

Unsheltered Homelessness in Hollywood Is Down from January 2020 Levels

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Summary: A complete census of Hollywood and East Hollywood conducted on February 25, 2021 suggests that unsheltered homelessness has fallen in these communities by 11% and 15%, respectively, compared to the last LAHSA Point-In-Time (PIT) count. A 30% drop in individuals seen on the street drives this change (Figure 1), enough to reduce the number of identified persons and dwellings in about a third of census tracts. This trend holds in tracts assessed by professionals or volunteers and is larger than counting errors can account for. As such, a quantitative decline in unsheltered living should persist even if the average number of people living in tents or makeshift structures is updated. Data from the Coordinated Entry System will reveal whether homelessness has declined in toto, or if COVID-related initiatives reduced only the portion of people living unsheltered in Greater Hollywood.

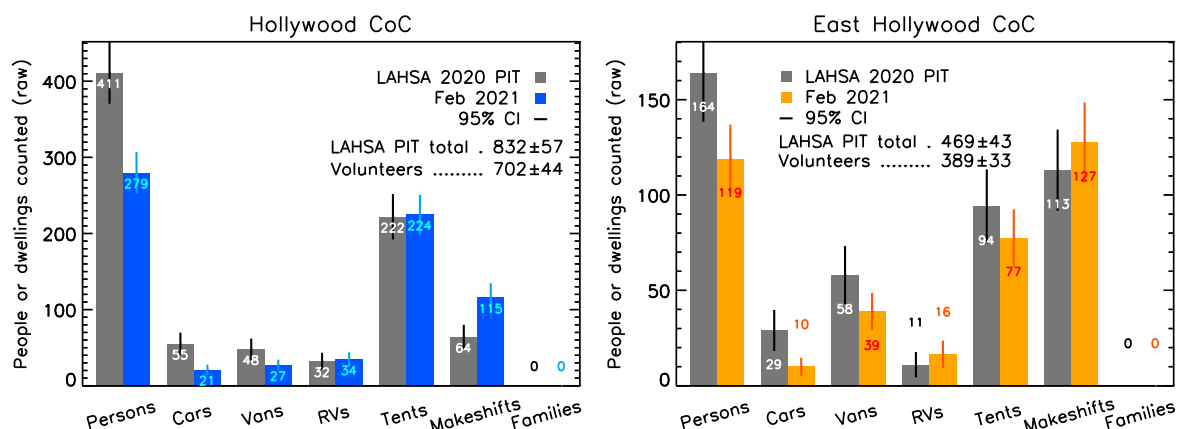


Figure 1: Raw tallies of unsheltered persons and dwellings in Hollywood and East Hollywood (left/right) from the 2020 and 2021 PIT counts (grey/colors). Persons, cars, and vans fell in both communities while RVs and tents stayed statistically flat. Makeshift structures are the only category to show a potential common increase. Overall, we identified 208 fewer people and dwellings compared to 2020, with similar 16% decreases assessed by almost entirely independent teams in both communities. “Persons” are TAY+Adults.

Table 1: Greater Hollywood Unsheltered Data and Population Estimates

	Adult	TAY	Car	Van	RV	Tent	Makeshift	2021 Total	2020 Total	Difference
Hollywood										
Counts	277	2	21	27	34	224	115	702	831	–15%
Inhabitants	277 (27)	2 (5)	32 (11)	49 (13)	50 (14)	332 (29)	195 (24)	937 (93)	1058	–11% (9%)
Category share	30% (3%)	0% (0%)	3% (1%)	5% (1%)	5% (1%)	35% (3%)	21% (3%)	–	–	–
East Hollywood										
Counts	114	4	10	39	16	77	127	389	469	–17%
Inhabitants	114 (19)	4 (4)	15 (8)	70 (15)	24 (9)	115 (19)	216 (23)	557 (83)	656	–15% (12%)
Category share	20% (3%)	1% (1%)	3% (1%)	13% (3%)	4% (2%)	20% (3%)	39% (4%)	–	–	–

Parentheses denote 90% uncertainties. Uncertainties larger than estimates imply that only upper limits are available. No unaccompanied minors or families were observed.

