

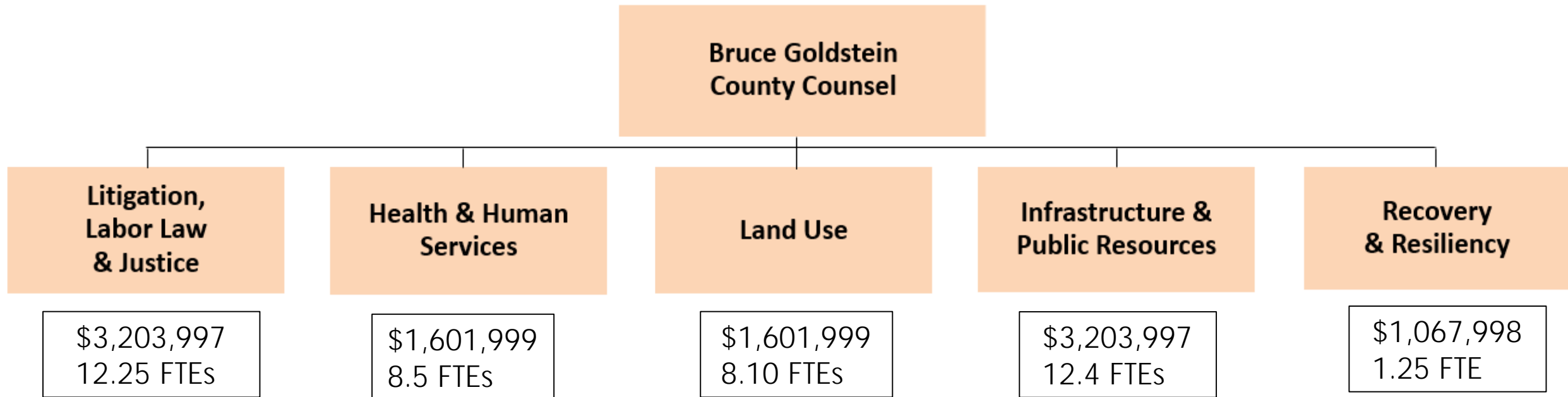
County Counsel



Administrative Support and Fiscal Services

Department Overview

FY 2018-19 ADOPTED: \$10,132,138
FY 2018-19 REVISED: \$10,173,251
FY 2019-20 PRELIMINARY: \$10,679,990
NET CHANGE (ADO – REC): \$547,852
TOTAL FTE: 42.5



Department

Key Operational Challenges and Opportunities

1. **Technology**: Update Office technology to more efficiently meet Client and administrative needs and increase capacity to handle complex litigation and greater volume of work with current staffing levels.
2. **Land Use**: Loss of institutional legal knowledge and staffing in Land Use Group, compounded by personnel turnover at Permit Sonoma. Committed to working with Permit Sonoma on complex code enforcement and cannabis-related matters, as well as comprehensive planning issues and general plan development.
3. **Funding**: Remedy structurally deficient funding structure through transition to direct bill model for general fund clients.



Department

Key Operational Challenges and Opportunities

4. **Multidisciplinary Team Building**: Continue to expand cross-over knowledge base of existing staff to build resiliency and better serve client needs.
5. **Litigation**: Continue to develop in-house litigation staff and technology capacity to handle a wide array of cases through trial.
6. **Natural Resources Practice Group**: Convert the Recovery and Resiliency practice group to a Natural Resources practice group using existing staff to coordinate the legal support for natural resources departments and agencies on recovery and resiliency priorities.



Department Reduction Impacts

Reduced Land Use staff by two positions to realize \$399,592 in budget savings.

- **Deputy County Counsel IV 1.0 FTE**, whose primary role is to provide legal advice to Permit Sonoma on project applications and comprehensive planning, and to prosecute code enforcement matters. Loss of this position will impact service delivery times to clients.
- **Legal Secretary II – Confidential 1.0 FTE**, whose primary role is to provide administrative support to Land Use attorneys. Loss of this position will lead to inefficiencies as attorneys are forced to do more of their own administrative work such as document scanning, filing and form preparation.

This reduction of staff in the Land Use Practice Group, equates to a loss of 1,500 client legal services hours and 2,080 support staff hours.



Department Recovery and Resiliency Framework Efforts Program

County Counsel is involved in virtually every priority recovery project, highlights include:

- Alert & Warning System (CP 1; **Top 10 Priority Project**): Counsel is engaged in the countywide alert and warning working group to standardize messages across jurisdictions and will continue to provide input on the alert and warning outreach and education program.
- Work with Community to Identify Hazards, Mitigation Strategies, etc. (CP 3; **Top 10 Priority Project**): Counsel is actively engaged with staff to assist community groups in understanding Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE) and other neighborhood preparedness program constraints and opportunities.
- Work on Solutions to Hardening and Replacing Utility Infrastructure (CP 4.6; **Top 10 Priority Project**): Counsel is leading the County's participation in California Public Utilities Commission proceedings regarding undergrounding and de-energization, as well as engaging in advocacy efforts in Sacramento.



Department Recovery and Resiliency Framework Efforts Program

- Support Rebuilding of Fire Destroyed Homes and Building with Improved Local Hazard Resiliency and Reduced Climate Impacts (H4; H3 **Top 10 Priority Project**): Counsel will continue to support rebuilding efforts through drafting land use ordinance updates/changes as needed, advocating for insurance reform and funding assistance, and helping develop opportunities for enhanced vegetation management in wildland urban interfaces.
- Vegetation Management, Forest Stewardship, and Watershed Protection (CP 3.4 **Top 10 Priority Project**; NR 1; NR 2 **Top 10 Priority Project**): Counsel is engaged with staff, local, regional, and state private and public partners on healthy forest initiatives and watershed protection efforts, as well as community outreach and education efforts.



Department Recovery and Resiliency Framework Efforts Program

- Formation of the Renewal Enterprise District (RED) (H 1.1): County Counsel was integral in the formation of this Joint Powers Agreement(JPA) between the County and the City of Santa Rosa. After successfully negotiating and drafting the JPA agreement, Counsel is now drafting necessary legal documents for the new entity and, along with the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, (CDC), City, and Sonoma County Transportation Authority(SCTA)/Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) staff, will staff the RED through its first two years resourced by grant funding. Counsel is also actively engaged in legislative advocacy to support the RED's mission to increase affordable housing.
- Explore use of County-owned Property for Housing Development (H 5): Counsel is intimately involved in all aspects of potential real estate transactions, including drafting agreements and environmental review and permitting.

