

Communication from Public

Name: Mike Bravo

Date Submitted: 07/21/2022 06:32 PM

Council File No: 20-1376-S1

Comments for Public Posting: As the hotter weather rolls in, unhoused folx will need shade and refuge even more, and of course all humans need access to basic facilities. These are mostly found in or by our public spaces like parks and libraries. Until city leadership can offer adequate shelter or housing to our unhoused population, we should stop displacing them in response to the complaints made by housed residents who also often happen to be beneficiaries of gentrification. That's no solution and shows no integrity or duty to humanity and our social responsibilities to our neighbors. Please do not expand an already harmful policy.

Communication from Public

Name: Caitlin Rich

Date Submitted: 07/21/2022 08:26 PM

Council File No: 20-1376-S1

Comments for Public Posting: 41.18 has proven to be a failed strategy. Since it's wildly irresponsible implementation, unhoused death rates have increased 22%. There are woefully insufficient services to support our unhoused neighbors, and the city is not providing them a safe, stable, or supportive alternative. To look at a failed policy and believe that it should be expanded is outrageous. Our community has suffered so much at the expense of this inhumane strategy. To inflict it on more and more places will only lead to increased death rates, especially when we are facing 100+ degree temperatures daily. The only option is to repeal 41.18 in its entirety and dedicate resources to actually support the people you claim to support.

Communication from Public

Name: Brendan Coates

Date Submitted: 07/21/2022 12:09 PM

Council File No: 20-1376-S1

Comments for Public Posting: Hi there, I'm a CD13 resident and I'd like to encourage everyone on City Council to vote no on the proposed expansion of 41.18. This law does nothing to address the causes of homelessness (which, the leading causes are the cost of housing and costs of medical care). Instead, this law punishes people for being poor by pushing them ever further to the margins of society, away from friends, family, and services. Since 41.18 was passed, deaths among unhoused Los Angeles residents have increased 22%. A vote for this expansion is a vote for the deaths of more unhoused people - people that this legislative body is supposed to protect. Don't vote for death! We want Services Not Sweeps! Homes Not Zones! Housekeys Not Handcuffs!

Communication from Public

Name: Matt Wait

Date Submitted: 07/21/2022 12:16 PM

Council File No: 20-1376-S1

Comments for Public Posting: How has 41.18d worked at all for unhoused people in our city? It hasn't. This was promised as a temporary trial solution, and with this expansion it is clear it is the ONLY tool the city is willing to invest in this solution. Please vote no on this failed policy.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 07/21/2022 01:10 PM

Council File No: 20-1376-S1

Comments for Public Posting: I am writing the Council to OPPOSE the expansion of to 41.18, vote NO on the proposed amendment, and to REPEAL 41.18. Since the passage of 41.18 a year ago, unhoused deaths have risen 25% according to LA County Medical Examiner-Coroner. The proposed amendment, with thousands of criminalized zones totalling at least 88 sq. miles--20% of the city--would worsen this. I cannot overstate the impact this would have on the already crumbling healthcare system at every level. Every kind of care will be affected in ways that the Council cannot foresee. Criminalizing unhoused people negatively affects everyone housed, every worker, our transportation infrastructure (highways, stations, busses, trains, cars are not built to be permanent housing), hospitals and clinics, and the acts of sitting, lying down, sleeping, and putting stuff down away from home--stuff everyone does on some level, including Council members. I really stress that 41.18 will not only affect those who cannot pay rent (which includes kids and dependents) but every renter and homeowner. It will restrict movement on a fundamental level and crush systems of care in a way that is truly horrific. Please OPPOSE the expansion of to 41.18, and VOTE NO on the proposed amendment. Please REPEAL 41.18. Thank you.

Communication from Public

Name: Jacob

Date Submitted: 07/21/2022 02:34 PM

Council File No: 20-1376-S1

Comments for Public Posting: You fucking fascists are waging a war against the most vulnerable people in this city. Despicable stuff. You're all going to hell you disgusting people.

Communication from Public

Name: Rick Garvey

Date Submitted: 07/21/2022 06:23 PM

Council File No: 20-1376-S1

Comments for Public Posting: Councilmembers, I urge you to vote NO on the expansion of 41.18. For over 20 years I have worked as a public policy researcher working with unhoused people living in parks and on sidewalks in Los Angeles. I have seen the City attempt to deal with the homelessness problem again and again by instituting ordinances that do nothing to deal with the root cause of the problem, a lack of housing. We simply do not have enough shelter or housing resources to place everyone. Clearing encampments without the adequate placement options results in displacement. This is a terrible policy and should not be expanded. When encampments are destroyed and unhoused people are moved, they are often harmed by being disconnected from services and providers. It especially harms people who are sick or disabled. In our recent RAND study, we found that the overwhelming majority of people wanted housing, and the main reason they were not currently housed was because they were never contacted by outreach workers for move-in. One reason for this is because they were forced to leave the area they were to meet the outreach worker and the housing slot went to someone else. This is a terrible policy and should not be expanded. Most unhoused people do want some type of housing option, but there is not enough to offer. Clearing encampments merely displaces most of the camp residents to another location. Some are disabled, sick and in need of care. We should have real housing solutions connected to our outreach services. And we should offer that before we just sweep people away. It is wrong. We need to do better. Kudos to Councilman Bonin for securing at least temporary housing placements ahead of the sweep of Ocean Font Walk last year, however the more recent sweep of the library resulted in over 80 removals and only 40 housing placements. The other 40 folks had to move further into the neighborhood and under the proposed expansion they would be subjected to harassment and citation. This is a terrible policy and should not be expanded. As the hotter weather rolls in, unhoused people will need shade and cool places even more, but they always need access to sanitary facilities. These are found in or by our parks and libraries. Until we can offer adequate shelter or housing to our unhoused population, we should stop displacing them in response to the complaints made by housed residents. That is no solution,

and it is not the humane thing to do. These are public spaces and should be open to all of us, both housed and unhoused. Thank you for your consideration. Rick Garvey, 234 Horizon #5, Venice, CA 90291

JASON M. WARD, RICK GARVEY, SARAH B. HUNTER

Recent Trends Among the Unsheltered in Three Los Angeles Neighborhoods

An Interim Report on the Los Angeles Longitudinal Enumeration and Demographic Survey (LA LEADS) Project

The overwhelming scope of homelessness ranks as the most serious problem facing Los Angeles among both voters (Hart Research Associates, 2021) and candidates seeking to replace outgoing mayor Eric Garcetti (Oreskes and Wick, 2021). The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic exacerbated the incidence of unsheltered individuals through a dramatic decline in shelter capacity and the cessation of activities aimed at reducing the risk of transmission, such as routine street and sidewalk sanitation. California's ambitious Project Room-key program, which aimed to place 15,000 vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness into underutilized hotel rooms, ultimately sheltered about 4,000 people in Los Angeles, and many individuals housed under this program returned to the streets, citing such factors as excessive rules and lack of privacy (Oreskes and Smith, 2021; Smith and Oreskes, 2020).

Through 2021 and into early 2022, there has been a deluge of policy actions related to the increase in unsheltered homelessness. In March 2021, city council member Mitch O'Farrell initiated the removal of more than 200 individuals living in Echo Park (Chiotakis, 2021; Oreskes, 2021). Despite the claim that all individuals were offered housing prior to a forcible cleanup and closure of the park, many individuals were dispersed to other areas (Smith, 2021). In April 2021, Judge David O. Carter, ruling in an ongoing lawsuit brought by residents and local businesses in the Skid Row neighborhood against the city and county of Los Angeles, ordered that offers of housing or shelter be provided to the dense population of unsheltered individuals living in the Skid Row area by mid-October 2021 (Williams, 2021). This order was later stayed by a federal appeals court, but the case is ongoing (Oreskes, Dolan, and Zahniser, 2021).

Over summer 2021, community opposition to encampments on the oceanfront walk in Venice led to a political tug of war between city council member Mike Bonin and Los Angeles County

KEY FINDINGS

- Between late September 2021 and January 2022, the total number of unsheltered people, vehicles, tents, and makeshift structures averaged 1,358 in Skid Row, 685 in Hollywood, and 523 in Venice. Across this period, the total number of individuals, vehicles, and makeshift structures across these three areas increased by around 17 percent.
- We conducted systematic random surveys of 216 unsheltered people in Hollywood, Skid Row, Venice, and “Veterans Row” during this same period. Around 90 percent of survey respondents indicated interest in receiving housing; nearly half reported being offered housing in the past, and one-third indicated that they were currently on a housing waitlist.
- Around 80 percent of respondents said that they would accept a private room in a shelter or hotel, a permanent stay in a motel- or hotel-like setting, or permanent supportive housing. About half would accept interim housing with access to services, shared housing, or safe camping. Less than one-third would accept a group shelter or a recovery or sober living housing offer.
- The most commonly reported factors that prevented respondents from moving into housing in the past were never being reached to complete the housing intake process (41 percent), privacy concerns (38 percent), and safety concerns (32 percent).
- Over 75 percent of respondents have been continuously homeless for over a year, and over 50 percent have been continuously homeless for more than three years. Over 75 percent of respondents have spent six months or longer living in the neighborhood where they were surveyed. The majority of respondents resided in Los Angeles County before their current location, and nearly 75 percent reported residing within California.
- The share of respondents identifying as Black/African American was 38 percent higher in our sample than in 2020 data from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, while the share of respondents identifying as Hispanic was 24 percent lower.

Abbreviations

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
LAHSA	Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority
LA LEADS	Los Angeles longitudinal enumeration and demographic survey
PIT	point in time
TAY	transition-aged youth
VA	Veterans Affairs

Sheriff Alex Villanueva (Tchekmedyian, Smith, and Rector, 2021), followed by a major and, thus far, largely successful effort to house more than 200 individuals (Oreskes and Molina, 2021).

Most recently, the Los Angeles City Council introduced an updated camping ban (city ordinance 41.18) that allows individual council members

to nominate locations satisfying a list of criteria (e.g., near a school, library, business entrance, or homeless shelter) to be off limits for camping once all individuals camping in the area have been provided with an offer of housing (Office of the City Clerk, 2021). Thus far, there has been significant variation in the utilization of this policy across city council districts (“City Council Enforces LA’s Anti-Camping Law at 58 Locations,” 2022).

