

# Alternative Strategies

## Introduction

The following strategies have been gathered from various sources by the [VNC Discussion Forum Committee \(DFC\)](#) for its ongoing consideration of the [VNC Diversity Vision Goal](#). This is a flexible document which the authors of each [Alternative Strategy](#) or of any [Response](#) thereto may amend as their understanding evolves in the discussions. It is also an open document for which additional [Alternative Strategies](#) and [Responses](#) are solicited and encouraged.

Joe Murphy, DFC Chair (310-305-1444; [joedmur@gmail.com](mailto:joedmur@gmail.com))

## Alternative Strategy I

Drafted by Joe Murphy, DFC Chair (310-305-1444; [joedmur@gmail.com](mailto:joedmur@gmail.com)) for consideration at the 170214 DFC meeting.

**DFC MOTION:** Request VNC Board support of the [Discussion Forum Committee's](#) commitment to generate and submit to the Board, for its review and approval, a set of recommendations capable of implementing the following [Strategy Objective](#):

**Develop and present to the board a set of policies and laws which would encourage private and public efforts to provide more less-expensive 'homes' in existing LA residential communities in a way which would become, over time, within the economic reach of ownership by less wealthy residents – 'homes' where they and their families would feel they 'belong' to a 'community' without the fears common in 'ghettos' – an approach designed to create & then maintain a systemic housing supply/demand balance in all of LA's residential communities.**

### <date> Response

Drafted by <name> (<tel#; email>) for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

## Alternative Strategy II

Drafted by Frank Murphy (310-306-1962; [franknmurphy@ca.rr.com](mailto:franknmurphy@ca.rr.com)) for consideration at the 170509 DFC meeting.

Frank Murphy submitted the following as LA zoning changes which he indicated could encourage him (and others like him) to construct the housing necessary to offset, over the long term, the current housing deficit-creating zoning system in the City of Los Angeles:

1. **Reduce Housing Construction Costs:** Reduce parking requirements in all residential construction to one parking stall per unit (none if justified by actual or projected lack of need) and allow building residents to determine how to share available parking stalls. This would encourage housing construction throughout the City of Los Angeles.
2. **Support Grannie Units:** Encourage the construction of all forms of building safety compliant 'Grannie Units' in single family zones without occupancy requirements. This would encourage provision of housing for relatives and/or supplemental income enabling residents to avoid displacement from gentrification pressures.
3. **Encourage designs to accommodate future adaptive reuse as community needs evolve:** For example, design parking facilities to accommodate future housing/retail conversions as need for parking dwindles and/or to meet anticipated housing supply/demand imbalances.
4. **Adopt volumetrics as an alternative to current zoning restrictions (FARs, setbacks, etc.):** Doing so would encourage architectural creativity while limiting construction to the volumes permitted by development standards.
5. **Allow and facilitate conversion of present and future multi-housing rental units into options for resident ownership:** home-ownership enhances family and community stability.

### 170523 Response

Drafted by Joe Murphy (310-305-1444; [joedmur@gmail.com](mailto:joedmur@gmail.com)) for consideration at the 170613 DFC meeting.

This [Alternative Strategy II](#) is my current preference (barring the surfacing of a better [Strategy](#)) because it either satisfies all, or does not undermine any part of, my [Alternative Strategy I](#). My rationale for supporting it is that – if implemented – it is the only [Strategy](#) received so far which seems likely to induce the sort of profit-motivated construction of the housing which will be needed to accommodate the ongoing demand for it – demand which has been and will be generated in significant part by past and current efforts to “house homeless people” (including the need to meet the demand for the permanent long-term housing which will be generated by the implementation of [LA City Proposition HHH](#) and [LA County Measure H](#)). This systemic ongoing long-term balancing of the supply & demand for housing would very likely also have significant positive impacts on:

- Reducing displacement pressures caused by gentrification;
- Reducing, albeit indirectly, the tendency of the current [land-management system](#) to “maintain ghetto cultures” – ie, communities where disadvantaged residents seem constrained in ways which keep alive, from generation to generation, the ghetto culture in which they and their children probably were (are, or are likely to be) raised;
- Tempering the tendency of current efforts to rely on models which too often place clients in a “supplicant position” instead of providing them with a [land-management system](#) which empowers them: (a) to improve the communities and cultures in which they reside; or (b) to move into such ‘improved’ communities.
- Reducing considerably (indeed, almost eliminating) the taxes required to fund past & current efforts which have generated poor results. See [state report](#), <http://www.latimes.com/politics/essential/la-pol-ca-essential-politics-updates-california-housing-affordability-1483490282-htlstory.html>.

