LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Partners,

Simply put, 2020 was one of the single most challenging years of our lifetime, regardless of our professions. Still, to be an emergency manager in 2020 was an endurance test unlike any other.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the longest Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Joint Information Center (JIC) activation in the Denver Office of Emergency Management’s (OEM) history. The City’s EOC and JIC team, with personnel from nearly every agency in the City, pulled together to guide the City’s response throughout. In alignment with public health protocols, we moved quickly to virtualize our EOC operations as we oversaw public health orders, implementation of continuity plans, procurement of supplies and equipment, donations management, and sheltering for persons experiencing homelessness. The size and scale of our emergency response was unlike anything the City had seen in decades, if ever.

In late May, the killing of George Floyd became a lightning rod for social justice and law enforcement reform around the country. The response was more than a week of protests and social unrest in Denver. The EOC, still activated for COVID-19, took on the additional challenge of managing a second emergency. The EOC coordinated the deployment of the Colorado National Guard, damage assessment, and debris management teams. The JIC worked around the clock to push public information and alerts to our residents and businesses.

Even when the EOC and JIC weren’t activated, Denver OEM was busy supporting the Long-Term Recovery Committee to guide the City’s economic and community recovery from COVID, kicking off the Securing The Cities grant program, supporting our metro area partners through the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) program, updating our Emergency Operations Plan, and holding training and exercises including our annual Continuity Tabletop Exercise and our first Integrated Planning and Preparedness Workshop. While social distancing protocols made conducting community preparedness outreach and education a challenge, we quickly adapted our programs to make them virtual and accessible. This included conducting classes in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language.

In 2021, we will begin the year with a new outlook and renewed hope for the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our first task will be to support the national rollout of the COVID vaccine and continue to position our community for recovery and return to a new normal. We will kick-off updates to our Hazard Mitigation Plan and our Continuity of Government plans, prepare our new alternate EOC, and continue to push forward in ensuring we address equity and accessibility in all that we do.

While 2020 was a year of unprecedented challenges, it validated our years of planning, training, and exercising to ensure we were ready to respond to whatever came our way. Finally, I’d like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to our Mayor, our dedicated and tireless Denver OEM team, and all the City and community partners that helped us through 2020 and have helped to build our program into what it is today.

Matthew Mueller
Executive Director
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SECTION 1: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 MISSION

Lead Denver’s emergency management efforts to cultivate safe, prepared, and resilient communities.

1.2 VISION

To become a National model in shaping and sustaining the culture of preparedness throughout the whole community.

1.3 OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HISTORY

The Denver Civil Defense Office, the forerunner to Denver OEM, was established by Mayor Quigg Newton in 1951 under the direction of George Berger with the intent of coordinating the City’s response and recovery to a nuclear attack. While the office continued to focus on preparations for a nuclear strike, including establishing a remote command center under the stage of the Red Rocks Amphitheater, it also began to broaden its focus to include responding to natural disasters. In 1973, the Civil Defense Office transitioned to become the Office of Emergency Preparedness with a focus on community preparedness, training, exercising, and maintaining the City’s alert and warning systems - such as the outdoor warning siren system and the metropolitan emergency telephone system. In 1996, the office was officially renamed the Office of Emergency Management, as it remains today.

1.4 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Denver OEM focused its 2020 efforts on three strategic priorities: 1) Strengthen City Emergency Preparedness, 2) Build Community Resilience, and 3) Expand Preparedness Partnerships. These priorities guided efforts throughout last year and formed the basis of Denver OEM’s five-year strategic plan that will be published in early 2021. This plan will further define how Denver OEM will implement these strategies over the next five years as Denver’s leader in emergency preparedness.

1.4.1 CITY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The goal to Strengthen City Emergency Preparedness highlights Denver OEM’s commitment to ensuring City government is ready for emergencies and disasters. Denver OEM worked tirelessly throughout 2020 to sustain an ongoing response to the pandemic and public unrest while ensuring the City was ready to manage any future threats. Denver OEM updated plans, conducted exercises, and acquired critical response equipment to build local capabilities. Disasters will occur and Denver OEM will ensure that Denver is ready.

