

Matthew J. Kiefer

Director

mkiefer@goulstonstorrs.com

Boston: +1 617 574 6597



Matthew Kiefer is a real estate development and land use lawyer whose practice focuses on obtaining parcel dispositions and entitlements from public agencies for complex urban projects. He has a particular focus on projects that involve collaborations between for-profit developers and non-profits or public agencies and that address unique policy, feasibility, and design challenges. These include market-oriented, mixed-income and affordable housing; commercial and mixed-use projects; and facilities and master plans for universities, cultural institutions, and other non-profits. He is a Fellow of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers and has been recognized by Chambers USA as “a pre-eminent force in development and land use work.”

In addition to his law practice, Matthew teaches in the Master in Real Estate program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and has written and spoken widely on land use topics. Matthew's long-form thought leadership articles are listed [here](#). Both these and his shorter insights are available [here](#).

Matthew serves as Co-Chair of the Advisory Board and on the Management Committee of ULI Boston; is a member of the City of Boston's Article 80 Reform Steering Committee; served two terms as an at-large member of the City of Boston's Community Preservation Committee, awarding \$200 million in funds to affordable housing, historic preservation and open space projects; is the past Chair and a current Executive Committee member of the Boston Municipal Research Bureau, which supports best practices in municipal governance; and is an Honorary Member of the Boston Society for Architecture and the American Institute of Architects.

He is a graduate of Boston University and the University of Michigan Law School, and was a Loeb Fellow at the Harvard GSD.

Accolades

- Elected to Honorary Membership, American Institute of Architects, 2020
- Elected to Honorary Membership, Boston Society for Architecture, 2017
- Elected Fellow of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers (ACREL), 2012

- *Chambers USA*, Real Estate: Zoning/Land Use, Massachusetts, 2019, 2021-2024 (Band 1)
- Martindale Hubbell Peer-Review Rated AV Preeminent™
- *Boston Magazine*
 - Top Lawyers, Real Estate, 2021
 - Top Attorneys in Massachusetts, 2016
- Lawyer of the Year, Best Lawyers® (2016, 2019, 2025): Land Use and Zoning Law
- Best Lawyers in America®, (2008-2017, 2020-2025): Land Use and Zoning Law - Real Estate Law
- Massachusetts Super Lawyers, 2019-2024

Affiliations

- Teaching: Lecturer, Master in Real Estate Program, Harvard Graduate School of Design
- Planning and Policy: Past Chair and current Executive Committee member, Boston Municipal Research Bureau; Co-Chair of Advisory Board and member of Management Committee, ULI Boston; Board Member, Leventhal Map and Education Center
- Regulatory Reform: City of Boston Article 80 Reform Steering Committee; Inclusionary Development Policy Mayor's Working Group; MEPA Climate Change Adaptation Advisory Committee; Chapter 91 Facilities of Public Accommodation Task Force
- Historic Preservation: Council of Advisors and former Board President, Historic Boston Incorporated; Chair, Truro Historical Commission
- Open Space: Co-founder, Emerald Network; Member, Trustees Collaborative for Open Space

Admissions

- Massachusetts

Education

- University of Michigan Law School
- Boston University
- Harvard University Loeb Fellow

Representative Matters

Developer Designations of Publicly Owned Sites

Developer designations from the Boston Planning and Development Agency for projects in urban renewal areas and in the Charlestown Navy Yard; from the Boston Housing Authority for public housing redevelopments; from the Mayor's Office of Housing for affordable housing projects; from Massport for projects in the Seaport; and from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for land and air rights parcels along the Mass Turnpike, Central Artery, and Melnea Cass Boulevard.

Life Science Conversions

Conversion of Boston office buildings to life science use.

Seaport District Projects

Regulatory approvals for real estate developments throughout Boston's Seaport District, including apartments, condominiums, hotels, and tech, office, lab, and retail space.

Phased Mixed-Use Developments

Master planned projects approved under the Planned Development Area provisions of the Boston Zoning Code, including the 6.3-million-square-foot Seaport Square on 23 acres in the Seaport and the Harrison-Albany project, a 700,000-square-foot residential and commercial development in the South End.

Neighborhood Residential Projects

Market-rate, mixed-income, and affordable residential and supportive housing projects in the Boston neighborhoods of Allston-Brighton, Charlestown, Dorchester, East Boston, Fenway, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Roxbury, the South End, and the West End. These include on-site and off-site compliance with Boston's Inclusionary Development Policy, partnerships between for-profit and non-profit housing developers, and redevelopments of public housing communities.

Waterfront Projects

State waterfront licensing under Chapter 91 for projects with path-breaking climate resilience strategies, including Clippership Wharf in East Boston, the Innovation and Design Building in the Ray Flynn Marine Park, and Building 114 and the Spaulding Rehabilitation Center in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

Institutional Master Plans and Projects

Institutional master plan approvals for major Boston hospitals and universities, including Massachusetts General Hospital, Northeastern University, the Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology, and Harvard University's Allston campus. These include collaborations with for-profit developers for student housing and other revenue-generating campus facilities.

Cultural Institutions

Facilities for cultural institutions and other non-profits, including additions to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Gardner Museum and new homes for The Possible Project, United South End Settlements, the Boston Society for Architecture, Historic Boston Incorporated and the Emerald Necklace Conservancy.

Historic Adaptations and Restorations

Adaptive re-use of historic buildings and historic restorations in the Back Bay, South End, and Beacon Hill historic districts.

Public-Private Partnerships for Public Open Space

Formation, regulatory approvals, and funding options for public-private partnerships to create public open space.

Community

Through sustained civic engagement, Matthew takes an active role in improving the city where he works and lives.

In his teaching, writing, and speaking about design, development, and land use policy, Matthew encourages broad debate on how to thoughtfully reshape cities to meet their 21st century challenges.

Long-Form Thought Leadership

[How Real Estate Development Can Boost Urban Health](#) (with Adele Houghton)

Stanford Social Innovation Review, September 2023

[Zoning 3.0: Guiding Land Use in the Contemporary City](#) in [Idea City: How to Make Boston More Livable, Equitable, and Resilient](#).

Idea City, May 2023

[Navigating Rising Waters: The Public Waterfront Act](#)

The Boston Bar Journal, May 2018

[Climate Change and Real Estate Development: Regulatory Experimentation in the Face of Uncertainty](#)

The Legal Impact of Climate Change, January 2011

Toward a Net Zero Carbon Planet: A Policy Proposal

University of Colorado Law Review, October 2009

Public Planning and Private Initiative: The South Boston Waterfront

Urban Planning Today, January 2006

Suburbia and Its Discontents: Notes from the Sprawl Debate

Sprawl and Suburbia, January 2005

Privatizing Creation of the Public Realm: The Fruits of New York City's Incentive Zoning Ordinance

Boston College Environmental Affairs Law Review, January 2001

The Public Trust Doctrine: State Limitations on Private Waterfront Development

Real Estate Law Journal, Fall 1987

Conservation Easements: Tax Benefits for Landowners

Zoning and Planning Law Handbook, February 1987