HansonBridgett



Robin R. Baral

Partner

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Areas of Focus

- Land Use
- Public Revenue: Rates, Fees and Charges

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Robin is a proven problem solver who thrives in situations where creative, legally defensible strategies are needed to deliver on client goals and expectations. He expertly guides clients through nearly every aspect of the land development process in California, primarily through the city or county approval process and as needed to obtain state or federal permits or environmental clearance. Robin has extensive experience working with developers, landowners, investment groups and government agencies throughout California. His core expertise lies in facilitating entitlement approvals and efficiently navigating environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other federal and state permitting frameworks.

In more than 15 years of practice, Robin has worked with clients to obtain entitlements for nearly every type of residential project, ranging from small-lot subdivisions to large urban infill sites, mixed-use master plans and multi-phased development agreements. He works with technology clients to develop deployment strategies related to urban mobility, transportation, and public and private infrastructure. He enjoys working with clients that are at the forefront of innovation in multifamily housing production through the use of mass timber, offsite modular, and panelized construction to deliver high-performance buildings. Robin also has deep experience working with development teams to design residential and mixed-use master plans that incorporate environmental protections, such as onsite wetlands conservation, and emerging “agrihood” and wellness communities integrated with residential and

mixed-use development.

Robin spent the beginning of his career representing small, rapidly growing cities in negotiating development agreements, processing complex entitlement packages, and establishing special taxes, impact fees and other forms of public revenue. He now primarily represents the private sector (developers, investors, business groups) on development and municipal finance matters. After working deeply in both the public and private sectors, Robin has seen firsthand where ongoing challenges, such as housing accessibility and climate resiliency, can be met by working collaboratively and by embracing innovation. When alignment is lacking, Robin is adept at harnessing state laws, such as SB 330, State Density Bonus Law, Builder's Remedy, and ministerial pathways to get infill housing, office and hospitality projects approved.

In housing policy and other land development arenas, Robin is skilled at providing strategic counsel in response to legislative and regulatory mandates. This is due to his engagement in policy and legislative circles around Sacramento, and his active involvement in helping to shape those policies.

His infrastructure work includes permitting and financing of groundwater and surface water treatment plants, solar and wind energy facilities, wastewater treatment plants, water bottling facilities, rail trans-loading facilities, and waste disposal facilities. Robin provides sophisticated advice on matters of public finance and dispute resolution for state and local taxes. He works well with clients and bond counsel to establish tax and financing solutions. He has assisted numerous cities, counties and special districts with rate-making proceedings, voter-approved taxes, and the adoption of impact fees. This experience has provided Robin with a thorough understanding of the constitutional limits of local taxation and land use exactions.

When needed, Robin has served as the lead attorney to successfully resolve a broad range of litigation matters. His cases have involved defending project entitlements and CEQA approvals, challenging and defending municipal finance mechanisms (Proposition 218, impact fees, CFD financing), and challenging business license taxes, ballot initiatives, and water rights determinations.

Representative Work

Representing developers throughout California to obtain project approvals for residential and mixed-use projects pursuant to SB 330, State Density Bonus Law, Builder's Remedy, and other streamlined or ministerial housing approvals, totaling more than 2,500 new homes and 200,000 square feet of commercial space under entitlements in 2026.

Representing a development group to formulate an agrihood master plan consisting of more than 500 homes designed around agricultural and community amenities.

Represented an infill developer in the successful entitlement, CEQA exemption, and prompt resolution of CEQA litigation in connection with a 17-story, 227-unit, transit-oriented development in Downtown Berkeley.

Represented a developer to obtain entitlements for a 26-story high-rise in the City of Berkeley; the project was approved unanimously with no appeal to the City Council. This was the first project in Berkeley to surpass the City's 180-foot height limit in the Downtown Area Plan.

Represented a master plan developer in obtaining entitlements for a 690-acre specific plan consisting of up to 2,700 units and 250,000 square feet of commercial space, with onsite mitigation of biological resources, through a detailed open space preservation and parks plan.

