

### Eight Attorney Land Use Group Joins Sheppard Mullin Orange County

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Geoffrey K. Willis and Deborah M. Rosenthal have joined the Orange County office of Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP as partners in the firm's Real Estate, Land Use and Environmental practice group. Willis and Rosenthal will be joined by a team of six attorneys: special counsel Marguerite P. Battersby and David R. Hunt, and associates David P. Collins II, Jessica A. Johnson, Douglas E. Wance and Gregory E. Woodard. The group most recently practiced together with Bingham McCutchen in Orange County.

"With Geoff, Deborah and the group joining us, we continue to grow signature practice groups like Real Estate and expand capabilities to better serve client needs. With Geoff leading the team, the group's knowledge and expertise will significantly enhance our real estate practice, which is already one of the best in California," said Guy Halgren, chairman of the firm.

"I look forward to growing the firm's California land use practice, specifically in Orange County," Willis said. "Sheppard Mullin is a top-notch firm with an impressive real estate group. I am thrilled to be practicing on such a strong platform with the firm's great lawyers throughout the state."

"Geoff's group is an excellent addition to the firm's Real Estate practice group, which now includes more than 80 attorneys firm wide," commented Domenic Drago, chair of the firm's Real Estate, Land Use and Environmental practice group. "They bring an incredible collective background with more than seventy-five years of combined experience, which includes ground-breaking land use matters and cutting-edge real estate-related litigation."

As a land use and development specialist, Willis concentrates his practice on matters involving the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); the National Environmental Policy Act; water rights and quality; the Endangered Species Act; wetlands regulation; the Clean Air Act; CERCLA investigation, remediation and litigation; the California Subdivision Map Act; local zoning and land use requirements, environmental due diligence and audits. He has specific expertise in the development of shopping centers, large conjunctive use projects, houses, golf courses, industrial parks and manufacturing complexes, regulatory compliance of ongoing businesses involving air, endangered species, water and wetlands permitting.

Rosenthal devotes her practice to land use and environmental law and litigation, working with issues that include wetlands, endangered species, takings, historic preservation, mitigation banking, hazardous materials industrial development, including self-storage, and golf courses. She has been involved in a variety of complex federal- and state-coordinated environmental permitting programs for large private developments, including the

negotiation of development agreements and preparation of development plans. A major portion of Rosenthal's practice is devoted to CEQA, inverse condemnation and general plan litigation in connection with land use entitlements for large residential real estate developers.

Willis and Rosenthal have represented their clients' interests before all of the counties in Southern California, many of the cities in California, the State Water Resources Control Board, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards, the Army Corps of Engineers, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the High Desert Air Pollution Control District, the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Coastal Commission, the California EPA, and EPA Region IX and a number of additional state and local governing bodies.

Willis received a B.A. from Pomona College in 1983 and a J.D. from University of California, Hastings College of Law in 1986. Rosenthal received a B.A. from University of Michigan in 1972, a master's degree in regional planning from the University of Oklahoma in 1978 and a J.D. from Yale Law School in 1981.

Last year, a six attorney team joined Sheppard Mullin's Real Estate, Land Use and Environmental practice group in the firm's San Francisco office. The former Steefel, Levitt & Weiss land use group includes partners Judy Davidoff and Art Friedman, as well as associates William Fleishhacker, Miriam Montesinos, Alexis Pelosi and Elizabeth Sibbett.

*The California Real Estate Journal* consistently ranks Sheppard Mullin among the largest real estate practices in the state. The firm's Real Estate, Land Use and Environmental practice group is one of the most diverse in California, representing investors, developers, builders, major landowners, lenders and local agencies on every aspect of commercial and residential real estate.

## **About Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP**

Sheppard Mullin is a full service AmLaw 100 firm with more than 520 attorneys in 10 offices located throughout California and in New York, Washington, D.C. and Shanghai. The firm's California offices are located in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Century City, Orange County, Del Mar Heights and San Diego. Founded in 1927 on the principle that the firm would succeed only if its attorneys delivered prompt, high quality and cost-effective legal services, Sheppard Mullin provides legal counsel to U.S. and international clients. Companies turn to Sheppard Mullin to handle a full range of corporate and technology matters, high stakes litigation and complex real estate, land use and finance transactions. In the U.S., the firm's clients include more than half of the Fortune 100 companies.