Sean R. McGowan

Partner

Practice Leader | Real Estate

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- Representation in commercial real estate transactions, including the acquisition, disposition, leasing and financing of a comprehensive range of properties
- All aspects of development and redevelopment, land use and zoning, project financing and incentives, construction agreements, property management issues, landlord-tenant matters, day-to-day business counseling
- Previous in-house experience drives a sophisticated big picture perspective and business-focused approach to guiding clients to successful outcomes

Sean focuses his practice on assisting commercial property owners in reaching their business goals by providing the legal support required for success. His work encompasses the purchase, sale and leasing of commercial properties and providing guidance on land use matters, with a particular emphasis on obtaining approvals for multifamily apartment buildings and industrial facilities.

Sean has experience in all aspects of development, redevelopment, real property transactions, land use approvals and permitting, zoning issues, commercial project financing and incentives, and the representation of clients on issues related to property management, landlord-tenant matters, and day-to-day business counseling. He represents clients in the drafting and negotiation of redevelopment, financial (PILOT) and construction agreements, in real estate-related joint ventures, and in disputes and litigation involving real estate holdings. He also serves as counsel to one of the major sewerage authorities in the state and has previously served as counsel to other public entities.

Sean's clients include real estate investors, developers, commercial landlords and tenants, the owners of retail properties, and small businesses and corporate property owners. In addition to his experience as an attorney in private practice, Sean previously served in an in-house legal capacity for a leading New Jersey based commercial developer, assisting in the development of numerous multi-family residential, retail and warehouse projects. Through this experience, he has acquired a unique perspective and deep understanding of the issues faced by commercial real estate developers and redevelopers, enabling him to take a business-oriented approach to his work on behalf of clients.

Areas of Focus

Practice Areas

- Real Estate
- Commercial Real Estate Acquisitions & Dispositions
- Commercial Real Estate Leasing
- Real Estate Financing
- Land Use & Zoning Disputes
- Landlord & Tenant
- Redevelopment, Land Use & Zoning
- Affordable Housing
- Land Use Approvals
- Parking Demand & Other Special Considerations
- Project Siting & Property Acquisition
- Redevelopment Plans & Agreements
- Affordable Housing

Industries

- Real Estate

Credentials

Bar Admissions

- New Jersey, 2005
- U.S. District Court, District of New Jersey, 2005

Education

- Seton Hall University School of Law, J.D., 2005

- Rutgers University, B.A., 2002
- New Jersey Institute of Technology, Graduate Certificate in Construction Management

Recognition

- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America* (a trademark of Woodward/White, Inc.) in the Real Estate Law practice area (2026-present)
- Selected for inclusion by *NJBIZ* on its 2024 "Leaders in Law" list

Clerkships

- Former law clerk to The Honorable Harriet F. Klein, Superior Court of New Jersey, Essex County, Chancery Division (2005-2006)

Experience

Representative Matters

- Representing The Ramani Group and its affiliates in the phased redevelopment of a $500 million, 1,300-unit mixed-use residential and retail project in Plainfield, including multi-site acquisitions, redevelopment agreements, planning approvals, and complex financing. The firm's work includes securing $26 million in permanent financing, structuring a $60 million construction loan for Phase II, and advising on entity restructuring to satisfy lender collateral requirements.
- Serving as general counsel to the Linden Roselle Sewerage Authority, provides ongoing representation at monthly meetings and assists in the drafting and review of resolutions, contract bids and related checklists, and contracts for construction projects. Also advises on legal compliance matters and on regulations pertinent to operational issues and provides counsel on employment and staffing matters and litigation.
- Successfully represented the Islamic Center of Passaic County in securing municipal and county approvals for a $25 million, community center in Paterson and the expansion of its mosque in Clifton, prevailing before the Clifton Planning Board following protracted hearings and testimony and overcoming significant neighborhood opposition. Read more about this matter.
- Lead counsel in the firm's representation of a New York-based full-service real estate firm and its affiliates, with holdings throughout the country, in the redevelopment and approval of a $75 million portfolio of industrial outdoor storage properties in Delanco, successfully challenging restrictive zoning through litigation, securing adoption of a redevelopment plan, and obtaining municipal approvals enabling implementation of the client's business model. The buildings totaled more than one million square feet leased to more than 80 tenants.

