



Steven Mlenak

Partner

Practice Leader: Redevelopment, Land Use & Zoning

Practice Leader: Community Association

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- Representation in all aspects of redevelopment and land use law, with a strategic understanding of issues at the intersection of law, policy and local government and a particular focus on securing approvals and offsetting project costs through local tax exemptions and state tax credits
- Assists in the negotiation and drafting of PILOT financial agreements, and in obtaining economic development incentives through Aspire and other programs
- Provides compliance support and general counseling to condominium and homeowners association clients across a broad range of legal issues

Steve is a leader of the firm's redevelopment and land use practice. He guides clients, including developers, property owners and municipalities, through the intricate regulatory landscape of New Jersey's redevelopment process. From initial project concept to final construction, he offers the strategic oversight necessary to obtain project approvals and maximize project viability across the state's real estate sector, providing support on mixed use, residential, industrial, commercial, office, retail and affordable housing development projects.

Steve's practice is defined by his ability to move those projects forward. He represents clients in all aspects of redevelopment and land use law, with a particular focus on offsetting project costs through local tax exemptions and state tax credits and securing land use approvals.

Steve assists redevelopers and municipalities in the negotiation and drafting of financial agreements (PILOTs) under New Jersey's Long Term Tax Exemption Law. He has played a key role in helping numerous clients secure funding through various Economic Development Authority (EDA) programs, including incentives under the EDA's Aspire Program for projects that utilize low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC).

His work encompasses the negotiation and drafting of complex redevelopment agreements, the review of redevelopment area studies and redevelopment plans, the drafting of redevelopment-related ordinances and resolutions, and appearances before redevelopment entities and governing bodies. This includes representing clients before municipal, county, and state planning and zoning boards to secure essential permits, variances, and approvals.

Steve's approach is informed by a deep understanding of New Jersey's legislative process, gained from hands-on experience dating back to his tenure as Chief of Staff for a member of the state's General Assembly. This unique background allows him to offer clients a sophisticated perspective on the intersection of law, policy, and local government.

Beyond redevelopment, Steve maintains a strong practice in community association law, providing strategic guidance and general counseling to condominium and homeowners association clients across a broad range of legal issues. He supports common interest communities throughout New Jersey in the interpretation and amendment of governing documents and by-laws, drafting contracts, the collection of delinquent assessments, the enforcement of rules and regulations, operational and maintenance issues, the fiduciary responsibilities of board members, transition negotiations and litigation, and Municipal Services Act compliance. When disputes arise, he represents associations in alternative dispute resolution proceedings, construction defect litigation, Fair Housing matters, and landlord-tenant disputes, ensuring his clients remain compliant and protected.

Areas of Focus

Practice Areas

- Redevelopment, Land Use & Zoning
- Affordable Housing
- Condemnation & Eminent Domain
- Land Use Approvals
- Parking Demand & Other Special Considerations
- Project Siting & Property Acquisition
- Public Private Partnerships
- Redevelopment Plans & Agreements
- Special Improvement Districts
- Real Estate
- Affordable Housing

- Real Estate Litigation
- Land Use & Zoning Disputes
- Condominium Litigation
- Financial Incentives & Economic Development
- Community Association
- Energy & Renewable Resources
- Construction Contracting & Risk Management
- Higher Education

Industries

- Real Estate
- Public Entities
- Community Associations
- Construction
- Healthcare
- Energy, Public Utilities & Solid Waste
- Higher Education

Credentials

Bar Admissions

- New Jersey, 2011
- New York, 2013

Education

- Rutgers University School of Law-Newark, J.D., 2011
- University of Connecticut, B.A., 2008

Experience

Representative Matters

- The firm represents The Lions Group, a family-owned real estate development, construction and property management firm, in connection with its transformational redevelopment project at Journal Square in Jersey City, projected to include 360 residential units over 34 stories, retail space and a public thoroughfare to the Journal Square train station. Our representation includes preparation of applications to the New Jersey Economic Development Authority for up to \$90 million in tax credits under the Aspire Program and more than

\$13 million dollars more in LIHTC from the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency. The firm's work further involves environmental remediation oversight, residential master lease preparation, financing for approximately \$300 million dollars with one of the largest financial institutions in the world and preparation of condominium formation documents. [Read more](#) about this project.

