

Eagle Rock + Highland Park's Unsheltered Population Is Unchanged from 2020

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Summary: Volunteers surveying Eagle Rock and Highland Park on 29 April 2021 found a non-significant change in adults experiencing unsheltered homelessness compared to the 2020 LAHSA Count: $-3\% \pm 17\%$ (90% CI). A 20% decline in the number of identified rough sleepers was offset by an 83% increase in the number of tents and makeshift dwellings (Figure ??). This near-doubling of the most visually salient part of unsheltered living would support subjective impressions that the state of homelessness worsened despite the total population remaining statistically unchanged. Data from the Coordinated Entry System will reveal how changes in sheltered homelessness Eagle Rock and Highland Park's total unhoused population.

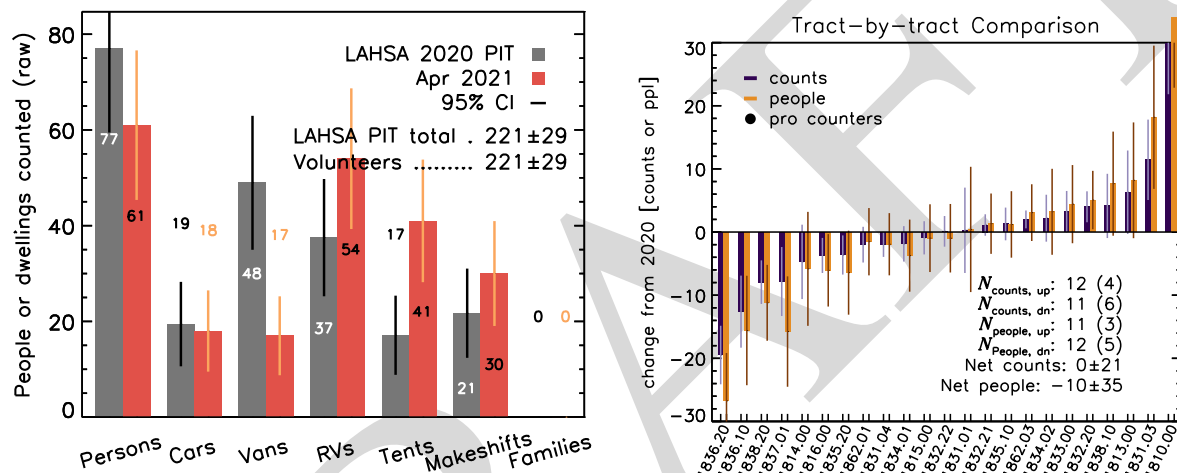
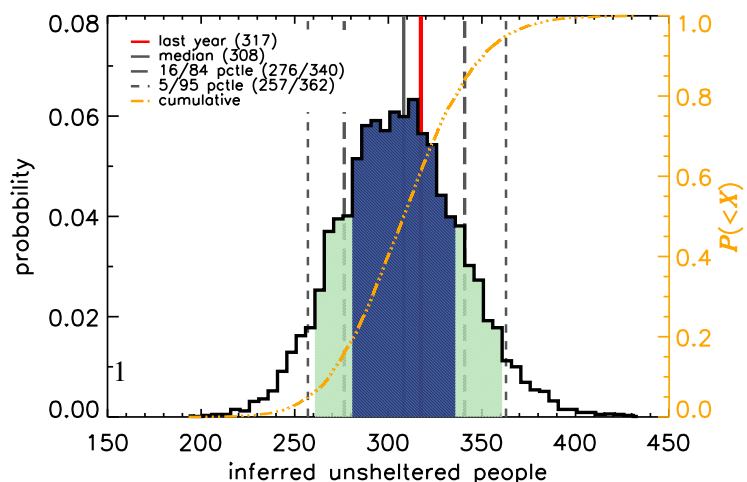


Figure 1: Left: total tallies of unsheltered persons + dwellings in Mid City West from the 2020 and 2021 PIT counts (grey/colors). Persons and RVs fell while tents and makeshift structures rose. Overall, the same number of people + dwellings were identified as in 2020. Right: tract-level results (see also Figure ??, Table ??). Six tracts added significantly more unsheltered people, 4 lost them (parentheses denote significant changes). Tract 2147.00 at Wilshire/Fairfax saw the largest drop (-13 people); 1920.01 along the Hollywood border saw the largest gain ($+20$).

