

Fair Games: A New Deal for Our Future

Los Angeles will become the mega events capital of the world over the next several years. During 2026 through 2028, our city will host—among other events—the FIFA World Cup, the Super Bowl, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Such mega events and the massive investments required to make them happen should have a positive impact for the city’s residents, including the workers that make the games possible. But in recent decades, in country after country, global sporting events have failed to produce lasting benefits for host communities. While corporate sponsors have enriched themselves, the games have left local communities indebted for years with five of the past six Olympics posting cost overruns of more than 100% and has permanently displaced millions of poor residents.ⁱ

Unfortunately, LA28 executives, elected political leaders, and corporate leaders have failed to present a coherent vision for how the 2028 Olympics will be different. The city has subcontracted the design and execution of the games to billionaires who have pursued deals without meaningful transparency or participation by affected communities.

We must change course. Los Angeles needs a New Deal for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and other mega events.

A Transparent and Open Process

Major decisions, including those set out in the Host City Contract, Games Agreements, and Venue Agreements, should be made with total transparency and full opportunities for the public to give input.

City-and-Regionwide Union and Living Wage Jobs

The cost of living in Los Angeles is soaring. The majority of Angelenos are renters and must earn \$48 per hour to afford the \$2,500 average monthly rent of a two-bedroom apartment.ⁱⁱ Given this reality, all Olympic and Paralympic jobs in the region—from those who make garments emblazoned with the Olympics logo to those who clean hotel rooms to those who stage the Games to the athletes in the Games—must have union and living wage jobs.

The passing of the Olympic and Paralympic Wage in Los Angeles and Long Beach is a critical first step. It marks the first time in history that cities hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games have guaranteed a \$30 minimum wage for frontline tourism workers — ensuring that the people who clean rooms, move luggage, and serve guests are not left behind as the world watches. But much more needs to be done to ensure a transformational legacy for working Angelenos.

50,000 Units of Housing for Workers and Their Families.

Los Angeles faces a severe shortage of housing for families with low or moderate incomes, a crisis the recent wildfires will only exacerbate. An estimated 75,000 people in Los Angeles County are unhoused.ⁱⁱⁱ Although our city needs hundreds of thousands of new units of housing,^{iv} the City permitted less than 9,000 new units in 2024.^v City leadership has failed badly to address this problem, most recently rejecting zoning

changes necessary to realistically meet the state housing law obligations.^{vi}

As part of a new vision for 2028, Los Angeles and surrounding cities—and the billionaires who stand to gain from the upcoming mega-events—should commit themselves and make concrete plans to build 50,000 units of worker housing, through at least the following:

- **A \$5 billion contribution from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and LA28 to build housing for workers like teachers, fire fighters, and hotel workers.**
- **A \$1 billion contribution from tourism industry employers to build housing for workers and their families.**
- **A \$500 Million-Per-Year Permanent Housing Fund**
Cities should generate a permanent funding source for housing by taxing companies that overpay their executives and underpay their workers. A gross receipts tax on companies that pay their CEOs or other executives more than 100 times their median worker in Los Angeles could bring in more than \$500 million annually to help meet our urgent housing needs
- **A Paris-Style Olympic Village that Transitions to Housing**
LA28 Chairman Casey Wasserman promised that if Los Angeles won its bid to host the Olympics, it would build an Olympic Village with 17,000 beds for athletes, coaches and staff that would later be converted into permanent housing for residents.^{vii} Paris managed to accomplish a similar housing construction program for the 2024 Games in which the city built a new Olympic Village for athletes that then became permanent social housing for working class people.^{viii} However, LA28 and the City reneged on this promise to do the same in LA and has since backed away from any commitment to help to reduce homelessness.^{ix} This legacy project should move forward.
- **Build Housing for Workers and Their Families on Public Land**
Cities throughout the region should make vacant or poorly-utilized publicly owned land available for housing construction. Los Angeles has the most vacant land of any large city in California.^x Of 22,000 vacant lots, the City owns roughly 10% of them.^{xi} Los Angeles and surrounding cities should facilitate affordable housing construction on such sites. A particularly important opportunity exists in Santa Monica. Of the over 80,000 formal jobs in the city, only 7,600 workers live and work in Santa Monica. The rest commute in, often from long distances, generating pollution and congestion. The Santa Monica Airport, a sprawling plot covering almost 200 acres, will be decommissioned as of New Year's Eve 2028. At least part of the land must be used to build housing for teachers, city employees, and service workers.

- **Moratorium on Airbnb and Short Term Rentals – and an End to the IOC’s Airbnb Deal:**

Cities must enact an immediate moratorium on Airbnb and other short-term rental platforms. These platforms strip thousands of homes from the long-term rental market, driving up rents and deepening the homelessness crisis.^{xii} In Paris, short-term rentals exploded ahead of the Olympics, decimating the city’s housing stock. Inglewood faces the same threat — and may never recover without urgent action. A moratorium could return up to 10,000 homes to people who live and work in the region. It’s time for cities to prioritize housing for residents — and for the International Olympic Committee to end its partnership with Airbnb, a company whose business model undermines the very communities that host the Games.