One common thread affecting all of these actions has been an ongoing lack of accurate data on both the number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness and the housing needs and preferences of these individuals. Typically, policymakers and the public rely on annual data provided by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the agency responsible for conducting a point-in-time (PIT) census of Los Angeles County’s unhoused population.¹ The PIT count typically takes place each January and is accompanied by a demographic

survey, conducted between December and February each year, that is designed to help estimate specific characteristics of the population experiencing homelessness, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, length of homelessness, and disability status. These efforts result in a public report, published several months later, that provides estimates of the number of people experiencing homelessness across the county. Federal, state, and regional policymakers use these figures to make programmatic decisions about housing supports and related services.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual PIT count did not take place in 2021. As a result, there are no current estimates available on the number of people experiencing homelessness or on their characteristics.² In addition, the current structure of the annual PIT count and demographic survey leaves important knowledge gaps. First, even with annual PIT estimates, we know little about how these numbers may vary over the year depending on seasonal changes, such as inclement weather, the opening of winter shelters, or shifts in policies or enforcement activity. Second, the demographic survey does not include information about individuals' experiences with the county's housing provision infrastructure or individuals' housing needs and preferences.

To fill these and other knowledge gaps with evidence that can inform the development of effective homelessness policy, in September 2021, we began the Los Angeles Longitudinal Enumeration and Demographic Survey (LA LEADS) study, an ongoing project to enumerate and survey individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in selected areas of Los Angeles. We examined areas with historically high concentrations of street homelessness or increases in street encampments in recent years that have drawn the attention of policymakers, stakeholders, and the media: Hollywood, Skid Row, Venice, and "Veterans Row" (Lopez, 2021; Oreskes, Reyes, and Smith, 2021; Sisson, 2021). In addition, we systematically collected survey data, including demographics, past experiences with the housing system, and specific housing needs and preferences, from a subsample of individuals in these areas. This evidence can contribute to a better understanding of the nature of homelessness in Los Angeles and may inform policies and strate-

gies to most effectively allocate resources targeted at ending homelessness. We plan to conduct an additional round of survey data collection while continuing enumerations. At the end of the study, its full findings will be presented as a final report.

Study Geography

We selected a total of four study sites, which were chosen because of their policy relevance and past data availability. For three of the sites—Hollywood, Skid Row, and Venice—area-specific data tabulations are available from the 2020 LAHSA PIT count and demographic survey. After selecting these primary study sites, we settled on a specific geography for each area through a combination of input from service providers and site assessments by our field workers that identified potential boundaries that would encompass areas of significant current encampment activity. The specific area geographies are described in detail in Appendix A, and the four sites are as follows:

- **Skid Row**, a neighborhood with a footprint of approximately half of a square mile, has been the historical ground zero of homelessness in Los Angeles since at least the late 1920s (Sheeley et al., 2021).
- The **Venice** neighborhood witnessed dramatic growth in street encampments over the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and has been the subject of numerous political disputes and lawsuits about homelessness policy, including a failed campaign to recall city council member Mike Bonin (Reyes, 2019; Zahniser, 2022).
- **Hollywood** has witnessed a large increase in street encampments over the pandemic period. Prior to the January 2021 implementation of new city council districts, it had a unique within-neighborhood city council boundary that made it subject to the policy decisions of two city council members, Nithya Raman and Mitch O'Farrell, who had differing approaches to addressing homelessness, including regarding enforcement of the city's revised anti-camping ordinance (Deegan,

2021; Reyes, 2021). In addition, Hollywood 4WRD, a local advocacy group for people experiencing homelessness, conducted a thorough count of unsheltered individuals in Central and East Hollywood in summer 2021 (Abramson et al., 2021).³

- The “**Veterans Row**” encampment along San Vicente Boulevard in front of the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs (VA) campus has been characterized by varying levels of activity prior to the pandemic, but its population grew during the pandemic. The encampment has recently become the focus of criticism related to underuse of the vast area of land controlled by the VA and the failures of the VA to effectively deploy resources aimed at housing veterans experiencing homelessness (Braslow, 2020). We did not originally plan to include Veterans Row, but when we became aware of a planned outreach effort aimed at clearing this site through a combination of offers of housing and safe camping inside the West Los Angeles VA campus (Solis, 2021), we opted to include this site by conducting two enumerations in October in the three weeks leading up to the outreach effort. We adminis-

tered surveys on the second visit. We opted to include the relatively small number of survey responses from the site ($n = 12$) in the total tabulations in this report but left site-specific enumeration results and survey tabulations to the appendixes.

Enumeration Study Methodology

We conducted counts roughly every two weeks in Skid Row and monthly in Hollywood and Venice.⁴ We alternated the timing of the counts between early morning hours (approximately 6 to 9 a.m.) and nighttime hours (approximately 9 p.m. to 12 a.m.) to determine whether there was any significant variation depending on the time of day. We also varied the days of the week and the time of the month of each count to ensure that we were not capturing variations based on those features. In addition, for each site visit, we varied the starting location and direction of movement of our survey teams to ensure that our counts were not influenced by any systematic patterns of daily migration, such as individuals waking up and moving to an area meal service at the same time each day. Further details about our enumeration methodology can be found in Appendix B.

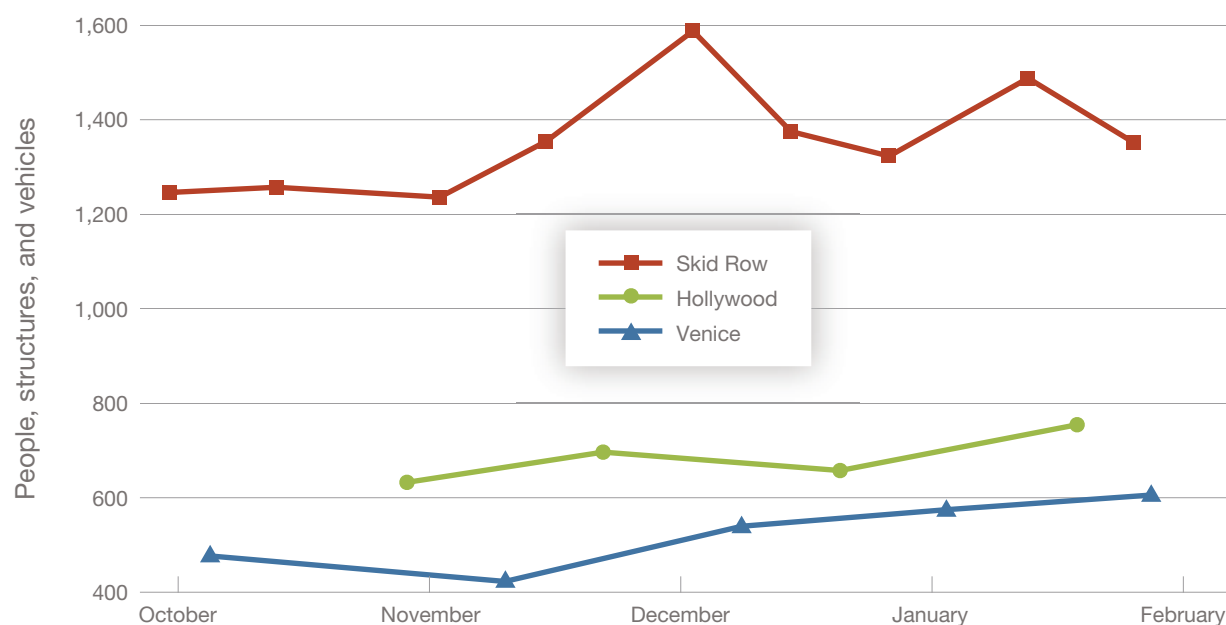
Our Skid Row counts averaged 1,358 people, structures, and vehicles. Hollywood and Venice had significantly lower averages; the Hollywood average was 685, while the Venice average was 523.

Counts of Unsheltered Individuals, Vehicles, Tents, and Makeshift Shelters

Figure 1 presents data from our enumerations of individuals, cars, vans, RVs, tents, and makeshift shelters at our three primary survey sites from late September 2021 to January 2022. We consider the sum of people, vehicles, tents, and makeshift dwellings as providing a close approximation of the number of distinct individuals experiencing homelessness. We believe that any overcounting attributable to counting empty tents or vehicles as occupied is likely to be more than offset by the possibility that we counted a makeshift dwelling inhabited by multiple people as representing only one person.

Overall, our Skid Row counts averaged a total of 1,358 people, structures, and vehicles per enu-

FIGURE 1
Enumeration Data from September 2021 to January 2022 by Site



NOTE: For each site, the first count was conducted from approximately 6 to 9 a.m. and the next count was conducted from approximately 9 p.m. to 12 a.m. Each subsequent count alternated on this day/night schedule.

meration (standard deviation [SD] = 117). The large number of people enumerated in Skid Row in early December appears to be an outlier that may have been related to the presence of a large-scale COVID-19 testing and vaccination operation in the area on the day we conducted the enumeration. Hollywood and Venice had significantly lower averages than Skid Row; the Hollywood average was 685 (SD = 53), while the Venice average was 523 (SD = 74). All site estimates have trended modestly upward over time by an average of around ten people, structures, or vehicles per week across all three sites.⁵

In Appendix D, we provide a table with distinct counts for each of these categories and each enumeration shift. We do not use any weighting to convert structures and vehicles into larger numbers of individuals, as is done in the LAHSA estimates (Henwood et al., 2020). A quick approximation of our count data using the 2020 LAHSA weighting for adult individuals estimated to be in cars, vans, RVs, tents, and makeshift structures increases the totals we reported by an average of 30 percent. In a later report, we will present our results using the most recent weights from the LAHSA demographic survey.

Housing Needs and Preferences Survey

We collected survey data twice in Skid Row (the middle and end of November 2021), once in Hollywood (mid-November 2021), and twice in Venice (early October and early December 2021). Details about our survey methodology are in Appendix C. When feasible, we compared our results with the LAHSA 2020 demographic survey data for these areas (LAHSA, 2020).

