KERN COUNTY
POINT IN TIME COUNT
2024 REPORT

Bakersfield - Kern
BKRHC
REGIONAL HOMELESS
COLLABORATIVE

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Acknowledgements

The Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative (BKRHC) Point in Time (PIT) Count Committee would like to thank all the individuals and partner agencies who contributed to this endeavor and whose efforts were instrumental in the success of the count. Over 421 volunteers registered to participate in the 2024 PIT Count. Employees from the County of Kern, City of Bakersfield, homeless service providers, and community organizations gave their time with several aspects of planning, implementing, and conducting the count.

Thank you to the Mission at Kern for providing logistics space for the PIT Count, to the PIT Committee members and committee chair Manuel Vieyra with Flood Ministries of Bakersfield for providing leadership and guidance in planning for such a huge community event, to partners with lived experience of homelessness for gifting us with insight where it was needed, and to the BKRHC staff for their commitment and support to the work.

Thank you to Suzanne Baehr and the amazing Kern County GIS team for supporting the app survey work and data needs of the PIT Count volunteers.

Thank you to City and County partners in government, code enforcement, fire/emergency services, law enforcement, parks and recreation, human services, public works, and aging and adult services for helping navigate through the work.

Thank you to Dr. Ashleigh Herrera with California State University of Bakersfield (CSUB) for providing Narcan training for all volunteers and other CSUB members for participating during the count.

A special thank you to the Kern County community who took part in the count and showed that, through collaboration, we can continue to do amazing work.

A huge thank you to all the participating organizations who provided their time, energy, and support to the Kern County 2024 PIT Count, including volunteers from:
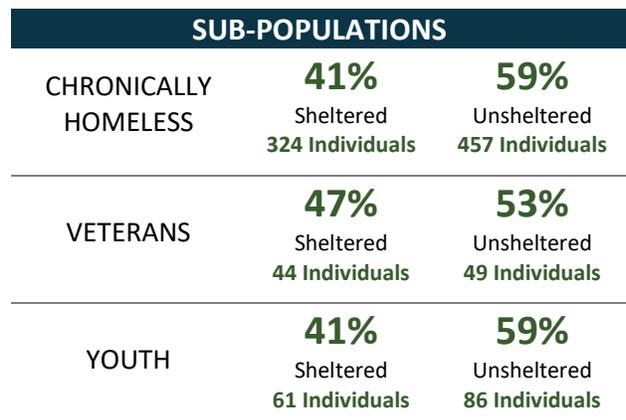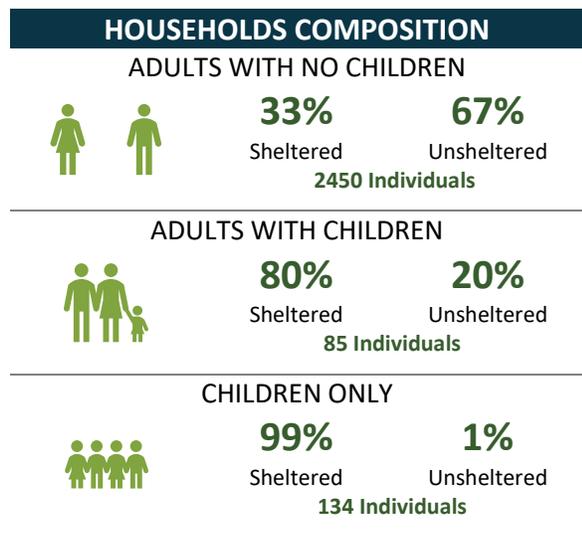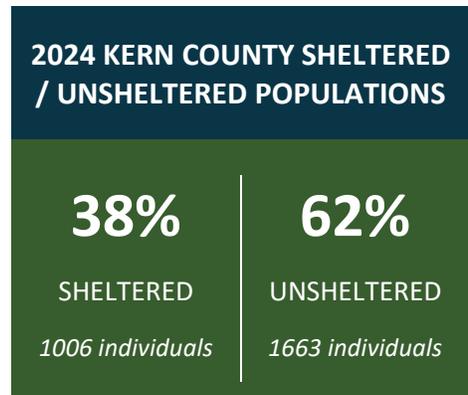
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• Fairfax School District • Flood Ministries • Garden Pathways • Greater Bakersfield Legal Association • Gogo Marketing • Good Samaritan Hospital • Habitat For Humanity • Health Net • Housing Authority of the County of Kern • Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services • Kern County Assessor • Kern County Grand Jury • Kern County Superintendent of Schools • Kern Health Systems • Kern High School District • Kern Medical • Lamont Elementary School District • LifeHouse Church • Maturango Museum • Mercedes of Bakersfield • Mercy House • No Sister Left Behind • Office of Assemblywoman Dr. Jasmeet Bains • Omni Family Health • Pathways • Redeem Home • Rosedale School District • Stewards Inc. • Tech-Time Communications Inc. • Telecare Corporation • Temple Beth • The Dream Center • The Garden Living at Mill Creek • The Open-Door Network • Tulare Basin Watershed Partnership Network • United Way of Central Eastern California • Victory Outreach • Wasco Free Will Baptist Church • Wescom Credit Union • Women's Center High Desert

Kern County 2024 PIT Count Summary

The 2024 Point-in-Time Count was an endeavor taken on by a dedicated group of individuals and volunteers through a community-wide effort to cover Kern County. The count conducted from January 24th through 27th comprised a single night shelter count and a three-day unsheltered count.

2022 – 2024 HOMELESS POPULATION COUNTS

	Adult	Adults with Children	Children	Total
2022	1361	75	167	1603
2023	1747	76	125	1948
2024	2450	85	134	2669

2024 KERN COUNTY SHELTERED / UNSHELTERED POPULATIONS

38%	**62%**
SHELTERED	UNSHELTERED
1006 individuals	*1663 individuals*

HOUSEHOLDS COMPOSITION

ADULTS WITH NO CHILDREN

33%	**67%**
Sheltered	Unsheltered

2450 Individuals

ADULTS WITH CHILDREN

80%	**20%**
Sheltered	Unsheltered

85 Individuals

CHILDREN ONLY

99%	**1%**
Sheltered	Unsheltered

134 Individuals

AGE

Under 18 years	**6%** — 146 individuals
18 – 24	**6%** — 147 individuals
25 – 34	**22%** — 595 individuals
35 – 44	**28%** — 744 individuals
45 – 54	**18%** — 488 individuals
55 – 64	**15%** — 406 individuals
65 years and older	**5%** — 143 individuals

GENDER

WOMAN	MAN	CULTURALLY SPECIFIC	TRANSGENDER
33.09%	**66.54%**	**0.04%**	**0.11%**
NON-BIN	DIFFERENT IDENTITY		MULTIPLE
0.07%	**0.04%**		**0.11%**

SUB-POPULATIONS

	Sheltered	Unsheltered
CHRONICALLY HOMELESS	**41%** Sheltered 324 Individuals	**59%** Unsheltered 457 Individuals
VETERANS	**47%** Sheltered 44 Individuals	**53%** Unsheltered 49 Individuals
YOUTH	**41%** Sheltered 61 Individuals	**59%** Unsheltered 86 Individuals

RACE & ETHNICITY *

AMERICAN INDIAN, ALASKA NATIVE, OR INDIGENOUS	**2.4%**
ASIAN OR ASIAN AMERICAN	**0.9%**
BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN, OR AFRICAN	**15.8%**
HISPANIC/LATINA/E/O	**25.6%**
MIDDLE EASTERN OR NORTH AFRICAN	**0.1%**
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER	**0.9%**
WHITE	**51.5%**
MULTIPLE RACES	**2.8%**

* List includes race and ethnicity only or race and ethnicity with Hispanic/Latina/e/o combinations.

Introduction

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness as individuals who lack resources and support networks to obtain permanent housing and can be categorized as those who are literally homeless, imminently homeless, unaccompanied youth or families with children/youth, and individuals or families fleeing or attempting to flee various forms of violence such as domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual assault, or other life-threatening conditions.

The nationally conducted PIT Count is an annual snapshot of sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness within a geographic area. Specifically, Kern County covers over 8,100 square miles with a variety of ecosystems ranging from high deserts, chaparral-laden mountains, and fertile agricultural land within the valley.

Although HUD requires Continuums of Care (CoC) to conduct counts biennially, the Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative completes an annual count to identify changes within the homeless delivery system and understand the needs within the community.

Methodology

The 2024 PIT Count utilized a HUD approved methodology for conducting interviews for individuals experiencing homelessness in Kern County that ensures consistency allowing a meaningful analysis and standard. The methodology involves a combination of interviews, surveys, and observations by trained volunteers. The shelter count was completed using a survey hosted within the ArcGIS Survey 123 application, a geographic information system that works by collecting data via survey administration, and occurred on the night of Tuesday, January 23, 2024. The unsheltered count was completed the following morning on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, utilizing the unsheltered version of the survey application, which was also hosted within ArcGIS Survey 123.