Safe and Dignified Treatment of Immigrant Communities

Southern California is a proudly diverse immigrant community, rich and vibrant in culture. This uniqueness makes it an ideal location for the Olympics and Paralympic Games, and a draw for visitors from around the world.

The success of international events like the Olympic and the Paralympics depend on the spirit of openness and safety extended to all participants, the people who work the events, and to the surrounding communities that host the event. We demand that the IOC press the US government to protect the constitutional rights of the many immigrants who live, work, and contribute meaningfully to the cities selected to host the games, and guarantee the fundamental rights of the millions of foreign visitors and fans who will seek entry to the United States to attend the events. We demand the IOC join in a call for a full moratorium on ICE raids and a fair path to citizenship for all. We demand that companies that employ workers who will make the Games possible agree to essential protections for immigrant workers.

Taking these steps will ensure that the upcoming mega-events benefit the communities that will host them and the workers that will make them possible, not just corporate sponsors and the billionaire class.

If corporate CEOs, the IOC, LA 28, and city leaders fail to meet workers’ needs, workers and their supporters will be prepared to take to the streets and to strike.

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- ⁱ See, e.g., Alicia Wallace and Alex Leeds, *Hosting the Olympics has become financially untenable, economists say*, CNN, August 29, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/26/economy/olympics-economics-paris-2024/index.html>; Sarah Hurtes, *The Olympics Is Transforming Their Neighborhood. And Kicking Them Out*, New York Times, July 20, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/20/world/europe/france-paris-immigration-homeless-olympics.html>; Matt Alt, *Tokyo's Olympics Have Become the Anger Games*, NEW YORKER, July 22, 2021, <https://www.newyorker.com/sports/sporting-scene/tokyos-olympics-have-become-the-anger-games>; Alexander Budzier and Bent Flyvbjerg, *The Oxford Olympics Study 2024: Are Cost and Cost Overrun at the Games Coming Down?*, May 30, 2024, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4850085
- ⁱⁱ California Housing Partnership, *Los Angeles County: 2024 Affordable Housing Needs Report*, https://chpc.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Los-Angeles_Housing_Report.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Greater Los Angeles 2024 Homeless Count Results, June 28, 2024, <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=8174-2024-greater-los-angeles-homeless-count-infographics.pdf>
- ^{iv} California Housing Partnership & The Angeleno Project, *The Hard Facts: LA Homelessness and Housing by the Numbers 2023*, 2023, <https://theangelenoproject.org/the-hard-facts/#:~:text=After%20the%20passage%20of%20local,units%20to%20meet%20current%20demand.>
- ^v Hilgard Analytics, *Residential Permits in the City of Los Angeles: Annual 2024 Update*, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64d6d04f67d26f28afc9ac83/t/67841a56e3cc347185d1b5c9/1736710744240/Residential_Permitting_Trends_Q4_Annual_2024.pdf
- ^{vi} Andrew Khoury, *Nonprofits allege Los Angeles plan to boost housing development is too weak, illegal*, Los Angeles Times, February 14, 2025, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-02-14/la-housing-plan-lawsuit>
- ^{vii} Bringing 2024 Olympics to LA Could Ease Housing Crisis, City Leaders Say, Los Angeles Business Council, October 25, 2015 <https://labusinesscouncil.org/bringing-2024-olympics-to-la-could-ease-housing-crisis-city-leaders-say/#:~:text=Casey%20Wasserman%2C%20chairman%20of%20the,the%20games%2C%E2%80%9D%20Wasserman%20said.>
- ^{viii} Adele Peters, *Paris is transforming an industrial neighborhood into the Olympic Village—and then turning it into permanent housing*, Fast Company, June 4, 2024, <https://www.fastcompany.com/91135148/paris-is-transforming-an-industrial>
- ^{ix} Jules Boykoff and Dave Zirin, *Opinion: The Olympics promise to be socially responsible. How's that working out?*, Los Angeles Times, July 24, 2024, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2024-07-24/paris-los-angeles-olympics-homeless;> Interview with Casey Wasserman on Airtalk on KPCC (stating “We’re not responsible for solving homelessness. We’re responsible for delivering the Olympic Games as a private enterprise in 2028.”), <https://x.com/NOlympicsLA/status/1463577298280484866>
- ^x Commercial Cafe, *Texas Triangle Dominates List of U.S. Cities with Most Vacant Land Available*, March 23, 2023, <https://www.commercialcafe.com/blog/us-vacant-land-study/#methodology>

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- ^{xi} Alissa Walker, *This interactive map shows LA's publicly owned properties*, July 3, 2019. Curbed LA. <https://la.curbed.com/2019/7/3/20681291/map-public-property-los-angeles#:~:text=There%20are%20about%2022%2C000%20vacant,are%20owned%20by%20the%20city.>
- ^{xii} David Wachsmuth, *Short-term rentals in Los Angeles Are the City's regulations working?*, A report prepared for Better Neighbors LA, Urban Politics and Research Group, McGill University School of Urban Planning, July 2021, <https://upgo.lab.mcgill.ca/publication/strs-in-los-angeles-2021/strs-in-los-angeles-2021.pdf>