Key Takeaways

Table 1 provides key demographic characteristics of the survey sample. Additional characteristics, along with separate tabulations for our Veterans Row respondents, are provided in Appendix E. From this table, we can see that respondents in Skid Row tended to be older than those in Hollywood and Venice. In addition, respondents in Venice were more likely to report being White, while respondents in Skid Row and Hollywood were more likely to report being Black/African American.⁶

TABLE 1

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants (percentages)

Participant Characteristic	All (n = 216)	Hollywood (n = 54)	Skid Row (n = 82)	Venice (n = 68)
Age				
18–24	5	4	2	9
25–54	63	76	51	68
55–61	17	11	22	15
62 and older	15	9	25	9
Gender				
Male	70	70	70	68
Female	25	24	27	26
Nonconforming	2	2	1	3
Missing	3	4	2	3
Hispanic ethnicity	19	13	18	24
Race				
American Indian/Alaska Native	19	15	21	18
Asian American	6	7	4	9
Black/African American	50	57	66	28
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4	4	4	4
White	34	28	13	57
Other	15	11	17	15
Health				
Chronic health condition	46	44	44	49
Mental health condition	54	57	51	52
Substance use disorder	20	15	18	22

NOTES: n = number (sample size). Participants could indicate membership in more than one race, so these percentages add up to more than 100. Mutually exclusive percentages might not add up to 100 because of rounding. The “All” column includes 12 respondents from Veterans Row. We provide discrete tabulations for these additional respondents in Table E.1.

Nearly half of respondents reported having ever been diagnosed with a chronic health condition, while more than half reported having ever been diagnosed with a mental health condition. Only 20 percent reported having ever been diagnosed with a substance use disorder, which is 40 percent lower than the 28-percent share of respondents reporting such a diagnosis in the 2020 LAHSA demographic survey.⁷

Table 2 presents descriptive information about the lengths of periods of past and current homeless-

ness and residential status among survey participants. We found that the vast majority of respondents, 78 percent, have been continuously homeless for a year or more, and 52 percent have been continuously homeless for three years or longer. In Venice, we found that respondents tended to have shorter durations of homelessness, both currently and over their lifetimes. The shorter duration in this neighborhood may be related to the high-profile “Encampment to Home” effort to rapidly house more than 200 residents that had been encamped along the beach-

TABLE 2

Measures of Homelessness Experiences of Survey Participants (percentages)

Participant Characteristic	All (n = 216)	Hollywood (n = 54)	Skid Row (n = 82)	Venice (n = 68)
Age at first spell of homelessness				
Less than 18	23	32	14	25
18–24	23	28	24	19
25–54	46	36	51	49
55 and older	8	4	11	6
Duration of current spell of homelessness ^a				
Less than a year	22	22	19	25
1 to 2 years	26	24	22	31
3 years or longer	52	54	59	44
Duration at current location ^a				
Less than 3 months	17	11	12	26
3–6 months	7	8	6	9
More than 6 months	76	81	81	65
Location prior to current location				
Los Angeles County	62	61	66	59
Elsewhere in California	12	15	9	12
Outside California	23	22	18	28
Incarcerated	1	2	2	0
Missing	2	0	5	1

NOTES: n = number (sample size). The “All” column includes 12 respondents from Veterans Row. We provide discrete tabulations for these additional respondents in Table E.2.

^a To reduce respondent burden, the RAND Survey Research Group recommended using overlapping periods (at the bounds of each grouping) for some of the response options. For clarity here, we group categories into broader periods and assume zero “edge cases” (e.g., 12 months exactly).

front in summer 2021 (Smith, 2022); this effort may have removed from the streets potential respondents with longer durations of unsheltered homelessness.

We also asked about respondents’ duration in the area where they were surveyed and found that more than three-quarters had been in the area for six months or longer. When asked where they were staying before they came to the area, nearly three-quarters of respondents said that they had been in California, and 62 percent said that they had been in Los Angeles County.

Housing Needs and Preferences

Findings on the housing needs and preferences of respondents are presented in Table 3. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the vast majority of survey respondents (90 percent across all three survey sites) indicated an interest in receiving housing. Perhaps less intuitively, nearly half of our respondents reported having been offered housing since they experienced homelessness in Los Angeles. Nearly one-third of respondents indicated that they are currently on a waitlist for housing (26 percent in Skid Row, 35 percent in Hollywood, and 34 percent in Venice).

We also asked respondents what prevented them from moving into housing since they became home-

TABLE 3

Housing Needs and Preferences of Survey Participants (percentages)

Need or Preference	All (n = 216)	Hollywood (n = 54)	Skid Row (n = 82)	Venice (n = 68)
Interested in housing	90	89	90	88
Currently on a waitlist	32	35	26	34
Offered housing since homeless in LA	46	44	44	46
Factors that prevented housing move-in				
Never contacted for move-in	43	39	52	40
Lack of privacy	38	41	38	32
Housing safety	32	33	33	31
Paperwork issues	29	26	33	25
Hours or curfew	26	26	21	29
Housing location	26	22	21	34
Housing cleanliness	21	20	22	21
Other housing rules	19	26	11	19
Partner not allowed into housing	14	11	13	18
Handicap accessibility	11	9	17	4
Pets	10	13	5	13
Possessions	10	11	7	13
Other issues that prevented past move to housing ^a	25	28	20	24
Acceptable housing options				
Permanent stay in motel or hotel setting	81	78	88	79
Supportive housing (own apartment with case management)	80	85	87	69
Shelter or hotel with private room	77	74	83	75
Interim housing with access to services	59	52	71	50
Safe camping (organized tent space)	50	46	48	51
Shared housing (shared apartment or house)	45	44	43	49
Bridge housing (temporary shelter with onsite services)	44	37	46	49
Group shelter	31	17	38	34
Recovery or sober living housing	30	22	38	28
Specific housing/shelter needs or requirements				
Needs to be in particular neighborhood	36	33	29	45
Storage for possessions	30	33	28	29
Allowed to stay with partner, spouse, child, roommate	27	30	22	29
Allowed to stay with pet(s)	25	32	22	23
Handicap accessible	21	22	27	15

Table 3—Continued

Need or Preference	All (n = 216)	Hollywood (n = 54)	Skid Row (n = 82)	Venice (n = 68)
Other ^a	14	20	10	8
Factors that would prevent future housing move-in				
Lack of safety	60	76	59	51
Lack of privacy	58	70	55	54
Lack of cleanliness	46	52	45	43
Negative interactions with staff	44	41	45	46
Hours or curfew	38	52	27	43
Other rules	25	26	24	25
Other ^a	6	6	5	9

NOTES: n = number (sample size). The “All” column includes 12 respondents from Veterans Row. We also provide discrete tabulations for these additional respondents in Table E.3.

^a In Table E.3, we include tabulations of recoded categories from the three “other” categories in this table.

less.⁸ We listed 12 options and offered them a chance to list their own. Advocates for people experiencing homelessness have focused with some regularity on the potential barriers posed by housing that does not offer accommodations for the so-called three Ps: pets, partners, and possessions (Beekman, 2017; Demsas, 2021), but relatively few respondents (between 10 percent and 14 percent of the full sample) indicated that these factors prevented them from moving into housing. Privacy (38 percent) was more commonly mentioned as a barrier, suggesting a limited role for congregate shelters in effectively moving individuals off the streets. We find corroboration for this general preference in the relatively low levels of respondent interest in group shelters and Bridge housing (i.e., congregate shelters with onsite case management and other services run by the City of Los Angeles). Safety concerns were reported by 32 percent of respondents, consistent with recent research showing that a lack of safety has contributed to some individuals in supportive housing projects returning to the streets (Milburn et al., 2021).

From a policy perspective, perhaps the most important finding is that the most common factor preventing move-in to housing in the past was never being contacted for move-in (43 percent). This finding is confluent with a recent focus on the importance of service worker staffing levels and continuity in successfully addressing unsheltered homelessness

(Thompson et al., 2021; Tobias, 2022). It may also bear on the ongoing controversy over periodic sanitation “sweeps” of encampment-heavy areas that activists claim lead to unsheltered residents being dispersed from these areas, therefore making outreach service follow-up challenging (Chou, 2020).

Respondents were asked to express interest in a variety of housing options that are part of the city and county portfolio and that have been the subject of recent debates over appropriate ways to deploy limited funding resources (Galperin, 2020; Oreskes and Smith, 2020; Smith, 2021). Around 80 percent of respondents suggested that they would accept an offer of a private room in a shelter or housing setting, a permanent stay in a hotel or motel setting, or an offer of permanent supportive housing. There was much lower interest in group shelters or sober living facilities; only 30 percent of respondents indicated that they would accept offers for these accommodations. Around half of respondents indicated that they would accept safe camping or interim, transition, Bridge, or shared housing.

Comparability with 2020 LAHSA Survey Data

Although this study used sampling geographies that do not exactly replicate those used in the LAHSA

PIT count, we were cognizant of the geographies they used when we formed our geographic boundaries. To meet budget constraints, we generally used modestly smaller geographic areas relative to neighborhood definitions used in the PIT count while still ensuring that we retained all relevant areas in the given neighborhood with significant levels of encampment activity. Overall, we believe that there is a sufficient level of comparability between area-specific data from the 2020 LAHSA demographic survey and our data for our three primary survey areas of Hollywood, Skid Row, and Venice.⁹

Unlike the LAHSA demographic survey, we did not weight our survey data for nonresponse. In the LAHSA methodology, those who either refuse to be surveyed or are passed over by the surveyors because of, for example, concern about safety, have multiple interviewer-perceived observable characteristics recorded. These data are then used to construct nonresponse weights that are applied to the collected survey data to estimate population-level characteristics (Henwood et al., 2020). However, the relatively low refusal rate among individuals whom we approached (19 percent of the 329 individuals we approached refused to participate in screening for the survey, and another 1 percent were determined by the field representative to be cognitively impaired and were passed over) suggests that any differences in our

estimates related to this type of adjustment would be small in magnitude.

We found important differences in the race and ethnicity of unsheltered individuals in our LA LEADS survey data relative to neighborhood-specific tabulations of 2020 LAHSA demographic survey data. Table 4 presents these results for two key demographic subgroups, those who self-identified as Black/African American and those who self-identified as Hispanic. The share of respondents identifying as Black/African American was 38 percent higher in our sample than in the LAHSA data, while the share of respondents identifying as Hispanic was 24 percent lower.

