




SANTA CLARA COUNTY

# COMMUNITY PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

2020–2025



### **Acknowledgements**

The Community Plan Steering Committee would like to thank the many community stakeholders, people with lived experience of homelessness, and organizations for their participation in the process to update the plan and their valuable input.

For a full list of organizations that participated in the process, see page 14.



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# Introduction

In 2015, the community came together to create a roadmap for ending homelessness in Santa Clara County. This plan—which was centered around a collective impact response and the proven Housing First model—set an ambitious goal to create 6,000 new housing opportunities and identified innovative strategies and programs for reducing homelessness.

## Supportive Housing System Progress 2015-2019

Thanks to the collective efforts of partners throughout the community, over the past five years, we have done the following:

Helped **8,884 households** resolve their homelessness,



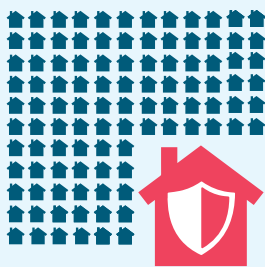
representing **14,132 people**



**Doubled** the number of supportive housing units in Santa Clara County



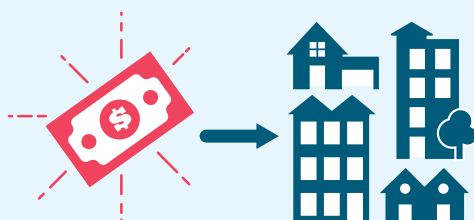
**Doubled** our temporary housing and emergency shelter capacity



Launched a new homelessness prevention system that now serves about **1,000 households annually**



Led a community-wide campaign that has successfully housed more than **1,600 veterans** and engaged nearly **800 private landlords** in the effort



Voters approved **\$950 million** to develop affordable housing through the 2016 Measure A Affordable Housing Bond and raised another **\$100 million** in private contributions to support the implementation of the community plan

Despite our progress creating a supportive housing system that assists thousands of homeless individuals and families each year, the crisis continues to grow. The systemic factors driving homelessness in our community—from the failed policies at the local, state, and national level to the extreme lack of housing options that are affordable for low-income residents—remain stronger than ever and are pushing more of our neighbors onto the streets every day.

These challenges have been compounded by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that arrived in our community as this plan was in development, making implementation of many of these strategies even more urgent. This public health crisis has ground our local economy to a halt, leaving many more households on the brink of homelessness due to job loss, lack of childcare, and economic uncertainty. The pandemic has also required a massive and immediate response by our crisis response system to quickly ramp up shelter capacity, increase access to hygiene services for people living outside, and protect those people experiencing homelessness who are particularly vulnerable. As a result, as this plan goes into effect, we anticipate there will be many more people experiencing or at risk of homelessness who will need immediate support, which will require our community to continue to be flexible and innovative in our responses to homelessness.

To truly end homelessness in Santa Clara County, we must summon the collective will and resources to not only respond to the current crisis and scale our successful housing strategies, but also address and eliminate the root causes of homelessness in our community.

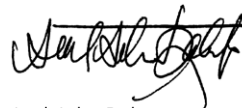
### Community Plan Steering Committee Members



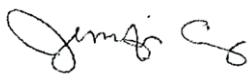
Ky Le, Co-Chair



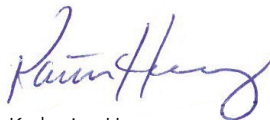
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Joel John Roberts



Jennifer Loving, Co-Chair



Katherine Harasz



Claudine Sipili



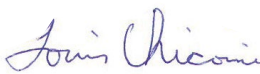
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Miguel Marquez



