City of Santa Clara's Citywide Plan to Reduce Homelessness and Its Impacts

Draft

July 8, 2025

Prepared by the City of Santa Clara in partnership with Homebase.

Acknowledgements

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About Homebase

The City contracted with Homebase—a national technical assistance provider on homelessness—to facilitate a Homelessness Taskforce to help prioritize the City's resources and efforts and develop this draft plan in partnership with the City. Homebase is a nonprofit dedicated to building community capacity to prevent and end homelessness.

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Introduction and Background

The City Planning Process

The issue of homelessness has become increasingly visible, urgent, and complex for many cities in the Bay Area, and the City of Santa Clara is no exception. As housing costs continue to soar, so do the number of people experiencing homelessness in our community. While cities often cannot solve the issues relating to homelessness on their own, they do have a critical role to play in reducing homelessness, and the City of Santa Clara is committed to doing its part.

While homelessness is a very local experience, it's a regional challenge. In Santa Clara County, as is the case across much of the Bay Area, cities are adjacent to one another, and people – housed and unhoused alike – regularly cross city lines, even when only traveling a few miles or even blocks. They may live in one city, work in another, and shop or visit friends or family in a third, all within a given day, week, or month.

Understanding both the nature of homelessness and strategies for addressing it in the City of Santa Clara requires focusing on the City and its neighborhoods. It also requires awareness of the realities of homelessness across the County, as well as resources and strategies for addressing the issue County-wide.

> *"Every member of our community deserves a safe and stable home—and it is our collective responsibility to make this vision a reality."*
>
> *– Community Plan to End Homelessness in Santa Clara County*

In this spirit of community, compassion, and collaboration, and recognizing the need for locally-focused efforts as well as regional approaches and collaboration, the City of Santa Clara sought to develop a Citywide Plan to Reduce Homelessness and its Impacts (City Plan) that would draw from and complement the broader efforts already underway as part of the 2020-25 Santa Clara County Community Plan to End Homelessness (Community Plan).

Community Plan to End Homelessness in Santa Clara County

In 2019, the County of Santa Clara Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) and a variety of partners embarked on a strategic planning process that spanned nearly a year, included a variety of community engagement opportunities surveys, focus groups, interviews, community meetings, and meetings with City departments, and culminated in the countywide Community Plan.

The Santa Clara City Council endorsed the Community Plan in March 2021, and this City Plan was developed to align with the three key strategies adopted in the Community Plan:

Strategy 1: Address the root causes of homelessness through system and policy change

"The system we live in has created social, economic, and racial disparities and it will take monumental shifts in policies and priorities to make effective change."

Strategy 2: Expand homelessness prevention and housing programs to meet the need

"To end homelessness, we will need to continue to build capacity to provide a broad array of housing and services over the next five years."

Strategy 3: Improve quality of life for unsheltered individuals and create healthy neighborhoods for all

Even with strategies in place to prevent and end homelessness for as many people as possible, "the reality is that many people will remain unhoused due to an extreme housing crisis and increasing income inequality."

City of Santa Clara Homelessness Taskforce

To help achieve its planning goals, the City convened a Homelessness Taskforce in March 2022, which brought together diverse lived experiences to help the City identify and prioritize the feasible strategies it could and should implement, keeping in mind what City resources are available, where the City's expertise and influence is strongest, and what countywide systems and resources are in place.

Members of the Taskforce included both members of the community and representatives from homeless service agencies. Eight community members were selected from a pool of over 130 applicants, and represent a diverse set of backgrounds, including the following:

- Each City Council district is represented by one member,
- Four members have lived experience of homelessness, and
- Five members represent local agencies.

The purpose of the Taskforce was to provide input and make recommendations to inform the City Plan, including by:

- Helping to identify both what the City and County are already doing well and gaps that exist in resources and efforts to address homelessness specifically in the City of Santa Clara;
- Brainstorming potential strategies to reduce and fill those gaps; and
- Helping to prioritize strategies and actions that are within the City's capacity and control in order to reduce homelessness and its impacts within the City.

The Taskforce also helped guide and support the community engagement process.

Members of the public were able to listen in and view monthly Taskforce meetings from April to October 2022, submit questions and comments, and participate in other community engagement opportunities (see below).

Community Engagement
Throughout the planning process, feedback was gathered from community members over a period of six months in 2022 from a diverse set of stakeholders and the community at-large. The community engagement process included outreach to many sectors throughout the City and Santa Clara County, including community members, people with lived experience of homelessness, businesses, service providers, and City staff.

The community engagement process included the following opportunities to provide feedback:

- 4 focus groups with people with lived experience of homelessness, housing and services providers, community members, and City staff;
- Survey of the business community on how homelessness has impacted their businesses and employees with 276 respondents;
- 12 interviews with people with lived experience of homelessness;
- 6 Homelessness Taskforce Meetings open to the public;
- Community Forum open to all members of the public for participation; and
- Public comment submitted via email and during Taskforce meetings.

In addition to the feedback sources throughout the community engagement process, the following data sources were also consulted as part of this Plan.

- 2022 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey Data
- Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) Data
- Additional reports and background information shared with Homebase by City staff

The City sought feedback from the community on the draft framework of the City Plan from October-December 2022. The draft framework was presented at a City Council study session on January 10, 2023. This City Plan incorporates the City Council's feedback on the draft framework.

A Snapshot of Homelessness in the City of Santa Clara
This section provides a brief snapshot of data on people experiencing homelessness in the City of Santa Clara to provide some initial context for the City Plan as compared to the countywide Community Plan.

Every other year, the County conducts the Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey, a visual Point in Time (PIT) count of people experiencing homelessness on a single night.[1] When multiple years'

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[1] The Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey uses the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of "homeless" and includes people sleeping outside, in vehicles, in any place not meant for humans to live, as well as in emergency shelter and transitional housing. It does not include people who are living in overcrowded housing, who are couch surfing, or are paying for their own hotel room.

worth of PIT Count data is reviewed, it provides the best data available on the number and characteristics of people experiencing homelessness over time. Due to COVID-19, the 2021 count was pushed back a year and was conducted in February 2022.

Homeless Census and Survey: Number of People Experiencing Homelessness Over Time
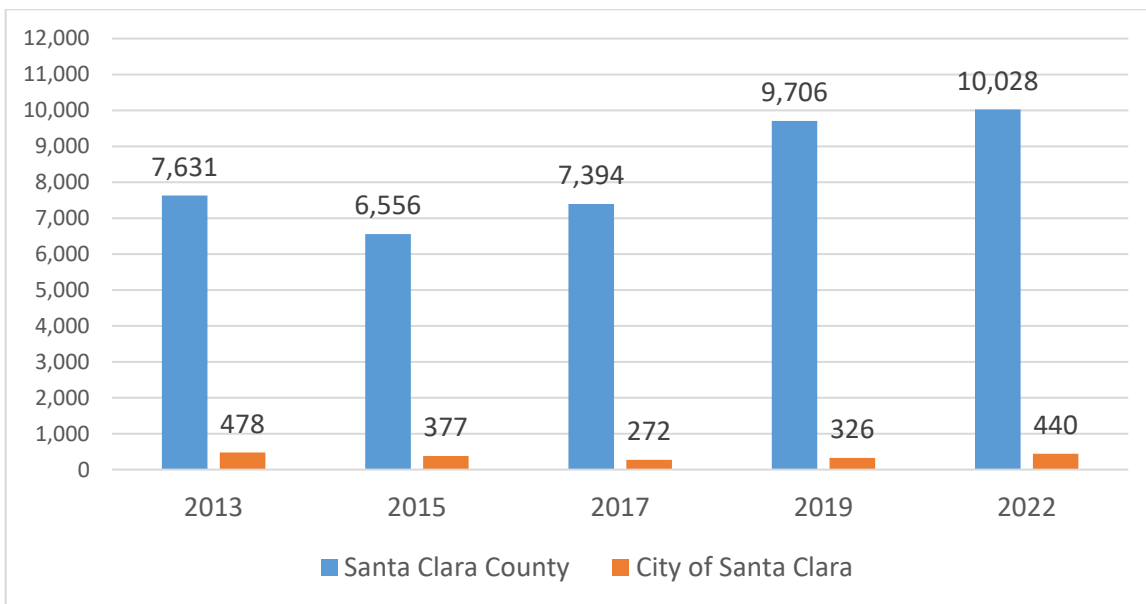
The Homeless Census and Survey is an important source of information about population trends; however, the number of people who experience homelessness in the City over the course of a year is likely much higher than what a point-in-time count represents. This is because a point-in-time count only measures the number of people who are homeless on a given day. It does not account for the many people who fall in and out of homelessness during the rest of the year.