Our respondents are similar to respondents in the LAHSA 2020 survey data in terms of gender, with the exception of our sample having fewer women and fewer gender-nonbinary individuals in Hollywood. We are unable to assess age differences between male and nonmale respondents in LAHSA tabulations, but, in our data, women and gender-nonconforming respondents are, on average, younger than male respondents. For this reason, we suspect that the lower shares of these groups in our data are related to the fact that the annual LAHSA effort includes a distinct component aimed at counting transition-aged youth (TAY) populations that involves service provider participation.¹⁰ In Venice, our survey populations are highly comparable by age and gender. In

TABLE 4
Changes in Race and Ethnicity of Unsheltered Individuals Over Time
(percentages)

Race or Ethnicity and Site	LAHSA 2020	LA LEADS 2021	Percentage Difference
Black/African American			
Skid Row	60	69	+15
Hollywood	33	59	+79
Venice	26	31	+19
Hispanic			
Skid Row	22	18	-18
Hollywood	30	13	-57
Venice	23	24	-4

NOTE: The third column is the percentage difference between these two measures using the formula $((b-a)/b)*100$, where a is the LAHSA 2020 data point and b is the LA LEADS 2021 data point.

Skid Row, our sample has fewer 25- to 54-year-olds (51 percent versus 64 percent) and more respondents aged 62 or older (25 percent versus 14 percent).

Limitations

This report represents a first look at our data collection effort after approximately four months of fieldwork. We caution that the conclusions in this report are provisional and subject to change as the number of enumerations and the number of survey respondents increase. We are continuing both of these efforts and plan to publish an update later in 2022. As noted previously, our enumeration and survey areas differ from those used in LAHSA's 2020 effort, but not in ways that we think would result in meaningful differences in the composition of our survey respondents.

Conclusions

Preliminary evidence from our study suggests that the extent of unsheltered homelessness in the three Los Angeles neighborhoods we focused on increased by an average of around 17 percent over the approximately four months since we began the study in late September 2021. We also documented higher levels of Black/African American homelessness and lower levels of homelessness among Hispanic individuals relative to the 2020 LAHSA survey data. Our survey results show that individuals living unsheltered on the streets of Los Angeles have been homeless for extraordinarily long periods; 78 percent reported that their current spell of homelessness has lasted a year or more, and 52 percent reported that they have been continuously homeless for three years or longer.

Perhaps related to this extended exposure to the mental and physical stresses of living unsheltered, 54 percent of respondents reported having been diagnosed with a mental health condition and 46 percent reported having been diagnosed with a chronic health condition. Although our results are not directly comparable with 2020 data from the LAHSA demographic survey because of differences in our questions, these findings suggest significantly higher levels of these conditions than were reported

Almost half of respondents said that they had been offered housing since becoming homeless, which raises questions about why they have not been successfully housed.

two years ago. These findings have important policy implications in terms of the health care needs of these populations and the downstream returns of successfully housing them, such as reducing the utilization of costly emergency services and avoiding criminal justice involvement for behaviors related to treatable mental health issues. More encouragingly, we found evidence of lower rates of substance use disorder than were found in the 2020 LAHSA survey using a highly comparable question (20 percent in our data versus 28 percent in the LAHSA data).

Regarding housing preferences, we found a near-universal interest in obtaining housing among our survey respondents. Almost half of respondents reported that they had been offered housing since becoming homeless, although this is perhaps unsurprising given the substantial durations of homelessness reported. This finding, though, leads to questions about why these individuals have not been successfully housed. Respondents indicated that they strongly prefer private housing, suggesting that increasing funding for congregate shelters, as has been espoused by some policymakers, might have a limited ability to effectively address street homelessness (Galperin, 2020; "LA Councilman Buscaino Seeks Ballot Measure to Prohibit Homeless Encampments," 2021). Additionally, an inability to quickly

Over 40 percent of respondents mentioned never having been contacted for move-in as a reason they were not housed in the past.

connect eligible individuals to housing may be a significant problem, as reflected by over 40 percent of respondents who mentioned never having been contacted for move-in as a reason they were not housed in the past. This pattern may reflect the need for increasing continuity among case workers (Thompson et al., 2021; Tobias, 2022) and reducing the often extraordinary delays in connecting eligible individuals to available housing (Bishari, 2022).

Future reporting on this study will benefit from continued enumerations and an increased survey sample. A longer time series of enumerations may provide some early evidence on the effects of the recent city ordinance (41.18) that allowed city council members to nominate locations for enforcement of a camping ban, although the timeline and extent of enforcement activity pertaining to this ordinance remain unclear as of this writing. Additionally, we will provide updated estimates of the average numbers of people residing in cars, vans, RVs, tents, and makeshift structures in our survey areas.

Appendix A. Site Geography

The process through which we selected survey site geographies was guided by a desire to capture most or all significant areas of encampment activity within the scope of project resources, while maintaining boundaries that were broadly consistent with both past enumeration and survey efforts and what service providers in these areas considered to be relevant geography. In practice, this involved choosing geo-

graphic areas that could be thoroughly covered by two three-person teams (or, in the case of Venice, two three-person teams in cars and one two-person team on foot) in approximately three hours so that our projected budgeting would cover the desired number of enumeration and survey shifts over the intended study period.

Skid Row Geography

We conducted two site assessments of Skid Row in August 2021 to determine the current distribution of encampment activity. We contacted individuals responsible for area homelessness service provision as well as individuals who coordinate aspects of the annual PIT count, to receive input on what they considered to be the most relevant geographies in the area. We also shadowed the designated homelessness outreach team's efforts.¹¹ We ultimately settled on a relatively compact geography used by area homelessness service providers to define Skid Row that comprises about 50 percent of the overall geographic area assessed in the PIT count (see Figure A.1).

Hollywood Geography

For Hollywood, we began by assessing the geography used in the recent count conducted by Hollywood 4WRD. We then conducted a site assessment of this area in late September and gathered feedback on current encampment activity from area service providers. With these inputs, we decided to limit our study geography to the Central Hollywood portion of the larger Hollywood 4WRD study area (see Figure A.2).

Venice Geography

Similar to the processes described above, the process of determining our Venice geography involved multiple site assessments, outreach to area service providers, and discussions with representatives from city council district 11 regarding current hotspots for encampment activity. Because of significant recent developments affecting large encampments on the Venice boardwalk, we concentrated on the western portion of Venice (see Figure A.3).