Leland Wilcox



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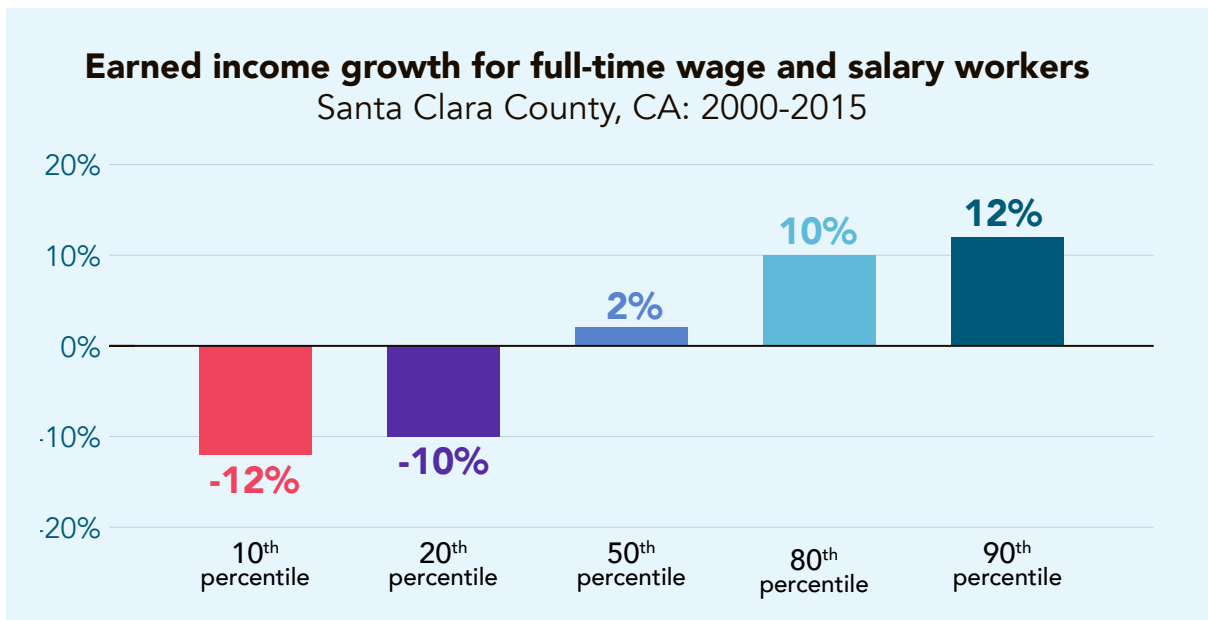
Jacky Morales-Ferrand



# Our Homelessness Crisis

According to the 2019 Point-in-Time count, there are 9,706 individuals experiencing homelessness on any given night in Santa Clara County.<sup>1</sup> Families with children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, veterans, youth and young adults are all represented in the county's diverse homeless population. More than 80% of these individuals are unsheltered—sleeping outside, in cars, or other places not meant for human habitation. We expect that these numbers will increase over the coming months as the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is felt.

The gap between the rich and the poor in our community, combined with the lack of housing development particularly at the lowest income levels, is fueling the homelessness crisis. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, families at the highest income levels in the Bay Area (the 90th percentile) have more than 12 times the income of families at the bottom (the 10th percentile).<sup>2</sup> Those at the bottom rung of the economic ladder have also not shared in the region's significant economic growth. Between 2000 and 2015 in Santa Clara County, workers with earnings in the 10th percentile saw their income decline by 12%.<sup>3</sup>



This income inequality has been further exacerbated by the economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as many low-income households living paycheck-to-paycheck struggle to make rent and pay for other basic needs.

<sup>1</sup> Applied Survey Research, "Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey Comprehensive Report 2019." 2019. <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/osh/ContinuumofCare/ReportsandPublications/Pages/HomelessnessCensusandSurvey.aspx>

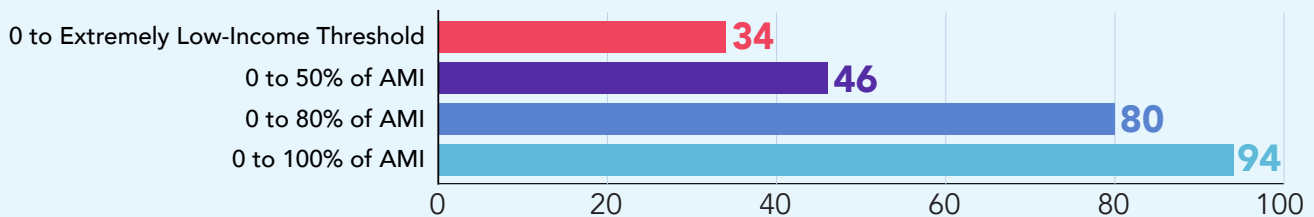
<sup>2</sup> Public Policy Institute of California, "Income Inequality in California." 2020. <https://www.ppic.org/publication/income-inequality-in-california/>

