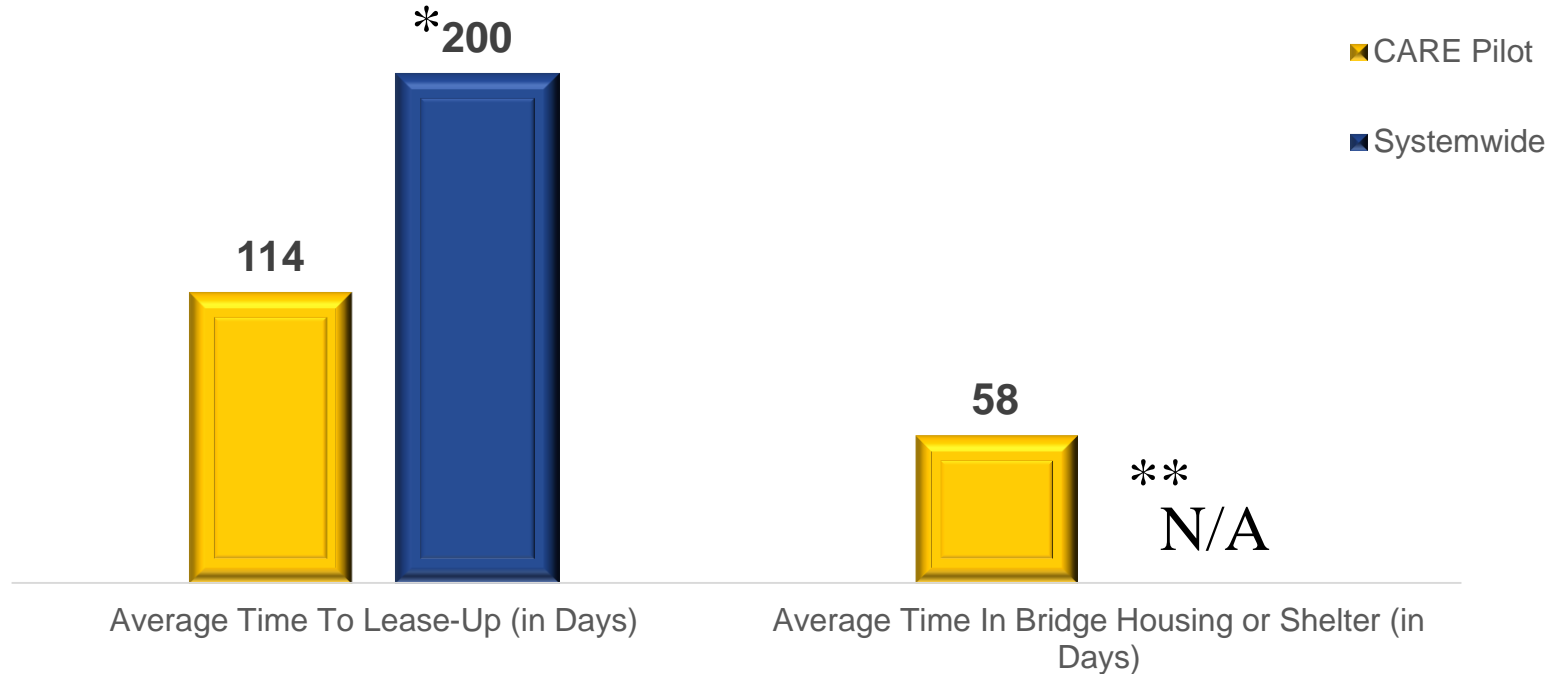


The Pilot Outcomes, By Site, Are Positive And Consistently High, Proving The Efficacy Of The Housing First Approach

