Watsonville
CALIFORNIA

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC PLAN 2025

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Cradle to Career Santa Cruz County

Housing Santa Cruz County

Pajaro Valley Loaves and Fishes

People First Santa Cruz County

Salvation Army

Watsonville Church of the Nazarene

Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County

Housing Matters Santa Cruz County

Pajaro River Flood Management Agency

Pajaro Valley Shelter Services

Red Cross of Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito Counties

Second Harvest Food Bank

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Introduction

The City of Watsonville is committed to addressing homelessness with compassion, urgency, and strategic action.

Homelessness is a complex challenge that impacts individuals, families, neighborhoods, and the entire community. As the number of unhoused residents continues to create pressure on public systems and spaces, the City recognizes the need for a coordinated, balanced response rooted in both empathy and accountability.

This **Homelessness Strategic Plan** outlines Watsonville's approach to making measurable progress toward reducing homelessness and managing community impact. It is guided by three overarching Priorities:

Priorities

End Suffering on the Street
Prioritize immediate and sustained efforts to reduce human suffering by expanding access to housing, health care, and support services for those experiencing homelessness.

Share and Protect Public Spaces
Ensure that shared public areas remain clean, safe, and accessible for all community members, while also responding to the needs of unsheltered residents with dignity and fairness.

Create Opportunity
Address the root causes of homelessness by strengthening prevention programs, supporting economic mobility, and aligning resources to help individuals regain stability and independence.

Strategic Areas

To advance these priorities, the City will focus its work on four **Strategic Areas**:

🏠 **Housing**

📄 **Policy & Funding**

✋ **Prevention & Resources**

📋 **Management & Enforcement**

Together, these Strategic Areas represent the City's overall approach to ending homelessness and are listed in order of preferred implementation and resource allocation. Focusing primary efforts on increasing Watsonville's housing stock will help to meet diverse income needs, reducing the likelihood of residents becoming unhoused. Policies must then be adopted that help to encourage and facilitate housing development, maximize partnerships and resources and provide operational frameworks. Short of having housing solutions that meet the needs of all residents, efforts in prevention and resources are needed to keep residents from becoming unhoused and to provide services to those who are experiencing homelessness. Finally, management and enforcement efforts are needed as a last resort to preserve the environment and infrastructure and protect community health and safety.

The Current State of Homelessness in Watsonville

At least every two years, typically during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts of the local population experiencing homelessness. The federal government requires communities to conduct a PIT Count every 2 years; however, the County of Santa Cruz has elected to conduct the counts annually. PIT Counts approximate the number of persons experiencing homelessness in each community and collect information on persons and families residing in emergency shelters and transitional housing and unsheltered situations including on the streets, in cars, abandoned properties, or other places not meant for human habitation (the unsheltered). The County of Santa Cruz worked in conjunction with Applied Survey Research (ASR) to conduct the 2025 Santa Cruz County Homeless PIT Count and Survey.

2025 PIT Count Results

The report shows a 20% decrease in the County's overall homeless population. In Watsonville specifically, a 50% decrease in population was recorded (from 673 in 2024 to 335 in 2025). This includes a 60% drop in unsheltered individuals (from 583 to 234) and a 12% increase in sheltered individuals (from 90 to 101).

This significant progress reflects the City's ongoing, coordinated efforts, including expanded outreach, homelessness prevention programs, and affordable housing developments. Implementation of some of the Action Items across the four Strategic Areas outlined in this Plan has already begun, resulting in significant changes to the City's PIT Count numbers. It is anticipated that this trend will continue as time and resources allow for further implementation of this Plan, resulting in fewer individuals experiencing homelessness.

Jurisdiction	Unsheltered		Sheltered		Total		
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	24-25 Net Change
Total Incorporated	1,061	924	365	351	1,426	1,275	-11%
City of Capitola	50	71	0	0	50	71	42%
City of Santa Cruz	384	612	275	250	659	862	31%
City of Scotts Valley	44	7	0	0	44	7	-84%
City of Watsonville	583	234	90	101	673	335	-50%
Total Unincorporated/Confidential Scattered Site*	302	198	0	0	302	198	-34%
Total County Office of Education	122	0	0	0	122	0	-
Total	1,485	1,122	365	351	1,850	1,473	-20%

The 2025 PIT Count was conducted on January 30, 2025. The full 2025 PIT Count Report can be found by scanning the QR Code.

Note:
In past years, County Office of Education location data was vague. This year's more precise data allowed individuals to be assigned to exact locations.

*Confidential/scattered site data are confidential due to privacy considerations.

Watsonville Point in Time Count:

2019: 370 unhoused

2022: 366 unhoused

2023: 421 unhoused

2024: 673 unhoused

2025: 335 unhoused (50% decrease from 2024)
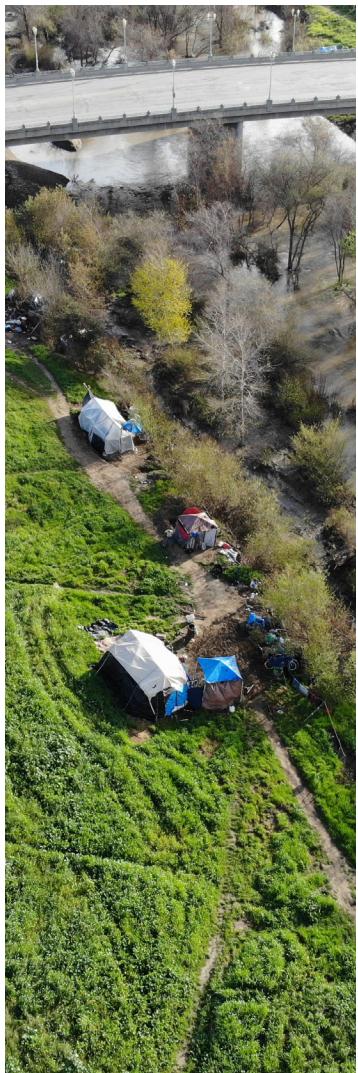
Why the Significant Change?

Although there is still much work to be done, the 50% reduction is the result of intentional, coordinated efforts across the City and community. It reflects Watsonville's strong commitment to addressing homelessness through strategic planning, partnerships, and compassion.

Key contributing factors include:

• Completion of affordable housing developments, such as Tabasa Gardens (53 permanent units for low- and extremely low-income residents).

• Increased investment in homelessness prevention, with continued funding for nonprofits helping Watsonville residents remain housed.

• Strong interdepartmental collaboration, including staff from Police, Public Works, Parks, Community Development, Library, and Fire.

• Improved data tracking, with more individuals entered into the County system for better coordination and follow-up.

• Expanded outreach through the Connector Pilot Program and consistent encampment engagement, helping connect more individuals to shelter, services, and long-term support.

• Large-scale encampment cleanups and outreach efforts are continuously taking place to not only address health and safety concerns but also provide opportunities for connection to services and housing.

• Development of a Homelessness Strategic Plan, created in partnership with 13 local community organizations, multiple City departments, the Watsonville businesses, and engaged residents.

While more work remains, this progress shows that focused, community-based approaches are working, and that Watsonville is moving in the right direction.

Key Takeaways from the 2025 Countywide PIT Count

Historic Drop in Homelessness
Countywide homelessness dropped by 20 percent from 2024 to 2025. This is the lowest number since counts began. **Total:** 1,473 individuals experiencing homelessness (72 percent are men)

Unsheltered Homelessness Remains High
76 percent of individuals were unsheltered
(living in vehicles, tents, encampments, etc.)

Rise in First-Time Homelessness
• 40 percent were experiencing homelessness for the first time
• Up from 30 percent in 2024
• Reflects growing economic pressures and cost-of-living increases

Economic Drivers Are a Major Cause
Loss of employment (18 percent) and high cost of living (15 percent) were the top cited causes of homelessness

Local Roots
• 78 percent of respondents became homeless while already living in Santa Cruz County
• Reaffirms that homelessness is a local issue requiring local solutions

Increase in Chronic Homelessness
• 60 percent now meet the federal definition of chronic homelessness (long-term homelessness combined with a disabling condition)
• Up from 38 percent in 2024

Health-Related Challenges Are Widespread
• 75 percent of respondents reported at least one disabling condition
• 54 percent reported a psychiatric or emotional condition
• 43 percent reported a physical disability

Creation of the Homelessness Strategic Plan

This Plan was developed through a collaborative process, incorporating input from a diverse range of community members, including some with lived experience with homelessness, service providers, business owners, faith-based institutions, government representatives and City staff.

