

## **DOWNTOWN LA REAL ESTATE VETERAN JOINS COX CASTLE**

By Matthew Guarnaccia  
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A seasoned veteran in the Los Angeles real estate scene has joined [Cox Castle & Nicholson LLP](#), bringing with him more than 50 years of experience representing developers and investors on major deals in the city's downtown and beyond, the firm announced.

Known as a pioneer of the redevelopment and revitalization of downtown Los Angeles, John Whitaker has guided domestic and foreign clients on a number of major large-scale office, residential, lodging and retail properties. Cox Castle said in a statement Whitaker will be a part of its land use practice group.



John Whitaker

Whitaker, who previously worked at [DLA Piper](#), was instrumental in the effort that helped transform downtown Los Angeles starting in the 1970s and '80s. While Cox Castle has a solid footing in California real estate law, it has yet to make a name for itself in the downtown LA market, a task Whitaker hopes to accomplish.

He told Law360 he has worked closely with Cox Castle and many of its attorneys throughout his career, referring matters to one another regularly. Whitaker retired from DLA Piper in January, and he said a number of his clients still wanted him to represent them and that joining Cox Castle was a win-win that allows him to serve this purpose.

"I can be a resource for all of [Cox Castle's] downtown issues and help with any major projects, and also utilize their depth and expertise to assist the clients that still wanted to work with me going forward," Whitaker said.

Throughout his career, Whitaker has been involved in a number of key projects in the Los Angeles area, including the revitalization of the city center in the 1970s and guiding Greenland

USA, The Ratkovich Co., Related Group and [Brookfield Properties](#) on various undertakings.

In the early 2000s, Whitaker also steered the South Group in the development of a trio of high-rise condominium projects, which marked the first ground-up construction of residential condominiums in downtown Los Angeles in two decades.

His practice also involves helping clients tackle the complexities that come with new regulations and their effect on current, pending and potential projects. While the days of the redevelopment agencies in downtown Los Angeles are over, Whitaker said regulatory and other issues continue to present themselves as the area changes.

Whitaker said he appreciates how Cox Castle has maintained a singular focus on real estate, and that while the firm has grown — adding offices in Orange County and San Francisco — it has consistently continued to forge ahead with its own strategy.

"Cox Castle never yielded to pressure to merge with larger, outside firms and I've always admired them for that," Whitaker said.

--Editing by Amy Rowe.