1.4.2 BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Denver OEM’s second goal is to Build Community Resilience. The building blocks of a resilient community are Denver residents and in 2020 Denver OEM developed new and innovative methods to reach the Denver community with preparedness classes and resources to navigate COVID-19 and grow family preparedness.
for all hazards. OEM also continued to develop and implement strategies to mitigate hazards to the Denver community and encourage smart and resilient growth. By spreading disaster knowledge and resources, Denver OEM plays a key part role in building a strong Denver community that is resistant to disaster.

### 1.4.3 EXPAND PREPAREDNESS PARTNERSHIPS

The goal to Expand Preparedness Partnerships is based in Denver OEM’s desire to coordinate with public and private partners to facilitate a whole community approach to emergency management. Denver OEM manages multiple regional grants and participates in regional, state, and national workgroups aimed at building strong partnerships. In 2020, many of these partnerships were utilized during emergency response operations, and Denver OEM launched new initiatives to further develop multi-jurisdictional collaboration. As a regional leader, Denver OEM will continue to ensure our larger community comes together to collaboratively overcome disasters.

### 1.5 DENVER OEM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
1.6 BUDGET

Denver OEM manages an annual budget of more than $13,000,000, with the majority consisting of grant funds that Denver manages on behalf of the North Central Region. Denver OEM’s budget is primarily funded through multiple grant streams as well as the City and County’s General Fund.

The Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) continued its stewardship of the North Central Region’s homeland security grant program by managing and disseminating more than $10 million in expenditures to support the region’s ability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist incidents and other catastrophic events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2020 Financial Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding Source</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Fund - Operating</td>
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<td>General Fund - Personnel</td>
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<td>Urban Areas Security Initiative Grants (UASI)</td>
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<td>Securing the Cities Grant (STC)</td>
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<td>Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)</td>
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<td>Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program Grant (PDM)</td>
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<td>Cumulative Total of 2020 Active Funding</td>
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SECTION 2: STRENGTHEN CITY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

2.1 OPERATIONS

2.1.1 PROGRAM SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

The EOC and JIC are tasked by the Mayor to activate during large scale events and provide the strategic oversight and operational coordination necessary to assess, respond to, and recovery from any disaster or emergency that impacts the City and County of Denver. In 2020, during the early onset of the COVID pandemic, the City and County of Denver worked hard to virtualize much of the EOC to help promote social distancing. The EOC and JIC are staffed primarily by Agency Heads and Executive City Leadership. With a total of nearly 270 trained staff, spread across three shifts, the Denver EOC and JIC are able to sustain operations indefinitely to ensure completion of their mission: To Save the City. As of December 2020, the EOC logged the following activity for the year:

| EOC/JIC Activations in 2020 – Spanning nearly 4 months (combined) |
| 5 EOC/JIC Trainings in 2020 (Virtual) |
| 3 EOC/JIC Exercises in 2020 (Virtual) |

In 2020, Denver OEM heavily focused on procuring additional equipment and supplies to help improve the City’s readiness for an unplanned emergency. The additional supplies necessitated the buildout of the warehouse space to include high density storage systems and other security improvements to the warehouse building.

In total, Denver OEM deployed the following equipment in 2020:

- 25+ pallets of cots, covers, and blankets across multiple locations
- 6 pallets of personal hygiene kits
- 14 pallets of PPE and disinfectant products
- 6 portable generators and lighting towers
- 2 portable medical tents
- 8 portable heaters
- 1 mass warning trailer

The City’s Mass Notification system is hosted by Everbridge. In 2020, Denver OEM sent numerous Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) to the public, including communications about Denver’s Stay at Home Order during the COVID pandemic as well as curfew alerts during the social unrest over the summer. Additionally, Denver OEM helped coordinate multiple notifications to City employees about developing incidents and EOC activations. In total, OEM issued over 25 WEA messages and 15 City employee notifications.
The City’s Outdoor Warning System, which consists of 86 tornado sirens throughout the city and DEN airport, was maintained with regular replacement of batteries and radio equipment, an update to the alerting software, and an update to the system’s encryption. The portable mass warning trailer was utilized multiple times in 2020 by the Denver Police Department.

