



William C. Griffith

Shareholder

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For three decades, Bill Griffith has advised local and national clients on legal and policy issues affecting land use, zoning, real estate, environmental review, municipal law, regulatory matters and government relations. He has been legal counsel to Mall of America in all its phases, and serves as city attorney for the city of Columbus. He is a trusted advisor on real estate development and public funding for both private clients and municipalities.

Bill is a frequent speaker at seminars on land use, zoning, and environmental law, and he has served as an adjunct professor in land use law at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. He has been published in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, St. Paul Pioneer Press and the Minnesota Real Estate Journal and is a frequent panelist on the Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal's Table of Experts for Commercial Real Estate.

Representative Experience

Land Use, Zoning and Entitlements

- Represented Rosa Development in approval of a master plan from the City of Bloomington for phased redevelopment of the Park N' Fly site near the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Construction on Phase 1 is slated for early 2021 and includes market rate and affordable housing in three acres of the site. The project is funded, in part, through tax increment financing and local grants administered by the Bloomington Port Authority. Parking operations will continue in the interim and are integral to the redevelopment efforts.
- Negotiation of a 25-year master redevelopment contract for Mall of America expansion using tax increment financing. The international tourist destination is projected to double in size when all phases are completed.
- Represented Kraus-Anderson, the developer and owner of the highly successful Southtown Shopping Center, in negotiations with the City of Bloomington to phase in mixed-use zoning controls over time as redevelopment of the center occurs.
- Worked with commercial property owners and city planners to negotiate amendments to the City of St. Cloud's comprehensive plan which requires planners to consider the access needs of private property owners as well as traffic safety. The plan addresses roadway improvements needed for the next 15 to 20 years, including a new frontage road through a key growth corridor between Interstate-94 and downtown.

Services

- Land Use
- Liquor and Cannabis Licensing and Compliance
- Education
- Energy
- Environmental Regulations
- Government Relations
- Nonprofit
- Real Estate
- Renewable Energy

- Represented the oldest church in Minneapolis in negotiations with the developer of the Nye's redevelopment project to satisfy historic regulations to save historic buildings and mitigate impact of the project on the church.
- Helped fast-track zoning and land use requirements for a new charter school that provides online primary and secondary education. In just four months, the team secured zoning permits for the school.

Municipal Law and Government Relations

- Represented the City of Columbus in acquisition of right of way for an extension of public road access to the Viking Industrial Center site on Lake Drive. Acquisition was expedited to meet the developer's timetable and the site was delivered through willing party negotiations in lieu of condemnation. Construction of the project and road extension will both be completed this fall, just nine months after ground breaking.
- Represented the City of Columbus in the acquisition of a major tract of prime property for a master development. Provides advice and counsel to the city regarding its long-term master development plan, as well as annexation and municipal incorporation proceedings.
- Led effort to win funding approval from the Minnesota Legislature for Mall of America by securing authority for new tax revenues to support significant new development of the property.
- Worked with a coalition of city officials, landowners and legislators to include roadway improvement funding for Bloomington's South Loop District in the state bonding bill.
- Assisted a coalition of contractors, builders, members of the building trades and professionals serving the construction industry in drafting measures for Minnesota legislation to stimulate new construction, renovation, and redevelopment.
- Successfully represented the Hudson Group in its entry into the concessions market at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Environmental Review and Permitting

- Advised a major supplier to wastewater and water purification industries defending a citizen initiated petition for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.
- Coordinated all aspects of Alternative Urban Areawide Review (environmental review) for a master planned golf course and residential community.
- Environmental assessment worksheets and environmental impact statements are part of the environmental review process. Bill assists clients working through the review process to avoid or minimize negative environmental effects of proposed developments.
- For municipalities throughout the Twin Cities, sustainable or green development is a top priority as cities update their comprehensive plans. Developers have turned to Bill to analyze the impact of these changes to municipal plans.

Public Financing

- Provided legal counsel to Mall of America during its \$1.4 billion refinancing. The firm represented the mall's owner throughout the multipart transaction which was one of the largest in the U.S. that year and the largest in Minnesota.
- In 2010, Bill led the team that drafted language for Minnesota's legislation enabling Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs in state, local and regional government throughout Minnesota. Bill presented this program to Bloomington as a model for the city's first special assessment agreement for energy improvements.

Housing

- Represented a multifamily developer in overcoming intense opposition to one of the first affordable housing projects in an affluent suburb of Minneapolis.
- Bill has represented a number of group homes serving women and new immigrants in recovery from addiction seeking reasonable accommodation under the Federal Fair Housing Act.
- Helped form a statewide support organization to increase funding to affiliates of Habitat for Humanity across Minnesota.

Historic Preservation

- Represented new owners of a historic home in the city of Stillwater, Minnesota in conversion of the home from a bed and breakfast to a real estate office. The William Sauntry Mansion was built in 1881 by lumber baron William Sauntry and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The reuse of the mansion was approved under the City's first Historic Preservation Use Variance, after the owners submitted a zoning code text amendment which authorized the variance.

Education

- William Mitchell College of Law (J.D., 1988)
- University of Wisconsin (B.A., 1982)
 - Eau Claire

Bar/Court Admissions

- Minnesota, 1988
- Wisconsin, 2002

Recognition

- Top Lawyers in Minnesota,® Minnesota Monthly, 2026
- Super Lawyer®, Super Lawyers magazine, 2025-present

Community Service

Bill is a past president of Larkin Hoffman and has been a leader in community service. He is a founding member of Minnesota Habitat for Humanity and the founding chair of Hennepin Elementary School Board, a public charter school in Minneapolis dedicated to providing an excellent education to students from high-poverty neighborhoods. Bill was instrumental in the creation of the Bloomington Sister City project with Izumi, Japan. Recently, Bill helped launch Ecolibri USA, a nonprofit that supports student scholarship in the villages around Lake Atitlan in the Guatemalan highlands.