### <date> Response

Drafted by <name> (<tel#; email>) for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

# Alternative Strategy III

Drafted by Wendy L. Kaysing (818-203-2006; [taratree123@yahoo.com](mailto:taratree123@yahoo.com)) for consideration at the 170509 DFC meeting.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Wendy L. Kaysing** <[taratree123@yahoo.com](mailto:taratree123@yahoo.com)>

Date: Fri, Feb 17, 2017 at 3:21 PM

Subject: 5 PRACTICAL, COST-EFFECTIVE, & RAPID ways to solve the homeless problem in L.A.

To: "mike.bonin@lacity.org" <[mike.bonin@lacity.org](mailto:mike.bonin@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org" <[councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.price@lacity.org" <[councilmember.price@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.price@lacity.org)>, "councildistrict15@lacity.org" <[councildistrict15@lacity.org](mailto:councildistrict15@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.wesson@lacity.org" <[councilmember.wesson@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.wesson@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.blumenfield@lacity.org" <[councilmember.blumenfield@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.blumenfield@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org" <[councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.fuentes@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.huizar@lacity.org" <[councilmember.huizar@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.huizar@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.martinez@lacity.org" <[councilmember.martinez@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.martinez@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.ofarrell@lacity.org" <[councilmember.ofarrell@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.ofarrell@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org" <[councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.cedillo@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.english@lacity.org" <[councilmember.english@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.english@lacity.org)>, "councilmember.krekorian@lacity.org" <[councilmember.krekorian@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.krekorian@lacity.org)>, "paul.koretz@lacity.org" <[paul.koretz@lacity.org](mailto:paul.koretz@lacity.org)>, "david.ryu@lacity.org" <[david.ryu@lacity.org](mailto:david.ryu@lacity.org)>

Cc: Kathy Junge <[kathyjunge@gmail.com](mailto:kathyjunge@gmail.com)>, Mark Ryavec <[delphiassociates@ca.rr.com](mailto:delphiassociates@ca.rr.com)>, Jill <[bagman1933@aol.com](mailto:bagman1933@aol.com)>, Joe Murphy <[joedmur@gmail.com](mailto:joedmur@gmail.com)>, Charles Rosin <[charles.rosin@gmail.com](mailto:charles.rosin@gmail.com)>, Lilly Lawrence <[ecolily@gmail.com](mailto:ecolily@gmail.com)>, Bruno Kohfield-Galeano <[brunogaleano@yahoo.com](mailto:brunogaleano@yahoo.com)>, Nicole Zwiren <[nicoleknows@gmail.com](mailto:nicoleknows@gmail.com)>, Lauri Burns <[lauri@theteenproject.com](mailto:lauri@theteenproject.com)>

TO: All concerned about the homeless.

FROM: Wendy L. Kaysing, Venice Resident & Advocate for LOW COST and CREATIVE solutions to the homeless epidemic in L.A.

There are a number ways to combat homelessness that would cost the city very little--some methods could even become self-sustaining by offering work opportunities to the homeless, along with INSTANT housing...see below:

1. Utilize the empty hospitals that exist in Los Angeles county -- approx. ten of them ... the homeless can help rehab/retro fit them into shared housing and also activate the kitchen/dining rooms. Hospitals are ideal in that they already have private and shared rooms, office space, kitchen, and dining area. Often all that is needed is cleaning, paint and some updating. Supplemental fresh food can be grown on the roof-tops.
2. Create more boarding houses for chronically homeless --hire a "host/manager" to make sure rules are followed. The city can rent large homes, divide bedrooms to maximize the number of beds available offered, and then charge rent on a sliding scale (NO RENTAL SUBSIDIES NEEDED!) The newly housed, formerly homeless can take turns working in the kitchen and garden--and raise some of their food hydroponically. Raising food is also very therapeutic. Services can also be offered like pet sitting.
3. Instead of building expensive INDIVIDUAL apartments for the homeless (FOOLISH!), build DORMITORIES, like colleges do for their students, with individual or shared rooms, and common lounging and kitchen areas. It is foolish to offer individual apartments to those who often CANNOT live on their own because of mental problems or other issues. Dormitories and/or shared housing makes it easier to insure that special needs can be met in a VERY cost effective manner.
4. IMMEDIATELY set up CAMPGROUND on city or county land for homeless people that have restrooms, showers, and a community room. This is a very cost effective way to address the problem of homeless people who do not want to give up their pets...also this method costs very little money, and could be set up within a month's time. This method is a no-brainer to get homeless off the street within a very short time frame. The homeless could be charged on a sliding scale to pay for upkeep, security.
5. IN ADDITION: The City of L.A. needs to allocate a MINIMUM of one-tenth of one percent of HHH money (\$1.2 million) to have Regina Well, Senior Crisis Chaplain and Executive Director at Homeless Task Force (Venice, California) expand this program here in Venice.