The City held two community workshops on homelessness in March and October 2024. During these workshops, community members, City staff and City Council members discussed key issues and brainstormed potential solutions. From these conversations, four themes emerged as top priorities: housing, policy and funding, prevention and resources and management and enforcement.

Following these community workshops, the next step was creation of a plan to transform the identified priorities into action.

A Call for Applications was released in November 2024 to solicit individuals interested in joining Working Groups that would support the City of Watsonville's Task Force on Homelessness. To be eligible, applicants needed to live or work in Watsonville. More than 30 applications were received, and individuals were divided into Working Groups, led by City teammates, representing the four Strategic Areas identified through the community workshops.

The Working Groups began meeting in January 2025 and were tasked with assessing the current state of their Strategic Area, identifying gaps and proposing actionable steps the City could take.

Each Working Group selected one Representative and one Alternate to serve on the Task Force on Homelessness. The Task Force on Homelessness was then charged with compiling the work of the four groups to develop the City of Watsonville's Homelessness Strategic Plan.

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Introduction

Housing is the cornerstone of any effective strategy to address homelessness. In the City of Watsonville, increasing the supply of affordable housing and preventing displacement are top priorities. A comprehensive housing approach not only focuses on building more units but also emphasizes the importance of keeping residents stably housed and supporting the creation of housing that is accessible to all income levels. This chapter outlines targeted strategies to expand housing opportunities, prevent homelessness, and ensure long-term housing stability for our community's most vulnerable residents.

Highlights

Non-profit housing developers play an important role in providing affordable housing in Watsonville. The City has granted direct financial assistance, land write-downs, regulatory incentives, and other forms of assistance to a number of developers to provide both ownership and rental housing to lower- and moderate-income households. In recent years, the City has assisted South County Housing, Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center, Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition, Eden Housing, Inc., Habitat for Humanity, and others in the provision of affordable housing.

The City has also utilized funding various sources including: grants available through the State Department of Housing and Community Development HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), CalHome Program, Permanent Local Housing Allocation Program (PLHA), Joe Serna Jr. Farmworker Housing Grant Program (FWHG), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); the City's Affordable Housing Fund; and Private Funding/Financing to provide direct financial assistance to income-eligible, first-time home buyers to purchase their first home.

Types of Housing Currently Available

	Housing Type
1,106	Mobile Homes
3,046	5 of More
1,697	2-4 Unit
9,173	Single Family
1,124	Senior Homes (Part of Single Family)

Total Dwelling Units - 15,022

(Y-axis: 2,000 / 6,000 / 10,000 / 14,000)
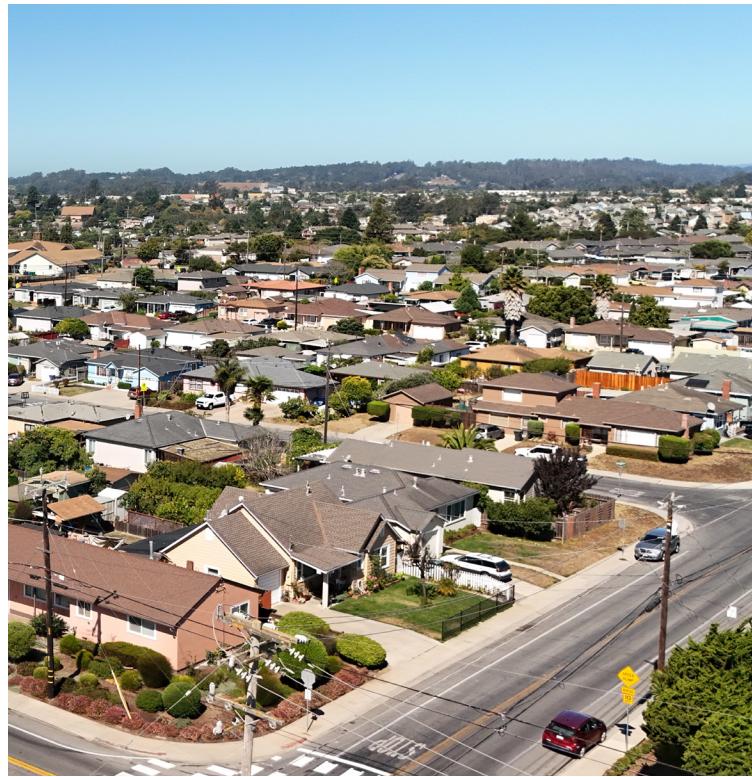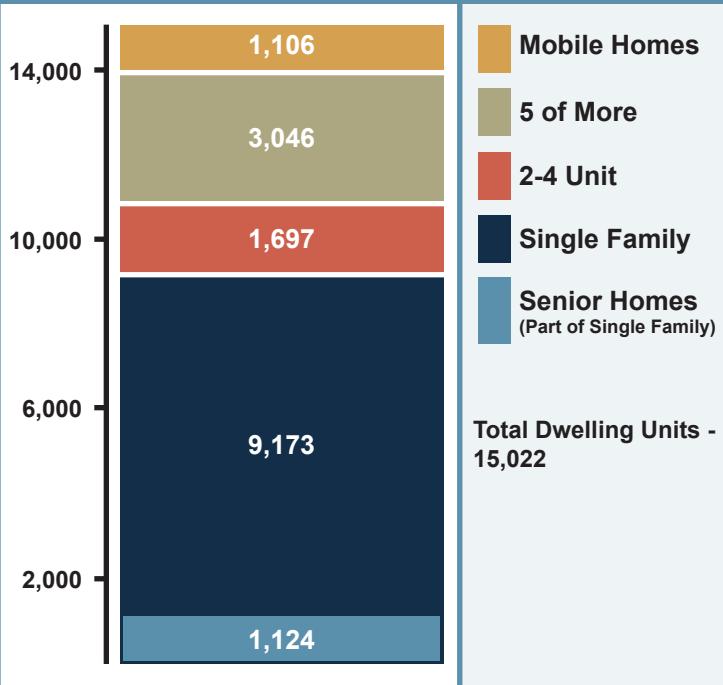
The following strategies present a robust, multi-pronged approach to expand opportunities for safe, respectable, and affordable housing and supportive services to promote the highest level of independence and community integration for individuals and families impacted by homelessness.

• Continue implementing existing citywide housing programs, such as the inclusionary housing ordinance and the mobile home rent stabilization ordinance.

• Partner with non-profits and affordable housing developers to support acquisition of and reinvestment in affordable housing in the downtown and throughout the City.

• Encourage 100% below-market-rate housing with City funding and collaboration.

• Consider innovative funding sources, such as public-private partnerships, to make affordable housing more viable in the downtown and throughout the City. Continue to look for grant opportunities to expand funding for housing programs, such as the First-Time Home Buyer Program and Down-Payment Assistance Program.

• Promote existing programs among residents through outreach efforts and educational opportunities.

Current Status

According to the Santa Cruz County Housing Authority, there are close to 2,000 rental homes that are offered at "below market value" — also called "affordable" housing — in Watsonville. These include public housing managed by the Housing Authority, non-profit housing, and housing managed by other entities. These homes also provide housing for special needs groups (seniors, persons with physical or mental disabilities), farm workers, and homeless persons.

This number does not include housing used by people under the Housing Choice Voucher program (also known as Section 8). The number of units subsidized with Housing Choice Vouchers in the City of Watsonville is 2,423 out of 5,235 total vouchers issued in the County, which is approximately 46%. (although there is some overlap with the above affordable rental homes managed by non-profits and private entities.

For the 6th Cycle Housing Element, Watsonville's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) was 2053 units spread across four income categories: 283 Very Low-Income (0-50% of Area Median Income (AMI)); 186 Low-Income (51-80% of AMI); 521 Moderate-Income (81-120% of AMI); and 1,063 Above Moderate-Income (> 120% AMI).


