

Unsheltered Homelessness in Hollywood Is Down from January 2020 Levels

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March 16, 2021 -- NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

Summary: Volunteers surveyed all of Hollywood and East Hollywood on February 25, 2021, finding the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to have fallen in those communities by 10% and 15%, respectively, compared to the 2020 LAHSA Count. A 30% drop in individuals on the street—as opposed to dwellings—drives this change (Figure 1) even as tents doubled in 28% of census tracts. This phenomenon might drive subjective impressions that the state of homelessness has worsened. Given COVID-related contractions in health, hygiene, and social services, however, such perceptions may well be accurate despite a decline in raw numbers. Data from the Coordinated Entry System data will reveal if homelessness has dropped generally, or if government initiatives have reduced Greater Hollywood’s share of it.

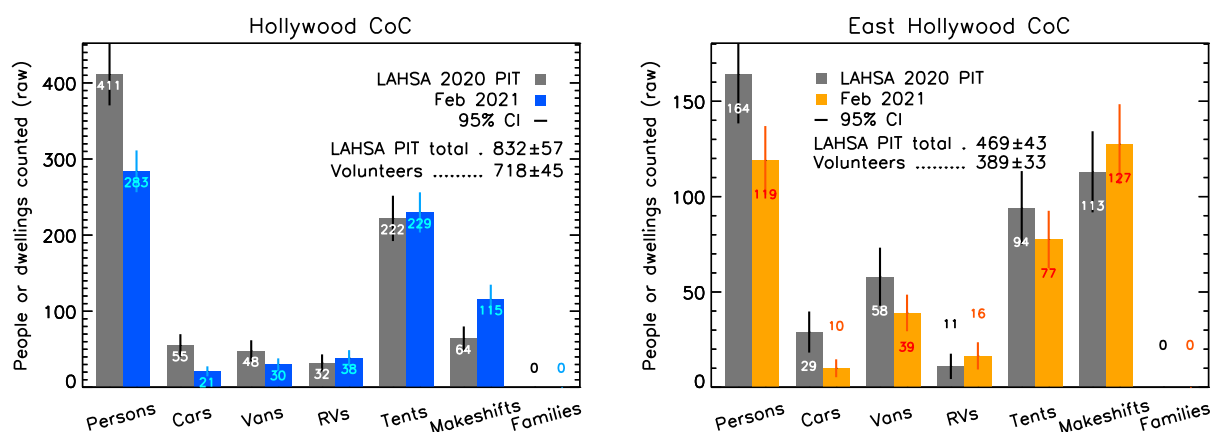


Figure 1: Raw tallies of unsheltered persons and dwellings in Hollywood and East Hollywood (left/right) from the 2020 and 2021 PIT counts (grey/colors). Persons, cars, and vans fell in both communities while RVs and tents stayed statistically flat. Makeshift structures are the only category to show a potential common increase. Overall, we identified 194 fewer people and dwellings compared to 2020, with similar 15% 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 | 282 | 2 | 21 | 30 | 38 | 230 | 116 | 718 | 831 | –14% |
| Inhabitants | 282 (28) | 2 (3) | 32 (11) | 54 (14) | 56 (14) | 339 (29) | 195 (24) | 957 (94) | 1058 | –10% (9%) |
| Category share | 29% (3%) | 0% (0%) | 3% (1%) | 6% (1%) | 6% (1%) | 35% (3%) | 20% (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 mean that only upper limits are available. No unaccompanied minors or families were observed.

Context: Government, nonprofit, and volunteer organizations in Hollywood¹ conducted a census of people

¹ *The Center at Blessed Sacrament, The Central Hollywood Neighborhood Council, Covenant House, Hang Out Do Good, Hollywood 4WRD, My Friend’s Place, and resident organizers.*

experiencing unsheltered homelessness on 25 Feb. to compensate for the [cancellation](#) of the 2021 LAHSA Count. All 40 census tracts in Hollywood and East Hollywood were surveyed mainly between 7:00 PM and 10:00 PM (Figure 2).

