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, since 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 (Figure 2). As this trend holds in tracts assessed by professionals or volunteers and is larger than counting errors can account for, 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.

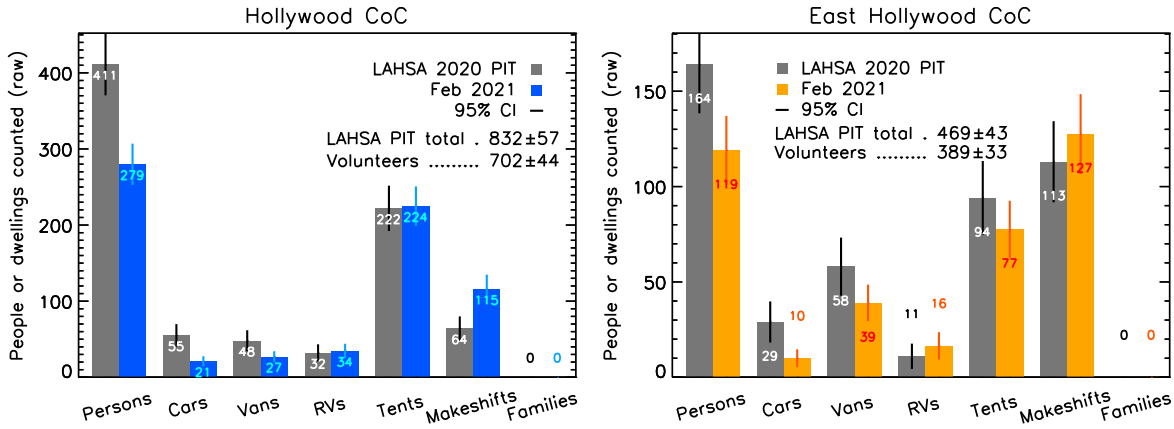

Figure 1: Raw tallies of unsheltered persons and dwellings in Hollywood (left) and E. Hollywood (right) from the 2020 (grey) and 2021 (colors) Point-In-Time counts. Persons, cars, and vans declined in both communities, RVs and tents remained statistically flat, with makeshift structures the lone category to show a potential common increase. These areas were surveyed almost entirely by independent teams.

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 95% uncertainties (binomial in the case of the categories). Uncertainties larger than estimates imply that only upper limits are available. No unaccompanied minors or families were observed; "Persons" are TAY+Adults.

Context: Government, nonprofit, and volunteer organizations in Hollywood—*The Central Hollywood Neighborhood Council*, *The Center at Blessed Sacrament*, *My Friend's Place*, *Hang Out Do Good*, *Hollywood4WRD*, *Covenant House*, and various resident organizers—conducted a PIT enumeration of people

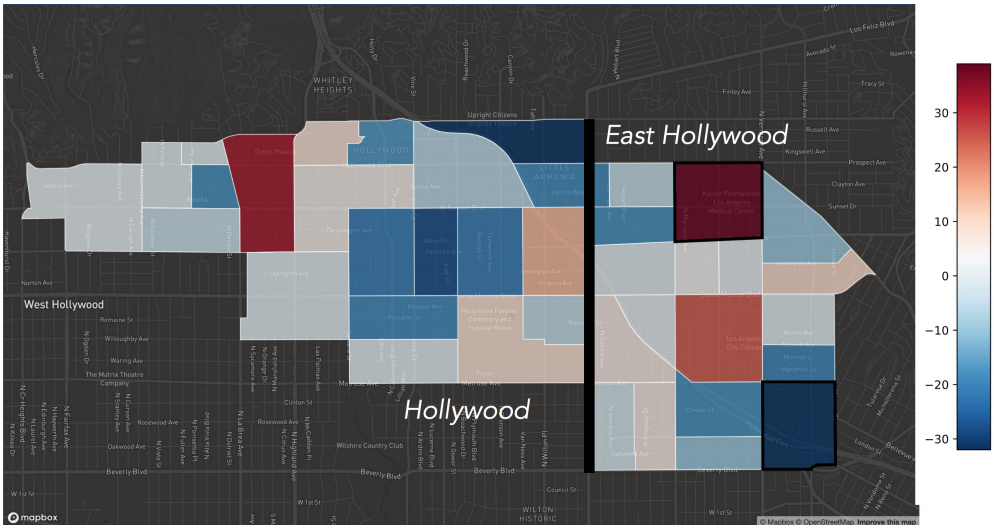

Figure 2: The Greater Hollywood PIT survey area with census tracts colored by inferred changes in total unsheltered population from 2020 (red+, blue−). Hollywood (21 tracts) spans Crescent Heights/Franklin to Western/Melrose; E. Hollywood (18 tracts) spans Hollywood/Western to Hoover/Beverly. E. Hollywood 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 of both tracts support the accuracy of their PIT counts.