<sup>3</sup> Bay Area Equity Atlas, "Earned income growth for full-time wage and salary workers: Santa Clara County, CA, 2000–2015." <https://bayareaequityatlas.org/indicators/income-growth#/?geo=040000000000006085>

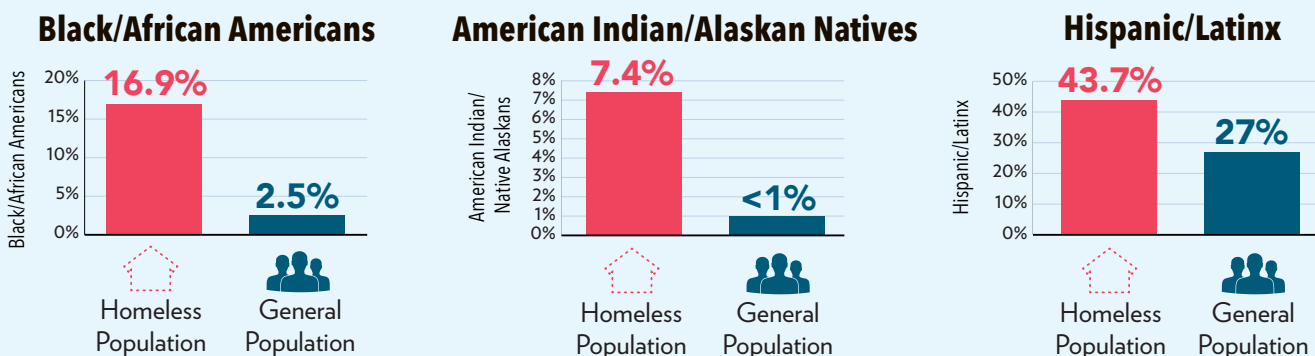
Compounding the impacts of this inequality is the fact that housing costs are higher than ever and housing that is affordable to the lowest-income families is not being produced. In fact, the National Low-Income Housing Coalition's most recent report, *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*, found that in 2018 there were only 34 affordable and available units for every 100 extremely low-income renter households in the San Jose metro area.<sup>4</sup>

### Affordable & Available Rental Homes "Per 100 Renter Households"

San Jose Metropolitan Area: 2018



In addition, longstanding and structural racial inequities continue to affect who becomes homeless in our community. A recent report commissioned by Destination: Home found that people of color are dramatically more likely than their white counterparts to become homeless in Santa Clara County, and that poverty alone cannot explain disparities in homelessness. For example:



While the brunt of this crisis is borne by our unhoused neighbors, we know its impacts are felt much more broadly. Our neighborhoods, first responders, businesses, and environment are also suffering the consequences of our region's severe homelessness crisis.

Even worse, the problem continues to grow as more people are slipping into homelessness than ever before—the result of growing income inequality, gentrification and displacement, rising housing costs, an extreme housing shortage, and a lack of sufficient safety net services to adequately care for the most vulnerable in our community. In fact, for every homeless family or individual we connect to housing, between two and three more are experiencing homelessness for the very first time.

If this trend continues, in addition to the nearly 10,000 individuals currently experiencing homelessness, another 20,000 are at-risk of falling into homelessness over the next five years—far more than our supportive housing system currently has the capacity to serve.

<sup>4</sup> National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes." 2020. [https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/gap/Gap-Report\\_2020.pdf](https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/gap/Gap-Report_2020.pdf)







# Ending Homelessness in Santa Clara County

Solving this crisis is one of the great moral challenges facing us. It will require tremendous effort, new partnerships, and even bolder strategies—and it will require the entire community to be a part of the solution.

We must take immediate actions that can improve the quality of life for the huge number of unsheltered residents in our community. We must increase shelter capacity and increase interim housing options, and we must expand services to meet their basic health and safety needs.

We need to significantly scale our housing development and programs to meet the growing need in our community. This includes building many thousands more supportive housing units, expanding our homelessness prevention strategies, and enhancing the way our supportive housing system serves those in need.

Most importantly, we will never end homelessness in our community if we do not attack the systemic root causes that continually push more of our neighbors into homelessness. As a result, we must address inequitable land use and housing policy to allow every jurisdiction to achieve their Regional Housing Needs Allocation goals for very low and extremely low-income housing production. We must ensure every resident who is able to work can access living wage employment and we must reverse decades-long structural inequities that have driven people of color and other vulnerable residents onto the streets.