Each team surveyed two tracts. To increase accuracy, each tract was surveyed by at least two teams.

Results and checks: Table 1’s population estimates come from the count data with tallies for cars, vans, RVs, tents, and makeshift dwellings weighted by their average occupancy. Our baseline result uses the same [SPA4/CD13 weights](#) as the last official [Community Summaries](#). Changing weights based on a tent survey or using the last [SPA4-wide](#) values has no significant effect. All suggest at least an 89% chance of a decline compared to 2020.

Given the drop in unweighted counts, tents and makeshifts would have to shelter ~45% more people on average now to erase that decline. At least since 2018, such a large change has never been seen. The aforementioned tent survey—which showed a value consistent with 2020’s—makes it more unlikely.²

Other data suggest that our 2021 enumeration is accurate: (1) 38 duplicate tract measurements show counting uncertainties consistent with random errors, which the analysis accounts for; (2) [The Hollywood Partnership](#) found the same result for a common tract on 19 Feb.; (3) trends in Hollywood and East Hollywood agree despite being counted by different teams; (4) a [SELAH](#) recount of one East Hollywood tract on 27 Feb. agrees with our data. Finally, if 80 people who may have been at safe parking sites are added to our estimate, the chance of a decline from 2020 is still 88%.

Comments: The drop we find mainly reflects ~30% fewer lone adults seen on the street. Government initiatives to stop evictions and move people indoors and may be responsible. If [CD13’s 6.5% share of LA County’s unsheltered seniors](#) is an indication, perhaps 100 Greater Hollywood residents occupied Project Roomkey’s [1608 active rooms](#) on the night of our count—about half the inferred change. The new [Riverside A Bridge Home](#) and 120 PATH supportive housing units may also have contributed. Coordinated Entry System data will reveal if those scenarios are true.

If there are fewer people on the street, however, their quality of life is worse. 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 25% increase in [overdose deaths](#) and made more visible by [suspended](#) tent folding and sanitation practices as tents simultaneously doubled in 28% of tracts. Of course, the ~10% decline we infer does not bode well for the period [after the eviction moratoriums end](#).

If our data support the effectiveness of programs aimed at reducing street homelessness, they do *not* suggest that the state of homelessness has improved. In the fight to rebuild lives—as well as build homes—that fact must remain paramount.

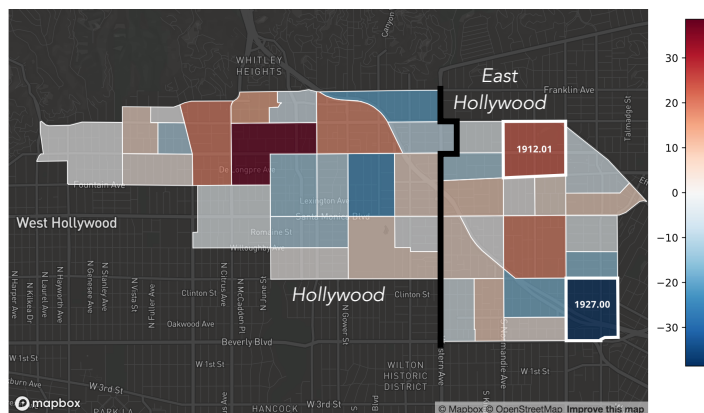


Figure 2: The count area with census tracts colored by changes in unsheltered population from 2020 (red+, blue–). Hollywood spans Crescent Heights/Franklin to Western/Melrose. East Hollywood spans Hollywood/Western to Hoover/Beverly and saw the largest changes: tract 1912.01 rose by 40 people and 1927.00 fell by over 120 people.

²SELAH outreach teams surveyed 47 tents in Hollywood on 28 Feb., finding an average of 1.50 ± 0.22 people per tent vs. LAHSA’s 2020 value of 1.48 ± 0.11 .