RHNA Progress Permitted - Units Issued by Affordability			
Income Level	RHNA Allocation by Income Level	Total Units to Date	Total Remaining RHNA
Very Low	283	10	273
Low	186	52	134
Moderate	521	–	521
Above Moderate	1,063	60	1,003
Total Units	2,053	122	1,931

By the end of 2024, a total of 122 housing units were completed during the first year and a half of the 6th Cycle Housing Element, which will count towards the 2,053 total units of the RHNA goal. These housing units represent 6% of the City's total RHNA allocation. The City's responsibility under the RHNA is to ensure that there is adequate land available and zoned appropriately to allow the development of the specified number of housing units. However, because cities do not construct housing, we must rely on private developers to construct housing units. The state continues to push cities to relax development standards and provide additional incentives to developers to entice development and reduce the risks and costs inherent in new construction. With the adoption of the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan, the City anticipates that a significant amount of new housing will be proposed in the downtown area during the current 6th Cycle Housing Element.

The City of Watsonville faces a number of challenges in addressing local housing needs. These include space limitations and diminishing affordability in northern Santa Cruz County jurisdictions that increases the demand for lower-cost housing in Watsonville. This market demand increases housing prices, resulting in overpayment and overcrowding for Watsonville residents. The Housing Element includes Program C.9 to amend the Zoning Ordinance to include procedures and regulations to process low-barrier navigation centers in compliance with State law by June 2026.

Recent & Upcoming Rental Units

Tabasa Gardens – 53 Affordable Rental Units
1482 Freedom Blvd., Watsonville, CA 95076
26 rental units are designated for farm-workers, six for people experiencing homelessness.

Sparrow Terrace - 72 Affordable Rental Units
141 Miles Lane, Watsonville, CA 95076
35 rental units designated for farmworker families and six for people experiencing homelessness.

Cienega Heights - 80 Affordable Rental Units
1515 Brewington Avenue, Watsonville, CA 95076
39 rental units designated for farmworker families

Kamilah Deyn Townhomes – 48 Units, 7 Affordable
221 Airport Blvd., Watsonville, CA 95076
Seven rental townhomes designated for affordable to very low, low, and median income families

The Residence at 558 Main – 50 Rental Units, 10 Affordable
(Under construction)
558 Main Street, Watsonville, CA 95076
Ten rental units designated for affordable to very low, low, and median income families

Transitional Housing

**Recurso de Fuerza
Low Barrier Navigation Center**
(Coming Dec. 2025)

118 First Street, Watsonville, CA 95076
34 modular units initially providing housing and services to individuals living in camps

Recent & Upcoming Ownership Units

Habitat for Humanity
13 Affordable Units

(Coming in late 2026)

36 Airport Road,
Watsonville, CA 95076

Five ownership homes designated for farm worker families

Hillcrest Residences
144 Units

(Under construction – selling now)

511 Ohlone Parkway,
Watsonville, CA 95076

29 ownership homes designated for median, moderate, and above-moderate families

Sunshine Gardens
87 Units

(Under construction – selling now)

1777 Santa Victoria Ave.,
Watsonville, CA 95076

17 ownership homes designated for median, moderate, and above-moderate families

Key Structural Gaps Identified

Several gaps were identified that limit or slow progress in expanding housing availability in Watsonville, some of which are also stated objectives of Housing Element Program C.8. These include:

• The need to amend the Zoning Ordinance to include procedures and regulations to process low-barrier navigation centers in compliance with State law.

• The need to establish a monitoring program to track an inventory of sites that could accommodate transitional and supportive housing.

• More collaboration with local organizations and agencies to discuss the needs of people experiencing homelessness and extremely low-income households.

• Support and funding for local and regional efforts to address the housing needs of people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness.

Rental 58%	Ownership 42%

0%	50%	100%

Recent and Upcoming Housing

Ownership:	244 units	*(59 affordable)*
Rental:	337 units	*(256 affordable)*
Total Units:	581	
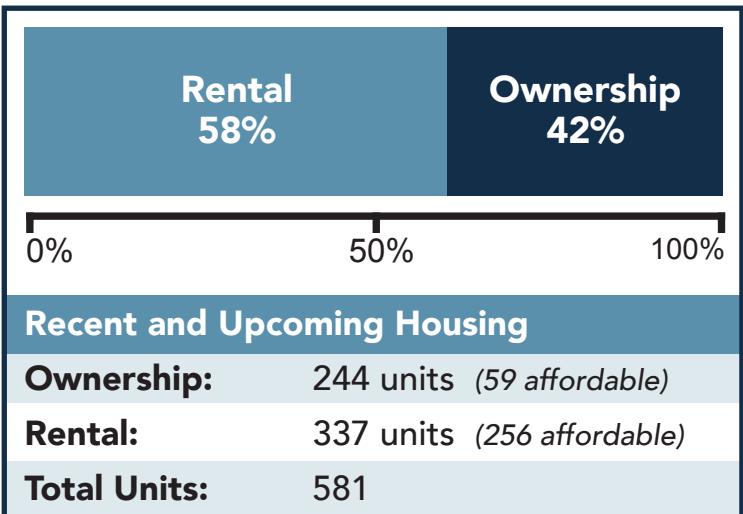
Housing Implementation Strategy

The Housing Division's implementation strategy is a two-pronged approach focused on meeting the demands of the City's unhoused population through building partnerships that augment the continuum of housing options available. The desired outcome is to increase temporary shelter beds, as well as interim and permanent housing options to meet the demands of the City's unhoused population and increase housing instability by:

Coordinating closely with the Santa Cruz County Continuum of Care (CoC), and all of its members. The CoC covers the entire geography of Santa Cruz County, including the Cities of Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Capitola, and Scotts Valley, as well as the unincorporated areas. The lead planning body for the CoC is the County of Santa Cruz Housing for Health Partnership (H4H), a county-wide action team that meets regularly. The City of Watsonville participates in all H4H meetings and takes a leadership position in the CoC by serving as a member of the Governing Board, which makes key CoC and other funding and policy decisions. The CoC Executive Committee coordinates the activities of the County and cities around a unified CoC strategy and plan for preventing and ending homelessness.

Expanding public-private partnerships. The City is strengthening coordination with Santa Cruz County Continuum of Care and is focusing on reorienting contractual partnerships with supportive service providers towards outcome-based services. Growing the list of housing developers and enticing the philanthropic community to make strategic investments along the continuum will help eliminate supply gaps and fund additional supportive services that are focused on shared outcomes. The aim is for public and private sectors to share the goal of ending suffering on the streets and creating housing opportunities and options that could positively impact the unhoused, reduce the crowded housing and lessen barriers of housing affordability in the area.

The Housing Taskforce Group outlined several strategic actions that could positively impact the housing continuum, with a focus on those currently experiencing homelessness.

Strategic Priorities and Actions

1 | Increase the Supply of Shelter and Housing to Match Demand

Objective

Participate as an active partner in the creation of shelter and permanent housing options to align with current and projected needs, with the goal of achieving functional zero in unsheltered homelessness.

Key Actions

• Regularly assess shelter and housing capacity compared to community need, accounting for seasonal, demographic, and regional trends.

• Amend the Zoning Ordinance to include regulations and procedures for low-barrier navigation centers, as well as establish a ministerial approval process. Partner with others to increase access to low-barrier shelter options that accommodate diverse populations, including individuals with pets, couples, and people with disabilities.

• Partner with others to create permanent supportive housing with wraparound services for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

• Adopt evidence-based Housing First practices to prioritize rapid placement into permanent housing without preconditions.

• Align efforts with countywide Housing for Health partners and health/social service providers to ensure shelter transitions efficiently into housing placements.

Expected Outcome

A right-sized shelter and housing system that ensures individuals experiencing homelessness are quickly and stably housed, advancing toward functional zero for unsheltered homelessness in Watsonville.

