

## Construction Group Of The Year: Orrick

By **Georgia Kromrei**

*Law360 (January 28, 2026, 4:04 PM EST)* -- Last year, Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP advised the Gateway Development Commission on the \$16 billion Hudson River tunnel replacement project and advised New York City on the Manhattan construction contract for its \$13 billion Borough-Based Jails Program to replace the Rikers Island complex, earning a spot among the 2025 Law360 Construction Groups of the Year.

Young Lee, a partner in Orrick's New York office, said Orrick's public finance and infrastructure teams are "hyperfocused on the space of the industry where technology disruption converges with project and construction delivery."

That focus was on display in Orrick's representation of the Gateway Development Commission, a bistate authority created by New York and New Jersey to oversee the tunnel replacement project.

Orrick said it advised multiple parts of the project to ultimately double the passenger capacity for the rail line connecting Bergen Palisades in New Jersey to Penn Station in Manhattan. The project includes creating a new tunnel under the Hudson River while the existing tunnel is repaired, so as not to disrupt the 800,000 daily passengers who rely on the Northeast Corridor from Boston to Washington, D.C.

Matthew Neuringer, a partner in Orrick's New York office who is advising on the project, said Orrick's work will not end with making a "cement tube," but will extend to the tunnel's fit-out with rail systems and substations to make it completely interoperable with both Amtrak's and New Jersey Transit's existing systems.

"It's both replacing a critical infrastructure asset that has a huge impact on the gross domestic product in the United States and the Northeast, but also increasing capacity," Neuringer said. "It's a major win for our region."

The project has been contemplated off and on for the past 20 years, according to Lee, who is also advising on the project. The 115-year-old tunnel has already exceeded its useful service life, Orrick said, and the current project to repair it is seen as the last chance to fix the tunnel before it suffers structural damage due to unforeseen natural disaster.

In 2025, Orrick said, the firm completed procurement for the most technically complex contract, connecting New Jersey with Penn Station construction, and finalized the utility agreement protecting



existing infrastructure.

Lee said Orrick was "uniquely disposed" to advise on the project, in part because of the firm's deep relationships with agencies and government authorities in the New York metro area. Having the right connections helped create confidence, allowing the project to try new delivery methodologies, Lee explained.

"Given the massive size and that it's the one final chance to get it done properly, the client thought that Orrick was the firm to diligence all of those various methodologies, figure out the right structure for the procurements and engage with the contracting market, who we had a lot of familiarity with from other deals," Lee said. "We had that level of connection and confidence that other firms would not have brought to the table as part of the overall scope of services."

The infrastructure project has attracted the attention of the Trump administration. In October, a Trump administration official said in a social media post that funding for the tunnel would be part of \$18 billion in New York City infrastructure projects "put on hold to ensure funding is not flowing based on unconstitutional [diversity, equity and inclusion] principles."

The Gateway Development Commission funds the project, and then seeks reimbursement for the federal government.

Lee said the Orrick team's job as attorneys is to keep the project moving forward, and tune out the "white noise" of politics.

"Obviously, we're not completely immune to it, and we hear the news as much as everyone else," Lee said. "But the thing about the types of projects we work on is that they are so technically complex — and so critical to the nation's infrastructure, economy or security — that regardless of what administration is running the country at the time, most of our projects are bipartisan in nature, in the sense that all Americans would benefit from getting the project done."

Orrick also advised New York City on construction contracts for the \$13 billion plan to replace the Rikers Island complex with four borough-based jails, using an innovative design-build approach that the firm helped the city develop. The approach allows the city to hire a firm to do both the design and construction, optimizing for the best outcome, not just the lowest price. Adding a progressive element allows the city to advance the project before the design is completely finalized, Neuringer said. The last contract, for the jail to be based in Manhattan, was awarded in 2025, according to Orrick.

"What that allowed them to do was unearth all of the types of challenges that typically derail projects, cause cost overruns and cause them to be delayed, [which] the design builder and the city of New York can work on collaboratively, so that when they lock in the price and the schedule after they're in contract, they know that they've done everything they technically could have done to have as certain a price and schedule as possible," Neuringer said.

That approach, Neuringer said, means that once the work is started, the project can accelerate without having to go back and rework it. Orrick structured the request for proposals and negotiated the construction contract. At times, the firm was negotiating on four different procurements with about a dozen different bidders.

Orrick also advised the Public Finance Authority — a governmental entity that provides local

governments with low-cost, tax-exempt financing for projects that contribute to social and economic growth quality of life improvement — on the issuance of \$3.4 billion in tax-exempt private activity bonds for the \$11 billion State Route 400 Express Lanes Project in Atlanta.

The project incorporates dynamic pricing, with tolls based on real-time traffic conditions, and annual toll revenues are projected to be \$300 million, Orrick said. The project will also include upgrades for several key bridges and two new bus stations.

The project brought together Orrick's public finance practice with its infrastructure team.

Christine Reynolds, a partner in Orrick's public finance department who advised on the project, said the project brought together municipal tax-exempt debt, as well as private partners.

"As a whole, Orrick's infrastructure group and our public finance group works together to deliver these projects across both the public and private sector," Reynolds said, "and that's a really distinguishing factor of Orrick as a whole compared to some of the other groups that we see out there."

--Editing by Amy French.