BKRHC PIT Committee and Governing Board approved two (2) additional days to continue the count for encampment areas along the Kern River and the Rural areas. Flood Ministries Outreach Team searched and conducted interviews. These efforts aimed to identify unsheltered individuals and families who may not have been identified on Wednesday, January 23, 2024.

There was no change in the methodology due to the need to have an accurate data comparison for three consecutive years. We pursued the updated guidance provided by HUD, including several required contingencies to ensure surveys were not duplicated on individuals already surveyed on prior days. These measures included comparison of personally identifiable information including name, date of birth, demographic information, current living situation and survey screening questions (e.g., have you already been surveyed).

The PIT count utilizes an in-person interview of individuals experiencing homelessness throughout Kern County. For those individuals who were not able to complete a survey, various account methods are used in situations where it was impossible or unsafe for a volunteer to survey an individual. An observational survey was completed and trained outreach staff conducted interviews on two additional days for accuracy. For instances where demographic (gender, race, ethnicity) data could not be collected, a data resource known as the HUD data extrapolation tool was used to obtain missing data extrapolated from the data that was present. The data collected is compiled and undergoes a thorough process that included scrubbing/cleaning, deduplication, error-checking within the extrapolation tool, analysis, post analysis review, and entry into HUD's reporting system (HUD Data Exchange – HDX 2.0), which conducts automated, real-time error tracking. Any errors in HUD's reporting system were caught and corrected before the data submission could be completed.

Even prior to official submission to HUD, the data and reports are reviewed with the CoC's Governing and Executive Boards.

Current and Comparative Data

During the 2024 PIT Count a total of 2669 individuals were counted, 1006 comprised sheltered individuals and 1663 comprised unsheltered individuals. This is a 37% increase in the total number of individuals when compared to the 2023 PIT Count (1948 individuals) (see Appendix C Table 6).

The year over year difference resulted in the sheltered count increasing by 8% while the unsheltered count trended upward with an increase of 64%. A few potential factors that contributed to these changes include:
1) The two additional days that interviews were conducted on the riverbeds and rural communities contributed to a more accurate unsheltered count.
2) The drastic change in the weather conditions from the low 30s in 2023 to the high 50s in 2024 meant fewer people sought shelter during this time.
3) The increase in the number of volunteers who participated in the 2024 PIT Count and extensive pre-planning efforts and training.
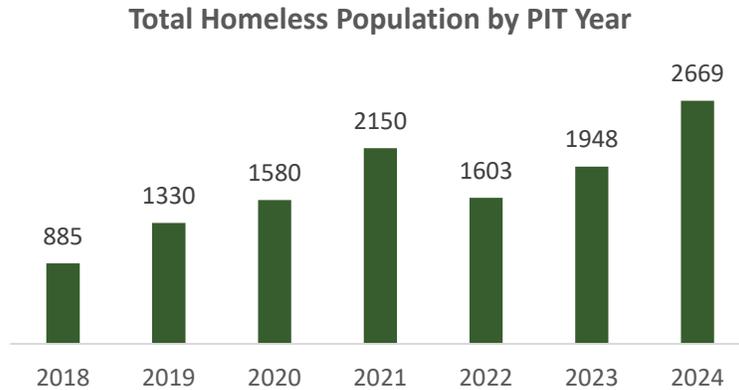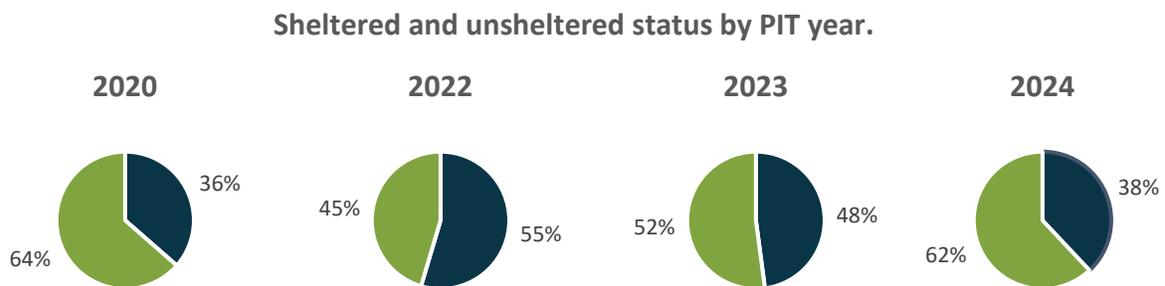
Total Homeless Population by PIT Year

Figure 1. Total homeless population by PIT year.

Sheltered and unsheltered status by PIT year.

Figure 2. Comparison of sheltered (blue) and unsheltered (green) populations by PIT year.

Key Findings

Population Demographics

Age

Children (under 18 years) and youth (aged 18 – 24) comprised 5% and 6% of the total sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations respectively, while adults (aged 25 and older) comprised the remaining 89% of the population. Specifically, exactly half of the entire homeless population counted consisted of adults between the ages of 25 – 44 and approximately 5% of individuals experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness were considered elderly (143 individuals aged 65 or older).

Age
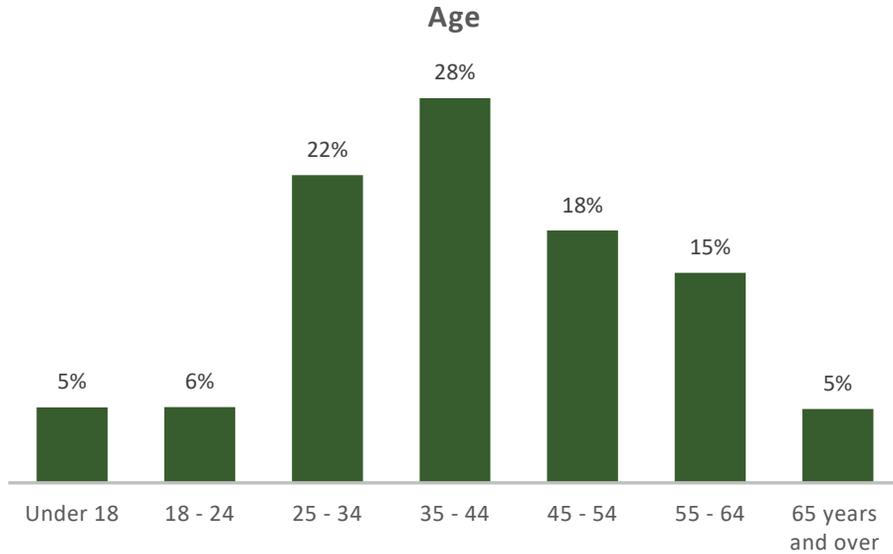
Figure 3. Age Brackets for Homeless Population

Gender

Historically, individuals who identify as male make up the majority of the homeless population. This year the total for males was 66.54% of the total population. Females accounted for 33.08%, while individuals identifying as culturally specific, different identity, multiple genders, non-binary, and transgender comprised a collective total of 0.37% of the population. Specific population percentages are indicated in the figure below (Figure 4).
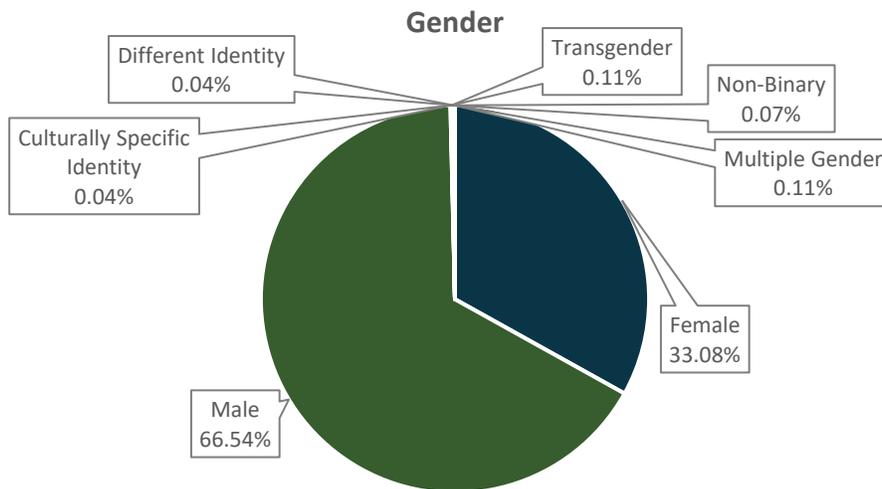
Gender

Figure 4. Gender Distribution of Homeless Population

Ethnicity and Race

During their last review of PIT count collection criteria, HUD made the decision to consolidate the ethnicity and race categories to be more inclusive and indicative of individuals' specific ethnic and racial representation. The result is a combination of ethnicity and race where specific combinations could include the ethnicity and race alone, the ethnicity and race with included Hispanic/Latina/e/o representation, or multiple selections.

