

**Seena Max Samimi
Of Counsel**

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Practice Groups

Land Use & Environmental
Municipal and Special District
Real Estate
Trial & Litigation

Bar Number

246335

Education

University of California, Berkeley School
of Law, JD, 2006

University of California, Los Angeles,
BA, 2003 *summa cum laude*

Practicing Since: 2006

Languages: Spanish, Persian (Farsi)

Seena Samimi's practice focuses on complex disputes involving real property, land use, and environmental law. His clients turn to him in their high-end residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use projects across California to navigate complex legal issues, and when needed, defend them against contentious neighbors, vocal community groups, and aggressive regulatory agencies.

With over two decades of experience, Seena brings a broad perspective shaped by hands-on expertise and diverse roles from both sides of the courtroom. He has served as outside counsel to cities and counties, advised major corporations, and acted as general counsel for a global construction company overseeing critical infrastructure projects. Seena secured essential environmental approvals for the largest desalination plant in the United States and has advised on major international developments, including a high-profile project in Santiago, Chile, at the base of the Andes.

Seena handles litigation and appeals across real estate, land use, environmental, and government agency law – including cases involving cannabis regulation and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In addition, Seena handles a wide range of real property issues for high-net-worth clients arising from neighbor disputes, enforcement of covenants and easements, nuisance abatement, code enforcement, permitting, and zoning disputes.

Known for his practical, strategic approach, Seena helps clients protect their investments, resolve tough disputes, and succeed in and out of court.

Honors and Awards

The Best Lawyers in America, Land Use and Zoning Law
(2024–2027)

Professional and Community Affiliations

- The State Bar of California, Member (2006-Present)
- California Lawyers Association, Environmental Section

Presentations and Publications

- Presenter, “Key Regulations, Case Studies, and Cross-Practice Impacts in a Rapidly Evolving Legal Landscape” – *Meyers Nave* webinar, December 11, 2024
- Quoted, “District Attorney Targets Commercial Property Owners Tied to Unlicensed Businesses” – *The Bakersfield Californian*, November 18, 2023
- Quoted, “Legal Perspectives on Federal and State-Level Legislation” *Law.com*, April 1, 2022
- Author, “California Regulators Release Revised Compliance Framework for Commercial Licensing” – *Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP* Client Alert, September 21, 2021
- Author, “Current Trends in COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement” – *Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP* Update, June 17, 2020
- Author, “COVID-19 Economic Relief Programs Will Spur Wave of Future Government Investigations and Law Enforcement Actions” – *Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP* Update, April 14, 2020
- Author, “Dos and Don’ts of California’s Commercial Compliance Environment” – *Daily Journal*, August 5, 2019
- Quoted, “Experts Highlight Five Legal Pitfalls Hoteliers Face” – *Hotel News Now, Meet the Money*, May 17, 2019
- Interview, “Legal Issues Surrounding Business Regulation in California” – *Buenos Días Familia, Estrella TV*, April 4, 2018
- Quoted, “Medical Marijuana and Commercial Real Estate in California and Beyond” – *Lawline Today*, September 8, 2015
- Quoted, “Attorney Gets into the Weeds on Marijuana and Commercial Real Estate” – *Sacramento Business Journal*, March 12, 2015

Published Decisions

- *California Construction & Industrial Materials Assn. v. County of Ventura*, 97 Cal.App.5th 1 (November 13, 2023)
- *Tsakopoulos Investments, LLC v. County of Sacramento*, 95 Cal.App.5th 280 (September 7, 2023)
- *Kirby v. County of Fresno*, 242 Cal.App.4th 940 (December 1, 2015)

- *Castaic Lake Water Agency v. Newhall County Water Dist.*, 238 Cal.App.4th 1196 (June 26, 2015)

Representative Experience

Real Estate and Land Use Litigation

- **Bronfman – Real Estate Fraud Litigation.** Obtained an \$11 million verdict after a month-long jury trial for claims involving fraud and breach of fiduciary duty in connection with a \$26 million real estate venture involving luxury homes in Southern California.
- **Hines Holdings – Breach of Contract Litigation.** Represented a mezzanine lender defending against claims for breach of loan guaranties and an alleged loan-to-own scheme involving a \$1.5 billion real estate portfolio. (Summary judgment and favorable settlement.)
- **Los Angeles Housing Project – Housing Litigation.** Successfully overturned a local government denial of a housing project based on the Housing Accountability Act, where the trial court granted a writ of mandate ordering the City of Los Angeles to approve the project.
- **Beverly Hills Restrictive Covenant – Litigation and Preliminary Injunction.** Successfully obtained a preliminary injunction in federal court to block neighboring construction being done in violation of a restrictive covenant.
- **Montecito Neighbor Dispute – Litigation/Mediation.** Successful mediation of a neighbor dispute after litigation involving neighboring owners trespassing to remove trees to improve their views without consent.
- **Commercial Complex – Enforcement of CC&Rs.** Successfully blocked a cannabis operator from operating within a commercial complex due to violation of CC&Rs. Represented ownership of commercial complex through City administrative proceedings, trial in California Superior Court, and California Court of Appeal.
- **Cardiff Real Estate Fraud – Litigation/Mediation.** Reached resolution at mediation, representing Defendant sellers of property, relating to allegations of failure to disclose material facts at sale of property.
- **San Luis Obispo Cannabis Operator – Litigation.** Successfully defended against a local government action to revoke a cannabis license from a legally operating client, through issuance of a temporary restraining order against the City.
- **City of Rancho Cordova – Eviction Action.** Represented City in successful eviction of a bar operator tenant who refused to vacate City land after lease termination.
- **Beverly Hills Landlord – Mediation.** Represented Beverly Hills Landlord in successful mediation where no money was paid out to Tenant alleging problems with property.