According to Regina Weller, "Sgt. Marcelo Blanco and Police Chief Brian Johnson came from Upland to attend our class, as well as LAPD Officers and other community organizations and social workers. Chief Johnson first learned the "different perspective" on homelessness from us when he had his Pacific Division Beach Detail officers join us on our Venice Beach outreaches, and of course, when he took the assignment in Upland, he wanted his officers to be involved. Prior to the class, Chief Johnson invited us to Upland deciding to start there what we had been doing in Venice, and had us address the community leaders in Upland regarding implementation of homeless outreach. I recall how stunned the Upland community was at first at the prospect of homeless engagement. I had a long discussion with Officer Marcelo at that time, encouraging him to lead in this community relations endeavor -- he was sold on it and so excited to begin implementation in Upland with their officers and community, so they came to our training class. They are using our methodology and it works! Just a few months back, Steve was invited to be their keynote speaker at their first Community Homeless Summit." see article below:

[Upland takes a new approach to homelessness](#)

The reason many problems don't get solved is two-fold: Lack of imagination and lack of political/community will. Jamie Lerner (paraphrased), Lerner is a former mayor of Curitiba, Brazil, and a current consultant to cities around the world. See his very enlightening "Ted Talk" :

[Jaime Lerner: A song of the city](#)

**Wendy L. Kaysing**  
Venice, CA 90291

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new. Socrates

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## <date> Response

Drafted by <name> (<tel#; email>) for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

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## Alternative Strategy IV

LA Times Editorials & Articles reproduced here by JDM for consideration at the June 13, 2017 DFC meeting.

**LA Times May 27, 2017 Editorial**

### To end the housing crisis, California leaders can't be afraid to put all options on the table

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-housing-crisis-bills-20170527-story.html>



**An empty lot, located at the intersection of 1st St. and Lorena St. in Boyle Heights on April 6. A nonprofit developer's plan to build housing for the homeless here has been stalled.**

(Los Angeles Times)

**The Times Editorial Board**

May 27, 2017

How do you know that California's housing problem has hit crisis proportions? When state lawmakers introduce more than 130 bills to try and fix it.

The state's housing market has long been unaffordable for far too many Californians. But in recent years, the problem has become impossible to ignore. Rapidly rising rents are forcing more residents to spend a staggering percentage of their take-home pay to keep a roof over their heads. Financial advisors recommend spending no more than 30% of your income on housing, but one in three renters in California pays more than half of their income to their landlord. Plus the greatest job growth has been in coastal cities that have the highest housing costs, forcing workers to pay more than they can afford, commute long distances or forgo career opportunities because the cost of living is too high.

The crisis may be most visible in the growth of tents and RVs clustered along city streets as homelessness has risen in California in recent years, even as it has declined elsewhere in the nation.

At the heart of California's housing crisis is a mathematical problem: There are simply not enough homes for the state's population. Housing construction has failed to keep up with demand since the 1980s, and the problem has only worsened in recent years. Over the last decade, California has built about 80,000 homes annually — about 100,000 homes a year short of what was needed.

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Why? Various studies have pointed the finger at local governments, where measures to combat sprawl and protect the environment, red tape, community concerns and outright NIMBYism have severely limited housing construction. Those bottlenecks have persisted because housing decisions are largely local decisions. Cities and counties determine what gets built where through planning and land-use policies.

Local elected officials can encourage housing construction, or they can slow it — which is often the case in the state’s coastal regions. The number of houses and apartments in Los Angeles and San Francisco grew by just 20% between 1980 and 2010, compared with 54% in typical U.S. metropolitan areas. No surprise, these are among the two most unaffordable cities in the country.

State lawmakers have decided they can no longer sit on the sidelines and let the shortage get worse. Traditionally, legislators have tried to address the state’s housing problem by providing money to build more affordable housing. This session there are proposals to issue housing bonds, impose a real estate transaction fee and eliminate the state’s tax deduction for mortgage interest on second homes — all of which would generate hundreds of millions of dollars for low-income housing. But there’s no way the state can subsidize its way out of the housing crisis; doing so could cost upwards of \$250 billion, according to the Legislative Analyst’s Office [report](#).

Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) put lawmakers on notice: He won’t sign new housing funding bills without statewide changes that make it easier, faster and cheaper to build new housing. Brown is right to demand reform. In Sacramento, lawmakers are removed enough from the local development scrum to craft broad policies that encourage or even mandate housing that fits California’s broader goals and needs.

