

City Attorney's Office

FY11 Final SOP

DeWitt F. McCarley, City Attorney

“We are committed to providing the City and its public officials and employees with cost effective legal services of the highest quality.”

City Attorney's Office FY2011 Final Strategic Operating Plan

I. Executive Summary

Introduction

The City Attorney's Office provides legal advice and representation to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager and other City officials, employees, and agencies. The Office represents the City, its officials and employees in litigation filed by or against them. Upon request, the Office provides legal opinions to City officials and employees on City-related matters.

All ordinances and resolutions adopted by the City Council are drafted or reviewed by the City Attorney's Office. Contracts, leases, deeds, franchises and other legal documents to which the City is a party are also reviewed or drafted by the Office. In addition, the City Attorney is involved in selecting and managing the services of outside counsel who represent the City, its officials and employees on City-related matters.

The City Attorney's Office is committed to providing the City and its public officials and employees with cost effective legal services of the highest quality.

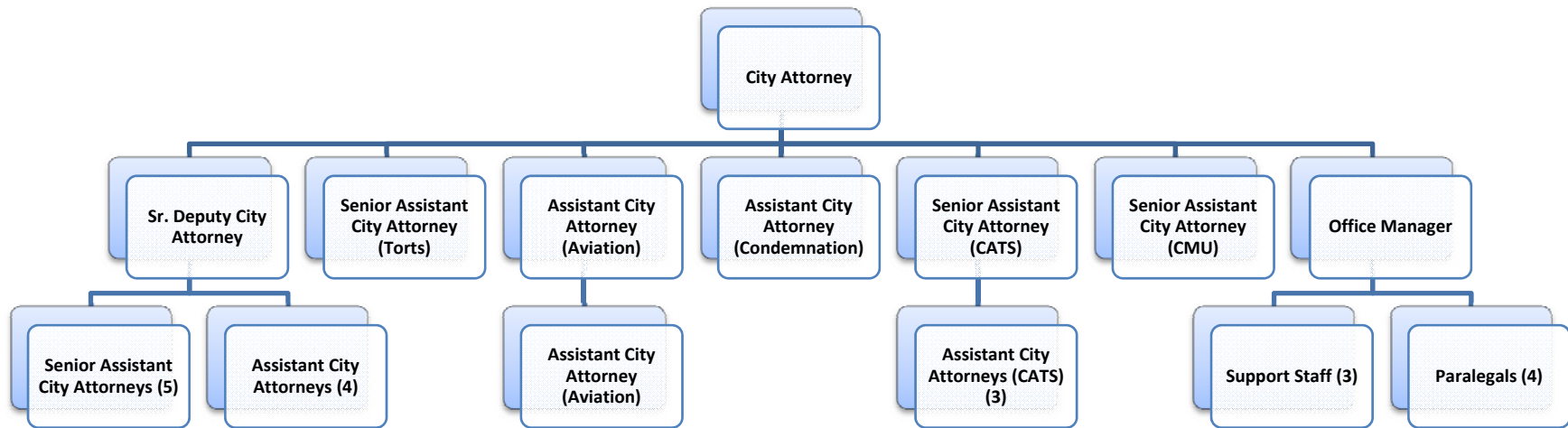
Summary of Resources

	FY2009 Actual	FY2010 Budget	FY2011 Budget
Budget	\$1,611,068	\$1,693,953	\$1,883,589
Positions	26.5	26.5	27.5

Vision and Mission

Vision: We will be the City of Charlotte's preferred provider of legal services. Our services will be consistently responsive and of the highest quality. We will be passionate in our pursuit of excellence and will always act in accordance with the highest professional and ethical standards.

Mission: We will ensure that appropriate legal services are always provided to our client, the City of Charlotte, in accordance with the values of the City Attorney's Office. This responsibility will be discharged by consulting regularly with our client and being familiar with its needs.



*Also to be considered as a part of the City Attorney's Office organizational chart:

Police Attorney's Office

- Deputy City Attorney – 1
- Senior Assistant City Attorney – 2
- Assistant City Attorney – 2
- Paralegal – 2

II. Strategy and KBU Planning

The City Attorney's Office provides legal advice and representation to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, City officials and employees.

Links to Corporate Strategy

The City Attorney's Office will provide service that is consistent with the City's corporate strategy.

Serve the Customer. The City Attorney's Office will continue to focus on the client, be accessible and responsive, and maintain a thorough understanding of City operations, personnel and policies.

The City Attorney's Office will provide a high level of customer service to Key and Support Businesses, monitor and respond to feedback from our customers, and strive to be accessible and responsive to our customers.

Each attorney is required to conduct a client service interview with each of his or her client departments and develop a plan to provide the service.

The office will monitor and respond to feedback from customers.

Run the Business. The City Attorney's Office will continue to pursue excellence in the practice of law, be recognized experts in municipal law, and focus on preventive legal advice.

Three Committees are evaluating the business processes currently in place that deal with litigation, communication and training to identify potential areas for improvement.

Manage Resources. The City Attorney's Office will continue to strive to provide legal services in a cost effective manner and at a lower cost than services provided by outside counsel.

Compile a list of outside counsel used by the City. The office has set a goal to gather information regarding outside counsel used by the City and update the current outside attorney rate chart. A list will be developed showing attorneys the office has used and which attorneys on staff have worked with the outside lawyer or firm.

Develop Employees. The City Attorney's Office will continue to champion the City's interest, treat citizens and the Bar with respect, and maintain the highest professional and ethical standards.

