

An aerial photograph of a dense urban skyline, likely New York City, featuring numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A prominent white diagonal line runs from the top-left corner towards the bottom-right, bisecting the cityscape. In the bottom-left corner, the number '2' is displayed in white, with a short horizontal white line positioned directly beneath it.

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Introduction

As The Real Estate Roundtable (RER) reflects on a year of extraordinary activity and impact across both policy and membership, this year's annual report opens with insights and perspective from RER Chair Kathleen McCarthy (Global Co-Head, Blackstone Real Estate) and RER President & CEO Jeffrey DeBoer. In this Q&A, RER's leaders share how the organization is amplifying its voice in Washington, advancing members' policy priorities, strengthening the RER community, and preparing for what lies ahead for the industry and organization.



Kathleen McCarthy | Chair, Board of Directors
Global Co-Head of Blackstone Real Estate

Upon becoming Roundtable Chair 12 months ago, you set some ambitious organizational goals—retaining and recruiting high-caliber members, increasing committee engagement, refining communications, and enhancing *Roundtable on the Road*. What has stood out to you in your first year leading the organization?

Let me begin by saying this year has been incredible. We faced countless legislative challenges and we won them all. And, after all, that is what RER is all about. Stepping back, it's been incredibly rewarding to see how our members—all of whom are extremely busy leading their own businesses—have leaned in this year to provide their personal perspective on the huge number of national policy proposals directed at our industry. This, more than anything else, is the reason these last 12 months have been so successful for us in Washington. We also focused on bringing clarity to our communications, encouraged and energized committee participation, and ensured that RER remains the home for top-tier commercial real estate industry leaders. The expansion of *Roundtable on the Road* has been especially impactful, creating new ways to connect with members across the country and hear directly from them.

What is the goal of *Roundtable on the Road*, and why is it important for members?

Roundtable on the Road is about bringing the mission of RER directly to our members and their markets. Throughout the year, we hosted small, member-exclusive gatherings across the country that connected local real estate leaders with RER leadership and policy experts for candid conversations about how federal decisions in Washington are impacting local markets. It's also been an opportunity to build deeper relationships across our membership and ensure that every region and asset class has a voice in the policy dialogue. The response so far has been incredibly positive—and we're just getting started.

What motivated you to take on the role of Chair, given your demanding schedule, and why do you believe other industry leaders should remain engaged?

The real estate industry faces complex policy challenges and significant risks, but also enormous opportunities. I took on this role to help guide an organization that ensures our industry's voice is heard at the highest levels of national policymaking. For any CEO, there's real value in being part of a respected, engaged community that drives impact in Washington. One way we reinforce our messages is through REALPAC—RER's bipartisan political action committee—which remains a highly effective tool for supporting candidates who understand our industry and advocate for commonsense, pro-growth solutions. In today's environment, any CEO not paying attention to Washington isn't fully managing their business risk, and REALPAC offers an opportunity to amplify their impact.

Overall, membership and policy committee participation are the backbone of RER. How are you approaching member engagement and ensuring the right voices are at the table as the industry evolves?

Maintaining a membership that is inclusive and reflective of a constantly evolving industry remains a top priority. This past year, we've worked to identify rising voices, align committees more strategically, and simplify how we communicate our value so busy executives can plug in more easily.



Jeffrey DeBoer | President & CEO
The Real Estate Roundtable

The past year brought an intense pace of legislative activity and leadership change. How has RER navigated this environment, and what role have members played in that effort to date?

Yes, what a year it's been! The pace and complexity of policy this past year has been unprecedented. It required a rapid, well-coordinated response. Thanks to the engagement and expertise of our members, policy advisory committees, and our 18 national real estate organization partners, we have responded to each of the legislative challenges and opportunities with a combination of substance, speed, and credibility that defines our effectiveness.

We have a long history of policy success in D.C. but I believe the past 12 months have been our most challenging and most successful.

Our members' active relationships, our partners, and our vast network continue to be key to engaging with policymakers. RER members bring extensive industry expertise and credibility that strengthen the impact of our advocacy. Armed with the practical realities of how policy changes would affect the development, financing, and management of commercial real estate assets, our policy staff are able to advocate with a unique, trusted perspective and shape the course of policy debates in Washington.

What sets RER apart as a respected and bipartisan advocate in Washington?

It comes down to the quality of our research, the depth of our relationships, and our nonpartisan, solutions-oriented voice. We're engaging both established leaders and new members of Congress, as well as key decision-makers in the administration to make sure that commercial real estate is part of every major conversation—from housing and infrastructure to tax, energy, capital markets, and security.

What are some of the most impactful policy debates and outcomes RER has helped shape this year?