- The firm represents a real estate and emerging technology investment firm in connection with its 100% affordable housing project known as Rowan Towers in Trenton, which will substantially renovate and modernize the 195 units on the property. Our representation includes preparation of applications to the New Jersey Economic Development Authority for up to \$90 million in tax credits under the Aspire Program and more than \$30 million dollars in LIHTC from the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency. This project will include a community room, library, remodeled exterior and a social services coordinator, among other features.
- Representing the St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church of Perth Amboy in connection with the redevelopment of its former community center into a multi-use facility comprised of a new community center, senior housing dwellings, a new chapel and priests' offices. This engagement includes counseling with respect to the redevelopment area designation, preparation and negotiation of a redevelopment agreement, and the procurement of all necessary local approvals including preliminary and final site plan approval from the Perth Amboy Planning Board.
- Serving as redevelopment counsel to the Town of Westfield on multiple major initiatives, including the \$500+ million transformation of its downtown core, advising on redevelopment agreements, land disposition, public improvements, financial agreements, bond-financed infrastructure, and public-private partnerships across several concurrent projects.
- The firm is representing Monmouth University in campus-wide land use and redevelopment matters, including securing approvals for the Bruce Springsteen Archives and Center for American Music and advising on student housing, athletic, academic, and infrastructure expansions exceeding \$20 million.
- As part of the firm's ongoing representation of Hartz Mountain Industries in various matters throughout the years, assisted this leading national real estate developer on land use approvals for a \$500+ million master-planned project in Roxbury Township, encompassing nearly 2.5 million square feet of industrial development, residential units, public amenities, infrastructure improvements, and dedication of over 400 acres of open space.
- The firm has represented Capodagli Property Company as the developer of numerous large-scale redevelopment matters and in land use litigation throughout New Jersey. Our representation has included \$40 million lost-profit litigation in Toms River, securing redevelopment approvals in Rahway, and builders-remedy and redevelopment litigation in multiple municipalities, involving projects exceeding \$300 million in aggregate value.
- The firm's role as Special Redevelopment and Affordable Housing Counsel to the Municipality of Princeton involves the redevelopment of the Princeton Seminary property, acquisition of more than six acres through eminent domain for \$42 million, and planning for multiple affordable housing projects totaling more than \$185 million.

- The firm represents the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) as redevelopment counsel in sourcing development partners and negotiating joint venture and development agreements for historic rehabilitation and residential redevelopment projects exceeding \$150 million. The firm's work on this project was [recognized by the New Jersey Alliance for Action as one of New Jersey's Leading Capital Construction Projects](#).
- Soojian Brothers Construction, a family-owned general contracting firm specializing in commercial projects, retained the firm related to its redevelopment of a blighted former gas station in Pompton Lakes into a 23-unit mixed-income multifamily project. Our work included the negotiation of amendments to an existing redevelopment plan, a redevelopment agreement, a tax exemption/financial agreement, and an off-site parking license agreement, as well as the difficult negotiation of easements with a neighboring property owner and the County of Passaic.
- Obtained preliminary and final site plan and subdivision approval with variance and waiver relief from the Township of Woodbridge for a large mixed-use project consisting of 376 apartment units in five buildings, two retail/restaurant buildings, clubhouse featuring a pool and other amenities, approximately 800 parking spaces, and ancillary site improvements.
- Representing a commercial property owner in litigation and administrative proceedings challenging approvals for a \$400 million mixed-use waterfront development in Edgewater, including prerogative writ actions, appellate proceedings, and defense of related retaliation claims.
- Represented the redeveloper of a multi-million-dollar mixed-use project in Linden comprised of 113 market-rate residential dwellings and over 16,000 square feet of retail space. This representation included the preparation and negotiation of the redevelopment agreement and PILOT agreement, as well as coordination of the acquisition of private properties through agreement or condemnation by the City of Linden.
- Played a significant role in the redevelopment of a blighted unoccupied office building in downtown Linden into the new headquarters of an expanding regional laboratory. Representation included the negotiation and execution of an amended redevelopment agreement, financial agreement for a 5-year tax abatement, adoption of related municipal resolutions and ordinances, and assistance in obtaining preliminary and final site plan review approval from the Linden Planning Board.
- Representing a full-service, privately held commercial and residential real estate development and investment company in redevelopment and land use matters throughout New Jersey, including securing approvals for residential and mixed-use projects and advising on developments valued at approximately \$20 million.
- Representing a New York-based scaffolding contractor in the development of a \$5 million manufacturing and office facility in Branchburg, including negotiation of municipal settlement agreements resolving neighboring objections.
- Representing Park Street Land Development LLC in multiple redevelopment projects across New Jersey, including negotiation of redevelopment and PILOT agreements and securing approvals for projects ranging from \$10 million to \$35 million.
- Counseled an international Fortune 500 retailer on large-scale retail and commercial developments totaling millions of square feet across multiple locations, advising on redevelopment approvals, PILOT agreements, environmental remediation, land use and zoning, construction permitting, and leasing matters.

