

PARTNER

Ethan J. Walsh

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📍 Sacramento



Ethan J. Walsh is an attorney in the Municipal Law practice group of Best Best & Krieger LLP and represents cities and other public agencies in all aspects of their operations. He serves as city attorney for the Cities of St. Helena, Woodland and Winters and general counsel for the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (also known as Zero Waste Sonoma) and Natomas Basin Conservancy, and additionally advises public agencies on issues related to economic development, affordable housing and land use law. He takes a collaborative approach to assist his clients in determining the most efficient and effective way to achieve their policy objectives while limiting risk and potential liability.

Land Use & Economic Development

In his land use, economic development and real estate practice, Ethan regularly represents public agencies in meetings and transactional negotiations related to land use and development issues, including structuring transactions for commercial, residential and mixed-use projects, and negotiating and drafting the implementing agreements for those transactions.

- Negotiated agreements and entitlements required for the development of a \$75 million PG&E gas operations training facility in the City of Winters; construction is currently underway
- Negotiated and drafted agreements for the conveyance and rehabilitation of a historic theater building in the City of Woodland for development of a modernized movie theater and café
- Negotiated and drafted agreements for the sale of City-owned property and processing of entitlements for the development of a 73-room downtown boutique hotel in the City of Winters
- Negotiation of amendments to development agreement and associated entitlements for a 413-unit residential subdivision in the City of Winters
- Negotiated and drafted agreements between the City of Davis and University of California for the construction and maintenance of a shared pipeline project, to provide additional surface water supply to the University through a regional water supply project developed by the Cities of Davis and Woodland

Affordable Housing

Ethan's affordable housing practice includes advising public agencies in connection with all aspects of their affordable

CORE PRACTICES

Housing, Economic Development and Real Estate

Environmental Law & Natural Resources

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Open Government & Ethics

Municipal Law

Public Infrastructure

Public-Private Partnerships

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

Education

University of California, Los Angeles
School of Law, J.D.

University of California, Davis, B.A.

Bar Admissions

California

housing programs. This includes negotiating agreements with affordable and market-rate developers for the development of affordable housing, and developing and implementing local inclusionary housing programs. Projects include:

- Negotiated and drafted public agency loan documents and associated regulatory agreements for numerous multifamily affordable housing projects, including the Temple Art Lofts in Vallejo, the rehabilitation of the historic Masonic Temple as a mixed use affordable housing development focused on providing housing for working artists; New Harmony Mutual Housing Community in Davis, a 69-unit affordable housing development serving extremely low and very low income households; and Cannery Lofts in Davis, a 62-unit affordable housing development serving extremely low, very low and low income households
- Advised the City of Concord in connection with the update of the City's inclusionary housing in-lieu fees and development of a nexus study for the implementation of an inclusionary housing impact fee for market rate rental housing
- Assisted the City of Ventura in the comprehensive revision of its inclusionary housing program documents, including project specific implementation plans, affordable housing development agreements with developers and resale restriction agreements with eligible homebuyers

Prevailing Wage

Ethan has substantial experience in prevailing wage laws as they relate to public-private projects, and frequently advises public agencies and private developers on the potential impacts of state prevailing wage laws on proposed transactions.

Accolades

- The Best Lawyers in America®, Municipal Law, 2025, 2026

Thought Leadership

Publications

- "2026 California New Laws: Key Updates & Practical Impacts – Housing Law," *PublicCEO*, Feb. 5, 2026
- "HUD Issues New Broadband Mandates," *BBKnowledge*, Jan. 3, 2017
- "Spot Zoning Not Always an Abuse of Discretion," *BB&K Legal Alert*, Jan. 22, 2014
- "Inclusionary Housing Units Must Be Counted Toward State Density Bonus Requirements in California," *BB&K Legal Alert*, July 22, 2013
- "Redevelopment in California After the Demise of RDAs," *Los Angeles Lawyer*, Feb. 22, 2013
- "Post-Redevelopment California: Getting Your Real Estate Assets in Order," *PublicCEO.com*, Nov. 28, 2012
- "Charter Cities Can Opt-Out of State Prevailing Wage Requirements on Locally-Funded Projects," *BB&K Legal Alert*, July 5, 2012

Presentations

- "When Planning Commission Meetings go Sideways: How to Get Back on Track," League of California Cities 2025 Planning Commissioners Academy, March 5, 2025
- "Housing Law Jeopardy," League of California Cities Annual Conference, Oct. 17, 2024