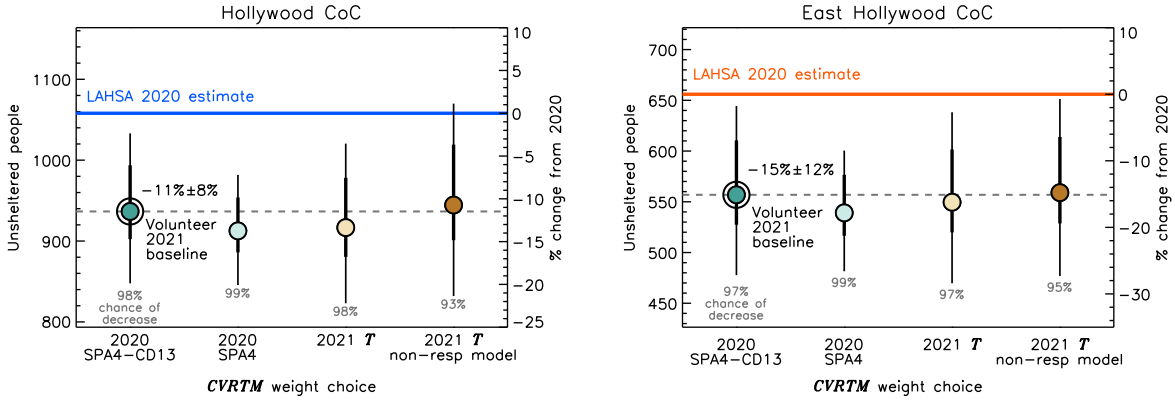

Figure 3: Unsheltered populations in Hollywood (left) and E. Hollywood (right) as functions of CVRTM weights. The baseline estimate uses the same weights as the 2020 LAHSA Community Summaries. Using SPA4 weights or replacing the tent weight, T, with results from a survey conducted in Hollywood yields consistent results. All imply at least a 93% chance that unsheltered homelessness has fallen by some amount, with likely declines of $12\% \pm 9\%$ and $15\% \pm 12\%$ in Hollywood and E. Hollywood, respectively.

experiencing unsheltered homelessness to compensate for the cancellation of the official 2021 LAHSA Count. All 39 US Census tracts in the LAHSA-recognized Hollywood and East Hollywood communities were surveyed on 25 February (Figure 2). Nine tracts—comprising ∼43% of identified individuals and dwellings—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 and enabling better error estimates. 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.

Annual trends are consistent across communities and between volunteer- and professional-counted tracts. Six tracts saw significant population increases; 14 saw declines. E. Hollywood harbors the tracts with both the largest increase (1912.01) and decrease (1927.00) since 2020.

Results and uncertainties: The population inferences in Table 1 and Figure 3 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—quoted in Table 1 and shown in teal in Figure 3—adopts the 2020 SPA4/CD13 CVRTM weights underpinning the latest official Hollywood and E. Hollywood Community Summaries, from which we also draw 2020 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 (Figure 3), and all estimates suggest at least a 93% chance of a decline compared to the 2020 Count.

Nevertheless, the CVRTM weights represent systematic uncertainties: underestimating them would bias our population estimates low and perhaps erode the declines we infer in both communities. While we encourage efforts to ascertain current CVRTM occupancies, the declines in unweighted counts are large enough that changes from 2020 must be substantial to bring our estimate in-line with last year's. All else being equal, the average tent would need to shelter (2.8) 2 people in (East) Hollywood vs. 1.5 people in 2020. The average makeshift structure would need to shelter (2.5) 2.7 people vs. 1.7 people in 2020. Notwithstanding a 28 February survey in Hollywood that yielded a tent weight consistent with the 2020 value, such 30%–90% increases in *mean* occupancies seem unlikely—especially since known COVID-related tent distributions by local providers should push in the opposite direction.[1]

Multiple cross-checks suggest that the raw counts from our 2021 PIT count 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 the 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 E. Hollywood show consistent trends.

5. Tracts monitored by SELAH since May 2020 show similar declines to that implied by our data. One of these tracts is 1912.01 in E. Hollywood, whose 27 Feb. SELAH estimate 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 $\sim$30% drop in observed unsheltered individuals in both Hollywood and E. 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

[1] Given the high proportion of people dwelling in tents and makeshift structures, the T and M weights are the largest potential error sources in this analysis. While surveys of the full 2021 PIT area have not been conducted, SELAH outreach teams surveyed of 47 tents (38 responses) in Hollywood on 28 February, yielding a mean occupancy of $T = 1.39 \pm 0.14$ people per tent, or $T = 1.50 \pm 0.22$ when non-responses are modeled. While M was not estimated, both T values are consistent with the official 2020 weight of $T = 1.48 \pm 0.11$.

on the night of the PIT count—enough to account for about half the inferred decline. The opening of at least one *A Bridge Home* in Los Feliz—whose catchment area includes Hollywood—may also have contributed, as may the opening of 120 permanent supportive housing units by PATH in May 2020 in tract 1927.00. While all of those 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 Hollywood.

If the numbers have fallen, however, COVID-related closures of restaurants and other facilities that provided life support to unhoused people (food, hygiene) have substantially degraded conditions for those left on the street. Reduced sanitation activities 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 Hollywood has improved. In the fight to rebuild lives—as well as build homes—such a fact cannot be forgotten.