

BANKING/ FINANCE

Canada's in the Midst of an Epic Lateral Hiring Frenzy—and US Firms Aren't Helping

by Gail J. Cohen

Canada's legal market has been hit by the largest lateral hiring frenzy it has seen in decades, with not only Canadian but also U.S. firms vying for limited associate talent in Canada.

"The remarkable swing of the pendulum over the last 14 months has been such that there is a raging war for talent going on right now," said Douglas Bryce, national managing partner of Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt, one of Canada's biggest law firms. "We're experiencing very high activity levels and so we have a very high appetite for associate talent."

Since at least last September, the legal market has been extremely busy, particularly in corporate and securities work, but also in other practice areas, including commercial real estate and labor and employment. This is true across the country, including in Calgary, Toronto and Vancouver, said Dal Bhathal, managing partner at Canadian recruiter The Counsel Network.

But the high demand for new associates is not taking place simply so firms can get the increased amount of work done, according to Peter Feldberg, managing partner of Canadian Global 200 firm Fasken Martineau DuMoulin. The rapid addition of talent is also taking place so firms can ensure the associates already at the firm don't get burned out.

Indeed, McCarthy Tétrault, another Global 200 firm, which has hired more than two dozen associates since January and will onboard another 40 or so by September, is increasing its head count to ease the burden on existing lawyers, said firm CEO Dave Leonard.

"We're not simply saying, 'Oh this is great! Get all the associates working 200-300 hours a month. Look how much money we're making,'" said Leonard, whose firm has five offices across Canada as well as offices in New York and London. "This isn't sustainable. We don't want our people working so hard."

Many of the new associates will come through aggressive rehiring of articling students who have done their training at firms.

But often that isn't enough, and recruiters are benefiting from the high demand.

Warren Bongard, president and co-founder of Toronto-based ZSA Legal Recruitment, said the first quarter of the year was probably one of the company's best quarters in more than a decade. "And it was just constant—it was like insatiable demand from mostly law firms but also in house," he said.

Some of the movement is occurring because lawyers view the incredibly busy legal market as an opportunity to move up to a higher tier, according to Carrie Heller, president of The Heller Group Legal and Executive Search. In addition, lawyers are feeling overworked in their current firms and think they may be better supported in a firm with more resources, she said.

THE AMERICANS ARE COMING

Like counterparts in many countries, the Canadian firms are offering special COVID bonuses, in the area of \$20,000 or 10% of their salaries on top of standard bonuses, to reward those associates who stay on through the year.



SHUTTERSTOCK

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Base salaries, however, haven't changed much, say the recruiters.

So, while Canadian firms are slugging it out with each other to attract and retain the best talent, U.S. firms are looking north and raiding associates from Canada. That's not a new phenomenon, recruiters say, as education and early professional life are quite similar in the two countries. But the pace of hiring and the wider range of practice areas and geographies make this time quite different.

Law firms in the United States are also incredibly busy, especially with private equity and transactional work, and they are experiencing high demand for mid-level associates. To meet that demand, recruiters across the U.S. have turned to Canada—the closest and easiest place from which to recruit, said Stephanie Biderman, a New York partner at the recruiting firm Major, Lindsey & Africa.

"That ties into the increase in demand for Canadian associates," she said.

Kirkland & Ellis, Latham & Watkins, White & Case and Willkie Farr & Gallagher are just a few of the firms that have hired Canadians recently for positions in Silicon Valley, New York, and even Boston and Chicago, recruiters say.

The firms either declined to comment or did not respond to requests for comment.

With starting salaries in the U.S. almost double what even the largest Canadian firms offer, there's always been movement across the border. But current demand and the special COVID and signing bonuses being offered in the U.S. mean more Canadians are willing to make the move, said Katherine Loanzon, a managing director at Kinney Recruiting in New York.

Remote and flexible working arrangements have also made cross-border hiring less cumbersome for firms and associates. In some cases, American firms are bringing on new hires without them being licensed to practice in a U.S. jurisdiction, then allowing them to become licensed while working at the firm, Loanzon said.

And across the board, while the number of lateral moves in Canada and to the U.S. is sky high, hiring decisions are also being made faster. Where the interview process used to take several weeks, timelines now are super compressed, said Heller.

"We're seeing firms move very quickly, just responding to the pressure that's out in the market right now," she said.

Gail J. Cohen is the Toronto-based correspondent for Law.com International. She writes about lawyers and legal issues in Canada. Her coverage includes the business of law, global and domestic law firms, in-house legal departments and regulatory issues. She can be reached at gcohen@alm.com.