**As we implement the strategies in this plan, we will raise the voices of people with lived experience and share power with our unhoused and recently-housed neighbors. We will focus on policies and programs that reduce racial inequity, in an effort to reverse the disproportionately high rates of people of color who are unhoused.**

None of this will be easy or cheap. In fact, just meeting the affordable housing needs of our community would require several billion dollars. But we cannot accept a future in which thousands of our neighbors are forced to live outside. Every member of our community deserves a safe and stable home—and it is our collective responsibility to make this vision a reality.

# Our Plan

The 2020–2025 Community Plan to End Homelessness will serve as our roadmap for ending homelessness in Santa Clara County and is organized around three main strategies:

STRATEGY 1	STRATEGY 2	STRATEGY 3
 <p>Address the root causes of homelessness through system and policy change</p>	 <p>Expand homelessness prevention and housing programs to meet the need</p>	 <p>Improve quality of life for unsheltered individuals and create healthy neighborhoods for all</p>

The strategies included in this plan are grounded in evidence-based practices, lessons learned over the past five years, and robust conversation and input from more than 8,000 members of our community; including people with lived experience of homelessness, subject matter experts, key stakeholders, and community members.

In addition, this plan sets aggressive targets designed to reverse the current growth in homelessness we are experiencing and bring us one step closer to our collective goal of eliminating homelessness in our community.



# Our Targets

By 2025, we will:



Achieve a **30% reduction** in annual inflow of people becoming homeless\*



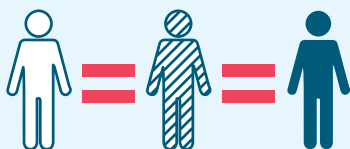
House **20,000 people** through the supportive housing system



Expand the Homelessness Prevention System and other early interventions to serve **2,500 people per year**



**Double** temporary housing and shelter capacity to reduce the number of people sleeping outside



Address the **racial inequities present** among unhoused people and families and track progress toward reducing disparities

\*The reduction in annual inflow target was based on annual inflow prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This target will be reevaluated once the longer term impacts of COVID-19 are known.



## The Strategies

Reaching these ambitious goals will require a collaborative community response based on proven, evidence-based strategies to end homelessness as well as innovative approaches that maximize the resources available.

The strategies are organized under three areas of focus that make up the basic framework for the plan.



## STRATEGY 1



### Address the Root Causes of Homelessness Through System and Policy Change

To end homelessness in our community, we must address its root causes. This plan sets a five-year goal of reducing new unhoused individuals and families in a given year by 30%. The strategies below are targeted to address the entrenched economic and societal causes of homelessness through transformational systemic 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. While eliminating these disparities across our community will take more than the five years covered by this plan, we can make substantial progress towards this important goal by implementing the strategies below.

1

#### Ensure that people accessing safety net services have the support they need to obtain and maintain housing.

- A** Adopt housing screening and referral processes for individuals and families accessing safety net services.
- B** Expand housing programs for families involved in the child welfare system.
- C** Expand and diversify housing programs for foster youth to meet their long-term housing needs, so no foster youth become homeless.
- D** Expand housing resources available to Medi-Cal recipients accessing services in the Specialty Mental Health System.
- E** Advocate for the state and the federal government to increase funding and access to safety net services.

2

#### Ensure that people involved in the criminal justice system do not become homeless.

- A** Support households with incarcerated family members to prevent homelessness.
- B** Expand existing and develop new housing and workforce development programs to successfully reintegrate people leaving probation, parole, jails, and prisons into the community.

## STRATEGY 1



### Address the Root Causes of Homelessness Through System and Policy Change (Continued)

#### 3 Create the conditions to develop enough affordable housing to meet the need in our community.

- A** Work with cities to change local land use and housing policy to allow for development of more affordable housing and help reverse housing disparities that have negatively impacted people of color.
- B** Identify underutilized land across the county to be used for dense affordable housing development.
- C** Prioritize development of housing for extremely low-income individuals and families making 30% of Area Median Income or less and set joint targets.
- D** Advocate for flexible funding that can speed up and create more affordable housing.

