
Frank Petrilli

Partner

San Francisco

Details

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Frank Petrilli is a trusted advisor to his clients on all matters related to the entitlement process, including entitlement strategy, land use and land use litigation, and compliance under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). He helps his clients obtain entitlements for complex and controversial developments, negotiate and draft agreements with local governments and regulatory agencies, and resolve problems at all stages in the development process from early planning through entitlement and construction. Frank also focuses on housing policy, as well as long-term planning efforts across the Bay Area.

Named a “Top 40 under 40” California attorney by the Daily Journal in 2020, Frank takes a pragmatic approach to serving his clients. He focuses on identifying the key issues facing a project and developing creative solutions to efficiently deliver on the outcomes that matter most. He also helps build entitlement teams from the ground up, while providing thoughtful, strategic advice based on his strong political instincts, technical expertise, emotional intelligence, and intuitive understanding of how local government works in practice. Frank primarily focuses on infill projects in the San Francisco Bay Area, with a particular focus on the Mid-Peninsula and Silicon Valley regions.

Frank serves on the Board of Directors for the San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA) and the Bay Area Council. He is a member of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) and the Urban Land Institute.

Frank earned his J.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law with a specialization in Philosophy of Law. He earned his B.A. in Philosophy from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Notable Representations

Tech Campuses & Office Projects

- Counseling Facebook on approvals for the continued expansion of its Menlo Park headquarters, including obtaining approvals for approximately 1 million square feet of office buildings designed by Frank Gehry, which included negotiating several Community Benefits Agreements focusing on affordable housing and community development with various non-governmental organizations.
- Advised Bohannon Development Company on the re-entitlement, permitting, and related issues for the Menlo Gateway Project, an approximately one million square foot mixed-use development in Menlo Park.
- Counseling Kylli Inc. on all aspects of the Burlingame Point office campus project in Burlingame, California, involving 767,000 square feet of office uses.
- Represented a global technology company in obtaining land use entitlements, CEQA approvals, and negotiating a development agreement for a new state-of-the-art office campus in Mountain View’s North Bayshore Area.
- Successfully represented LinkedIn in 2015 in a “beauty contest” in Mountain View, in which the City Council awarded LinkedIn with the lion’s share of available development rights in the North Bayshore area.
- Representing several life science developers with pending projects in San Mateo County.

Mixed Use, Housing & Hospitality

- Representing citizenM in connection with the entitlements for a first in-kind modular hotel in Menlo Park.
- Counseling Ensemble Investments in connection with a ground lease and development of a new high-end hotel on a complicated site in South San Francisco as part of the landmark Oyster Point redevelopment plan.

- Advising the private developers of several multi-family density bonus projects located in downtown Santa Cruz, CA and Santa Clara, CA.
- Advising Cliff Bay Partners on land use and entitlement issues in connection with an 83-unit condominium project at 190 W. Cliff in the coastal zone in Santa Cruz, CA.
- Representing the developer of a large mixed-use project in Downtown Menlo Park.
- Obtained entitlements and advised the developer on land use and CEQA issues for the rehabilitation of several historic buildings on a 65-acre site at Pier 70 in San Francisco.
- Successfully defended the use of a statutory exemption for a large multi-family residential project in a CEQA challenge alleging, among other matters, failure to prepare a Supplemental EIR, failure to follow CEQA's procedures, and failure to conduct new environmental analysis of impacts from greenhouse gas emissions and toxic air contaminants.
- Represented developer on all land use issues and drafting of legislation in connection with a ballot initiative campaign to amend an area plan to allow higher-density housing.
- Represented developer in defending a specific plan and related entitlements for a development involving 5,000 residential units and 3,000,000 sq. ft. of office, retail and commercial space at the trial and appellate court levels.
- Represented statewide provider of senior housing in obtaining petition for writ of mandate setting aside a city hearing officer's decision finding multiple zoning violations.

Public Entity Work

- Represented the University of California, San Francisco on a range of land use and CEQA matters, including long range planning, as well as the negotiation and documentation of real estate documents and environmental clearances for various projects in San Francisco.
- Prevented an attempt to halt construction of a \$320 million University of California, Berkeley project in litigation presenting complicated scope of relief and severability issues.
- Successfully defended a Supplemental EIR for a large-scale transit project against a challenge raising a number of issues under CEQA, including improper "pre-commitment" by the agency, procedural noncompliance, deferred mitigation, and failure to analyze numerous alleged environmental impacts.
- Successfully defended EIR in a consolidated proceeding presenting a litany of issues under CEQA and the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act. Issues included allegedly inadequate project description, improper delegation, improper segmentation, inadequate analysis of biological, geological, cultural and other impacts and mitigation measures, and inadequate objectives, alternatives and statement of overriding considerations. Subsequently defeated a motion for nearly one million dollars in attorneys' fees.

Honors & Awards

In 2020, Frank was named among the "Top 40 Under 40" attorneys in California by the Daily Journal. He is also a Legal 500 recommended and Super Lawyers top rated Land Use & Zoning attorney. Legal 500 notes that clients describe Frank as "easy and enjoyable to work with," and always able to "find solutions to difficult problems."

Professional Activities

Frank serves on the Board of Directors for the San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA) and the Bay Area Council. He is a member of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) and the Urban Land Institute.

Publications & Speaking Engagements

- Frank is a contributor to publications such as Fortune and Law360 where he shares insights on land use and urban issues. He also guest lectures on land use and real estate law at the UC Berkeley School of Law.

Education

J.D., University of California, Los Angeles School of Law (2009)

B.A., with highest honors University of California, Santa Cruz