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **COUNCIL ZONING MEETING** on **June 23, 2021 beginning at 6:00 PM**. The City Council will consider this item for **SECOND READING**. The meeting will be held at the **City of Doral, Government Center, Council Chambers** located at **8401 NW 53rd Terrace, Doral, Florida, 33166**.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE No. 2021-12

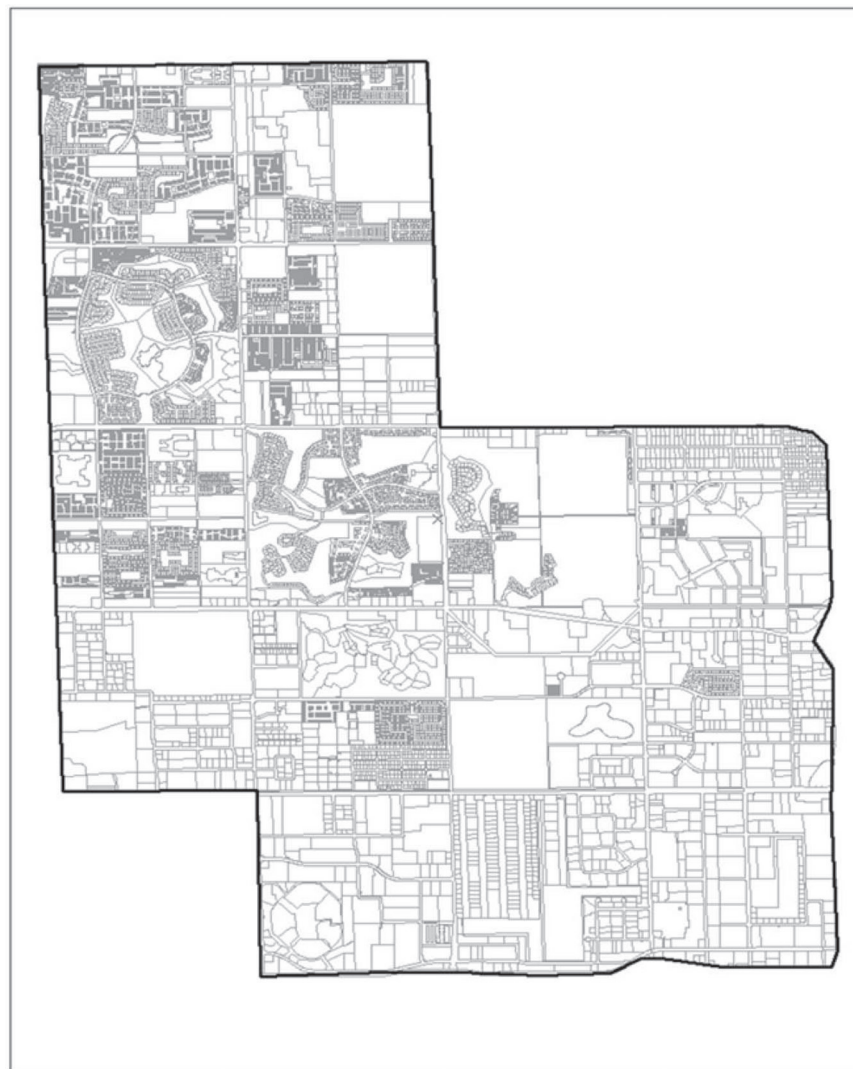
AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, APPROVING/DENYING A TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF DORAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, TO ELIMINATE SCHOOLS AS A PERMITTED USE WITHIN PROPERTIES DESIGNATED INDUSTRIAL AND RESTRICTED INDUSTRIAL BY THE CITY'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP; AUTHORIZING THE TRANSMITTAL OF THE TEXT AMENDMENT ADOPTION PACKAGE TO THE STATE LAND PLANNING AGENCY IN THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND OTHER REQUIRED GOVERNMENTAL REVIEWING AGENCIES PURSUANT TO SECTION 163.3184, FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 21-06-DOR-01

APPLICANT: City of Doral

REQUEST: The City of Doral Staff is requesting Mayor and City Council approval of a text amendment to the City of Doral Comprehensive Plan, to eliminate schools as a permitted use within properties designated Industrial and Restricted Industrial by the City's Future Land Use Map.

Location Map



Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

Connie Diaz, MMC
City Clerk
City of Doral