- Obtained a monetary judgment on behalf of a condominium association against a developer for nearly \$200,000 in damages related to unsold commercial units held by the developer in the association. After selling all of the residential units in a Cape May condominium, the developer of the condominium refused to contribute towards the expenses of the building while continuing to own three large commercial units within the condominium. This left the maintenance and repair of the building solely to the individuals that purchased their homes from the developer to pick up the developer's short fall for years. Steve filed suit and, in a lengthy written opinion from the judge, successfully obtained a judgment of nearly \$200,000, including attorney fees and interest, against the developer for the association.
- The firm represented the Morristown Parking Authority, preparing and negotiating parking license agreements, easement agreements, and other parking-related instruments on behalf of the Authority, and periodically serving as counsel to the Authority at its Board of Commissioners' meetings.
- Provided counsel to various District Management Corporations on behalf of SIDs including the Morristown Partnership, Inc., the Newark Downtown District, the Downtown Paterson SID, the Downtown Millburn SID, and the Pompton Lakes SID.

Published Cases

- Played a significant role in representing a New Jersey condominium association in its successful appeal of a U.S. Bankruptcy Court decision. In *In re: Rones*, the Bankruptcy Court had ruled that Chapter 13 debtors could "strip" all but the 6-month priority portion of the condominium's lien by ruling that the New Jersey Condominium Act only afforded a payment priority, rather than a true lien priority (which would protect the lien as a secured claim). On appeal, the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey reversed the Bankruptcy Court, holding that the limited priority granted condominium liens in the Act protects it from being stripped or crammed down in any way. As a result, condominium debtors are now required to pay back the entirety of the validly filed condominium lien as a secured debt to have a Chapter 13 plan confirmed. Steve authored the appellate and reply briefs in the client's appeal and coordinated with CAI-NJ in its filing as *amicus curiae* in support of the association.

Affiliations

Memberships

- New Jersey Builders Association: Redevelopment Counsel; Legislative Affairs Committee
- New Jersey State Bar Association: Land Use Law Section, Secretary (2026-2027), Board of Directors (former member), Legislative Committee (former Chair)
- NAIOP New Jersey: Legislative Committee and Regulatory Affairs Committee
- Community Associations Institute - New Jersey Chapter (CAI-NJ); Board of Directors (2026): President (2025); Executive Committee (2022-2025); Membership Committee: Vice Chair (2020), Member (2019); National Legislative Action Committee - NJ: Member (2026; 2013-2016) Board Liaison (2020-2025)
- Rutgers Business School Center for Real Estate Advisory Board

- Metropolitan Builders & Contractors Association of New Jersey

Personal

- Somerset Raritan Valley Sewerage Authority (Commissioner, 2014-2016; 2016-2021)
- New Jersey Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande (Chief of Staff, 2011-2012)
- Former judicial intern to The Honorable Sebastian P. Lombardi, New Jersey Superior Court (2009)

Insights & More

Announcements

Chambers USA 2026 Recognizes Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis Across 10 Practice Areas and 18 Individuals
6.04.26

Steven G. Mlenak Installed as Secretary of NJBSA Land Use Law Section
5.14.26

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

36 Greenbaum Attorneys Selected for Inclusion in 2026 Edition of New Jersey Super Lawyers
3.20.26

Greenbaum Secures Significant Win as NJ Court Upholds Toms River Redevelopment Plan in Favor of Developer Meridia Toms River 40 Urban Renewal
3.18.26

Greenbaum's Work with NJIT Recognized as One of New Jersey's Leading Capital Construction Projects
2.17.26

