



JOELLE ROCHA, PARTNER

OVERVIEW

Joelle Rocha is a partner with a focus on real estate development and land use; she also represents clients in business disputes and general commercial litigation. Previously, she served as Assistant to the Solicitor for the towns of Warren and Lincoln. She is admitted to practice in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Joelle has successfully permitted several of the State's largest mixed-use developments. She has represented private developers in residential, commercial, mixed use and solar projects and before municipal and state boards and agencies. She has secured tax stabilization agreements for several private development projects.

In January of 2023, Joelle was hired by House Speaker Joe Shekarchi to work with him and the House Policy team to write his housing package in 2023. The results were the passage of 13 bills signed into law in July of 2023, which represented the first major changes to land use law in three decades. She has been retained by the Speaker for that same role in 2024.

She has successfully litigated several class actions against municipalities regarding illegal and excessive impact fees and building permit fees, and recovered litigation costs for landowners and developers as a result of unlawful and unsubstantiated government actions. She has argued before the Rhode Island Supreme Court on behalf of several clients in matters involving recovery of attorneys' fees and challenges to local ordinances.

COMMUNITY

Active in the community, Joelle in 2024 joined the board of ONE Neighborhood Builders, whose mission is to improve lives by building homes and connecting communities. She is a former member of the Rhode Island Builders Association and its Legislative Committee. She is a former board member of the Ocean State Montessori School, Roger Williams University School of Law Alumni Association and the Rhode Island Soccer Association.

RECOGNITION

In 2024, Joelle Rocha received the Rhode Island Bar Association Lauren E. Jones, Esq Writing Award with co-author Amy Goins for their Rhode Island Bar Journal article entitled: "**Seismic Changes to RI's Land Use Laws: What You Need to Know.**"

Joelle was selected as a Fellow of the Rhode Island Bar Association in 2022, an honor recognizing members whose professional, public and private careers have demonstrated their outstanding dedication to the welfare of the community and maintenance of the objectives of the Rhode Island Bar Foundation.

Joelle has been recognized by **Providence Business News** with its Forty Under 40 award, by **Super Lawyers** as a Rising Star, and in **Rhode Island Monthly** both for its Excellence in the Law in the area of Environmental Law/Land Use. She was the recipient of the Outstanding Women in Business award by Rhode Island Monthly. She continues to be recognized by **Best Lawyers** in the area of Commercial Litigation, Litigation-Construction, Litigation-Land Use and Zoning, and Litigation-Real Estate.

- Best Lawyers
- RI Bar Foundation Fellow
- Super Lawyers Rising Star
- Providence Business News Forty Under 40
- RI Monthly Excellence in the Law
- RI Monthly Outstanding Women in Business
- University of Massachusetts (Dartmouth) Distinguished Alumni

CONTACT

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EDUCATION

Roger Williams University
School of Law (J.D. Honors
Program, 2006)

University of Massachusetts,
Dartmouth (B.A. Political
Science, summa cum laude,
2003)

PRACTICE AREAS

Construction Law

Litigation

Real Estate & Land Use

BAR AND COURT ADMISSIONS

Rhode Island

Massachusetts

US District Court for the
District of Massachusetts

US District Court for the
District of Rhode Island

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JOELLE ROCHA, *PARTNER* continued

PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Joelle received the Rhode Island Bar Association/Bar Journal Writing Award in 2024 with her co-author Amy Goins for the article entitled: "Seismic Changes to RI's Land Use Laws: What You Need to Know."

In 2024, Joelle Rocha moderated the session entitled "Affordable housing risk and reward: Balancing the need for affordable/multifamily housing development with the uncertainty of investment and an acceptable rate of return" at the second annual real estate symposium of the Roger Williams University Cummings Institute for Real Estate.

In 2024, Joelle Rocha was part of a speaking panel on "Recent Amendments to Land Use Laws: How it Started, How it's Going." The panelists reviewed the 2023 amendments to Rhode Island's enabling statutes for land use and discuss how the new laws affect clients' development applications. The speakers focused on how municipalities have incorporated the recent statutory changes into new ordinances and regulations, pending legislation affecting land use matters, and the Rhode Island Superior Court's new Land Use Calendar.

In 2023, Joelle was part of a speaker panel on "Recent Developments in Land Use Law." They covered recent amendments to the enabling statutes and other laws governing the review and approval of development applications by municipal land use boards; lessons learned from recent judicial opinions involving land use; and issues related to legislative commissions involving land use and affordable housing.

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