The 2022 Homeless Census and Survey revealed that the vast majority of people who are experiencing homelessness were in Santa Clara County when they lost their housing. This is consistent with data from previous years.

2022 Homeless Census and Survey: Residence when Housing Was Lost
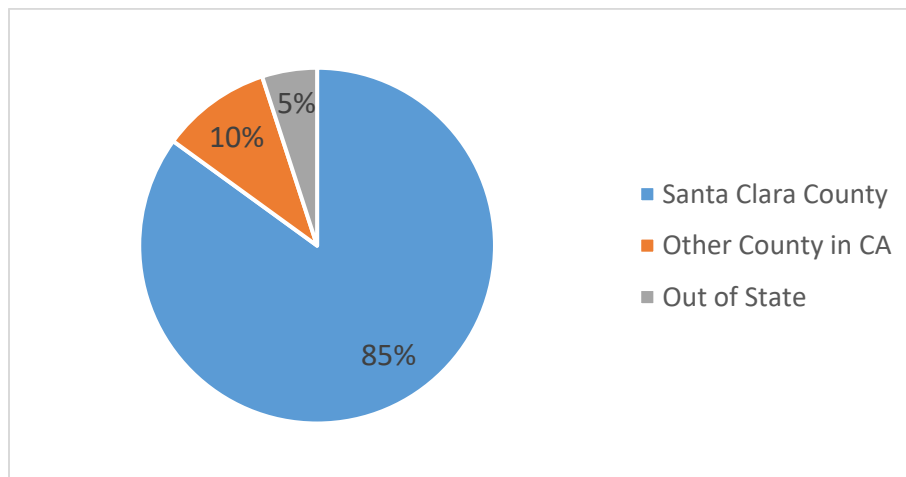
Overview of Existing Resources and Programs

The Supportive Housing System in Santa Clara County

Homelessness is a regional issue, and many of the services and programs available to City of Santa Clara residents are part of a countywide system supported by various funders, including the County of Santa Clara. The City of Santa Clara contributes resources to this countywide system, in addition to the targeted services it provides within the city itself.

Homelessness Prevention

The countywide Homelessness Prevention System provides flexible financial assistance and resources for households at risk of losing their housing. In addition to financial support, partner agencies offer case management, legal services, employment assistance, landlord mediation, and financial coaching.

Supportive Housing

Countywide, there are a range of supportive housing programs, each of which offers help finding and paying for housing, as well as connections to vital resources and supports that help people remain stably housed. The majority of these programs, including long-term permanent supportive housing and time-limited rapid rehousing and transitional housing programs, accept any resident of Santa Clara County, regardless of city. Many of these services require clients to travel to offices for services or to apply online which may be difficult if a client has low or limited literacy skills, lacks internet access, lacks skills to use technology, or lacks access to transportation.

Coordinated Entry System

The Santa Clara County Coordinated Entry System provides a streamlined, centralized system that identifies and prioritizes individuals and families experiencing homelessness with housing resources within a county-wide inventory of roughly 6,000 supportive housing units. Placements are based on the acuity of client's needs. It is important to have trained outreach workers who can locate unhoused residents, build trust, and conduct assessments so that clients can be eligible for supportive housing placement. Unfortunately, the demand for supportive housing far exceeds the supply and many high need clients remain unhoused.

Emergency Shelter

As of January 2023, 1,640 emergency shelter beds across Santa Clara County offer places to sleep inside for people experiencing homelessness. During fiscal year 2024, a total of 780 individuals with a connection to the City of Santa Clara enrolled at an emergency shelter somewhere in Santa Clara County.

Here4You Call Center

In 2022, Santa Clara County, in partnership with the Bill Wilson Center, launched the Here4You Call Center, which provides housing problem solving services and centralized referrals to emergency shelters to resolve the immediate housing crises of Santa Clara County residents. The Call Center also provides transportation to emergency shelter when necessary.

Behavioral Health Services

The Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services Department offers a wide range of behavioral health services to ensure that residents of Santa Clara County have access to help when they need it. City of Santa Clara residents can access services through the Mental Health Call Center or the Substance Use Services Call Center.[2] Some of the programs offered by the County include but are not limited to, targeted outreach to housed and unhoused high utilizers of emergency services and a Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) that can respond to individuals in crisis who exhibit mental health symptoms or who may be suicidal to deliver crisis intervention, de-escalation services, and connections to community resources throughout the county. More outreach is needed to help connect clients with resources and emergency shelter while they wait for permanent housing and before their health deteriorates further.

Resources in the City of Santa Clara

While many programs and services to reduce homelessness and its impact are countywide, the City of Santa Clara also has existing and ongoing efforts to address the issue. This section outlines the programs, services, and resources located within the City of Santa Clara that are available to people currently or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Extremely Low-Income and Supportive Housing:

Extremely low-income (ELI) housing is housing with a particular focus on households that are between 0% to 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI). These income limits are established annually by the California Department of Housing and Community Development. Effective April 2025, this amount was a maximum income of $60,250 for a family of four living in Santa Clara County.[3] Notably, 5,725 Santa Clara Households are ELI. In total, City has invested in 1,286 units of affordable housing, 306 of which are for Extremely Low Income (ELI) residents.

Supportive Housing is affordable housing that includes wrap-around services for residents to live and thrive in their home. The City invests in intensive case management for individuals residing in permanent supportive housing.

The City has supported the development of new extremely low-income and supportive housing through the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond:

Calabazas Community Apartments:

The first supportive housing complex in the City of Santa Clara, Calabazas Community Apartments, broke ground in December 2019. The 145- unit apartment building is now home to a diverse group of low-income individuals and families, some of whom previously experienced homelessness. Supportive services offered for residents include case management, social services, job assistance, financial literacy, computer training, and health education.

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[2] https://bhsd.sccgov.org/home

[3] State Income Limits for 2025. State of California Department of Housing and Community Development, Division of Housing Policy Development. https://www.hcd.ca.gov/sites/default/files/docs/grants-and-funding/income-limits-2025.pdf

Agrihood Senior Apartments:

Agrihood Senior Apartments is a 165 affordable unit development in progress, which will consist of 70 studios, 83 one-bedrooms, 10 two-bedrooms, as well as two resident manager units. A portion of the units will be leased to qualifying senior veterans and 54 of the units will be set aside as permanent supportive housing for households experiencing homelessness.

Kifer Senior Apartments:

Kifer Senior Apartments, currently in development, will consist of 79 affordable apartments. 45 of the units will be reserved as Permanent Supportive Housing (including resident manager units) for older adults with special needs, 17 will be available to households earning up to 30% of area median income, and 17 will be available to households earning up to 50% of area median income.

1601 Civic Center Drive:

1601 Civic Center Drive is currently in predevelopment. The project has been entitled and proposes to build 106 new ELI/VLI housing units including 27 Rapid Rehousing units. The City committed funding in late 2023 but a funding gap remains.

The City continues to identify resources, locations, and development opportunities for additional affordable housing units. The City allocates most of its affordable housing funds for households earning less than 80 percent of the County median income, and it recognizes the need for supportive housing for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities.

Crisis Response

While the City of Santa Clara works to increase its affordable housing supply, a process that takes years, it has invested in homelessness prevention and crisis response to ensure the city remains a safe and clean community for all, and to ensure that individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness have resources to meet their basic needs. The following are services supported by the City of Santa Clara that are available to city residents experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing housing, as well as services provided by other community partners that are located within the city.

Homelessness Prevention

The City contributes $50,000 a year to the County of Santa Clara's Homeless Prevention System. The Homeless Prevention System is comprised of a network of 20 community partners collaborating to stabilize housing for at-risk households, serving community members with vastly diverse lived experiences and of different cultures, ages, and household compositions.

Rental Assistance

The City, in partnership with Abode Services, funds a Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program of approximately $1,000,000 combined each year. TBRA provides housing assistance in the form of deposits and rental subsidies for up to 12 months, along with case management services, to families with children experiencing homelessness, those fleeing domestic violence, or families with children that are at risk of homelessness for households at or below 60% Average Median Income.

