

Michael Shonafelt

Los Angeles, California
Shareholder

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Areas of Practice & Industry Specialties

Real Estate; Land Use



Michael Shonafelt is a Shareholder in the Firm's Los Angeles office and a member of the Real Estate practice group. He advises landowners, developers, lenders, receiverships and public agencies on all zoning and land use matters, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Coastal Act, general plan amendments and zone changes, conditional use permits (CUPs), subdivision maps, variances, development agreements, wetlands issues and coastal development permits (CDPs) and the California housing laws.

He has obtained entitlement and permit approvals for a range of development projects, from industrial developments to resort hotels, residential developments and wireless telecommunications network projects. His practice covers all phases of the real property entitlement process — from preparing the permit application to achieving final approval and post-decision land use litigation. He provides a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary level of service designed to most efficiently get projects to construction. He is particularly recognized for his ability to achieve consensus and success in the wake of seemingly insurmountable project challenges and opposition.

Professional Involvement

- Orange County Bar Association
- Los Angeles County Bar Association
- Founding Board Member, California Wireless Association

Representative Matters

His successes in particularly challenging projects include, but are not limited to:

- Legado Redondo: Entitlement of a mixed-use project with 115 units, over 21,000 square feet of commercial uses and a 110-key hotel, in the City of Redondo Beach, California.
- One South: Entitlement of a mixed-use project with 52 units, 10,500 square feet of commercial uses in the City of Redondo Beach, California.
- Highrose/Verandas: Entitlement of a 79-unit affordable housing development in the City of Manhattan Beach, California.
- Catalina Village: Entitlement of a 32-unit mixed use project in the City of Redondo Beach, California.
- 101 Avenida Califia: Entitlement of a 40-unit congregate care facility in the Coastal Zone of the City of San Clemente, California.
- Three Oaks Project: Entitlement of a 268-lot subdivision in the City of Walnut Hills.
- Hillsborough Small Cell Network: Entitlement of a 16-node small cell wireless telecommunications network in the Town of Hillsborough, California.

- Piedmont Small Cell Network: Entitlement of a multi-node small cell wireless telecommunications network in the City of Piedmont, California.
- Aptos Small Cell Network: Entitlement of a multi-node small cell wireless telecommunications network in Aptos, Santa Cruz County, California.
- Crown Castle Macro-Site Torrance: Entitlement of a macro-site telecommunications facility at 2124 Redondo Beach Boulevard in the City of Torrance, California.

Mr. Shonafelt also has advised developers in many large mixed-use developments such as the Hollywood Palladium Redevelopment Project and the Downey NASA Reuse Site as well as residential/resort projects, such as the final phase of Snow Creek in Mammoth. He has served as special land use counsel to the County of Monterey and the San Diego Unified Port District and has advised the Orange County Transportation Corridor Agencies on a range of issues. He has litigated many issues of first impression regarding the Builder's Remedy, the Mitigation Fee Act, CEQA, and the Wireless Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Publications

- Michael Shonafelt Quoted in Forbes Magazine, July 3, 2024
- Michael Shonafelt Featured in RCR Wireless, December 26, 2018
- California Case Shows Propriety of Telecom CEQA Exemptions, *Law360*, April 10, 2018
- Whose Streets? California Public Utilities Code Section 7901 in the Wireless Age, *UC Law SF Journal of Communications and Entertainment Law*, May 1, 2013
- Spectrum Crunch: The Land Use Obstacles to 4-G, *Daily Journal*, July 8, 2010

Presentations

- "Michael Shonafelt, Panelist at the Wireless West Conference," Wireless West Conference, April 22, 2024
- "Michael Shonafelt, Presenter at the Bureau of Indian Affairs," Bureau of Indian Affairs, January 1, 2024
- "Michael Shonafelt, Presenter at the Bureau of Indian Affairs," Bureau of Indian Affairs, April 1, 2023
- "Michael Shonafelt, Speaker at the Broadband Summit," University of Southern California Marshall School of Business, June 23, 2010

Education

Mr. Shonafelt earned his J.D. from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. He also earned his M.A. in Bilingual Education and a B.A. in History/Philosophy, from California State University, Dominguez Hills, in conjunction with baccalaureate studies received at St. Michaels Abbey as part of an academic seminary program with the Angelicum University.

Bar Admissions

- California

Community

- Board Member, St. Thomas More Society of Orange County
- Past Board Member, Orange County Council of the Boy Scouts of America

Languages

- Spanish
- Latin