Process Outcome	NoMa Sites	New Jersey And O Street Park	21 st and E Street	25 th and Virginia Avenue
Date Started	8/23/21	9/20/21	9/20/21	1/18/22
Total Residents	45	32	34	28
Engaged w/ Process	41	27	22	20
In Leased Apartment	38	21	21	15
In PEP-V as Housing Search Continues	2	1	0	0
Refused to Engage and Left Encampment or were Unavailable	4	5	12	8
Successful Engagement Rate	91%	84%	65%	71%
Successful Placement Rate For Those Engaged	98%	81%	95%	75%
Expected to transition from local Subsidy To PSH, TAH, & RRH	24	6	15	4
Transitioned from local Subsidy To PSH, TAH, & RRH	8	5	2	0

The Overall Speed Of The Lease-Up Process For C.A.R.E. Participants Was Significantly Faster Than Observed Systemwide

Length of Time (In Days) To Lease-Up And Length-of-Stay In Bridge Housing



Source: Department of Health and Human Services

Note: *This includes only local LRSP Vouchers

** DHS was not able to provide the average length of stay for residents in shelters who have been placed in apartments.

When Pilot Data Are Disaggregated, The Overall Speed Of The Lease-Up Process Varied But Was Generally Lower Than Observed Citywide

Steps In The Process	NoMa (M and L St NE)	New Jersey and O Street Park	21 st and E Street Underpass	25 th and Virginia Avenue	Systemwide Participants
Average Time to Lease-Up (in days)	114	125	n/a	n/a	*200
Average Time Spent in PEP-V	77	54	49	51	67

Source: Department of Health and Human Services

Note: *This includes only local LRSP Vouchers.

n/a = Residents in these two sites were housed with local funds and have not yet transitioned to LRSP vouchers.

DMHHS Permanently Closed Two Of The Sites That Were Included As A Part Of The Pilot Site

- ❑ Under the existing Protocol, DMHHS can close encampment sites if there are persistent public health or safety issues that cannot be eradicated without shuttering the site, or if the encampment prevents residents from using the public space for its intended use.
- ❑ DMHHS can close such sites with a 14-day notice, or if there are immediate dangers or health hazards, the closure can be executed immediately.
- ❑ During the course of the pilot study, DMHHS closed two large encampments – one at NoMa, because the continued presence of encampments endangered both the encampment residents and the general public, and the other at New Jersey Ave and O St Park, which was scheduled for renovation.
- ❑ In both sites, DMHHS extended offers of housing to every resident at the site after informing the residents that the sites would close.
- ❑ Nine of the 77 residents who were living at the sites we closed rejected the District's offer of housing. Aside from a generally expressed suspicion of government, these residents did not further elaborate on the reasons for refusing housing.

What Happened With Residents who “Backfilled” Into Sites?

- ❑ Some residents arrived at the targeted encampments after program canvassing strategies used to identify pilot site participants were completed
- ❑ Some of these residents who backfilled at the NoMa and New Jersey Ave and O St sites were placed into PEP-V/bridge housing with the goal of reaching housing stability
 - ❑ Because some of these residents were not known to the homelessness system, we anticipated that the lease-up process for this group would take significantly longer
- ❑ At the last two Pilot locations, 14 residents who were not on the program list have backfilled at these sites. The decision was made to extend expedited pilot services and housing navigation to these residents.
 - Most of these residents have agreed to engage with the outreach team and area currently on the path to stable housing
 - ❖ 9 apartment lease-ups
 - ❖ 3 engaging in housing-focused case management
 - ❖ 2 refusing housing services

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Key Lessons Learned

- **Enhanced outreach staffing** – High Staff to client ratio for encampments allowed for more intensive engagement, thereby fostering staff relationships with more difficult clients.
- **Less housing barriers** – For C.A.R.E. upfront housing, clients were able to bypass some Local Rent Subsidy Program requirements (e.g., documentation, criminal background checks, DCHA LRSP approval/inspection, and paperwork for landlords) which increased the speed of the lease up process for pilot participants.
- **Vital document support** – The support by DMHHS to access DC one cards for residents proved critical in acquiring the necessary documentation for housing.
- **PEP-V and Bridge Housing** – Offering temporary sites at hotels and/or bridge housing options (such as Girard and Valley Place) accelerated movement out of encampments for people accepting temporary alternatives to encampments. Those who were not willing to accept emergency shelter were generally willing to accept PEP-V. This capability must be expanded to ensure future success.
- **DPW Assistance** – The DPW weekly site engagements conducted via scheduled bulk trash clearings, consistent trash maintenance, and regular removal of bio-hazards proved paramount in mitigating the overall health and safety risks at each location.

