2019 HOMELESS COUNT RESULTS

The Homeless Count offers an insight into the scale and dynamics of Santa Monica’s homeless population. The 2019 Homeless Count numbers held steady overall with 987 people counted. The numbers decreased or remained stable in areas where there were targeted interventions. Through doubling down on outreach efforts, staff and partners made over 34,520 contacts with people experiencing homelessness, connecting them to housing and supportive services when resources were available.

Here are the results:

- The total number of people experiencing homelessness increased from 957 to 987. This is a 3% difference.
- There was a 19% decrease in the unsheltered population in Downtown Santa Monica.
- The unsheltered population increased by 1% (646 to 654) mainly due to an increase in vehicle homelessness.
- The sheltered population increased by 6% (311 to 331) due to the number of people in hospitals rising from 8 to 27.
- Beach count numbers remained stable.
- County numbers – Homelessness increased by 12% to 58,936 people across Los Angeles County, and 19% on the Westside.

This is an important topic for our community.

ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS IN OUR CITY CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

See page 6 for Jill’s story of patience and determination.
2019 BUY LOCAL WINNERS

In May 7th, City officials, business leaders and residents gathered in front of City Hall to announce the winners of the 2019 “Most Loved Santa Monica Businesses” Contest. The “Most Loved Santa Monica Businesses” Contest was launched in 2014 by the Buy Local SM Committee and the Santa Monica Daily Press. Now in its 6th year, the contest has grown by leaps and bounds. From #MostLovedSM surf and bike shops to Santa Monica’s favorite Farmers Market vendor, the call was put out to discover and celebrate the Most Loved Businesses in Santa Monica. The contest invited everyone to vote for which businesses locals can’t live without, the ones that put smiles on our faces when we drop in, and the ones we most want to celebrate because they’re so awesome.

Over 5,000 people voted! To learn more about the winners, visit BuyLocalSm.com/most-loved. Congratulations!

IN A WORLD OF ACCELERATED CHANGE, LET’S HARNESS TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE AN EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL ECONOMY

A Letter from Mayor Gleam Davis

It is exciting to consider the wave of innovation and change expected in the coming years. Scientists will get steps closer to reaching human-level artificial intelligence, allowing machines to handle an even greater share of our responsibilities. Companies will develop and deliver goods and services faster, creating better tailored products and experiences to meet our needs at lower cost. Connections within the digital and physical world will become more seamless, providing even easier access to information.

The interplay of so many innovations will likely result in transformational changes to job and career dynamics, urban and regional transportation, and expectations and behaviors in shopping and personal services. Does this mean that the future of our local economy is within our control? Yes, provided we embrace and prepare for it.

We need to understand the potential implications of emerging technologies, and it is critical to determine what we want our future regional economy to look like. We face major issues that we must address regardless of the innovations that arrive in coming years - issues like income inequality, job stability, climate change, housing affordability and traffic. What does our desired future look like in the Los Angeles region, and how will technologies and disruption help or hinder us on our course to reach it?

As we wrestle with the automation of jobs, the stampede of new mobility options, and the ability to order anything at any time, we are already feeling the impacts of accelerating change. Now is the time to strategize how we, as individual communities and as a region, can navigate a rapidly changing future to improve community wellbeing, expand economic opportunity, address historical inequities, and reduce human impact on the environment.

If we hesitate at this moment, we may not have a say in how the future plays out, and we risk losing the opportunity to incorporate advances in technology into a holistic plan that builds a more just and sustainable economy. If we wait to see what befalls us year after year, it will grow increasingly difficult to develop policies, build infrastructure, and provide services that may protect against the whirlwind of disruption.

New technology can be a useful tool, or it can be a trap. We believe that we can shape an economy that effectively serves our community for generations to come through careful management of innovations, but we do not yet have a roadmap on how to do so. In Santa Monica, we have begun the daunting task of cataloging anticipated trends with the intention of incorporating our learnings into a long-term economic strategy to guide our community (visit SantaMonica.gov/EconomicFuture for more information).

