



Metro Metro Council Attorney

Recruitment Announcement



ABOUT METRO

Metro is the regional government for the Portland metropolitan area. It is the only directly elected regional government in the United States. Metro is responsible for managing the Portland region's solid waste system, coordinating the growth of cities in the region, oversight and implementation of two bond measures for affordable housing and open space/habitat preservation, managing a regional parks and natural area, and overseeing the Oregon Zoo, Convention Center, Portland's Centers for the Arts and the Portland Expo Center.

Metro serves more than 1.5 million people in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties. The agency's boundary encompasses Portland, Oregon and 23 other cities – from the Columbia River in the north

to the bend of the Willamette River near Wilsonville, and from the foothills of the Coast Range near Forest Grove to the banks of the Sandy River at Troutdale.

Metro is known world-wide for its cutting-edge work in the fields of Solid Waste Management, Housing and Transportation Planning and Community Engagement.

The Metro Council consists of a president, elected region wide, and six councilors who are elected by district every four years in nonpartisan races. Metro has a diverse workforce of more than 1,600 employees including park rangers, economists, teachers, scientists, designers, planners, animal keepers, stagehands and cartographers. Hundreds of volunteers lend a hand at Metro's parks, cemeteries, natural areas, offices and visitor venues.



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ABOUT THE POSITION

Metro is seeking a resourceful and experienced lawyer with management expertise to become its next Metro Attorney. Reporting to the Metro Council, with a close working relationship with the Metro Council President, the position provides legal counsel to the Metro Council, Chief Operating Officer and Metro Operating Units on complex and sensitive legal matters and represents Metro in litigation and issues of significant visibility and public impact.

This position leads a staff of 15 including 9 attorneys and 6 support staff dealing with a variety of legal issues in areas such as: land use planning, real estate, construction, litigation, employment and labor, constitutional law, public finance, records and public meetings, contracts, administrative law, elections, and bond measures.



DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Metro Attorney is responsible for a wide range of areas including:

- Plans, organizes and directs activities of the legal department. Implements and monitors work plans to achieve the office's mission and goals. Holds primary responsibility for talent management, initiating salary action, handling grievances, and coaching attorneys and support staff.
- Directs and responds to various Office of Metro Attorney administrative opportunities and challenges and determines appropriate action or resolution. Establishes, implements and monitors policies and procedures, consistent with Metro Code and relevant laws and assures efficient operation and high volume/high quality internal services.
- Researches legal issues and statutory and case law; makes recommendations for Charter and Code changes, ordinances, resolutions and other legal documents; drafts and issues legal opinions; drafts and reviews legal documents and prepares or revises as requested by the Council.
- Manages resources according to the flow of legal work to assure timeliness and smoothness of operations. Evaluates internal systems and legal resources. Contracts for external legal services, administrative services and other resources when workload requires or for special legal expertise.
- Provides legal analysis and opinions on laws, issues, and proposed legislation relevant to Metro and its programs and activities.
- Will have an understanding of how to approach and discuss risk with colleagues with a larger system approach lens. And will proactively work to find ways to reduce legal risk while allowing innovation to occur throughout the organization.
- Will work with the Metro Councilors and the COO to implement an Employer of Choice action plan as well as a performance-based system strategic plan for the organization. The implementation will include empowering and training employees to find ways to reduce barriers to conducting their work efficiently both in the Metro Attorney's office but also agency wide.
- Provides representation to Metro in state and federal courts and before administrative agencies and oversees outside counsel.
- Attends meetings and provides advice to the Metro Council or its committees; represents Metro in hearings before elected and administrative entities and state and federal agencies; represents Metro in negotiations to resolve issues involving litigation risk; serves as a spokesperson for Metro on legal issues arising in the conduct of Metro business, including inquiries from legal counsel for other outside agencies, interested parties and the public.
- Develops professional relationships with external entities in support of Metro programs; meets with internal and external, public and private officials to represent programs.
- Fulfills Metro's core values of public service, excellence, teamwork, respect, innovation and sustainability.
- Will hold themselves to a high moral and ethical professional and personal conduct.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The region is experiencing massive population growth and with that comes an overall anxiety in the region around a loss of livability. The mission of Metro through the years has been to plan to make the region livable. We now have been asked to stand up and become an active player in implementation measures to find solutions.

