



**President**

Andrew Thomas  
Westwood Village  
Improvement Association

**President - Elect**

Steve Snider  
Downtown Oakland and  
Lake Merritt-Uptown District  
Associations

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

Liz Studebaker  
City of San Diego

**Secretary**

Chip  
Downtown Association of  
Santa Cruz

**Treasurer**

Austin Metoyer  
Downtown Long Beach  
Alliance

**At Large Directors:**

Emilie Cameron  
Downtown Sacramento  
Partnership

Maggie Campbell  
MIG San Diego

Karin Flood  
Union Square Business  
Improvement District

Kathy Hemmenway  
Walnut Creek Downtown

Suzanne Holley  
Downtown Center Business  
Improvement District (LA)

Steve Mulheim  
Old Pasadena Management  
District

Chloe Verrey  
San Jose Downtown  
Association

Steven Welliver  
Downtown Santa Monica  
Inc.

## **CALIFORNIA'S BIDS WORK RELENTLESSLY TO DIRECTLY IMPACT AND REDUCE HOMELESSNESS**

**Business improvement districts (BIDs) serve as the collective voice for property owners and businesses in the heart of many urban centers in California.**

BIDs are financed by assessments on real property and are created through the consent of a majority of property owners within the district, weighted by the amount each owner pays in assessments. BIDs are proud to manage and provide special benefits to the assessed publicly owned parcels within BIDs, going above any baseline of service provided by the municipality.

BIDs are a funding mechanism available to property owners to fund activities, maintenance, and improvements that provide special benefits to assessed properties. The management of BID funded activities, maintenance, and improvements is almost always conducted by a designated "Owners' Association". An Owners' Association is a private nonprofit entity that is under contract with the local government to administer or implement BID activities, maintenance, and improvements as specified in the BID's governing documents. Although Owners' Associations are private nonprofit entities, they are subject to public accountability laws, specifically the Ralph M. Brown Act and the California Public Records Act. Every Owners' Association is required to comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act at all times when matters within the subject matter of the BID are heard, discussed, or deliberated, and with the California Public Records Act for all records related to activities of the BID. Additionally, Owners' Associations are required to provide annual reports to the local government on the finances, activities, maintenance, and improvements related to the BID.

Because BIDs are formed in contiguous commercial areas, they often include and provide special benefits to publicly owned parcels within the BID boundary. The "Right to Vote on Taxes Act" (Prop. 218) requires BIDs to provide special benefits to both private and public parcels. As Prop 218 states, "Parcels within a district that are owned or used by any agency, the State of California or the United States shall not be exempt from assessment unless the agency can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that those publicly owned parcels in fact receive no special benefit."

Some publicly owned parcels are can be assessed at a reduced rate than for-profit commercial parcels, commensurate with the special benefits conferred to publicly owned parcels. The primary focus of services to publicly owned parcels typically includes clean and safe activities that are designed to provide the special benefit of increased cleanliness and safety on publicly owned parcels. BID assessment funds that are used for legislative advocacy activities must be structured to provide special benefits to assessed parcels by providing a unified voice for assessed property owners on issues that may impact a safe, clean and welcoming environment for our neighborhoods.

Additionally, local governments have the ability to issue bonds secured by BID assessment revenue. If assessed property owners wish to raise money for capital improvements (building new kiosks, parks, sidewalks or other improvement), they have the ability to avoid full-payment of the improvement and can instead finance those improvements over 30 years. This significantly assists with redevelopment opportunities within the urban core – which attracts new housing, business and entertainment options for residents and visitors.

For example, in 2017, the Downtown Sacramento Partnership’s Downtown Guides assisted more than 82,000 employees, residents, visitors and businesses. Their Public Space Services team power washed 5,040 blocks and removed 914,207 pounds of debris and hazardous materials. Without these services, the downtown core would be far less clean, safe and welcoming for downtown workers, residents, visitors and guests.

---

**Business Improvement Districts champion real solutions to homelessness.**

BIDs don’t just talk about homelessness, our members work relentlessly to directly impact and reduce homelessness. Many of our members prioritize the most vulnerable in our downtowns, actively working with cities, counties and service partners to connect those in need with services and housing. We provide local leaders with best practices, real-time statistics and information to help shape policies.

