

Kristin Allen, Attorney Investigator, Van Dermynen Makus Law Corporation

Prior to joining Van Dermynen Makus, Kristin served as an Associate at Best Best & Krieger LLP, where she advised and represented both public and private entities across a wide range of employment and labor matters. In this role, she provided objective, strategic guidance to employers on compliance with state and federal employment laws, including those governing discrimination, harassment, wage and hour disputes, medical leave, disability accommodation, and workplace safety. She also advised clients through collective bargaining, grievances, arbitrations, and other labor relations processes, ensuring fair and legally sound outcomes.

Kristin has conducted and assisted with numerous impartial workplace investigations. Her work has encompassed allegations involving harassment, discrimination, retaliation, bullying or abusive conduct, workplace misconduct, performance concerns, violations of workplace policies and safety standards, and complex matters within higher education institutions, including Title IX complaints. Kristin is known for her ability to approach sensitive issues with neutrality, discretion, and respect for all parties involved.

In addition, Kristin advised public entities on compliance with the Public Safety Officers' and Firefighters' Procedural Bill of Rights Acts and Cal/OSHA proceedings. She has successfully defended educational institutions in Equal Employment Opportunity Commission matters, demonstrating her ability to assess facts objectively and craft balanced, evidence-based responses.

As a law student, Kristin externed for the Federal Court of International Trade in New York City, where she drafted objective legal memoranda and court opinions addressing Ninth Circuit cases, federal court procedures, and appellate litigation. She also served as a Clinical Law Student in the Rutgers Law School's Education and Health Law Clinic, providing advocacy and support in education rights and special education cases. While studying abroad at Oxford University during law school, she focused on constitutional law and civil rights, further refining her commitment to fairness, due process, and equity in the legal system.

Before attending law school, Kristin worked as a paralegal at a family law firm, where she developed strong interpersonal and conflict-resolution skills essential to objective fact-finding through working on a wide array of cases involving dissolution, child custody, domestic violence, and spousal support. This experience honed her ability to navigate sensitive, emotionally charged situations with empathy, impartiality, and professionalism.

Shauna Amon, Principal, Jackson Lewis P.C.

Shauna Amon is a principal in the San Diego, California office of Jackson Lewis P.C. No matter the workplace law issue, Shauna focuses first and foremost on what employers value above all—a combination of practical business-oriented solutions and litigation avoidance. An experienced investigator, Shauna has conducted investigations on a range of claims including allegations of workplace misconduct, discrimination, harassment, bullying and retaliation. She's particularly skilled at all stages of Title IX investigations and proceedings and is a certified investigator through the Association of Workplace Investigators and the Association of Title IX Administrators. Her experience with educational institutions extends advising to K-12 districts, community colleges, and higher education clients on a variety of personnel and general education issues, including certificated and classified discipline and dismissal as well as workplace and student investigations.

Elizabeth Tom Arce, Partner, Liebert Cassidy Whitmore

Liz is an accomplished advocate with experience litigating a wide array of labor and employment cases in state and federal trial and appellate courts. Liz has successfully represented employers in matters ranging from single plaintiff lawsuits to wage and hour class and collective actions. Her litigation experience includes numerous successful summary judgment motions, defeating class certification, and decertifying collective actions. Liz's litigation practice also includes handling matters in arbitration and before administrative agencies where she has been effective at obtaining favorable results for the firm's clients.

When she is not defending litigation matters, Liz advises employers on a wide range of diverse employment matters such as wage and hour, disability accommodations, public safety, employee discipline, disability retirements, and anti-discrimination, harassment and retaliation laws. At the center of her employment counseling practice is auditing employer policies and practices for compliance with wage and hour laws such as the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Michele Bagneris, City Attorney/City Prosecutor, Pasadena

Michele Beal Bagneris, Esq. is the City Attorney/City Prosecutor for the City of Pasadena, California. She is responsible for managing all civil and criminal legal matters for the city. She and her staff advise the city council, city advisory bodies, commissions and committees, city departments, the Rose Bowl Operating Company, the Pasadena Convention Center, and the Pasadena Community Access Corporation. As City Prosecutor, she oversees prosecution of misdemeanor and infraction violations, and special programs such as the Truancy, Nuisance Abatement and Domestic Violence programs. She supervises approximately 30 employees in the department and manages all litigation and transactional matters handled by in-house and outside lawyers.