2 | Partner with Schools, Churches, and Non-Profit Developers to Build Housing
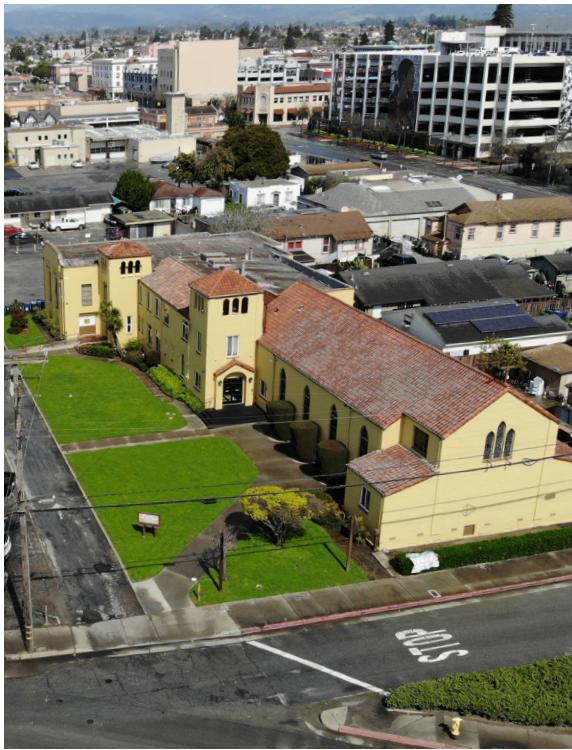
Objective

Leverage underutilized land and community partnerships to build housing for low- and extremely low-income workers.

Key Actions

• Work with local school districts to identify surplus land that can be developed into workforce housing for teachers, school staff, and other low-income residents.

• Engage churches and other religious institutions with excess land in efforts to create affordable housing through joint ventures or land donations.

• Provide technical assistance and fast-track approvals for non-profit developers building permanent supportive and affordable housing.

Expected Outcome

Expanded access to deeply affordable housing tailored to the needs of Watsonville's workforce and vulnerable populations.

3 | Secure and Allocate Sustainable Housing Funding

Objective

Ensure sufficient and sustainable funding streams to support housing development and homelessness prevention programs.

Key Actions

• Actively pursue regional, state, and federal funds, including grants, bonds, and housing trust contributions.

• Encourage private investment through incentives, land contributions, and collaborative funding models with employers and foundations.

• Allocate local budget resources to support the development of housing and emergency rental assistance programs.

Expected Outcome

A robust funding framework that sustains long-term investment in affordable housing and homelessness prevention.

4 | Advance Equitable Housing Access Across All Income Levels and Life Stages

Objective

Ensure that every resident in Watsonville has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing—regardless of income, age, ability, or household status—by advancing policies and programs that meet the diverse needs of the entire community.

Key Actions

• Create a comprehensive policy that outlines goals for housing access across all population segments, including families, seniors, youth, (of all income levels), veterans, people with disabilities, agricultural workers, and undocumented residents.

• Promote a variety of housing types (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, cohousing, modular units) and tenure options (rental, ownership, cooperative) to support economic and lifestyle diversity.

• Advocate with HUD for the prioritization of historically underserved populations in housing programs, including BIPOC communities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those at the intersection of homelessness and other systemic barriers.

• Strengthen tenant protections (e.g., just cause eviction, anti-displacement measures) and enforce fair housing laws to prevent discrimination and displacement.

Expected Outcome

An inclusive housing system in Watsonville that reflects the community's full diversity, closes racial and economic housing gaps, and upholds the principle that housing is a human right.

Housing
5 Year Action Plan

Strategic Action	Key Actions (Years 1–2)	Key Actions (Years 3–5)	Measures	Expected Outcomes
Community Development				
Increase Shelter & Housing Supply	Conduct needs assessment; Amend zoning for low-barrier shelters	Support permanent supportive housing; Expand partnerships	# of shelter beds and housing units added	Functional zero in unsheltered homelessness
Community Development				
Partner with Schools, Churches, and Nonprofits to build housing	Identify surplus land for workforce housing; Engage faith-based partners; Support nonprofit housing development	Continue to deepen partnerships	# of units developed; # of partnerships formed	Expanded access to deeply affordable housing
Community Development & Finance				
Secure and Allocate Sustainable Housing Funding	Pursue grants and bonds; Encourage private investment	Establish long-term funding mechanisms	$ secured; # of funding sources	Sustained investment in housing and prevention
Community Development & City Attorney				
Advance Equitable Housing Access	Promote diverse housing types; Support tenant protections	Advocate for underserved groups; Expand tenure options	% of BIPOC/ LGBTQ+ housed; eviction rates	Inclusive housing system for all

Policy & Funding

Priorities Addressed

Introduction

Effective and responsive policy frameworks are essential to advancing solutions to homelessness in the City of Watsonville. This chapter focuses on strategies to improve neighborhood relations, increase access to outreach and services, and reduce the environmental impacts of homelessness. These policies emphasize collaboration and public safety, while ensuring the dignity of all community members. The key policy tasks and other related actions in this Plan consider the necessary investments and potential revenue opportunities required to support sustainable solutions, align resources efficiently, and foster long-term system improvements.

Highlights

The City of Watsonville has recently achieved positive results in addressing homelessness through a deeply collaborative, interdepartmental approach. By aligning efforts across Departments—including Police, Public Works, Parks and Community Services, Community Development, Library, and Fire—the City has increased internal communication and coordination.

This coordinated strategy has contributed to a historic 50% drop in homelessness from 2024 to 2025, signaling that Watsonville's integrated, compassionate approach is delivering measurable impact.

The City of Watsonville has made significant strides in addressing homelessness through strong interdepartmental collaboration and regional partnerships. A key example is the City's coordinated response to encampments along the Pajaro River levee, where public safety, housing, and public works teams worked closely with Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency, and local nonprofit organizations.

Current Status

The City of Watsonville is actively developing a coordinated policy response to address homelessness, guided by the City Council's strategic priorities and informed by community engagement. The Council plays a central role in shaping policy direction, approving funding allocations, and aligning local efforts with state and federal initiatives. Recent state laws, such as AB 2835 and AB 3057, have expanded local authority to use hotels for emergency shelter and streamlined the development of accessory dwelling units, offering new tools to address housing shortages.

Locally, the Watsonville Municipal Code provides regulatory guidance on land use, emergency shelters, and public safety, which city staff enforce through targeted code enforcement and supportive services.

However, the City faces significant budget constraints, relying heavily on limited Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and competitive state grants to support housing programs, infrastructure improvements, and services for low-income and unhoused residents. Despite these challenges, the City continues to prioritize affordable housing development, homelessness prevention, and interagency collaboration to create sustainable, community-centered solutions.

The City does not have a Department or specific funds dedicated to addressing homelessness. All current City activities related to homelessness are subsidized through Departmental budgets at the expense or trade off of core programs and services.

Key Structural Gaps Identified

Several gaps were identified that limit or slow progress in the City's ability to enact policies or allocate the budget necessary to support management, housing and services in Watsonville. These include:

• Limited state funding to support homeless services available and distributed to counties via Continuum of Care and not directly to cities.

• Policies will require several updates to the Municipal Code, which are both costly and time-consuming. Prioritization of these updates to policies will be necessary.

• Need to establish a monitoring program to track an inventory of sites that could accommodate transitional and supportive housing.

• Collaboration with local organizations and agencies to discuss the needs of people experiencing homelessness and extremely low-income households.

• Support and funding for local and regional efforts to address the housing needs of people experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness.

Strategic Priorities and Actions

1 | Prioritize the City's Interdepartmental Homelessness Action Committee

Objective
Continue to regularly convene representatives from stakeholder City Departments to implement the Homelessness Strategic Plan.

Key Actions
• Convene a monthly interdepartmental meeting with representatives from the City Manager's Office, Police, Fire, Community Development, Public Works, Parks and Community Services and the Library.

• Measure and track progress made on the Workplan of this Homelessness Strategic Plan.

• Report progress to the City Council at least once per fiscal year.

Expected Outcome
Increased communication and coordination on homelessness efforts and demonstrable progress on the Homelessness Strategic Plan.

