



**City of Thornton**  
**Colorado**

**CITY ATTORNEY**  
**APPROXIMATELY \$200,000+**

*Apply by*  
**June 27, 2021**  
*(First Review, Open Until Filled)*

***P*ROTHMAN**



## THORNTON, COLORADO



Located in the northeast quadrant of the Denver metropolitan area and comprising 37 square miles, the city of Thornton is Colorado's sixth largest city and home to a diverse and growing population of 146,000 residents. The City is only 10 minutes from downtown Denver, 35 minutes from Denver International Airport (DIA) and less than 2 hours from the Breckenridge and Vail ski areas. The community's location provides an ideal environment for a wide range of businesses to thrive, and the community's natural setting of ridgelines, wildlife, waterways, rolling hills, and undeveloped land provide Thornton residents with amenities and an abundance of recreational opportunities that contribute to a unique and excellent quality of life. Thornton's location also allows for easy access to the region's 28 major resort areas found in the nearby Rocky Mountains, which offers skiing, hiking, rafting, and camping, as well as beautiful and breathtaking scenic wonders, all within a two-hour drive. Cultural activities, including numerous museums, gardens, the opera and symphony, are readily available in Denver and other nearby communities such as Boulder, Fort Collins, Loveland, Greeley and Arvada.

Thornton has aggressively pursued recreation programs with nearly 1,000 acres of land developed or designated for public parks. The city's 18-hole municipal golf course, numerous lighted tennis courts, athletic fields, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, recreation centers and gymnasiums present recreation opportunities for people of all ages and activity levels. Sports fans can also enjoy the region's multiple professional sports teams, including the Denver Broncos, Colorado Rockies, Colorado Avalanche, Colorado Rapids and the Denver Nuggets.

The region's residents are well educated. Nine major universities and colleges are located within a 45-mile radius of the community, along with numerous smaller institutions of higher learning. The larger institutions include the Universities of Colorado at Boulder and Denver, University of Denver, Metropolitan State College, University of Northern Colorado, Colorado State University, Colorado School of Mines, Regis University, and Colorado Christian University.

Thornton is served primarily by two school districts encompassing four high schools, five middle schools and fourteen elementary schools.

To learn more about the incredible opportunities found in and around the city of Thornton, please visit [www.thorntonco.gov](http://www.thorntonco.gov).



## THE CITY

Operating on a 2021 total budget of \$437,053,743 with approximately 1,100 FTEs, the city of Thornton utilizes a Council-Manager form of government. Thornton's City Council consists of a mayor who is elected at large, and eight council members, where two are elected from each of the City's four wards.

The mayor and council members each serve staggered four-year terms. The City Manager, City Attorney, and Presiding Municipal Judge are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the city council.

While the city council is responsible for setting policy for the city of Thornton, the City Manager is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the City, including hiring and supervising city staff.

## THE DEPARTMENT & POSITION

Operating on a 2021 budget of \$2,735,236 with 19 FTEs, the City Attorney's Office serves as legal counsel for the City, providing legal service to the City Council, the City Manager, all departments of the City, and all boards and commissions.



The City Attorney's Office consists of the City Attorney, a Deputy City Attorney, a Senior Assistant City Attorney, 9 Assistant City Attorney I/II's, a Law Office Administrator, a Senior Legal Administrative Assistant, a Legal Administrative Assistant, and 4 Paralegals.

The attorneys represent the City in litigation in state and federal courts and before local and state administrative agencies and protect the City's water rights in water court. In advising the staff on programs and activities, the attorneys prepare and review ordinances, resolutions, Intergovernmental agreements, contracts, deeds, easements, and other legal documents. The City Attorney's office also conducts all prosecution matters in the Municipal Court. The attorneys direct and monitor special counsel to the City in bonds, utilities, workers' compensation, liability defense and other matters.

The City Attorney is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the City Council on a contractual basis with the terms of employment outlined in the contract, the Charter, and the City Code. As the chief legal advisor for the City, the City Attorney provides a wide range of legal services to City Council, City boards and commissions and City departments.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

1. The city of Thornton is constructing a 75-mile water transmission pipeline which passes through three counties connecting to the South Platte River. Water rights are held by the City, however there is pending litigation over the pipeline setting. This is an important project for the future of Thornton, which the City Council is keenly interested in. The City Attorney will be central in the legal strategy development, and its successful implementation.
2. A privately held property with an environmental issue has stymied an upcoming deployment project. The City Council is ready for the project to move forward. The City Attorney will be asked to chart a course to achieve the necessary environmental cleanup and move the project forward.
3. The City Attorney's Office has seen significant staff growth in recent years. The next City Attorney will have the opportunity to shape the department's team and help craft the departments culture. Additionally, she or he will select the new Deputy City Attorney for the department, who will be a key team member leading into the future.



