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Editors' Note

This year, we decided to take a different approach. We didn't pick a list of lawyers specifically devoted to real estate deals or municipal law. Our list this year is collection of the state's top attorneys whose work in the development arena significantly impacted projects that are helping to shape the transformation of cities.

For instance, as bond counsel to the Bay Area Toll Authority, Mary A. Collins of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP had a big hand in shepherding financing of the new \$6.5 billion east span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. She called it "one of the most expensive infrastructure projects in California in the last 20 years." Scott H. Campbell of Best Best & Krieger LLP helped Avalon shed its inclusion on an environmental group's notorious "Beach Bummers" list, helping guide a process to fix the city's sewer system and clean up the harbor.

Edgar Khalatian of Mayer Brown LLP is taking on the first full-scale revision to Los Angeles' zoning code in more than 60 years. He also represents the owner and developer of the mixed-use SOLA Village project in downtown L.A., which is set to include 1,500 residential units and 200 hotel rooms across 2.5 million square feet. And Allan T. Marks of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP served as developer's counsel on the second phase of the \$1.1 billion Presidio Parkway highway project, which will replace Doyle Drive, the southern access to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco.

These lawyers and the others on our list are passionate about their work, and it shows in very tangible ways.

- The Editors

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Dale Goldsmith

**Armbruster Goldsmith & Delvac LLP**

Los Angeles

Specialty: land use

Goldsmith has been working on the highly anticipated development of the Plaza at Santa Monica. At 148 feet tall and 12 stories, the mixed-use project designed by prominent architect Rem Koolhaas will include a boutique hotel, retail space, affordable housing and public space at Fourth Street and Arizona Avenue.

Goldsmith has had a big hand in negotiating the public-private partnership between city of Santa Monica and developers Metropolitan Pacific Capital, DLJ Real Estate Capital Partners and Clarett West Development. His team is working to secure entitlements for the project, which is still a few years from

completion.

"The intriguing thing about the project is the design," Goldsmith said. "It's particularly interesting that Koolhaas has the design of this building. It's truly one of the most interesting projects I've worked on."

Goldsmith has also been working on a series of projects to provide housing in the downtown Los Angeles arts district. He's helping to create a new hybrid type of zoning. The area, mostly encompassed by industrial zoning, lacks good housing options and doesn't allow for residential uses, and Goldsmith is working on six projects that would offer work and live spaces.

"That would create space for more lively, robust, more extensive artistic and creative activity such as welding or coffee grinding," Goldsmith said.

Having worked in land use law since 1986, Goldsmith said he loves the niche.

"I deal with tangible things," he said. "The greatest pleasure I have is when I drive down the street and see one of my projects. I can say, 'I had a hand in that.' It's far more exhilarating work, I think, than my compatriots who can say, 'I've moved large mountains of money.'"

- **Katie Lucia**

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Armbruster Goldsmith & Delvac LLP
 Los Angeles
Specialty: land use

Delvac has focused much of his practice on the historic preservation of many of Southern California's oldest buildings. Along that vein, he's recently focused on the creation of the future Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. The museum will be housed in a 75-year-old former May Company building near the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's campus at Wilshire Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue in Los Angeles.

"It's really going to be a phenomenal addition to L.A. scene," said Delvac, who represents the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in connection with the project.

So far Delvac has managed preparation of the studies and paperwork required for the environmental impact report, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. It's coming together well, he said, and the project is nearly ready to move into the public approval process. As with most large developments, he said, there has been some community concern at this particular site over the flow of traffic.

"Traffic is always a big issue," he said. "In that neighborhood, attracting visitors is a concern and I think we're going to have little resistance from people who aren't in love with the idea of a Museum of Motion Pictures - a world class attraction - in their neighborhood."

Having practiced land use law for more than 30 years, Delvac said he loves the challenge of navigating difficult twists and turns in a project's journey toward completion. It takes strategic thinking, he said, as well as knowledge of the law and the patience to resolve issues.

"I find in my practice [that] strategy is critically important," he said. "When you decide the strategy, you have to know it's a long road, know what your highest hurdle is, know you can jump that first. We have to run toward the issues, not away from the issues."

- **Katie Lucia**