

DEVORA “DEV” DAVIS
CITY COUNCILMEMBER

**Frequently Asked Questions:
Homelessness**

Table of Contents

	Page
Spending.....	2
City of San Jose Programs.....	3
Non-Profit Programs.....	7
Permanent Supportive Housing.....	7
Challenges.....	8
Resources.....	9

1. How many homeless individuals live in San Jose?

The 2019 point-in-time count in San Jose found 6,097 homeless people living in San Jose, which is 1,822 more than were counted in 2017.

2. What happens when a person becomes homeless?

When a person first becomes homeless, it often sets in motion a downward spiral.

- It becomes harder to find a job, prepare for a job interview, and communicate with potential employers.
- It becomes harder to access government agencies and the services they provide.
- The newly homeless person immediately becomes more vulnerable to theft, harassment, sexual assault, and other violent crimes.
- It becomes more difficult to maintain proper hygiene, and the poor living conditions can take a toll on an otherwise healthy person's physical well-being.
- The newly homeless person becomes prone to depression and their mental health may deteriorate.

The longer a person is homeless, the more likely it is that any or all these problems will manifest themselves. That is why homelessness prevention is so critical. And if a person does fall into homelessness, then rapid rehousing can literally save that person's life. Homeless residents in need of assistance can always call 408-510-7600.

3. How much does an individual need to make to pay rent in San Jose?

A \$54/Hour wage needed to rent 2-bedroom in San Jose¹

4. What type of housing can a person get if they earn \$15/hour?

A single person earning \$15 an hour earns approximately \$31,000 a year and can afford to pay \$775 in rent. There are no market-rate apartments in San Jose being offered at \$775. He/she would qualify to rent an affordable studio for \$769, however, these are difficult to find because the supply is very limited. On average, one-bedroom apartments in San Jose are renting for \$2,752 a month. A single person would need to earn \$118,00 to rent this apartment. On average, a one-bedroom rent-stabilized (i.e., rent-controlled) apartment rents for \$1,644 a month. To rent it, a

¹ National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2019). *Out of reach 2019*. Washington, DC: Retrieved from https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2019.pdf

single adult would need to earn \$70,452. These apartments are simply too expensive for low-wage earners to afford.

5. What are the City and County spending on homelessness services and affordable housing?

The County has thus far committed \$234 million of the \$950 million in available Measure A funds for 19 housing developments that will collectively add 1,437 apartments. In FY 2018-2019, the City spent close to \$15 million or 36% of Housing budget on housing programs for the homeless, including homeless services, interventions, and homeless prevention.

4. What is Measure A?

In November 2016, Santa Clara County voters approved Measure A, a \$950 million affordable housing bond. Bond funds will help finance 4,800 new affordable housing opportunities for vulnerable populations over ten years. To date, the County has approved funding for 19 developments, including 13 in 2018, creating a total of 1,437 new affordable apartments. In addition, the County has invested \$50 million to provide down-payment assistance to moderate-income households.

<https://housingtrustsv.org/programs/empowerhomebuyersccc/>

6. What is the City doing about homelessness?

The City of San Jose has a broad strategy for addressing the homelessness crisis through a multi-faceted approach. Among many programs, the City is investing in the following housing-based solutions:

- **Homelessness Prevention:** In collaboration with Destination: Home, the City is operating the Homelessness Prevention Program, which provides financial assistance to families at risk of falling into homelessness. Over 97% of families who have received this assistance have stayed in their homes.
- **Rental subsidies:** Rental subsidies, coupled with varying levels of services, are a national best practice and proven solution for achieving housing stability. For example, Rapid Rehousing programs move homeless households into housing and provide financial assistance and services to help stabilize the households. City-funded rental subsidies can assist 200 households annually.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing:** Permanent supportive housing is a proven, cost-effective solution to ending chronic homelessness. Second Street Studios, the largest permanent supportive housing development in San Jose, opened this year, providing stable housing for over 130 formerly homeless individuals. There is a total of 1,013 permanent supportive housing apartments in San Jose. Please see #8 for an in-depth description of permanent supportive housing.