That means pushing cities to approve more housing near transit and job centers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making it easier for people to forgo driving. It means adding teeth to existing state laws that require cities to produce enough housing to meet their population growth. It means putting cities and counties that build enough affordable housing first in line for parks and infrastructure funding.

Despite all the attention on the state’s housing crisis, legislators and Brown are still avoiding some of the most controversial and, possibly, effective reforms. What about changes to the California Environmental Quality Act, which is too often used to block or shrink infill, transit-adjacent housing developments that are exactly the kind of environmentally-friendly projects the state needs?

What about reviving some version of California’s redevelopment agencies, which allowed cities to target investment in certain neighborhoods and generated about a billion dollars a year to build affordable housing?

And what about Proposition 13? The cap on property taxes was supposed to make it easier for longtime residents to stay in their homes, but it has also pushed up the cost of new housing construction as cities have layered on development fees and assessments to pay for infrastructure. If California leaders are serious about ending the state’s housing crisis, every possible solution should be on the table.

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**<date> Response**

Drafted by <name> (<tel#; email>) for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

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## How to cut grim homeless numbers: House people faster

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-grim-2017-homeless-numbers-20170601-story.html>



A man sleeps in the 2nd Street tunnel in downtown Los Angeles. Citywide, the homeless population jumped 23% over the last year.

(Reed Saxon / Associated Press)

**The Times Editorial Board**

June 1, 2017

The new numbers on homelessness in Los Angeles are startlingly grim — up 20% in the city and 23% overall in the county. That means volunteers found 57,794 men, women and children living on sidewalks and in parks, in cars and campers, or at overnight shelters during a three-night count in January, despite tens of millions of dollars worth of services funded by city and county agencies. In the city of Los Angeles alone, 34,189 homeless people were counted in the tally. The number of homeless veterans was up 57% despite the federal government's redoubled efforts to eliminate the problem.

At a news conference on Wednesday, local leaders and officials at the L.A. Homeless Services Authority didn't try "sugarcoating" (as Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) put it) the fact that they have yet to make a dent in homelessness. Yet the numbers reflect the riddle of solving this increasingly intractable problem. While the homeless population went up dramatically, so did the number of people the county *did* manage to house — a record 14,214. That's good. Anywhere else, it would be great. But while those folks were being housed, their ranks were more than offset by the mounting volume of people unable to escape the streets. And, no, they weren't from out of town. A separate demographic survey that the homeless services authority conducts shows that 75% of the area's homeless people have been here five years or longer.

## L.A. County's median rent is rising rapidly, while renters' median income is shrinking.

The city and county have a plan to fix this: Reach out to chronically homeless people and get them into housing; reach out to newly homeless people and get them rapidly rehoused through rental assistance. They

just can't do any of it fast enough to stop more people falling into homelessness. Not the outreach, not the provision of housing, not the rental assistance.

There's no question that a huge part of the problem is caused by the severe shortage of housing in the region. According to statistics provided by the homeless services authority, less than 3% of the apartments in greater Los Angeles will be vacant this year. Making matters worse, L.A. County's median rent is rising rapidly, while renters' median income is shrinking, according to the California Housing Partnership Corporation.

Garcetti wants the city council to impose a fee on developers that would go toward building affordable housing in the city. That's an idea worth exploring.

Meanwhile, there are things that can be done to attack homelessness in the short term. The city needs to look into creative ways that other communities are using to increase the supply of housing — for example, by rehabilitating existing buildings or even converting shipping containers. And elected officials cannot allow reflexive neighborhood opposition to block badly needed and appropriately scaled housing projects.

The head of the Homeless Services Authority on Wednesday said his agency is working on ways to speed up the bureaucracy, including cutting the time it takes for service providers to have their contracts approved. That's a good idea. For example, outreach to chronically homeless people can take weeks or even months to bear fruit. If more outreach workers can get on the streets faster, more people can be persuaded to move into housing.

There are also homeless people who have federally subsidized rent vouchers for apartments, yet can't find willing landlords or available apartments. In particular, hundreds of homeless veterans have vouchers in hand but can't find apartments. The VA and the county need to deploy more housing navigators who specialize in finding housing and working with landlords. And more services and rental assistance need to be offered to people on the verge of homelessness before they become newly homeless statistics.

City and county officials already know all this. To a certain extent, their prescription for themselves is to do everything they're already doing but with more money. They are, indeed, about to get more money. The city can start selling bonds this year to fund homeless housing, as authorized by Proposition HHH. Officials have already recommended that the bonds finance 416 units of permanent supportive housing in the development pipeline. Additionally, the county's Measure H funding for services will become available in July.

But city and county officials must act faster and move more creatively. And then they must hold themselves accountable this time next year for the results.

