

# John Vavas

CO-HEAD, REAL ESTATE | NEW YORK

New York, NY | 212.413.2840

[jvavas@polsinelli.com](mailto:jvavas@polsinelli.com)



John Vavas' practice is focused on commercial real estate finance, where he represents financial institutions and real estate funds in connection with single-lender and agented, multi-lender transactions. John has vast experience representing clients in connection with the closing of newly originated commercial mortgage loans, acquiring existing commercial mortgage loans and negotiating loan documentation. Additionally, John is skilled at representing various lenders in the origination of CMBS, balance-sheet loans, construction, mezzanine and syndicated loans secured by real estate.

John serves as his clients go-to legal partner when navigating emerging asset classes and transformative investment opportunities. From data centers to office-to-residential conversions, he works closely with clients to capitalize on the latest market trends with practical, business-focused legal strategies.

John also has significant experience as internal counsel for commercial real estate lenders. His prior in-house experience allows him to bring a different perspective to his clients and provide counsel that draws on his knowledge from those prior positions.

## Education

- New York Law School (J.D., *cum laude*, 2003)
- Gettysburg College (B.A., 2000)
  - Japanese Studies
- Gettysburg College (B.A., 2000)
  - Management

## Bar Admissions

- New York

## Capabilities

- Real Estate Finance
- Finance
- Data Center & Infrastructure

# Matters

---

- Represented one of the largest insurance companies in the U.S. in a \$400 million participation in an up to \$8 billion facility secured by six data centers totaling 1.2 million square feet and 143 megawatts of potential critical IT capacity.
- Represent a Manhattan-based real estate private equity firm and debt manager, in connection with over \$300 million in mortgage loan investments towards office-to-residential conversions around New York.
- Represented a lender in connection with a \$206 million construction loan secured by a first mortgage encumbering vacant lot property to be developed into a mixed-use property comprised of 661 residential units, parking spaces and retail space in Florida.
- Represented a lender in connection with the origination of a \$135 million mortgage loan secured by Pfizer's former NYC headquarters in Midtown, Manhattan. The 33-story office tower is planned to be converted into a Class A multifamily property with over 900 units, retail and amenity space.
- Represented a lender in connection with the origination and recapitalization of a \$313 million construction loan secured by a partially built, stalled condominium building located in Lower Manhattan, New York.
- Represented a lender in connection with a \$135 million mortgage loan to be used to redevelop a former medical center into an integrated community of residential units, a community center, clubhouse and open space with parks and trails.
- Represented lender in the creation and acquisition of a \$100 million senior A-Note on an existing construction mortgage loan encumbering a hotel-to-multifamily conversion project in midtown Manhattan.
- Represented the purchaser in connection with their acquisition of a \$113 million SASB private issuance secured by an office building in Miami, Florida.
- Represented a lender in connection with a \$77.2 million first-mortgage condominium inventory loan collateralized by a recently completed 41-story residential condominium tower located in Austin's Rainey Street District in Austin, Texas.
- Represented a lender in connection with the origination of a \$70, million mortgage loan secured by a hotel in Miami, Florida. The loan documentation contemplated a future development of the subject property.
- Represented a lender in connection with the origination of a \$90 million condo inventory loan to a developer, secured by several unsold condominium units in a luxury condo development located in Miami, Florida.
- Represented a lender in connection with a \$120 million note-on-note financing secured by a construction loan made to finance the development of a condominium project in Brooklyn, New York.

# News

---

May 19, 2026

**Polsinelli Represents Northwind Group in \$50 Million Loan for Manhattan**

## Residential Development

February 6, 2025

**Polsinelli Advises Northwind Group in \$135 Million Loan for Manhattan Office to Residential Conversion**

November 21, 2024

**Polsinelli Advises Northwind Group in \$77.2M First-Mortgage Loan on Austin Residential Building**

August 19, 2024

**Polsinelli Advises Northwind Group in \$95 Million First-Mortgage Loan to Joint Venture Between BLDG and DWREI**

July 2, 2024

**Polsinelli Advises Northwind Group in \$23M First-Mortgage Loan**

## Publications

---

May 15, 2026

**Commercial originations surge 52% amid lender “feeding frenzy”**

*Quoted, The Real Deal*

February 11, 2026

**Attorneys Tackle Office Conversion Puzzle Across The Country**

*Quoted, Law360*

October 8, 2025

**Big Law Real Estate Practice Leaders Plot Growth**

*Quoted, New York Law Journal*

September 8, 2025

**Speaker Spotlight: John Vavas of Polsinelli**

*Featured, Commercial Observer*

March 28, 2025

**Office-to-resi conversions gain steam in New York**

*Quoted, PERE Credit*

March 20, 2025

**Term Sheet: The Fed's rate pace; New York's CMBS relief; InterVest and OZK's Nashville duet**

*Quoted, PERE Credit*

March 2025

**Ran Eliasaf's Northwind rides the alternative lender wave**

*Quoted, The Real Deal*

February 7, 2025

**Recovery Remains Elusive for Office REITs**

*Quoted, The Deal*

October 14, 2024

**A billion square feet of new housing space to emerge in cities as America's office market faces a major crisis**

*Quoted, New York Post*

October 2024

**America's offices are about to see a wave of distress that could result in a billion square feet of fresh housing supply**

*Quoted, Business Insider*

September 18, 2024

**Fed Announces 50 Basis-Point Rate Cut**

*Quoted, GlobeSt.com*

September 5, 2024

**RFR Holding Plans to Resolve Debt Issues Without Selling Its Class A Buildings**

*Quoted, Commercial Observer*

July 30, 2024

**Risky Bet on US Office Towers Becomes Debacle in South Korea**

*Quoted, Bloomberg*

March 26, 2024

**With Debt Harder To Get, CRE Finance Is Facing A 'New Reality'**

*Quoted, Bisnow*

March 20, 2024

**Interest Rates Remain the Same. What Will 2024 Bring?**

*Quoted, Commercial Property Executive*

December 1, 2023

**How sponsors are using bridge loans to buy time until the recovery**

*Quoted, Real Estate Capital USA*

October 9, 2023

**The State of Multifamily Lending**

*Quoted, GlobeSt.com*

September 14, 2023

**Looming maturity wall gives rise to new 'blend and extend' strategy**

*Real Estate Capital USA*

August 4, 2023

**Bill Ackman Predicts Rising Treasury Yields. How Will CRE Fare?**

*Quoted, GlobeSt.com*

July 21, 2023

**CRE Carrying Costs Are Nearly as Burdensome as Interest Rates**

*Quoted, GlobeSt.com*