Outreach

The City's Police Department includes a Community Response Team that conducts outreach while not in uniform to respond to crises and connect people experiencing homelessness to existing services. While the team does not conduct housing assessments for the County's supportive housing system, it does facilitate assessments with partnering entities.

Encampment Cleanup

The City has an agreement with Tucker Construction to provide encampment cleanup services in the City. The Police Department's Community Response Team coordinates with other City departments as needed and partners with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department, transportation agencies, private property owners, and others to conduct clean-up and abatement.

Basic Needs

The City, in partnership with WeHope, is piloting a service that provides weekly mobile shower and laundry service for unsheltered individuals.

The City, in coordination with United Way, provides funding of $5,000 per year for 2-1-1 telephone-based services to help residents locate shelter and food. United Way 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember, three-digit number that families and individuals can call to obtain free and confidential information on health and human services. This service is available in a variety of languages.

Case Management

The City, through NextDoor Solutions, funds $30,000/year for comprehensive support services for survivors of domestic/intimate partner violence to address crisis, safety, stability, and self-sufficiency needs. These services aim to assist the survivor in developing self-efficacy to address immediate, short, and long-term goals and address the client's needs.

The City, in partnership with the County Office of Supportive Housing, funds $125,000/year for intensive case management for residents of permanent supportive housing.

Interim and Transitional Housing

Covenant House provides transitional housing for youth experiencing homelessness ages 18-24 for up to two years. The program includes onsite case management, mental health counseling, education and employment support, and access to long-term housing opportunities.

The Bill Wilson Center, partially funded by the City of Santa Clara, provides short-term housing for youth ages 11-17 experiencing homelessness, transitional and supportive housing services for youth and young adults ages 17-21, as well as assistance for young-parent families.

Resources for Community Development partnered with the County to rehabilitate the Bella Vista Inn on El Camino Real. The site will operate as interim housing for 1-2 years and will convert to permanent supportive housing once phase two, which includes new units, are constructed.

There continues to be a need in Santa Clara for non-congregate interim housing for adults.

Behavioral and Mental Health Crisis Response

City staff regularly coordinates with the Momentum Health Trusted Response Urgent Support Team (TRUST) program to help residents during urgent mental health or substance use situations. TRUST is a community-driven mobile mental health crisis response team composed of specially trained community residents including those who have first-hand experience with mental health challenges; crisis intervention specialists; and first aid provider/responders. TRUST teams are different from other County-supported mental health crisis response teams, as they respond without involving law enforcement. The TRUST team can be reached through the suicide crisis line at 9-8-8.

The Santa Clara Police Department also coordinates closely with the Santa Clara County Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT). PERT is a crisis intervention model that pairs a licensed mental health clinician with a law enforcement officer to respond to calls in real time involving people in active, acute mental health crises.

Community Needs and Gaps

The needs and gaps below were identified through the analysis of community data about homelessness in the City of Santa Clara, as well as input during Homelessness Taskforce meeting discussions, focus groups with a variety of stakeholders, feedback from a Community Forum event, public comments, and feedback and information from City staff.

Source of Quantitative Data

The primary data source for this analysis is the Santa Clara County Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS).[4] HMIS is a very useful source of data because it is a widely used system. Most people who are accessing any type of homeless-specific resource are reflected in HMIS, and all providers who use HMIS collect and enter the same data in the same way. HMIS is also able to show more than just a single point in time; it can provide data about everyone who interacted with a homeless system service provider over a period.

As with any data source, there are limitations to the data available in HMIS. The primary limitation is that HMIS only contains information about people who connect with homeless-dedicated services. For example, if someone is sleeping in their car and hasn't interacted with outreach workers or accessed any other type of housing assistance or shelter, they aren't reflected in HMIS.

The analysis below uses self-reported data in HMIS to identify individuals and families with connections to the City of Santa Clara, including those who:

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[4] Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. Not all homeless service providers participate in data collection; however, participation by providers in Santa Clara County is very high.

2) Currently live in the City;
3) Lived in the City immediately prior to losing housing;
4) Work or attend school in the city; or
5) Spend most of their time in the city.

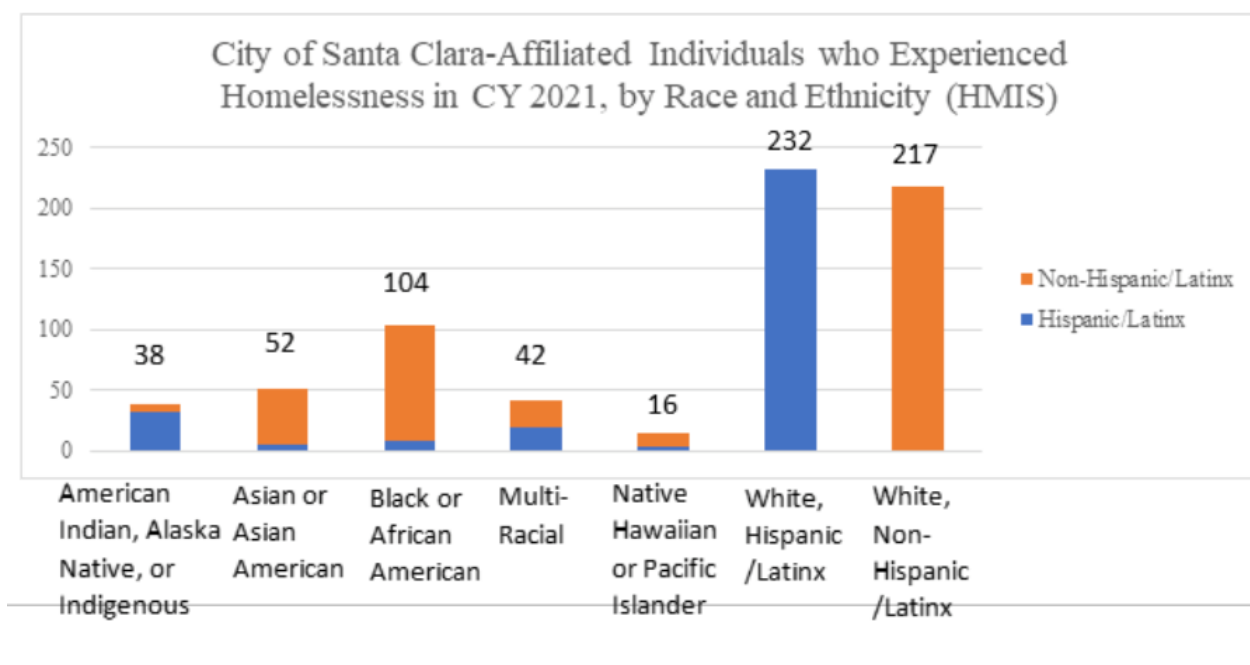**People Experiencing Homelessness Who are Connected to the City of Santa Clara**

During calendar year 2021, a total of 769 individuals experiencing homelessness with a connection to the City of Santa Clara were recorded in HMIS.[5] HMIS data reveals that over half of those experiencing homelessness have a disability, and approximately one third have experienced domestic violence.

City of Santa Clara-Affiliated Individuals who Experienced Homelessness in CY 2021 (HMIS)	
Total	**769**
Youth and Young Adults (aged 0-24)	132 (17%)
Older Adults (aged 55+)	231 (30%)
With a Disability	453 (59%)
Met the Definition of "Chronically Homeless"[6]	384 (50%)
With Experience of Domestic Violence	264 (34%)

Demographic information collected in HMIS illustrates the racial and ethnic makeup of this population. The chart below breaks down each response category for race by ethnicity response (Hispanic/Latinx or Non-Hispanic/Non-Latinx). The response category "White" is displayed in two separate bars, broken out by ethnicity response, due to the relatively high number of individuals identifying as White. Of 769 individuals, a total of 352 (46%) identified as Hispanic or Latinx.

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[5] Most projects that enter data into HMIS use the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of "homeless," which includes people sleeping outside, in vehicles, in any place not meant for humans to live, as well as in emergency shelter and transitional housing. It does not include people who are living in overcrowded housing, who are couch surfing, or are paying for their own hotel room.

[6] The federal definition of "Chronically Homeless" includes people who have a disabling condition that impacts their housing stability and have experienced homelessness for at least 12 months.