At the time she was appointed City Attorney by the Pasadena City Council in 1997, Ms. Bagneris was a shareholder at the law firm of Richards, Watson & Gershon, where she specialized in public law since joining the firm in 1983. While serving as Pasadena City Attorney, she continued to practice law as a member of the firm, advising public clients in a wide range of areas including land use, general advisory matters, litigation, labor and employment, code enforcement and nuisance abatement matters. While at the firm, she served on the firm's Hiring and Associates Evaluation Committees and handled and supervised other lawyers in municipal prosecution matters (misdemeanors and infractions) for the firm's clients. She also served as Assistant City Attorney for a number of cities throughout Los Angeles County and was the City Attorney for the City of Monrovia from 1992 until she departed from the law firm after 16 years of practice. In 1999, she left the firm to become the full-time, in-house City Attorney for Pasadena.

Ms. Bagneris received her Bachelor's Degree in International Relations from Stanford University in 1980 and was selected to participate in the International Political Economy program in London, England. She received her Juris Doctorate Degree from Boalt Hall School of Law, University of California, Berkeley in 1983. She has conducted seminars and presented papers to public officials, the League of California Cities, Southern California Code Enforcement Organization, Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, and other professional organizations on a wide range of municipal law matters.

Ms. Bagneris is active in professional and community organizations, including: Board Member, League of California Cities; Institute for Local Government; past President of the Los Angeles County City Prosecutor's Association; past President of the League of California Cities City Attorney's Department; past President of the City Attorney's Association of Los Angeles County; various League of California Cities committees; and the Los Angeles County Bar Association. She previously served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Urban League and on the State Bar Committee on Human Rights. She has been awarded the Medal of Excellence from Women at Work, Humanitarian Award from the Alkebu-lan Cultural Center, and named a Woman of Excellence by the YWCA. She has received commendations and awards from other organizations and has been the keynote speaker before religious and community

groups. She has also volunteered in classrooms and participated in panel discussions at U.S.C. Law School. Ms. Bagneris is married to Jules S. Bagneris, III, and they have three children.

Mitesh Bhakta, Senior Assistant City Attorney, Mountain View

Mitesh is a local government attorney who is passionate about technology, best practices, preparing his clients for the government of tomorrow.

Emilio, Camacho, Member-At-Large, City Attorneys Department and Sr. Deputy City Attorney, Sacramento

Senior Deputy City Attorney, serves as counsel to the Police Department, Counsel to the City Auditor. He has extensive legal experience including advisory, administrative prosecution, civil prosecution, criminal prosecution, civil litigation, and appeals. Prior to serving at the City of Sacramento, Mr. Camacho served as Deputy Legislative Counsel, advising the members of the Legislature and the Governor in matters of legislation impacting the State of California.

Leah Castella, Partner, Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP

Leah Castella is a partner in Burke's Oakland office. She splits her practice between General Counsel services for public utilities and complex public law litigation. Since she began practicing public law, Leah has had a particular interest in assisting public agencies with the Public Records Act, including the development and implementation of defensible records retention policies. She has provided these services to over a dozen public agencies as special counsel and now provides these same services to her General Counsel clients. She has also conducted trainings and spoken about records retention issues to public agencies, including a joint presentation with the Electronic Frontier Foundation at an Open Records Conference hosted by the California State Bar and a presentation at the League of California Cities. Over the last decade, Leah has built a team that can be quickly marshalled to assist public agencies across the state with their responses to voluminous and politically sensitive PRA requests.

Michael Colantuono, Shareholder, Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC

Michael has specialized in municipal law since 1989. He is certified by the California State Bar as a Specialist in Appellate Law and is a Past President of the California Academy of Appellate Lawyers, an association of about 125 of the most distinguished appellate lawyers in California. He is an Elected Member of the American Law Institute, the leading independent organization in the United States producing scholarly work to clarify, modernize, and otherwise improve the law. He has argued 14 cases in the California Supreme Court, appeared in all six of the California District Courts of Appeal, as well as trial courts around the State and he has argued in the 9th Circuit. He serves on the California Judicial Council's Appellate Advisory Committee and served on its Appellate Caseflow Working Group.

Michael has expertise in a broad range of areas of concern to local governments in California, including constitutional law, land use regulation, open meetings, elections, municipal litigation, conflicts of interest, public utilities, LAFCO issues, inverse condemnation, cannabis regulation, and a wide range of public finance issues involving taxes, assessments, fees and charges.

Michael is perhaps California's leading expert on the law of local government revenues, briefing 18 cases on that subject in the California Supreme Court since 2004. The Daily Journal named him a California Lawyer of the Year in inverse condemnation law for his win in *City of Oroville v. Superior Court* (2019) 7 Cal.5th 1091, government's first win in that court in this subject area in decades. California Chief Justice Ronald M. George presented him with the 2010 Public Lawyer of the Year Award on behalf of the California State Bar. Two successive Speakers of the California Assembly appointed him to the Board of Trustees of the California Bar, the state agency which regulates the practice of law in California. His fellow Trustees elected him Treasurer and President of the Bar and the California Supreme Court appointed him as Chair of its Board of Trustees.

