



OF COUNSEL

# Synthia Gunzel

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☎ (951) 826-8285      📍 Riverside



Synthia Gunzel is of counsel in the firm's Business Services Practice Group. She provides strategic and comprehensive counsel on matters involving real estate, public works, public-private partnerships (PPP), contracts, easements, rights-of-way, conservation and other legal matters specific to special districts and public agencies.

Synthia joined BBK after a distinguished career with the Office of County Counsel for the County of Riverside ("County"), where she began as a Deputy County Counsel and last served as the Chief Deputy County Counsel over the Business and Transactional Services Division. In these positions, Synthia was responsible for representing the many County departments, agencies and special districts on transactional and advisory matters, contracts, services and programs. She was responsible for drafting, reviewing and analyzing resolutions, complex business contracts, real property documents, leases and related documents, public works documents and real property laws and procedures. Synthia also drafted new ordinances and amendments to existing ordinances relating to solicitation on County property, encroachment permits, mitigation fee programs, flood hazard areas, purchasing, subdivisions, zoning/land use, solid waste facilities, real property procedures and authorities, volunteer fire companies and reserve firefighter programs.

In her roles with the County of Riverside, Synthia also

## CORE PRACTICES

Real Estate

Business Transactions

## EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

### Education

Western State College of Law,  
J.D.

University of Southern California,  
B.S., business administration

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### Bar Admissions

California

gained considerable experience with mentoring and training County attorneys, paralegals, volunteers and others on legal matters involving the Public Records Act, Ralph M. Brown Act, public contracting, rights of way matters, real estate, ordinances and other laws governing public agencies.

## LANGUAGES

English

Active in the community, Synthia is a member of the USC Alumni Association and a founding member of the USC Trojan Marching Band Alumni Association. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband of almost 35 years, their three adult sons and daughters-in-law, her granddaughters and her parents. Synthia is a member and past president of a local chapter of P.E.O., a philanthropic organization that provides scholarships and promotes educational opportunities for women.

### Notable Experience

- Represented the County of Riverside in multiple major public works projects, including an Emergency Operations Center in Riverside and the John J. Benoit Detention Center in Indio, which is the largest project undertaken by the County to date.
- Represented a special district in a politically charged disposition of real property to a local community college district, which included drafting language in the purchase and sale agreement recognized by the court as influential to the court's ruling in the special district's favor in a CEQA judicial challenge brought by a citizen group.
- Represented the County, drafted and negotiated contracts for build-to-suit and PPP projects, including the RUHS-Medical Center Medical Office Building, County Department of Social Services facilities and other County facilities.
- Collaborated with the County's Transportation Department and Facilities Management -Real Estate to draft agreements and negotiate the acquisition of seven miles of right-of-way interests from long time property owners and their area partners that avoided having to acquire the interests by eminent domain and resulted in significant costs savings for the County.
- Negotiated the County's acquisition of properties collectively worth more than \$300 million and lease agreements for its extensive lease portfolio.
- Represented and advised the County's fire department, its chief and officers regarding the regulation of volunteer fire companies and firefighters. Drafted new County Ordinances Nos. 903 and 904, which resulted in training and operational consistence and reduced potential liability to the County.

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### Professional & Community Involvement

- Riverside County Bar Association
- Served as a volunteer scoring attorney at the Riverside County Mock Trial Competition
- Served as Co-Conference Chair and presenter at County Counsels' Association of California Public Works and Contracts conferences

- County of Riverside: Supervisory Excellence Academy, Leadership Initiative
- California State Association of Counties Institute for Excellence in County Government