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**<date> Response**

Drafted by <name> (<tel#; email>) for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

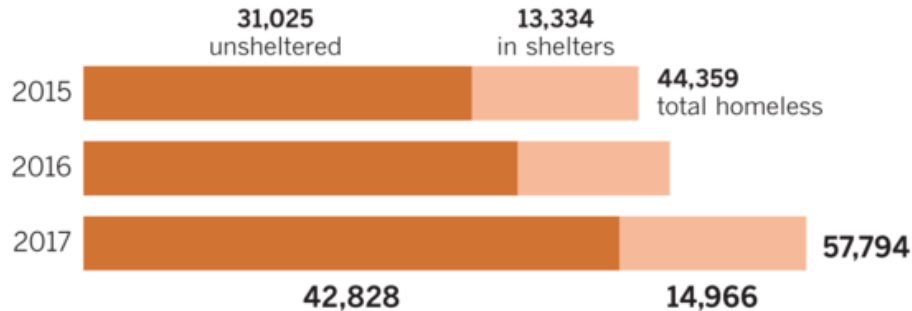
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## LA Times May 31, 2017 Article

### L.A. County homelessness jumps a 'staggering' 23% as need far outpaces housing, new count shows

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-count-20170530-story.html>

## L.A. County homelessness soars



Source Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

Jon Schleuss / @latimesgraphics

**Los Angeles County saw a large increase in its homeless population in 2017.**

(Los Angeles Times)

**Gale Holland and Doug Smith**

May 31, 2017

Los Angeles County's homeless population has soared 23% over last year despite increasing success in placing people in housing, according to the latest annual count released Wednesday.

The sharp rise, to nearly 58,000, suggested that the pathway into homelessness continues to outpace intensifying efforts that — through rent subsidies, new construction, outreach and support services — got more than 14,000 people permanently off the streets last year.

“Staggering,” Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn said in a statement. “It is clear that if we are going to end the homeless crisis, we need to stem the overwhelming tide of people falling into homelessness.”

Said Leslie Evans, a West Adams resident active in efforts to combat homelessness in South Los Angeles: “These are scary numbers.”

The startling jump in homelessness affected every significant demographic group, including youth, families, veterans and the chronically homeless, according to the report. Homeless officials and political leaders pointed to steadily rising housing costs and stagnant incomes as the underlying cause.

Homelessness also increased sharply in the city of Los Angeles, where the count of just over 34,000 was up 20% from 2016.

“There's no sugarcoating the bad news,” Los Angeles Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) said at a news conference Wednesday where the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority released its report. “We can't let rents double every year. I was particularly disappointed to see veteran numbers go up.”

Garcetti called homelessness a problem that has persisted “through administrations, through recessions,” adding, “Our city is in the midst of an extraordinary homelessness crisis that needs an extraordinary response. These men, these women, these children are our neighbors.”



The Homeless Services Authority linked the worsening problem to the economic stress on renters in the Los Angeles area. More than 2 million households in L.A. and Orange counties have housing costs that exceed 30% of income, according to data from Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies included in the report.

According to the nonprofit California Housing Partnership Corp., median rent, adjusted for inflation, increased more than 30% from 2000 to 2015, while the median income was flat.

Currently, the median asking price for rentals countywide is \$1,995 for one-bedroom apartments and \$2,416 for all multifamily units, according to the real estate website Zillow.

“I am deeply concerned that over the next few years we will continue to be overwhelmed by people for whom rents are simply unsustainable,” Supervisor [Sheila Kuehl](#) said in a statement. She called for changes in land use and rent control regulations to boost affordable housing.

Mirroring last year’s count, only one of every four homeless people in both the city and across the county were classified as “sheltered,” meaning they were counted in an emergency shelter or longer-term transitional program. That left three of every four, or just under 43,000 countywide, living on the street.

The chronic homeless population — defined as those who have been on the streets at least a year or multiple times and suffering mental illness, addiction or physical disability — increased 20% to more than 17,000, despite increasing numbers placed into housing.

There were few exceptions to the bad news.

Even the homeless veteran population jumped in 2017, marking a backsliding of the gains made last year by city, state and federal programs that slashed the number of homeless veterans by a third. With the number of veterans placed into housing slightly down, the count of 4,828 homeless veterans was up 57%.





**Mirroring last year's count, only one of every four homeless people were classified as "sheltered," meaning they were counted in an emergency shelter or longer-term transitional program. That left three of every four — just under 43,000 — living on the street.**

The only hopeful sign of homeless initiatives making headway was the strong increase in the number of homeless families being sheltered. Though the population of homeless families increased nearly 30%, those without shelter dropped 21%.

The 2017 count, conducted in January, will become the baseline for a multibillion-dollar homeless program funded by two successful ballot measures.