Michael currently serves as General Counsel for the Calaveras County LAFCO, the Oak Tree Park and Recreation District, the Peardale-Chicago Park, Higgins, Ophir Hill, and Penn Valley Fire Districts and the Eden Township Healthcare District. He previously served as City Attorney of Auburn (2005–2019), Barstow (1997–2004), Calabasas (2003–2012), Cudahy (1994–1999), Grass Valley (2011–2026), La Habra Heights (1994–2004), Monrovia (1999–2002), and Sierra Madre (2004–2006), as General Counsel to the Auburn (2005–2019), Barstow (1997–2004), Grass Valley (2011–2015) and Sierra Madre (2004–2006) Redevelopment Agencies, and as General Counsel of the Big Bear City Community Services District (1994–2001) and the Camarillo Healthcare District.

Michael assisted the Legislative Analyst's Office in the impartial analysis of Proposition 218 and co-chaired the committee which drafted what became the Proposition 218 Omnibus Implementation Act of 1997. He also chaired the committees which drafted the League of California Cities' Prop. 26 and 218 Implementation Guide.

Michael was elected by his peers to serve as President of the City Attorneys' Department of the League of California Cities in 2003–2004. He served on Cal Cities' Board of Directors in 2022 and 2023.

Michael was appointed by the Rules Committee of the California State Assembly to the Commission on Local Governance in the 21st Century. The Commission was formed to study the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act, and the bulk of its recommendations became law. Michael was deeply involved in drafting both the committee report and the statute.

Michael graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University (BA 1983) and received his law degree from University of California, Berkeley School of Law (JD 1988), graduating first in his class. While in law school, he was an Articles Editor of the California Law Review and became a member of the Order of the Coif upon graduation. Michael was law clerk to the Honorable James R. Browning, Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in 1988–1989.

He taught Administrative Law as an adjunct Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law in 1995 and is a frequent speaker and trainer on a wide range of public law topics.

Michael comments on local government and municipal finance topics on LinkedIn (Michael Colantuono).

Rubin, Cruse, Partner, Renne Public Law Group

Rubin E. Cruse, Jr. is the lead government advice attorney and a partner at the Renne Public Law Group. Rubin is a practical and detail-oriented attorney with extensive experience in public agency law having served in the Shasta County Counsel's Office for over twenty-four years and as the Shasta County Counsel for over twelve years. He effectively managed the County's in-house law office while also providing practical legal advice and representation to the Board of Supervisors, the County Executive Officer, and other County leadership on the full panoply of legal issues impacting California county Government.

Rubin has also served as Vice President and President of the County Counsel's Association of California. The County Counsel's Association presented him with the James B. Lindholm, Jr. Legacy Award for his outstanding contributions to the organization and public agency law."

Amanda Daams, Partner, Best Best & Krieger LLP

Amanda Daams is a Partner in the Environmental Law & Natural Resources practice group of Best Best & Krieger LLP. Practicing for over 16 years, she represents public agency and private clients in the areas of the California Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and related environmental laws. In addition to advising on procedural issues, she has reviewed and advised on hundreds of environmental documents, including those related to general plan updates, specific plans, residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial and transportation projects, as well as mining projects across California. She also assists public agencies and private clients in CEQA litigation.

Eric Danly, Department Director, City Attorneys Department and City Attorney, Petaluma

Eric Danly has served as the Petaluma City Attorney since December 5, 2005, and since July 1, 2013 in an in-house capacity. Eric reports directly to the City Council and oversees the City Attorney's Office consisting of, in addition to the City Attorney, three assistant city attorneys and a legal assistant. Prior to joining Petaluma in-house Eric was a partner in the Meyers Nave law firm and managing partner of its Santa Rosa office. Eric also served as Cloverdale City Attorney, General Counsel to the Monterey County Housing Authority Development Corporation, Clearlake City Attorney and Assistant City Attorney for Pinole.

Eric has delivered numerous presentations on open meetings and records law, and ethical and other laws applicable to public agency officials. He served on the League of California Cities committee that authored the organization's first published guide to the California Public Records Act, entitled "The People's Business – A Guide to the California Public Records Act." He was appointed to serve on the City Attorney's Department's standing committee on the Public Records Act when the committee was formed in September, 2009 and served on the committee through April, 2016. Along with his colleagues on the Public Records Act Committee, Eric helped author updates to The People's Business: A Guide to the Public Records Act, which were published 2010, 2011, 2014, and the Second Edition to The People's Business, which was published in 2017. While serving on the Public Records Act Committee Eric and his colleagues provided annual updates on the Public Records Act for the Municipal Law Handbook, in addition to providing support to Cal Cities lobbyists on Public Records Act issues and recommendations to the Legal Advocacy Committee on requests for amicus support in public records cases. Eric is a past President of the City Attorneys' Department of Cal Cities and is currently serving a two-year term as the Department's Director on the Cal Cities board. Eric has also previously served as Chair of the Attorney Development and Succession Committee, and on the Legal Advocacy, Municipal Law Handbook, and Nominating Committees within the City Attorneys Department of Cal Cities.

