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City of Riverside Names James Johnson as City Attorney

Current General Counsel of Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles starts July 17

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside on Tuesday (6/16) named James Johnson as City Attorney. He currently is the General Counsel for the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA). Johnson will start in Riverside on July 17.

“Mr. Johnson brings a wealth of experience, professionalism, and leadership in public-sector legal services,” said Mayor Pro Tem Steven Robillard, who led the recruitment. “The City Council looks forward to partnering with him as we continue advancing Riverside’s priorities and serving our community.”

Johnson has served as the Housing Authority’s legal counsel for 7½ years, where he has advised the Authority on all legal matters, including Public Housing and Section 8 programs, real estate acquisitions, disposition and redevelopment activities, asset management, contracting, and public entity law and governance. He received “Awards of Excellence” from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials for his work on “HACLA University” and Law Clerk programs.

“We are pleased to welcome James Johnson to the City of Riverside as our next City Attorney,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “His extensive legal and public service experience will be a valuable asset to our organization, and I look forward to working with him as we continue serving the Riverside community.”

Johnson previously worked for four years for the Office of the County Counsel in Los Angeles, where he served as Deputy County Counsel, among other prior roles during this time. While Deputy County Counsel, he also served as General Counsel for Rancho Los Amigos Hospital in L.A. County. He also worked as an adjunct professor of business and criminal law at California State University, Long Beach.

Johnson previously served one term on the Long Beach City Council, representing the 7th District and serving as a board member of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Before joining the Council, he was Long Beach’s Assistant City Auditor and a Senior Policy Advisor.

Johnson earned his J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley School of Law (Boalt Hall), where he was president of the Student Bar Association, finished in the top 10 percent of his class, and was recognized for excellence in advanced legal research. He earned an A.B. with honors from Harvard University, where he was on the Dean's List and received the John Harvard Scholarship.

"I am very gratified to have been selected as Riverside's next City Attorney," Johnson said. "I look forward to working with the Mayor, City Council, staff and the larger community to further the city's success."