The majority of our counted homeless population identified as White (only)(39.6%) and Hispanic/Latina/e/o (only)(25.6%). Individuals who identified as Black, African American, or African (only) represented 15.3% of the population, while those who identified as White & Hispanic/Latina/e/o were counted at 12.0%. All other ethnicity and race populations account for 2.1% or less of the total population (see Table 1).

Table 1. Age Breakdown Among Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless Population.

Ethnicity & Race	Sheltered	Unsheltered	All People
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous (only)	1.1%	2.4%	1.9%
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous & Hispanic/Latina/e/o	1.1%	0.1%	0.5%
Asian or Asian American (only)	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%
Asian or Asian American & Hispanic/Latina/e/o	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Black, African American, or African (only)	16.8%	14.4%	15.3%
Black, African American, or African & Hispanic/Latina/e/o	1.1%	0.1%	0.5%
Hispanic/Latina/e/o (only)	8.3%	36.1%	25.6%
Middle Eastern or North African (only)	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Middle Eastern or North African & Hispanic/Latina/e/o	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (only)	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander & Hispanic/Latina/e/o	0.5%	0.1%	0.3%
White (only)	36.3%	41.6%	39.6%
White & Hispanic/Latina/e/o	30.0%	1.0%	12.0%
Multi-Racial & Hispanic/Latina/e/o	1.3%	0.2%	0.6%
Multi-Racial (all other)	1.9%	2.2%	2.1%

Living Accommodations and Duration for Unsheltered Homeless Population

The majority of unsheltered individuals that provided a response to their current living situation resulted in an overwhelming majority living outdoors, typically in places not meant for human habitation including parks, encampments, the riverbed area, behind buildings, and along canals

or alleyways. Unsheltered individuals encountered during the PIT count were also currently living in abandoned buildings, cars, or garages.
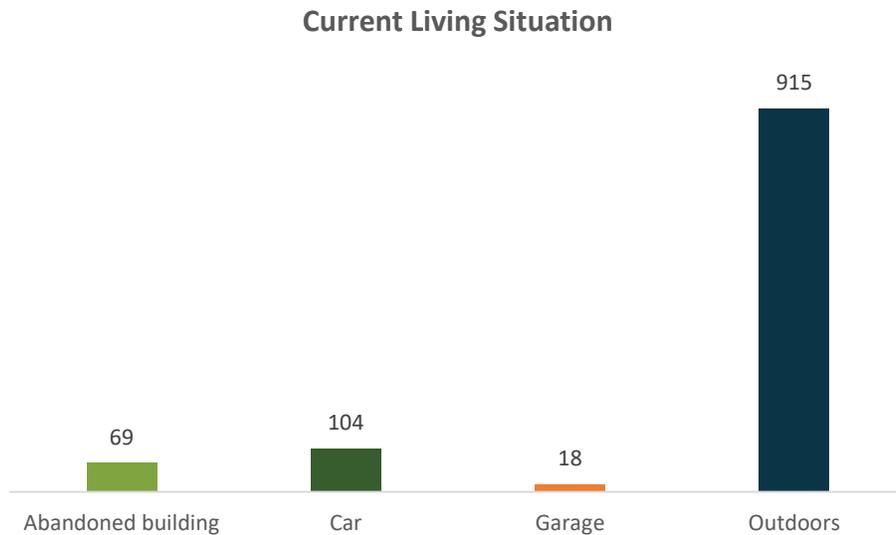
Current Living Situation

Figure 5. Current living situation for unsheltered individuals.

There were 380 individuals who experienced first time homelessness and were also interviewed during the unsheltered homeless count. As for length of current episode for unsheltered homelessness, those who have been homeless for a year or more (see Figure 6) had the highest count.
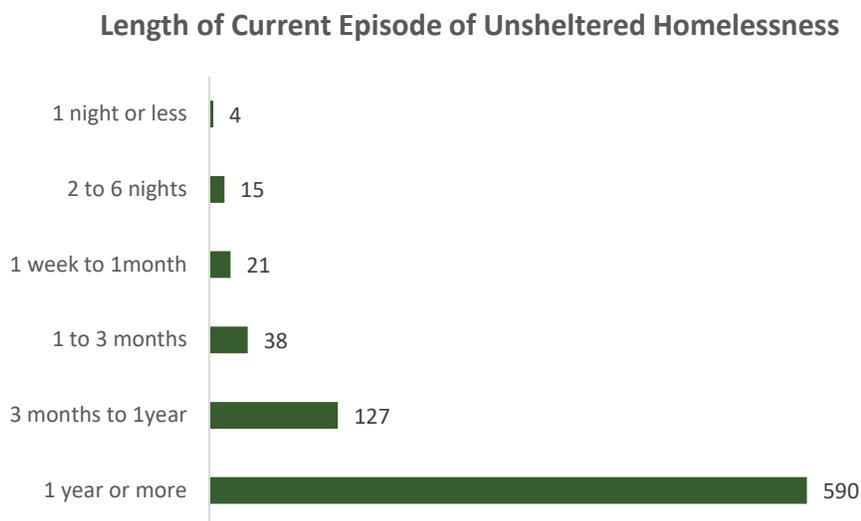
Length of Current Episode of Unsheltered Homelessness

Figure 6. Count of length of current episode of unsheltered homelessness.

Perceived Causes of Unsheltered Homelessness

Data on perceived causes of homelessness was collected from 724 unsheltered respondents who provided a response to this survey question. The top causes were health, mental health, and substance use disorder related reasons (178), household or family issues (176), employment related causes such as lack of wages, job loss, or lack of jobs (155), and mortgage or rent related issues (136). Other potential causes of homelessness include incarceration or personal choice.

Health and Unsheltered Homelessness

There was a total of 224 individuals who self-reported health conditions within the unsheltered population that ranged from a single disease or morbidity to as high as seven (7) co-morbidities. These diseases include asthma, diabetes, heart disease, hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and valley fever.

Table 2. Morbidity and Co-Morbidity within the Unsheltered Homeless Population.

Number of Self-Reported Diseases (Morbidities)	Count
1	162
2	40
3	12
4	6
5	2
6	0
7	2

Health insurance data was again included as part of the survey questions for this year's PIT count. Access to healthcare is a major social determinant of health and access to healthcare insurance is an important factor in resolving one's homelessness. During this year's count, the number of individuals who provided a response regarding health insurance increased (349 in 2023 versus 499 in 2024). The data revealed an increase in the number of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness who have Medi-Cal or Medicare compared to last year.

Table 3. Insurance Among the Unsheltered Homeless Population.

Insurance Type			
Medi-Cal	448	Veterans administration	4
Medicare	30	Other	16
State health insurance	1		

Special Populations of Interest

Three particular populations of interest within the overall homeless population include individuals who are chronically homeless, those with current or prior military service, and individuals aged between 18 – 24 years (youth). The count for these populations is listed below.

Table 4. Count of Homeless Populations of Interest.

Homeless Populations of Interest	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Chronically homeless	324	457
Veterans	44	49
Youth	61	86

Additional Homeless Populations

Other populations of focus for individuals experiencing homelessness include those with self-reported mental illness, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, and those who identify as survivors of domestic violence (see Table 5).

Mental Illness

There was a total of 325 adults who self-reported a serious mental illness. More unsheltered individuals reported a serious mental illness than their sheltered counterparts.

Substance Use Disorder

458 individuals in the homeless population self-reported a substance use disorder with the majority also being unsheltered. Substance use disorder ranges from alcohol, drug, or alcohol and drug use.

HIV/AIDS

There was an equal number of individuals who self-reported living with HIV/AIDS that were also experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness with 20 respondents.

Domestic Violence Survivors

There were more unsheltered individuals who identified and self-reported as survivors of domestic violence than those that were sheltered, 110 to 45 individuals, respectively.

Table 5. Count of Additional Homeless Populations.

Additional Homeless Populations	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Adults with a serious mental illness	30	295
Adults with a substance use disorder	149	309
Adults with HIV/AIDS	10	10
Adult survivors of domestic violence	45	110

Unsheltered Population Distribution for Kern County

The included density maps provide an overall view of the homeless population spread throughout Kern County and within metropolitan areas. Additionally, count totals are divided up by City. Please see Appendix B for additional information.

Conclusion

Homelessness is solvable in Kern County and efforts are being made to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness at any given time. The PIT Count is a critical component to address homelessness and BKRHC will use the data to gain understanding of the county's state of homelessness to strive for solutions that prevent homelessness and provide housing stability for all. This information will be used to inform the collaborative efforts with city, county, government, and service providing organizations to strategically plan and effectively allocate funds for developing permanent housing and resources throughout the county.

The PIT Count is a crucial endeavor that shows us that, through collaboration, our community is capable of doing amazing things to improve the quality of life for all Kern County residents.

