HUSCH BLACKWELL



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OVERVIEW

For Rod, honesty and credibility are the foundation for the strong relationships he develops with clients.

Rod has earned a reputation as a highly accomplished attorney with a wealth of experience guiding clients through complex real estate, land use, data center, and telecommunications matters. With a client base ranging from national developers and Fortune 500 companies to local entrepreneurs and public sector entities, Rod is valued for delivering strategic counsel and practical results in both established and emerging markets. Recognized for his leadership in high-stakes transactions and regulatory matters, he seamlessly integrates legal strategy with business objectives, providing holistic, forward-thinking solutions that address the full spectrum of clients' needs.

Rod is renowned for his comprehensive real estate practice, counseling developers, investors, lenders, and retailers through the entire lifecycle of real estate projects—acquisition, financing, development, leasing, and disposition. The clients he represents span a wide range of asset classes, including industrial, office, multifamily, retail, higher education, healthcare, and mixed-use developments. Rod is particularly knowledgeable about land use

> *"Rod Carter and his team consistently deliver exceptional legal services, making them unparalleled in the industry."*
>
> — Midwest Legal Officer, Leading Fortune 500 Telecommunications Company

Industry

Real Estate, Development, & Construction

Services

Corporate
Corporate Real Estate
Data Centers
Land Use
Nonprofit Organizations & Religious Institutions
Public-Private Partnerships (P3)
State Attorneys General Practice
Telecommunications

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planning, zoning, eminent domain, tax increment financing, public-private partnerships (P3), leasing, construction and design contracts, and regulatory compliance. He has a proven record of securing critical entitlements and incentives, resolving permitting and code issues, and navigating relationships with governmental authorities, city councils, zoning boards, and state agencies to advance projects from concept to completion.

As the leader of the firm's Telecommunications team, Rod represents communications carriers, broadband providers, tech companies, and trade associations in all aspects of infrastructure deployment, including transactions involving communications towers, data centers, fiber networks, wireless facilities, and edge computing infrastructure.

Known for his strategic vision and collaborative approach, Rod is adept at finding practical, creative solutions to complex challenges—whether structuring sophisticated transactions, negotiating with public officials, or overcoming opposition to development. His strong relationships with decisionmakers in the public and private sectors, coupled with his deep industry insight, allow him to anticipate obstacles and drive projects across the finish line.

Drawing on decades of experience in real estate and technology law, he is one of a handful of practitioners with broad experience in all aspects of the data center industry and is regularly called upon to advise on high-profile, transformative projects that shape the region.

Case Study

Microsoft Corporation

Our team assisted Microsoft in the construction of a $1 billion data center on a 315-acre parcel of land in Wisconsin.

Experience

- Secured incentives and regulatory approvals for an American multinational technology corporation in connection with two major data center projects: a $3.3 billion data center in Racine County, Wisconsin—including a $226 million land acquisition, expedited environmental review, and favorable tax conditions—and a related data center campus in Kenosha County, Wisconsin, involving a $34.8 million land acquisition.
- Navigated complex zoning and incentive challenges to transition a property from a slaughterhouse to a data center for a major U.S. telecommunications provider, including creation of a special zoning district and renegotiation of TIF agreements.

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Experience

- Advised private developers, investors, lenders, municipalities, and community development authorities on all aspects of real estate projects, including land use planning, zoning, eminent domain, historic tax credits, mixed-use ownership structures, tax increment financing, leasing, and construction and design contracts and disputes.
- Advised the USA's largest cooperative food wholesaler to independently owned supermarkets and grocery stores on variances and related land use approvals for a 1,000,000-square-foot regional distribution facility.
- Represented a multinational oil and gas corporation in a land use dispute involving rail and river access for oil refining product delivery, encompassing complex contractual and federal commerce issues.
- Represented an international entertainment operator in the redevelopment of one of the largest U.S. water parks, including resolving code violations, facilitating property sales, and coordinating with the Wisconsin DOT for improved access for new theme park and hotel developments.
- Represented a Class A corporate park in obtaining City of Milwaukee approval for a for-profit university, securing controversial zoning and code amendments and overcoming legal and policy challenges, as well as strong local opposition.
- Represented a coalition of residential condominiums in stopping the development of a proposed $40 million music venue in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward.
- Counseled NYSE and NASDAQ telecommunications companies on wireless network deployment, negotiating site development, network construction, leases, sale and lease-back, pole attachment, right-of-way, easement, and franchise agreements. Provided strategic consultation for the purchase and sale of communications facilities, including transaction structuring and due diligence.

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Experience

- Assisted one of the largest carrier-neutral fiber optic network providers in the Midwest in negotiating private easements, relocation agreements, and municipal license agreements for fiber optic cable deployment and maintenance with numerous municipalities within public rights-of-way.
- Guided wireless carriers, broadcasters, and infrastructure companies through regulatory and compliance challenges across the infrastructure lifecycle. Advised on siting rules, advocated for policy changes, developed compliance plans, resolved siting disputes, and represented clients in enforcement proceedings and litigation under the Telecommunications Act of 1996.
- Successfully represented a leading telecommunications company in federal litigation against the City of Milwaukee, securing a court judgment—affirmed by the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals—allowing the installation of small cell towers at Fiserv Forum despite opposition from the NBA and city officials.
- Successfully represented a real estate developer in a landmark Wisconsin appellate land use case, resulting in a ruling that a city's exaction requirements were unconstitutional, setting a significant statewide precedent.
- Championed a pivotal appellate court victory establishing statewide preemption for telecommunications infrastructure, overriding restrictive local ordinances and streamlining telecom deployment.
- Achieved significant legal victories for regional health and wellness facilities, including reversing a zoning committee's denial and securing approvals for substance abuse treatment and adolescent recovery centers, overcoming local opposition and tribal sovereign immunity arguments.
- Represented the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council in securing a conditional use permit for an $18 million Adolescent Recovery and Wellness Center in northern Wisconsin.

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Recognition

- *The Best Lawyers in America®*
  - Corporate Law, 2025-2027
  - Litigation - Land Use and Zoning, 2025-2027
  - Litigation - Real Estate, 2025-2027
  - Real Estate Law, 2027
- *Chambers USA*
  - Real Estate, 2025-2026
- *The Legal 500 United States*
  - Real estate: Land use/zoning, Recommended lawyer, 2024-2026
- *Milwaukee Business Journal*, 40 Under 40 Award Recipient, 2016
- Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent

Education

- J.D., Marquette University Law School
  - *Marquette Law Review*
- B.A., Carthage College
  - Phi Alpha Theta Honor Society
- American University
  - Washington Semester in National Government & Politics

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Admissions

- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Seventh Circuit

Community Leadership

- Board of Zoning Appeals, City of Brookfield, Wisconsin
- Carthage College Alumni Association, Officer, Board of Directors
- Marquette University Law School Mediation Program, Teacher, Mediator and Judge
- Marquette University Law School Alumni Association, Board of Directors, 2004-2012



The Best Lawyers in America®

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