City of Santa Clara-Affiliated Individuals who Experienced Homelessness in CY 2021, by Race and Ethnicity (HMIS)

As the above graph shows, the largest category of people experiencing homelessness connected to the City are people who identify as white and Hispanic or Latinx, followed by people who identify as white and non-Hispanic.

The demographics of City of Santa Clara households experiencing homelessness are particularly relevant when compared to the overall population. As the charts below show, people of certain races and ethnicities are disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness. In other words: certain races and ethnicities are more likely to experience homelessness than others.[7]

Identifying as Black or African American

Identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native

Identifying as Hispanic or Latinx
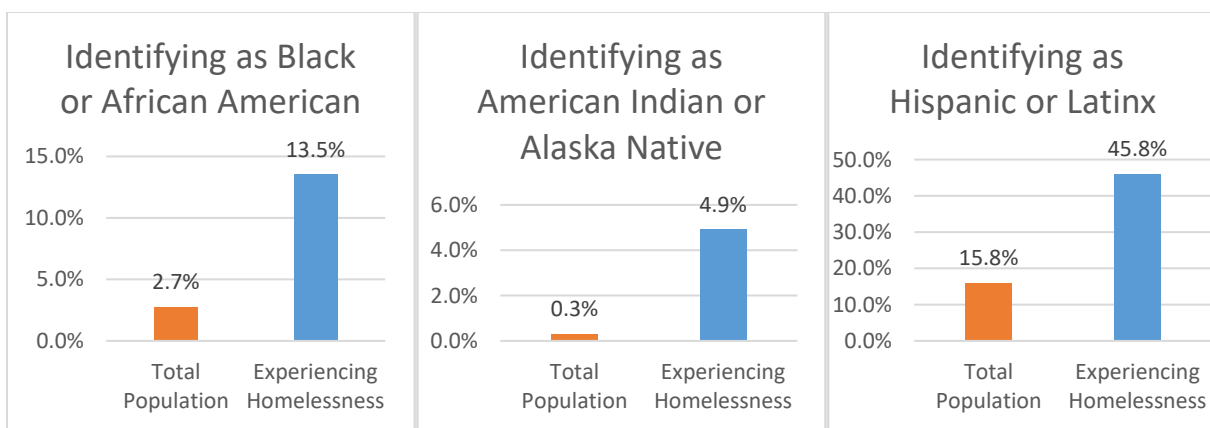
Lack of affordable housing is a key driver of homelessness.

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[7] Demographics of the total population of the City of Santa Clara were derived from U.S. Census Bureau data at: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/santaclaracitycalifornia/PST045222

The primary unmet need for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness across the county is access to housing they can afford, with the services and resources they need to remain stably housed. Such services could include ongoing case management and regular mental health care, not just crisis care. The table below shows the numbers of people in defined income categories of low-income households who are housing cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs.[8] Thousands of low-income renters are living with a risk of housing loss, because of high housing costs and inadequate income.

	Population within the City of Santa Clara	Number who are Housing Cost Burdened
Low-Income (50-80% of Area Median Income)	4,995	**2,675**
Very Low-Income (30-50% of Area Median Income)	5,145	**3,640**
Extremely Low Income (<30% of Area Median Income)	6,145	**5,225**

In response to the countywide Homeless Census and Survey in 2022, the top five most commonly reported obstacles for people experiencing homelessness to obtain housing were:

- Can't Afford Rent;
- No Job/Income;
- No Housing Available;
- No Money for Moving Costs; and
- Housing Process Too Difficult

Input from providers, people with lived experience, and local government partners during the outreach process aligns with the data above. Households experiencing homelessness report struggling with high rents, lack of income, and low housing availability in the community. Many community members, both housed and unhoused, identified affordable housing as a top priority during the community engagement process for this plan.

Supportive services are necessary to long-term housing stability.
In addition to the need for affordable housing, many individuals and families experiencing homelessness need social support and targeted services to rebuild health and stability. Based on data in HMIS about Coordinated Entry System assessments for people with a connection to the City of Santa Clara, 48% were identified as needing housing assistance with time-limited supportive services, and 40% were identified as needing housing assistance with long-term or permanent supportive services.

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[8] The Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) website provides information, based on American Community Survey data for 2015-2019, about household income cross-referenced with housing characteristics: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html#year2006-2019

Homelessness Taskforce members and service providers identified the following high-priority supports and resources:

- Support with goal-setting and coordination of services (i.e., case management);
- Medical and behavioral health care;
- Education and employment support;
- Domestic violence advocacy;
- Transportation; and
- Services targeted to seniors and youth.

Crisis response resources are needed within the city limits.

A strong recurring theme through the Homelessness Taskforce discussions and community input was the need for access to key services, such as emergency shelter, proactive housing-focused outreach, and behavioral health services, within the City of Santa Clara.

In calendar year 2021, a total of 347 individuals stayed at least one night in an emergency shelter somewhere in the county. While people in the City of Santa Clara are eligible to access shelter countywide, only 10 shelter beds were located within the city itself, and those beds are all youth-dedicated in calendar year 2021. To access shelter, individuals and families must go to other cities within Santa Clara County, including people whose jobs, schools, and communities are in the City of Santa Clara.

While the Police Department's Community Response Team conducts outreach to respond to crises and to connect people experiencing homelessness to resources, this team is primarily responsive to calls from the community rather than proactive. There is no proactive street outreach in the City of Santa Clara, as there is in other areas of the county. Consistent, housing-focused street outreach is essential to meeting the basic needs of people living outside, building relationships of trust with unsheltered individuals, and conducting assessments to connect people to the County's Coordinated Entry System.

One of the most frequently identified unmet needs for people living outside or in vehicles was accessible behavioral health care. HMIS data indicates that over half of the people experiencing homelessness in the city have a disability, which includes individuals with behavioral health conditions as well as physical and developmental disabilities. Additionally, half of those recorded in HMIS are experiencing chronic homelessness, which entails long episodes of homelessness that often result in trauma and other health impacts. People with experience being unsheltered and local provider partners noted that accessing and staying connected to behavioral health care can be challenging, particularly for those living outside.

Community members, both housed and unhoused, as well as city employees who interact with the public, described the impacts of unmet behavioral health needs on the community. Currently, resources to respond to a behavioral health crisis quickly and safely, which are primarily provided by the County Behavioral Health Services Department, are limited, and not widely known in the community. In addition, transportation options to access such services can also be a barrier.

Trash, bio waste, graffiti, and fires impact public health and quality of life for all residents.

Of the 769 individuals who experienced homelessness in calendar year 2021, 422 (55%) did not stay in an emergency shelter during that time. Many of these individuals likely spent their experiences of homelessness outside, in their vehicles, or in other places not meant for humans to live.

Individuals and families living outside or in vehicles have limited to no access to basic hygiene resources such as bathrooms, running water, laundry, and trash and bio waste disposal. This severely and directly affects the health and dignity of people who are unsheltered. It also creates public health and environmental impacts more broadly, including waste and trash in public spaces and on private property. The lack of housing also impacts public spaces such as parks, community centers and libraries as unhoused residents may prevent other community members from fully accessing these services by blocking physical access for example. Unhoused people may seek shelter in highly frequented areas, impeding access to entryways and belongings often accumulate creating a health hazard and an unwelcoming atmosphere for visitors. The daily activities of living outside can cause other public safety hazards for residents, both housed and unhoused, such as the risk of cooking fires spreading out of control. Other safety issues include drug use (e.g. methamphetamine smoke wafting into residences), vermin and disease from the accumulation of refuse, and toxic/hazardous materials spilling into waterways.

Input gathered through the Homelessness Taskforce discussions and community engagement process, as well as extensive public comment, highlighted an urgent need for expanded resources to address these impacts. The City of Santa Clara has funded both encampment cleanups and mobile shower and laundry services, but the scale of these interventions has not yet matched the need.

Strategies to Reduce Homelessness and its Impacts

The six Strategy Areas and 34 associated work items outlined in this section serve as a roadmap for the City of Santa Clara's ongoing and future efforts to address homelessness and its impacts. The strategies and work items were developed in coordination with the City's 2023-2031 Housing Element and the County's 2020-2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness and informed by input collected from the Homelessness Taskforce, community engagement efforts, City staff, and the City Council at the January 2023 study session. [9] They are designed to respond to identified community needs and service gaps through a combination of short- and long-term actions that are cost-effective, impactful, and balance compassionate support, service accessibility, and public safety.