Context: Government, nonprofit, and volunteer organizations in Hollywood—*The Center at Blessed Sacrament, The Central Hollywood Neighborhood Council, Covenant House, Hang Out Do Good, Hollywood4WRD,*

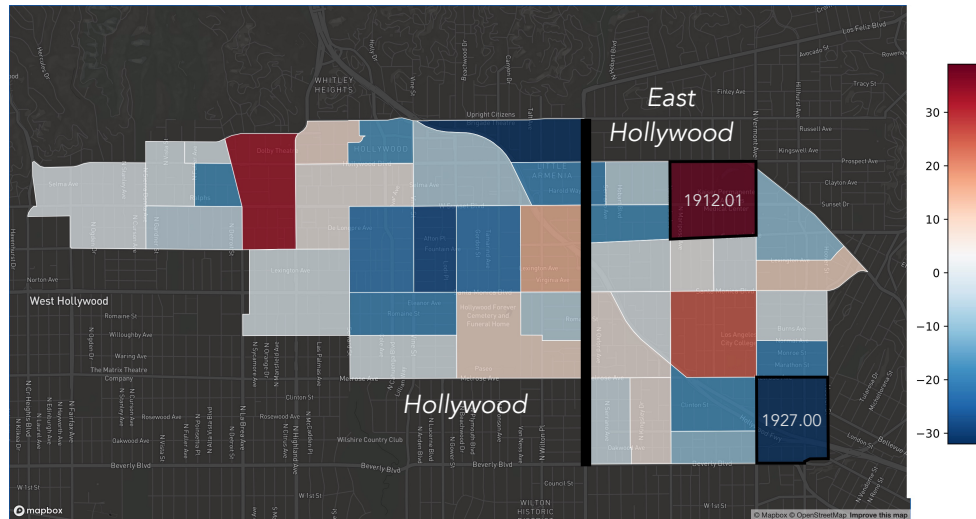


Figure 2: The Greater Hollywood PIT survey area with census tracts colored by inferred changes in total unsheltered population from 2020 (red+, blue–). Hollywood (21 tracts) spans Crescent Heights/Franklin to Western/Melrose; East Hollywood (18 tracts) spans Hollywood/Western to Hoover/Beverly. East Hollywood saw to the largest tract-level changes, with 1912.01 (NE box, volunteer-tallied) rising by 40 people and 1927.00 (SE box, pro-tallied) falling by over 120 people. Subsequent cross-checks support both tracts’ PIT counts.

My Friend’s Place, and various resident organizers—conducted a PIT enumeration of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to compensate for the [cancellation](#) of the official 2021 Count. All 39 US Census tracts in the LAHSA-recognized Hollywood and East Hollywood communities were surveyed on 25 February (Figure 2). Nine tracts were counted by professional outreach teams during the day. The remainder were surveyed by car-based volunteer teams beginning at 7:00 PM.

Each volunteer team was assigned two tracts in one of the communities. Given high turnout, each tract was surveyed by at least two teams, increasing the accuracy of the count. Tracts surveyed by professionals were counted only once. No volunteer teams and only one professional team counted tracts in both communities, making the two datasets almost entirely independent.

Year-on-year trends are consistent across communities and between volunteer- and professional-counted tracts. Six tracts saw significant population increases and 14 saw declines. The tracts with the largest increase (1912.01) and decrease (1927.00) are both in East Hollywood.

Results and uncertainties: The population inferences in Table 1 reflect 10,000 Monte Carlo resamplings of the survey data with counts perturbed randomly by their uncertainties. Counts for cars, vans, RVs, tents, and makeshift dwellings (CVRTM) were additionally boosted by the relevant mean occupancy weights perturbed by their own uncertainties. The baseline case adopts the 2020 [SPA4/CD13 CVRTM weights](#) underpinning the latest official Hollywood and East Hollywood [Community Summaries](#), from which we also draw 2020’s person and CVRTM raw tallies. Those inferences yield 936 ± 92 and 556 ± 83 people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, respectively (90% CI). Modifying the weights to their 2020 [SPA4-wide](#) values or using data from in-person surveys of tent-dwellers in Hollywood has no significant effect.¹ All estimates suggest at least a 93% chance of a decline compared to the 2020 PIT count.