CEQA and Environmental

- **The Parking Spot – CEQA Litigation.** Represented a prominent national airport parking operator in a CEQA dispute with Los Angeles World Airports in connection with LAX's Landside Access Modernization Program, resulting in a favorable settlement.
- **City of Salinas – CEQA Litigation.** Successfully represented the City in a challenge to the City's approval of an Amazon Warehouse facility, obtaining dismissal of the action.
- **City of Vacaville – CEQA Litigation.** Successfully represented the real party in interest developer relating to a CEQA challenge to the City's approval of a housing development, obtaining dismissal of the action.
- **Los Angeles Department of Water and Power – Owens Valley Air Quality Penalties.** Represented LADWP in litigation relating to over \$100 million in penalties under the Health and Safety Code, associated with air emissions in the Owens Valley.
- **Codelco – Mining Transactional.** Represented a servient tenement property owner in the negotiation of an easement with Codelco, the largest mining company in Chile.

Government & Public Policy

- **California Cities/Counties - Cannabis Industry Litigation.** Represented cities and counties throughout California in cannabis regulation efforts, obtaining preliminary injunctions, temporary restraining orders, and permanent injunctions against cannabis operators for various zoning and public nuisance-related violations.
- **Cannabis Industry Clients – Regulatory and Permitting.** Assist cannabis-industry clients throughout California to navigate state and local regulations, including several of the largest companies in the U.S. and one of the first cannabis lounges in all of California.
- **California Cities/Counties -- Cannabis Regulations.** Represented cities and counties throughout California in drafting and implementing cannabis-related regulations.
- **California Cities/Counties – Public Records Act.** Represented public entities in responding to Public Records Act requests and defending against litigation challenging the adequacy of document productions.
- **Private Developers – Public Records Act.** Represented private clients in pursuing government documents through the Public Records Act, including all stages of litigation relating to disclosure disputes.

Land Entitlements & Permitting

- **Bellflower Hospital – Conditional Use Permit.** Handled several modifications of conditional use permits, for various hospital uses and conditions of approval.
- **Malibu Motels/Hotels – Project Approvals:** Represented developers in Malibu in connection with planning and land use approvals for motels and hotels before the City of Malibu and the California Coastal Commission.

- **Grandview House Preschool – Entitlement Acquisition.** Represented two preschools in the acquisition and entitlement of sites in Glendale and Pasadena, including complex parking, easement, and covenant issues.
- **Poseidon – CA Coastal Commission approvals.** Represented the largest desalination plant in the Western Hemisphere in obtaining entitlements before the California Coastal Commission.
- **Chile Baha'i Temple – Construction.** Handled environmental work, permitting, real property litigation, and entitlements for an iconic, award-winning development project at the foothills of the Andes Mountains in Santiago, Chile.
- **Malibu Residential Home Owners – Entitlements.** Handled entitlement work for several City of Malibu property owners looking to develop their properties, or make modifications to their homes, including fire rebuilds.

Real Estate

- **Culver City Hospital – Real Property Transactions.** Represented the hospital in the negotiation of purchase and sale agreements, covenants, and easements in connection with real property transactions.
- **Cannabis Industry – Landlord Contracts.** Have Represented landlords in lease negotiations with cannabis-industry tenants, to ensure appropriate protections and safeguards.

Land Use

- **Nobu Malibu – Land Use & Code Enforcement.** Represented the restaurant in connection with land use and code enforcement matters with the City of Malibu.
- **Culver City Hospital – Neighboring Use Abatement.** Represented a hospital in negotiating project modifications and mitigation measures relating to construction, noise, and vibrations for hospital-adjacent projects with potential impacts on operations.
- **City of San Clemente – Recovery Homes.** Represented the Orange County City in disputes involving the regulation of group homes and drug and alcohol recovery facilities.
- **International Real Estate Owner – Challenge of Mello-Roos Tax.** Successfully challenged and invalidated the City of South San Francisco's imposition of a Mello-Roos special tax through a reverse validation civil action, saving clients hundreds of millions of dollars in special taxes.
- **Recycling Centers – Entitlements and Code Enforcement.** Represent several recycling centers throughout various cities in California in their entitlements and responses to code enforcement.

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