Eric received a BA in Interdisciplinary English from Stanford University in 1990, and his JD from University of California, San Francisco College of the Law with a public law concentration in 1998. He has been practicing law representing public agencies since 1999.

Heather Ferbert, Member-At-Large, City Attorneys Department and City Attorney, San Diego

Heather Ferbert serves as the 28th San Diego City Attorney, the City's chief legal officer and City prosecutor. She was elected to office in 2024. Prior to her election, Heather served as a San Diego Chief Deputy City Attorney, where she and a city attorney team worked to stop multi-million-dollar real estate scams and made women's health clinics safer and more accessible. Throughout her career, Heather has focused on serving the City to provide and protect access to housing. Heather is a graduate of California State University Long Beach and the University of San Diego School of Law. She's active in the Lawyer's Club of San Diego, the women's bar association, and has served as an adjunct professor at the San Diego School of Law.

Eli Flushman, Partner, Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP

Eli Flushman is a public law partner in Burke's Marin County office. Eli is a municipal law attorney who has over a decade of experience advising cities on general municipal law, including, drafting ordinances, advising staff on land use and development, code enforcement, public nuisance litigation, public records, and general litigation. Prior to joining Burke, Eli worked for the City of Vallejo, City of Redwood City, and the League of California Cities. Eli is a member of Cal Cities CPRA Committee.

Michael Guina, City Attorney, Burlingame

Michael Guina is the City Attorney for the City of Burlingame, appointed in 2021. He previously served as the City Attorney for the City of Emeryville from 2015 – 2021. Michael advises the City Council, Planning Commission, and senior executive staff on a wide variety of municipal affairs. He has extensive experience with land use, zoning, and housing matters; CEQA; complex real estate transactions; and environmental remediation and regulatory proceedings. He regularly advises the Council and its commissions on the Brown Act, Public Records Act, conflicts, and ethics. Michael represents the City in all judicial, administrative, and regulatory proceedings.

Jill Habig, Founder and CEO, Public Rights Project

Jill Habig is the Founder and CEO of Public Rights Project (PRP), a national legal nonprofit that helps local government officials advance civil rights and democracy. PRP provides training, convenings, and legal representation to over 200 cities across the country. Jill began her legal career in the San Francisco City Attorney's Office working on the landmark trial challenging Proposition 8 to establish marriage equality in California. Before founding PRP, Jill served as Special Counsel to California Attorney General Kamala Harris, where she oversaw her healthcare, education, and civil rights portfolios and led the creation and launch of a children's civil rights unit. Jill is an alum of Georgetown University and Yale Law School, and has taught state and local impact litigation at Berkeley Law School and Yale Law School.

Glen Hansen, Of Counsel, Renne Public Law Group

Glen Hansen has provided high-quality legal advice to public agencies, private developers and property owners for more than 30 years. Glen is a practical and effective litigator with extensive experience in land use, environmental and real property law, guiding clients through high-stakes regulatory disputes, entitlement processes and constitutional takings claims throughout California. His practice focuses on advising public agencies on the full range of land use and environmental issues, including zoning, development approvals, regulatory enforcement and public works disputes. He has extensive experience in litigation and counseling under many state and federal statutes. Having represented both public and private sector clients, Glen brings a well-rounded perspective that allows him to anticipate challenges and develop pragmatic legal strategies.

Dan Hentschke, Assistant City Attorney, Santa Barbara

Dan Hentschke joined the City Attorney's Office in December 2017. Before joining the office he served as: General Counsel for the San Diego County Water Authority (1998-2015); City Attorney for the cities of Oceanside (1991-1998), San Marcos (1987-1993) and Solana Beach (1986-1998); assistant city attorney for Carlsbad (1979-1986); and as a deputy city attorney for San Diego (1977-1979). He was coaxed out of retirement to return to his home town. Dan is a product of Santa Barbara's public education system (Adams Elementary, La Cumbre Junior High, Santa Barbara High, and UCSB). Dan is a past-president of the City Attorney's Department.