Denver OEM maintains a duty officer program to ensure all OEM Duty Officer staff have the training and equipment to support their assignments. As of December 2020, the DO program consisted of 9 trained Denver OEM staff who rotate on-call responsibilities on a weekly basis. As of December 31st, 2020, Denver OEM collectively received over 4,200 communications and notifications of developing incidents, events, or requests for assistance as reported by Denver Police, Denver Fire, Denver International Airport, Special Events, or the National Weather Service. In many of these instances, the Denver OEM Duty Officer took additional steps to monitor the situation and determine if further action was required. In 2020, The City requested Denver OEM to respond to multiple events, which included setting up multiple facilities to help decompress the shelter systems during COVID and cold weather events, coordination of the Convention Center buildout as a medical surge facility for COVID, assisting with the standup of the Pepsi Center for COVID testing, and responding to the Police Command Post for the George Floyd Protests over the summer.

2.1.2 EOC ACTIVATIONS

Last year tested Denver’s emergency preparedness like never before. Thanks to Denver’s investment in emergency management programs, the City was able to rise to these challenges and meet the needs of the community.

Health officials detected the first case of COVID-19 in Denver on March 6, and this same day the Denver EOC activated to coordinate the City’s pandemic response. The EOC would remain activated until June 18 to meet community needs through the tireless efforts of OEM staff and EOC members from across City government. The EOC accomplished the following tasks and much more:

- Converted the National Western Center, Denver Coliseum, and other community sites to shelters serving thousands of Denverites experiencing homelessness.
- Opened the Pepsi Center testing site, which preformed over 118,000 COVID-19 tests.
- Supported state and federal agencies in converting the Colorado Convention Center into an alternate care site with a patient surge capacity of 2,000 patients.
- Provided over 1.3 million items of personal protective equipment (PPE) to internal and external COVID-19 response partners.
- Managed numerous emergency alerts and public information needs through the EOC’s Joint Information Center (JIC).
While simultaneously managing pandemic needs, the EOC supported the Denver Police Department’s response to major public unrest over the summer. The EOC obtained critical resources, assisted with multi-agency coordination, and provided public information assistance to ensure lives and property were protected. Denver OEM staff worked within Denver’s Police Command Post to facilitate a seamless connection to the EOC, and EOC staff worked late into the night supporting Police operations, only to return early in the morning to manage cleanup efforts and continue the COVID-19 response.

Denver OEM also worked with the Denver Election Division to develop emergency plans and contingencies to address potential threats to the November election. This effort included hosting a regional election security exercise and proactively reopening the EOC the day before the election. Denver’s election was successful and concluded without major incident.

Major emergency management needs persisted through the end of 2020. In December, Denver OEM reopened the JIC to support public information needs related to the COVID-19 vaccine and began planning to reopen the EOC in early 2021 to support vaccine distribution.

### 2.1.3 TRAINING AND EXERCISE

Denver OEM training and exercise activities were greatly reduced due to the pandemic in 2020.

Denver OEM held two exercises this year. On August 19, Denver OEM hosted a 4-hour EOC Section Chiefs Tabletop Exercise (TTX) focused on cyberattack impacts (42 participants). During the third week of September, Denver OEM hosted the Annual Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop (IPPW) (formerly known as the Training and Exercise Planning Workshop). Due to social distancing requirements, there were nine individual workshops held over the course of one week, each focused on a different priority core capability (~100 participants total).

On January 15, Denver OEM participated in the Regional Training and Exercise Planning Workshop (TEPW).