Appendix A: Definitions

Adult

An individual who is aged 25 and older.

Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative (BKRHC)

The primary entity charged with responsibility for overseeing CoC functions as mandated by HUD, including submission of the annual CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), HMIS oversight, Point In Time Count, Housing Inventory Chart, as well as other annual reports.

Chronically Homeless Individual

An individual or family head of household with one or more disabling conditions who has been continuously homeless for 1 or more years and/or experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years.

Families

A household that consists of at least one adult who is 18 years of age or older and at least one child who is under 18 years of age.

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The U.S. Department that funds low-income and affordable housing initiatives, including the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, through the HUD Continuum of Care Program and Emergency Solutions Grant Program.

Point In Time (PIT) Count

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.

Sheltered Homelessness

A state of homelessness where an individual is currently residing in an emergency shelter, navigation center, or transitional housing.

Unsheltered Homelessness

A state of homelessness where an individual is currently residing in a place not meant for human habitation including abandoned buildings, vehicles, park benches, sidewalks, or encampments.

Unaccompanied Youth

Youth under the age of 18 and individuals between 18 through 24 years of age experiencing homelessness and without a parent or legal guardian.

Veteran

An individual who has served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States.

Appendix B: Unsheltered Count Density Maps by City
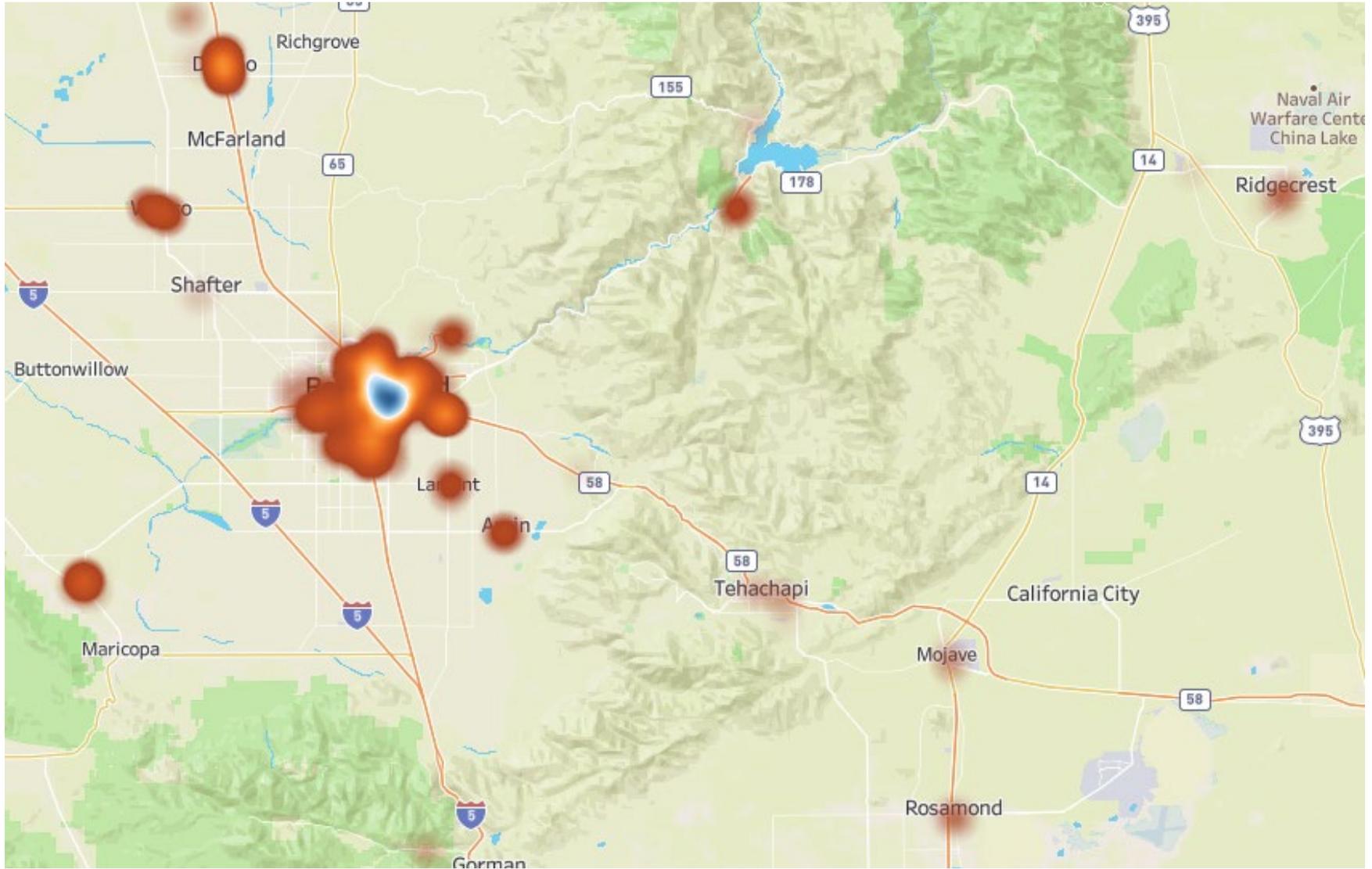

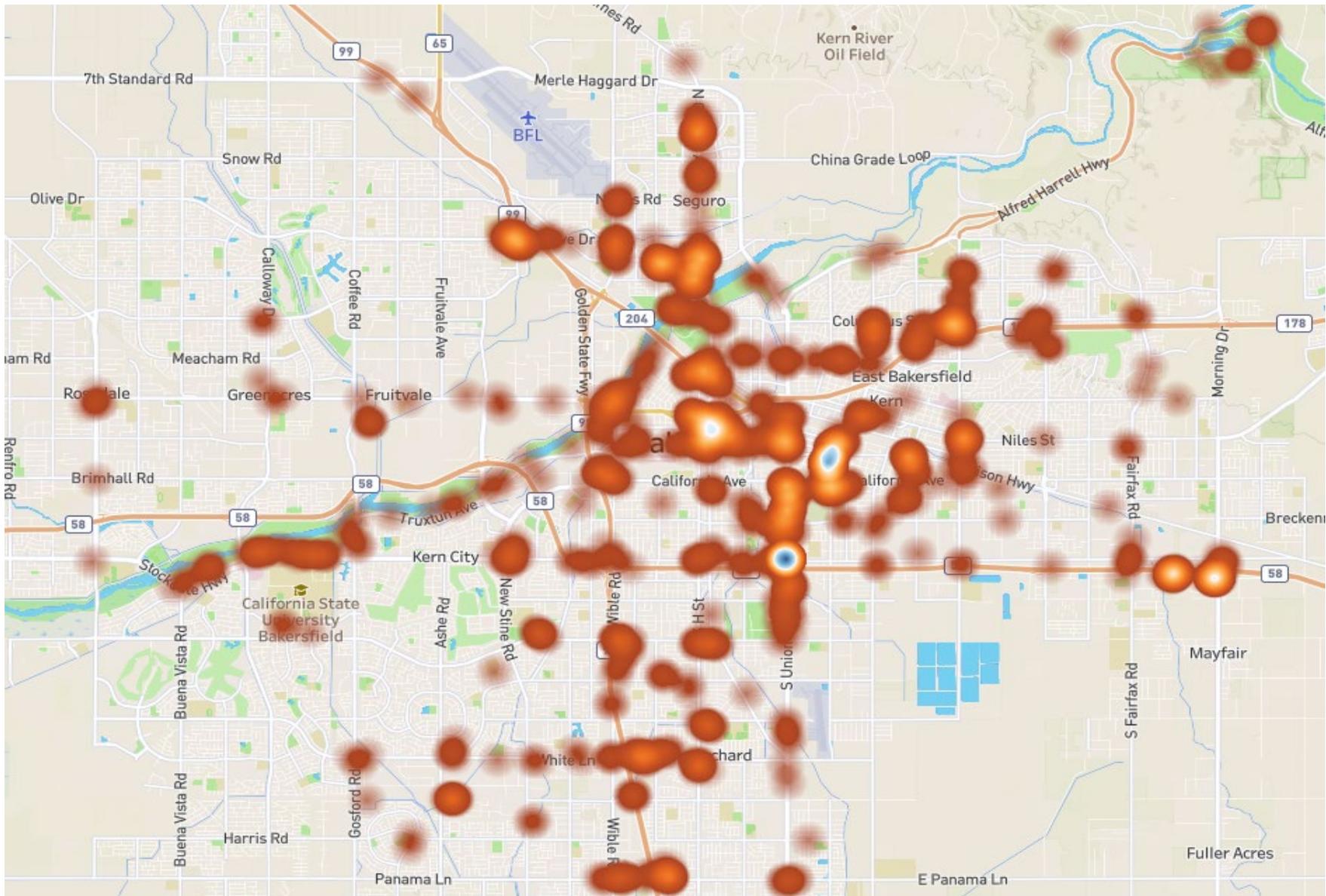Figure 7. Density map of Kern County for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