Santa Monica is only 8.3 square miles, tucked in 4,751 total square miles of Los Angeles County. We're tackling these issues now, but to be truly successful, we need to work together as a region. We are at a unique moment in time where technology will likely upend many of the ways our region functions.

We need to collaborate among the private, public, non-profit and academic sectors to foster a resilient regional economy that embraces and productively harnesses disruption.
HOUSING AFFECTS EVERYONE

The burden of housing costs in Santa Monica isn’t just affecting low-income families. It is weighing down even middle-class community members with well-paying jobs. As we witness an increasing number of people forced onto the streets because of high housing costs, we are also seeing more middle-class families struggling to find affordable, safe and decent housing.

The City of Santa Monica has long been committed to providing affordable housing for everyone. Not only is this due to our dedication to fostering inclusivity and diversity, but also because we know the larger impact housing can have on our community and beyond.

As Mayor Gleam Davis recently said at the City’s Housing Crisis Panel, if we don’t address the housing crisis, “it is eventually going to harm our economy.” Census Bureau data shows that in the last ten years, a million more people left California than moved in, with most moving to states with lower housing costs. If companies can’t find workers, they will move to places where they can.

SO HOW IS THE CITY ADDRESSING THIS CRISIS?

The City supports the creation of housing at all affordability levels. We’ve invested in the production and preservation of affordable housing and utilized regulatory mechanisms that support the creation of housing. Preserving Our Diversity (POD) Program is a great example of how the City aims to achieve its goal of maintaining economic diversity. You can read more about the program on page 4.

We have two established local non-profit organizations dedicated to this issue. One focuses on family housing, rehabilitating and deed-restricting existing housing, and the other focuses on housing homeless people living with mental illness. We have also partnered with non-profits throughout the region to create other types of affordable housing, including senior housing and housing for people with disabilities.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DOESN’T COME WITHOUT STRUGGLES

Although we are making strides in creating affordable housing, we still face significant challenges. Land and building costs are escalating rapidly in all of our communities. We are also addressing concerns to ensure that new housing does not detract from the existing quality of life. And even with a local sales tax for affordable housing, we still feel the loss of our local redevelopment agencies in terms of the amount of funding we could dedicate to affordable housing.

LOOKING AHEAD

We are optimistic about the new funds coming from the state to support affordable housing, as well as opportunities to revive tax-increment financing for affordable housing. We are also exploring means to reduce the cost of creating affordable housing. One real opportunity is to take the cost of land out of the equation by promoting the development of affordable housing on publicly owned land.

Santa Monica has been on the forefront of maintaining an inclusive and diverse community for decades, and we have the local community to thank. In 2017, more than 60% of voters supported Measure GSH to increase the sales tax and bring in approximately $7-8 million annually to support more affordable housing. The City will continue to evaluate other opportunities to support this very important issue.

For more information on housing, visit santamonica.gov/housing.

RULES OF THE ROAD ARE BEING ENFORCED

Throughout the summer, Santa Monica Police officers will be citing violations made by bicyclists, e-scooter riders, drivers and pedestrians that put roadway users at risk. These violations include drivers speeding, making illegal turns, failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, riding on sidewalks, failing to stop for signs and signals or any other dangerous violation.

City Code Enforcement Officers continue to respond to complaints, and track, document, and issue citations for violations in the Public Right of Way. The City has procured additional support from a contractor to assist with violation documentation and impounding vehicles through the busy summer months.

For more information, contact Code Enforcement at (310) 458-4984.

SANTA MONICA’S COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SANTA MONICA’S COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SANTA MONICA’S COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SANTA MONICA’S COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Q: WHAT IS THE POD PROGRAM?
A: The Preserving Our Diversity (POD) program provides financial assistance to extremely low-income, long-term Santa Monica residents, aged 65 and older, who live in rent-controlled apartments and whose inability to pay rent may result in displacement from Santa Monica.

