



Jessica A. Skelton

PARTNER

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PRACTICE AREAS

Litigation Public Policy and Political Matters
Municipal Law

Pronouns:
she, her, hers

With expertise in complex trial and appellate litigation and Washington municipal law, Jessica Skelton helps clients navigate high-profile challenges and disputes so they can deliver for their constituents. Jessica has extensive experience representing public and private clients in state and federal trial and appellate courts and in alternative dispute resolution proceedings. In addition to municipal law, her practice emphasizes federal and state constitutional issues, real estate litigation, and eminent domain and relocation issues.

Alongside her litigation work, Jessica also provides general municipal advice to cities, counties, transit agencies and other local government entities on a range of matters, including constitutional and tax-related issues, open public meetings, and ethics and good governance. Her experience includes serving as outside counsel to Pierce Transit, the City of Bellevue, and the Clark County Ethics Commission.

Prior to joining Pacifica Law Group in 2011, Jessica spent five years in the Appellate, Governmental, and Constitutional Litigation Practice Group at K&L Gates. Before entering private practice, Jessica served as a judicial clerk for Justice Mary Fairhurst of the Washington State Supreme Court, where she assisted in drafting opinions on issues including Washington public disclosure laws and state and federal constitutional matters. During law school, Jessica worked in the chambers of the Honorable Paul De Muniz, Oregon Supreme Court, and the Honorable Ann Aiken, United States District Court for the District of Oregon.

Jessica donates a significant number of hours each year to pro bono service and has worked with organizations including Legal Voice, a legal advocacy organization that represents women and LGBTQ people, and Treehouse, a nonprofit organization that serves youth in foster care.

Bar Admissions:

- Washington
- Oregon
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington
- U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon

- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

Education:

- Brown University, B.A., Modern Culture & Media
- University of Oregon, J.D. (Moot Court Board; Women's Law Forum, Director; Constitutional Law tutor; Regional Client Counseling Competition Finalist; Regional Mock Trial Competition)

Honors:

- International Municipal Lawyers Association Amicus Award, 2026
- Selected for *Washington Super Lawyers*, 2018-2025
- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* in the fields of Commercial Litigation, Litigation–Municipal, and Municipal Law, 2024-2026, and in the fields of Appellate Practice, and Eminent Domain and Condemnation Law, 2025-2026
- Selected for *Washington Rising Stars*, 2010-2015
- Washington Women Lawyers, State Board Member of the Year 2009

Speaking Engagements & Presentations:

- Jessica is a frequent presenter at the Seminar Group's Issues in Condemnation seminar, including on the following:
 - Easily Overlooked Mysteries of Public Use and Necessity (2022)
 - Inverse Condemnation (2021)
 - Recent Developments in the Condemnation of Government Owned Property (2019)
 - Potential Changes to the Eminent Domain Process: A Panel Discussion (2018)
 - Annual Condemnation Case Roundup (2017)
- Jessica also is a frequent presenter at the Washington State Association of Municipal Attorneys (WSAMA) conferences, including:
 - The Sus Among Us; Ethics for Really Cool Municipal Lawyers (Spring 2025)
 - Recouping Right of Way Costs (Spring 2021)
 - Public Entity Conflicts; Issues in Condemnation (Fall 2019)
 - The Interpretation Dance; Gap-Filling, Rulemaking, and Municipal Code Amendments (Fall 2017)
 - A Taxing Problem: When Can a Municipality Tax Another Governmental Entity? (Fall 2014)
- She also has presented on recent developments in transit safety at the Washington State Transit Association conference, school site acquisition for the Washington Association of School Business Officials, and the Public Records Act for the Council of School Attorneys.
- She also has regularly presented on compliance with ethics rules at the annual Hearing Examiner's Association of Washington conference.
- She also provides trainings to public entities on compliance with the Washington Public Records Act, Open Public Meetings Act, ethics rules, and other governance requirements.
- For the past several years, Jessica has presented to high school history and social studies teachers about important cases released by the U.S. Supreme Court as part of the Judicial Institute.
- Alphabet Soup: The ADA to the ROW, The Basics of Using Public Rights of Way and Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Washington State Transit Association Public Transportation Conference, October, 2021

Community Involvement:

- Leadership Tomorrow, Class of 2016
- Legal Voice, 2007–Present (Legal Intake Committee Member, 2013–Present; Cooperating Counsel 2007–

Present)

- Treehouse, Programs Committee (2020-Present)

Professional Organizations

- King County Bar Association, Appellate Section Executive Committee, 2012-2019 (Chair, 2017-2018)
- Washington Women Lawyers, 2007-2012 (President, 2010-2011; President Elect, 2009-2010; Secretary, 2007-2009)

Representative Matters

- Jessica has argued in federal and state appellate courts, including before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the Washington Court of Appeals, and the Washington Supreme Court. She frequently represents public entities regarding constitutional issues and other high stakes claims. Examples:
 - Jessica represented the City of Federal Way before the Washington Supreme Court regarding the City's authority tax utility districts within the city, resulting in a 9-0 decision in favor of the City: *Lakehaven Water & Sewer Dist. v. City of Fed. Way*, 195 Wn.2d 742, 466 P.3d 213 (2020).
 - Jessica has represented the Washington State Bar Association in litigation challenging its attorney discipline system and bar procedures. See, e.g., *Eugster v. Littlewood*, 724 F. App'x 602 (9th Cir. 2018).
- Jessica also represents clients in trial court proceedings in federal and state court, including defending municipal entities against alleged violations of ethics laws. See *Bainbridge Taxpayers Unite v. City of Bainbridge Island*, Case No. 3:22-cv-05491-TL (W.D. Wash.) (claims dismissed in part by federal court and case remanded to state court, where remaining claims were dismissed).
- Jessica has extensive experience representing acquiring agencies at all stages of property acquisition, including during the project development stage, before trial courts, and on appeal.
 - She has obtained multiple verdicts at trial for the acquiring agency's appraised value.
 - She also has prevailed on appeal of public use and necessity determinations. *City of Bellevue v. Pine Forest Props., Inc.*, 185 Wn. App. 244, 340 P.3d 938 (2014).
- Jessica has represented clients in administrative proceedings and on appeal from those proceedings, including before hearing examiners and the Growth Management Hearings Board.
- Jessica provides advice and counseling on a wide range of governance and compliance issues, including providing general counsel support to cities, counties, and transit agencies.