Michelle Hugard, Deputy City Attorney, Santa Monica

Ms. Hugard is a Deputy City Attorney with the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office Municipal Division. She currently advises Santa Monica's Community Development Department, along with the City's Planning, Landmarks, and Building & Fire Life Safety Commissions. Ms. Hugard has also previously served as a litigator in the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office Civil Litigation Unit and as a Prosecutor in the Criminal Division. Prior to working with the City of Santa Monica, Ms. Hugard served as a Judicial Law Clerk to the Honorable Stuart Rice and Honorable Kathleen O. Diesman in the Los Angeles Superior Court.

Ms. Hugard currently serves as the Chair of the Cal Cities Attorney Development and Succession Committee. She has also served as a member of the Nominating Committee and as a reviewer for the Municipal Law Handbook.

Andrew Janz, City Attorney, Fresno

Andrew Janz was appointed City Attorney in December 2022 and oversees an office of 39 attorneys and 190 support staff including code enforcement officers, investigators, and inspectors. The Fresno City Attorney's budget is approximately \$32 million annually. During his tenure as City Attorney, Andrew has led the effort to protect congressionally appropriated federal funds for public safety, transportation, and housing; to prosecute wage theft; in curbing criminal activity in local smoke shops, and in expanding the role of the City Attorney's Office in tenant protection and holding slum-lords accountable.

Prior to joining the City Attorney's Office, Andrew served at the Fresno County District Attorney's Office where he was a Deputy District Attorney. While there, Andrew prosecuted various types of cases including violent crimes and child sexual abuse cases. Before becoming a prosecutor, Andrew clerked for District Court Judge Carolyn Ellsworth in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Andrew attended Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles where he obtained his juris doctor degree. During law school, Andrew served on Law Review and was a summer associate at Merleker and Mielke, an international law firm in Berlin, Germany. He is also a graduate of California State University, Stanislaus where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Economics and a Master's Degree in Public Administration. During graduate school, Andrew was selected to attend former CIA Director Leon Panetta's Institute of Public Policy in Monterey, California.

Andrew is married to Heather Walker Janz who owns and operates a marriage and family therapist practice. The two have a daughter, Wilhelmina Janz. Andrew enjoys cooking Thai food for friends and family and watching English Premier League soccer."

Andrew Jared, Shareholder, Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC

Andrew serves as City Attorney for the Cities of Barstow, Etna, Montague, Fort Jones, and Yreka. He also serves as Assistant City Attorney for the City of Encinitas, General Counsel for the Goleta Water District, and General Counsel for the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District. His interests are in land use, housing issues, water law, and public works construction disputes.

Claire Lai, Senior Of Counsel, Redwood Public Law, LLP

Claire S. Lai is Senior Of Counsel in Redwood Public Law and currently serves as Assistant City Attorney for the City of South San Francisco, City of Walnut Creek, and Town of Los Altos Hills, as well as the General Counsel for Graton Community Services District and the Oro Loma Sanitary District. She also serves as Assistant General Counsel for the SSF Conference Center Authority and Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission. Additionally, Claire serves as supporting counsel for the San Diego Countywide Oversight Board and the North County Library Authority.

Claire advises cities and special districts on a wide range of municipal and public law issues. Her areas of focus include land use, telecommunications, housing, public contracts, the Brown Act, and the Public Records Act. In her practice, Claire assists cities and regional agencies with navigating state housing laws and adopting local development regulations; procuring and managing public works projects; and considering land use and CEQA issues in urban developments. Additionally, Claire regularly counsels public agencies on real property transactions and prepares purchase and sale agreements, leases, and other disposition documents. Claire also advises public agencies on unique legal areas such as redevelopment agency dissolution law, the Surplus Land Act, and federal and state public utilities regulations.

From her background serving as Deputy County Counsel at the Merced County Counsel's Office and Interim Deputy City Attorney at the Milpitas City Attorney's Office, Claire further brings valuable first-hand experience to our public law clients. While in law school, Claire was a Judicial Extern in the Pro Se Department of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in San Francisco and a law clerk in the Appeals, Writs and Trial Section of the California Attorney General's Office.

Lauren Langer, Partner, Best Best & Krieger LLP

Lauren serves as the City Attorney for West Hollywood and Hidden Hills and as General Counsel for the Westside Cities Council of Governments. She is a partner and member of Best Best & Krieger LLP's (BBK)'s Municipal Law practice group and is the co-leader of the firm's Housing practice, assisting public agencies in navigating housing policy and constantly changing state housing laws. Her practice consists of advising city clients on land use, zoning, environmental and housing laws (including Density Bonus Law, the Housing Accountability Act, the Housing Crisis Act (SB 330) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)). Lauren also drafts legislation and contracts and advises on all other legal issues associated with Municipal Law practice, such as the Brown Act and California Public Records Act.

