

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE February 14, 2014

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT City Attorney's Office: Goals and Objectives 2014

On Wednesday, February 19, 2014, the City Council will be briefed on the City Attorney's Office Goals and Objectives for 2014. The briefing materials are attached for your review.

Please let me know if you have questions or need additional information.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Warren M.S. Ernst'.

Warren M.S. Ernst  
City Attorney

cc: A.C. Gonzalez, City Manager  
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor  
Rosa A. Rios, City Secretary  
Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge  
Ryan S. Evans, Interim First Assistant City Manager  
Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager  
Forest E. Turner, Assistant City Manager

Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
Charles M. Cato, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Theresa O'Donnell, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer  
Elsa Cantu, Assistant to the City Manager  
Frank Libro, Public Information Officer

**CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**2014**

Presented to Dallas City Council  
February 19, 2014

# Purpose of Briefing

- Overview of CAO
- Significant accomplishments
- Goals for 2014
  - In the Community
  - In City Hall
  - In the City Attorney's Office

# Overview

The mission of the City Attorney's Office is to provide the highest quality legal services with integrity, efficiency, independence, and professionalism.

# Overview

- The City Attorney is appointed by and answerable to the City Council, as representatives of the City of Dallas
- As spelled out in the City Charter, the City Attorney:
  - Provides legal advice to the City Council, the City Manager, all boards and commissions and all city officers and employees
  - Represents the City in all litigation and controversies
  - Prosecutes all cases brought before the municipal court
  - Approves all proposed ordinances and contracts
- Further, the City Attorney is responsible for:
  - Identifying and hiring the best possible attorneys and staff to fulfill the duties of the office
  - Leading, coordinating, and managing the office to best fulfill its mission

# Significant Accomplishments

- Community Prosecutors and Community Courts - nationally recognized for enhancing the quality of life in our neighborhoods
- Major lawsuits and disputes
  - Continue to successfully defend the City in the pay referendum cases
  - Successfully defended payday lending ordinance
  - Successfully stopped massive code violations at Columbia Packing
  - Working with the City Council and City Manager to address HUD matters
  - Successfully defended withholding birthdates to help prevent identity theft
  - Won 78% of the cases on appeal in the last year
  - Civil rights section has won 30 of 32 trials since 2003
  - Obtained court authorization for 250 demolitions last year
- Major ordinances
  - Gas drilling ordinance amended and updated
  - Boarding home ordinance
  - Galleria-Valley View area plan and PD ordinance, first step in \$1B development

# Significant Accomplishments

- Major transactions
  - Farmer’s Market redevelopment (ECO)-- \$64M
  - Love Field redevelopment (AVI) -- \$519M
  - City Performance Hall (OCA/PBW) -- \$41M
  - Trinity River Corridor projects (TWM) -- over \$2B of multi-jurisdictional projects
    - Flood control
    - Public amenities
    - Infrastructure
  - Love Field redevelopment (AVI) -- \$519M
  - Tawakoni and NW Water Transmission Line ROW acquisitions (WTR/DEV) – over 550 parcels
  - Hike & Bike Trail System development
  - Transit-oriented development and other TIFs
  - Children’s Garden at the Arboretum (PKR) -- \$45M
  - Convention Center Hotel (CES) -- \$500M
  - New downtown parks (PKR):
    - Klyde Warren Park \$110M
    - Main Street Garden \$20M
    - Belo Garden \$15M
  - Privatization of Dallas Zoo

# Goals for 2014

Do better:

- Increased responsiveness
- Improved and more efficient processes

Goals:

- In the Community
- In City Hall
- In the City Attorney's Office

# Goals for 2014 - In the Community

- Work with the City Council and the City Manager on new Quality of Life Initiatives
  - Environmental initiatives
  - Consumer protection initiatives
    - Transportation for hire
    - Payday lending
    - Neighborhood stability
- Charter review and amendment process
- Identify and target community needs, then find creative solutions
  - Foreclosed and abandoned properties
  - Nuisances
  - Blight
  - Code violations
- Continue to be innovative in the work we do:
  - Economic development (over 250 service requests completed in 2013)
  - Real property matters (over 2,000 service requests completed in 2013)

# Goals for 2014 - In City Hall

- Update the Council Rules of Procedure with the City Council and City Secretary
- Develop matrices of policy issues and choices before drafting amendments and ordinances
- Enhance opportunities for our citizens to serve on boards and commissions
- Update Public Information Act processes for DPD
- Work with Procurement Services to ensure efficient and prudent purchasing of goods and services
- Develop new approaches to keep City Council informed about disputes and cases

# Goals for 2014 - In the City Attorney's Office

- Develop a better compensation system to retain our best attorneys
- Enhance staffing in community prosecution, economic development, litigation and elsewhere
- Reduce litigation costs by:
  - Early assessment of disputes to determine where settlement could reduce costs and payouts
  - Examining use of outside counsel
- Develop systems to proactively identify and manage statutory and regulatory issues before becoming problems
- Develop and implement increased standardization of CAO services and work product to improve quality and efficiency

# Additional goals and strategies

- We will seek out
  - Innovative approaches and initiatives to enhance the quality of life of our community
  - Best practices from other governmental and corporate law departments to fulfill our mission