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

2025 Chambers USA Guide Ranks Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis in Key Practice Areas and Recognizes 18 Attorneys as Leading Individuals
6.04.25

Thirty-Five Attorneys from Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis Selected for Inclusion in 2025 Edition of New Jersey Super Lawyers
3.19.25

Robert S. Goldsmith to Lecture at Book Launch, Symposium and Networking Reception for The Redevelopment Handbook: A Guide to Rebuilding New Jersey's Communities
10.09.24

2025 Edition of Best Lawyers Recognizes 56 Attorneys in 39 Practice Areas: Ten Greenbaum Lawyers Recognized on "Ones to Watch" List; Three Selected for "Lawyer of the Year" Recognition

8.14.24

2024 Chambers USA Guide Ranks Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis in Key Practice Areas and Recognizes 20 Attorneys as Leading Individuals

6.05.24

Steven G. Mlenak Elected Fellow of American College of Real Estate Lawyers

4.09.24

Thirty-Four Attorneys from Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis Selected for Inclusion in 2024 Edition of New Jersey Super Lawyers

3.25.24

Steven G. Mlenak to Receive 2024 President's Award from New Jersey Chapter of Community Associations Institute

2.13.24

Steven G. Mlenak Elected President-Elect of CAI-NJ

1.15.24

2024 Edition of Best Lawyers Recognizes 59 Attorneys in 38 Practice Areas: Twelve Greenbaum Lawyers Recognized on "Ones to Watch" List; Five Selected for "Lawyer of the Year" Recognition

8.16.23

Greenbaum Partner Steven G. Mlenak Recognized by NJBIZ as a "Forty Under 40" Honoree

8.09.23

Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis Recognized as Member of 2023 New Jersey Future Smart Growth Award-Winning Team for Downtown Westfield Redevelopment Project

8.03.23

Steven G. Mlenak Elected Vice President of CAI-NJ

1.05.23

2023 Edition of Best Lawyers Recognizes 51 Attorneys in 36 Practice Areas: Nine Greenbaum Lawyers Recognized on "Ones to Watch" List; Seven Selected for "Lawyer of the Year" Recognition

8.17.22

Steven G. Mlenak Named Co-Chair of Redevelopment & Land Use Department

1.09.22

Client Alerts

New Jersey's Permitting Dashboard Pilot Program: A New Avenue for Developers and Project Owners to Reduce Delays and Increase Transparency

5.06.26

[Governor Sherrill Signs Executive Order 17 to Address Rising Housing Costs Statewide What You Need to Know](#)

4.29.26

[New Jersey's New E-Bike Law: What Community Associations Need to Know - and Do](#)

2.24.26

[New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency Launches \\$500M Tax Credit Auction](#)

10.15.25

[New Jersey Enacts Legislation to Amend Capital Reserve Funding Requirements for Planned Real Estate Developments](#)

10.06.25

[A Review of the New Jersey Legislature's Latest Amendments to the New Jersey Aspire Program](#)

1.09.25

[New Jersey Releases Fourth Round Affordable Housing Calculations; Identifies Present and Future Need for 150,000 New Units Throughout State](#)

10.21.24

[New Jersey Becomes Second State to Enact Legislation to Protect Structural Integrity of Residential Housing Structures Including Common Interest Communities](#)

1.16.24

[An Overview of Amendments to the New Jersey Aspire Program](#)

7.10.23

[The New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020: An Overview of the New Jersey Film & Digital Media Tax Credit Program](#)

4.27.21

[The New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020: An Overview of the New Jersey Emerge Program](#)

4.01.21

[The New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020: An Overview of the New Jersey Community-Anchored Development Program](#)

3.04.21

[The New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020: An Overview of the New Jersey Aspire Program](#)

2.25.21

[First Look: The New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020](#)

1.08.21

[NJ Governor Phil Murphy Signs Executive Order 153 Permitting Outdoor Swimming Pools, Outdoor Recreation and Entertainment Facilities to Open](#)

6.12.20

Department of Community Affairs Issues Substantial Regulations Affecting Common Interest Communities

5.21.20

Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Allowing Tenants to Use Security Deposit to Pay Rent

4.28.20

An Overview of Recent Land Use Guidance and Legislation in New Jersey in Response to COVID-19

4.13.20

Published Articles

Toms River council vote to scrap downtown plan fell short, judge says

2.27.26

Succession Planning for Community Associations

January 2026

EDA approves \$68 million Aspire award to rehab 196-unit Trenton affordable housing tower

9.22.25

Lions Group eyes 360-unit Journal Square rental tower with \$90 million Aspire award

9.02.25

President's Corner

7.05.25

Key deadlines loom as towns, builders digest new DCA affordable housing obligations

10.20.24

Reports: Hartz scraps plan for logistics park, open space at sprawling Hercules site on I-80

7.31.24

Huge Roxbury warehouse proposal in jeopardy as planning board pushes back. What happened.

