

Bartko Pavia Elevates Howland Gordon to Equity Partnership

SAN FRANCISCO (December 23, 2025) — Bartko Pavia LLP is pleased to announce the elevation of Howland Gordon to equity partner, effective January 1, 2026. Gordon's rapid ascent reflects both his exceptional business development success and his embodiment of what makes Bartko Pavia's real estate practice distinctive: a team of former in-house counsel who understand legal services from the client's perspective.

Before joining Bartko Pavia, Gordon served as General Counsel at H&M, the global retail giant, where he managed complex real estate portfolios, multi-jurisdictional transactions, and high-stakes commercial negotiations. His in-house experience gives him rare insight into what corporate clients actually need, which is not just technically sound legal advice, but practical, business-focused solutions delivered with efficiency and responsiveness.

"Howland's elevation to equity partner is the natural result of what he's accomplished since joining us," said An Nguyen Ruda, Firmwide Co-Managing Partner. "He didn't just bring impressive credentials, he brought a fundamentally different way of thinking about client service, shaped by years of being on the other side of the table as a consumer of legal services. That perspective is invaluable. He understands that clients don't just want lawyers who know the law; they want partners who understand their business, anticipate their needs, and deliver solutions efficiently. Howland does all three, and he's already built substantial new client relationships as a result. He's exactly the kind of client-focused, business-savvy lawyer we're building this firm around."

Patrick M. Ryan, Litigation Department Chair and Firmwide Co-Managing Partner, added: "What sets Bartko Pavia apart is our willingness to do things differently. While other firms chase pedigree, we chase talent and judgment and we've found some of the best lawyers are the ones who've walked in our clients' shoes. Howland exemplifies that philosophy. His time as GC at H&M taught him to think strategically about risk, cost, and timing in ways that pure law firm lawyers often miss. He's brought that mindset to every transaction and negotiation since joining us, and our clients have responded enthusiastically. This elevation recognizes not just his technical skill, but his ability to be a true business partner to our clients."

Gordon joins a real estate practice that has become known for recruiting top-tier in-house counsel, including equity partners David Matthews and David Graham, both of whom brought decades of corporate legal department experience to the firm. This focus on lawyers with client-side backgrounds reflects Bartko Pavia's broader culture: a service-oriented, efficiency-driven approach that prioritizes solving client problems over traditional law firm metrics.

"The real estate work we handle at Bartko Pavia runs the gamut, from sophisticated commercial acquisitions and development projects to complex financing and corporate real estate strategy,"

said David Matthews, Chair of the Real Estate Department and former in-house counsel himself. "What we don't do is overcomplicate things or staff matters with unnecessary lawyers just to run up bills. Howland gets that instinctively because he lived it as a client. Since joining us, he's consistently delivered exceptional results on major transactions, brought in valuable new client relationships, and demonstrated the kind of judgment and strategic thinking that makes him indispensable to clients facing complex real estate challenges. We're fortunate to have him as a key leader in this practice, and his elevation to equity partner reflects the trust our clients and colleagues have placed in him."

Gordon's practice focuses on commercial real estate transactions, including acquisitions, dispositions, development, and financing, as well as advising corporate clients on their broader real estate strategies. His clients include retail, technology, and institutional players navigating sophisticated real estate portfolios.

"I'm deeply honored by this recognition and grateful for the trust my partners have placed in me," said Gordon. "Having worked in-house for years, I knew what kind of firm I wanted to join, one that thinks like a business partner, not just a legal vendor. Bartko Pavia's culture of collaboration, efficiency, and client focus made this an easy decision. The firm has given me the platform to practice law the way I always thought it should be practiced: with creativity, pragmatism, and an unwavering commitment to delivering value. I'm excited to continue growing our real estate practice and serving our clients as an equity partner, and I'm particularly proud to be part of a team that includes so many talented former in-house lawyers who share that client-first mindset."

Bartko Pavia's real estate practice has become a cornerstone of the firm's work, with lawyers advising on billions of dollars in transactions annually. The practice's emphasis on recruiting experienced in-house counsel has proven to be a strategic differentiator, attracting clients who value lawyers with real-world business experience over those with traditional Big Law pedigrees. For more information, visit www.bartkopavia.com

Bartko Pavia LLP is a powerhouse litigation and transactional firm representing both plaintiffs and defendants in high-stakes commercial disputes, real estate transactions, class actions, antitrust matters, labor and employment litigation, and bet-the-company cases. The firm is known for combining elite legal talent with a client-focused, service-oriented culture that prioritizes practical business solutions over conventional law firm metrics. Bartko Pavia's team includes numerous former in-house counsel and business leaders who bring real-world experience to their practice.

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