FIGURE A.1
Map of Skid Row Site Geography

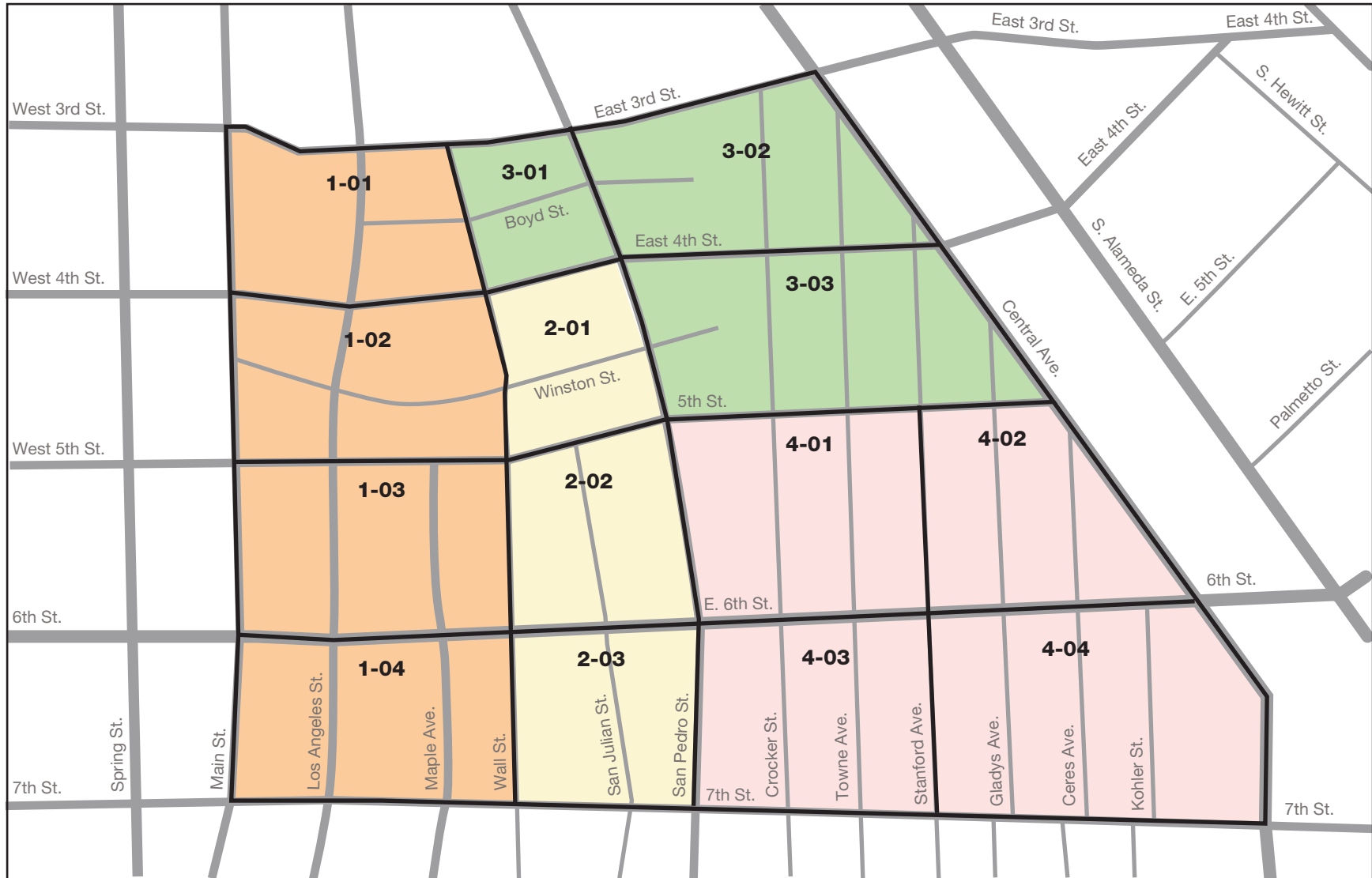


FIGURE A.2

Map of Hollywood Site Geography

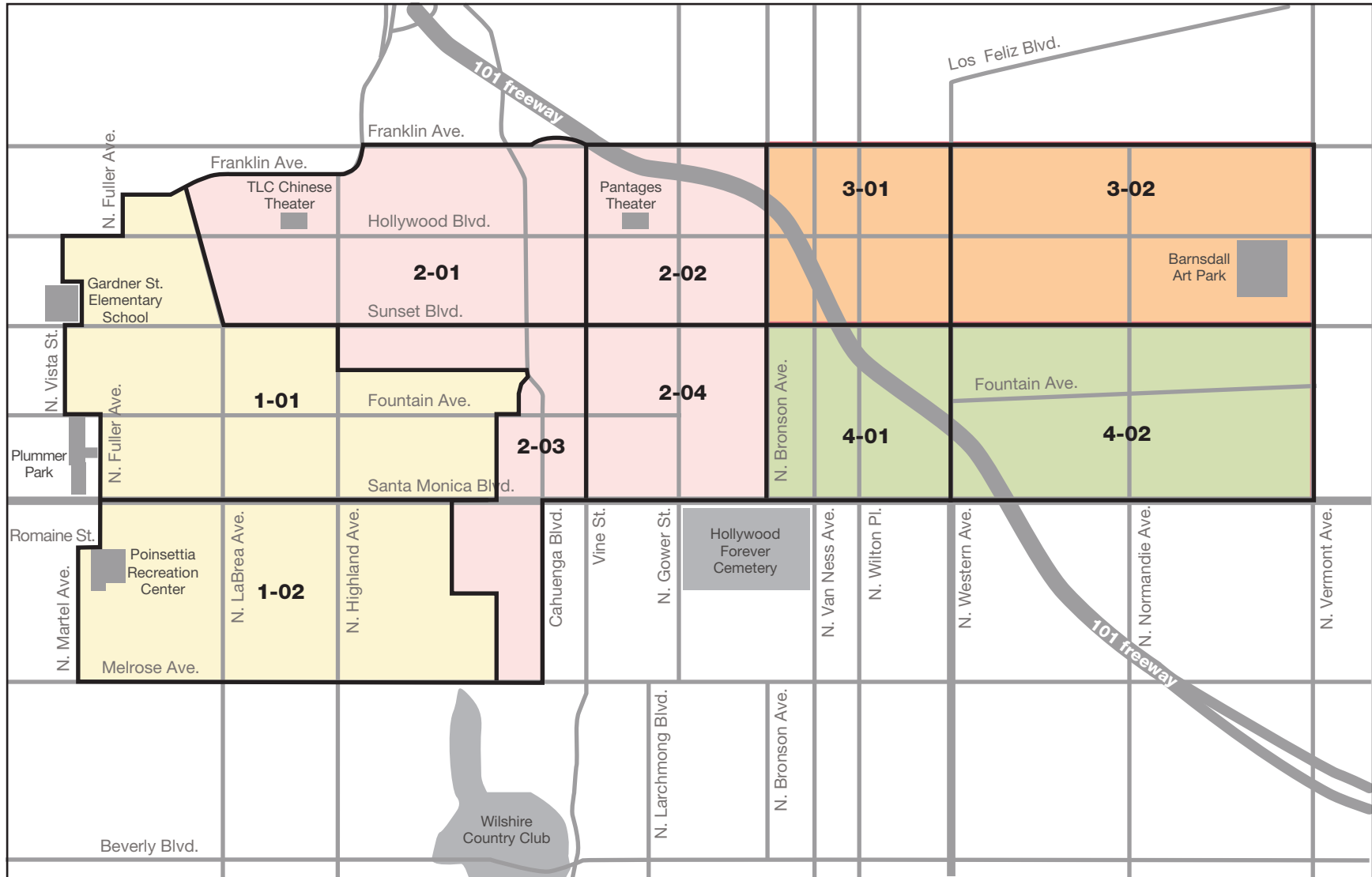
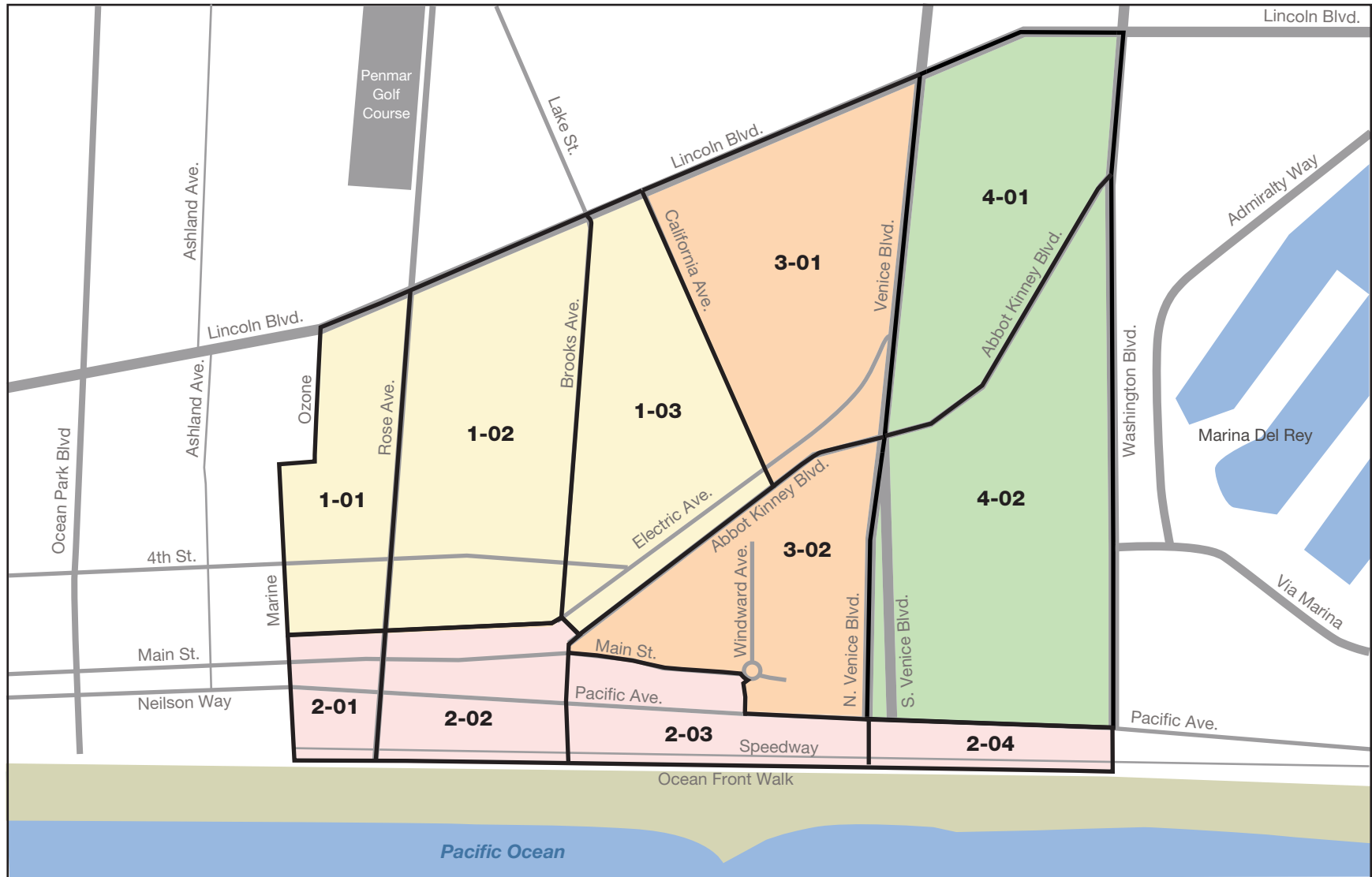


FIGURE A.3
Map of Venice Site Geography



Veterans Row Geography

This survey area was relatively straightforward to identify because of its highly compact geography—a short stretch of San Vicente Boulevard (which runs into Bringham Avenue heading northwest) that bounds the West Los Angeles VA campus to the southwest. Specifically, we enumerated and surveyed individuals who were present or encamped along the north side of San Vicente Boulevard between Kiowa Avenue to the south, northward beyond the point where San Vicente turns into Bringham Avenue, as far north as Gorham Avenue.

Appendix B. Enumeration Methodology

Our enumerations were each conducted by two teams of three individuals. For Skid Row, each team covered one-half of the geography on foot. One person per team used a clicker to count individuals, and the other two people used paper forms to tally cars; vans; RVs; and small, medium, and large tents and shelters. These were counted independently, and then, at the end of each block (e.g., block 1-01 from Figure A.1), these two counts were averaged and rounded to the nearest integer value.

Using a similar approach to that of the LAHSA PIT count, we did not approach vehicles or structures to assess whether they were occupied; they were simply counted. Our field team was trained in using common factors to identify vehicles serving as places of residence, including signs that the vehicle was not being regularly moved, had covered windows, or had large amounts of possessions in or around the vehicle.

One difference in our approach relative to the approach used in the LAHSA PIT count was with regard to tents and makeshift structures. We divided these into three groupings: small (6 ft or less across), medium (6 to 12 ft across), and large (greater than 12 ft across). We counted continuous structures of greater than 12 ft (as are seen in parts of Skid Row) as multiple structures. We did not count structures that appeared to obviously serve only a storage purpose.

The training that our small field team underwent is more rigorous than the approach used by volun-

teers in the LAHSA PIT count, who are trained in a single short session and survey one or two census tracts each. Additionally, several of our survey team members have significant prior or current experience working or volunteering in homelessness services or adjacent fields that likely led to greater accuracy, relative to the LAHSA PIT count, in distinguishing individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as associated vehicles and structures.

For Hollywood, our teams were in cars. One person served as the driver, and the other two individuals counted people, cars, vans, RVs, tents, and other makeshift structures. The same process for reconciling the two counts described above was used. The approach used in Venice was a hybrid of the approaches used in Skid Row and Hollywood. In Venice, we had one team walking along the area proximate to the boardwalk and two other teams driving through the more eastern portion of the neighborhood.

As mentioned earlier, we alternated our enumeration shifts between early morning (approximately 6 to 9 a.m.) and nighttime (approximately 9 p.m. to 12 a.m.). These both tend to be periods during which, at least toward the beginning of the morning shift and the end of the nighttime shift, most individuals with access to a vehicle, tent, or makeshift shelter are inside them. To try to further address any remaining bias in our counts that could be related to individuals systematically moving about in our survey subareas at given times of the day or night (e.g., individuals waking up and going to an area meal service, where it would be possible to count them twice as we walked our survey routes), we also varied the direction in which we walked or drove through each subgeography.