#### 4 Protect residents from evictions, displacement, and housing discrimination.

- A** Adopt and implement new fair housing plans for the region.
- B** Strengthen local rent control and tenant protections.
- C** Provide legal assistance to ensure that individuals and families most severely impacted by the lack of affordable housing, namely people of color, have equal access to housing.
- D** Create a fund to preserve both naturally affordable and income-restricted affordable housing.

#### 5 Ensure all residents who are able to work have access to living wage employment.

- A** Support efforts to increase the minimum wage to a living wage in Santa Clara County.
- B** Partner with corporations to create living wage job opportunities for people who are unhoused or at risk of homelessness.
- C** Provide training, internships, and mentorships to help people who are unhoused or at risk of homelessness to obtain access to living wage jobs.
- D** Invest in social enterprises that train and employ people who are unhoused or at risk of homelessness.

#### 6 Expand public and private sector support for ending and preventing homelessness.

- A** Increase community engagement and support for affordable and supportive housing development throughout the county.
- B** Provide leadership opportunities for people with lived experience of homelessness to shape how we address homelessness in our community.
- C** Create a county-wide education campaign that increases awareness of the causes and impacts of homelessness and ongoing efforts to end homelessness.





## STRATEGY 2

### Expand Homelessness Prevention and Housing Programs to Meet the Need



While Strategy 1 aims to close the gaps in our social safety net and address the other systemic causes of homelessness, we know that there will be some people over the next five years who will still become unhoused due to a severe shortage of affordable and accessible housing. 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.

#### 1 Increase the capacity of supportive housing programs for people experiencing homelessness.

- A** Expand the supportive housing system to provide housing and services to help 20,000 unhoused people secure stable, permanent housing. Expansion would target the following:
- 7,000 people housed in Permanent Supportive Housing programs that provide long-term support.
  - 10,000 people housed through Rapid Rehousing programs that provide short- and medium-term support.
  - 3,000 people housed through Housing Problem Solving and other short-term or one-time assistance.
- B** Develop programs tailored to the needs of specific populations of people experiencing homelessness, including:
- Youth and young adults
  - Older adults (55+) and seniors
  - Families with children
  - Adults (ages 25 to 54) without children

#### 2 Provide a broad range of supports to prevent homelessness.

- A** Expand the Homelessness Prevention System to prevent homelessness for an additional 7,000 households who are at risk by providing targeted financial assistance and supportive services.
- B** Provide targeted financial resources to prevent homelessness and eviction for severely rent-burdened residents living in existing affordable units.

#### 3 Create a state-of-the-art supportive housing system.

- A** Center the voices of people who have lived experience of homelessness, especially people of color, in the policy and program design decisions of the supportive housing system.
- B** Invest in professional development and competitive pay to attract and retain a highly qualified workforce of homeless service provider staff.
- C** Incentivize hiring of people who have lived experience of homelessness to reflect the client population—especially people of color and LGBTQI+ persons.
- D** Increase access to supportive housing programs for people of color by addressing racial bias in our system.