Proposition HHH, approved by Los Angeles voters in November, will provide \$1.2 billion in bond proceeds over a decade to build permanent housing. Measure H, approved by county voters in March, will provide an estimated \$3.5 billion over 10 years for rent subsidies and services. The county Board of Supervisors is scheduled to vote on budgets for the first three years on June 13.

The combined initiatives aim to create or subsidize 15,000 housing units and pay for services to support those living in them.

Voters "have afforded us opportunity we never had ... to step forward and confront the problem of homelessness in Los Angeles," said Supervisor [Mark Ridley-Thomas](#). "I am not at all discouraged by this data. We knew intuitively there was an uptick. ... Now we have the resources to stand up to it."

Ridley-Thomas called on the community to "put your war clothes on and get ready to fight."

The Los Angeles count, the largest in the nation, is an estimate based on a street tally conducted by 7,700 volunteers over three days and nights. For the last dozen years, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has required cities, counties and other regions to conduct a count in order to receive federal homelessness aid.

The numbers give an imperfect snapshot of the highly fluid homeless population at a point in time. The number of people who lose their homes over the course of a year is more than three times greater on a given night, homeless officials say.

Because the homeless authority has refined its methodology over the years and expanded its volunteer base, year-over-year comparisons can be misleading.

Officials acknowledged, for example, that last year's 11% increase at least partially resulted from the introduction of a special effort to locate hard-to-find youth.

But the scale of this year's increase left little doubt that homelessness was on the rise.

Earlier this month, Orange County reported an 8% increase in its homeless population over two years. More than half of the county's nearly 4,800 homeless people were living without shelter.

A 26% increase toppled years of stagnant or declining numbers in Santa Monica, bringing its homeless population to nearly 1,000, the highest number in a decade. City officials said more than half the homeless people came from other parts of the county.

A brighter picture emerged from Long Beach, which conducts its own count. The city recorded a 21% decline in its homeless population, crediting a nearly 200% increase in permanent housing there. But the actual decrease — 482 people — barely affected the regional totals.

In Los Angeles County, the most drastic increase — 48% — occurred in the San Gabriel Valley district of Supervisor Hilda Solis, where the count rose to just under 13,000.

Ridley-Thomas' district remained the most affected with nearly 19,000 people counted, a 22% increase.

Surveys conducted with the Los Angeles count provided demographic breakdowns for the portion of the county excluding Long Beach, Pasadena and Glendale, cities that conduct their own counts.



These showed increases of 20% or more for every type of improvised shelter — cars (2,147), vans (1,862), campers and recreational vehicles (4,545), tents (2,343) and makeshift shelters (3,516).

Youths made up the fastest growing homeless age group with those 18 to 24 up 64%, followed by those under 18 at 41%.

Those numbers didn't surprise Heidi Calmus, who works in the Hollywood branch of Covenant House, an international homeless services agency.

Calmus said the agency sees 100 to 150 new homeless youth in Hollywood every month. All the shelters have waiting lists, and permanent housing is impossible to find, even with a rent voucher.

"The system is overwhelmed," Calmus said.

While blacks remained the largest racial/ethnic group, making up 40% of all homeless people, the number of Latinos grew by almost two-thirds. Whites declined by a modest 2% and Asians, though remaining only 1% of all homeless people, increased by nearly a third.

Three-fourths of homeless people reported they had been in the county for five years or more, while 12% had been residents for less than a year.

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**<date> Response**

Drafted by <name> (<tel#; email>) for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

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# L.A.'s new homeless numbers are grim. Why?

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/opinion-la/la-ed-grim-homeless-numbers-20170530-story.html>



**A homeless person sleeps on a bench on Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica.**

(Mike Nelson / European Pressphoto Agency)

**Carla Hall**

May 31, 2017

Homelessness is everywhere, and if you thought this fog of misery was beginning to lift, think again. In fact, the new numbers are grim. The number of homeless people has risen a startling 20% in the city of Los Angeles and 23% in the county, according to the results of the 2017 countywide street and shelter count of homeless people over three nights in January. On Wednesday morning, those results will be officially unveiled and dissected by political leaders and executives of the joint city-county agency, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, known as LAHSA.

The count tallied 34,189 homeless people in the city of Los Angeles. That's up from 28,464 in 2016. In the County of Los Angeles, the tally was 57,794. That's up from the 43,854 homeless people counted last year. And there's a 50% increase in people living in their cars.

It was bad enough news when homelessness figures for the county and for the city each went up 12% in 2015 over 2013. That increase helped jolt public officials into realizing homelessness was an urgent, escalating problem. Now it's just escalated even more — despite one-time funds that both the county and the city appropriated last year.