In addition to her land use and Municipal Law experience, Lauren is highly skilled in drafting and implementing other critical and complex municipal ordinances for her city clients in areas such as tenant protection, cannabis regulation, density bonus and wireless infrastructure. Lauren also handles litigation matters for her city clients.

Donald Larkin, Partner, Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP

Don Larkin is a partner in Burke's Labor and Employment Law and Public Law practice groups, with more than 25 years representing public agencies. As a member of the Labor and Employment team, Don represents and advises agencies in all areas of labor and employment law, including employee discipline, arbitration, and negotiations.

Don also has extensive experience in all other areas of municipal service, specializing in open government laws (Brown Act and Public Records Act), land use and planning, and public safety.

Prior to Joining Burke Williams & Sorensen, Don served as the in-house City Attorney for the City of Morgan Hill, Deputy County Counsel for the County of Santa Clara, Assistant City Attorney for the City of Palo Alto, and Deputy City Attorney for the City of Santa Clara.

Michael Lawson, Second Vice President, City Attorneys Department and City Attorney, Hayward

Mr. Lawson has served as City Attorney since 2008. Mr. Lawson has a long record of public service, having also served as City Attorney for the cities of Berkeley, Oakland, and East Palo Alto. He is a graduate of the University of California, Davis, King Hall School of Law (J.D.), and the California State University, Hayward/East Bay (B.A., Journalism/Mass Communications).

Karen Li, Assistant City Attorney, San Diego

San Diego Assistant City Attorney Karen Li has been practicing law since 1998. She began her career as a Deputy Alternate Public Defender and became a Deputy City Attorney in 2000. She was a prosecutor for twelve years and then transferred to the Civil Advisory Division where she advised various City Departments, including the Public Records Administration. She served as the Chief Deputy of the Office's Public Records Unit until her recent promotion to Assistant City Attorney in charge of the Criminal Division. She has served on the League's CPRA Committee since 2017 and chaired the Committee since 2024.

Steve Mattas, Partner, Redwood Public Law, LLP

Steve Mattas is the City Attorney for the City of Walnut Creek and Town of Los Altos Hills. He also serves as General Counsel for the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, Ventura County Transportation Commission, Sunol Smart Carpool Lane Joint Powers Authority, and as Assistant General Counsel for the Tri-Valley Transportation Council. Steve also serves as special counsel to several public agencies including Alameda County Transportation Commission, Valley Transportation Authority, San Francisco County Transportation Authority, Treasure Island Mobility Management Agency, SANDAG and various Joint Powers Authorities. Steve has also represented private developers and community associations on various land use and development issues. Steve focuses his practice on land use, environmental law, transportation, government structure and governance, public agency elections and municipal law.

Recognized statewide for his land use work, Steve is the managing co-editor and an update coauthor of numerous chapters in the leading comprehensive publication on land use law, California Land Use Practice, published and updated annually since 2006 by Continuing Education of the Bar. He also authored and contributed to several chapters of the book, including those covering general and specific plans, sustainability and climate change regulations, housing, specially regulated land uses, and compliance with federal, state and regional agency requirements for wetlands and endangered species, wastewater and stormwater discharges, annexation issues, and much more. Steve has extensive experience representing public agencies in negotiating and preparing development agreements, facility management agreements and public property leases.

In his role as general and special counsel to transportation agencies, Steve has assisted agencies with governance issues, public-private partnerships including the provisions of public transit services, federal and state procurement, property acquisition and leasing, right of entry and license agreements, compliance with federal and state transportation funding programs, cooperative agreements with state and local agencies, franchise agreements, railroad property leasing and property management, preparation, and amendments and administering sales tax expenditures plans, active transportation and regional bicycle and pedestrian mobility projects, express lanes and tolling systems.

Steve frequently authors articles and gives presentations on land use law, density bonus and housing laws, among other topics. He has made presentations to the California State Bar, CalCities, and many other organizations. He previously served as the City Attorney Department representative to the LOCC's Housing, Community and Economic Development Committee and the Environmental Quality Committee. Steve has also served as an expert witness on land use and Fair Housing Act issues for the City of San Diego.

Alex Mog, Senior of Counsel, Redwood Public Law, LLP

Alex Mog is an experienced legal advisor to California public agencies. His practice is focused on advising clients on real estate transactions, housing, economic development, and land use matters. He frequently counsels clients on complex development applications, including compliance with California's ever-changing housing laws. His experience includes negotiating development agreements for large-scale projects, comprehensive general plan updates and annexations, and processing of entitlements for mixed-use developments. Alex serves as City Attorney for the cities of Cloverdale and Sebastopol, and Assistant City Attorney for the cities of Modesto and San Leandro.