On June 29, Denver International Airport (DEN) held a virtual Part 139 Tabletop Exercise (TTX) (1 OEM staff). They also successfully held their Part 139 Full-Scale Exercise (FSE) in-person on September 2, while following strict public health measures to keep all participants safe (1 OEM staff). Finally, DEN virtually held their annual Integrated Preparedness Planning Working (IPPW) on December 15. The US Department of Homeland Security hosted a virtual TTX with Coors Field on September 9.

On February 12 and 13, Denver OEM hosted the G-0272: Alert and Warning course (10 participants). On February 11, Denver OEM delivered a local emergency management briefing to our partners at the U.S. Northern Command in the EOC. On March 5, Denver OEM held one in-person Denver Basic EOC Operations Course before the pandemic and the EOC was activated (28 participants). After the EOC demobilized in June, classroom training was virtualized onto the City’s Workday Learning platform. By October, almost 300 employees were assigned either the Denver Basic EOC Operations Course or the Denver Annual Basic EOC
Operations Refresher Course, which were required to be completed by December 31. Denver OEM also hosted 6 internal Duty Officer monthly training sessions throughout the year for the eight Duty Officers.

### 2.1.4 CONTINUITY & CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Citywide Continuity Program’s purpose is to facilitate the mitigation, prevention, response, and recovery of City services from disruptions through developing, maintaining, and expanding continuity of operations plans (COOPs) and the Continuity of Government (COG) plan. As outlined in the COG plan, the City should ensure internal City business processes, facilities, personnel, and other City resources are functional in order to continue to serve the citizens of Denver, regardless of the cause of a service disruption.

In 2020, Denver OEM facilitated 17 inter-agency continuity planning meetings and guided continuity preparedness efforts throughout the year in support of the March 3, June 30, and November 3 elections. Denver OEM also supported planning efforts and observed the Elections Division’s Tabletop Exercise for the General Election. Additionally, Denver OEM led the City’s COVID-19 Continuity and Workforce Protection Work Group, provided continuity recommendations to the Mayor’s Office Return To Work workgroup, and COVID-19 Workplace Coordinator program.

Finally, Denver OEM hosted continuity training for all continuity personnel within the City. This included conducting an annual Citywide Continuity Exercise with 105 participants across 26 agencies plus the Mayor’s Office, the Clerk & Recorder’s Office, Clerk & Recorder’s Election Division; Denver County Courts; City Council; Denver Housing Authority; and the Denver Public Libraries. To strengthen agency COOPs, Denver OEM developed a continuity focused tool in the City’s OneTrust software for ACCs. Denver OEM presented Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) with template to ACCs for correcting identified gaps in their COOPs through the annual executive approval process.

Denver OEM recognizes the intricacies of critical infrastructure resilience, supply chain resilience, private-public partnerships, and continuity of service concerns for both private and public sector entities. To ensure resilience of the City’s critical infrastructure, Denver OEM engaged in a number of efforts in 2020. Denver OEM identified and tiered critical infrastructure assets for the Colorado National Guard and Denver Police Department for the George Floyd Protests and November Election, hosted standing critical infrastructure partner calls with private sector and City agencies, and participated in CISA/FEMA hosted Critical Infrastructure and Key Resource partner calls. Finally, Denver OEM kicked off a critical infrastructure inventory and mapping project for the Denver urban area.

### 2.1.5 PLANNING

Denver OEM had an eventful year for both deliberative and crisis action planning. From March through May, the EOC produced 88 Action Plans comprising the citywide coordinated effort for response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition to ongoing response operations, Denver OEM supported the Long-term Recovery Committee in developing 14 recovery action plans and the Long-term Reopen and Recovery Strategy. Notably, Denver established the Equity Review to ensure all emergency planning addressed equitable response and distribution of resources for City residents and visitors.