## IDEAL CANDIDATE

### Education & Experience:

A Juris Doctorate from a nationally accredited law school, and ten (10) years of experience in the active practice of law is required. Candidates should be a current member in good standing of the Colorado State Bar or be able to gain prompt admission to the Colorado State Bar.

The ideal candidate will have extensive municipal law experience, will have a thorough understanding of the constitutional provisions regarding Home Rule, a broad spectrum of experience in municipal law; knowledge of water law; and an in-depth understanding of current issues confronting cities. He or she will be both a highly competent attorney and an effective manager. While Colorado experience is preferred in the above areas, experienced City Attorneys, Assistant City Attorneys and/or other senior level public and private attorneys with municipal experience from anywhere in the United States are strongly encouraged to apply.

Any equivalent combinations of education and experience that allow a candidate to perform the duties of the position may be considered.

### Necessary Knowledge, Skills & Abilities:

- Thorough understanding of the legal principles, practices and precedents related to the role and responsibilities of a city attorney, and a positive track record in successful pre-trial assessment.
- Deep experience in municipal law, preferably while practicing in Colorado.
- A proven ability to provide sound legal advice even when it may not be the popular answer, delivering the facts that need to be heard.
- The selected candidate will be approachable and accessible to the Mayor and all City Council members, as well as to his or her staff.
- Confidence in one's own legal reasoning to take a position on an issue and stand by it.
- Skill in political awareness of local government issues to be a valued neutral counselor to individual council members.
- A detailed understanding of difficult issues, and the ability to explain them in simple, straight forward language.

- Recognized leadership of talented legal teams that thrive on empowerment, respect, and accomplishments.
- An understanding of when to apply both internal and external legal resources to achieve both effective and efficient outcomes.
- The ideal candidate will be a first-rate lawyer who is creative, thoughtful, technically competent, innovative and credible, with a solid work history.
- The selected candidate will be a highly skilled and poised communicator who is effective one-on-one and in public meetings that require clear, concise, and objective responses to complex legal questions.
- The ability to mentor and develop staff, respect budgetary parameters, attract and retain top talent, and an appreciation for a diverse workforce.
- Proven experience as a competent manager of both issues and staff - capable of sustaining a respectful and productive work environment that inspires teamwork and positive results, and values staff contributions.
- A high level of knowledge in western and US water laws.
- The ability to be an independent thinker with creative problem-solving approach and an eye for detail, a dedication to public service, and a wish to keep the interests of the City at heart.
- Skill as a self-starter, positive, and appropriately assertive and proactive.
- The ability to earn and maintain the Mayor and City Council's trust and respect, yet willing to raise difficult issues when necessary. This will require a person of exceptional character who naturally earns the confidence and trust of others and maintains exceedingly high ethical standards.



- Skill in being politically astute without being political. Experience working with local elected officials and knowledge of the difference between legal advice and policy-making roles.
- Experience minimizing the City's exposure to liability while achieving the Mayor and Council's policy direction.
- The ability to effectively manage a large law office and deliver high-quality, timely service.
- Willingness to take prudent risks, and a track record as an attorney of helping clients reach their goals by developing legal, alternative approaches.
- Knowledge of when and how to effectively select and manage outside counsel.
- Experience communicating to City leaders the possible impacts of certain decisions on staff and financial resources.
- The ideal candidate will have an established network of reliable resources, be respected in the state's municipal law community, and understand Colorado's local government political, financial, legal landscape.



### COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **APPROXIMATELY \$200,000+. SALARY BASED ON EXPERIENCE.**
- Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance
- Life, Dependent Life & Supplemental Life Insurance Options
- Voluntary Accidental Death & Dismemberment Policy
- Flexible Spending Plan
- Retiree Health Savings Plan
- Retirement Plan
- Deferred Compensation Plan
- Short & Long-term Disability Plans
- Paid Holidays
- In-House Training Opportunities
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Employee Assistance Program

**For more information, please visit:**

**[www.thorntonco.gov](http://www.thorntonco.gov)**

The city of Thornton is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **June 27, 2021** (first review, open until filled). Applications will only be accepted electronically. To **apply online**, go to **[www.prothman.com](http://www.prothman.com)** and click on "**Open Recruitments**" followed by "**City Attorney – City of Thornton, CO**" and follow the directions provided, or please **[click here](#)**.

**PROTHMAN**

**[www.prothman.com](http://www.prothman.com)**

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