2 | Update Municipal Ordinances that support Strategic Actions of all Priorities
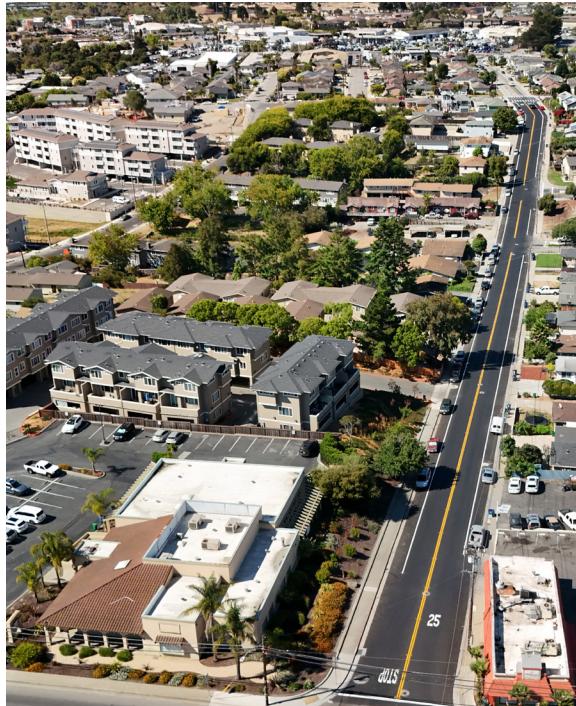
Objective
When needed, Council should evaluate and update City Ordinances that support priorities outlined in this Plan to ensure that housing services and management/enforcement are supported in accordance with the Homelessness Strategic Plan.

Key Actions
• Update Camping Ordinance

• Updated Fire and Police provisions in the Municipal Code for citable offences where applicable.

• Update Ordinances that support housing, management & enforcement, and prevention & services efforts

Expected Outcome
Have appropriate policies and ordinances that allow for the continued support of community and housing goals set forth in the City's Housing Element.

3 | Strengthen Coordination with Santa Cruz County Continuum of Care

Objective

Improve regional collaboration and enhance service delivery through outcome-based contracts with supportive service providers.

Key Actions

• Maintain participation in Santa Cruz County's CoC planning processes and ensure that Watsonville's priorities are represented in regional decisions.

• Integrate with the county's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and align local performance tracking with regional benchmarks. Utilize HMIS system workers as part of the outreach efforts.

• Transition City-funded service provider contracts to include clear, measurable outcome requirements—such as housing retention, job placement, and reductions in return to homelessness.

• Collaborate with the County and CoC agencies to provide training and support for service providers transitioning to performance-based models.

Expected Outcome

Improved service coordination, better accountability, and enhanced outcomes for individuals receiving housing and supportive services.

4 | Develop and Implement Shared Data and Funding Strategy

Objective

Develop a comprehensive understanding of Watsonville's homelessness service investments, ensure funding continuity for housing, prevention services and enforcement & management, and leverage data to advocate for increased, equitable County, State, Federal and philanthropic funding specifically designated for Watsonville-based programs.

Key Actions

• Compile funding report and analyze effectiveness/gaps

• Share findings with partners to strengthen advocacy

• Document disparities and push for equitable County allocation

• Support County and regional grant efforts (state & federal)

• Establish Pooled or Blended Funding Mechanisms

• Track cost-benefit impacts to guide investment

• Advocate for Policy and Legislative Support

4 | Develop and Implement Shared Data and Funding Strategy (Cont.)

Expected Outcome

Data-driven and sustainable funding decisions, increased investment at the County, state, and federal levels; improved transparency in resource distribution; stronger regional advocacy; continuity in funding for homelessness efforts.

5 | Strengthen Neighborhood Engagement around New Shelters and Housing Interventions

Objective

• Increase trust through regular, inclusive, and respectful dialogue

• Promote transparency and reduce misinformation

• Ensure policies reflect equity and support long-term community wellness

Key Actions

• Require a Public Notification Process and Community Engagement Plan prior to the siting of new shelter or housing interventions

• Create and maintain a list of permitted shelters with clear standards for maintenance and management

• Clarify existing zoning regulations to allow for transitional and supportive housing, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) "By Right" where appropriate

• Facilitate neighborhood meetings to address community concerns and build support

• Include equity and anti-displacement principles in shelter/housing siting policies

• Form partnerships with schools, churches, and neighborhood leaders to serve as ambassadors for solutions

• Invite and involve local businesses in planning and implementation of solutions

Expected Outcome

• Reduce fear and stigma in neighborhoods regarding the development of transitional and supportive housing or shelters

• Ensure neighbors feel heard and understand how shelter or housing will affect their community, and address concerns where appropriate

• Support positive relationships between housed and un-housed residents

6 | Increase Outreach and Investment in System Navigation

Objective

• Build an effective by-name list for service delivery.

• Engage local businesses, service and faith-based organizations, community members and individuals with lived experience with homelessness.

• Ensure sustained investment in outreach personnel and systems.

Key Actions

• Increase City outreach positions as funding becomes available to ensure coverage throughout Watsonville.

• Support and train the business community and City personnel to learn skills on how to engage with the unhoused community.

• Create a volunteer corps of trained outreach ambassadors.

• Develop interagency protocols for service delivery and convene regular multi-partner coordination meetings.

• Work with school districts and healthcare systems to expand referral networks.

• Ensure City-led events (e.g. farmers markets and festivals) include outreach resources.

• Expand targeted outreach to underrepresented populations, including youth and seniors.

Expected Outcome

• Create a coordinated pipeline that connects people experiencing homelessness to services and housing.

• Enhance communication between service providers and the broader community.

• Engage schools, hospitals, and trusted institutions as outreach partners.

7 | Environmental and Infrastructure Response

Objective

• Increase garbage pickup and cleanup efforts in high-need areas.

• Provide access to sanitation and hygiene services.

• Empower neighborhoods to take part in environmental stewardship.

Key Actions

• Provide and maintain accessible public restrooms, showers, handwashing stations, and drinking fountains as funding allows.

• Install public garbage receptacles and increase City garbage pickup services.

• Create a new citywide "Clean Community" program in collaboration with residents and businesses.

• Reinstate Neighborhood Watch program to support stewardship and community pride.

• Develop communication strategies to educate the public about City efforts and services.

• Homeless and mental health training for Watsonville Police personnel

• Provide periodic community updates and maintain task-force engagement.

Expected Outcome

• Reduce environmental impacts related to homelessness.

• Improve neighborhood cleanliness, public health, and safety.

• Ensure access to basic sanitation for all people.

Policy & Funding
5 Year Action Plan

Strategic Action	Key Actions (Years 1–2)	Key Actions (Years 3–5)	Measures	Expected Outcomes
City Manager's Office				
Prioritize Interdepartmental Homelessness Action Committee	Convene monthly meetings, track and report progress	Convene monthly meetings, track and report progress	Progress reports to City Council	Increased coordination and progress on Plan implementation
City Attorney & City Manager's Office				
Update Municipal Ordinances	Review and revise camping, fire, and housing codes	Continue to evaluate alignment of policies and ordinances with strategic goals of this Plan	# of ordinance updates	Legal alignment with homelessness strategies
Community Development & City Manager's Office				
Strengthen Coordination with SCC Continuum of Care (CoC)	Formalize CoC participation; Align data systems; Transition to outcome-based contracts	Build capacity and measure results	Aligned performance tracking; contract KPIs met	Improved service delivery and accountability
City Manager's Office & Finance				
Pursue Sustainable, Integrated Funding	Develop joint funding strategy with County and NGOs; Seek grants	Establish pooled funding; Tie funding to outcomes	# of funding streams; ROI metrics	Aligned investments for housing and services
Community Development & City Manager's Office				
Strengthen Neighborhood Engagement around new shelters and housing interventions	Launch public notification plans; Clarify zoning	Host neighborhood meetings; Build support	# of meetings; community sentiment	Reduced stigma and increased support
Police Dept., City Manager's Office & Parks and Community Services				
Increase Outreach & System Navigation	Hire outreach staff as funding is available; Create volunteer corps, Convene partner coordiantion meetings	Expand outreach and referral efforts	# of outreach contacts; % connected to services	Coordinated pipeline to housing and services
Public Works & Parks and Police Dept.				
Environmental & Infrastructure Response	Maintain and install sanitation facilities and receptacles; Launch Clean Community program	Reinstate Neighborhood Watch; Expand public education	# of cleanups; public health indicators	Cleaner, safer neighborhoods

Prevention & Resources

Introduction

Preventing homelessness and coordinating essential resources form the foundation of an effective community response to housing instability. Prevention services intervene before housing loss occurs, working with at-risk individuals and families to address underlying causes of housing instability such as job loss, medical crises, or family emergencies. Meanwhile, resource coordination ensures that when people do experience homelessness, they can quickly access the full range of services needed to regain stable housing.