And there's more troubling news: Veteran homelessness, which went down significantly by the 2016 count after an infusion of federal funds, jumped 57% this year to 4,828, higher than in 2015.

Yet, LAHSA says it made more housing placements than ever in 2016.

So, what's going on? Certainly, no one expected the numbers to go *down* 20% this year. But are we just barely treading water as more people fall into homelessness? Surely, these figures are, at least partially, the result of a deplorable lack of affordable housing — the kind that is truly affordable to working-class and poor people. LAHSA officials are expected to talk about the overall rise of rents and the decrease in renters' income. Of course, the city is gearing up to spend \$1.2 billion of bond money on housing over the next decade, which should — which better — make a dent in homelessness. But we also need to ask how well the city and county are spending the money that they have already allocated for homelessness. And how well is LAHSA doing its job if the numbers keep going up? Could this agency be more effective in some ways?

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## <date> Response

Drafted by <name> (<tel#> email) for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

## LA Times June 1, 2017 Article

### Youth homelessness surges in L.A. 'Why are you out here?' 'My mom is a really bad mom'

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-youth-20170601-story.html>



Nick Semensky, left, hands a bag of hygiene supplies to Charles Stacks, 23, and Marquis Drew, 26, in Hollywood on Tuesday. Semensky is a member of a homeless outreach team.

(Christian K. Lee / Los Angeles Times)

**Gale Holland**

June 1, 2017

Diandre Pope said his mother dropped him off at a Hollywood youth shelter when he was 15, and he started to get into trouble.

Now 31, the Watts native stays in an encampment on Hollywood Boulevard, around the corner from a popular fitness club, siphoning power off a utility pole to power his telephone and sampling the capacious offerings — taquitos to hot wings — from a nearby convenience store.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority [reported Wednesday](#) that 6,000 homeless young people like Pope were tallied across the county in January, a 61% increase over the 2016 total.

The homeless services agency improved the youth count, Executive Director Peter Lynn said, which could account for part of the jump. But Heidi Calmus of Covenant House California, an international youth homeless services agency with a branch in Hollywood, said the sharp increase was no surprise.

All the youth shelters have waiting lists and affordable housing is tough to find, even with a rent voucher, Calmus said.

“The system is overwhelmed,” Calmus said Tuesday night as she and a colleague, Nick Semensky, delivered toiletry bags and sandwiches to young people living in the streets.

Most of the young people are ages 18 to 24, Lynn said. Many were released from foster care or group homes, or like Pope, were set loose by their families.



They distrust authority and have no appetite for giving up the freedom of the streets for another regimented living situation, Semensky said.

“Emergency housing is instantly available on skid row, but they will have to be with older people and they may feel like they’re in the jail or prison they’ve already been in,” Semensky said. “And they say, ‘If I’m going to be homeless I might as well be homeless in L.A., it’s more exciting.’”

Like Pope, they are on the street longer than in the past, Calmus said. Some have had bad experiences in homeless settings and now are running out of options, she added.

Maggie Reyes, 24, said she spent almost a year at a youth shelter before another woman started stealing her belongings. She moved back with her mom, who has struggled to hold onto housing. She is hoping to get her own subsidized housing before the special services for young homeless people are cut off when she turns 25.

Michael Z., 24, said he was thrown out of his house after graduating high school because of his drinking and drug use. He said he no longer drinks and has finally found a good job.

He asked that his last name not be used because he has to conceal his homelessness from his employer. Agencies try to help him with housing, but landing a place appears to be a distant hope at best, he added.

“It takes so long to rehab from the streets,” he said.

Reyes said the homeless youth she sees in the street are getting younger and younger.

“I’m always running into kids who say, ‘I’m really 15’ and I’m like, ‘Why are you out here?’ They’re like, ‘My mom is a really bad mom,’” Reyes said.

“Every year there are more coming than going,” she said.

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**<date> Response**

Drafted by <name> (<tel#; email>) for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

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## Alternative Strategy V

LATimes Article describing proposed by **City Council President Herb Wesson** for consideration at the August 8, 2017 DFC meeting.

# Housing, battling racism and a municipal bank top agenda for L.A. council president

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-wesson-speech-20170725-story.html>



**City Council President Herb Wesson speaks at Los Angeles City Hall last month.**

(Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)



**Emily Alpert Reyes**

July 23, 2017

Los Angeles should explore whether to create a municipal bank that would finance affordable housing and throw its doors open to the cannabis industry, [City Council](#) President [Herb Wesson](#) said Tuesday.

Wesson tossed out the idea as part of a sweeping speech that set out his agenda for his final term. In addition to the bank, Wesson said L.A. must take new and innovative steps to battle racism, protect immigrants and build more affordable housing.

