



→ Lauren K. Chang

Partner

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Lauren K. Chang is a partner in the Real Estate, Energy, Land Use & Environmental Practice Group in the firm's Los Angeles office. She is a leader of the firm's Land Use Subgroup and on the Recruiting Committee.

Areas of Practice

Lauren advises and counsels property owners, private and public developers, and non-profit organizations on real estate developments in the City of Los Angeles and other jurisdictions throughout California.

Lauren has significant experience negotiating and obtaining land use entitlements for complex multi-year development projects throughout California, including innovative transit-oriented, multi-family residential, affordable and permanent supportive housing, mixed-use, hospitality, and park projects on urban infill sites. She advises clients at every step of the process, from initial due diligence and crafting successful entitlement strategies to compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and through final project approval. Lauren leverages her substantial experience reviewing CEQA documents to develop efficient and defensible CEQA strategies that integrate cutting-edge streamlining options at the state and local levels, including State Density Bonus Law, Transit Oriented Communities, SB 35, AB 2162, AB 1197, SB 743, and SB 375. She has special expertise in projects that adaptively reuse and integrate existing buildings on site (especially those with eligible and designated historic resources), including negotiations with local historic offices and Redevelopment Agencies, review and strategy of environmental compliance, and coordination with historic experts.

Prior to joining the firm, Lauren worked at The Sohagi Law Group where she represented public agencies under CEQA, NEPA, State Planning and Zoning Law, Public Records Act, Brown Act, and a wide range of municipal laws during all stages of the administrative and writ proceedings at the trial and appellate levels. She reviewed and edited environmental documents (EIRs, MNDs, CEAs) for consistency with CEQA and NEPA for projects, including waterfront development, transmission lines and substations for the California Public Utility Commission, airport expansions for the Los Angeles World Airport, intermodal container facilities at the Port of Los Angeles, and communications and public safety networks for Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System. Lauren's unique perspective on CEQA compliance informs her practice on a daily basis.

Honors

Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch, *Best Lawyers*, 2023-2024

Experience

- Representing multiple clients on affordable housing projects in Los Angeles, including a 100 percent affordable permanent supportive housing project near downtown Los Angeles with up to 150 units that used AB 2162 streamlining and modular construction; a 100 percent affordable housing project in Skid Row with up to 150 units that used SB 35 streamlining and modular construction; a 202-unit Density Bonus mixed-income project in Hollywood that used SB 35 streamlining and modular construction; and a Density Bonus project in the Wilshire Community Plan Area that includes up to 153 units and rehabilitation of an existing cathedral.
- Representing multiple clients on mixed-use hotel projects in Los Angeles, including a mixed-use, 182-key hotel project in Hollywood; a mixed-use, 190-key hotel project in Hollywood; and a 455-key mixed-use hotel and event center in Downtown Los Angeles that adaptively reuses an existing eligible historic hotel and replaces SRO units. All of these projects require multiple discretionary entitlements from the City of Los Angeles, CRA/LA, and potential historic resources and/or historic districts.
- Advising non-profit organizations on long-range planning, including development of specific plans for a 38-acre deck park, master plan for an existing decommissioned reservoir, recreational facility and a business district representing over 350 businesses.
- Representing and advising a cemetery client on alcohol licensing, entitlements, CEQA compliance, and historic designation for a historic cemetery and entertainment venue in Hollywood.
- Representing and advising client on adaptive reuse of an existing historic structure to event and restaurant space in Hollywood related to alcohol licensing, entitlement, CEQA compliance.

Articles

- "CEQA's 'Unusual Circumstances Exception' in the Wake of Berkeley Hillside," *Environmental Law News*, Spring 2016

Real Estate Law Blog Posts

- "California Continues Trend of Pushing Housing Legislation to Address Ongoing Housing Shortage," February 14, 2024
- "Second District Addresses CEQA's Class 32 Infill Exemption Criteria," September 7, 2023
- "Housing Legislation Update 2023," January 31, 2023
- "Court of Appeal Holds No-Project Alternative Analysis May Mean More When Conservation is an Option and Reinforces Low Barrier to Entry Under the Exhaustion Doctrine," April 20, 2022
- "Southern California Counties To Adopt Major Housing Production Targets," February 25, 2021
- "De Novo and Substantial Evidence Standards Of Review In CEQA Cases" rel="noopener noreferrer" href="https://www.realestatelanduseandenvironmentallaw.com/evidence-standards-eir.html">"California Supreme Court Clarifies Scope of *De Novo* and Substantial Evidence Standards Of Review In CEQA Cases," February 25, 2019

- "Five Years in the Making: California is One Step Closer to a Comprehensive Update to the CEQA Guidelines," January 7, 2019
- "California Housing Legislation (2017-2018)," October 4, 2018

Events

MCLE Triple Play

One Afternoon, Three Credits: Fast-Track Your MCLE Completion

Sheppard Mullin, 333 S Hope St, Los Angeles, CA 90071-1422, United States, 01.25.2024

Memberships

- Committee Member, REACH Program – Diversity Initiative Committee
- Advisory Council – Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust
- Women in Leadership Circle – Coro Southern California
- Member, Environmental Law Section, Public Law Section, Los Angeles County Bar Association
- Member, Association of Environmental Professionals
- Member, Central City Association

Practices

CEQA Documentation and Defense

Real Estate, Energy, Land Use & Environmental

Industries

Multifamily Housing

Education

J.D., University of San Diego School of Law, 2012

B.A., University of California, Davis, 2008, *with honors*

Clerkships

Extern to the Honorable Michael A. Anello of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California

Extern to the Honorable Ronald S. Prager of the Superior Court of California for the County of San Diego

Admissions

California