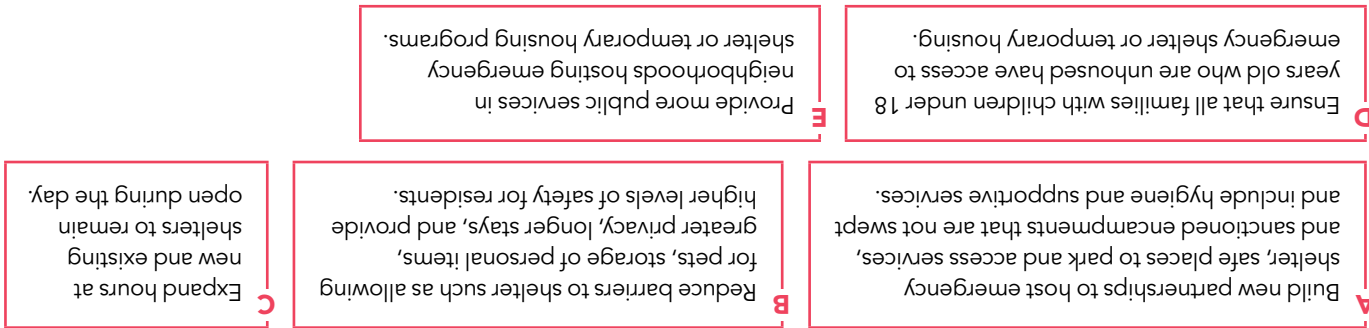
## STRATEGY 3

### Improve Quality of Life for Unsheltered Individuals and Create Healthy Neighborhoods for All

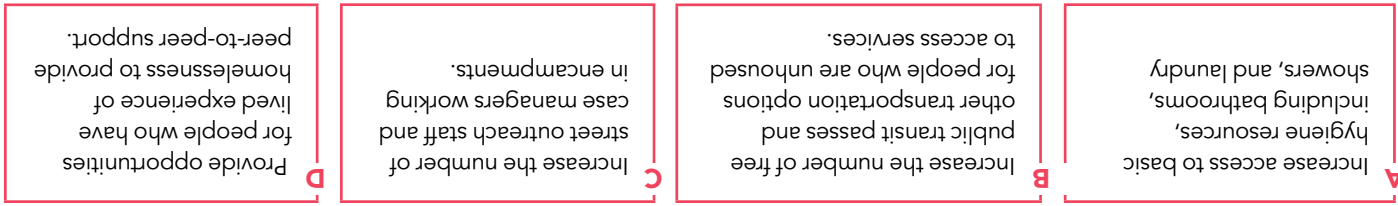


The first two strategies of the plan seek to end and prevent homelessness for as many people as possible over the next five years. However, the reality is that many people will remain unhoused due to an extreme housing crisis and increasing income inequality. To address this immediate crisis in our community and ensure healthy neighborhoods for all, we must begin by doubling our temporary housing and shelter capacity to serve 2,000 additional households each night and increase investment in health, safety and other basic services to better meet the needs of people living in unsheltered conditions and build connections to housing programs and safety net services offered throughout the county.

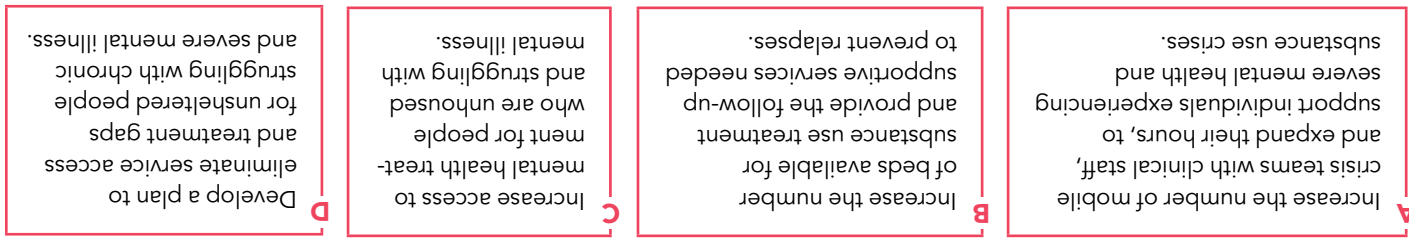
#### 1 Double the number of year-round temporary housing beds and offer a variety of welcoming temporary housing options throughout the county.



#### 2 Increase street outreach, hygiene services, and transportation options to match the needs of unsheltered residents.



#### 3 Increase mental health and substance use services.





## STRATEGY 3 Improve Quality of Life for Unsheltered Individuals and Create Healthy Neighborhoods for All (Continued)

### 4 Engage a cross-section of community partners to address the needs of unsheltered residents.

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p><b>A</b> Increase outreach to city and County staff and business and neighborhood associations about available resources to assist people who are unhoused.</p> | <p><b>B</b> Engage the private sector to contribute funding to support health and safety services and shelter for people who are unhoused.</p> | <p><b>C</b> Increase coordination between agencies engaging people living in encampments to ensure consistent and humane approaches to encampment resolution.</p> | <p><b>D</b> Create a referral system where unhoused residents can access information and services, such as available temporary housing and homeless services.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

### 5 Ensure that community spaces are safe and welcoming for housed and unhoused residents.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>A</b> Partner with new private sector, community-based, and faith-based organizations to create safe and welcoming community spaces in every community for unhoused people to access services during the day.</p> | <p><b>B</b> Work with community organizations, cities, County agencies, and neighborhood associations to ensure that public spaces such as parks, libraries, and community centers remain clean, well-maintained, and welcoming to all.</p> |
|---|---|

