

The Real Estate Legal Market

By Richard A. Rosenbaum, Executive Chairman, Greenberg Traurig, LLP

EDITORS' NOTE *Richard Rosenbaum has long been considered a thought and change leader in the legal profession. He joined Greenberg Traurig in 1985 as its 90th lawyer and has since been integrally involved in forming and successfully executing the strategies that have led to the firm's growth and unique culture across the United States, Europe and the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. He closely guards the firm's long-term core values while still aggressively navigating ever-changing times. Rosenbaum has always put the firm's clients and people first, understanding that a law firm leader works for them, first and foremost. He is proud of his work in founding the firm's renowned and wide-ranging "commitment to excellence" program, which ensures that all these values remain core to the firm's daily practice and global brand for many years to come.*



Richard A. Rosenbaum

FIRM BRIEF *Greenberg Traurig, LLP (gtlaw.com) has more than 3,100 attorneys in 51 locations in the United States, Europe and the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. The firm is a 2024 BTI "Leading Edge Law Firm" for delivering on client expectations for the future and is consistently among the top firms on the Am Law Global 100 and NLJ 500.*

For decades, real estate law was viewed as disciplined, durable, stable, and, most importantly, predictable. Land was tangible. Contracts were structured. Financing followed established patterns and frameworks. The work required rigor, precision, and patience. However, seldom were multiple disciplines involved, requiring novel approaches to close transactions. That era is over.

Technology upheaval, energy transition, the expansion of healthcare infrastructure, and the integration of AI are not simply influencing the real estate market and practice of law; they are reshaping them at a structural level. The role of real estate lawyers is being redefined in completely unexpected ways. What was once a largely siloed practice focused primarily on title, leasing, zoning, and financing has evolved to cover the intersection of technology, infrastructure, regulation, and capital markets.

This shift is not incremental. It is a powerful transformation that has upended the way things were done in the past. At Greenberg Traurig, we've been at the forefront of disruption since our founding nearly 60 years ago. Real estate law has always been a cornerstone of the firm. We had anticipated these changes for years. It's why we spent so much time and capital bringing in respected real estate attorneys who shared our vision for the potential of what the real estate market could become. At

the same time, we also invested heavily in technology to empower our attorneys to be more efficient. This mindset is part of what enabled our firm to reach just shy of \$3 billion in revenue in 2025, and we expect continued growth in our real estate practice (among others) for the years to come. But knowing how and where to focus in this shifting arena requires a true understanding of the changes taking place around the world.

As mentioned above, part of that understanding stemmed from the realignment we saw as large language models and machine learning were beginning to break through many years ago. While some didn't anticipate AI would become omnipresent, we recognized its potential to fundamentally change the practice of law around the world. Generative AI's abilities have been covered extensively elsewhere, but worth noting is how legal work that took days or weeks could now be done in hours. This frees up attorneys from rote tasks to focus on the strategic and tactical elements that AI is not designed to handle. In essence, this technology amplifies capability without replacing the immense value of human judgment. In that sense, the AI transformation mirrors the broader evolution of real estate law itself: the firms that lead will be those that embrace change with both ambition and discipline.

As lawyers are liberated from certain tasks, they've noted a shift in real estate that appears most visible in the asset classes driving deal

“Technology upheaval, energy transition, the expansion of healthcare infrastructure, and the integration of AI are not simply influencing the real estate market and practice of law; they are reshaping them at a structural level.”

“The throughline is unmistakable: real estate is increasingly intertwined with emerging asset classes that demand a multidisciplinary approach to navigate potential pitfalls and take advantage of opportunities.”

activity: large-scale data centers, medical office portfolios, battery storage facilities, renewable energy developments, and industrial properties with embedded energy components are no longer niche sectors. They drive capital allocation strategies, and the blend of real estate and infrastructure has created a wealth of opportunities for attorneys who understand the complexities and textured layers of how these once distinct areas now come together. Consider a real estate deal involving a data center. These facilities may require land assemblage, energy procurement, transmission planning, tax incentives, water rights analysis, environmental review, and cybersecurity and data governance considerations. The broader infrastructure ecosystem is inextricably intertwined with energy markets and regulatory oversight. These elements must each be handled adroitly from many different disciplines within a firm for the client to have the opportunity to thrive.

