

Unsheltered Homelessness in Hollywood Is Down from January 2020 Levels

Louis Abramson, PhD, and Brian Kohan for the *Hollywood4WRD Coalition*

March 7, 2021 -- NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

Summary: A February 25, 2021 census of Hollywood and East Hollywood suggests that unsheltered homelessness has fallen in those communities by 11% and 15%, respectively, compared to the 2020 LAHSA Point-In-Time (PIT) count. A 30% drop in individuals seen on the street drives this change (Figure 1), reducing the number of identified persons and dwellings in about a third of census tracts. Unsheltered living is thus likely to have declined quantitatively even if the average number of people living, e.g., in tents is updated. **Simultaneously, however, 13% of tracts saw at least a doubling in street dwellings. Combined with the salient side-effects of COVID-related reductions in health, hygiene, and social support services, this trend may contribute to accurate perceptions that the state of homelessness has worsened over the past year, albeit at reduced scale.** Coordinated Entry System data will reveal whether homelessness has declined in toto or if government initiatives reduced only the portion of people living unsheltered in Greater Hollywood.

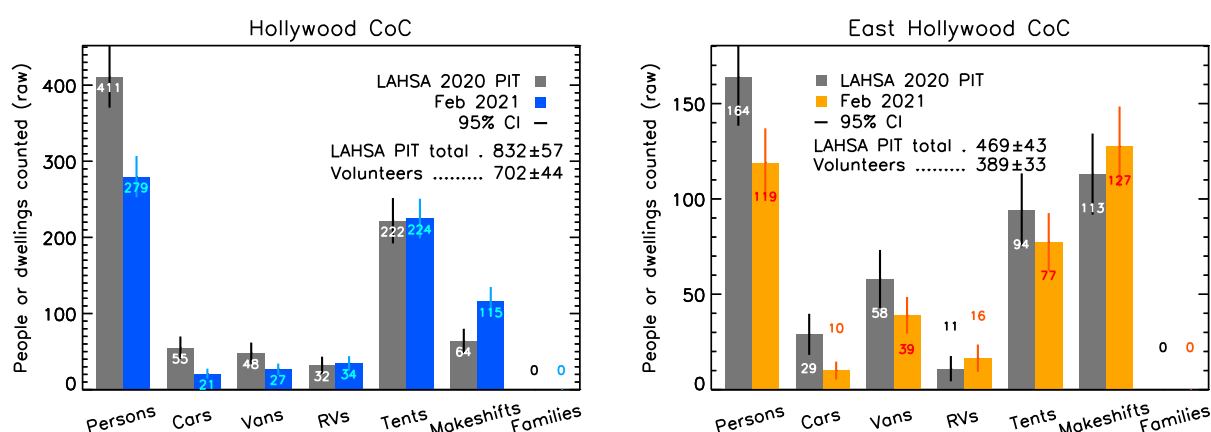


Figure 1: Raw tallies of unsheltered persons and dwellings in Hollywood and East Hollywood (left/right) from the 2020 and 2021 PIT counts (grey/colors). Persons, cars, and vans fell in both communities while RVs and tents stayed statistically flat. Makeshift structures are the only category to show a 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 2021 PIT 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.

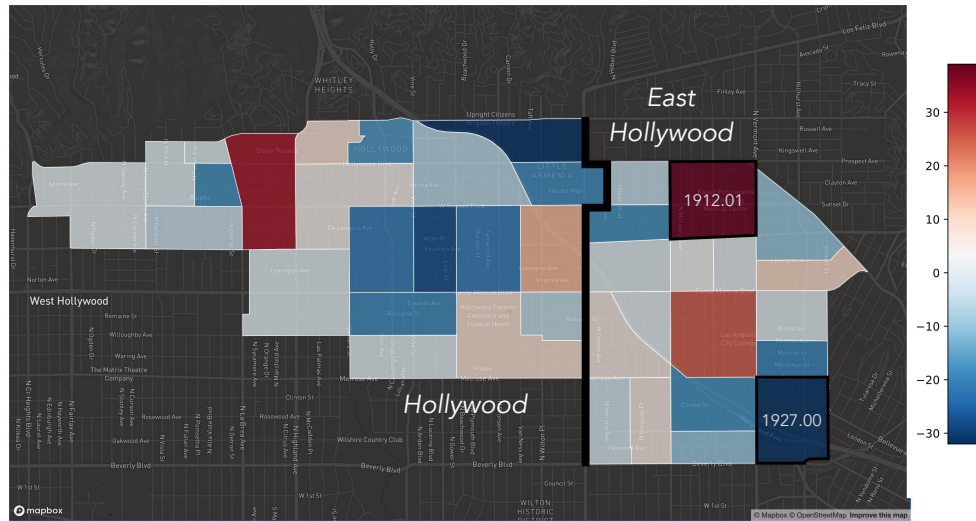


Figure 2: The Greater Hollywood PIT survey area with census tracts colored by inferred changes in total unsheltered population from 2020 (red+, blue–). Hollywood (21 tracts) spans Crescent Heights/Franklin to Western/Melrose; East Hollywood (18 tracts) spans Hollywood/Western to Hoover/Beverly. East 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.

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*, *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; Barnsdall Park) and decrease (1927.00; US Rte. 101) 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

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.

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 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

SAFE PARKING NUMBERS

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 **Five ABH’s cover Greater Hollywood, three have catchment areas covering 1927.00. Their net addition is 33 beds, total, but 89 in that tract (whose net gain is eroded by losses of preexisting beds from Schrader and Garnder in the west).**—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 proving basic support to unhoused people (food, hygiene). Reduced sanitation activity and access to mental health and drug treatment centers (**VERIFY, add overdose data**) have only exacerbated those challenges. Hence, while these data may support the efficacy

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.

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.

**VISUAL DISPLAY VS NUMBERS – SEE PEOPLE WHO’VE MOVED TO VALLEY RETURN-
ING TO HOLLYWOOD FOR SERVICES DURING THE DAY.**

DPSS closed; phone system with long waits req’d to replace EBT. If you don’t have a phone your stuck.

Libraries are closed, and therefore *The Source* service connection events. Daytime charity resources and some parks are closed, resulting in more exposure to the weather and less food.

Med-Cal not accessible via DPSS. Enrolling in health insurance requires similar phone calls and that a state ID be uploaded (previously not required). Lacking insurance affects likelihood and length of admission to hospital. Discharges requiring skilled or recuperative care placements are even more difficult.

DMV is by appointment only and appointments are made online.

DMH clinic services done via telehealth, leaving homeless clients hanging. One FSP has abandoned all field work due to COVID. Clients in crisis needing evaluations redirected to hospitals.

Hospitals, IMD’s step down facilities and SNF’s do not allow visitors, limiting the ability of case managers to negotiate with clients and social workers to ensure successful discharges. Consent forms for sharing info cannot be signed by patients due to lack of access.

Homeless people have gotten sicker while hospitals and LAFD have become overburdened dealing with COVID fallout, resulting in less access to emergency care.