

Unsheltered Homelessness in Hollywood Is Down from January 2020 Levels

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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 occupancy of, e.g., tents is updated. **However, 13% of tracts saw at least a doubling in street dwellings. This trend may contribute to qualitative perceptions that the state of homelessness has worsened over the past year, which—given real COVID-related reductions in health, hygiene, and social support services—are also likely to be accurate.** 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.

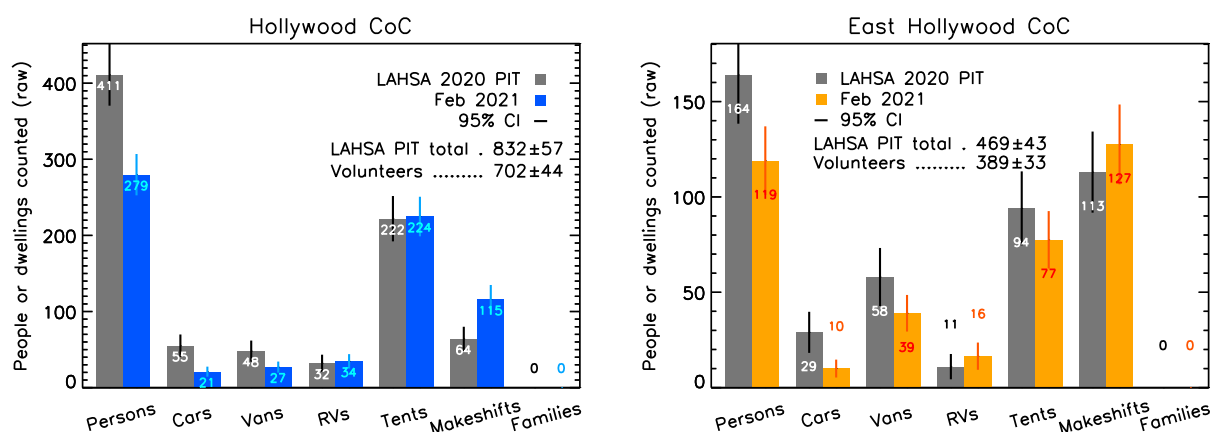


Figure 1: Raw tallies of unsheltered persons and dwellings in Hollywood and East Hollywood (left/right) from the 2020 and 2021 PIT counts (grey/colors). Persons, cars, and vans fell in both communities while RVs and tents stayed statistically flat. Makeshift structures are the only category to show a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

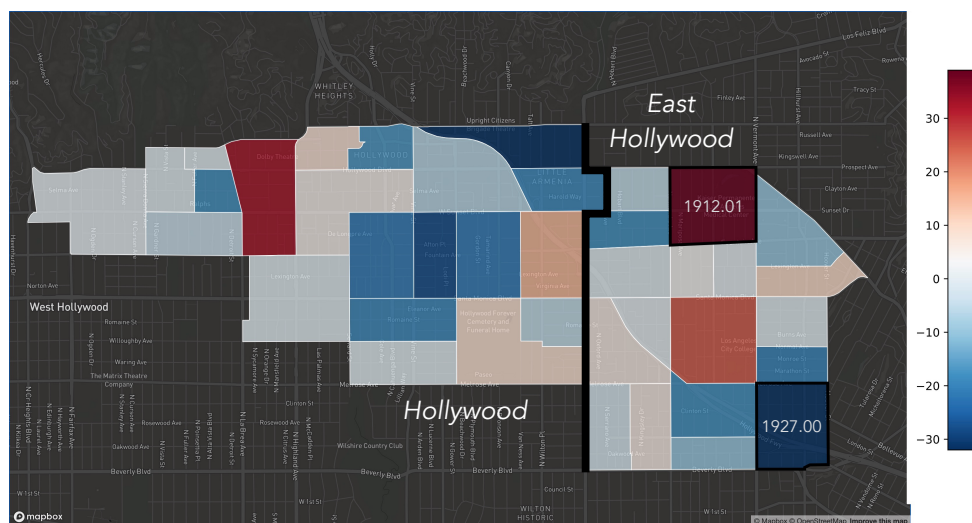


Figure 2: The Greater Hollywood PIT survey area with census tracts colored by inferred changes in total unsheltered population from 2020 (red+, blue–). Hollywood (21 tracts) spans Crescent Heights/Franklin to Western/Melrose; East Hollywood (18 tracts) spans Hollywood/Western to Hoover/Beverly. East 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*, *Hollywood 4WRD*, *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; 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 All estimates suggest at least a 93% chance of a decline compared to the 2020 PIT count.

¹Those inferences yield 912 ± 68 and 944 ± 118 people in Hollywood, and 539 ± 59 and 559 ± 87 in E. Hollywood, respectively.

Nevertheless, the CVRTM weights are systematic uncertainties: if the average tent or makeshift structure holds more people today compared to last year, then the inferred population decrease may be artificial. Given the drop in unweighted counts, however, those dwellings' *average* occupancies must have risen to 2.2 and 2.6 people from 1.5 and 1.7 people, respectively, to erase the decline. Such ~50% increases in the mean seem unlikely given known COVID-related tent distribution efforts—which push 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 our PIT count in a common tract (1902.02) and an independent recount of that entire geography performed 28 Feb.
3. Trends hold in tracts counted by volunteers and professionals in Hollywood and East Hollywood.
4. A 27 Feb. recount of tract 1912.01 in East Hollywood conducted as part of a SELAH monitoring campaign agrees with our PIT value.

Up to the number of vehicle dwellers in safe parking locations, the above suggests that our results are both quantitatively and qualitatively reliable.

Comments: A ~30% drop in unsheltered individuals in both Hollywood and East Hollywood drives the decline we find, for which government initiatives to move people indoors (Project Roomkey) and staunch inflow into homelessness (eviction moratoria) may be responsible. Indeed, CD13's share of LA County's *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 count—about half the inferred change. The opening of at least one *A Bridge Home* site in Los Feliz—whose catchment area includes Greater Hollywood—and 120 PATH permanent supportive housing units may also have contributed. The latter are located in tract 1927.00. While all of those units did not go to local residents, any that did would help drive that tract's large observed decrease. Coordinated Entry System data will constrain these possibilities.

However, to say nothing of the implications of the above for conditions following the repeal of the eviction moratoria, if there are fewer people on the street, their quality of life has degraded markedly. COVID has restricted or eliminated access to restaurant and park bathrooms, libraries (and so *The Source* service days), DPSS (EBT, Medi-Cal), DMV (ID replacement), and DMH facilities. Physical limitations on caseworker access to clients at hospitals and clinics has also hindered successful discharges. These qualitative harms are reflected by a 25% increase in *overdose deaths*, and visually amplified by a doubling of unsheltered dwellings in 13% of census tracts³ as enforcement of tent folding ordinances (LAMC 56.11) and City and State sanitation programs were simultaneously suspended or de-scoped. So, while the PIT 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 **must remain paramount**.

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.

³Including 1907.00, Central Hollywood's commercial core.