Alexandra Mulhall, Associate, Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP

Alexandra (Alex) Mulhall is an associate at Burke, Williamson & Sorensen, LLP where she primarily practices public law litigation and advises public entity clients on a variety of matters, including the California Public Records Act, Brown Act, various election law issues, leasing disputes, constitutional First Amendment issues, and code enforcement. Alex has defended public entities in various types of litigation, including inverse condemnation, dangerous condition of public property, writs, tax assessment appeals, public contract disputes, and Public Records Act litigation.

John Pearson, Deputy City Attorney, San Diego

John is a Deputy City Attorney in San Diego. He has over 25 years' experience defending public entities in both public sector and private practice including defense of police liability in state and federal court, automobile liability, dangerous condition of public property, Government Claims Act compliance, as well as defense of intersection design, traffic signs, signals, and failure to warn cases.

Javan Rad, Second Vice President, City Attorneys Department and City Attorney San Buenaventura

Javan N. Rad is the City Attorney for the City of Ventura, and has served in that position since October 2024. Prior to his arrival in Ventura, Javan worked for the City of Pasadena for 19 years, the last 12 years as Chief Assistant City Attorney. Javan has been active in a variety of capacities for the League of California Cities' City Attorney's Department, and is currently a Second Vice President for the Department. Javan has also served as sole city attorney representative on the Federal Communications Commission's Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, as the President of the City Attorney's Association of Los Angeles County, and as President of the Board of Directors of SCAN NATOA (the States of California and Nevada Chapter of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors). Javan graduated from Purdue University with a bachelor's degree in Quantitative Agricultural Economics and from Pepperdine University School of Law.

Prasanna Rasiah, President, City Attorneys Department and City Attorney, San Mateo

Prasanna W. Rasiah has served as an in-house municipal law attorney for over 25 years. He is the City Attorney of San Mateo and was appointed to that role in 2021. Prior to that he worked as an Assistant City Attorney with Redwood City, and as a Deputy City Attorney with Fremont. He began his municipal law career in 2000 as a Deputy City Attorney with the City of Berkeley. Prasanna has spent time on the Municipal Law Handbook and Brown Act Committees and currently serves as President of the City Attorney's Department. He received his law degree from the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco, and his bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University.

James Ross, Partner and Head of Affirmative Litigation Practice, Renne Public Law Group

Jim Ross brings over 30 years of experience providing legal advice to public entities. Jim is the Head of Renne Public Law Group's Affirmative Litigation Practice which has been involved in notable litigation such the Opioid, Tobacco and Juul cases as well as litigation to combat fraud, protect local funding and prevent unfair business practices. Jim's practice also focuses on advising public agencies in multiple areas of public law, including general government agency advice, land use, public works, elections and litigation oversight. He served in county counsel offices for over 26 years. Prior to his years of working with counties, Jim served as a city attorney and a deputy city attorney and provided legal advice to special districts. Jim regularly presents at conferences held by the County Counsels' Association of California, Cal Cities, and other organizations.

Ezra Siegel, Senior Attorney, Richards, Watson & Gershon

In his two decades of litigating cases, Ezra Siegel has taken more than 17 cases to verdict in both state and federal courts. He has successfully argued and won before the California Court of appeal. His experience includes defending public agencies against a variety of claims, including inverse condemnation, breach of contract, labor retaliation, and numerous tort claims involving wrongful death, serious brain injury, and dangerous condition cases. He has successfully defended law enforcement against constitutional claims involving the First, Four, Fifth, and Eighth Amendments, as well as the Bane Act, and suicide-by-cop.

Ezra passionately fights for his clients, which is exemplified by his impeccable trial record, securing a defense verdict or judgment against plaintiffs in nearly every case. His approach involves thoroughly investigating cases that will either lead to a favorable settlement or a victory by motion or at trial.

Ezra is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), an invitation-only organization that recognizes elite trial lawyers who meet rigorous experience requirements and uphold the highest standards of civility, integrity, and professionalism.

Matthew Slentz, Senior Counsel, Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC

Matthew is Senior Counsel with Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley's litigation practice group. Matthew litigates a range of disputes for public agency clients in both trial and appellate courts, including suits involving public utilities, local government taxes and fees, land use and inverse condemnation, and Public Records Act requests. Prior to joining Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, Matthew served as Chief Deputy Public Defender for Stanislaus County.

Dan Sodergren, City Attorney, Pleasanton

Dan Sodergren is the City Attorney for the City of Pleasanton. Mr. Sodergren previously served as City Attorney for the cities of Tracy and Livermore and as Special Counsel for the cities of Palo Alto and Oakland. He began his career as a law clerk and served in that capacity in Palo Alto, Santa Clara and San Jose. Mr. Sodergren is a graduate of U.C. Berkeley and Santa Clara University School of Law.

