

# CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



### ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

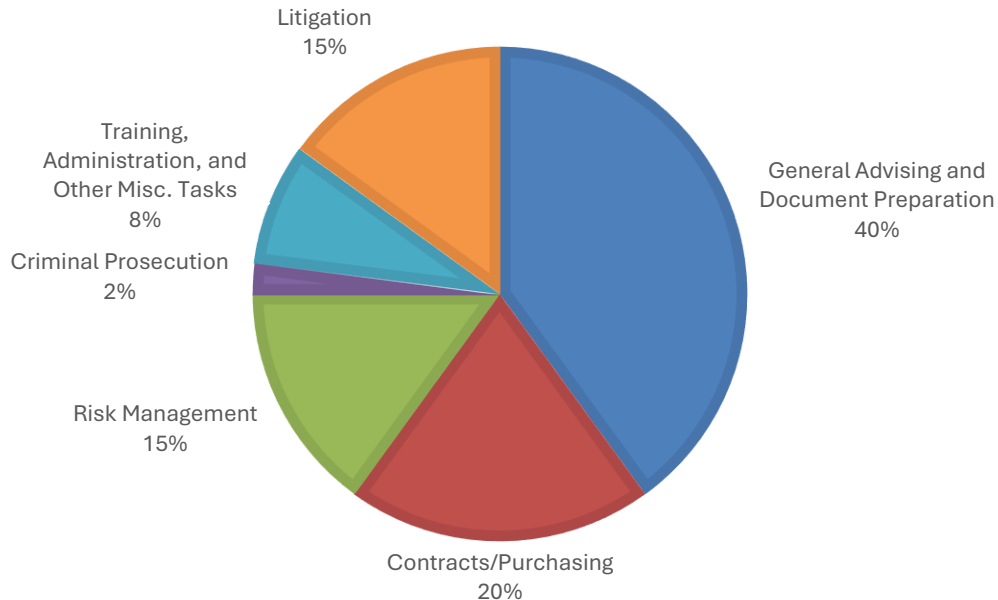
The City Attorney provides advice and support to the Mayor, Council, boards, commissions, and staff on all legal matters pertaining to the business of the City. In addition, the City Attorney represents the City in all actions brought by or against the City or its officials in their official capacity and oversees outside counsel when utilized in litigation and projects requiring specialized practice areas. Staffing in the City Attorney's Office consists of the City Attorney, Assistant City Attorney, and the Paralegal, who provides administrative support to the City Attorney. The work program for the City Attorney's Office is driven by the needs of the City and each department therein. The City Attorney provides preparation assistance and legal review of all documents, including ordinances, resolutions, interlocal agreements, real estate documents, public works contracts, services agreements, purchasing contracts, and various other documents to make sure they are legally sufficient and compliant with the laws. The City Attorney's Office works closely with the Clerk's Office to review and respond to city-wide records requests, manages our contract with Thurston County for criminal prosecution services, and oversees risk management for the City in coordination with the insurance pool.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Provided comprehensive legal services to Mayor, Council, and staff.
- Provided training for Council and staff on public records and OPMA in collaboration with the Attorney General's Office.
- Managed litigation and claims against the City; provided litigation updates and legal memorandums to Mayor, Council, and staff regarding anticipated and/or ongoing legal issues/litigation.
- Provided support and legal services for all city projects.
- Updated the City's Purchasing Manual and provided city-wide contract training and support.
- Reviewed and updated existing City policies and forms.
- Monitored case law and legislative changes in state law affecting City ordinances and/or procedures.
- Kept the Mayor, Council, and staff advised on changes in the law and assisted with preparing code amendments as necessary.
- Monitored and assisted with immediate homelessness and housing issues.
- Transferred risk management to the City Attorney's Office and increased the City's risk management awareness by drafting policies focused on educating employees on safety, ensuring all employees are adequately trained for their position, and general risk management policies for the City.
- Collaborated with WCIA to build best risk management practices for the City.
- Reduced the City's insurance costs by approximately \$200,000 per year through our risk management work.

# CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT

## WHERE THE CAO INVESTS TIME



## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

With the hiring of our new Assistant City Attorney in February 2024, we were able to prioritize and address a variety of risk management issues, including but not limited to, our special events permit policy and procedures, safety audits with WRS and TED, and revisions to the safety and training policies for WRS and TED. Having a second in-house attorney also helped us tackle the growing demands that each department has experienced as a result of the tremendous growth Tumwater has seen and will continue to see.

## GOALS FOR 2025-2026

- Continue to provide comprehensive legal services to the Mayor, Council, and staff.
- Continue to monitor state law changes and case law interpretations affecting City ordinances and assist with preparation of code amendments as necessary.
- Assist with the development of procedures to support technologies for a paperless office and a remote/hybrid workforce.
- Monitor and assist with long-term homelessness and housing issues.
- Continue to monitor and participate in gopher and habitat conversation plan discussions.
- Continue to assist with land use planning, including comprehensive plan and development regulations, habitat conservation planning, climate action plan, development agreements, and brewery and craft brewing center related issues.
- Continue to support code enforcement, ensuring team members have the legal support needed to be successful.
- Support and demonstrate positive leadership toward Tumwater Way (customer service), leadership development, and cross-departmental effectiveness training with the leadership team.
- Assist Mayor, Council, and staff with issues related to Council rules and relationships.
- Continue to enhance the City's risk management functions and update forms, policies, and procedures accordingly.