“When our grandchildren tell stories of us, what will they say? Will they say we were brave?” asked Wesson, who recently was reelected as council president. “When the history books remember us, will they say that we did everything within our power to improve the lives of the people we represent?”

To combat hatred, Wesson wants the city to help organize scores of intimate dinners between people of different races, faiths and backgrounds. To defend immigrants, he wants the city to craft new legislation. And to ensure more affordable housing is built, Wesson wants a new commission to think up ideas.

But his most unexpected proposal was forming a bank: Wesson suggested that a municipal bank could help finance affordable housing, provide loans for small businesses and entrepreneurs, and give the marijuana industry a [safe place](#) to park its cash. Cannabis businesses have been shut out of [many banks](#) and rely heavily on cash transactions.

“Do you know, we’ve got people that are going to go home tonight and sleep on a mattress that’s worth \$2 million?” Wesson said, alluding to marijuana entrepreneurs stashing cash at home. “We have to figure out a way to make this industry work. We in government are supposed to push the envelope, not protect the status quo.”

The Southern California Coalition, a marijuana industry group, welcomed the idea. “The cannabis industry is perceived to be a sitting duck for crime because it’s heavily cash based,” said Adam Spiker, the group’s executive director, adding that marijuana businesses also struggle to get loans and have had trouble finding landlords willing to accept cash.

The speech, which was promoted in advance to the media, had the feel of another State of the City address. Wesson, a former speaker of the California State Assembly, greeted fellow council members Tuesday by saying that the inauguration ceremony earlier this month was “the mayor’s day,” while “today is our day.”

Ahead of his speech, a video revisited some celebrated moments for the City Council, including increasing the citywide minimum wage, passing a bond to help the homeless and courting the Olympics.

Wesson, 65, led his remarks with a story, recounting that white men had pelted him with a milkshake and called him racial slurs when he was a 12-year-old headed to the movies in Ohio. He went on to list a number of hateful incidents in the last year, including the desecration of Jewish cemeteries and the slaying of two men trying to defend a Muslim girl on a Portland, Ore., train.

“We cannot stand by and allow bad people to roll back the clock on the progress that we have made, not just in this city, but in this country,” Wesson said.

Wesson plans to partner with Community Coalition, an advocacy group formerly led by City Councilman Marqueece Harris-Dawson, to host more than 100 small dinners that bring Angelenos together throughout the city.

After the speech, he told reporters that he believed face-to-face dinners could change the world, saying that such discussions at college and church had helped him let go of a hardened heart after he was attacked as a youth.

To address the housing crisis facing Angelenos, Wesson said he wanted a new commission to come up with strategies to make it easier to build affordable housing. The commission, created in partnership with the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, could explore everything from speeding up permits to repurposing shipping containers, Wesson said.

Wesson said a municipal bank also could help finance more affordable housing. He did not go into details Tuesday about how precisely the L.A. bank would work, saying that he wanted Councilman [Paul Krekorian](#) to start examining the idea and see whether it was worthwhile.

The idea of a public bank has been championed by some local activists who see it as a way to keep money in the community and steer clear of “unethical investments.” North Dakota created a public bank nearly a century ago; campaigns to create public banks have popped up in Oakland, San Francisco and other cities.

As of Tuesday afternoon, more than 400 people had signed a Change.org petition backing a Los Angeles municipal public bank “accountable to the people.” Phoenix Goodman, one of the co-founders of Public Bank L.A., said that activists who want Los Angeles to divest from Wells Fargo had realized that they needed “an ethical alternative.”

“The real solution isn’t going from a big bank to another big bank — it’s transcending Wall Street altogether,” Goodman said.

But the idea also drew some skepticism Tuesday. The city has “structural deficits going on forever and now they want to start a bank?” said Jack Humphreville, who serves on the Neighborhood Council Budget Advocates, which provides input for city leaders on the budget.

The [last time](#) Wesson gave such a speech two years ago, some wondered whether the prominent address meant he was angling to replace Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#). The Tuesday address comes three years before the [powerful](#) and charismatic politician will be termed out of the City Council.

In his speech, Wesson repeatedly cast his gaze beyond Los Angeles to the nation at large. But when asked, Wesson said that didn’t mean he was eyeing any kind of national office — only emphasizing that Los Angeles could lead the country toward progress.

“I’m not going anywhere,” Wesson said. “L.A. is stuck with me.”

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#### <date> Response

Drafted by <name> (<tel#; email>) for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

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# Alternative Strategy VI

Proposed by <name> (<tel#; email>) and posted by JDM for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

<Text>

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## <date> Response

Drafted by <name> (<tel#; email>) and posted by JDM for consideration at the <date> DFC meeting.

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