Denver OEM developed a just-in-time damage assessment plan for the George Floyd Protests as well as an EOC action plan for the 2020 elections.
Despite the challenges throughout the year, Denver OEM conducted two Planning Committee, one Hazard Mitigation Committee, and two Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) virtual meetings in 2020. FEMA awarded Denver OEM grant funding to support the rewrite of its 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan and OEM continued to support agencies in the completion of citywide mitigation projects. Denver OEM also facilitated the City’s pursuit of applications in the inaugural year of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) FEMA grant program.

Finally, Denver OEM closed out the year with the annual update to the Emergency Operations Plan, including several new agencies, revised Executive Order 85 language, updated executive-level authorities for public health emergency protective actions, and information on expanded virtual EOC capabilities.

2.2 BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

2.2.1 COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

Denver OEM’s community outreach program, Denver Ready, is tasked with preparing all of Denver’s 716,000 residents (as stated in the 2020 Census projection) for emergencies. Denver Ready uses an all hazards approach, which focuses on capacities and capabilities critical to readiness, while leveraging the knowledge that already exists within the population.

All Denver OEM trainings and presentations are led by skilled emergency management professionals, including Outreach Trainers, and partner agency subject matter experts. By working with various partner agencies, the program is able to reach the whole community, which includes varied socio-economic levels, age ranges, cultural and language backgrounds, education levels, and physical abilities.

An example of reaching the whole community is the Emergency Preparedness in the Era of COVID-19 class for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Denver OEM hosted this class by partnering with the City’s Office of Sign Language Services. The instructors and curriculum for the course came from both partners at Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, as well as the Office of Sign Language Services. There were 16 participants spanning the hearing, partial-hearing, deaf, and mute demographics. Due to the COVID-19 response, this class was only held one time in 2020, after virtualization had been implemented in early Fall. In 2021, the hopes are hold this class once a quarter to keep the American Sign Language (ASL) community up to date with the most current information.

In 2020, the Denver Ready team focused on prioritizing equity by building out the Denver Listo program. The program staff translated all six of the regularly held outreach classes into Spanish. The outreach staff engaged 68 Denverites, which included the My City Academy with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) and the new Denver Listo programming. Despite not holding any classes from mid-March through end of August due to COVID-19, there were only 9 fewer participants than in 2019.
Overall in 2020, Denver OEM engaged the public at 48 different events, classes, presentations, and workshops: 7 of those being led in Spanish, and 1 for the ASL community. A total of 1,002 people were engaged between January and December.

In 2021, Denver Ready will be rolling out the Resilient Neighborhood Program, which endeavors to create Resilient Neighborhood Response Teams in 3-4 neighborhoods per month. The focus will be to expand partnerships with Denver Public Schools to bring preparedness curriculum into classrooms and to continue to focus on strategies and material that create equity in emergency preparedness for communities.

2.2.2 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNING

The Public Information and Warning (PIW) program manages the City and County of Denver OEM social media, traditional media, marketing presence, brand and the JIC during emergency activations. Social media pages are available twenty-four hours a day/seven days a week.

Denver OEM is very active on social media platforms, specifically Facebook and Twitter. Social Media updates focus on Community Preparedness classes and initiatives, incidents/warning updates, and overall City goals. These platforms provide essential communications to the public and encourage information flow for situational awareness. Denver OEM’s postings can be found on the office’s Facebook and Twitter pages by searching @DenverOEM. In the event of a significant incident, the post-incident information will also be posted to the Denvergov.org/DenverOEM website.

Denver has increased its participation in public outreach, as its essential to helping communities mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters. Denver OEM manages two warning systems that include the Outdoor Warning Siren System, consisting of 86 electromechanical sirens, and the WEA, which get tested on an annual basis.
Below are the 2020 usage stats for OEM Facebook and Twitter pages:

Twitter:

- **Tweets**: 39 tweets
- **Followers**: 6K followers
- **Engagement**: 143 engagements
- **Traffic**: 69 clicks

Facebook:

- **Posts**: 176 posts
- **Fans**: 1.3K fans
- **Engagement**: 47K engagements
- **Traffic**: 68 clicks
The Denver JIC is facility established as the central point of contact for news media and interest parties to coordinate incident information activities at the scene of the incident. The Denver JIC was activated the most in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and public unrest. With three shifts of 18 people and more than 15 agencies represented, this has been the most robust operation that the JIC has seen since being established. The JIC sent out more than 49 press releases and organized more than 15 press conferences.