- Representing L'Oréal USA Products in the $75 million expansion of its Franklin Township manufacturing facility, obtaining unanimous planning board approval following extensive public hearings and negotiations over site improvements, and coordinating ongoing regulatory approvals with county and state agencies.

- Represented the owner of an aging and dilapidated motel in Woodbridge in the redevelopment of the property into a multifamily community with an affordable housing component. The representation included negotiating redevelopment and financial agreements with tax abatements, construction and bridge financing, and affordable housing compliance, including a novel municipal arrangement and a rent control exemption for market-rate units. In the final phase of the project, Sean advised on permanent financing collateralized for securitization, enabling the client to retain its existing corporate structure and achieve substantial cost savings.
- Represented a corporation in the sale of a former chemical manufacturing facility burdened by zoning restrictions and environmental contamination, negotiating seller financing, price adjustments, and post-closing remediation agreements to facilitate a $10 million transaction after multiple prior failed sales.
- Represented the buyer in the $11.7 million acquisition and rehabilitation financing of a 250-unit multifamily property in Ohio, structuring a “drop and swap” transaction to avoid reassessment, negotiating complex lender covenants, and meeting accelerated closing requirements tied to defeasance.
- Representing a premiere production resource for the television and film industries in the leasing and operation of industrial space for film and television production companies, including Netflix, in New Jersey. The firm’s representation includes negotiating specialized master leases, subleases, and license agreements permitting short-term studio use, stage construction, and pyrotechnics, and structuring ancillary revenue arrangements.
- Representing an affiliated entity of a full-service real estate development, construction, and property management firm in a $50 million mixed-use development in South Orange, securing amended site plan and parking approvals for commercial tenants through streamlined hearings before a highly regulated municipal planning board.
- Representing The Ramani Group’s single purpose entity in the redevelopment of a blighted commercial property into a 23-unit multifamily project, including acquisition, redevelopment and financial agreements with tax abatements, environmental and easement negotiations, zoning approvals, and construction financing.

Affiliations

Memberships

- New Jersey State Bar Association: Real Property, Trust and Estate Law Section, Board of Consultors
- Commercial Real Estate Development Association, New Jersey (CREDA NJ)
- New Jersey Builders Association: MultiFamily Council

Insights & More

Announcements

2027 Edition of Best Lawyers Recognizes 50 Attorneys in 38 Practice Areas
8.20.26

Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis Named to 2026 NJBIZ Leaders in Real Estate, Construction and Design List
4.22.26

Greenbaum Prevails Before Clifton Planning Board on Behalf of the Islamic Center of Passaic County
3.18.26

2026 Edition of Best Lawyers Recognizes 54 Attorneys in 41 Practice Areas: Eight Greenbaum Lawyers Recognized on “Ones to Watch” List
8.21.25

Sean R. McGowan & Stephanie G. Reckord Recognized by NJBIZ on 2023 List Called "Leaders in Law"
4.11.23

Jack Fersko and Sean R. McGowan Profiled in Law360
2.20.23

Sean R. McGowan Named Co-Chair of Real Estate Department
1.08.23

Client Alerts

New Jersey Moves to Establish Database of Available Commercial Real Estate Properties
6.09.23

Publications

2024 Market Forecast
January 2024

Greenbaum Rowe Real Estate Co-Chairs Talk Practice Goals
2.09.23

Greenbaum Rowe Names New Real Estate Co-Chair In NJ
1.10.23

Seminars & Events

Multi-Family and Mixed-Use Trends
3.25.26

The State of Redevelopment: Multifamily and Mixed-Use
12.09.25

Tax Law Update Lunch and Learn
8.04.25

Legal Trends in Land Use Law
3.25.25

Land Use and Zoning in New Jersey: From Application to Appeal
12.12.24

Hot Topics in Commercial Real Estate
5.15.24

2024 Real Estate Conference
4.17.24

Financing Programs
3.20.24

Legal Trends in Land Use Law
3.28.23

Redevelopment and Related Agreements between Municipalities and Private Parties: An Overview of Public Private Partnerships
4.26.22

Development Agreements Between Municipalities and Private Parties: Private Funding, Tax, and Infrastructure Issues for Long-Term Development Projects
2.22.22

Legal Trends in Land Use Law
10.11.21

Videos

Minimizing Risk & Maximizing ROI in Multifamily Development Projects
6.09.26