The six Strategy Areas and associated work items are as follows:

Strategy Area 1: Prevent homelessness for City residents who are at-risk
Aligns with Countywide Community Plan Strategies 1 and 2

Objectives

- ✓ Reduce the inflow into homelessness among City residents at imminent risk of losing their housing.
- ✓ Reduce displacement and help tenants relocate when needed.
- ✓ Increase the availability and accessibility of services within the City for City residents.

Work Items

1.1: By December 2025, partner with the Charities Housing, CORE, Santa Clara County's Office of Supportive Housing, Destination Home, the Housing Authority and others to reduce rent burden for seniors living in the Belovida apartment complex and carrying out a minor rehabilitation of the building.

1.2: By 2027, explore increasing the City's investment in the Countywide Homelessness Prevention System to increase access to rental assistance, deposit assistance, car repair, housing problem solving, and other prevention related services for City residents.

1.3: By 2026, expand the City's investment in Tenant Based Rental Assistance to serve 10-20 additional households per year.

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[9] For a summary of the input from Homelessness Taskforce discussions and the community engagement process see Appendix C. While all input provided by community members during the planning process was reviewed and considered, not all community input resulted in strategies. There are multiple reasons for this, including that some activities suggested through community input have been shown to cause harm to already vulnerable people while not meaningfully reducing homelessness or mitigating its impacts. Many actions which may temporarily appear to reduce the presence of unsheltered individuals do not result in reductions in homelessness and may erode or prevent the trust that is critical to meaningfully engage and support people experiencing homelessness. This plan focuses on strategies that have the potential to reduce homelessness and its impacts in a meaningful and sustainable way.

1.4: By 2026, explore implementation of policies to prevent displacement and/or facilitate a soft landing when relocation is unavoidable including but not limited to the following:

- Policies that minimize displacement resulting from code enforcement
- No net loss policy for income restricted affordable housing
- Longer notification requirements for tenants when housing will be redeveloped
- Landlord paid relocation benefits for tenants impacted by no cause and no-fault evictions
- Creating a rental deposit cap

Strategy Area 2: Increase availability of short-term shelter, permanent supportive housing, and Extremely Low Income (ELI) housing
Aligns with Countywide Community Plan Strategies 1 and 2

Objectives

- ✓ Create new shelter and housing that is affordable and accessible to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- ✓ Use all the tools available to the City to increase housing affordability, especially at ELI levels.
- ✓ Reduce opposition to new development at all stages – from initial planning through operation.

Work Items

2.1: By 2031, add 136 new emergency shelter, interim housing, rapid rehousing, or shared supportive housing beds/units to provide shelter options for unhoused residents in Santa Clara who are waiting for placement in permanent affordable housing.

- Include people with lived experience in the planning process to ensure that new options are designed to meet the needs of people living in unsheltered situations.
- Set aside beds and interim housing for unhoused residents currently living in the City of Santa Clara.

2.2: Select a site, procure an operator, and implement a pilot overnight inclement weather program to be activated during cold or inclement weather events.

2.3 Develop an inventory of potential sites for safe parking and report back to Council on the estimated cost and funding gap to set up and operate this program for at least two years.

2.4: Continue to engage with Destination: Home's Housing Ready Communities Program, SV @ HOME and other agencies to increase awareness of the causes and impacts of homelessness and best practice solutions to foster understanding of and support for affordable housing development.

2.5 By 2027, develop communication guidelines in collaboration with developers, service providers, property management companies, City and County departments, unhoused residents and housed neighbors to ensure successful integration of new interim and supportive housing developments into the community. This protocol may include:

- Guidelines for staffing ratios and availability of supportive services

- Key messaging/education for housed community members as well as incoming tenants
- Creating channels for communication between neighbors during planning phases and after a housing site is operating
- Opportunities for connection and community-building for existing neighborhood residents and incoming tenants
- Coordination with and expansion (if needed) of emergency response services, as well as other community-based service options for complaints or concerns that do not warrant emergency response

2.6 Explore amendments to City's housing-related policies to facilitate more affordable housing development.

- By 2031, implement programs in the Housing Element workplan (Chapter 13.2) related to zoning, general plan text amendments, updating the affordable housing ordinance, and more.

2.7 By 2031, work towards the Housing Element goal of permitting 1,436 extremely low and 1,436 very low income units.

2.8 Seek partnerships with housing developers and government agencies to leverage new state and regional funding for interim housing, permanent supportive housing, and ELI housing.

Strategy Area 3: Conduct proactive street outreach to engage people who are unsheltered and connect them to resources
Aligns with Countywide Community Plan Strategy 3

Objectives:

- ✓ Ensure that people experiencing homelessness in the City are assessed as part of the community's Coordinated Entry System[10] and connected to other services to meet their health and basic needs wherever possible.
- ✓ Proactively engage, develop rapport with, and ultimately house people with the highest needs in the community.
- ✓ Increase utilization of existing City and County homeless assistance resources by people experiencing homelessness in the City.
- ✓ Increase connections to mental health services (including crisis services) for people experiencing homelessness in the City, especially those who have been hesitant or lack the capacity to access services.

Work Items

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[10] The Coordinated Entry System is a community-wide access model for supportive housing that assesses, prioritizes, and refers households experiencing homelessness to supportive housing resources as they become available. See the Santa Clara County Continuum of Care website for more information.

3.1 Secure a service provider to provide street and encampment-based outreach and case management to help Santa Clara residents obtain and/or retain shelter or housing through the following activities:

- Conduct assessments in accordance with County HMIS standards.
- Provide services to ensure households are housing ready/document ready and assist clients with creating housing plans.
- Provide services that link clients to mental health services, substance abuse treatment services, or urgent/emergency care.
- Provide services that help clients increase income through entitlement and benefits applications such as Medi-Cal, Calfresh, Social Security Disability Income, and Welfare-to-Work.
- Help clients access medical, behavioral health, employment and other services.
- Provide housing problem solving services to determine if there are ways to quickly resolve and/or avoid entering into homelessness or rapidly exiting homelessness including through conflict resolution, mediation, one-time financial assistance, relocation and other activities.
- Collect feedback from people who are unhoused to inform improvements to the City's engagement efforts and shelter/housing/service programs.

3.2 Enhance the City's capacity to respond faster to crises that require clinical responses or de-escalation.

- By 2027, create written guidelines and coordinate with the County or service providers to train City staff who regularly interact with unhoused residents on crisis response, emergency and non-emergency response procedures, conflict resolution, de-escalation techniques, and available resources in the City or County.

3.3 Coordinate efforts with service providers and other partners to ensure that services provided to unhoused individuals remain consistent and uninterrupted during the 2026 Major Events.

3.4 Explore opportunities to support peer outreach that trains and employs people with lived experience of homelessness to provide street outreach and system navigation services.

Strategy Area 4: Address basic needs of people living outside, including health, and hygiene
Aligns with Countywide Community Plan Strategy 3

Objectives:

- ✓ Create opportunities for engagement, connection, and trust-building with people living unsheltered by providing resources to meet basic needs and build a foundation for making progress toward housing goals.
- ✓ Address the immediate unsheltered crisis in the City by creating spaces for people experiencing homelessness to safely stay, address immediate needs, and access services.
- ✓ Improve the accessibility and experience of public areas throughout the City for both housed and unhoused residents.

4.1 Continue to promote existing "pop up" hygiene, shower, biowaste, and laundry services to expand access and participation in existing programs, including:

- Building in opportunities to connect people on-site with related services.
- Ensuring unhoused and housed community members are aware of available services.

4.2 By Spring 2026, explore partnerships with other agencies, businesses, nonprofits, faith-based, and volunteer organizations to leverage funding, facilities, expertise, and staffing to support provision of basic needs services, such as food, hygiene supplies and services, and restrooms for people living unsheltered. These efforts may include resource fairs, donation drives, volunteer days/programs, and assisting with the biennial Point In Time Count.

4.3 Establish safe and welcoming places for people living in unsheltered situations to access. These locations should be places where people can find day-time respite from inclement weather, rest indoors, access restrooms, use computers, Wi-Fi, and phones, charge devices, and access services. Potential actions may include:

a. Establish standards for access to basic needs and services including but not limited to water and charging stations to incorporate in such places.
b. Establish a navigation center with volunteers and/or paid staff who can engage with, provide information, and connect people with services as needed.