Medical office and healthcare developments present a different but equally intricate web to maneuver through. Transactions in this space must account for Stark Law compliance, reimbursement structures, operational covenants tied to hospital systems, privacy regimes, and regulatory scrutiny. Of course, landlord-tenant issues remain an area of careful focus as well. The team providing real estate counsel must be conversant in land use, finance, and healthcare regulations, as well as operational risk. Pushing deeper, potentially other issues will emerge. Clients need trusted guidance that can anticipate where the risks may lurk under the surface.

Energy-transition assets further expand the terrain. Solar arrays, wind projects, battery storage facilities, and hybrid industrial developments with energy components introduce interconnection agreements, federal and state incentives, environmental permitting, and grid capacity constraints. If it's a cross-border transaction, there is a heightened level of regulatory compliance to consider. By necessity, real estate strategy is inextricably woven into infrastructure planning and regulatory considerations.

The throughline is unmistakable: real estate is increasingly intertwined with emerging asset classes that demand a multidisciplinary approach to navigate potential pitfalls and take advantage of opportunities. The team representing their client will, ideally, take a holistic approach as we do at GT to handle the convergence of property, infrastructure, finance,

energy, and technology. Each aspect requires an experienced hand at the tiller.

Yet the forces reshaping the real estate landscape extend beyond the nuances of individual asset classes. They reflect a broader reordering of how markets operate, how capital moves, and how organizations evaluate risk. What once could be understood through local conditions and domestic regulatory frameworks now requires a more global view, where cross border influences potentially dictate the success or failure of a transaction. This shift is perhaps most visible in the globalization of capital flows. Pension funds, sovereign wealth entities, infrastructure investors, and multinational operators now deploy capital across continents with an appetite that would have been unthinkable two decades ago. Their priorities – long term stability, resilient cash flows, and assets with infrastructure characteristics – align with the healthcare, energy, and tech heavy real estate sectors driving today's activity. However, their presence also introduces new layers of regulatory compliance, diligence expectations, and jurisdiction specific norms that must be reconciled. A real estate transaction in Phoenix can be shaped by rules in Singapore. A financing structure in Boston may require navigation of investment review protocols in Riyadh. Real estate lawyers and their teams must now interpret dual (or more) regulatory systems that do not always share common roots or goals.

I suspect you're seeing the picture, but it goes deeper. Real estate lawyers must keep pace with governmental policies as well. The alacrity with which regulatory bodies adapt new policies creates an environment where the rules themselves are in motion, especially as political pendulums swing. Energy policies may shift as countries attempt to balance decarbonization goals with grid reliability. Healthcare regulations evolve in response to demographic pressures, staffing shortages, and technological innovation. Data assets face reevaluation as nations assess privacy, security, and sovereignty requirements. The regulatory landscape might change during a transaction, forcing real time adjustments. Predictability has seemingly been trumped by the need for adaptive thinking and cross functional understanding.

At the same time, the operational underpinnings of assets have become more central to investment decisions. In earlier decades, many investors were not as concerned with

how a hospital functioned, how a data center consumed power, or how an industrial building integrated renewable energy. Today those operational realities are inseparable from valuation and risk assessment. A facility's resilience to climate pressures, its ability to scale technologically, its compatibility with future regulatory regimes, and its alignment with shifting tenant needs all play a role in the longevity of the investment. Real estate is still brick and mortar, but it is also systems, data, energy, and operational continuity; each is an essential element that must be considered in determining investment value.

This convergence has heightened the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration within firms. Transactions increasingly require the perspective not just of real estate attorneys, but also those versed in energy regulation, environmental policy, healthcare operations, data privacy, tax structuring, project finance, and government law and policy. The modern deal is no longer a straight line from LOI and PSA to closing. It is a coordinated effort across practices to protect the client. Firms that operate in silos simply cannot keep pace with the complexity of what clients now face.

Another notable transformation is the shifting expectation of what clients seek from their attorneys. While legal precision remains foundational, clients prioritize strategic counsel that helps them anticipate obstacles, position assets for long term success, and understand how macro level forces impact decisions. Again, this is another way generative AI has had a pivotal impact by enabling greater document analysis and creation in a very short period. Clients target advisors who grasp both the transactional mechanics and the broader economic, regulatory, and geopolitical context in which their assets will exist. The real estate lawyer who can connect these dots most efficiently is the one who adds enduring value.

Ultimately, the evolution underway is not a temporary deviation from the norm. It is the new norm. Real estate has become a nexus of global capital, infrastructure demands, regulatory intensity, and technological transformation. And the attorneys who guide clients through this environment must be as dynamic and multifaceted as the landscape itself. The question is not whether the real estate legal market will continue to evolve, but which firms will lead that evolution and which will be forced to follow. ●