- **Interim Housing:** Interim housing programs offer temporary housing options for those people who are either connected to longer-term housing or searching for an apartment. There are two interim housing sites in San Jose offering 72 beds. The City is opening its first bridge housing community in 2019. This will be a development of “tiny homes” that will provide 80 beds of interim housing to help bridge homeless residents from the streets to stable housing.
- Through the “**Rebuilding for Heroes**” program, the City provides financial incentives to landlords who rent apartments to formerly homeless veterans.
- **Veteran Housing:** 1,379 Veterans were housed as of May 2019.

In addition to housing-based solutions, the City provides crisis-response interventions to assist homeless residents. Nearly three quarters of homeless persons in San Jose are unsheltered. Thus, the City funds, manages, and coordinates a variety of street-based crisis-response programs, as well as mechanisms for constituents to report homeless concerns.

- **Outreach and case management:** Street outreach provides services, assessment and referrals in downtown San Jose and targeted areas, including in City libraries.
- **Overnight Warming Locations (OWLs):** In the winter months, the City operates two overnight warming locations (OWLs) in community centers when severe weather hits so homeless residents have a warm, dry place to sleep. The City also passed an ordinance that allows communities of faith, and other places of assembly, to operate temporary shelters in their buildings, year round.
- **Mobile Hygiene:** The City provides mobile showers and laundry facilities six days a week throughout San Jose.
- **Homeless Concerns Hotline:** The City funds a hotline at 408-975-1440 (and homelessconcerns@sanjoseca.gov) that enables a coordinated response to address community concerns.
- **Safe Parking Programs:** The City is operating a Safe Parking program at three community centers. The program provides families and individuals who live in their cars with safe areas to park overnight. Participating households have access to social services and receive assistance in finding permanent housing. The City also passed an ordinance that allows communities of faith, and other places of assembly, to operate safe parking programs.

7. What is the City doing about the housing crisis?

Housing supply and demand are out of balance. Construction in San Jose slowed down during 2018 due to increased costs associated with new construction, and the flattening of rents relative to those costs. The City is taking many steps to encourage and facilitate the construction of more housing. The City Council has set a goal to create 25,000 housing units by 2022, of which 10,000 will be affordable. To achieve

this goal, the City has adopted a Housing Crisis Workplan that lays out a plan to achieve more housing by addressing land use and funding issues.

- The City recently announced plans to invest \$100 million in 11 housing developments. These developments will add over 1,100 apartments for low-income residents, providing housing for over 3,000 people.
- The City is working on opening more areas where developers want to develop. This includes downtown and North San Jose.
- The City has created a cross-departmental Housing Catalyst Team whose mission is to facilitate housing development in the City. There is one planner who is dedicated to facilitating the development of extremely low-income housing, including homeless housing.
- The Housing Department is developing an Anti-Displacement Plan to help our low-income residents remain in San Jose.
- The City Council recently approved the City's first co-living project to densify residential development at a lower price point than traditional apartments.
- Co-living is where residents rent out private bedrooms and bathrooms, up to 18 people then share a kitchen and living area.
- The City provides incentives for developers that build high-rise developments to help address the high cost of development in downtown San José.
- The City has streamlined the process to build ADUs sjbackyardhomes.com:
 - 1. ADU Tuesday's: Set aside Tuesday's as express service day where those with qualifying projects can get a permit in as little as 90 minutes.
 - 2. New pre-approved Master Plan Program: The ADU master plan program works with ADU designers to pre-approve their design plans.
 - 3. ADU Ally: This will help customers with questions and connect them with city staff from planning, building, code, and fire during any point of their application.
 - 4. Universal Checklist: The City has redesigned its ADU landing page to ensure homeowners can access all critical information in one location.
- In 2018, the City put new systems in place to improve enforcement of the rent-control provisions in the City's Apartment Rent Ordinance. In addition, the City now requires that property owners specify a legally allowable reason for terminating a tenant's lease.