Represented a developer in the approval of a development agreement, specific plan amendment, and related entitlements for 2,500 residential units plus retail, commercial, light industrial and other employment-generating uses.

Represented a group of car dealerships to challenge a city gross receipts business license tax on constitutional grounds, resulting in a successful resolution and settlement agreement.

Represented a business group to prepare ballot materials that would significantly reduce gross receipts business taxes.

Publications

"EPA and Army Corps Release Joint Proposed Rule Revising WOTUS Regulations," co-author, Environmental Law Alert (November 2025)

"Options for Rebuilding Following Southern California's Fires," co-author, Land Use Law Alert (January 2025)

"Clearing the Fog Around California's "Builder's Remedy" and Housing Element Certification" co-author, Land Use Legal Alert (January 2025)

"AB 1287 Makes Technical Changes to State Density Bonus Law to Maximize Housing Production," co-author, Land Use + Government Legal Alert (December 2023)

"California's Top Three Housing Bills to Track for 2024," co-author, Real Estate Legal Alert (November 2023)

"HCD Reviews Coastal Height Limits," Land Use Law Alert (August 2022)

"Old East Davis Decision Preserves the Deference Granted to Cities in Interpreting Subjective Standards," Land Use Law Alert (February 2022)

"California Housing Crisis Persists Despite Legislative Breakthroughs," *Real Property Law Reporter* (January 2022)

"2021 Legislative Update: Housing Advocates Score Key Wins," Land Use Law Alert (October 2021)

"AB 701 Continues the Recent Trend in California to Regulate Warehouse Distribution Centers," Land Use Law Alert (October 2021)

"An In-Depth Look at the Oakland A's Proposed New Stadium Project," Land Use Law Alert (September 2021)

"A Recent Ruling Involving Unlined Landfills Highlights the Pitfalls of Relying on Categorical Exemptions under CEQA," Land Use Law Alert (September 2021)

"A Draft Technical Advisory Offers Guidance on Streamlining CEQA Review for Sustainable Transportation," Land Use Law Alert (July 2021)

"Records Retention Policies and CEQA Compliance," *Urban Water Institute Newsletter* (October 2020)

Presentations

"Sticker Shock: Why Do California Apartments Cost So Much to Build?" co-presenter, Bay Area Council (October 2026)

"StimULI - Unlocking Value Through Modular Construction," speaker, ULI Los Angeles Event (September 2026)

"House Forum and Interactive Workshop" speaker, Monterey Attainable Housing Forum (November 2025)

"The Future of Downtowns: Can Office-to-Housing Conversions Really Help?" moderator, Bay Area Council (September 2024)

"Housing the Bay Area: Moving from Crisis to Solutions," panelist, Northern California Chapter of Corenet (August 2024)

Press

"Hanson Bridgett Announces 2025 Partner Promotions," Hanson Bridgett Press Release (January 2025)

“Housing project at S.F. parking lot stalled for a decade. Now its developer plans to supersize it, “ *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 2024)

“Developers Seizing ‘Supersized’ Density Bonus Opportunity,” *Daily Journal* (February 2024)

Honors & Awards

Super Lawyers, Land Use & Zoning; Environmental; Real Estate (2015-2022)

California Lawyers Association, Wiley W. Manuel Pro Bono Legal Services Award (2022)

Professional Affiliations

Bay Area Council – Housing Committee Co-Chair (2024-present)

Urban Land Institute – San Francisco District, Public Private Partnership Local Product Council (2024-present), Member (2007-present)

Midland School, Board of Trustees (2023-present)

Academic Distinctions

California Department of Justice, Division of Public Rights, Land Law section, Law School Honors Program (2009)

Education

J.D., Loyola Law School Los Angeles (2010)

B.A., University of California, Berkeley (2004)

Admissions and Courts

California