## Process Improvements Across Strategies 1, 2, and 3

Throughout our work, we must continue to expand coordination between systems, increase the use of data to improve programs, and increase training opportunities for all partners, including:

- Share data across safety net, criminal justice, and housing systems to better predict and target households who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
- Better utilize data collected in the homeless system of care and across County departments to know what is working well, what programs need improvement, and to identify inequities in the system.
- Provide demographic data, including race and ethnicity, in all reports on homelessness to highlight and address inequities.
- Create accessible dashboards that show our progress and hold our systems accountable.
- Provide trauma-informed care and racial equity/anti-racism training to all staff working with people experiencing homelessness.
- Increase access to services, including providing system navigation resources and training to all staff working with people experiencing homelessness.
- Align racial equity work in the homelessness sector with other racial equity initiatives in Santa Clara County.
- Expand partnerships with corporations, philanthropic institutions, and individual donors to secure private funding to reduce and prevent homelessness.
- Align and coordinate with other community efforts to address homelessness, such as the Homelessness Task Force.

Thank You!

# Thank You!

The Community Plan Steering Committee would like to thank the following agencies and staff who participated in the Community Plan Work Group to gather community input and update the community plan:

- County of Santa Clara: Jackie MacLean, Hilary Barroga, Kathryn Kaminski, Hilary Armstrong
- City of San José: Sarah Zárate, Ragan Henninger
- Destination: Home: Ray Bramson, David Low
- City of Morgan Hill: Rebecca Garcia
- City of Mountain View: Wayne Chen
- LifeMoves: Bruce Ives
- Sacred Heart Community Service: Erin Stanton
- Community Solutions: Erin O'Brien

The Steering Committee and Work Group would like to thank the many people who are currently or formerly unhoused who shared their input and experiences to inform the community plan, including the following:

- Lived Experience Advisory Board
- Sacred Heart's Survivors of the Streets
- HomeFirst Sunnyvale Shelter's Client Collaborative
- Clients/residents from Hope's Corner, Bill Wilson Center, New Haven Inn, and Second Street Studios

The Steering Committee and Work Group would like to thank the following community stakeholders, agencies, and organizations for participating in the process:

- Abode Services
- Alta Vista High School
- Amigos de Guadalupe
- Anthem Blue Cross
- Bill Wilson Center
- Bitfocus
- Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County
- Charities Housing
- Cisco
- Cities Association of Santa Clara County
- City Team
- City of Cupertino
- City of Morgan Hill
- City of Mountain View
- City of Palo Alto
- City of San José
- City of Milpitas
- City of Santa Clara
- Community Services Agency
- Community Solutions
- County of Santa Clara:
  - Behavioral Health Services
  - Office of the District Attorney
  - Probation Department
  - Public Defender Office
  - Public Health Department
  - Reentry Services
  - Santa Clara Valley Medical Center
  - Social Services Agency
  - Office of Supportive Housing
  - Office of Equity and Social Justice
  - Offices of Supervisors Cindy Chavez, Dave Cortese, Susan Ellenberg, Joe Simitian, and Mike Wasserman
  - Valley Homeless Healthcare Program
- David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Destination: Home
- Dependency Advocacy Center



- Downtown Business Association
- Downtown Streets Team
- EAH Housing
- East Side Union High School District
- Family Supportive Housing
- First Community Housing
- Gilroy Compassion Center
- HomeFirst
- Housing Trust Silicon Valley
- Humane Society of Silicon Valley
- Hunger at Home
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kids in Common
- Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
- LifeMoves
- LinkedIn
- Los Altos Community Foundation
- Mental Health Systems
- Next Door Solutions
- On Lok
- PATH
- Razing the Bar
- Resources for Community Development
- Santa Clara County City Managers Association
- Santa Clara County Housing Authority
- Santa Clara County Office of Education
- Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Advocacy Consortium
- Santa Clara Family Health Plan
- Sacred Heart Community Service
- Salvation Army
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits
- Silicon Valley at Home
- Silicon Valley Independent Living Center
- Silicon Valley Organization
- South Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking
- Spectrum Equity
- St. Joseph Family Center
- Sunnyvale Community Services
- The Health Trust
- United Way Bay Area
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- West Valley Community Services
- YWCA of Silicon Valley