This year has been one of the most consequential in recent memory. RER has been at the forefront of policy discussions and negotiations surrounding the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, ensuring that key positive tax provisions were preserved, enhanced, and that negative proposals that would discourage investment in all real estate, but especially housing, were rejected. Both actions served to protect and advance the interests of commercial real estate, and our ability to support local budgets, create jobs, increase housing supply, and help expand the overall economy.

One of our most significant actions was preserving the full deductibility of state and local business property taxes—an issue that quickly became one of our top priorities earlier this year. Just imagine if a business’s expenses, which average about 40 percent of a typical business’s total expenses, were no longer deductible in measuring income. Unbelievably, this was a serious threat. We mobilized our members and partners, elevated credible economic data, and directly engaged senior policymakers. As a result, this harmful proposal was excluded from the bill.

We also played a leading role once again in defending long-standing tax treatment of carried interest, capital gains, like-kind exchanges, and Opportunity Zones (OZs), which have proven effective and vital to driving investment, job creation, and long-term economic growth. One final area of focus was the proposed changes to partnership taxation, where we again prevailed and achieved a positive outcome.

Beyond tax, we pushed back strongly against the Fed’s proposed *Basel III Endgame* regulations, which would have raised bank capital requirements by 20 percent and undermined the availability of real estate credit. Our coalition advocacy contributed to the Fed revising and now pausing that effort. We also supported the removal of burdensome reporting mandates under the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA).

We continued our longtime support for the EPA’s ENERGY STAR program (which is under attack), and advanced energy policy priorities that promote grid reliability and permitting reform. On housing, we championed expanded incentives for affordable housing (some of which are included in the new law) and property conversions, including the *Revitalizing Downtowns and Main Streets Act* and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC).

And, the security of people, buildings, and data continues to be a high level focus and drives our information sharing work with Homeland Security and the FBI.

Across all of these issues, our ability to act quickly with clear, fact-based messaging, supported by long-standing credibility and consistent engagement with decision-makers in Washington, ensured that our industry’s priorities were not just considered, but ultimately reflected in the legislation.

Looking Ahead

How is RER ensuring real estate’s voice is represented in fast-moving policy discussions?

Kathleen: From the Board’s perspective, one of our core responsibilities is ensuring that RER has the strategic focus and member alignment to respond quickly and effectively to fast-moving policy debates. That means drawing on the insights of our members, engaging through policy committees, and empowering our staff to act decisively when legislative opportunities—or threats—arise. The past year has shown that when we work together with clarity and purpose, backed by our fact-based approach, we can shape outcomes that matter to the entire real estate ecosystem.

Jeff: What differentiates RER is our ability to communicate the real public benefits that a vibrant real estate industry brings to the country. Our industry plays an enormous role in not only supporting millions of jobs and driving growth, but also contributing to local budgets, growing Americans’ retirement savings, and building strong communities.

That’s coupled with RER’s trusted reputation on both sides of the aisle that we’ve built over years of consistent, credible engagement. Policymakers and their staff know that when they hear from us, they’re getting fact-based insights that reflect a unified industry perspective. That trust matters, especially when policy is moving quickly. Our unified, respected voice is what gives us a seat at the table when the most consequential decisions are being made.

What do you both see for CRE in the year ahead?

Kathleen: We will keep evolving and improving how we communicate our mission, aligning our membership with the future of the industry, and focusing our energy on the most urgent current issues. Real estate is critical to how and whether people and businesses achieve their dreams—it's where people live, work, shop, travel and dine. It anchors our communities and touches every part of American life. As the nation faces a housing crisis and urgent energy challenges, public policy must support a strong, resilient real estate sector that drives solutions, fuels economic growth, and improves quality of life and opportunity for all.

Jeff: Kathleen says it well, we intend to continue to work on all issues, but especially in the areas of federal housing and energy policy. Both are sure to be at the top of the national agenda, and we're planning to play a big role in shaping those debates.

I also need to underscore that our successes this past year are a testament to Kathleen's proactive leadership, who has done an exceptional job this year leading the Board, and the expert advocacy work and top-tier professionalism of our incredible staff and policy committees. We are the envy of many other industries.

Thank You

These accomplishments and our mission are no small task, and we couldn't have done it without you, our members. We want to extend our tremendous gratitude and appreciation for your continued support and active participation in our policy committees, events, advocacy efforts, and Roundtable communications. We are indebted to you for your tireless commitment to our community. Thanks to you, our lean and mighty team can continue doing what they do best: ensuring that real estate continues to thrive for generations to come.



RER board Chair Kathleen McCarthy.



RER President & CEO Jeffrey DeBoer.