2.3 EXPAND PREPAREDNESS PARTNERSHIPS

2.3.1 PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Finance and Administrative Team manages the administrative, finance, and grants management needs of OEM. This unit focuses on ensuring Denver OEM’s core financial, operational, and grant management services are aligned with the strategic plan and are provided elegantly, efficiently, and effectively to accomplish its mission to cultivate safe, prepared, and resilient Denver communities.

2.3.2 OEM GRANT PROGRAMS

Denver OEM’s operations are supported by the City’s general fund as well as several federal grant programs. In 2020, OEM successfully managed four grants used to strengthen the resiliency of the City and County of Denver.

Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG): This yearly grant, awarded from the State of Colorado, plays an important role in the implementation of the National Preparedness System by supporting the building, sustainment, and delivery of core capabilities essential to achieving the National Preparedness Goal of a secure and resilient Nation. In 2020, this grant supported essential activities for the City and County of Denver, including: the technology upgrades for the EOC, the upgraded software for the Continuity of Operations Plan for the entire City, the resources to develop an alternative EOC for the City, the hiring of the essential position of Planning Specialist for the Denver OEM team, and mass care supplies in preparations for emergency sheltering and support needs within the City.

Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI): The mission of this grant program is to sustain and improve regional capacity to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist incidents and catastrophic events with a nexus to terrorism. The individual projects of this program are designed to enhance public safety and security throughout the Denver Metro Area and its close partner agencies to achieve U.S. Department of Homeland Security goals and objectives. Denver OEM serves as the administrator of this grant, working with local, state, and federal subject matter experts to ensure the preparedness and response to any national risks in the Denver urban area. This grant awarded $2.6 million in support capabilities necessary to respond to terrorism. Several important project
awards were made to City agencies, including a mobile voting van for the Denver Elections Division, a training hazmat railcar for the Denver Fire Department, and equipment support for the Denver Police Bomb Squad.

**Securing the Cities (STC):** In March of 2020, Denver was awarded the Securing the Cities Grant program from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The purpose of STC Program is to build local capability to identify and intercept radiological and nuclear material before it can be used in a terrorist attack. This program does so by augmenting local resources with federal funding with the goal of detecting, deterring, and defending against terror attacks that use radioactive material. Working with public safety agencies, Denver STC will help them build an enduring radiological detection network that integrates with other counter-terrorism initiatives already in place, such as the Denver UASI program. In this award, Denver joined select group of cities, including San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, Phoenix, Atlanta, and the DC Region to develop a national and local safety net via equipment, training, and exercise. In support of Denver OEM, MOUs were established with five Principal Partners: Colorado State Patrol, Denver Department of Public Health and Environment, Denver Fire Department, Denver Health and Hospital Administration and Denver Police Department.

**Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM):** This grant award, from FEMA through the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, is focused on the development of an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan for the City and County of Denver that meets the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. This plan, developed over a two year period, will meet the most current FEMA Local Mitigation Plan Review Tool requirements and will be aligned with the State of Colorado Mitigation Plan.

### 2.4 2021 OUTLOOK

In 2021, Denver OEM will continue to focus on responding to and recovering from COVID-19. The EOC and JIC will support the implementation of vaccination clinics and recovery through the City’s Long Term Recovery Committee. Additionally, Denver OEM is excited to begin implementation of our new five year strategic plan that kicks off in 2021 and will lay the foundation of our program well into the future. As always, first and foremost, Denver OEM stands ready to support the City and our community in responding to any emergency that comes our way.