

Stevens & Lee

Powerful partnerships. Standout solutions.



Christopher K. Costa

Shareholder

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Practice

Real Estate

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. Chris was recognized by *NJBIZ* as one of the 2024 "Leaders in Real Estate, Construction and Design" for the results of his legal representation — particularly his work in repurposing and redeveloping major industrial, research and retail facilities.

Chris focuses a substantial portion of his practice on pharmaceutical companies, higher education institutions 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 variance approvals for warehouses. He is also experienced in the conversion 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 industrial transportation and logistics, including industrial ground leasing and vehicle fleet sales.

Chris also represents lenders and borrowers in the negotiation and closing of commercial loans in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, with a particular focus on the unique challenges of 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 religious institution clients, 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 a trustee of the board of Princeton Community Housing and the Princeton Bar Association. He is Associate Counsel of the New Jersey Planning Officials and a frequent presenter at the annual meeting of New Jersey League of Municipalities for that organization. He has also presented to the Association of Corporate Counsel, the Princeton and State Bar Associations and other organizations on topics ranging from critical real estate law issues, land use and leasing to discrimination in land policy.

Experience

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

Recognition

As published by *NJBIZ*, Chris was selected as a 2024 honoree of the Leaders in Real Estate Construction and Design Awards for his notable leadership in complex, high-profile land development approvals and transactions for corporate and industry power players.

Education

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

Bar Admissions

- New Jersey
- New York
- Pennsylvania