

# NEWS

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For Immediate Release

## **One Day Count Shows Rise in Homeless Population, Need to Continue Shelter, Housing and Service Expansion**

*Providing shelter and affordable housing, health, and mental health services  
are keys to ending homelessness*

**Redwood City** – County Executive Officer Mike Callagy today announced to a virtual gathering of community leaders that a one-day count found 1,808 people experiencing homelessness in San Mateo County.

“While that number may sound daunting to some, we know we have the ability and the commitment to end homelessness here in San Mateo County,” Callagy said. “We are putting together the resources and supports necessary to create a clear path from homelessness to permanent housing, with significant new shelter resources that have been opened recently and additional ones coming in a matter of months.”

Callagy made today’s announcement during the second in a series of events titled “[2022: Our Year of Working Together to End Homelessness](#).” This is an ongoing series of convenings, tours and a brain storming session to engage the community in developing solutions to a challenge County leaders have pledged to overcome.

“Together, we know we can put the systems in place to ensure that when individuals and families do experience homelessness, it is rare, brief and one-time,” said Don Horsley, president of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. “We know we have work to do, and we are committed to providing the resources necessary to complete that work.”

### **Homelessness: By the Numbers**

The one-day “[point in time](#)” count tallies the number of people experiencing homelessness at a given point in time. The 2022 count was conducted on February 24 by teams of community members that fanned out across San Mateo County to find and count

unsheltered individuals. A count of those in shelters and interim housing was also conducted.

The count found:

- ▶ 1,092 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This represents a 21 percent increase (191 individuals) from the 2019 one-day count.
- ▶ 716 individuals living in group shelters and hotels that have been converted to interim housing. This represents a 17 percent increase (105 individuals) from the 2019 one-day count.

“While the numbers went up, we believe the situation could be much worse without the supports we have put in place due to the impacts of the pandemic,” said Ken Cole, director of the County’s Human Services Agency.

“The past few years have been incredibly tough on so many individuals and families,” Cole said. “They deserve our compassion and, more than that, our promise that we will do everything within our power to ensure that every person experiencing homelessness can enter shelter and work towards finding a permanent home.”

The results of the point-in-time count provide data that helps inform policy makers and providers about the homeless population and to understand trends. Agencies that receive federal funding are required to conduct a point in time count every two years; the 2021 count was rescheduled for 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **“Our Year of Working Together to End Homelessness”**

The County has set the goal of creating enough shelter beds and transitional housing units to achieve “functional zero” homelessness. This means ensuring that every county resident experiencing homelessness, who chooses assistance, can be safely sheltered in an emergency shelter, or in temporary or permanent housing. It also means that outreach staff will continue to engage with those who are not currently interested in accessing services.

Providing temporary and permanent housing options is a key component of the initiative along with expanding supportive services to unhoused residents on the street, in shelters and residing in transitional housing. Supportive services address an individual’s or families’ barriers to housing and include connecting people with employment opportunities, social services benefits, and health and mental health services.



To build momentum, Callagy announced the year 2022 as “Our Year of Working Together to End Homelessness.” On Friday, in addition to learning the results of the point in time count, attendees heard from city leaders about their work to end homelessness and from providers of interim housing and supportive services for youth, families and adults.

The next event in the series, “[Moving into a Permanent Home](#),” will be held on Friday, June 3, at 10 a.m. The event will focus on the challenges of developing permanent affordable housing and conclude with a “fireside chat” with formerly homeless residents who now have permanent homes.

### **Creating Paths to Permanent Housing**

“With the leadership of the Board of Supervisors, we firmly believe the solution to homelessness is providing people with the tools they need to get into permanent, affordable housing,” Callagy said.

To address urgent shelter needs, in April, the County began construction of 240 safe living spaces in a Navigation Center now taking shape in Redwood City, east of Highway 101.

The Navigation Center will replace the Maple Street Shelter, which currently provides supportive services and emergency and transitional housing for up to about 110 individuals each night.

Unlike traditional shelters, the Navigation Center will allow people to have private sleeping quarters and 20 units will accommodate couples. The new facility will also offer outdoor space, and expanded space for support services providers.

The Navigation Center construction is expected to be complete by the end of the year.

In addition to the new units at the Navigation Center, the County has purchased five former motels/hotels for conversion into interim or permanent housing for individuals who are unsheltered or at serious risk of becoming unsheltered.

These properties are:

- Shores Landing, Redwood City: 95 units.
- The former Comfort Inn and Suites, Redwood City: 51 units
- The former Stone Villa Inn, San Mateo: 44 units
- Coast House, Half Moon Bay: 51 units
- Pacific Shelter, Redwood City: 74 units



Two hotels, Coast House and Pacific Shelter currently provide transitional housing and a third, Stone Villa will be ready for transitional housing residents in the fall. Formerly homeless seniors now have permanent homes at Shores Landing provides and the Comfort Inn will welcome permanent residents later this year.

To learn more about “Our Year of Working Together to End Homelessness” and to find ways to get involved, go to [smcendinghomelessness.org](http://smcendinghomelessness.org).

**Media Contact:**

Bryan Kingston  
Human Services Agency  
Communications Specialist  
(650) 802-7924  
[bkingston@smcgov.org](mailto:bkingston@smcgov.org)

