

Stephen A. Cooney Counsel

Stephen Cooney focuses on representing buyers and sellers in negotiating and documenting the sale, purchase, lease, development, finance and operation of commercial properties. He also advises clients and negotiates deals concerning a wide range of other commercial real estate matters, including land use issues, deed restrictions, access to water resources and the formation and operation of property owners associations. Stephen is Board Certified in Commercial Real Estate Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization.

Stephen also serves as outside general counsel for clients across many industries, including real estate, manufacturing, distribution, and service providers. He personally handles nearly every issue his clients may encounter, including day-to-day operational issues, negotiating and drafting business contracts, asset and stock sales, business governance issues, the formation and operation of entities and strategic planning. Stephen also advises clients on matters in the areas of public law and government relations.

Before joining Gray Reed, Stephen served as communications director and a senior policy advisor to former Harris County Judge Robert Eckels. While working in county government for 10 years, he gained extensive knowledge on local governmental issues including permitting, land use development and open records/meetings laws.

Experience

Business Transactions

- Represented seller in the \$17.3 million sale of the operating assets of five franchised restaurants.
- Represented seller in negotiating \$13 million sale of six franchised restaurants.



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Industries
Real Estate

Practices
Real Estate
Eminent Domain & Condemnation

Education
J.D., South Texas College of Law
Houston (2002)
B.A., The University of Texas (1994)

Bar Admissions
Texas

- Represented oil field services company in \$47 million stock acquisition of company that supplies syntactic foam products for use in offshore exploration and production; \$20 million stock acquisition of manufacturer of deep water buoyancy systems.
- Represented seller in \$23 million sale of radiation therapy services business.
- Represent clients in the oil and gas industry in negotiating master service agreements.
- Serve as outside general counsel to company that sells and distributes frac flowback water treatment systems.
- Serve as outside general counsel to rice milling company.
- Advise clients in forming and operating Texas entities - corporations, limited partnerships, limited liability partnerships, limited liability companies, including the preparation and negotiation of partnership agreements and LLC agreements.

Real Estate

- Represented seller in the \$2 million sale of its office building and warehouse, as well as acquisition and development of new site.
- Represented pest control company in acquisition of commercial property in Houston to expand business.
- Represented seller in sale of pads in Bastrop, Texas for development of fast food restaurants.
- Represented buyer in acquisition of multi-unit complex in College Station, Texas.
- Represented oil field services company in lease negotiation of 215,000 square foot industrial facility.
- Negotiation of numerous commercial leasing transactions, including

office leases, and retail leases throughout Houston.

- Advise clients regarding the formation and operation of property owners associations.

Public Law

- Serve as General Counsel to the Airline Improvement District, a municipal management district created by the 79th Texas Legislature (HB 1458); advises the Board on all legal issues, including grants, contracts, real estate matters and open meetings/records laws, and advises on legislative matters.
- Represent investor owned water utilities; represents clients before the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District; advises on Groundwater Reduction Plan issues, and related water issues.
- Represented a company regarding wage-scale issues while doing business with the City of Houston, resulting in the waiver of all penalties totaling \$42,000.
- Successfully appealed a client's removal from the City of Houston's Minority/Women Business Enterprise Program.

Press Releases

- "Twenty-Nine Gray Reed Attorneys Named 2018 Top Lawyers in Houston" (December 3, 2018)
- "Three Gray Reed Attorneys Earn Board Certification" (January 12, 2017)
- "Gray Reed Announces Attorneys Promotions" (February 17, 2014)

Thought Leadership

- "Groundwater Law Continues to Evolve - Texas Landowners be Ready", Gray Reed Insights (May 8, 2019)

- “Legislative Update: Significant Bills of the 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session Affecting Real Estate Lending and Other Commercial Matters”, *Real Estate, Probate & Trust Law Section of the State Bar of Texas Section Report* (June 23, 2017)
- “Your Business and the 83rd Legislature”, Gray Reed & McGraw Legal Alert (July 11, 2013)

Speeches and Presentations

- “Update on Groundwater Law”, Estate Forum – Next Generation (May 8, 2019)
- “A Deep Dive into Water Law and its Impact on the Energy Industry”, Dallas Association of Petroleum Landmen / Young Professionals in Energy / Women’s Energy Network (March 7, 2019)
- “Legislative Update on Water Law Issues”, Texas Bar CLE Water Law 101 (February 22, 2018)
- “The Intersection Between Family Law and Business Entities and Real Estate Law”, 28th Annual Family Law Conference, South Texas College of Law. (March 6, 2014)

Honors

- Named a *Houstonia Magazine* Top Lawyer in Houston (2018)
- Named a Texas Super Lawyers - Rising Stars Edition by Super Lawyers (a Thomson Reuters company) as published in *Texas Monthly* and *Law & Politics* magazine (2010)

Organizational Involvement

- Texas Bar College
- State Bar of Texas

- Real Estate Section - Real Estate Legislative Affairs Committee, Member for 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th and 86th Texas Legislature
- Real Estate Probate & Trust Law Section
- Business Law Section
- Governing Board of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Inc.
 - Vice President (2010 - 2011)
 - Chair of Public Policy Committee (2009 - 2010)
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- Rotary Club of Houston
 - Board of Directors (2017 - 2020)
- Maplewood South/North Civic Improvement Association
 - Past President
 - Former Board of Directors Member