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Media Contacts:

Laurel Anderson, County of Santa Clara Office of Public Affairs

Phone: 408-299-5119

Email: laurel.anderson@ceo.sccgov.org

Jeffrey Scott, San José Housing Department

Phone: 408-975-2647

Email: jeff.scott@sanjoseca.gov

County of Santa Clara, City of San José Release Results of 2019 Homeless Census

Regional homeless population has grown significantly as nearly three new people seek assistance for each person who exits homelessness; signs of progress in housing families and veterans

Santa Clara County, Calif. – The County of Santa Clara and City of San José today announced preliminary results of the biennial homeless census covering the County’s 15 cities and unincorporated areas. The count, conducted over two days in January 2019, found the number of homeless adults increased significantly over the past two years, resulting in an increase in the region’s overall homeless population.

Together, the County and City have housed approximately 4,000 formerly homeless families and individuals since 2017. Despite these efforts, the number of newly homeless residents continues to outpace the capacity of County and City systems to place people in stable housing. Nearly three new people are seeking assistance from the County for each person who exits homelessness.

“The reasons for homelessness are many and varied,” said Joe Simitian, President of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. “The high cost and shortage of housing are making a bad problem worse. Combining our efforts to prevent homelessness and create supportive housing with 2016 Measure A – Affordable Housing Bond – funds will continue to be an essential strategy in addressing homelessness. So far, the County has committed \$234 million of Measure A funds toward 19 housing developments that will collectively add 1,437 apartments for the most vulnerable in our community.”

The County of Santa Clara’s overall homeless count was 9,706, which is an increase of 2,312 over 2017. In San José, the overall homeless count was 6,172, which is an increase of 1,822 over 2017.

“Despite our collective efforts to house more than 6,900 homeless neighbors in the last three years, for every person we bring in from the cold, the economy pushes three more out the door,” said Mayor Sam Liccardo.

“We must double down on homelessness prevention and, in turn, alleviate the human misery and greater public cost following an eviction notice. It’s also time to end the reign of the NIMBY in Silicon Valley. We all have a shared responsibility to address this crisis — every city and every neighborhood. That means we must house homeless neighbors here, not the proverbial ‘somewhere else’.”

In Santa Clara County, the 2019 census found the number of homeless family members was 921, down from 1075 in 2017. The number of homeless veterans was 653, down slightly from 660 in 2017.

The census found the number of homeless family members in San José was 313, down from 340 in 2017. The number of homeless veterans was 476, up slightly from 468 in 2017.

To address the rise of homelessness, the County and City are focused on building deeply affordable housing. The County has prioritized development of housing for residents experiencing homelessness and households making less than 30 percent of Area Median Income. The San José City Council recently approved allocating 45 percent of the City’s investments in permanent affordable housing for extremely-low-income residents.

The 2019 census found the numbers also increased for chronically homeless and the unsheltered population.

- Countywide, the number of chronically homeless was 2,470, an increase of 373 over 2017. The percentage of homeless county residents who were unsheltered was 82 percent, up from 74 percent in 2017. And the number of unaccompanied youth and young adults was 1,876. While this figure was down from 2017, the decline was due in part to a change in methodology for counting young people.
- In San José, the number of people considered chronically homeless was 1,579, an increase of 374 over 2017. The percentage of homeless residents who were unsheltered was 83 percent, up from 74 percent in 2017. And the number of unaccompanied youth and young adults was 1,391. This was down from 2017. However, as with the County, the decline was due to a change in methodology.

“Now is the time to redouble our efforts to solve this crisis,” said Jennifer Loving, Chief Executive Officer of Destination: Home. “The solutions are right here in front of us - we just need to mobilize the collective will and resources to scale our proven strategies and meet the enormous need in our community. Bottom line: homelessness is solvable.”

About the County of Santa Clara

The County of Santa Clara government serves a diverse, multi-cultural population of 1.9 million residents in Santa Clara County, the sixth largest county in California. With a \$7 billion budget, more than 70 agencies/departments and 20,000 employees, the County of Santa Clara plans for the needs of a dynamic community, offers quality services, and promotes a healthy, safe and prosperous community for all. The County provides essential services including public health and environmental protection, medical services through Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (SCVMC), child and adult protection services, homelessness prevention and solutions, roads, parks, libraries, emergency response to disasters, protection of minority communities and those under threat, access to a fair criminal justice system, and scores of other services, particularly for those members of our community in the greatest need.

About the City of San José

With more than one million residents, San José is one of the most diverse large cities in the United States. It is Northern California’s largest city and the 10th largest city in the nation. San José’s transformation into a global innovation center has resulted in one of the largest concentrations of technology companies and expertise in

the world. In 2011, the City adopted Envision San José 2040, a long-term growth plan that sets forth a vision and a comprehensive road map to guide the City's anticipated growth through the year 2040.

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This news release is available at www.sanjoseca.gov and www.sccgov.org. The Point-in-Time Homeless Count report and data for the full 15 cities in the county will be available in July.