

Paula BAEZA

Shareholder

ORANGE COUNTY | TEMECULA

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Paula represents city and public agency clients on eminent domain and real estate issues. Paula works closely with clients in project planning and the pre-acquisition phase of the eminent domain process to analyze any issues that may arise in the proposed acquisition. Paula's experience is that taking an active role in the pre-acquisition stage, ensuring the clients follow the pre-acquisition procedures and facilitating meetings with clients, impacted owners, utility holders, and appraisers often results in successful negotiation, early resolution of acquisitions, and minimizes the legal issues in any filed eminent domain proceedings.

WORK FOR CLIENTS

Paula has represented the Cities of Anaheim, Banning, Brea, Buena Park, Indio, Manteca, Moorpark, Rancho Cucamonga, Seaside, Temecula and Yucaipa and the former Palm Desert Redevelopment Agency on acquisitions and real property-related issues. She is currently lead acquisition counsel for the Cities of Banning, Indio, Jurupa Valley and Temecula.

Paula's practice focuses on representing cities and public agencies on acquisition-related issues, including pre-acquisition issues, analysis of property interests required for a project, appraisal and negotiation issues, relocation assistance, eminent domain proceedings, preparation of purchase and sale agreements, rights of entry, conveyance documents and analysis of title and escrow documents. Paula handles eminent domain proceedings involving challenges to the public agency's right to take, precondemnation damage claims, severance damage claims, claims for loss of business goodwill, and other valuation issues.

PRACTICE AREAS

Eminent Domain

Municipal & Public Agency Law

Real Estate

FOCUS AREAS

Condemnation Actions

Eminent Domain (Litigation)

Infrastructure Projects

Real Estate Acquisition & Right-of-Way

Real Estate Transactions

Relocation Assistance

EDUCATION

J.D., Loyola Law School, Los Angeles

A.B., Stanford University

Paula has assisted clients on acquisition of property for public facilities, parks, parking lots, public works projects, road widening, extension projects and realignments, freeway interchange projects, storm drain easements, flood control easements, water transmission lines, and sewer lines. Paula advises clients regarding applicable state and federal regulations on projects involving federal funds and projects with Caltrans oversight.

Paula is the Assistant Chair of the Eminent Domain Department at Richards, Watson & Gershon.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Paula joined Richards, Watson & Gershon in 1998.

Before pursuing a career in law, Paula served as a California State Senate Fellow in 1990-1991 where she worked on a broad range of public policy issues and projects. After the Senate Fellowship, Paula served as a volunteer coordinator for a state assembly campaign and later served as district staff for a Riverside County Supervisor where she assisted constituents on many issues involving the county. These experiences in public policy and politics shaped Paula's desire to assist cities and public agencies on issues that impact local communities.

HONORS & AWARDS

California Senate Fellow (1990-1991)

Senior Production Editor, Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Journal

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

Member, Riverside County Bar Association

Member, Los Angeles County Bar Association

Member, International Right of Way Association, Chapter 57

EXPERIENCE

► *Jurupa Valley Limonite Avenue Widening Project.*

Assisted the City of Jurupa Valley to acquire portions of twelve parcels for the widening of Limonite Avenue from Etiwanda Avenue to Bain Street. The project required the acquisition of portions of ten parcels owned by private property owners and portions of two larger parcels owned by a public agency. Worked with city staff on offer letters, purchase and sale agreements, and settlement agreements. Represented the city on two

eminent domain proceedings that resulted in negotiated settlements.

► *French Valley Parkway/I-15 Improvements Phase II.*

Assisted the City of Temecula to acquire certain fee interests, easement interests, and temporary construction easements on several parcels and helped the city to meet a critical right-of-way certification deadline. Worked with city staff on the pre-acquisition steps, prepared purchase and sale agreements, settlement agreements, and assisted the city with escrow. Prepared agenda reports, resolutions of necessity, and filed eminent domain proceedings for certain property interests required for Phase II. Assisted the city with negotiating agreements in connection with several of the subject property interests acquired for Phase II, including the property interests that were the subject of the filed eminent domain proceedings.

► *Overland Drive Extension Project.*

Assisted the City of Temecula on several fee acquisitions and partial acquisitions in connection with the city's plans to extend Overland Drive from Commerce Center Drive to Enterprise Circle West, which impacted four businesses that operated on three of the larger parcels. Assisted the city on negotiations with the owners and business owners of these parcels regarding just compensation, loss of business goodwill, and relocation issues. The acquisitions were successfully resolved without the filing of any eminent domain proceedings.

► *State Route 99/State Route 120 East (Yosemite Avenue).*

Assisted the City of Manteca to acquire portions of approximately 25 parcels for the State Route 99/State Route 120 East (Yosemite Avenue) Interchange and Road Widening Project. This project required cooperation with Caltrans, certification of right-of-way and rights of entry. Worked with staff on appraisal review, offers and negotiations, agenda reports, resolutions of necessity, settlement agreements, and purchase and sale agreements. Most of the acquisitions were resolved prior to a resolution of necessity hearing. Represented the city in eight eminent domain proceedings that were resolved by negotiated settlements early on in the litigation.

PRESENTATIONS

Practical Applications in Eminent Domain
Orange County City Attorney's Association, 2010

Trials and Tribulations of a Partial Acquisition
International Right of Way Association, Chapter 1 Valuation Seminar, 2010