8. Why don't non-profit organizations and Churches work with homeless residents?

They do. More than a dozen community and faith-based organizations provide life-saving services for homeless residents, including free meals and overnight accommodations. Recently enacted ordinances allow these organizations to host Safe Parking areas in their parking lots AND operate shelters in their buildings. The City is grateful for the incredible work being done on behalf of homeless residents by these organizations. Here are a few:

Home First

HomeFirst™ is a leading provider of services, shelter, and housing opportunities to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in Santa Clara County. They serve more than 4,000 adults, veterans, families, and youth each year at seven locations including our Boccardo Reception Center, which is the county's largest homeless services center.

LifeMoves

LifeMoves programs combat homelessness by teaching comprehensive life skills that help our clients achieve long-term self-sufficiency, and effectively break the cycle of homelessness.

Downtown Streets Team

Downtown Streets Team provides opportunities for homeless and those at-risk with a Work-First strategy. Their goal is to transition Team Members into employment because having a job restores hope and opens the door to other opportunities.

Destination: Home

Destination: Home drives and aligns resources to create permanent housing and sustainable support systems built for the long term.

Abode Services

Secures permanent homes for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. They apply the innovative Housing First approach to go beyond the temporary solutions that shelters and transitional housing programs offer.

Sacred Heart Community Services

The Housing Program helps people with financial assistance to prevent them from becoming homeless, or, to keep them stably housed. They assist with past-due rent, rental deposit, utilities (PG&E), and Section 8 rental deposit.

(source: <https://projectwehope.org/get-help/santa-clara-county-resources/>)

9. Why are homeless residents only in San Jose and not in neighboring cities such as Los Gatos, Campbell, etc.?

Every city in the Bay Area is dealing with the homeless crisis and many have homeless shelters and provide services to homeless residents. There are 521 permanent supportive housing units located in other cities throughout Santa Clara County to house homeless individuals and families. This represents approximately 1/3 of the total number of units. San Jose is the largest city in northern California,

which helps explain why it has more homeless residents than other cities in the South Bay. San Francisco is a smaller city and has 9,784 homeless residents.

10. Why not build housing on the fairgrounds?

The County owns the fairgrounds. They have repeatedly declined to consider that for housing. Currently, there are 62 spaces for RV parking. During the week, there are up to 50 rentals. Rental spaces are available to the public when events and entertainment contractors are not scheduled. People are not asked to leave on weekends. No RV maintenance/washing is allowed.

11. What is permanent supportive housing?

Supportive housing looks like any other housing, but includes individualized support services to help residents remain housed. Specifically, supportive housing provides long-term rental assistance, case management and supportive services for the most vulnerable, chronically homeless individuals and families in the community. Supportive services include life-skills training, job placement assistance and mental health counseling. It also provides drug and alcohol addiction treatment.

12. What is AMI?

AMI stands for Average Median Income.

13. What is ELI, VLI, and LI?

ELI stands for Extremely Low Income and constitutes 0-30% AMI. VLI stands for Very Low Income and constitutes 0-50% AMI. LI stands for Low Income and is 0-80% AMI. Moderate Income level is 100-120% AMI.

14. City of San Jose Housing Department Income and Rent Limit Table:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/57412>

15. What happens to neighborhood property values when affordable housing developments are built?

In a study of the nation's 20 most expensive housing markets, [low-income housing built during a 10-year span showed no effect on nearby home values](#)²

The Housing Department is not aware of any peer-reviewed research that has found a correlation between construction of affordable housing and declines in property values. Neighborhoods in San Jose have not seen declines in property value when affordable housing has been built.

16. Is there any data that explains how temporary shelters may or may not impact crime rates and property values in nearby neighborhoods?

We are not aware of any studies on the impact that shelters have on property values. And we have seen no evidence that income-based housing developments increase crime.

