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## **James Ricca, Esq., Forchelli Deegan Terrana LLP**

December 22, 2020 - Spotlights

Name: James Ricca, Esq.

Title: Partner

Company Name: Forchelli Deegan Terrana LLP

What was your most notable project, deal, or transaction in 2020?

Forchelli Deegan Terrana LLP served as counsel to an institutional lender who provided \$54 million in combined mortgage loans for an \$80 million construction project in NYC. The deal was structured as a land loan, construction loan and project loan. It was a participation loan among three banks and we assisted our client by drafting and negotiating the participation agreement. We were also presented with and navigated our way through some environmental issues that arose during the due diligence phase of the project. It was a real team effort between myself and my partners, Steven Gaebler (co-chair of our Banking & Finance practice group) and Aaron Gershonowitz (chair of our Env. practice group).

What was the most challenging part of working during the pandemic?

For me, the hardest part of working during the pandemic was the fear and uncertainty I experienced concerning the health of my family and friends, and for the country's economic future. When the "New York State on Pause" Executive Order was signed on March 22, 2020, as Co-Chair of the Banking & Finance practice group at Forchelli Deegan Terrana LLP, I immediately applied to the New York State Department of Economic Development to designate certain functions of our law firm as an "essential business", in support of Finance and Loan Administration. This permitted several colleagues and our support staff to be physically present in the office in order to keep the office functioning and provide essential services to our clientele.

What are your predictions for commercial real estate in 2021?

2021 is going to be a tough year. Commercial real estate values will struggle to rebound due to vacancy rates. There will be a drop in demand for office space. Landlords will need to grant rent concessions and lower rents in order to build back occupancy rates for office and retail space.

Commercial landlords' operating costs will increase in 2021 as they provide new safety amenities. In addition, I anticipate municipalities will increase real estate taxes and service fees to make up for lost sales tax revenue.

Industrial real estate will continue to be a bright spot in 2021. Industrial space will be in demand as tech firms such as Apple, Google and Amazon continue expanding their presence in New York City and the suburbs.

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