4.4 Explore what it would take to install and maintain storage options for people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness and to enable safe storage of personal items.

Strategy Area 5: Reduce the impacts of unsheltered homelessness throughout the community
Aligns with Countywide Community Plan Strategies 2 and 3

Objectives

- ✓ Ensure safe and healthy community spaces for all City residents.
- ✓ Leverage collective community resources to create efficient and impactful interventions.
- ✓ Improve interactions between people experiencing homelessness and housed community members by empowering, educating, and building capacity of City staff and other housed community members who regularly interact with unhoused people.

Work Items

5.1 By 2027, explore opportunities within the City and with external partners, including potential partnerships with Valley Water, the County, transportation agencies, businesses, nonprofits, faith-based groups, and volunteer organizations, to leverage funding, facilities, expertise, and staffing to manage the impacts of encampments and enhance existing sanitation and safety efforts near encampments, parks, creeks, and other affected areas throughout the City.

5.2 Explore funding sources to supplement clean-ups and vehicle towing when RVs are used for illegal storage or illegal activity that would warrant its removal.

5.3 Convene a working group of key City staff who meet regularly to improve coordination, share updates and awareness of resources and programs, and work on various efforts related to unsheltered residents.

5.4: Develop City protocol to triage crises and concerns. By Fall 2025, determine what issues should be routed to specific City departments, County services, street outreach and case management team, and service providers, develop a protocol, and communicate the protocol and available community resources to the street outreach and case management team and City staff who receive calls about or regularly interact with people experiencing homelessness.

5.5 Work with the County to implement the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Care Court program and Assisted Outpatient Treatment for residents who refuse resources and services due to mental health, drug addiction or other challenges.

5.6 Develop a targeted plan to engage and house the highest utilizers of County and City resources, which includes:

- Working with the street outreach and case management team to engage people with lived experience (including currently unsheltered community members) in planning, identify and assess participants to determine resources needed, and develop housing and support goals and plan in partnership with participants.

5.7 Implement City protocols for noticing and disposing of refuse and other items left after encampments are closed.

Strategy Area 6: Foster productive community conversation about the causes, needs, and experience of homelessness to foster support and volunteerism
Aligns with Countywide Community Plan Strategies 1 and 3

Objectives

- ✓ Build community support for new housing developments, new shelter beds, and programs for people experiencing homelessness in the City.
- ✓ Foster greater understanding, support, and a stronger sense of overall community by increasing connections between housed and unhoused people.

Work Items

6.1: Engage people with lived experience of homelessness to inform decision-making about funding, housing development, and to support community education efforts.

a. By 2026, gather input and feedback from unhoused residents and people with lived experience of homelessness during resource fairs and through the street outreach and case management team.

b. By 2027, coordinate with the Lived Experience Advisory Board-SV to obtain input about funding decisions and community engagement efforts.

6.2: Support the County's 2027 Point in Time Count by coordinating volunteer recruitment, organizing donation efforts, and assisting with activities on the day of the count, as needed.

6.3: Provide opportunities for members of the public to engage with people who have lived experience and learn about the causes of homelessness, the impact of high housing costs, barriers to exiting homelessness, what is needed to effectively respond to homelessness, and how different stakeholders can help and get involved.

a. Work with the County and nonprofit agencies like Destination: Home to share educational materials and information.
b. Use existing public meetings and forums focused on housing or homelessness to raise awareness of the experience of and contributing factors to homelessness in the City, such as the 2027 Point in Time Count.

6.4 Work with neighboring cities and local service providers to coordinate information sharing and connections with business, faith-based groups, and other community organizations interested in fundraising or volunteering.

- This may include convening workshops at the City's libraries with service providers to ensure ongoing communication and awareness of new and changing programs.

Appendix A provides a comprehensive two-year implementation workplan to guide planning and monitor progress of the 34 work items detailed above that advance the City's homelessness response efforts.

For each work item, the workplan identifies the relevant Strategy Area, status of work efforts (if any), department(s), and resource needs (if any).

- **Ongoing**
  Work items that are currently being implemented with existing resources.

- **Planned**
  Work items that staff can reasonably initiate within the next two years, based on projected funding and staffing capacity.

- **Pending / Resource-Contingent**
  Potential work items that will require additional funding and staffing capacity to implement.

Appendix B provides a corresponding budget that includes the cost of current/budgeted services, along with additional estimated costs to implement these proposed activities, in FY 2025/26 and FY 2026/27.

Appendix A: Two-Year Workplan (see separate document)

Appendix B: Two-Year Implementation Budget

Below is a budget that includes the services the City is currently funding and proposing to fund in FY 2025/26 and FY 202627, based on ongoing and planned work items, to implement the proposed workplan. This does not include the City's investments into affordable housing production and preservation.

Table 1. FY 2025/26

Services	Budgeted / Funded	Unfunded
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (Abode Services)	$ 942,697	$ -
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (Abode Services – HOME ARP)	$ 606,744	
Intensive Case Management (County)	$ 125,000	$ -
Landlord/Tenant Mediation (Project Sentinel)	$ 69,159	$ -
Homelessness Prevention (County)	$ 50,000	$ -
Mobile Shower and Laundry (WeHOPE)	$ 50,178	$ -
Domestic Violence Services (NextDoor)	$ 30,000	$ -
211 Hotline (United Way)	$ 5,000	$ -
Proposed Street Outreach/Case Management, Temporary Hotel Program, and Inclement Weather Hotel Program (WeHOPE)[11]	$ 856,088	$ -
Encampment Cleanups (Tucker Construction)	$ 112,200	$ 65,000
Towing[12]	$ 67,000	TBD
Proposed Safe Parking Program (Pending viable site)	$ -	$ 1,600,000
Remaining State Grant to Fund TBD Services that Further Enhance the City's Homelessness Response	$ 87,828	$ -
TOTAL	**$ 3,001,890**	**$ 1,665,000**

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[11] The City received a State grant in the amount of $1,800,000 for the purpose of funding a street and encampment outreach team, launching a pop-up overnight care pilot program during inclement weather, and explore partnerships with other agencies, businesses, non-profits, and faith-based organizations to leverage resources to create a more comprehensive homelessness response. The proposed services will be funded by this grant.

[12] This budget is used for vehicle towing across the City. The City does not have a specific budget allocation for RVs that are used for illegal storage or illegal activity that warrants their removal.

Table 2. FY 2026/27

Services	Budgeted / Funded	Unfunded
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (Abode Services)	$ 506,000	$ -
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (Abode Services – HOME ARP)	$ 606,744	
Intensive Case Management (County)	$ 125,000	$ -
Landlord/Tenant Mediation (Project Sentinel)	$ 67,803	$ -
Homelessness Prevention (County)	$ 50,000	$ -
Mobile Shower and Laundry (WeHOPE)	$ 50,178	$ -
Domestic Violence Services (NextDoor)	$ 30,000	$ -
211 Hotline (United Way)	$ 5,000	$ -
Proposed Street Outreach/Case Management, Temporary Hotel Program, and Inclement Weather Hotel Program (WeHOPE)[13]	$ 856,088	$ -
Encampment Cleanups (Tucker Construction)	$ 114,444	$ 65,000
Towing[14]	$ 67,000	TBD
TOTAL	**$ 2,478,257**	**$ 65,000**

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[13] The City received a State grant in the amount of $1,800,000 for the purpose of funding a street and encampment outreach team, launching a pop-up overnight care pilot program during inclement weather, and explore partnerships with other agencies, businesses, non-profits, and faith-based organizations to leverage resources to create a more comprehensive homelessness response. The proposed services will be funded by this grant.

[14] This budget is used for vehicle towing across the City. The City does not have a specific budget allocation for RVs that are used for illegal storage or illegal activity that warrants their removal.

Appendix C: Summary of Taskforce Discussion and Community Engagement

Overview

Below is a summary of ideas that were raised and key themes that emerged during Taskforce meeting discussions, focus groups with a variety of stakeholders, feedback from the Community Forum event, public comments sent to the Homebase team, public comments provided during Taskforce meetings, and additional feedback and information shared with Homebase by City staff. Please note that while these are not direct quotes and some ideas that were shared in multiple venues have been synthesized to reduce repetition, Homebase has presented the feedback and ideas below as they were shared by partners and stakeholders.