Figure 8. Density map of metropolitan Bakersfield for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.
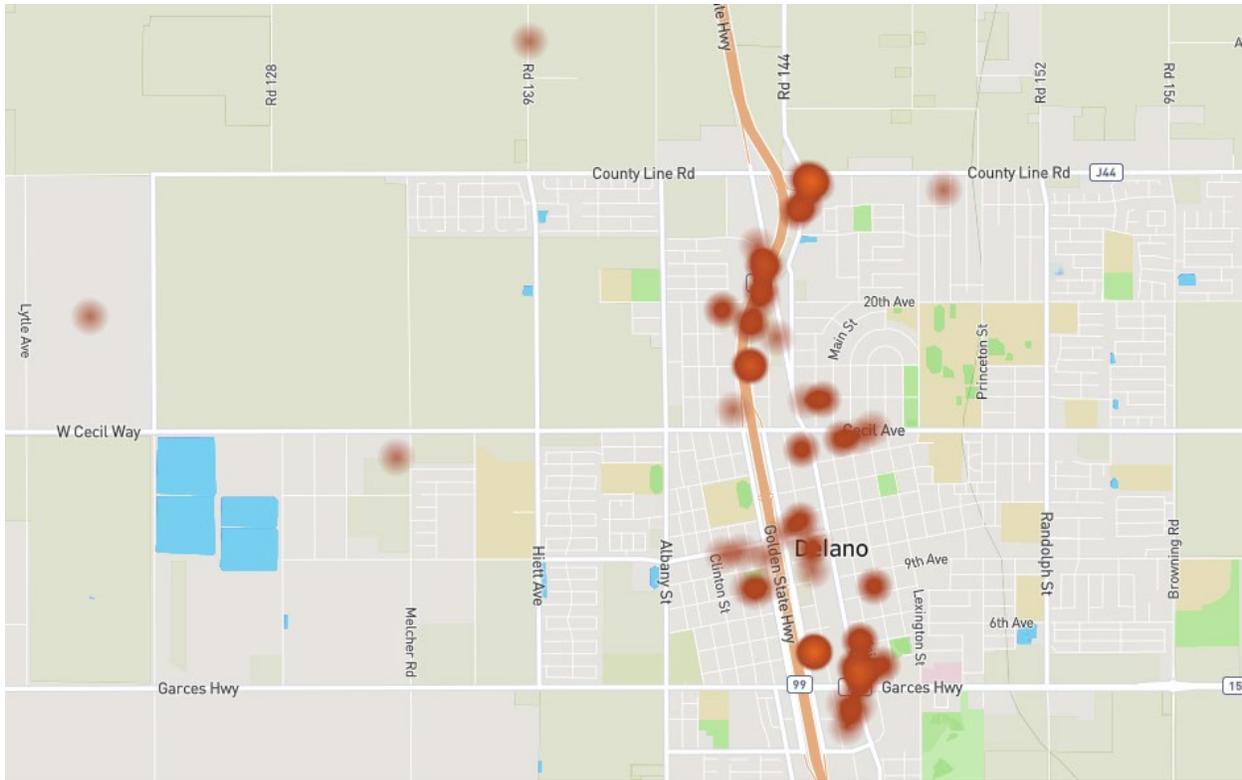
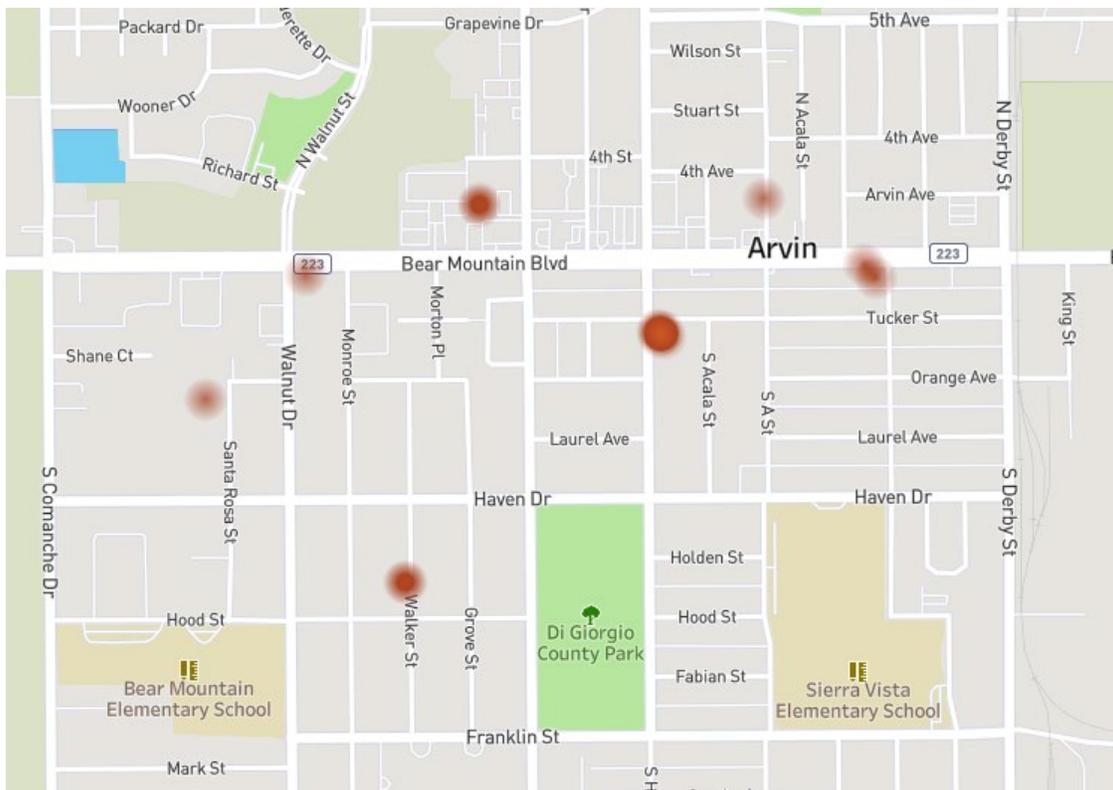Figure 9. Density map of Delano for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

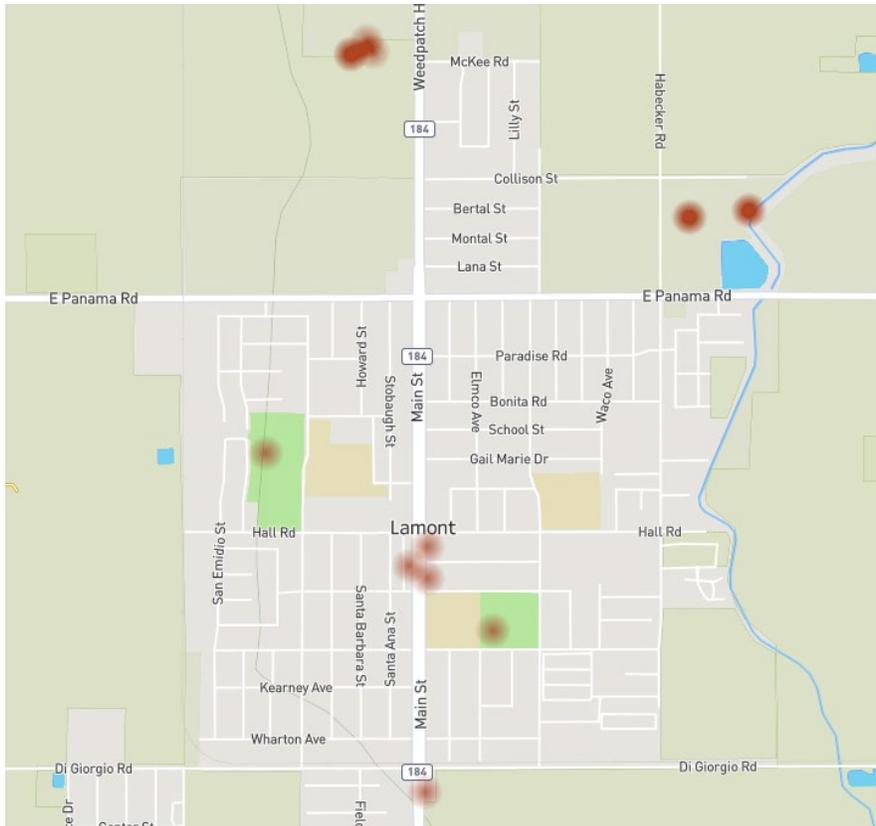Figure 10. Density map of Arvin for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

