

Gregory M. Murphy

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Pronouns: he, him, his

Gregory Murphy is a trusted advisor, counselor, and transactional attorney for public entities throughout California. He currently serves as City Attorney for the cities of Buellton, Lawndale and Temple City. Greg also has over 13 years' experience serving as Assistant or Deputy City Attorney to a number of the firm's municipal clients and legal counsel to the firm's joint powers authority and special district clients.

Greg regularly advises elected and appointed officials, navigating delicate issues with politically-divergent boards. He presents clearly and in real-world terms the impacts of legal constraints on agency activities. Greg takes time to understand clients' long- and short-term goals and how the law affects those objectives, finding ways to achieve them whenever possible. His focus on crafting legal advice that is practical, workable, and client-centered creates confidence and lasting relationships.

Experienced in the areas of land use and development, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), public contract law, prevailing wage law, purchases and sales of real property, and municipal economic issues, Greg has advised developers and public contractors as well as public entities. He attends planning and community development commission meetings and handles closed-session briefings of legislative bodies. He also advises on a number of election law issues ranging from charter amendments and ballot designations to election contests and post-contest litigation. Greg also engages in litigation related to land use, tax, contract, and election issues.

What I've Learned: Be creative. If you start a project thinking you can find a way to accomplish it, you'll often be right. If you start by thinking you can't accomplish it, you'll always be right.

PRACTICES

Environmental Land Use and Natural Resources

Public Law

Real Estate and Business Law

EDUCATION

J.D., cum laude and Order of the Coif Loyola Law School Los Angeles, 2002

>B.A., University of Notre Dame, 1996

ADMISSION

State Bar of California

United States District Court for the Central District of California

AFFILIATIONS

California State Bar Association

Los Angeles County Bar Association

City Attorneys Association of Los Angeles County

League of California Cities, former member Municipal Law Handbook Editorial Board

Municipal Law Institute, former Steering Committee Member

PUBLICATIONS

Western City Legal Notes – Six Local Government Transparency

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Changes City Officials Need to Know

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

Land Use and Real Estate

- Greg aided a city and its redevelopment agency in the negotiation and drafting of a complex disposition and development agreement designed to transform underutilized housing into a medical office building.
- He advises on pre-litigation eminent domain and takings matters, including inverse condemnation arising out of regulatory takings and physical invasions.
- Greg worked with three cities to update their general plans, adopt specific plans, and substantially or wholly rewrite their zoning codes to modernize land use and development within their jurisdiction.
- Greg worked with a county redevelopment agency to set up a unique community services program whereby enhanced levels of code enforcement, law enforcement, and public works services are provided to the redevelopment project area and funded in part with redevelopment moneys.
- Greg advised a redevelopment agency on the purchase of a commercial/residential building and the subsequent negotiation of a long-term building lease for a community art space and live/work lofts for artists. His work included analyses of agency options, drafting the purchase agreement and long-term lease, as well as negotiating deferred rental payments.
- He negotiated and drafted an Owner Participation Agreement under which a historic commercial/residential building would be substantially renovated to provide restaurant, retail, and commercial uses and live/work space. Greg negotiated relocation assistance and long-term operating covenants.
- Greg negotiated the $3 million+ redevelopment agency assembly of vacant parcels and sale of the parcels to the California Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for a new courthouse. The transaction involved complex negotiations such as clearing title of a number of liens, tax liens, and judgment debts; drafting purchase and sale agreements; negotiations on title issues, property condition, and redevelopment issues; processing lot line adjustments and other land use approvals to allow for the sale; and oversight of environmental remediation.
- He has advised on approvals related to charter schools and to religious land use, in each case avoiding potential challenges to application denials by focusing on legally sound reasons for denial supported by record evidence.

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General Municipal and Public Advisory

- Greg aided several cities with complex and sometimes urgent issues related to medical marijuana.
- He has significant legal experience in public contract law including bid protests, claims, terminations, and advisory work. He has recently worked with clients to enforce bond obligations against contractors for failure to properly perform public works projects. He also enforces bond obligations on private contractors who fail to meet public works obligations imposed on their projects.
- Greg regularly consults on conflicts of interest issues, focusing on preventing potential conflicts and warding off the appearance of conflicts.
- He drafts form and single-project contracts for client use, including form public works agreements and form consultant and design consultant agreements, and regularly advises clients on the intricacies of indemnity and waiver issues in public contracting.

Litigation and Advocacy

- Greg represented a city in a contentious election contest concerning the validity of signatures on vote by mail and provisional ballot envelopes. The court upheld the results of the election. Greg has also litigated the validity of ballot measures, including seeking an emergency writ from the California appellate court to stay an interlocutory order of a trial court that would have barred an initiative from the ballot.
- Greg represented a community services district in proceedings before the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Board relating to the Board’s requirement that the CSD implement a sewer system in a prohibition zone. His advocacy resulted in the enforcement of cease and desist orders against individual violators to accommodate the County’s takeover of the sewer project such that the individuals have not been fined under the orders to date.
- Greg advocated on behalf of a community services district against a private corporation that had purchased a small-scale water distribution company and was seeking to expand operations. After nearly 18 months of litigation, the administrative judge crafted an order limiting the corporation to its current provision of service.

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