C. Dalton Sorich, Assistant City Attorney, Carlsbad

C. Dalton Sorich is an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Carlsbad and an Assistant Staff Judge Advocate in the reserve component of the United States Air Force, holding the rank of Captain. He currently practices land use and housing law for the City of Carlsbad, though his career spanned multiple cities and counties throughout Southern California, the Central Coast, and the Central Valley. Throughout his career, he provided legal services in the fields of criminal prosecution, civil litigation defense, code enforcement, administrative hearings, public works, restraining orders, water and maritime law, general advisory law, and the legal advisor to Brown Act bodies. Prior to becoming a lawyer, he had various jobs, ranging from barista to whitewater rafting and rock climbing guide - establishing his adaptability and sense of wonder. He also lived and worked in Thailand for two years and still enjoys traveling and exploring local cuisine, cultures, and history. He obtained his B.A. in Business Administration at Point Loma Nazarene University and his J.D. from California Western School of Law.

Heather Stroud, City Attorney, South Lake Tahoe

Heather has served as the City Attorney for South Lake Tahoe since 2018. Before that, she was a Deputy City Attorney for San Diego and Carlsbad. Heather was a member of the City Attorney Department's Emergency Response Committee from 2023-2025.

Stephen Velyvis, Partner, Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP

Steve Velyvis is a well-respected land use and [environmental law](#) attorney with over 24 years of expertise advising and representing [public](#) agency and private clients in administrative proceedings and before state and federal trial and appellate courts.

Steve has extensive advisory and [litigation](#) experience with and works daily on projects addressing complex legal issues spanning the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Federal Power Act, and the California Coastal Act, as well as the state and federal legal and regulatory frameworks governing clean water, clean air, endangered species and electricity generation and transmission. He also routinely represents clients in [land use](#) and planning-related matters and advises on CEQA compliance issues in [eminent domain](#) matters.

While Steve has extensive advisory and litigation experience with a multitude of environmental laws, he is most experienced with CEQA, having represented parties on all three "sides" of the CEQA equation. In other words, in addition to successfully representing Burke's many municipal and public agency clients, Steve has also successfully represented numerous private clients (e.g., project applicants and project opponents.) In this regard, Steve distinguishes himself as a leading CEQA practitioner. Steve's deep and varied experience gives him invaluable insight into what all three sides on a given CEQA project are thinking at every step along the way. This unique perspective also enables him to develop cutting-edge legal strategies aimed at resolving conflicts and prevailing in litigation, as opposed to simply posturing or falling back on routine "cookie cutter" advice and litigation tools. In sum, Steve draws on his collective experience to help Burke's clients think outside the box and routinely provides successful, cost-effective results.

Meghan Wharton, Senior Counsel, Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, PC

Meghan is Senior Counsel in Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley's litigation practice group. Meghan has been a litigator since 2001 and has focused on public law since 2013. While at Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, Meghan has represented numerous public entities, including Alpine County, the cities of Grass Valley, Monterey, Barstow, Redlands, Canyon Lake, and numerous special districts.

Meghan has broad experience representing public entities in non-tort litigation matters. Meghan has litigated cases involving tax allocation, Proposition 218 and 26, election law, public finance, contract disputes, the Brown Act, public entity insurance coverage, conflicts of interest, land use, and constitutional challenges to public policies. She has secured victories at trial, on appeal, and before administrative tribunals. She has successfully argued before the California Supreme Court, California Court of Appeal and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal.

Prior to joining Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley, Meghan spent ten years with the San Diego City Attorney's Office representing the city in a wide variety of non-tort civil litigation matters and advising the City Council on municipal finance and public policy issues. Meghan was primary counsel to the Public Utilities Department and Mayor's Office regarding Proposition 218 and Proposition 26 issues.

She received her B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin, and her J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center.

Danny Yoo, Partner, Liebert Cassidy Whitmore

Danny represents public agency clients in all facets of labor and employment law. He regularly provides advice to clients on the evaluation and discipline of employees and disability interactive process. Danny assists clients in updating rules and policies, including drug testing policies, leave policies, disability retirement procedures, and personnel rules.

As a litigator, he has successfully represented clients in administrative appeal hearings of employee discipline. He has also litigated on behalf of clients in state and federal court, both at the trial and appellate level. Danny's litigation matters include wage and hour, discrimination, and employee discipline cases.

Prior to joining Liebert Cassidy Whitmore's Los Angeles office, Danny worked for a Los Angeles-based agency that litigated on behalf of tenants and for housing rights. Danny also has an extensive training background and has conducted various seminars, certifications, and workshops prior to his time at LCW.