One issue with any attempt to enumerate individuals with a characteristic that is not readily observable, such as homelessness, is the inherent difficulty of using a heuristic approach to determine whether an individual is currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness. For example, any given individual whom we observe and identify as experiencing homelessness in our enumerations might have some type of formal shelter but might be visiting an area where they used to reside when homeless. This

may tend to overstate the number of individuals we count as experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

However, evidence on the probable extent of this issue is provided by our screening instrument for administering the demographic survey, which asks people whether they have an overnight place to stay that meets the definition of shelter. Of the 256 individuals who completed the screening, only 16 percent were ineligible because of this criterion. Additionally, unlike our survey shifts, our enumerations primarily occurred during hours (early morning and nighttime) when people were more likely to be where they would sleep for the night.

This critique is relevant to any such enumeration exercise. We have no reason to believe that our own enumerations would be any more biased than past analogous efforts. Our use of a small, stable team of field workers who were professionally trained and accompanied by experienced supervisors, as well as the fact that we enumerated the same areas repeatedly, suggests that we *may* do a better job than teams of ad hoc volunteers, which are, of necessity, used to conduct the annual LAHSA PIT count.

Appendix C. Survey Methodology

Our survey data collection was conducted on separate days from the enumeration shifts (with the exception of Veterans Row, as described earlier). Our goal was to collect 40 completed surveys in Skid Row, 34 in Hollywood, and 34 in Venice during each outing. This report includes survey data collected from two Skid Row visits, one Hollywood visit, and two Venice visits.

Each survey shift began at approximately 8 a.m. and comprised two teams of three people who approached individuals on foot. During each visit, staff systematically approached individuals who appeared to be unsheltered and offered them an opportunity to participate in a ten-minute survey for \$5 cash. In Skid Row, we approached every third person encountered, and, in Hollywood and Venice, every other person encountered. We varied the “skip rule” that we used depending on the differential concentration of people experiencing homelessness in each area (i.e., higher in Skid Row than in Hollywood or Venice). We did not

use a skip rule for our single survey visit to Veterans Row, since this was a small population and our main motivation was to access as many individuals as possible before the site was cleared.

Every potential respondent was first screened for eligibility using two questions. The first was an item from the LAHSA demographic survey to determine whether the individual had been unsheltered for the past 30 days (i.e., the individual reported spending the past 30 nights on or at one of the following: street, sidewalk, or alley; bus or train; bus or train stop or station, transit center, or airport; unconverted garage, attic, or basement; campground or woods; park, beach, or riverbed; bridge or overpass; other outdoor location; abandoned building; parking lot [surface]; parking structure; car, truck, or van; RV or camper; outdoor encampment or tent; or other makeshift shelter not meant for human habitation). The second item asked whether the individual lacked another place to stay, such as a bed in a Bridge housing facility or other interim congregate housing, a hotel or motel room, or a room in a transitional housing building. Only respondents who reported staying in an unsheltered location and not having another place to stay were eligible to complete the survey.

Among respondents who reported staying in a car, van, RV, camper, tent, or other makeshift structure, we asked how many other people they shared the vehicle or structure with. We anticipate providing these data in future reports.

Overall, we approached 329 people, of which 216 screened eligible. Seventy-three were of unknown eligibility status because they refused the screening ($n = 63$); walked away ($n = 4$); were too disoriented, intoxicated, or cognitively impaired ($n = 4$); or had a language barrier ($n = 2$). Of those that completed the screening, 40 were deemed ineligible because of their homelessness status ($n = 40$).

Appendix D. Enumeration Counts by Category

Table D.1 provides distinct counts for each category (people; cars and vans; RVs; and small, medium, and large tents) and for each enumeration shift.

TABLE D.1

Enumeration Totals by Category

Date, Time, and Location	People	Cars and Vans	RVs	Small Tents	Medium Tents	Large Tents	Total
Hollywood							
10/29/21 (AM)	280	53	22	85	76	116	632
11/22/21 (PM)	302	91	29	90	58	126	696
12/21/21 (AM)	222	87	36	109	74	129	657
01/19/22 (PM)	341	82	32	80	74	145	754
Skid Row							
09/30/21 (AM)	595	24	6	166	135	320	1,246
10/13/21 (PM)	586	69	5	168	153	276	1,257
11/02/21 (AM)	529	52	7	190	133	325	1,236
11/15/21 (PM)	611	62	5	215	147	314	1,354
12/03/21 (AM)	757	108	5	216	166	336	1,588
12/15/21 (PM)	586	49	5	233	228	274	1,375
12/27/21 (AM)	604	50	5	246	143	275	1,323
01/13/22 (PM)	701	48	4	252	179	304	1,488
01/26/22 (AM)	620	43	3	214	198	273	1,351
Venice							
10/05/21 (AM)	110	138	80	46	46	56	476
11/10/21 (PM)	109	89	92	39	49	44	422
12/09/21 (AM)	167	152	85	49	39	47	539
01/03/22 (PM)	149	172	80	69	39	65	574
01/28/22 (AM)	165	188	72	59	63	58	605
Veterans Row							
10/06/21 (4 PM)	6	0	1	1	2	44	54
10/26/21 (9 AM)	9	0	1	2	3	34	49
11/18/21–2/4/22 ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

^a Over the period of November 18, 2021, to February 4, 2022, our field coordinator made seven site visits and found no evidence of unsheltered individuals or associated vehicles or structures at this site.

Appendix E. Additional Survey Demographic Characteristics

Table E.1 reproduces the data in Table 1 but presents additional demographic characteristics that were omitted for brevity. We also provide separate tabulations for the 12 respondents whom we interviewed from Veterans Row.

Table E.2 reproduces Table 2 but includes separate tabulations for these Veterans Row respondents. Table E.3 reproduces Table 3 with two differences. First, we add in a tabulation of the Veterans Row respondents. Second, we add in the results of answers in the “other” categories for questions about issues that prevented past housing move-in, specific housing needs not otherwise asked about, and issues that would prevent a future move-in to offered housing. These free-form responses were first examined to identify numerous cases in which responses duplicated choices already presented. Then, we combined the remaining unique answers into a more succinct set of categories.

Finally, Table E.4 reproduces the responses to the question “What issues stopped you from moving into housing in LA?” (See the row labeled “Factors that prevented housing move-in.”) The table presents the results we obtained when we conditioned this question on respondents having answered “yes” to the prior question, “Since you have been homeless in LA, have you been offered housing?” The question about factors preventing respondents from obtaining housing better addresses the issue of barriers encountered in housing offers obtained through the provision of homelessness services rather than issues encountered by individuals seeking housing outside the homelessness housing service provision framework (e.g., in the private market or in other informal ways, such as doubling up). Broadly, the answers as to what factors prevented moving into housing are quite similar, but there are some survey site-specific differences. We intend to revisit these differences through a statistical lens in a later report that will have a substantially larger sample of survey respondents.

TABLE E.1
Full Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants (percentages)

Participant Characteristic	All (<i>n</i> = 216)	Hollywood (<i>n</i> = 54)	Skid Row (<i>n</i> = 82)	Venice (<i>n</i> = 68)	Veterans Row (<i>n</i> = 12)
Age					
18–24	5	4	2	9	0
25–54	63	76	51	68	64
55–61	17	11	22	15	18
62 and older	15	9	25	9	18
Gender					
Male	70	70	70	68	91
Female	25	24	27	26	9
Nonconforming	2	2	1	3	0
Missing	3	4	2	3	0
Hispanic ethnicity	19	13	18	24	17
Race ^a					
American Indian/Alaska Native	19	15	21	18	42
Asian American	6	7	4	9	8

Table E.1—Continued

Participant Characteristic	All (n = 216)	Hollywood (n = 54)	Skid Row (n = 82)	Venice (n = 68)	Veterans Row (n = 12)
Black/African American	50	57	66	28	25
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4	4	4	4	8
White	34	28	13	57	75
Other	15	11	17	15	17
Marital status					
Married	5	9	1	7	0
Serious relationship, not married	4	4	4	6	0
Widowed	5	7	4	4	0
Divorced or separated	25	24	26	21	55
Never married	61	56	65	62	45
Educational attainment					
Less than high school	27	33	28	22	25
High school graduate	31	28	33	29	33
Vocational, business, or trade school	5	7	2	6	0
Some college	25	26	21	28	33
Associate's degree	6	4	7	6	0
Bachelor's degree or postgraduate degree	7	2	7	9	8
Health rating					
Excellent	22	30	20	21	8
Very good	20	19	18	21	33
Good	29	23	35	26	33
Fair	20	15	20	26	8
Poor	9	13	7	6	17
Chronic health condition	46	44	44	49	58
Mental health condition	54	57	51	52	67
Substance use disorder	20	15	18	22	50
Regular use—alcohol	30	30	33	25	42
Regular use—marijuana/cannabis	51	59	38	54	92
Regular use—methamphetamine, cocaine, fentanyl, heroin, or prescription opioids	25	31	22	19	58
Arrested in past 30 days	5	4	7	3	0
Jail or prison stay in past 30 days	4	4	6	3	0

NOTES: n = number (sample size). Mutually exclusive percentages might not add up to 100 because of rounding.

^a Participants could indicate membership in more than one race, so these percentages add up to more than 100.

TABLE E.2

Measures of Homelessness Experiences of Survey Participants (percentages)

Participant Characteristic	All (n = 216)	Hollywood (n = 54)	Skid Row (n = 82)	Venice (n = 68)	Veterans Row (n = 12)
Age at first spell of homelessness					
Younger than 18	23	32	14	25	33
18–24	23	28	24	19	17
25–54	46	36	51	49	42
55 or older	8	4	11	6	8
Duration of current spell of homelessness ^a					
Less than a year	22	22	19	25	33
1 to 2 years	26	24	22	31	25
3 years or longer	52	54	59	44	42
Duration at current location ^a					
Less than 3 months	17	11	12	26	17
3–6 months	7	8	6	9	8
More than 6 months	76	81	81	65	75
Location prior to current location					
Los Angeles County	62	61	66	59	50
Elsewhere in California	12	15	9	12	25
Outside California	23	22	18	28	25
Incarcerated	1	2	2	0	0
Missing	2	0	5	1	0

NOTES: n = number (sample size).

