

Stevens & Lee

Powerful partnerships. Standout solutions.



Christopher K. Costa

Shareholder

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Areas of Focus

Practice

Real Estate

Industry

Higher Education

State and Local Government

Technology, Telecommunications and Life Sciences

Chris is Co-Chair of the firm's Real Estate Department. He represents clients in all aspects of commercial real estate law, including land use, transactions, commercial banking, condominium conversions, leasing and landlord-tenant law. He has successfully obtained development approvals for clients throughout the State of New Jersey on industrial and warehouse projects, pharmaceutical and research facilities, residential subdivisions, mixed-use and apartment complexes, including for retail and restaurant capacities.

Chris focuses a substantial portion of his practice on pharmaceutical companies and other advanced technology companies. This work includes obtaining land use approvals and the sale and leasing of research and development facilities and corporate campuses.

In the area of industrial use and logistics, Chris represents clients in the purchase of industrial sites and has obtained multiple use variance approvals for warehouses. He is also experienced in the converting of sites zoned for retail and other uses into industrial sites through New Jersey's Local Redevelopment and Housing Law. He also works with clients in other areas of transportation and logistics, including industrial ground leasing and vehicle fleet sales.

A great deal of Chris' time and energy in 2020 and 2021 has been devoted to assisting his clients in navigating the challenges and the changing business landscape during the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges have been particularly difficult for his clients who own office or retail complexes and his clients who have lost revenue but are tied to long-term leases. In addition to advising commercial landlords and tenants in these shifting circumstances, Chris recently educated other experienced real estate professionals on the changes caused by the pandemic in a Stevens & Lee seminar, "Navigating Commercial Lease Disputes During the Global Pandemic."

Chris also represents lenders and borrowers in the negotiation and closing of commercial loans in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. He has particularly extensive experience representing lenders in construction loans for multifamily residential or mixed-use projects in New York City and industrial projects in New Jersey.

In addition to his transactional and other land use work, Chris has successfully defended the rights of religious and educational organizations designated as “inherently beneficial uses” before municipal boards, state courts and federal courts. For many of his clients that are religious institutions, he has successfully pursued actions in Federal Court under the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLIUPA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Chris is the past vice president and was a long-time trustee of the Family Guidance Center in Mercer County, New Jersey. He is the past president and former trustee of The Learning Cooperatives, a non-profit that operates multiple learning centers for middle school and high school students who do not attend traditional schools. Chris is a sought-after speaker for that organization and many others on topics including land use, discrimination, leasing and other real estate areas and an Associate Counsel of the New Jersey Planning Officials. He is a member of the New Jersey State Bar Association, the Mercer County Bar Association and the Cornell Real Estate Council, and has been trained in mediation of complex land use disputes by Consensus Building Institute.

Recent Transactions

- Representation of a Fortune 500 pharmaceutical company in the sale, leaseback and financing of a 432-acre life sciences campus with multiple onsite buildings, uses and tenants;
- Representation of a Fortune 500 pharmaceutical company in the sale of a 45-acre life sciences campus;
- Representation of an overseas pharmaceutical company in the lease of two separate facilities of 65,000 and 88,000 square feet; and
- Representation of a photonics company in the purchase of a five-acre office park parcel with a 34,000-square-foot building.

Affiliations

- New Jersey State Bar Association
- The New Jersey Planning Officials
- Princeton Learning Cooperative, Trustee
- Cornell Real Estate Council

Education

- Villanova University School of Law, J.D.
- Cornell University, B.S.

Bar Admissions

- New Jersey
- New York
- Pennsylvania