Our members are a resource for the community and working to increase capacity, diversity and supply of housing options:

- Twelve cities in the Bay Area and Sacramento have established a formal partnership with a non-profit organization that provides dignity, hope, purpose and a path out of homelessness, the **“Downtown Streets Team” (DST)**. Created with a business improvement district in Palo Alto in 2004, DST addresses homelessness in a comprehensive manner though wrap-around supportive services like employment and housing. DST team members volunteer on urban beautification projects to enhance the community’s public spaces. In exchange, they earn basic needs stipends for food, housing, toiletries, storage, cell phones and bus passes. Should Team Members decide to continue their service, DST supports these individuals in gaining housing and full employment ultimately the self-sufficiency needed for long-term success. As a result, 87% of DST team members remain in housing after the stipend subsidy ends.

- The Downtown Sacramento Partnership provides education and support for policies that increase capacity, diversity and supply of housing. Their work to promote a variety of housing options, including scattered site, affordable and rapid rehousing options are policies that are supported by credible and established organizations like the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and have proven to be effective in addressing the core challenges of homelessness.
- The Westwood Village Improvement Association (WVIA) in Los Angeles employs a dedicated outreach specialist to connect the district's most vulnerable with life-changing services. As a result, in 2018, the WVIA housed 11 individuals experiencing homelessness in the district, in both temporary and permanent housing. The WVIA also partners with local social service providers to host a pop-up access center to connect the transient community directly to services from relevant agencies.
- In the City and County of Los Angeles, business improvement districts in Venice, the Fashion District, Downtown Center, Historic Core, Arts District, North Figueroa community, Lincoln Heights, Downtown Industrial District, Figueroa Corridor BID, Leimert Park, North Hollywood, Culver City, Monterey Park, Century City, Pacific Palisades, and North Hollywood and others contract with Chrysalis, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a pathway to self-sufficiency for homeless and low-income individuals. Chrysalis team members provide BIDs with important maintenance services and in the process gain the experience necessary to transition to more advanced employment.

---

**BIDs do not exclude or remove homeless individuals from our districts.**

Like many other organizations and municipal governments, our members are actively working to assist the growing numbers of homeless individuals living on the streets. Our members alone cannot singlehandedly address homelessness, however, many BIDs in California are taking on the responsibility because we recognize that we are uniquely positioned to help. Our members are often the first point of contact and have daily interactions with those experiencing homelessness. We devote our time and resources to outreach, advocate and coordinate service for those in need.

We support for policies and tools that create a safe environment and seek to address aggressive or nuisance behavior in public space. We believe that everyone, including the homeless, have a right to safe, welcoming and clean streets. There is a distinct difference between criminal, anti-lawful behavior and those individuals who are suffering through the challenges of homelessness. Everyone, including those living on our streets, should be safe.

Some of California's BIDs provide services sometimes known as a "city guide" or "ambassador" program, whereby employees act as good-will ambassadors providing assistance while increasing safety in our downtowns. They escort residents, visitors and employees and answer questions. The simple presence of a guide or ambassador can also deter dangerous or even criminal behavior.

Many BIDs manage services that improve public spaces, including debris and graffiti removal and power-washing high foot traffic areas.

- The Downtown Sacramento Partnership established a “Homeless Navigator” program that works with Sacramento Steps Forward – a non-profit organization committed to ending homelessness in the Sacramento region that also manages the county’s Continuum of Care. The Navigator program connects individuals experiencing homelessness with community service programs and facilitates access to care. Just in the last 5 years, Downtown Sacramento Partnership has directly helped more than 400 individuals experiencing homelessness transition into housing. That translates to one individual transitioned into a suitable housing every 4.5 day.
- The Downtown San Diego Partnership (DSDP) works to raise awareness and funds to reduce homelessness in their community through a variety of programs and partnerships. Since 2010, with their Clean & Safe program’s homeless outreach team, DSDP has collaborated with Downtown stakeholders, local leaders, and regional service providers to help connect more than 2,000 people with housing and services. One of DSDP’s most successful efforts to reduce homelessness is the Family Reunification Program, which is designed to reconnect homeless individuals with their families and loved ones across the country. The program enables individuals to rebuild the much-needed support systems crucial to ending the cycle of homelessness. Since 2012, more than 2,160 people have been helped through the Family Reunification Program.
- San Francisco’s Union Square BID (USBID) hires Public Safety and Hospitality Ambassadors to perform wellbeing checks on individuals experiencing homelessness in Union Square, which in turn, links these individuals with services. Their partnership with the Downtown Streets Team hires homeless or marginally housed individuals to clean and improve the area. By giving people the opportunity to work, USBID learned they are able to reconnect positively with the community because they are matched with a case worker who can fast track them to a permanent job and/or housing. Since June of 2016, 21 individuals have been permanently housed and 23 have received full time employment. USBID also partners with Miracle Messages, a non-profit grass roots movement, to reconnect people experiencing homelessness with their families and friends.