burke
BURKE, WILLIAMS & SORENSEN, LLP



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Pronouns: he, him, his

Don Davis has provided contract city attorney and general counsel services to public agencies throughout California for over 30 years. He currently serves as the City Attorney for Rolling Hills Estates and provides special counsel services for numerous Burke public entity and private clients.

Don has considerable expertise in land use and planning having advised numerous planning commissions and city councils throughout his legal career. He regularly consults with city planning staffs on matters ranging from General Plan amendments to use permits. Don has drafted dozens of major zoning and land use ordinances, and has developed local density bonus and affordable housing programs.

Don enjoys governance issues and has extensive experience in the preparation and amendment of various governance documents such as joint exercise of powers agreements, joint powers authority bylaws, and memorandums of understanding between multiple agencies.

During his career, Don has been involved in a number of significant infrastructure projects involving federal, state, and local agencies. As part of those projects, he has handled a broad array of real estate transactional matters ranging from property acquisitions (including by eminent domain), financing, leasing, and dispositions. His real estate transaction practice includes providing advice on appraisals, title reports, legal descriptions, and engineering and survey issues.

Don is an authority on the Brown Act, Public Records Act, and other government transparency and ethics laws and has provided seminars and training around the state on these subjects. He developed the Brown Act Compliance Manual and the Public Records Act Compliance Manual for the California Special Districts Association.

Don also has significant experience with a wide variety of environmental issues including CEQA and NEPA. In working with the firm's public and private clients, Don has handled all aspects of the

PRACTICES

Environmental Land Use and Natural Resources

Litigation

Public Law

Tort Claims and Products Liability

EDUCATION

J.D., University of California, Davis, 1993

B.A., cum laude, English, Wake Forest University, 1984

ADMISSION

State Bar of California

United States District Court for the Central District of California

AFFILIATIONS

California Special Districts Association

Association of California Water Agencies

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CEQA/NEPA compliance process, including the hiring and management of project specialists in various environmental disciplines. He routinely provides advice and opinions on CEQA/NEPA compliance strategies, and has reviewed and commented on numerous CEQA/NEPA documents ranging from mitigated negative declarations to joint environmental impact reports/environmental impact statements.

Don is proficient in negotiating, drafting, and reviewing contacts for public agencies, including contracts for public works projects, maintenance, goods and services, consultants and professional services. Don is a strong proponent of plain language in public contracts, which should be readable and understandable to public agency staff and the general public – not just lawyers.

As a litigator, Don has successfully defended and managed the defense for public agencies in matters involving due process, equal protection, freedom of speech, government torts, inverse condemnation, public bidding and contract disputes, and writs of mandamus including CEQA suits. Don also has represented private clients in real estate, contract, and business-related litigation.

Prior to becoming an attorney, Don served as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in Yemen and also worked as an international educational consultant.

INSIGHTS

Burke Brown Act Compilation (2026)

PUBLICATIONS

Brown Act Compliance Manual for Special Districts

Update on Significant California Public Law Cases

California Public Records Act Compliance Manual for Special Districts

Key Amendments to the Brown Act for 2014

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