

PUBLIC LAW IS THE FOCUS OF OUR PRACTICE, AND HAS BEEN THE CORE OF OUR FIRM SINCE IT WAS FOUNDED IN 1986.



STEVEN T. MATTAS

Chair, Municipal & Special District Law Practice Group

Recognized by the *Daily Journal* as one of the “Top 25 Municipal Lawyers in California,” Steven serves as City Attorney of Los Altos Hills and South San Francisco and special counsel to several public agencies. Though he counsels on a multitude of areas in public law, he is known statewide for his land use, environmental and economic development work. Steven is managing co-editor of the state’s seminal text on land use law, *California Land Use Practice*. In addition, he recently served as the City Attorney’s Department representative to the League of California Cities (LOCC) Environmental Quality Committee and Housing, Community and Economic Development Committee.

For 25 years, Meyers Nave has practiced public law in California, combining in one firm many disciplines that other firms consider specialties. As a result, our institutional knowledge of the law and California community policies gives clients an assurance of reliable, top-notch service. In the roles of city attorney and general/special counsel, we provide both day-to-day legal advice and representation in complex transactions and litigation.

Currently, Meyers Nave serves as city attorney to more than 25 municipalities and as general counsel to dozens of counties and special districts throughout California. Many of these relationships have spanned decades—a fact that testifies to the quality of our work and our commitment to clients. Our attorneys:

- Advise staff and elected and appointed officials on legal issues, including those that regulate public meetings;
- Advise on incorporations, annexations and changes of organization;
- Prepare updates and amendments to general and specific plans and advise on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and other environmental issues;
- Attend council, commission and board meetings;
- Prepare resolutions and ordinances;
- Represent clients in cost recovery, code enforcement and litigation;
- Advise on finance, tax and fee issues; and
- Advise on successor agency and oversight board issues.

Some of the legal issues on which we advise are summarized below.

RALPH M. BROWN ACT

We routinely help clients regarding issues relating to open meetings, often being called upon after hours and “on the fly” to provide

immediate and urgent Brown Act direction. We have advised on complex questions and have successfully litigated several cases involving the Brown Act. A regular aspect of our firm’s engagements is providing training for local officials and city staff regarding this and other California laws.

PUBLIC RECORDS

The California Public Records Act (CPRA) is applicable to the vast majority of public agencies, and generally requires that the public have the ability to inspect and copy records of the municipality. As public agency lawyers, we know CPRA requirements and have extensive experience helping clients avoid problems. We offer proactive advice, counseling, continuing education for staff and regular updates on the law.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Along with the Brown Act and CPRA, issues relating to conflicts of interest are among the matters that must be dealt with on a day-to-day basis by any public agency. We regularly counsel on conflicts under the Political Reform Act, Government Code Section 1090, and other conflicts of interest laws.

ELECTIONS & VOTING

We advise a number of clients on preparing initiatives as well as responding to them along with referenda proposed by petitions, including reviews for legality and impartial analyses. We have also represented our clients in related writ of mandate proceedings and have handled quo warranto actions.

Municipal & Special District Law Services

- Open meetings
- Public records
- Elections
- Revenue and taxation
- Economic development
- Incorporation, annexations and changes of organization
- Adult use and First Amendment matters
- Indian gaming
- Code enforcement
- Conflicts of interest
- Property acquisition and disposition
- City prosecutor functions
- Land use, planning and zoning issues
- CEQA, NEPA, Clean Water Act, Enangered Species Act and other environmental laws
- Development agreements
- Public finance, assessment districts and community facilities districts
- Franchise agreements
- Referenda and initiatives
- Solid waste agreements
- Insurance/risk management
- Joint powers authorities and joint powers agreements
- Municipal bankruptcy
- Historic preservation
- Redevelopment Successor Agency and Oversight Board

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Operational issues of special districts within our purview include, but are not limited to, labor and employment matters, contracting, compliance issues, and public finance matters. We also help our clients form special districts, advising on organization issues, such as annexations and detachments as well as acquisition and disposition of public property.

REVENUE & TAXATION

We help our clients determine the taxes they can impose and how to impose those taxes lawfully. This can mean counseling throughout the process or advising on a particular legal consideration. We also defend clients in court from challenges to taxes and revenue sources, including those brought by counties with regard to property tax allocation.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

Preparing ordinances and resolutions requires skill with language and faithful attention to the details of the law as well as the intentions of the governing body enacting them. To advance and protect our clients' interests, we have reviewed and written ordinances regarding everything from land use and zoning to code enforcement and the establishment of municipal programs. We have prepared creative and innovative ordinances on hot topics such as medical marijuana and green building construction.

CONTRACTS & FRANCHISES

As city attorneys and general/special counsel, we routinely draft and negotiate franchise agreements, development agreements, leases, professional services agreements, public works contracts and more. Our focus is on creating contracts and agreements that support our clients' goals, protect their interests and minimize

risk. At times, this has even extended to filing validation actions regarding certain unique contracts.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Many of our clients routinely achieve compliance rates in excess of 80 percent without the need to initiate litigation. We promote voluntary compliance using a host of administrative processes and, when necessary, formal civil and criminal enforcement actions. We have successfully prosecuted hundreds of cases and recovered enforcement costs and expenses on behalf of many clients.

FEES & ASSESSMENTS

As public law attorneys, we are often faced with issues relating to methods of validly imposing fees and assessments. We stay abreast of developments in case law and initiatives, whether on Propositions 218 and 26, Mello-Roos or other areas. We respect that our clients do not necessarily want to charge their residents and businesses the highest fees possible and work to structure fees in a creative, legally defensible manner.

JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Due to our representation of several regional and statewide joint powers authorities (JPAs), we have prepared numerous joint powers agreements. Further, we are familiar with the options available to cities and other public entities in forming and working with JPAs.

LAFCO & CHANGES OF ORGANIZATION

In at least half of the counties in this state, we have represented cities and special districts before Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCo). We have handled issues on reorganizations, incorporations, annexations, revenue sharing, dependent districts and related matters.