Figure 11. Density map of Lamont for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.
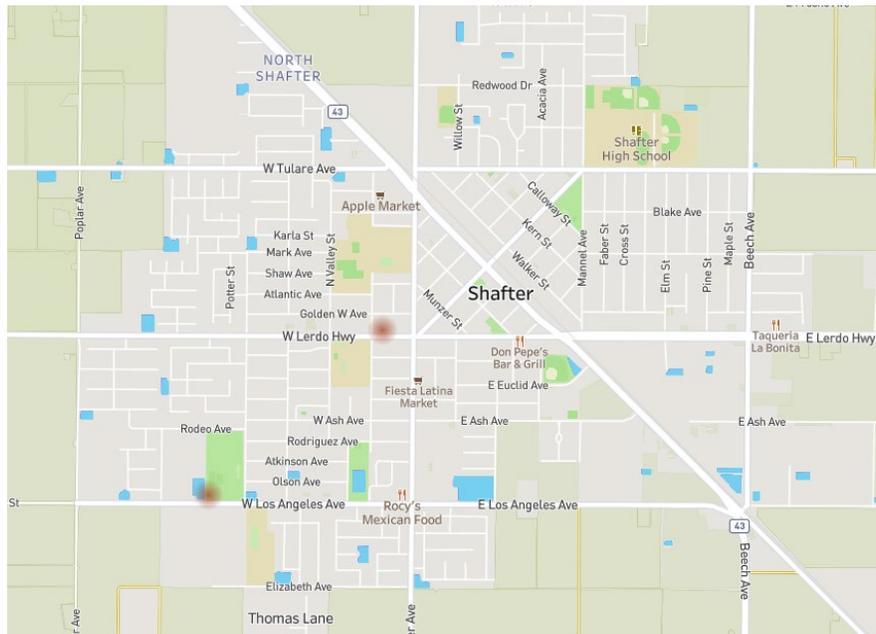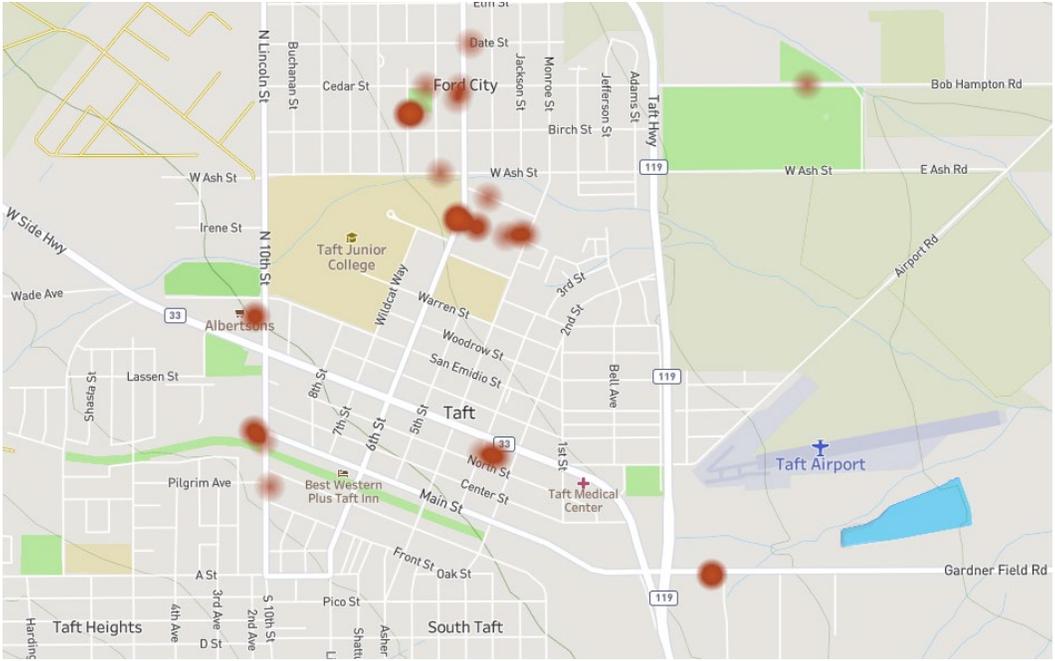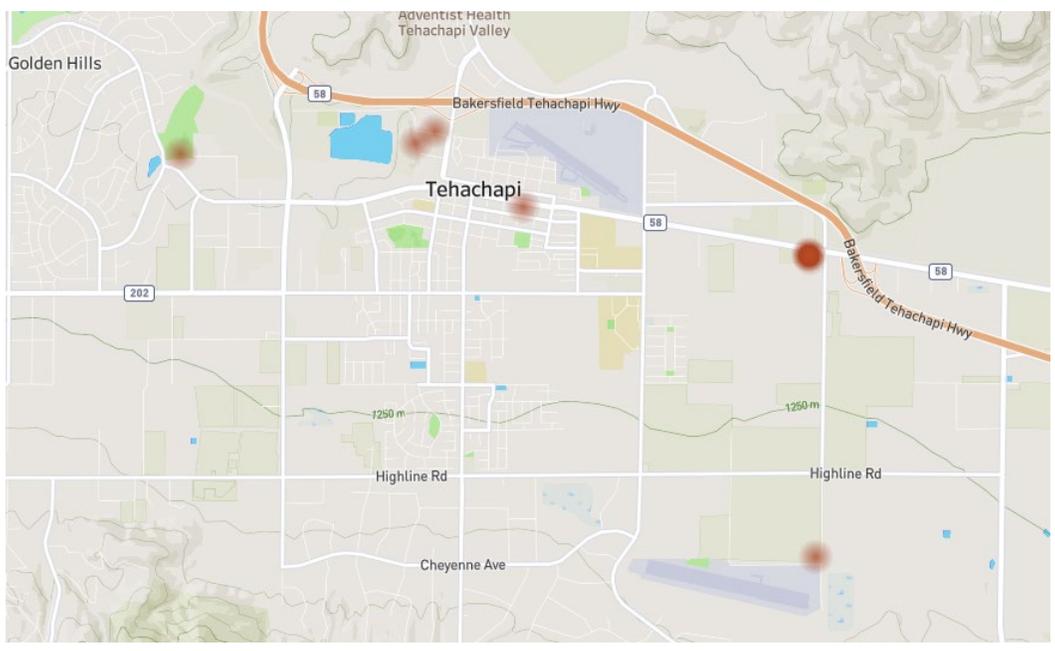

Figure 12. Density map of Shafter for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

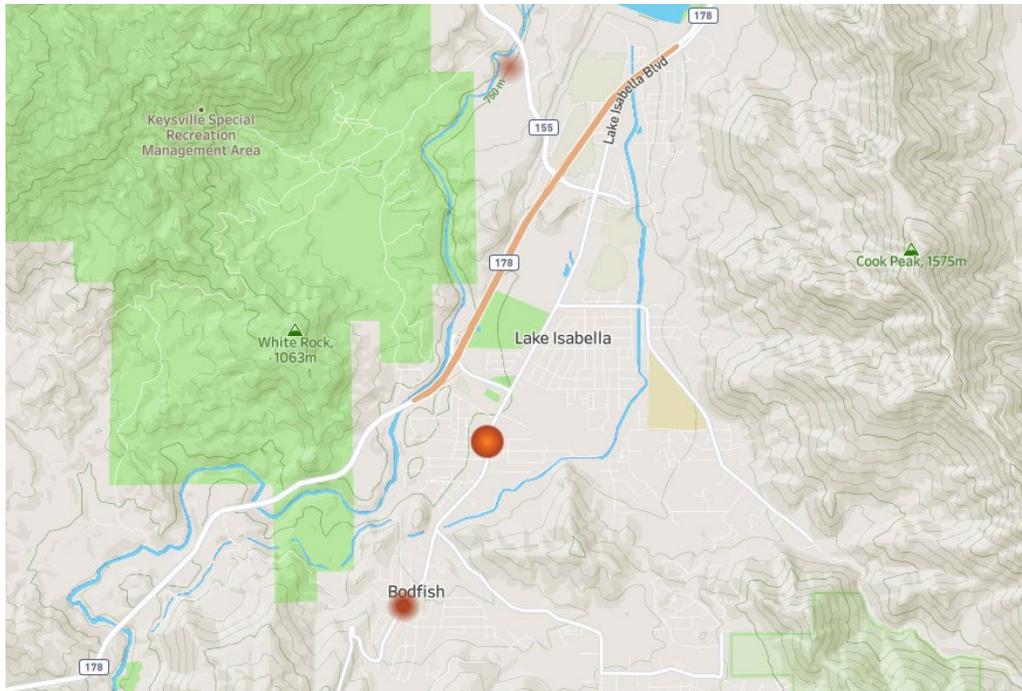Figure 13. Density map of Taft for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

Figure 14. Density map of Tehachapi for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