Nevertheless, the CVRTM weights are systematic uncertainties. If, on average, more people today live

¹Respectively, those inferences suggest 912 ± 68 and 944 ± 118 people in Hollywood, and 539 ± 59 and 559 ± 87 in East Hollywood, consistent with baseline results.

in each tent or makeshift structure compared to last year, then some of our inferred population decline would be artificial. However, the drop in unweighted counts is such that the occupancy increases needed to erase our estimated changes are substantial. All else being equal, the *average* tent would need to shelter 2 people in Hollywood and 2.8 people in East Hollywood vs. 1.5 people in 2020. The average makeshift structure would need to shelter 2.7 and 2.5 people, respectively, vs. 1.7 people a year ago. Such 30%–90% increases in *mean* occupancies seem unlikely given known COVID-related tent distribution efforts pushing in the opposite direction, and a 28 Feb. tent survey yielding a weight consistent with 2020’s value.²

Multiple cross-checks suggest that the raw counts from our 2021 PIT enumeration are accurate:

1. Comparisons of the count’s 37 duplicate tract measurements suggest per-tract and per-category counting uncertainties are consistent with the random errors built into the analysis.
2. External data from [The Hollywood Partnership](#) from 19 Feb. are consistent with both our PIT count in a common tract (1902.02) and an independent recount of that entire geography performed 28 Feb.
3. Tracts counted by volunteer and professional teams show consistent trends.
4. Counts in Hollywood and East Hollywood show consistent trends.
5. A 27 Feb. recount of tract 1912.01 in East Hollywood conducted as part of a [SELAH](#) monitoring campaign agrees with our PIT value.

All of the above suggests that our results are both quantitatively and qualitatively reliable.

Comments: The decline we find is largely driven by a ~30% drop in observed unsheltered individuals in both Hollywood and East Hollywood. This reduction may be partially attributable to government initiatives aimed at moving people indoors (Project Roomkey) and staunching inflow into homelessness (eviction moratoria). Examining Project Roomkey, [CD13’s share of LA County’s total unsheltered senior population](#) (6.5%) implies that perhaps 100 of its [1608 occupied rooms](#) were filled with Greater Hollywood residents on the night of the PIT count—enough to account for about half the inferred change. The opening of at least one *A Bridge Home* site in Los Feliz—whose catchment area includes Hollywood—may also have contributed, as might the opening of 120 permanent supportive housing units by PATH in May 2020 in tract 1927.00. While all of the latter rooms did not go to local unhoused residents, some may have, thus helping drive that tract’s large observed decrease.

Data from the Coordinated Entry System should constrain the above possibilities, revealing whether homelessness writ large has fallen since 2020, or just the unsheltered share in Greater Hollywood.

If the numbers have fallen, however, conditions for those left on the street have also degraded due to COVID-related closures of restaurants and other facilities providing basic support to unhoused people (food, hygiene). Reduced sanitation activity and access to mental health and drug treatment centers (**VERIFY**) have only exacerbated those challenges. Hence, while these data may support the efficacy of programs designed to reduce street homelessness, they do not suggest that the state of homelessness in Greater Hollywood has improved. In the fight to rebuild lives—as well as build homes—that fact cannot be forgotten.

²The T and M weights are the largest potential error sources in this analysis due to the high proportion of people living in tents and makeshift structures. While the full 2021 PIT area has not been assessed, SELAH outreach teams surveyed 47 tents (38 responses) in Hollywood on 28 Feb., yielding a mean occupancy of $T = 1.39 \pm 0.14$ people per tent ($T = 1.50 \pm 0.22$ when non-responses are modeled). Although M was not estimated, that T value is consistent with the official 2020 weight of $T = 1.48 \pm 0.11$. We encourage more robust efforts to update the CVRTM weights.