Q: WHAT’S THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM?
A: The purpose of the POD Program is to maintain economic diversity in the community by providing rental assistance to these residents. A secondary benefit is that the Program will collect data about the magnitude of rent-burden among lower income households, including extremely low- and very low-income renter households.

Q: ANY UPDATES FOR THIS YEAR?
A: City Council is currently considering expanding the POD program to reach 200 to 400 senior households and merge the wait lists for affordable housing maintained by the City and various nonprofits. For more information, contact Housing at 310.458.8743 or visit smgov.net/pod.
SIDEWALK VENDING: HOW TO BE A SMART CONSUMER

Recently, the Santa Monica City Council approved new laws for a comprehensive sidewalk vending program to create a pathway for vending in spaces that were formerly restricted. The Council acted in response to the state’s passage of the Safe Sidewalk Vending Act, which decriminalized street vending in public areas. The new program puts public health and safety at the forefront and expands economic opportunities for those who choose to vend lawfully under the program. With these new laws, it is important for residents and consumers to know how to make smart choices when purchasing goods from sidewalk vendors.

When buying from a sidewalk vendor, it is important to only make purchases from those vendors who have a Vending Permit issued by the City of Santa Monica. This permit—which vendors are required to display via a decal fixed to their cart or worn on a badge—indicates that the vendor is lawfully operating in the city and has taken the proper steps to sell their goods.

If the vendor you are buying from is selling food, it is also important to make sure that the vendor has a valid Los Angeles County issued Public Health Permit. This permit, displayed with a colored sticker containing the county seal, shows that the vendor is in compliance with all county and state food safety regulations and is safely selling their food items in the area. Not having this permit could mean that:

- The vendor doesn’t have clean water on site to wash their hands or utensils;
- There are unsanitary conditions, which could include unclean food equipment;
- Food was obtained from an unapproved source;
- Food is being stored at unsafe temperatures, which can promote the growth of harmful and dangerous bacteria;
- Food is not being protected from contamination.

Such conditions all pose a danger to public health and can result in you becoming ill. Limiting food purchases to vendors who have properly obtained a Public Health Permit will minimize the risks to your health.

This new program also restricts sidewalk vending in certain locations in Downtown as well as at the Pier and beach. These congested, high-traffic areas are restricted or limited due to the public safety risks that sidewalk vending activities can create. For more information, visit santamonica.gov/vending.

JULY IS PARKS & RECREATION MONTH

Santa Monica is internationally known for its iconic beach and world-class public spaces. It also boasts beautiful neighborhood parks, innovative health and wellness opportunities, ample sports and aquatic facilities, and enriching outdoor community events. The City of Santa Monica is encouraging our community to get outdoors to enjoy our bountiful Parks & Recreation amenities. Celebrate Parks & Recreation Month by getting active outdoors.

Here are some ideas to help you get started:

- Reserve a BBQ area at Virginia Avenue Park, the newest location to be added to the BBQ reservation program. smgov.net/bbq.
- Make it a great family day at the beach by visiting the North Beach Playground, the newest universally accessible playground santamonicaparks.org/north-beach-playground.
- Register for a recreational class or day camp activity at locations across the City santamonica.gov/recscape.
- Go for a quick ride on the ramps and bowls at The Cove Skatepark, located at Memorial Park smgov.net/thecove.
- Get your crew together and head to the Annenberg Community Beach House pool for Sunset Swims, an 18+ monthly aquatics event with a chill vibe annenbergcommunitybeachhouse.com.
- Everyone from the family can enjoy the pool during Family Splash Days at the Santa Monica Swim Center with games, activities, and more santamonicaswimcenter.org.
- Every heard of Pickleball? It’s part badminton, part tennis, all fun. Drop by the Memorial Park tennis courts every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday smgov.net/pickleball.
- Join the family fun with musical performances or fun recreational activities offered free every Saturday at Reed Park this June or July santamonica.gov/meetmeatreed.