The City of Watsonville's Prevention and Resources strategy builds upon existing strengths in the community's services network while addressing critical gaps that limit effectiveness. This strategy emphasizes coordination over duplication, leveraging existing investments while strategically expanding capacity in areas of greatest need. By improving both prevention services and resource accessibility, this strategy aims to reduce both the number of people who experience homelessness and the length of time they remain unhoused.

Highlights

City-Led Prevention Infrastructure – $2.3 million annually
The City of Watsonville invests more than $2.3 million annually in services designed to prevent homelessness and support community well-being. These investments are spread across several key programs and initiatives:

Library Prevention Programs – $100,000 annually
Focused on community engagement and early intervention, the Library offers educational and enrichment activities that support long-term stability. In addition, the Library plays a central role as a community hub. It hosts monthly resource fairs on the second Friday of each month, where nonprofit organizations connect directly with community members to share services, offer support, and strengthen local partnerships.

Highlights (Cont.)

Parks & Recreation Prevention Programs – $1.9 million annually
These programs emphasize youth development, after-school opportunities, and community engagement to help prevent risk factors associated with homelessness.

Emergency Warming Shelters – $60,000 annually
The City coordinates emergency warming shelters during severe weather events, providing immediate relief for vulnerable residents.

Social & Community Service Grants – $235,000 annually
These grants are distributed to nonprofit organizations, many of which deliver homelessness prevention and resource services across the community.

Current Status

In addition to the services offered by the City of Watsonville, the Watsonville community is fortunate to have a robust network of more than 15 organizations working to prevent and address homelessness. Together, these organizations manage tens of millions of dollars of annual funding. This comprehensive system demonstrates the community's strong commitment to addressing homelessness through collaborative action.

There are currently several internet-based databases and resource guides available for homelessness prevention and services resources throughout Santa Cruz County.

These include:

- Santa Cruz 211
- Santa Cruz County Housing for Health
- People First/Santa Cruz Free Guide
- Families in Transition
- Santa Cruz Public Libraries
- Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce

SCAN

The following is a summary of services available specifically in Watsonville:

Community Action Board Leadership
The Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County (CAB) serves as a cornerstone of the local response, reaching over 10,000 people annually through 55 years of anti-poverty work. CAB operates several innovative programs including the Watsonville Works Program, which provides paid employment in street cleaning while connecting participants to job placement services. The Shelter Project provides emergency rent assistance, motel vouchers for medical emergencies, and free voicemail service, supported by dedicated shelter hotlines.

Housing Continuum Services

The community maintains a strong housing services continuum. Pajaro Valley Shelter Services operates with a $1.6 million budget (94% privately funded) providing emergency shelter through permanent housing solutions. The Association of Faith Communities operates 40 beds and safe parking spaces, achieving a 45% rate of exits to permanent housing. Housing Matters focuses specifically on making homelessness "rare, brief, and non-recurring" through navigation and case management services.

Mental Health Services

Mental health services encompass a comprehensive network of supports and clinical interventions, delivered through the Santa Cruz County Health Servies Agency's Behavioral Health Division, NAMI Santa Cruz County and Encompass Community Services. These services are designed to promote psychological well-being, prevent crisis, and provide ongoing care for individuals experiencing mental health challenges, particularly those impacted by or at risk of homelessness.

The County's Behavioral Health Division's Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) responds to urgent behavioral health crises across Santa Cruz County—24 hours a day, 7 days a week. MCRT makes a difference by helping stabilize youth and adults in crisis and connecting them to ongoing care and resources. They help remove barriers to access by meeting the individual where they are, whether in a park, school, home, or other safe site like a faith-based location. Mobile Crisis Response Teams help reduce emergency room visits and interactions with law enforcement. Crisis Now, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) National Behavioral Crisis Care Guidance, are built on three foundational elements that are essential within an integrated crisis care system with the goal that everyone should have access to someone to call, someone to respond, and a safe place for help.

Specialized Support Services

The service network includes comprehensive addiction treatment through Teen Challenge Monterey Bay and Janus of Santa Cruz, victim services through Monarch Services, and family-focused prevention through Families in Transition's 25+ years of rental assistance and case management. Food security is maintained through Pajaro Valley Loaves & Fishes, Salvation Army, and Second Harvest Food Bank operations.

Service Coordination Efforts

Current coordination occurs through multiple channels including the Library's monthly resource fairs, the Parks & Community Services annual senior resource fair, CAB's recent partnership with Watsonville Police for homeless engagement, and collaborative funding arrangements between organizations. However, these efforts remain somewhat fragmented, creating opportunities for improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Key Structural Gaps Identified

Several gaps in current prevention and resources efforts have been identified that fall into three main themes: Systems, Programs and Funding.

Systems

Multiple resource and program guides exist in both digital and print formats and vary in terms of accessibility and how often information is updated. A lack of coordinated long term planning also leads to service organizations often competing for resources and clientele, redundancy in services and difficulty in measuring and sustaining long term results.

Programs

There is a need for an increased number of shelter beds, safe parking programs, mobile hygiene services, day services, medical service, mental health services and support and education for service providers.

Funding

Long term, sustainable funding is needed to support proven and successful prevention programs and resources.

Strategic Priorities and Actions

1 | Establish Comprehensive Service Database and Coordination System

Objective

Create a centralized, real-time information system that improves service navigation and coordination for both providers and community members

Key Actions

• Partner with United Way to enhance 211 database with Watsonville-specific services

• Develop a centralized resource portal, accessible through the City's website

• Implement real-time tracking of service availability and utilization

• Create service differentiation by type and populations served

Expected Outcome

Reduced barriers to up-to-date information and service access, improved coordination among service providers, and enhanced ability to track service gaps and utilization patterns

2 | Launch Community Awareness and Training Initiative

Objective

Build community capacity and awareness to support individuals experiencing homelessness while reducing stigma

Key Actions

• Recognize Homelessness Awareness Month through a Council resolution

• Connect with national resources and best practices

• Develop a community education campaign

• Provide training for City staff and community members

Expected Outcome

Increased community understanding and support, enhanced staff capacity to assist individuals experiencing homelessness, and reduce the stigma surrounding housing instability

3 | Support Expansion of Partner Services, such as Mobile Services

Objective
Support expansion of service accessibility through mobile delivery and centralized day programs that meet immediate needs

Key Actions
• Advocate for launch of mobile hygiene services (laundry, showers)

• Leverage Cal Aim MediCal funding opportunities

• Establish regular resource fairs at Veterans Hall

• Support development of day service programs with safe spaces and wraparound services

Expected Outcome
Increased access to basic services, improved health and dignity for individuals experiencing homelessness, and centralized location for multiple service delivery

4 | Support Expansion of Prevention Services and Day Programs

Objective
Reduce first-time homelessness by supporting expanded prevention interventions for at-risk individuals and families

Key Actions
• Develop healthcare partnerships for housing stability interventions

• Strengthen rental assistance and case management programs

• Create early intervention systems for experiencing sudden economic hardship

• Expand workforce readiness programs

Expected Outcome
Decreased number of individuals and families becoming homeless, reduced demand on emergency services, and improved housing stability for at-risk populations

Regular evaluation and adjustment of these strategic actions will ensure that the Prevention and Resources strategy remains responsive to the evolving needs of the Watsonville community. By building on the City's strong foundation of existing services, the strategy emphasizes continuous improvement and accountability. Through coordinated action, strategic investment, and community partnership, this strategy will strengthen Watsonville's capacity to prevent homelessness and support individuals and families in achieving long-term housing stability and well-being.