^a To reduce respondent burden, the RAND Survey Research Group recommended using overlapping periods (at the bounds of each grouping) for some of the response options. For clarity here, we group categories into broader periods and assume zero “edge cases” (e.g., 12 months exactly).

TABLE E.3

Housing Needs and Preferences of Survey Participants, with Recoded “Other” Responses Included (percentages)

Need or Preference	All (n = 216)	Hollywood (n = 54)	Skid Row (n = 82)	Venice (n = 68)	Veterans Row (n = 12)
Interested in housing	90	89	90	88	100
Currently on a waitlist	32	35	26	34	50
Offered housing since homeless in LA	46	44	44	46	75
Factors that prevented housing move-in					
Never contacted for move-in	43	39	52	40	17

Table E.3—Continued

Need or Preference	All (n = 216)	Hollywood (n = 54)	Skid Row (n = 82)	Venice (n = 68)	Veterans Row (n = 12)
Lack of privacy	38	41	38	32	50
Housing safety	32	33	33	31	33
Paperwork issues	29	26	33	25	33
Hours or curfew	26	26	21	29	50
Housing location	26	22	21	34	33
Housing cleanliness	21	20	22	21	17
Other housing rules	19	26	11	19	33
Partner not allowed into housing	14	11	13	18	8
Handicap accessibility	11	9	17	4	8
Pets	10	13	5	13	8
Possessions	10	11	7	13	8
Other issues that prevented past move to housing	25	28	20	24	50
<i>Respondents reporting nonredundant “other” issue^a</i>	<i>(n = 57)</i>	<i>(n = 16)</i>	<i>(n = 17)</i>	<i>(n = 18)</i>	<i>(n = 6)</i>
<i>Lack of income or employment</i>	26	31	12	39	17
<i>Lack of support or assistance</i>	26	25	29	33	0
<i>Lifestyle (including drug use)</i>	25	6	47	6	67
<i>Incarceration history</i>	9	13	6	6	17
<i>Lack of housing or ineligibility for housing</i>	7	13	0	11	0
<i>Discrimination</i>	4	0	6	6	0
<i>Need for special housing (e.g., LGBTQ+)</i>	4	13	0	0	0
Acceptable housing options					
Permanent stay in motel or hotel setting	81	78	88	79	67
Supportive housing (own apartment with case management)	80	85	87	69	75
Shelter or hotel with private room	77	74	83	75	67
Interim housing with access to services	59	52	71	50	58
Safe camping (organized tent space)	50	46	48	51	75
Shared housing (shared apartment or house)	45	44	43	49	50
Bridge housing (temporary shelter with onsite services)	44	37	46	49	42
Group shelter	31	17	38	34	42
Recovery or sober living housing	30	22	38	28	25
Specific housing/shelter needs or requirements					
Needs to be in particular neighborhood	36	33	29	44	42
Storage for possessions	30	33	28	28	33

Table E.3—Continued

Need or Preference	All (n = 216)	Hollywood (n = 54)	Skid Row (n = 82)	Venice (n = 68)	Veterans Row (n = 12)
Allowed to stay with partner, spouse, child, roommate	26	30	22	26	42
Allowed to stay with pet(s)	25	31	22	22	25
Handicap accessible	21	22	27	13	25
Other specific housing needs	14	20	10	16	8
<i>Respondents reporting nonredundant “other” issue^a</i>	<i>(n = 32)</i>	<i>(n = 10)</i>	<i>(n = 10)</i>	<i>(n = 11)</i>	<i>(n = 1)</i>
<i>Apartment amenities</i>	28	10	30	45	0
<i>Safety of neighborhood or community</i>	25	30	20	27	0
<i>Access to public transit</i>	19	20	20	9	100
<i>Special population (e.g., LGBTQ+, Catholic, older)</i>	19	40	10	9	0
<i>Desire for privacy</i>	9	0	20	9	0
Factors that would prevent future housing move-in					
Lack of safety	60	76	59	51	50
Lack of privacy	58	70	55	54	50
Lack of cleanliness	46	52	45	43	50
Negative interactions with staff	44	41	45	46	42
Hours or curfew	38	52	27	43	33
Other rules	25	26	24	25	33
Other ^a	6	6	5	9	0

NOTES: LGBTQ+ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning; n = number (sample size). All but 13 of the “other” responses to “Factors that would prevent future housing move-in” included an “other” reason that we categorized as redundant with one of our included categories, so we recoded these as such. Of the remaining 13 respondents, ten answered “yes” to “other” reasons but did not specify a reason. Of the remaining three answers (all in Venice), two answers concerned needing some form of onsite medical care and one answer concerned needing a workspace as part of acceptable housing. Italics indicate freeform answers that were given by respondents in response to an “other” option at the end of a series of questions.

^a Some respondents reported a response to “other” that was consistent with one of the specified survey response options that we recoded as such, and some reported an “other” issue but did not specify one.

TABLE E.4

Factors Preventing Past Housing Move-In Only Among Those Offered Housing Since Becoming Homeless in Los Angeles (percentages)

Factor Preventing Housing Move-In	All (n = 99)	Hollywood (n = 24)	Skid Row (n = 36)	Venice (n = 30)	Veterans Row (n = 9)
Never contacted for move-in	41	29	44	57	11
Lack of privacy	41	50	36	37	56
Housing safety	36	38	31	43	33
Hours or curfew	31	42	19	33	44
Paperwork issues	30	13	33	37	44
Housing location	28	17	28	33	44

Table E.4—Continued

Factor Preventing Housing Move-In	All (n = 99)	Hollywood (n = 24)	Skid Row (n = 36)	Venice (n = 30)	Veterans Row (n = 9)
Housing cleanliness	25	21	25	30	22
Other housing rules	20	33	8	23	22
Partner not allowed into housing	14	13	11	20	11
Pets	10	17	6	10	11
Handicap accessibility	9	4	17	7	0
Possessions	8	17	0	13	0
Other issues that prevented past move to housing	23	33	17	17	44
<i>Respondents reporting nonredundant “other” issue^a</i>	<i>(n = 23)</i>	<i>(n = 8)</i>	<i>(n = 6)</i>	<i>(n = 6)</i>	<i>(n = 4)</i>
<i>Lifestyle (including drug use)</i>	33	0	50	17	100
<i>Lack of income or employment</i>	29	38	17	50	0
<i>Lack of support or assistance</i>	21	38	33	0	0
<i>Need for special housing (e.g., LGBTQ+)</i>	8	25	0	0	0
<i>Lack of housing or ineligibility for housing</i>	4	0	0	17	0
<i>Discrimination</i>	4	0	0	17	0
<i>Incarceration history</i>	0	0	0	0	0

NOTES: LGBTQ+ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning; *n* = number (sample size). This table conditions answers to the question “What issues stopped you from moving into housing in LA?” (see row labeled “Factors that prevented housing move-in” in Tables 5 and E.3) on answering “yes” to the question “Since you have been homeless in LA, have you been offered housing?” Italics indicate freeform answers that were given by respondents in response to an “other” option at the end of a series of questions.

^a Some respondents reported a response to “other” that was consistent with one of the specified survey response options that we recoded as such, and some reported an “other” issue but did not specify one.

Notes

¹ The Los Angeles County Continuum of Care, where LAHSA's PIT count is conducted, excludes the cities of Glendale, Long Beach, and Pasadena.

² A few local groups, including Hollywood 4WRD, conducted area-specific counts modeled after the LAHSA procedure in 2020 or 2021.

³ Other neighborhoods that were the subject of grassroots efforts to enumerate the unsheltered population include Mid-City West (Folven, 2021), Eagle Rock/Highland Park, Lafayette Park, and Venice. We did not find formal release data for these efforts, only limited information about them from social media and community members.

⁴ We conducted counts in Skid Row at a higher frequency because of the much higher level of encampment activity in this area. On average, the roughly 0.4-square mile area of Skid Row that we surveyed has the equivalent of the combined number of unsheltered individuals in our other two, much larger survey sites.

⁵ To estimate the average change in homelessness across our study period in a manner that could isolate systematic variation over time from idiosyncratic variation from period to period, we used a linear regression of people on weeks that included site fixed effects (i.e., site-specific indicator variables that allow each survey site to have a constant estimated difference in levels). This approach yielded a coefficient of 9.96 people per week with a 95-percent confidence interval of 2.4 to 17.5. Site-specific regressions yielded coefficients that were tightly clustered around this estimate (10.49 for Skid Row, 8.18 for Hollywood, and 9.96 for Venice) but that had less statistical precision.

⁶ In our final report, which will have a larger survey sample, we plan to present statistical tests to examine differences between respondents across the three sites.

⁷ The questions about chronic and mental health conditions do not have direct analogues in the LAHSA survey, which asks instead about the presence of HIV/AIDS-related illness, a physical disability, a traumatic brain injury, a developmental disability, or a physical illness. The tabulated results do not provide data on answers to questions also included in the survey instrument about physical illness or traumatic brain injury.

⁸ We did not condition this question on having answered "yes" to the prior question, "Since you have been homeless in LA, have you been offered housing?" However, in Table E.4, we present frequencies of these same answers after first conditioning on respondents having answered "yes" to this question. Broadly, the frequency of issues is similar, although there are a few larger differences that we will explore more thoroughly with a larger respondent sample in a future report.

⁹ Comparisons of the enumeration data between LAHSA 2020 and LA LEADS are not possible without block-specific counts from the 2020 PIT count, which we were unable to secure prior to the publication of this report.

¹⁰ The ages that are included in TAY differ across agencies and organizations, but the term generally covers populations from approximately ages 16 to 25.

¹¹ *Shadowing* is a qualitative approach in which researchers observe other individuals conducting their normal daily activities (McDonald, 2005).