Concerns And Possible Solutions From DHS And Outreach Providers

Concerns	DHS' Solutions	Providers' Solutions
Encampment outreach teams have limited capacity to support and engage residents at encampment sites, the housing navigation phases, and provide housing stability support for housed residents.	Refer clients to a Community Services Agency (CSA) for behavioral health services and leverage Community Support or other service eligibility for clients in housing to provide community-based supports in housing and make referrals for other service needs.	PSH case managers should mirror the caseload ratios and expectations of the DHS PSH Program. Dedicated landlord engagement staff needed to focus on recruiting landlords to this unfamiliar rental assistance program and manage issues that arise with rental payments and client transitions from CARE-style rental assistance to mainstream PSH/other rental assistance programs.
The terms of the housing subsidies for the CARE pilot are different and less familiar than other programs in the homeless services continuum. Therefore, providers relied largely on landlords with whom they have trusted relationships or could recruit to be part of a pilot. This is probably unsustainable at a larger scale.	Match clients to housing interventions that they are eligible for and access housing units through the current process.	Ceasing the upfront housing of the CARE pilot would eliminate this concern. Scale and prioritize landlord recruitment efforts for housing encampment residents – DHS has internal housing navigators and there is a long-term effort to build a central unit repository through DHS/TCP/ICH Housing Solutions Committee. Do special pushes like the Home for the Holidays and make sure encampment residents matched to housing have a ready list of units to choose from.

Concerns And Possible Solutions From DHS And Outreach Providers (continued)

Concerns	DHS' Solutions	Providers' Solutions
The CARE Pilot has the potential to disrupt pre-existing housing systems, especially the District of Columbia Coordinate Assessment and Housing Placement (CAHP) prioritization system. This could violate existing community consensus on prioritization and create feelings of unfairness in the homeless services community.	Enhance collaboration within the CAHP prioritization system to avoid negative dynamics and unintended consequences of dedicating housing specifically to encampments.	Enhance collaboration within the CAHP prioritization system to avoid negative dynamics and unintended consequences of dedicating housing specifically to encampments.
Many residents living in encampments are new to the District and lack documentation. Prioritizing any housing subsidy for some is taking away resources available for long time DC residents experiencing homelessness who should be prioritized.	If someone does not meet CHAP prioritization for a housing subsidy/voucher, DHS will connect unhoused residents to Project Reconnect instead.	Get rid of the by name list, cease the upfront housing portion of the CARE pilot, and continue to engage encamped clients regarding services and housing as everyone else. Link clients directly to existing housing resources (PSH, RRH-I, TAH, etc) and make housing process move faster through fixing LRSP self-certification, landlord engagement at city level, flexible funds, or use DHS Local PSHP.

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Options For Consideration

Option 1: End the pilot program and return to the status quo housing lease-up process

Option 2: Expand the pilot citywide but remove the upfront housing resources and improve the assertive engagement model to encamped individuals

Option 3: Expand the pilot program citywide with the upfront housing component and continue to operate it separate from the existing housing lease-up process

Option 4: Expand the pilot citywide but create a list of criteria to guide prioritization of encampment sites for housing services to avoid problems of limited bandwidth and scale with outreach and case management