6.05.24

Q&A: Eek, E-bikes!

5.24

Responding to Litigation

5.24

Board Roles: Who Does What

February 2024

Powering E-Devices Safely

12.07.23

Q&A: President Bully

7.31.23

Legal Q & A: Handling Harassment

Winter 2022

A Starting Point: Insiders see growing (but measured) demand for new, more targeted state incentive program

October 2021

Radburn's Election Requirements for Smaller Communities

June 2021

The New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020: An Overview of the New Jersey Community-Anchored Development Program

Spring 2021

Greenbaum's Financial Incentives Chair on the Economic Recovery Act and 'Market Responsive' Niche Practice Groups

3.16.21

2021 Market Forecast

January 2021

What Happens When a Management Company Fails to Comply?

5.20

Seminars & Events

2026 Learn with LAC

5.18.26

"Free Money" Making the Most of Government Incentive Programs

3.25.26

2026 Land Use Update – Session 1

2.18.26

An Introduction to Redevelopment Law

10.29.25

Harnessing AI in Commercial Real Estate: Trends, Applications & What's Next

10.16.25

New HMFA Rules: What They Mean for New Jersey's Community Associations

9.03.25

2025 Land Use Update - Session 2

4.10.25

Attaining the American Dream: Solutions to the Affordable Housing Crisis

3.27.25

NAIOP NJ's Annual Public Policy Symposium

3.18.25

2025 Lunch with LAC - Legislative Update

2.03.25

Community Association Conference 2024

11.12.24

Joint Best Practices Roundtable

10.07.24

Are you Blighting our Town? How Municipal Officials Navigate the Politics of Redevelopment

6.06.24

2024 Land Use Update - Session 2

3.26.24

Mixed-Use Development/Redevelopment

3.20.24

2024 NJSBA Virtual Spring Conference

3.06.24

Oh, "Tutti Frutti", Rock Your Understanding of Fiduciary Duty!

10.18.23

Administrative & Policy Resolutions Every Association Should Consider

9.12.23

Land Use Institute 2022

12.06.22

Homeowner Leader Best Practices Roundtable Discussion

9.19.22

Right-Sizing It: The Challenges and Opportunities of Parking for Redevelopment Projects

6.15.22

Community Association / PRED Seminar

4.06.22

Legislative & Regulatory Update

3.03.22

Land Use Update 2022

2.22.22

Sailing Through Annual Elections & Membership Voting

10.20.21

Mixed Use Development/Redevelopment

10.12.21

The New Jersey Economic Recovery Act: A Strategic Look at New Jersey's New Incentives

9.29.21

Cannabis is Coming, Are You Ready?

6.17.21

Planning for Parking

5.25.21

Land Use Update 2021

3.02.21

Redevelop NJ - Navigating Current Redevelopment Trends

2.25.21

Virtual Expo Live Stream Session

1.20.21

Advanced Topics in Land Use - Permits, Parking, Pot, Standing and Design

11.22.20

Community Associations Seminar

11.12.20

ABC's of Housing Development

11.11.20

Healthcare, Real Estate & COVID-19: Impacts, Challenges and Opportunities

11.09.20

Executive Order 192

11.03.20

A Conversation About PILOT Programs and Redevelopment

11.02.20

Latest Legal Resources and Forms

10.25.20

Don't Sign the Proposal!

9.22.20

Legal Trends in Land Use Law & Environmental Law

9.21.20

Legislative and Regulatory Update

9.13.20

What is the "New Norm" for CAI-NJ Members? Virtually Navigating the the Good, the Bad & the Ugly of the World after COVID

6.11.20

Ignite! Redevelopment: Understanding New Jersey's New Land Bank Law

3.05.20

2020 Land Use Update

2.25.20