To facilitate alignment with the countywide Community Plan to End Homelessness, the themes have been categorized loosely within the three strategies of the County Plan available here.

Feedback was also collected through a survey of City of Santa Clara business owners, and those responses are summarized separately. Finally, this summary includes initial feedback from Taskforce members on the draft City Plan Framework.

Community Plan Strategy 1: Address the root causes of homelessness through system and policy change.

This strategy of the countywide Community Plan is targeted to address the entrenched economic and societal causes of homelessness through transformational systemic and policy change.

Theme 1.1: Community Engagement and Education to Increase Knowledge of and Expand Support for Efforts to Reduce Homelessness and its Impacts

- Community education about what homelessness looks like, what resources are available, and the reasons people end up unhoused is a space where the City can provide support **(Community Forum, PD Advisory Committee)**
  - o Share stories and fight against stigma of people experiencing homelessness.
  - o Talk more about Housing First and how it works.
  - o Host more Community Forums to talk about the issue and connect with the community.
- Partner with local businesses, e.g. host a fundraiser to bring awareness to the issue and give proceeds to assist people that are unhoused in the City **(Public Comment)**
- Increase community connection between community members that are unhoused and those that are housed. **(Community Forum, Lived Experience Focus Group)**
  - o Identify volunteer opportunities and other ways for community members to help that are safe and impactful
- Improve community outreach and education to City residents, especially those that are concerned about homelessness and believe more needs to be done. **(Public Comment)**

- Address concerns of community members who might oppose new housing developments in the City. **(Community Forum)**
  - Assuage fears that low-income housing will negatively impact neighborhoods.
  - Address concerns from long-time residents about maintaining property values as new apartments or developments pop up.
  - Provide more community conversations before housing projects are brought to large community meetings.
  - Identify a recommended set of "good neighbor" practices that regular communication between property managers, city departments, and neighbors
- Recognize that homelessness is a regional issue and requires partnership and ongoing communication and coordination between the County, cities, service providers, etc.; strengthen collaboration between County and surrounding cities. **(Taskforce Discussion, City Staff Focus Group)**

Theme 1.2: Lack of Affordable Housing is a Key Driver of Homelessness

- There is an extreme lack of affordable housing available to low-income folks; the cost of housing is a primary barrier for people who are experiencing homelessness to regain housing. Affordable housing is not always affordable enough for people with extremely low income. **(Community Forum, Lived Experience Focus Groups, Provider Focus Group)**
- Developers of affordable housing face a variety of obstacles; City leaders can and should do more to make it more feasible for developers to develop low-income housing. **(Community Forum, Provider Focus Group)**
- Changes to local housing policy are needed to allow for development of more housing for people with extremely low income (ELI)/supportive housing. **(Community Forum, Provider Focus Group, Taskforce Discussion, Public Comment)**
  - Increase housing supply for the most vulnerable by exploring inclusionary housing policy and requiring more affordable housing units in new developments.
  - Explore changes to expedite the permitting process.
  - Create a mechanism to determine how many mid or high-rent properties remain unfilled and require the units that have been empty for a certain period to be opened to low-income community members.
  - Create formal city policies to prioritize affordable housing development.
  - Charge a surtax on vacant residential properties.
- Locate affordable housing and interim housing in opportunity zones - parts of the City that have access to good jobs, schools, and are safe - rather than concentrating permanent and interim housing in areas of the City that are inaccessible and unsafe. **(Community Member Focus Group)**
- Use the Housing Element planning process to prioritize ELI housing development. **(Community Forum)**
- Identifying sites for affordable and/or supportive housing is difficult, there is often push-back from neighbors **(Community Forum, Taskforce Discussion, Public Comment)**

- Supportive housing must have adequate ongoing budget for supportive services and operations **(Taskforce Discussion)**

Theme 1.3: Protections from Eviction and Displacement

- Expand eviction protections; cover more properties under these protections. **(Provider Focus Group)**
- Enact anti-rent gouging protections and security deposit limits. **(Provider Focus Group)**

Theme 1.4: Education, Employment, and Living Wage Opportunities

- Education and employment are key to keeping people housed. **(Provider Focus Group, Lived Experience Focus Group)**
- Increase minimum wage. **(Lived experience focus group)**
- Lack of available and affordable childcare is a huge barrier for single parent households, especially to hold a job and even to search for housing. **(Lived Experience Focus Group)**
- Provide more long-term sustainability supports (e.g. life skill building) **(Provider Focus Group, Lived Experience Focus Group)**
- Need more resources for youth within the City, to get them on the right track with their education/employment and set them up for success in the future. **(Lived Experience Focus Group)**
  - Preventing homelessness for youth in the first place.
  - Increase access and funding for apprenticeships for youth experiencing homelessness or in the child welfare system.
- Many folks experiencing homelessness or housing stability have jobs, but cost of living is so high that folks can't maintain housing themselves. **(Lived Experience Focus Group)**
  - Eligibility to receiving resources is a challenge for folks that have some income (in poverty but don't qualify for help).

Community Plan Strategy 2: Expand Homelessness Prevention and Housing Programs to Meet the Need

Strategy 2 of the countywide Community Plan focuses on building capacity to provide a broad array of housing, prevention, and supportive services over the next five years.

Theme 2.1: Increase Development of ELI/Supportive Housing

- Set metric goals for the City for supportive housing production – both permanent and interim solutions. (e.g. identify pieces of land, build a certain number of units). **(Taskforce Discussion)**
- Use funding that's already available but may not be fully utilized (e.g. invest in more Measure A). **(Community Forum)**

- Need to ensure there is funding for supportive services to be attached to developments; State is making money available for capital improvements but not services. **(Provider Focus Group)**
- Require that supportive housing communities and other providers in the City have open discussions and regular meetings with public safety entities to maintain open communication **(Community Forum, Taskforce Discussion)**
- Advocate for an increase in PD and first responders to anticipate increase in service calls to supportive housing communities. **(Taskforce Discussion)**
    - Recognize that first year or two when new housing opens can be especially challenging as residents stabilize. This is not a constant throughout the life of the project.

Theme 2.2: More Local and Population Specific Programs and Services are Needed in the City

- Santa Clara lacks a "one-stop" service provider like Sunnyvale Community Services. **(City Staff Focus Group)**
- City needs to invest in services to prevent folks from slipping back into homelessness because they lack resources/connections/social support after being housed. **(Provider focus group)**
- Need for more services located within the City and available to people who live in the City. **(Community Forum)**
- Increase resources specializing in serving older adults, who are increasingly becoming a bigger portion of the unhoused population in the City and often require skilled nursing. **(Provider Focus Group, Community Forum, Taskforce Discussion)**
- Target housing and wrap-around services to help subpopulations that are especially vulnerable to becoming unhoused – including survivors of domestic violence and LGBTQ+ youth that may have been kicked out of home by their families. **(Community Forum)**
- Provide services and housing to people that may have criminal history, low credit scores, or other risk factors for homelessness to find housing. **(Community Forum, Lived Experience Focus Group)**
- Increase intensive case management services within the City, like Homesafe Program **(Provider Focus Group)**
- Help people with rent deposits and other homelessness prevention services to keep people from experiencing the trauma of homelessness in the first place, especially as cost of living and housing costs continue to increase. **(Lived Experience Focus Group, Community Forum, Provider Focus Group)**

Theme 2.3: Increase Community Knowledge of Available Resources in the City

- Need more information about what services/ resources are available. **(Community Forum, Taskforce Discussion, (Lived Experience Focus Group, Provider Focus Group, Public Comment)**
    - It's hard for people experiencing homelessness to navigate.
    - Service providers, City Staff, and community members don't always know what is available and how to help folks.

- County's Shelter Hotline does not have much knowledge of what resources the City has.
- Ensure that food pantries and other resources are visible and accessible.
- Ensure resources/ services provided by County are also accessible within the City.
- Ensure information about available resources/ services are disseminated to people who have English as a second language by creating partnerships with agencies, churches, synagogues, mosques, and other entities that have close relationships with cultural groups within the City **(Community Forum)**

Theme 2.4: Raise the Voices of People with Lived Experience of Homelessness

- Center the voices of those with lived experience as the City considers funding, policies and changes that impact those that are unhoused. **(Taskforce Discussion, Provider Focus Group)**
- Strengthen representation of lived experience from the City of Santa Clara on the County's Lived Experience Advisory Board. **(Taskforce Discussion)**

Community Plan Strategy 3: Improve Quality of Life for Unsheltered Individuals and Create Healthy Neighborhoods for All

Strategy 3 of the countywide Community Plan addresses the immediate crisis of homelessness in our community by focusing on doubling temporary housing and shelter capacity, meeting health, safety, and other basic needs of people living in unsheltered conditions, and addressing concerns about the impacts of homelessness in the community.