Advantages And Disadvantages For Option 1

Option 1	Advantages	Disadvantages
End the pilot program and return to the status quo housing lease-up process	<p>Preserves the integrity of the CAHP prioritization system</p> <p>Decreases the likelihood of incentivizing others to erect or move to encampments to access housing faster. This was NOT a major problem during the pilot program</p> <p>Less strain on outreach providers to perform PSH-like responsibilities</p> <p>Outreach teams will no longer feel conflicted prioritizing individuals in the program over those who live in shelters</p>	<p>Encampment clearings will happen at a slower pace with the loss of upfront housing benefits</p> <p>Does not expeditiously address the proliferation of encampments in the District</p> <p>Does not alleviate the concerns residents and businesses have regarding the optics of encampments, public health risks, and criminal activity that frequently occur at or around encampments</p>

Advantages And Disadvantages For Option 2

Option 2	Advantages	Disadvantages
Expand the pilot citywide but remove the “upfront housing” resources and improve the assertive engagement model to encamped individuals.	<p>Preserves the integrity of the CAHP prioritization system.</p> <p>Decreases the likelihood of incentivizing others to erect or move to encampments to access housing faster. NOT a major problem with the Pilot</p> <p>Puts less strain on outreach providers to perform PSH-like responsibilities</p> <p>Outreach teams will no longer feel conflicted prioritizing individuals in encampments over persons who reside in shelters</p> <p>Allows PSH providers to utilize their resources and skills to extend housing to residents as quickly as possible</p> <p>Landlords may be far more willing to accept DHS Local PSH than a Care Pilot temporary rental subsidy and thus transitions to LRSP vouchers would remain effective</p>	<p>Ends the upfront housing benefits to getting encamped individuals into apartments more quickly.</p> <p>Encampment clearings will happen at a slower pace, though perhaps not as slow as the current citywide process</p> <p>PSH providers will need to have the case management staff available to accept assignments</p> <p>Barriers to quickly lease individuals remain despite progress made regarding resident self-attestations</p> <p>Affordable housing stock remains limited and identifying willing landlords is a concern</p>

Advantages And Disadvantages For Option 3

Options 3	Advantages	Disadvantages
Expand the pilot program citywide and continue to operate it separate from the existing housing lease-up process	<p>Encamped individuals will move into units faster</p> <p>Community concerns regarding encampments (sanitation, crime, etc) will be more rapidly alleviated</p> <p>Reduces the public health and safety risk that residents currently face in encampments</p> <p>Uniquely addresses the issue of encampments in the city by utilizing a nationally recognized housing first approach</p>	<p>Disrupts the current CAHP prioritization process by adversely impacting the efforts of DHS to establish equitable access for all individuals experiencing homelessness through the CAHP process</p> <p>Could incent residents in shelters and on the street to erect or move to encampment sites to access an apartment faster, although this was NOT a major problem observed during the pilot.</p> <p>Affordable housing stock is limited and will be stressed by a citywide housing first approach</p> <p>Outreach teams are currently “stretched-thin” performing PSH-style case management once a client moves into housing.</p> <p>Continuing to operate the pilot in its current structure may discourage outreach providers from further supporting C.A.R.E.</p> <p>More bridge housing – possibly a purchased hotel – is need to make this strategy feasible.</p>

Option 4: Recommendation for Moving Forward

Option 4	Advantages	Disadvantages
Expand the pilot citywide but create a list of criteria to guide prioritization of encampment sites for housing services to avoid problems of limited bandwidth and scale with outreach and case management services	<p>This would continue the momentum created by the upfront housing model represented through C.A.R.E.</p> <p>If properly resourced, the data from the pilot indicate that persons who are living unhoused and in tented encampments will be moved into stable housing more expeditiously than under the current system</p> <p>More directly addresses the surging concern of District residents to “do something” to end encampments</p>	<p>The integrity of the CAHP prioritization system would not be preserved</p> <p>Outreach teams would not return to a sole focus on encampment engagement</p> <p>Increases the likelihood of incentivizing others to erect or move to encampments to access housing faster – though this was <i>NOT</i> a major problem observed in the Pilot.</p> <p>Landlords may be less willing to accept a C.A.R.E Pilot temporary rental subsidy over permanent LRSP vouchers</p> <p>Bridge housing option -- possibly a purchased hotel -- is needed to make this strategy feasible</p>