

Land Use Atty Duo Joins Schwabe Williamson In Seattle

By **Adrian Cruz**

Law360 (July 14, 2023, 4:53 PM EDT) -- Pacific Northwest firm Schwabe Williamson & Wyatt announced that it hired a pair of Seattle-based land use attorneys as of counsel for its real estate and construction group.

Patrick Mullaney and Julie Wilson-McNerney joined Schwabe Williamson at the start of June and the end of May, with Mullaney arriving after 22 years with Foster Pepper PC and Wilson-McNerney arriving after a nine-year stint with Perkins Coie LLP.

According to the firm's Thursday announcement, the new hires in Seattle are part of its overall focus on strengthening its land use practice at a time of significant market shifting.

"We are thrilled to welcome Patrick and Julie to our Seattle office," CEO Graciela Gomez Cowger said in a statement. "Each brings relevant experience, deep commitment to solving clients' challenges, and extensive local knowledge of Washington's land use regulations and environment. This expansion of our land use practice will enable us to continue our cutting-edge representation throughout the region."

Wilson-McNerney and Mullaney told Law360 Pulse Friday that one of the main reasons they were drawn to Schwabe Williamson was because of the firm's strength and emphasis on investing in its land use practice.

"I was also impressed by Schwabe's industry group focus, which allows its lawyers to use their deep industry knowledge to develop creative and pragmatic solutions on quick timelines that can anticipate worst-case scenarios and prevent problems," Wilson-McNerney said. "Schwabe's full-service team of attorneys specializing in real estate, land use, construction, tax, employment, financing, litigation, and intellectual property helps my development clients protect their investments, reduce project friction, and save time."

A graduate of Seattle University School of Law, Mullaney said his practice focuses on guiding private and public entities on land development and permitting for residential, office, industrial, retail, health care, large public infrastructure projects, and natural resource lands. He also brings experience in land use litigation, negotiating development agreements, and resolving disputes regarding boundary lines, easements, covenants or other regulatory compliance issues.



Patrick Mullaney



Julie Wilson-McNerney

"Schwabe provides an integrated platform of experienced attorneys that can take a project through all facets of development from inception to construction," Mullaney said. "I think my clients benefit from Schwabe's team approach, which enables me to provide them with creative and efficient solutions for their legal needs. I have been fortunate in my career to work for wonderful clients, and they have been very supportive of my decision to join Schwabe."

Mullaney added that some of the notable projects he's worked on throughout his career include permitting for the Seattle Seahawks' Lumen Field, a third runway at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, and the nearly \$2 billion Brightwater sewage treatment plant in nearby Snohomish County.

Wilson-McNerney graduated from University of Arizona's James E. Rogers College of Law, and she brings a similar practice focused on helping public- and private-sector developers build commercial, industrial and infrastructure projects. She said that one career highlight was her work on the redevelopment of Climate Pledge Arena, which created a modern arena for the National Hockey League's Seattle Kraken while maintaining the integrity of the original landmark structure that was built for the 1962 World's Fair.

"The developer had an extraordinary vision and had to find creative engineering, architectural, and historic preservation solutions to permit, entitle, and construct an arena in a short timeframe during a global pandemic," Wilson-McNerney said. "It was an honor to be a part of developing legal solutions and assisting the client in navigating Washington's environmental review and landmark preservation laws."

Both attorneys said that one of the main challenges their land use clients are facing is the increased complexity of the regulatory environment, with aspects such as environmental impact and infrastructure resiliency among the many areas that need to be addressed before a project can get off the ground.

"Increasing regulatory complexity is a big issue impacting permitting time, cost, and uncertainty," Mullaney said. "Evolving science and regulations to address things like greenhouse gas emissions, water quality, urban planning, societal inequities, and the shortage of affordable housing are additional considerations that must be factored into today's development equation."

--Editing by Adam LoBelia.