These are just a few of the many fun events and activities available throughout the summer. See you outside this July!
So What’s Next?

This work is hard and our focus on this important community topic continues. Building on the learnings of these successful strategies, the following next steps are planned for 2019, based on the Council’s unanimous vote of approval:

- Work with neighboring communities through the Westside Cities Council of Governments’ homelessness strategic planning process to address regional needs.
- Create 140 permanent supportive housing units for homeless Santa Monicans and encourage other communities to do the same.
- Explore the feasibility of a behavioral health center in Santa Monica.
- Proceed with a feasibility analysis of possible sites for the replacement of the SAMOSHEL shelter and associated community engagement process.
- Advance the development of an innovation fund as a way to leverage the generosity of private entities interested in contributing to homelessness solutions.
- Continue funding to the City, County, Community (C3) teams to expand the current contract and explore additional funding to create a new C3 team possibly focused on the beach.
- Increase the number of officers in the Santa Monica Police Department Homeless Liaison Program to ten by September 2019, and propose to hire two additional officers by December 2019.
- Expand the capacity of the Preserving Our Diversity (POD) program to include additional participants (more on page 4).
- Leverage the Santa Monica Fire Department’s unique role in the community to connect housed vulnerable populations with the right resources to prevent homelessness and expand data collection of these incidents (more on page 7).
- Support siting of new homeless programs in neighboring communities outside of Santa Monica and to ensure that local nonprofits have adequate new resources to build capacity to meet growing demand created by expansion of homelessness services.
- Increase Beach Outreach Coordination by strengthening relationships between West Coast Care and businesses along Ocean Front Walk to increase engagement and homeless service connection.

For ways to get involved in homelessness in Santa Monica, visit weare.santamonica.gov.
SANTA MONICA FIRE DEPARTMENT’S CRUCIAL ROLE IN HELPING HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

More than 20% of 911 responses in Santa Monica are for someone experiencing homelessness. As a first responder to these service calls, the Santa Monica Fire Department (SMFD) plays a key role in identifying and connecting vulnerable individuals with local healthcare providers, homeless services and permanent housing.

From January to June this year, the SMFD conducted a 6-month pilot program called the Community Response Unit (CRU). The goal of this program was to improve the safety, health, and wellbeing of our community’s most vulnerable populations. In the last few months, SMFD met with dozens of providers across the City to build relationships between them and the Fire Department. The program targeted four activities as part of its mission: prevention, education, engagement and response.

For more ways to get involved in homelessness in Santa Monica, visit WeAre.SantaMonica.gov or attend a Homelessness Steering Committee Meeting by contacting homelessness@smgov.net.

MEET JILL

Patience and Determination: How Jill Worked Her Way Out of Homelessness

Santa Monica is committed to finding solutions for the city’s homelessness crisis. In searching for solutions, we find it’s invaluable to listen to the stories of those that have experienced homelessness firsthand. That’s why we sat down with Jill one afternoon.

Jill is still reckoning with the years she spent in homelessness. Talking to her, you get the sense that she may never get over the shock that it happened to her.

Jill was supporting herself when an unaddressed mental health problem reared its head, and she was soon left without a job or place to lay her head at night. She says that time was marked with feelings of pain, shame, fear, and humiliation. And even though she’s been housed for five years now, she says the PTSD of the experience still lingers today.

Navigating a Way Forward

Jill’s transition out of homelessness began when a friend whose couch she was staying on handed her a list of shelters and resources for people experiencing homelessness. She got in touch with one of the agencies listed – OPCC (now known as The People Concern) – and they were able to get her an emergency bed at Daybreak Shelter. She spent the night on a cot among dozens of strangers in a large room. The lights didn’t even turn all the way off at night. Needless to say, she didn’t sleep well. But it was a first step.

Many steps would follow before Jill found herself permanently housed - like procuring a Section 8 voucher and meeting with case workers, doctors, and others involved in homeless rehabilitation. The process was, at times, overwhelming. She concentrated on trusting in a higher power and simply taking one step at a time.