Theme 3.1: Ensuring Safe and Welcoming Community Spaces for All Residents

- Increase funding for cleanliness and trash removal throughout the City. **(Public Comment, Provider Focus Groups, City Focus Group, Community Forum, City Staff Focus Group)**
    - Increased trash, bio waste, graffiti, fires, vandalism generate expenses for clean-up and repairs at City facilities.
    - Funding limitations and cuts have impacted the ability to meet the need for trash removal and clean-up in City parks.
    - Focus on creeks and waterways; partner with Valley Water to increase abatement in the creek and waterway system; hold quarterly creek cleanup and removal of encampments, trash, and pollutants from waterways in the City.
    - Address increase in RVs parked for extended periods of time and the trash and bio waste impacts of RV residents.
    - Ensure that health and safety guidelines are followed at encampments and around the City.
    - Provide garbage bins by creeks and throughout the City.

- o Improve responsiveness to cleanup requests from residents.
    - ▪ The frequency of trash cleanup needed is also an issue – trash will get picked up but then be there again the next day.
  - o Focus on Central Park.
  - o Businesses in Santa Clara are impacted by people who are unsheltered living on the sidewalk or nearby.
  - o Eliminate the city-wide Clean-Up Campaign and replace it with a voucher for each household to visit a dump site. **(PD Advisory Committee)**
- City staff need more resources/training/assistance to City staff to feel safe and equipped to handle issues as they come up. **(City Staff Focus Group)**
  - o Noticing more people with severe mental illness and substance abuse issues and City staff are not equipped and are concerned about safety at work.
    - ▪ Crisis mental health outreach often requests PD presence for increased safety
  - o Concerned about financial liability due to damaged facilities and vandalism.
  - o Provide opportunity for City staff to partner with the Lived Experience Advisory Board to learn how to interact with people experiencing homelessness. Meeting with people with lived experience to better understand the mindset they were in when they were in that experience may be powerful.

Theme 3.2: Increased City-specific Outreach and Connection to Services, Especially for Those who are Hardest to Reach or to Engage in Services

- Need dedicated street outreach team for the City **(Community Forum, Taskforce Discussion, Provider Focus Group, PD Advisory Committee, Public Comment, City Focus Group)**
  - o Andrea's estimate for two full-time people with a dedicated vehicle would cost the city around $200,000/ year.
  - o On top of building rapport and meeting basic needs, outreach must connect the City's unhoused residents with VI/SPDAT assessment which is needed prior to accessing all supportive housing opportunities.
  - o Outreach needs to be focused on those that are hardest to reach.
  - o The Police department recently added a licensed mental health clinician to augment existing Crisis Intervention Specialists, but clinicians are hesitant to respond without a police presence. Hiring additional Community Response Team personnel could allow for more clinicians to access unhoused residents.
  - o Add outreach/clinical team response as an alternative to police for quality of life/behavioral health calls.
  - o Track and reduce the number of "service-resistant" people (individuals who are not receptive to services).
- Improve quality of life for people that are unsheltered in the city; need more immediate solutions to meet basic needs through outreach, hygiene services, etc. **(Community forum, Lived Experience Focus Group, Taskforce Discussion, City Staff Focus Group)**

- o Provide free or low-cost healthcare services within the City (similar to Gardner Family Center in San Jose)
- o Increase Dignity on Wheels locations and advertise it through flyers throughout the City; place in locations near schools (e.g. community colleges), jobs and other resources; provide longer time frame for showers.
- Increase access to behavioral health services **(Community Forum, Provider Focus group, Lived Experience Focus Group, Taskforce Discussion)**
  - o Need stronger coordination between City, County behavioral health services, and housing providers; clients get lost in the County system.
  - o Address hesitancy to accept services (e.g. ensure folks significantly impaired by a mental health or substance use condition receive psychiatric assessment and are connected to services if accepted).
  - o Explore options to provide treatment if they are significantly disabled by a mental health or substance use condition and do not currently meet the standard for conservatorship.
  - o Substance use treatment in our community is not designed to effectively serve people who are unhoused. Access to treatment takes time, is often scheduled weeks or months out, and is often outpatient (with no bed attached.)
- Provide public transit passes and other transportation options (E.g. GoPasses, which is provided in San Jose) to enable people to access services. **(Lived Experience Focus Groups, Provider Focus group, Taskforce Discussion)**

Theme 3.3: Opportunities to Increase Temporary Housing and Shelter

- Identify city-owned land for temporary housing and encampments. **(PD Advisory Committee)**
  - o Interim in nature while City waits ongoing permanent structures like the old Bella Vista motel, Kifer Senior, etc.
- Explore options like safe parking (with supportive services) for people living in vehicles and RVs. **(Taskforce Discussion, Provider Focus Group, PD Advisory Committee)**
- Utilize empty buildings as low-barrier shelters. **(Lived Experience Focus Group)**
- Provide vouchers for short-term hotel/motel stays. **(Provider focus group, Community Forum)**
- Continue what the City is doing with Homekey. **(Lived Experience Focus Group)**
- Utilize hotels and motels to convert to transitional/interim housing. **(Community Forum)**

Summary of Responses to City of Santa Clara Business Community Survey

The Business community survey was open to people who own or operate a business within the City of Santa Clara. The survey consisted of several multiple-choice questions to prioritize proposed strategies, as well as opportunities for open ended feedback. The survey was circulated by the Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce September-October 2022 and received 276 responses.

For the multiple-choice questions, business owner expressed the most support for the following proposed strategies:

- Expand outreach within the City to proactively connect people experiencing homelessness with case management, assessment, and potential housing opportunities (177 respondents)
- Improve communication among service providers and businesses in the City (91 respondents)
- Change local housing ordinances to make it easier to build additional housing (81 respondents)
- Increase community education and conversations about what homelessness in the City of Santa Clara looks like, what resources are available, and where community members can volunteer (81 respondents)

Common themes from the open-ended responses included:

- Increase policing and enforcement of existing laws, especially related to drug use, theft, and property damage
- Address mental health and addiction with increased services, including in-patient mental health or mandated treatment. Relocate people and/or resources to different areas (e.g. rural areas outside of the City or specified areas within the city with co-located services)
- Provide job training and connect homeless people to job opportunities

Initial Response to Draft Strategic Plan Framework from Taskforce Members

The sixth and final meeting of the Homelessness Taskforce was held on October 27 where a draft framework was presented. Below is a summary of feedback from that discussion:

- Several Taskforce members suggested making it clearer that affordable housing is a priority. It's currently listed last, which doesn't match with the importance of housing to address homelessness.
    - There need to be enough housing programs to connect people to when engaged through outreach. Have learned through a site visit that sustainable funding for ongoing services and operation of housing programs is as important as the building.
    - Interested in more in the plan about the mechanisms the City will use to embrace housing development.
- Several Taskforce members appreciated the inclusion of prevention strategies and cited that as a priority.
    - Add a strategy to provide prevention support for families through collaboration with school districts.
- Several Taskforce members recommended separating interim housing and permanent housing programs into separate strategy areas.
- Street outreach strategies under Priority Area 3 were identified as a priority for several Taskforce members.
- Add concrete parameters for the strategies. For example, add information about the funding amounts available, and/or set targets for the type and amounts of housing and services to be created, along with expected costs.
- In Priority Area 1, consider language more broad than "assessing people for supportive housing." Conducting Coordinated Entry assessments isn't the only role outreach plays in connecting people to housing. Outreach also develops relationships with people that make them more likely to engage with available resources.
- Include more targeted strategies for subpopulations, such as young people and seniors.
- Appreciated that feedback from the Taskforce and community is clearly reflected in the draft framework.
- Mental health can be a cause of homelessness, particularly in young people, so recommend investing in youth mental health.
- Do more to highlight the importance of building broad-based support in the community.