The Attorney's Office will strive to increase the availability of skills in areas required to support City priorities, encourage staff to undertake activities or participate in organizations that strengthen and demonstrate our individual and collective commitment to professionalism and volunteerism.

We will support the Wellness initiative through nutritional education sponsored through the Wellness program and by making healthy food choices available at departmental events and meetings.

We will provide informative and helpful legal information to employees on various legal topics by publication of LegalEase on CNET.

Strategic Initiatives

- Ensure good customer service delivery through client service interviews.
- Be proactive regarding the provision of legal advice and opinions concerning the creation and interpretation of local ordinances, state and federal law. Administer all legal services, manage and coordinate all litigation matters and represent the City's legal positions with other agencies.
- Deliver competitive services by monitoring the services of outside counsel to ensure that the City is receiving the highest quality legal services at a reasonable cost.
- Promote learning and growth by providing the necessary resources and encouraging staff to undertake activities that demonstrate their commitment to professionalism and life long learning.

Technology Plan

The Office of the CIO and BSS/IT have been extremely helpful by analyzing our current processes and assisting in development of a plan outlining our future technology needs. The City Attorney's Office was given funding from the Technology Proposal Evaluation Team (TPET) and we purchased and are beginning training for the *Encase* system. We plan to submit a new proposal to TPET to receive additional funding for *Concordance*. These two systems will work with our *Time Matters* software to create a comprehensive litigation support system.

Training and Development Plan

Customer Service Training: The City Attorney's Office will continue to conduct client service interviews with the individual client departments to ensure that the staff attorneys are addressing the needs of the client and identify special needs. The office will strive to return telephone calls on the same day received and answer e-mail requests within a reasonable timeframe.

The office will continue to make Council member requests for service a high priority. We will research and provide written responses to Council members when received.

Technology Training: The City Attorney's Office emphasizes the importance of all staff members having an understanding of Outlook, that support staff develop and maintain superior word processing skills, and all attorneys should have an understanding of Microsoft Word. Particular staff members should develop and maintain expertise in relevant computer skills to assist and serve as a resource for other staff members in areas such as Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, Excel, Access and LexisNexis.

The office will conduct periodic surveys of staff members to ensure that they receive the training to keep them current on computer technology. Encourage support staff to pursue higher levels of training in Word, Access, Excel and PowerPoint.

Professional Development Training: Continue to provide resources and funding so that the attorneys will receive at least the 12 hours of Continuing Legal Education required by the Board of Continuing Legal Education of the North Carolina State Bar.

Provide funding for attorneys to attend conferences and seminars in their area of expertise, to maintain current competence in changing areas of the law.

Encourage attorneys to develop and conduct a seminar, or write a legal article for publication. The budget now provides for the City Attorney, the Senior Deputy City Attorney and a Senior Assistant City Attorney to attend the International Municipal Lawyers Association Mid-Winter Conference and the Annual Conference. If other attorneys are interested in attending one or both of these conferences, they will be required to write and give a speech at the conferences in order to attend.

Encourage all staff members to participate in some community service effort.

Customer Service Plan

The City Attorney's Office will continue to strive to be the City of Charlotte's preferred provider of legal services. We will continue to make every effort to retain the experienced attorneys that are now on staff. We will recruit and make every effort to retain the best-qualified support staff.

The Attorney's Office will encourage all new employees to take Customer Service training through Training Trax.

The Attorney's Office will make Council member requests for service a high priority.

III. Service Delivery

The City Attorney's Office provides legal services to all departments and officials for the City.

Core Service Areas

City Departments and Officials: Provide legal services to all City departments and City officials.

Mayor and City Council: Provide legal services to Mayor and members of Council.

Service History and Trends

City departments and officials: These legal services include ongoing advice to city officials, preparation and review of legal documents, representation of the City and city officials in lawsuits. When warranted the City Attorney may contract with outside legal counsel for specialized expertise and services. The Attorney's Office will administer all legal services, manage and coordinate all litigation matters and represent the City's legal interests with other agencies.

Mayor and City Council: The Attorney's Office will direct and organize functions of the office in a manner that will support the goals and objectives of the City Council. We will continue developing criteria for the use of outside legal counsel to supplement various departmental activities. Continue to hire, train and develop internal staff to assume additional legal responsibility in support of City needs.

The Attorney's Office will develop and promote practices which are responsive to City Council priorities and initiatives while retaining accountability for completion of those initiatives. Also provide accurate, concise and timely information on which the Council may take appropriate action.

IV. BSC and Performance Measurement

The City Attorney's Office will continue its efforts to build a strong team and dedication to providing the citizens and employees of the City with the best possible legal services. The Attorney's Office will create an environment that rewards constructive candor and addresses conflicts skillfully and productively.

The Attorney's Office will exhibit outstanding professional skills and demonstrate the ability to lead and take strong action on initiatives while ensuring complete follow through. The Office will exhibit knowledge of municipal laws and ordinances, as well as in-depth understanding of state and federal procedures and substantive legal issues. The advice and actions from the City Attorney's Office will be based on the highest level of integrity and legal precedent.

The Attorney's Office will continue to reflect its strong philosophy with regard to professional development. Staff is encouraged to reach their fullest professional potential.

V. Conclusion

The City Attorney's Office is committed to providing the City and its public officials and employees with cost effective legal services of the highest quality.

Appendix A – FY 2011 City Attorney’s Resource Request Summary

FY2011 Service & Current Level Change Requests	Cost Center	Request
Administrative Hearing Officer/Public Records Attorney	50100	\$129,726.00
Litigation Support System	50100	\$12,000.00
Business Process Analysis	50100	\$60,000.00
Subtotal FY2011		\$201,726.00