Figure 15. Density map of Bodfish and Lake Isabella for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.
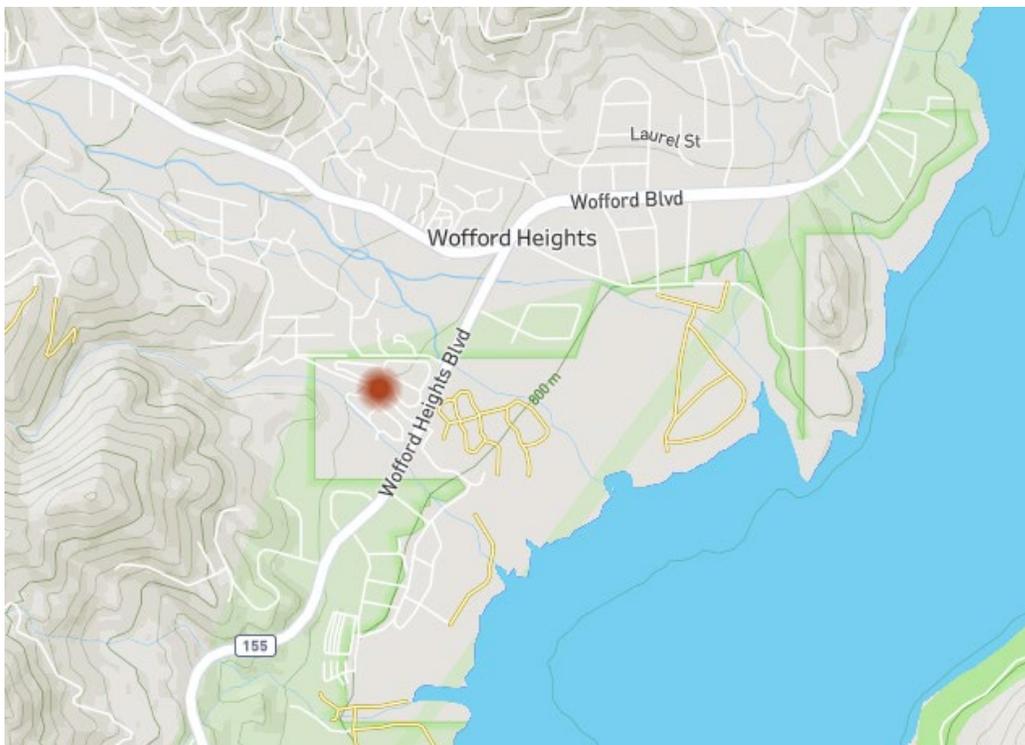

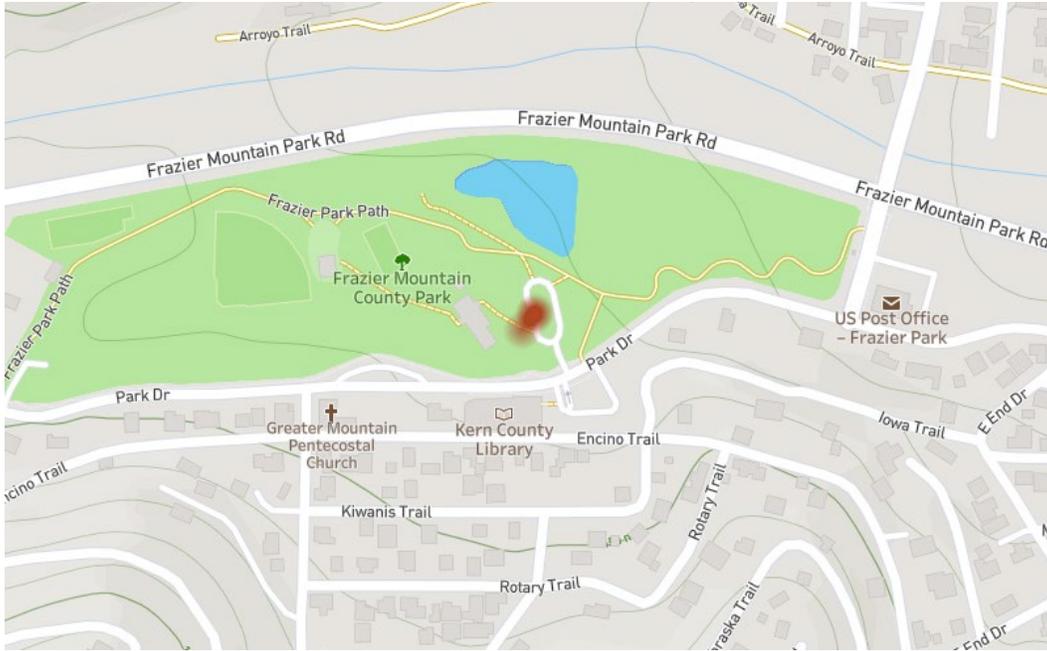Figure 16. Density map of Wofford Heights for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

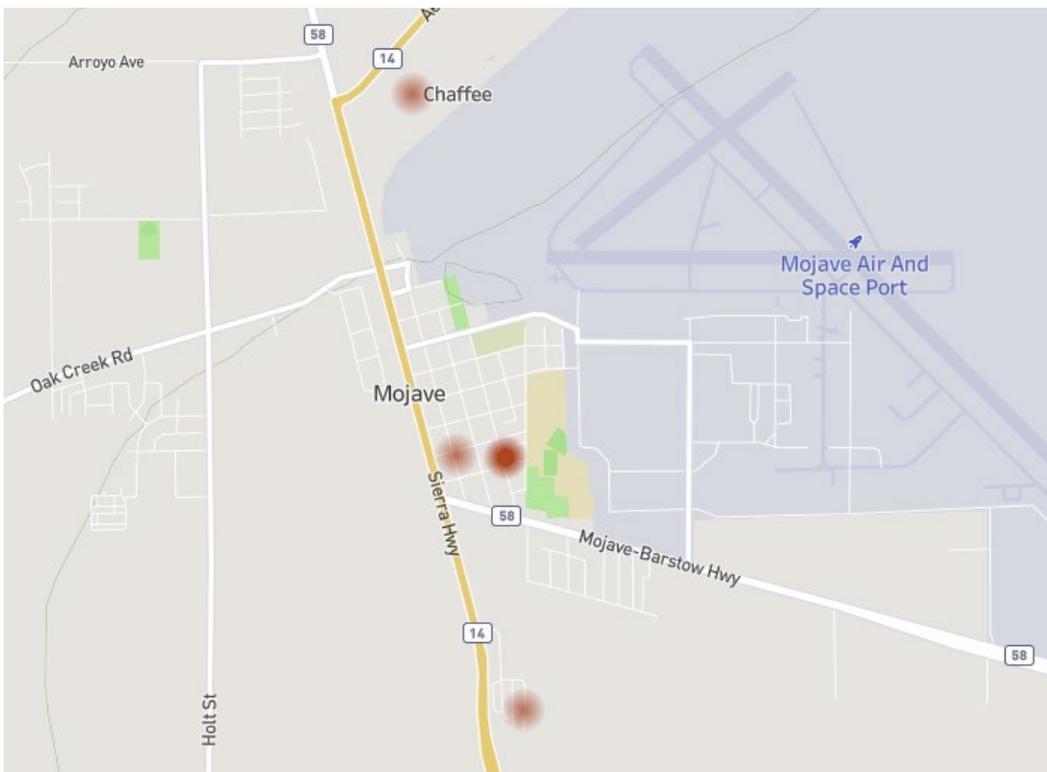Figure 17. Density map of Frazier Park for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

