

Daily Journal

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Development

CALIFORNIA'S **TOP 50** DEVELOPMENT LAWYERS

Editors Note

This year, we decided to take a different approach. We didn't pick a list of lawyers specifically devoted to real estate deals or municipal law. Our list this year is collection of the state's top attorneys whose work in the development arena significantly impacted projects that are helping to shape the transformation of cities.

These lawyers and the others on our list are passionate about their work, and it shows in very tangible ways.

Steven M. Strauss

FIRM

Cooley LLP
San Diego

SPECIALTIES

real estate litigation,
intellectual property



A judge once told Strauss that whenever he came into his courtroom it seemed to be about “dirt with money attached to it.”

This year, Strauss has had multiple successes in such cases, most notably fending off the fifth environmental challenge to a \$1 billion development project at the Navy Broadway Complex on San Diego's downtown waterfront.

His client, Manchester Pacific Gateway, has leased the naval space to develop 30 million feet of retail, restaurants, hotels and both commercial and administrative Navy office space as well as 4 acres of open space.

Strauss has spent the last six years trying to beat back the numerous environmental lawsuits challenging the project. Most recently, the California Coastal Commission sued Manchester, saying it needed to complete a new environmental impact report.

Strauss argued that the passage of time is not a sufficient basis to require supplemental reports to be done.

“The law is clear that the passage of time alone doesn't mean you need a new environmental report,” Strauss said. “What you have got to look at is what environmental impacts were they looking at then and have those changed now and they had not.”

In May a federal judge agreed with Strauss, granting Manchester and the Navy summary judgment.

“What I always try to do and what I tell the lawyers who work with me is, ‘you can't chew off too much,’” Strauss said. “You have to be surgical. Make the best argument, support it with the best evidence and don't obviate with lots of collateral or losing arguments.”

— Hadley Robinson