

Explanation of Veto for Additional City Attorney Position

At a cost of \$190,000, this position would fund one of the highest paid, if not the highest paid, City employee positions. While I recognize legal services incur a considerable cost to the City, I am not convinced that this is the best approach to provide services or save money for several reasons.

First, I would encourage staff to consider negotiating better rates with lawyers with whom we do considerable work.

Second, it is unclear to me that one single attorney would have the breadth of expertise needed for the potential range of real estate work. On one project, we may need someone's expertise on brownfield remediation; on another, we may need someone who can put together complex financing. If those skills do not exist in the proposed attorney, we will have to contract for those services, thus negating the proposed savings.

Third, creating a permanent position at this pay level may seem prudent in the short term when development work will likely be high. However, if this type of work diminishes in a decade, the City will again find itself losing money compared to the current arrangement of contracting attorneys for specific work.

Fourth, I would encourage City staff to consider if a longer-term project-based contract makes more sense than an employee who could work for the City for decades.