17. What are the challenges to solving the housing crisis?

First, the cost of land acquisition and construction pose significant obstacles to adding more housing in San Jose. By some estimates, Silicon Valley is the most expensive region in the world for construction.

Beyond the cost, zoning, and land-use restrictions limit where new housing can be built. While zoning can be changed, it is a process that takes time and requires the input of many stakeholders.

Another challenge is finding available parcels that are close to jobs, public transportation, medical facilities, schools, and grocery stores. While no site will ever be perfect, livability, walkability, and safety play into decisions about housing construction.

We also must be honest about the “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) attitude of many residents. People are often reluctant to accept or consider affordable housing developments or shelters in their neighborhoods. We have seen this many times in recent years. Without community support, it is extremely difficult to move forward with any significant housing development.

We also need more funding. At the end of March 2019, there were 1,100 new affordable apartments completed, under construction or entitled since the goal of

² Center for Housing Policy and National Housing Conference. *The center for housing policy insights from housing policy research* Retrieved October 4, 2019, from https://furmancenter.org/files/media/Dont_Put_It_Here.pdf

adding 10,000 affordable apartments was established. If all the projects slated to be funded by the City's \$100 million commitment come to fruition, a total of 2,090 apartments will be added, bringing the City over 20% of the way toward its goal. However, when all the currently available funding is counted from the City, County and State, the Housing Department estimates that a total of 5,771 apartments can be built. The City needs an additional \$528 million to fund the remaining 4,229 apartments. Without the identification of an additional funding source, the 10,000 goal is not achievable. To fill this gap, the City Council will consider adopting a Commercial Linkage Fee on new non-residential development and may also consider a ballot measure for Fall 2020.

18. Who can I contact to report a homeless concern?

Whenever you have a concern about a homeless encampment or other issues related to homeless residents, you may contact the Homeless Concerns Hotline at 408-975-1440 or homelessconcerns@sanjoseca.gov.

19. Everyone has a role to play in ending homelessness in our community, how can I help solve the homelessness crisis?

There are many ways for residents to get involved and make a difference. Here are a few:

- Establish a shelter or safe parking program at your place of worship or through a community organization. One resource is the Winter Faith Collaborative <https://faithcollaborative.wordpress.com/about/>.
- Get engaged with the Housing Ready Communities initiative at <https://destinationhomesv.org/housingready/>.
- Host a small meeting at your house and have representatives from the City talk with your neighbors about what we are doing. Please call (408) 535-4906 if you're interested.
- Volunteer for a program that provides services for homeless residents. The little pamphlets passed out have lists of organizations that often need help.
- Donate to a program that provides services for homeless residents.
- Say YES and support an affordable housing development or shelter in your community. Sign up for our email list to be notified of District 6 projects https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001Re2XAHrK4vlm0acvFEVE_k7q2LN3nQX4-mwCue2VGe4LDIOtnielezCzFkoFRCYNe6k4qC-iGrTIFixwfU8OoqOiO8XtNHjaWOwWEAMcBr8%3D.

20. Are there additional resources for people interested in learning more about homelessness and affordable housing in our local communities?

- List of homeless service providers along with contact information
<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11171>
- Santa Clara County Housing Authority
<https://www.scchousingauthority.org/>
- List of local homeless shelters
<https://www.211bayarea.org/santaclara/housing/shelters/homeless-shelters/>
- HomeFirst, a nonprofit homeless services provider
<https://www.homefirstscc.org/>
- Destination: Home, a nonprofit homeless services provider
<https://destinationhomesv.org>

21. What is Housing First?

Housing First is an approach to helping homeless people that starts with housing. In the past, homeless people were often expected to address issues they may have been facing – such as finding a job or seeking treatment for an addiction – before receiving help in finding a home. Studies have shown, however, that people often need housing before they can successfully work on other problems. The Housing First approach increases the likelihood of an individual’s long-term housing stability and improved physical and behavioral health.

22. If we provide services for homeless, will that attract more?

This is a valid concern. However, I know that doing nothing is not the answer.