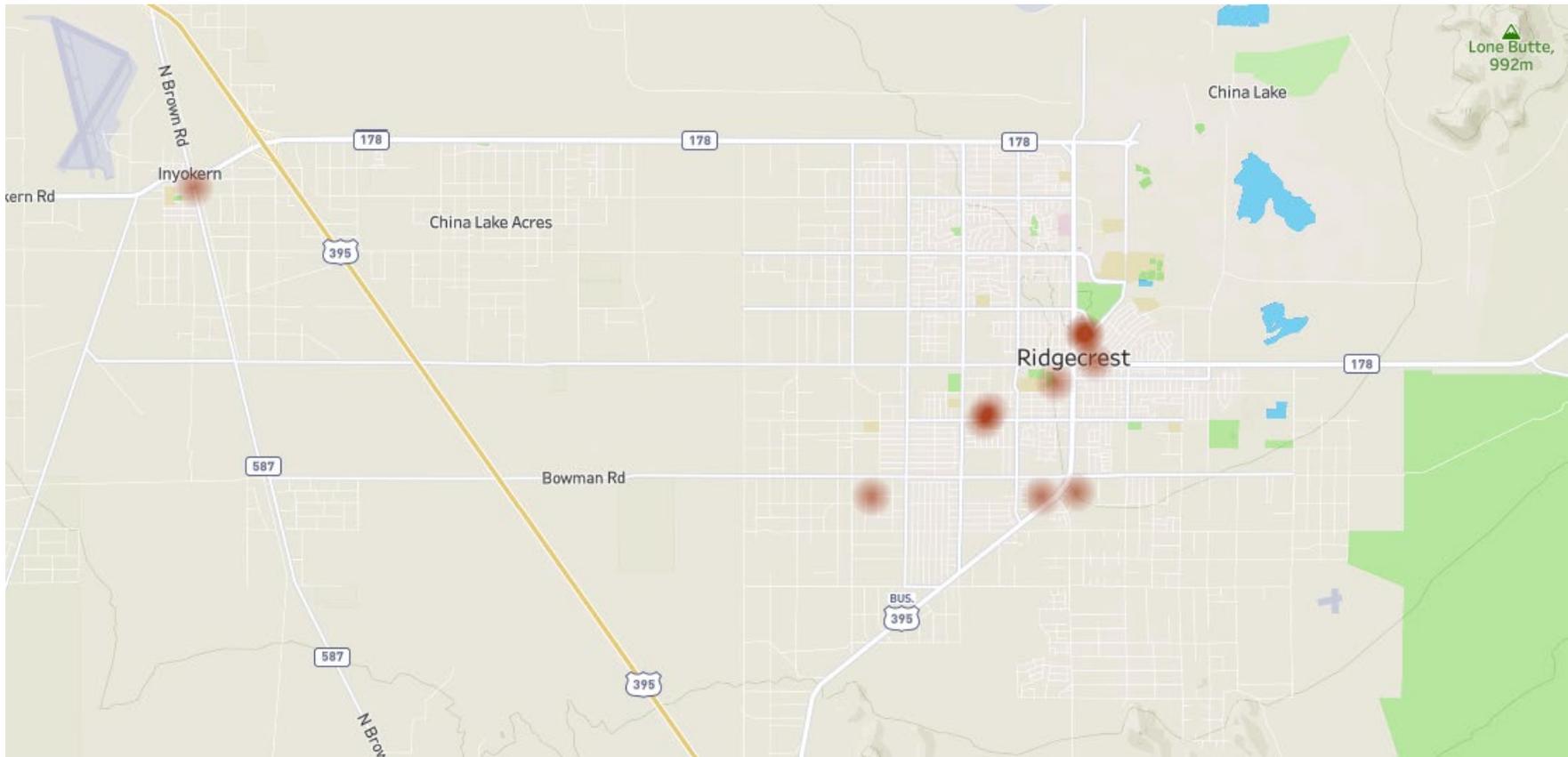Figure 18. Density map of Mojave for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

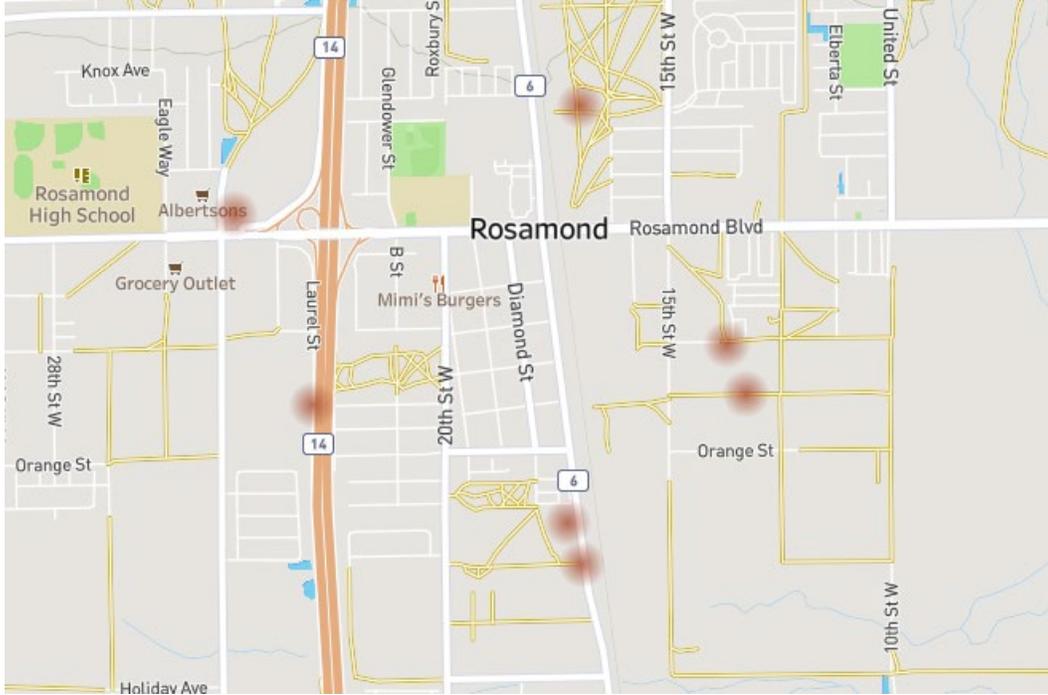Figure 19. Density map of Inyokern and Ridgecrest for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

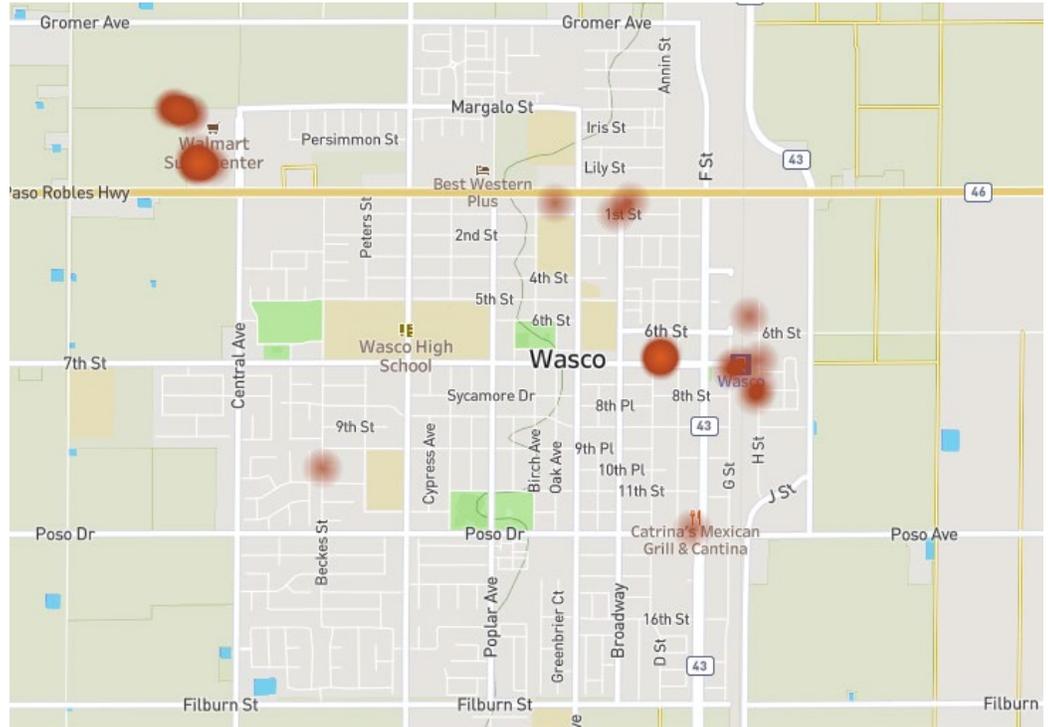Figure 20. Density map of Rosamond for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

Figure 21. Density map of Wasco for the 2024 Point-in-Time Count.

Appendix C: Historical PIT Count Data by Household Composition

Table 6. Metropolitan and Rural Data by Shelter Status

By Area and Shelter Status	Adults	Adults w/ Children	Children	Total People
Metro Bakersfield – Sheltered	794	59	116	969
Rural Sheltered	11	9	17	37
Total County Sheltered	**805**	**68**	**133**	**1006**
Metro Bakersfield – Unsheltered	1318	5	1	1324
Rural Unsheltered	259	2	0	261
Location Not Indicated	68	10	0	78
Total County Unsheltered	**1645**	**17**	**1**	**1663**
Total Metro Bakersfield	2112	64	117	2293
Total Rural	270	11	17	298
Location Not Indicated	68	10	0	78
2024 Combined Total	**2450**	**85**	**134**	**2669**
2023 Total	1747	76	125	1948
2022** Total	1361	75	167	1603

**2022 PIT Count utilized a single day unsheltered count.

Table 7. 2024 Unsheltered PIT Count Totals by City

City	Count
Arvin	26
Bakersfield	1202
Bodfish	2
Delano	86
Ford City	1
Frazier Park	3
Inyokern	1
Lake Isabella	16
Lamont	13
Mojave	7
Oildale	122
Ridgecrest	9
Rosamond	8
Shafter	2
Taft	39
Tehachapi	11
Wasco	35
Wofford Heights	2