

COX, CASTLE & NICHOLSON LLP ADDS EMINENT DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY TO LAND USE TEAM

Staff Reporter

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Partner John Whitaker



Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP, a preeminent full-service law firm focused on real estate in the United States, today announced that land use and transactional law veteran John Whitaker has joined the firm as a partner. Whitaker brings more than 50 years of exceptional legal counsel to developers of major downtown Los Angeles projects and other domestic and foreign investors in large-scale office, residential, lodging and retail buildings, to the firm's award-winning land use practice group.

“John is an institution in the Los Angeles real estate industry and we are incredibly fortunate to have an accomplished and admired professional join our team,” said Mario Camara, senior partner on Cox, Castle & Nicholson’s management committee. “His best-in-class counsel and track record for successfully navigating some of DTLA’s most complex projects will be instrumental for the real estate industry’s evolving legal landscape.”

Dubbed “Mr. Downtown” within the legal community, Whitaker has played a significant role in the revitalization of the Los Angeles city center since the late 1970s. He counseled major developers including Greenland USA, The Ratkovich Company, Related Group and Brookfield Properties, and served on the TFAR Task Force, which played a pivotal role in drafting City and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) policies. As a result, he quickly became the go-to resource for transfers of floor area rights, which enabled property owners to quantify and sell unused development rights from their sites to other landowners, who can then increase the density of new construction. Notably, Whitaker provided legal oversight to The South Group in the early 2000s for three condominium high-rise buildings – Elleven, Luma and Evo – the first ground-up construction of residential condominium buildings in downtown Los Angeles in 20 years.

Following the dissolution of CRAs in 2012, Whitaker was appointed by the Central City Association to work alongside City planning on a new Downtown Development Code. He helps clients navigate new regulations and advises on their rights and obligations with regard to existing and pending projects and potential acquisition of properties owned by redevelopment agencies.

“There are many synergies between my land use and transactional practice and the vast commercial work that I’ve witnessed from Cox, Castle & Nicholson over the last 50 years,” said Whitaker. “I was drawn to Cox Castle’s passion for excellence in real estate law, and believe that my knowledge and experience, combined with the firm’s accomplished team, will enable us to deliver unparalleled legal services to Los Angeles developers and beyond.”

Throughout his tenure, Whitaker has served on several boards for civic organizations and has been appointed to numerous City of Los Angeles task forces and committees. In addition to his affiliation with the Central City Association since 1993, and being its chair in 2002, he served two years as president of Los Angeles Headquarters Association and as chair of the Los

Angeles County Bar Association Real Property Section. He is a current member of the Urban Land Institute Los Angeles Advisory Board and the Downtown Los Angeles Breakfast Club.

Whitaker's legal prowess has earned him several prestigious recognitions, including the first USC Gould School of Law Real Estate Law and Business Forum Lifetime Achievement Award, Daily Journal's "Top Development, Land Use and Municipal Infrastructure Lawyers," Best Lawyers in America for real estate law and Southern California Super Lawyers. He also received several civic awards for his service to the Greater Los Angeles community.

Whitaker earned his J.D. from University of Southern California Gould School of Law. He graduated with distinction from Stanford University.

About Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP

Celebrating 50 years of real estate excellence in 2018, Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP delivers strategic legal counsel and services to developers, public agencies, energy companies, lenders, investors, joint ventures, pension funds, landlords, tenants, corporations, high-net-worth individuals and others in the management of their complex real estate, business and litigation challenges. Founded in 1968, the firm has more than 130 attorneys in offices in Los Angeles, Orange County and San Francisco. For more information, visit www.coxcastle.com. Follow the firm on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

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