

Homelessness

POSITION

We realize that homelessness is one of our society's greatest moral and humanitarian concerns. Our members consider themselves active in the community and key contributors to a responsible long-term solution. Additionally, as owners and managers of commercial real estate, our customers value clean and safe working environments. As members of the business community and providers of their facilities, we realize the ramifications of this unbridled issue.

As such, we:

- Support coordination between the government decision-makers in the homelessness space – including local jurisdictions, LA County, LAHSA, service providers, and affordable housing developers.
- Support and participate in philanthropic efforts that benefit the homeless, as embodied by BOMA/GLA's partnership with The People Concern.
- Support enforcement measures that protect real property, public safety, a clear right-of-way, sanitation, and vehicle accessibility - including 41.18 in the City of Los Angeles.
- Support financially responsible strategies and efficient use of existing funds earmarked to provide quality service and expedited housing to individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Support more equitable distribution of financial responsibility among taxpayers and oppose taxes that disproportionately burden the commercial real estate industry.
- Support standardized local response to encampment issues - as to when to deploy armed law enforcement, unarmed responders, and/or service providers so the business community has a clear, consistent mechanism to resolve these issues, and advocate for additional resources that enable the commercial real estate community to address this.
- Support coalitions across sectors to create new housing opportunities and homelessness services that ultimately create a pathway to giving people the dignity of a home.
- Support increased mental and drug rehabilitation services serving segments of the homeless population.
- Support low-barrier housing and shelter development, as well as the production of new designated affordable housing and market-rate housing to add housing stock for all income levels.
- Support streamlined permitting and approvals for projects that allow for adaptive reuse of properties from commercial to alternative uses, including residential. Furthermore, BOMA/GLA supports subsidies to incentivize adaptive reuse that adds to our regional housing stock and enables flexibility for property owners.

BACKGROUND

According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, there are 69,144 individuals currently experiencing homelessness across Los Angeles County – nearly double the 38,700 of 2010. Worse yet, 1612 individuals experiencing homelessness died on the streets in 2021.

BOMA/GLA members are first and foremost concerned citizens. They also manage assets adjacent to some of the County's largest encampments – these individuals are our members' neighbors whom they often know by name. Our members have a unique vantage point to the regional homelessness crisis, and it impacts them in every way:

- They witness the suffering caused by our regional homelessness crisis firsthand.
- They experience safety and health issues in their buildings caused by encampments along the right of way adjacent to their buildings.
- They grapple with the related drug and mental health crises and ambiguous intervention procedures in some cities as trespassing potentially occurs.

Homelessness has therefore become a top-priority issue for BOMA/GLA.

BOMA/GLA's approach has been to be a part of the solution, whether it is advocating for pragmatic policies to address homelessness or partnering with The People Concern, one of Los Angeles's most successful homelessness service nonprofits.

Many factors have contributed to such large increases in homelessness, including Los Angeles County's housing supply issues, related rent increases, lack of mental health and drug rehabilitation infrastructure, COVID-19 policies, and even good weather.

Some factors complicate responding to individuals' needs such as holes in the coordination between jurisdictions, the County, and their service providers.

In November of 2016, residents of the City of Los Angeles approved Proposition HHH (\$1.2 billion in bonds to fund housing for homeless people and people at risk of becoming homeless and to fund facilities that provide mental health care, addiction treatment, and other services) to fund permanent supportive housing in the City of Los Angeles. In March of 2017, Los Angeles County voters approved a tax increase to fund \$3.5 billion to address homelessness over the next 10 years (Measure H, a .25% county sales tax for 10 years in order to fund homeless services and prevention).

Despite significant resources allocated to address the crisis, a majority of HHH units remain unavailable as of 2023 and some projections indicate an \$800,000/unit cost.

Furthermore, Los Angeles City voters passed Measure ULA, a 5.5% transfer tax on most BOMA/GLA members to go toward combatting homelessness, but the affordable housing structure remains similar to HHH.



Position Statement

Simultaneously, various piecemeal enforcement and intervention mechanisms exist, particularly in the City of Los Angeles.

BOMA/GLA strongly advocated for 41.18, which sets reasonable standards to prevent illegal encampments from obstructing rights of way and being set up too close to sensitive areas such as schools. We also successfully advocated for increased enforcement when encampments violate the ADA.

The city is also working to expand programs such as Circle, which sends trained unarmed social workers to engage with individuals experiencing homelessness during nonviolent incidents.

We proactively engage policymakers and local governments with the views of the commercial real estate community to solve the issue of homelessness. We encourage the government to seek the commercial real estate industry's needs in advance and seek out a culture of compromise.