Identifiable issues include:

Transportation woes

With more people comes more traffic and the transportation system just hasn't kept up. Public transit isn't coming fast or often enough. Trucks and containers are stuck in traffic, and the region struggles to maintain transit, streets, and other critical infrastructure.

Economic disparity has increased and wages have stagnated.

While the region has some of the highest economic growth in the country, many residents still can't make ends meet. All too often, affordable housing is on one side of town and a decent job or education is all the way on the other side. These problems are felt disproportionately in communities of color.

Rising housing costs

Without affordable rental and home ownership options, working people and families are driven out of neighborhoods or into deeper poverty. Since a ballot measure creating affordable housing was just approved by voters, Metro will now be responsible for implementing the program in partnership with local government, community organizations and housing partners. However, we are losing people as they move further and further out to find affordable housing and that is increasing the congestion in the region.

Cleaning up the environment

For a region that prides itself on sustainability – there is still a lot to do to ensure continued improvement within our waterways. Metro has preserved thousands of acres of beautiful natural areas, but for many these are hard to reach, they live in communities that are park deficient. These are not only problems waiting to be solved, but also jobs waiting to be created.

Racial Equity

In 2010, the Metro Council adopted equity as one of the region's six desired outcomes. People of color represent a growing share of the Portland region's population. They also experience worse outcomes in every indicator of social well-being. It is imperative to the region's economy and quality of life, as well as Metro's effectiveness as a public agency, that Metro update its policies, practices, programs and activities to better serve people of color. Implementing the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will be a big part of the agency's work going forward into the future.



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The next Metro Attorney will be a legal professional with a demonstrated track record of successful legal accomplishments. Qualified candidates will be proven lawyers, strong leaders, creative thinkers, and possess the organizational skills to assess the structure and efficacy of the legal department with a vision that focuses on providing a high-quality product. A superior level of legal skill, political acumen, independent judgement, an appreciation for the application of technology to legal practice and institutional management is also important for this position.

The Metro Attorney and the Chief Operations Officer both serve at the pleasure of the Metro Council with oversight provided by the Metro Council President. Communication and coordination are an imperative between the Metro Council President, the Metro Council, the COO and the Metro Attorney.

The Metro Attorney will be held to a high standard for customer service, customer, employee and citizen relations as well as providing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion lens to decision-making all day, every day.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

Graduation from an accredited law school and ten years legal experience of which at least three were in a supervisory capacity and an active member of the State of Oregon Bar Association in good standing or eligible to be an active member within six months of employment. Legal experience in land use planning and ballot initiative is preferred. Government experience is a plus.



APPLICATION PROCESS

Persons interested in this position should submit the following information:

- A cover letter.
- A current resume.

If you have questions regarding this announcement, please call Marissa Karras at 360-956-1336. This position will remain open until filled but the screening process will move quickly. In order to be considered for the first round of interviews please submit your application materials at www.karrasconsulting.net no later than February 1st, 2019.

Metro is committed to upholding and promoting equal opportunity in employment. The Council encourages people of all backgrounds, cultures and religions to apply, including veterans, people of color, immigrants, refugees, women, LGBTQ, and people with disabilities. We know that a diverse workforce is a strong workforce. We will provide assistance in the recruitment, application and selection process to applicants with disabilities who request such assistance.

COMPENSATION

The annual salary range for this position is \$186,156 – \$269,947. Benefits are among the best in the region and includes comprehensive medical, dental, vision and life insurance, public employee retirement system contributions, holiday and leave time.