Prevention & Resources
5 Year Action Plan

Strategic Action	Key Actions (Years 1–2)	Key Actions (Years 3–5)	Measures	Expected Outcomes
Library & Parks and Community Services				
Establish Comprehensive Service Database	Enhance 211 database; Link to City website	Implement real-time tracking of utilization	Portal traffic; # of referrals	Improved service access and coordination
Library, Parks and Community Services & City Manager's Office				
Launch Community Awareness & Training	Recognize Homelessness Awareness Month; Train staff	Develop education campaigns	# of trainings; community survey results	Reduced stigma and increased support
City Manager's Office & Parks and Community Services				
Support Expansion of Mobile & Day Services	Advocate for mobile hygiene services; Host resource fairs	Support development of day programs with wraparound services	# of users; service satisfaction	Improved health and dignity for unhoused
Community Development & City Manager's Office				
Support Expansion of Prevention Services	Support rental assistance and early intervention programs	Build healthcare and workforce partnerships	# of prevented homelessness cases	Reduced first-time homelessness

Management & Enforcement

Priorities Addressed

Introduction

The City of Watsonville continues to confront the challenges that homelessness creates for the health and safety of residents, the success of local businesses, the preservation of the natural environment, and the protection of public and private property. Management and Enforcement includes addressing the environmental impacts related to homeless encampments within the City, particularly along the levees (Corralitos Creek, Salsipuedes, and Pajaro River) and near waterways, ensuring our local businesses and residents feel safe in their community, and ensuring first responder safety and efficiency remains a top priority.

The Watsonville Public Works and Utilities Department has a dedicated Field Services team to conduct regular illegal encampment cleanup and litter/debris removal. The City provides at least a 72-hour notice for all encampment cleanups. The Police Department provides support during these encampment cleanups to ensure safety of all employees and other participating community partners. In addition, the Field Services team proactively monitors and manages vegetation maintenance needed to prevent potential fire hazards. The Watsonville Fire Department responds to fires in homeless encampments including warming/cooking fires and vegetation fires started by unattended warming/cooking fires, in addition to responding to medical emergencies in encampments.

While focusing on housing, policy development, and other prevention and human services are important and necessary, these efforts must be balanced with the need to manage the immediate realities on the ground in Watsonville. Management and Enforcement strategies in the short-term are necessary to support the long-term, permanent solutions of housing and human services by addressing ongoing interim measures that protect our community's safety, public health, local businesses, and our residents.

Highlights

Homeless Outreach Collaborative Pilot Program

In August 2024, the City of Watsonville entered into a contract with Community Action Board (CAB) of Santa Cruz County to provide homeless outreach services to those in need within our City. A pilot program was developed to partner a Watsonville Police Department Police Service Specialist with Housing Connector from CAB. The pilot program went live in October 2024. Since then, the team has made documented contacts with at least 105 homeless people, while many others refused their offer of services and support. Working together, the team has been able to assist some of those contacted with getting on the list for housing in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is a multiple step process. They were able to assist most of those contacted with accessing basic needs such as food, medical services, hygiene, and safe places to park at night. The team also coordinated with many other homeless service providers that operate within Santa Cruz County to coordinate services for those in need. More work is needed, but after much coordination, there is finally a City-funded outlet that is dedicated solely to engaging with our local homeless population.

Current Status

Health and Safety Concerns

Community health and safety impacts related to homelessness are significant. The Police and Fire Departments have begun tracking calls for service involving "transient activity." The following is a summary of recent data collected.

Calls for Service - Police Department

Top 10 Call Types involving "Transient Activity" 12- month period (07/24 - 06/25) *(Documentation of this tag was not collected before October 2024)*	
Officer out w/subject	517
Disturbance	182
Trespassing	128
Refusing to leave	126
Welfare check	107
Suspicious circumstance	77
Camping	75
Alarm	56
Follow-up	48
Theft	39
TOTAL	1684
	Represents 6% of all Calls for Service during this time period.

Costs Related to Homelessness	
Campsite Clean-Up Overtime	$80,131
Homeless Liaison PSS payroll October '24 - April '25	$56,626
CAB Homeless Collaborative Contract FY24-25	$67,000
3,361 hours of calls for service related to homelessness	$290,376
Grand Total	$494,133

Calls for Service - Fire Department

Homelessness Related Incidents 12- month period (07/24 - 06/25) *(Documentation of this tag was not collected before October 2024)*	
Cancelled Fire	17
Cancelled, EMS	84
Likely, EMS	26
Likely, FIRE	44
Unknown	259
Yes, EMS	362
Yes, FIRE	226
Yes, other	9
Yes, Veh vs Ped/Bike	1
TOTAL	1028 *Represents 17% of all Calls for Service during this time period.*

Costs Related to Homelessness	
261.5 hours of homelessness related calls for service	**$82,245**
Total	**$82,245**

Impacts on the Environment and Public Property

Impacts to the City's sloughs, trails, parks and public property are costly and place significant burdens on environmentally sensitive areas and the safety of public property. The following is a summary of recent estimated staffing, and repairs and maintenance costs associated with homelessness.

Department	Twelve Month Cost FY24/25
Watsonville Public Library	**$20,000**
Parks and Community Services	**$46,000**
Public Works and Utilities	**$650,000**
Grand Total	**$716,000**

In total, the City of Watsonville spent more than $1,292,000 over a twelve-month period. These expenditures are all funded by the General Fund and are unbudgeted, which diverts key dollars away from core services offered by the Departments. The City does not receive external funding or subsidies to pay for these services.

Impacts on Businesses

Between the months of February - May 2025, the Management and Enforcement Working Group promoted a survey of citywide business owners to gather data on the impact of homelessness on their businesses. The areas surveyed, or "hot spots", were determined by related calls for service from both Police and Fire. A total of 19 businesses participated in the survey. 100% of those businesses surveyed reported that homeless individuals frequent the area around their business and 18 of 19 respondents reported that the homeless population has negatively affected their operations. Examples of reported impacts included: panhandling, scaring customers, leaving garbage around, stealing, harassing employees, overall loss of business income, constant vandalism, indecent exposure, shoplifting, setting fires, human waste on private property, needles and other drug paraphernalia, threats of physical violence, overdosing individuals, and brandishing weapons.

Other reported impacts to businesses surveyed include:

Theft or Property Damage:
Nine (9) businesses explicitly reported experiencing theft or damage related to homeless activity.

Examples from the businesses surveyed include:
Stealing fuel, propane, and butane for homeless cooking or warming fires; cut fencing; broken doors and windows; fires/arson; leaving trash, human waste, and drug paraphernalia; stealing signs and lights; shopping cart and basket theft; damage to solar panels; stolen bikes, tools, and delivered packages.

Expenses Incurred:
18 businesses indicated they have incurred expenses due to homelessness-related issues, including theft, cleanup, and security enhancements.

Business #1
"Astronomical product shrinkage, damage to our personal vehicles. We are constantly having to replace broken equipment. We have installed cameras and an upgraded alarm system. We have replaced doors and windows. We are constantly having to replace chains, locks, and fencing. Staff time has increased due to needing to clean the garbage enclosure daily and the landscaping."
Approximate cost = $75,000.

Business #2
Approximately $72,000 in product shrinkage each calendar year. **Approximately $98,000 so far in 2025.**

Business #3
Over the past year, product shrinkage was at $70,000, property damage is approximately $4,000/year.
Approximate cost = $74,000.

Business #4
We have had to replace many things with having the cleaning crew outside (dealing with hazardous waste) and have upgraded lighting and cameras.
Approximate cost = $30,000.

Business #5
I had to get some special made gates created for some doorways. Upgraded cameras and lighting, clean-up costs associated with the extra garbage, needles, and human waste around the property.
Approximate cost = $75,000.

Business #6
Mostly replacement and clean-up costs.
Approximate cost = $50,000.

Business #7
Clean ups, additional lighting, and alarm systems.
Approximate cost = $2,000.

Business #8
Mostly replacement and clean-up costs.
Approximate cost = $50,000.

Business #9
Recent shop door repair, security system upgrades, broken windows, and stolen products.
Approximate cost = $15,000.

Total reported financial impact to these nine businesses due to repairs, security and loss of revenue: $469,000.

Key Structural Gaps Identified

Map of Police Calls for Service related to homelessness
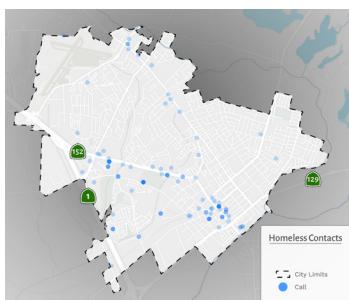
Heat Map of PD & CAB team contacts October 2024 – April 2025

Lack of Unified Regional Enforcement Framework
City and neighboring agencies often operate in silos, leading to inconsistent field-level coordination and response.