And she waited. For over a year. That was perhaps the most frustrating part. Even after all the steps had been completed, she just had to wait for an apartment to become available. Eventually -- one did, and it just so happens to be so close to the ocean that she feels like she went, in her words, from a “park bench to Park Place.”

Saying ‘Hello’

Today, Jill says ‘hello’ to everyone she comes across in Santa Monica, and she makes an extra effort to say ‘hello’ to those people who are experiencing homelessness. Having been homeless herself, she knows the feeling of being looked past and ignored simply because of her housing status – how people avoid eye contact and turn away. She remembers how dehumanizing that felt. She hopes that by simply saying ‘hello’, she can help counteract the sense of alienation and separateness many people experiencing homelessness feel. She hopes that by saying ‘hello’ she can help restore to them a sense of their own personhood.

A lot of times, she doesn’t stop at saying hello. If someone is willing to talk, she’ll talk. She’ll tell them about her own experience with homelessness. She’ll tell them how to get connected to services. She’ll even volunteer to go with them to take that first step to get help. It’s like an individual grassroots advocacy effort, extending a hand to whoever happens to be standing in front of her.

Jill encourages others to say hello too, as long as they feel safe in the situation. She says a little compassion goes a long way.
JULY 2019 EVENTS

The Santa Monica City Council meets every month in the Council Chamber, City Hall, 1685 Main Street. Upcoming Council meetings:

**Tuesday, July 23, 5:30 P.M.**

Meeting dates occasionally change. Visit smgov.net/council to confirm schedule and smgov.net/council/agendas to view agenda items. Meetings are broadcast live on City TV channel 16, and streamed at YouTube.com/santa Monica. Meetings are on 89.9 KCRW, 8 p.m. to midnight.

All Council meetings are open to the public. Public comment may be made in person at any meeting, or prior to the meeting via regular U.S. mail, email, or by fax to:

City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Room 209
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Phone: 310.458.8201 | Fax: 310.458.1621
Email all Council members: council@smgov.net

Seascape is a publication of the City of Santa Monica, designed to inform residents about City programs and services. Please email comments to communications@smgov.net or mail to:

Seascape
City of Santa Monica
1685 Main Street, PO Box 2200
Santa Monica, CA 90407-2200

Seascape is printed on recycled paper. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Seascape is available in alternate formats by calling the City’s Message Center at 310.458.3031 (TTY/TDD 310.394.6011).

---

For updates on meetings for Boards, Commissions and Task Forces, go to smgov.net/clerk or call 310.458.8411.

**Airport Commission**
JULY 22, 6:30 P.M. AT CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

**Architectural Review Board**
JULY 1 AND 15, 5:30 P.M. AT CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

**Arts Commission**
JULY 15, 6:30 P.M. AT KEN EDWARDS CENTER

**Commission for the Senior Community**
JULY 17, 1:30 P.M. AT KEN EDWARDS CENTER

**Commission of the Status of Women**
JULY 10, 7 P.M. AT KEN EDWARDS CENTER

**Disabilities Commission**
JULY 18, 6:30 P.M. AT KEN EDWARDS CENTER

**Housing Commission**
JULY 18, 4:30 P.M. AT KEN EDWARDS CENTER

**Landmarks Commission**
JULY 8, 7 P.M. AT CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

**Library Board**
JULY 4, 7 P.M. AT MAIN LIBRARY

**Planning Commission**
JULY 3 AND 17, 7 P.M. AT CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

**Recreation and Parks Commission**
JULY 18, 7:30 P.M. AT CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

**Social Services Commission**
JULY 22, 7 P.M. AT KEN EDWARDS CENTER

City of Santa Monica’s Guide to Community Involvement
Sign Up Today! SANTAMONICA.GOV/RESCAPE

---

he City of Santa Monica offers more than a hundred events each month. Check out the whole list at santamonica.gov/events and subscribe to the City’s newsletter at smgov.net/newsletter.