Context: To compensate for the [cancellation](#) of the annual LAHSA Count, volunteers in Mid City West¹ conducted a grassroots vehicle-based enumeration of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in that community's 19 census tracts on April 29, 2021 (Figure ??, top). Surveying ran from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM.

Results: The population estimates in Tables ?? and ?? reflect all identified persons, cars, vans, RVs, tents, and makeshift structures with each dwelling weighted by its average occupancy. The weights were set as the area-weighted average of those in the LAHSA-defined [communities](#) of Fairfax (30%), Mid Wilshire (30%), and Beverly Grove

¹ERNIC, HHPNC



(40%) from which Mid City West is constituted. Results are unchanged if the SPA4/CD5 or SPA4-wide occupancies are used instead, or if the tent weight is updated based on a survey performed by *The People Concern*.²

Using Monte Carlo methods, Mid City West’s unsheltered population is inferred to be 277 people—17 people higher than 2020’s value. However, counting and weighting uncertainties lead to a 90% confidence interval of ± 38 people (Figure ??, bottom). The inferred 7% increase is therefore consistent with Mid City West’s true unsheltered population remaining the same as it was last year. (Indeed, there is a 22% chance that it decreased.)

Fourteen out of 19 total tracts were counted at least twice (Table ??). Comparisons of results from these independent surveys show visual tally errors to be random, as the analysis assumes. The count uncertainty is $\pm 10\%$ (95% CI), with the remainder of the $\pm 15\%$ total population margin of error due to ranges in dwelling occupancies.

Comments: The above results reflect a $\sim 20\%$ drop in the number of adult individuals seen on the street—mirroring trends in neighboring Hollywood—offset by a doubling in tents and makeshift structures. Government initiatives to stop evictions and move people indoors may be responsible. If CD5’s 3.4% share of LA County’s unsheltered seniors is an indication, 60 CD5 residents might have been in any of Project Roomkey’s 1770 active rooms on the night of the count, including those in the Orlando Hotel. Others may have been in Pan Pacific Park’s COVID-activated emergency beds. Coordinated Entry System data will show if the above scenarios are true.

While the number of people on the street may be unchanged, their quality of life has worsened.

COVID has restricted or eliminated access to restaurant bathrooms, libraries (*The Source*), DPSS (EBT, Medi-Cal), DMV (IDs), and DMH facilities. Physical limits on client access at hospitals has also kept caseworkers from managing successful discharges. These harms are reflected by a 33% increase in overdose deaths and made more visible by suspended tent folding and sanitation practices as tents increased. Of course, with no drop observed with them in place, a substantial rise in unsheltered homelessness is likely once the eviction moratoria lapse.

The data support the effectiveness of programs aimed at curbing a rise in street home-

Table 1: Census Tract-level Unsheltered Data

Tract	Counter	Passes	Unshelt. pop.	90% CI
1920.01	Vol	3	29	21–37
1920.02	Vol	2	13	5–20
1944.01	Vol	2	10	2–17
1944.02	Vol	2	16	8–23
1945.00	Vol	2	19	10–26
2140.00	Vol	2	19	11–27
2144.00	Vol	2	6	0–14
2145.01 ^a	Pro/Vol	2	24	15–31
2145.02 ^b	Vol	1	0	0–7
2145.03 ^b	Vol	1	0	0–7
2146.00	Vol	2	27	19–34
2147.00	Vol	1	12	3–19
2148.00	Vol	2	46	36–56
2149.01	Vol	3	4	0–11
2149.02	Vol	2	19	10–26
2151.01	Vol	1	7	0–14
2151.02	Vol	1	11	2–20
2162.00	Vol	2	10	2–18
2163.00	Vol	3	6	0–13

²Outreach teams assessed that 52 people occupied 39 surveyed tents in or around the Mid City West Community, yielding an estimated 1.33 ± 0.18 people per tent vs. LAHSA’s 2020 value of 1.49 ± 0.11 .

lessness. Yet, they do *not* suggest that the state of homelessness has improved. In the fight to rebuild lives as we build homes, that fact must remain paramount.

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