Insufficient Inter-agency Collaboration
While numerous stakeholders are identified as necessary in addressing the growing homeless population, not all are actively participating, and those that do, tend to focus on one area only, such as housing and not address other critical areas like enforcement and environmental impacts.

Data and Performance Metrics
A lack of shared metrics and reporting tools limits oversight and progress tracking. Coordinated efforts require consistent data tracking, especially when pursuing grant funding where metrics are required.

Enforcement Strategy
The absence of a unified communication approach weakens community confidence and creates conflicting narratives. The Management and Enforcement component of the homeless issue is particularly sensitive as it is focused on the removal of encampments that are posing issues to human health, environmental threats to our waterways, and specifically in our region, our levee's structural integrity.

Strategic Priorities and Actions

1 | Establish a Multi-Agency Management & Enforcement Task Force

Objective

Create a Management & Enforcement Task Force to coordinate efforts across jurisdictions and reduce the reluctance of the homeless population to accept the services that are available and offered to them.

Key Actions

- Identify key stakeholders for Task Force
- Establish responsibilities for stakeholders
- Draft and adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or resolution
- Establish consistency in messaging, data collection, and metric development
- Establish regular coordination meetings

Expected Outcome

Improved coordination among local and County stakeholders and service acceptance

2 | Bridge Enforcement and Human Services Roles

Objective

Ensure consistent public messaging and media response for enforcement efforts

Key Actions

- Develop and commit to a consistent mission statement for management and enforcement
- Assign communications lead(s) per agency
- Create shared public FAQs and talking points
- Host periodic community meetings

Expected Outcome

Reframe the engagement model for housing and human services entities to include a dual focus: supporting long-term housing pathways and contributing meaningfully to interim management needs.

3 | Build Compassionate & Coordinated Street-Level Responses to Homelessness

Objective

Enhance the capacity and effectiveness of field responses to homelessness by equipping enforcement, outreach, and service providers with trauma-informed skills and embedding collaborative co-responder models that align public safety with support services.

Key Actions

- Continuance of the Homeless Outreach Collaborative Pilot Program between WPD and CAB
- Monitor and evaluate field performance
- Secure funding for program expansion

Expected Outcome

Having a Watsonville-based homeless outreach program will ensure these efforts and resources are being delivered effectively within our City.

Management & Enforcement
5 Year Action Plan

Strategic Action	Key Actions (Years 1–2)	Key Actions (Years 3–5)	Measures	Expected Outcomes
Police Department & Public Works and Utilities				
Establish Multi-Agency Enforcement & Management Task Force	Identify stakeholders; Draft MOU; Launch coordination meetings; Standardize data collection and messaging	Collect data and evaluate progress	# of meetings; stakeholder participation; recidivism rates	Improved coordination and service acceptance
Police Department & City Manager's Office				
Bridge Enforcement and Human Services	Develop shared messaging; Assign communication leads	Host community meetings; Track cost-benefit impacts	# of public engagements; funding secured	Balanced interim and long-term service focus
Police Department & Public Works and Utilities				
Build Compassionate Street-Level Responses	Continue outreach pilot; Train responders	Identify funding to expand co-responder models	# of trained staff; response time	Safer, trauma-informed field response

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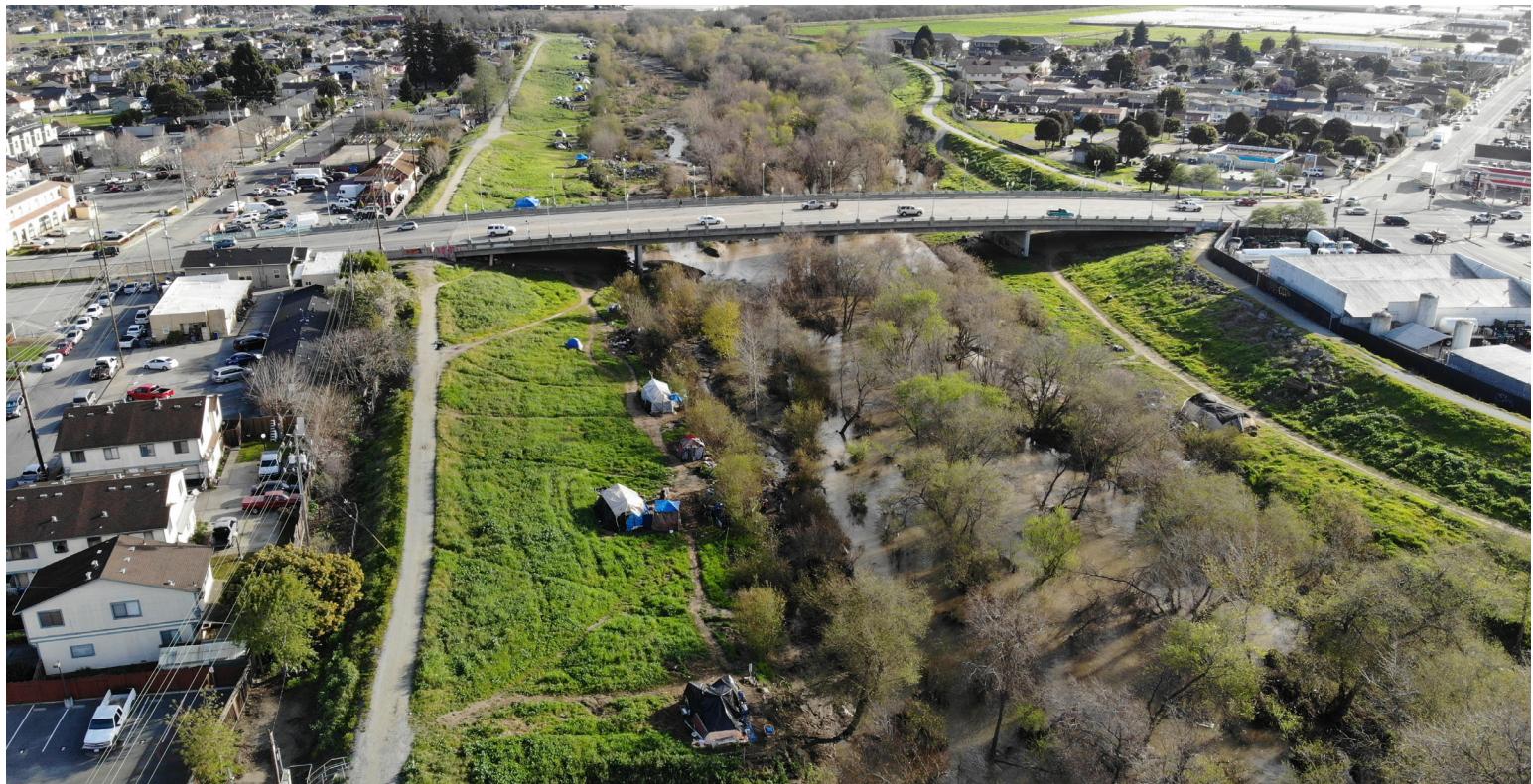
Conclusion & Next Steps

Homelessness is a complex challenge that affects all members of our community. Although this Plan in and of itself will not end homelessness, it sets the groundwork for proactive steps the City can take. Future success will not occur in a vacuum and this Plan's effectiveness is dependent on partnership and collaboration between the City, County, other governmental agencies, non-profits, faith-based organizations, the business community and residents.

The Workplan found within each chapter assigns the Strategic Actions outlined in this report with multi-year timelines, milestones and performance metrics. This Workplan serves to transform the Report into a usable roadmap for implementation. Funding and resources will continue to be the constraining factors that determine the level and speed of implementation of this Plan. Although Watsonville is well positioned with a strong network of partners in this work, Federal and State funding for these efforts remains volatile, with high probability for eminent reductions at the time of writing of this report. Nevertheless, Watsonville has proven its resilience time and time again and efforts that center safety, equity and opportunity will continue to be prioritized as the City strives to ensure the wellbeing of all residents.

Watsonville
CALIFORNIA

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC PLAN 2025