References

- Abramson, Louis, Brian Kohan, Jackie Vorhauer, Douglas Walker, Heather Carmichael, Helen Eigenberg, Stephen Fiechter, David Gordon, Emily Uyeda Kantrim, Arnali Ray, Elyse Schwartz, Sandy Andres, Nick Semensky, and Kerry Morrison, *Results of the 2021 Greater Hollywood Volunteer Homeless Count*, April 13, 2021.
- Beekman, Daniel, “Seattle May Try San Francisco’s ‘Radical Hospitality’ for Homeless,” *Seattle Times*, last updated October 12, 2017.
- Bishari, Nuala, “In San Francisco, Hundreds of Homes for the Homeless Sit Vacant,” ProPublica, February 24, 2022.
- Braslow, Samuel, “Inside Veterans Row, the Tent City That’s Sprung Up Outside the VA,” *Los Angeles Magazine*, July 10, 2020.
- Chiotakis, Steve, “Echo Park Lake: Tall Fences and No More Homeless Camps. Where Are the Former Residents Now?” KCRW, April 6, 2021.
- Chou, Elizabeth, “Activists Blockade Major Cleanups at Homeless Encampments,” *Los Angeles Daily News*, last updated September 1, 2020.
- “City Council Enforces LA’s Anti-Camping Law at 58 Locations,” *Daily News*, January 12, 2022.
- Deegan, Tim, “Nithya Raman Blasts the City’s New Homeless Encampment Regulations - She May Get the Last Laugh,” *CityWatch*, August 1, 2021.
- Demsas, Jerusalem, “Los Angeles’s Quixotic Quest to End Homelessness,” *Vox*, May 14, 2021.
- Folven, Edwin, “MCWCC Count Illustrates Changes in Homelessness,” *Beverly Press Park Labrea News*, May 20, 2021.
- Galperin, Ron, *Meeting the Moment: An Action Plan to Advance Prop. HHH*, Los Angeles, Calif.: Los Angeles Controller’s Office, City of Los Angeles, September 9, 2020.
- Hart Research Associates, “LA County Homelessness Survey,” Study 14123a, Washington, D.C., October/November 2021.
- Henwood, Benjamin F., Layan Kaileh, Nicole Wilson, Laura Gascue, Stephanie Kwack, Patricia St. Clair, and Gerry Young, *2020 Los Angeles Continuum of Care Homeless Count: Methodology Report*, Los Angeles, Calif.: University of Southern California, July 2020.
- “LA Councilman Buscaino Seeks Ballot Measure to Prohibit Homeless Encampments,” *Daily Breeze*, September 3, 2021.
- LAHSA—See Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority.
- Lopez, Steve, “For Both the Housed and Unhoused in This Hollywood Neighborhood, Help Is Urgently Needed,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 20, 2021.
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, “2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data Sheets,” webpage, last updated November 20, 2020. As of February 9, 2022: <https://www.lahsa.org/news?article=737-2020-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-data-sheets&ref=hc>
- McDonald, Seonaidh, “Studying Actions in Context: A Qualitative Shadowing Method for Organizational Research,” *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 5, No. 4, November 1, 2005, pp. 455–473.
- Milburn, Norweeta G., Earl Edwards, Dean Obermark, and Janey Rountree, *Inequity in the Permanent Supportive Housing System in Los Angeles: Scale, Scope and Reasons for Black Residents’ Returns to Homelessness*, Los Angeles, Calif.: California Policy Lab, October 2021.
- Office of the City Clerk, City of Los Angeles, draft ordinance replacing Section 41.18 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, Los Angeles, Calif., July 2, 2021. As of March 9, 2022: https://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2020/20-1376-S1_ord_draft_7-02-21.pdf
- Oreskes, Benjamin, “City Plans to Close Echo Park Lake and Clear Homeless Encampment,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 2021.
- Oreskes, Benjamin, Maura Dolan, and David Zahniser, “Appeals Court Strikes Down Sweeping Order to House L.A.’s Skid Row Homeless Population,” *Los Angeles Times*, last updated September 23, 2021.
- Oreskes, Benjamin, and Genaro Molina, “How L.A. Cleared Most Venice Beach Homeless Camps and Sheltered Many Unhoused People,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 2021.
- Oreskes, Benjamin, Emily Alpert Reyes, and Doug Smith, “Judge Orders L.A. City and County to Offer Shelter to Everyone on Skid Row by Fall,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 20, 2021.
- Oreskes, Benjamin, and Doug Smith, “Garcetti’s Signature Homeless Program Shelters Thousands, but Most Return to the Streets,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 20, 2020.
- , “L.A. Had a Golden Opportunity to House Homeless People in Hotels—But Fell Short of Its Goal,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 20, 2021.
- Oreskes, Benjamin, and Julia Wick, “L.A.’s Mayoral Candidates Agree Homeless Encampments Need to Go. The Question Is How,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 2021.
- Reyes, Emily Alpert, “Judge Rejects Challenge to Venice Homeless Shelter,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 13, 2019.
- , “L.A. Officials Want Answers About Police Rollout at Echo Park Lake,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 31, 2021.
- Sheeley, Kirsten Moore, Alisa Belinkoff Katz, Andrew Klein, Jessica Richards, Fernanda Jahn Verri, Marques Vestal, and Zev Yaroslavsky, *The Making of a Crisis: A History of Homelessness in Los Angeles*, Los Angeles, Calif.: UCLA, Luskin Center for History and Policy, January 2021.
- Sisson, Patrick, “Homelessness Surges in Venice Beach, Leaving Locals at Odds,” Bloomberg CityLab, August 9, 2021.
- Smith, Doug, “This L.A. Project Shows That Homeless Housing Can Be Done Quickly and Cheaply,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 2021.
- , “Hundreds of Tents That Lined Venice Beach Are Gone, But Residents Say Job Is Far from Done,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 2022.
- Smith, Doug, and Benjamin Oreskes, “Program to House Homeless People in Hotels Is Ending After Falling Short of Goal,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 2020.
- Smith, Erika D., “Column: A Week Later, Here’s What Happened to Some of the Homeless People Booted from Echo Park,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 3, 2021.
- Solis, Nathan, “L.A. County Clears Homeless Encampment Outside VA Campus; Vets Offered Shelter Inside,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 1, 2021.

Tchekmedyan, Alene, Doug Smith, and Kevin Rector, “Sheriff Villanueva Deploys Deputies to Venice Encampments, but Is He Overstepping His Authority?” *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 2021.

Thompson, Frank J., Jennifer Farnham, Emmy Tiderington, Michael K. Gusmano, and Joel C. Cantor, “Medicaid Waivers and Tenancy Supports for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness: Implementation Challenges in Four States,” *Milbank Quarterly*, Vol. 99, No. 3, September 2021, pp. 648–692.

Tobias, Manuela, “Will Worker Shortage Disrupt California Homeless Strategy?” *CalMatters*, January 27, 2022.

Williams, Jordan, “Judge Orders LA to Offer Housing to Homeless People by October,” *The Hill*, April 21, 2021.

Zahniser, David, “Mike Bonin Recall Drive Failed to Turn In Enough Valid Signatures, City Clerk Says,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 2022.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the RAND Survey Research Group field staff, including April Motola, who dedicated many early mornings and late nights to executing our study. We appreciate the guidance provided by researchers at the University of Southern California, specifically Patricia St. Clair and Benjamin Henwood, who gave us additional insights into the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority’s (LAHSA’s) annual point-in-time count and demographic survey effort. Louis Abramson from Hollywood 4WRD was gracious with his time and shared details on the organization’s efforts to enumerate people experiencing homelessness in the Hollywood area. Homelessness outreach service providers, including the Downtown Women’s Center, the Homeless Health Care Los Angeles ReFresh program, the People Concern, and the St. Joseph Center, also assisted in our efforts. Clementina Verjan at LAHSA allowed us to borrow flashlights for our night enumerations and connected us with helpful individuals at LAHSA and a number of Skid Row service providers. Tiffany Hruby provided administrative assistance throughout the project. We thank our colleague Heather Schwartz at RAND and Randall Kuhn at the University of California, Los Angeles, for providing peer review for this report.



The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous. RAND is nonprofit, nonpartisan, and committed to the public interest.

Research Integrity

Our mission to help improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis is enabled through our core values of quality and objectivity and our unwavering commitment to the highest level of integrity and ethical behavior. To help ensure our research and analysis are rigorous, objective, and nonpartisan, we subject our research publications to a robust and exacting quality-assurance process; avoid both the appearance and reality of financial and other conflicts of interest through staff training, project screening, and a policy of mandatory disclosure; and pursue transparency in our research engagements through our commitment to the open publication of our research findings and recommendations, disclosure of the source of funding of published research, and policies to ensure intellectual independence. For more information, visit www.rand.org/about/principles.

RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. **RAND**® is a registered trademark.

Limited Print and Electronic Distribution Rights

This publication and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law. This representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for noncommercial use only. Unauthorized posting of this publication online is prohibited; linking directly to its webpage on rand.org is encouraged. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of its research products for commercial purposes. For information on reprint and reuse permissions, please visit www.rand.org/pubs/permissions.

For more information on this publication, visit www.rand.org/t/RR-A1890-1.

© 2022 RAND Corporation

www.rand.org

About This Report

Homelessness is a serious problem in Los Angeles, but there is a lack of accurate data on the number and characteristics of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in this area. To better inform the development of effective homelessness policy, RAND researchers set out to determine the number of people experiencing homelessness in Skid Row, Hollywood, Venice, and “Veterans Row”—areas of Los Angeles with historically high concentrations of street homelessness or recent increases in street encampments. The researchers also gathered data on unsheltered individuals’ demographic characteristics, history of homelessness, experiences with the housing system, and housing needs and preferences. In this report, the researchers present results from the first four months of fieldwork. They plan to continue conducting counts and will present the full study findings in a final report.

This research was conducted by the RAND Center on Housing and Homelessness in Los Angeles, part of the Community Health and Environmental Policy Program within RAND Social and Economic Well-Being. The center is focused on providing policymakers and stakeholders with timely research and analysis addressing the crises of housing affordability and homelessness in the Los Angeles region and beyond. For more information, visit www.rand.org/chhla.

Community Health and Environmental Policy Program

RAND Social and Economic Well-Being is a division of the RAND Corporation that seeks to actively improve the health and social and economic well-being of populations and communities throughout the world. This research was conducted in the Community Health and Environmental Policy Program within RAND Social and Economic Well-Being. The program focuses on such topics as infrastructure, science and technology, community design, community health promotion, migration and population dynamics, transportation, energy, and climate and the environment, as well as other policy concerns that are influenced by the natural and built environment, technology, and community organizations and institutions that affect well-being. For more information, email chep@rand.org.

Funding

This research was supported by the Lowy Family, whose generous gift supported the establishment of the RAND Center on Housing and Homelessness in Los Angeles. The portion of this study about veterans was funded by the RAND Epstein Family Veterans Policy Research Institute, which was established from a gift by the Daniel J. Epstein Family Foundation to RAND.