



# Municipal Government

Since the 1920s, municipal government law has been a primary focus area for Foster Pepper. We regularly provide special counsel services to Washington state, as well as counties, cities, school districts, housing authorities, public hospital districts and other municipal entities throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Our lawyers are actively engaged in all aspects of the laws pertaining to governments in Washington state and provide a wide range of legal services, including counsel on energy issues, planning, permitting, land acquisition, procurement, construction claims and contracts, taxation, labor matters, litigation, environmental and regulatory proceedings, and state and federal grants. We regularly work with municipal clients on open public meetings, public records policy and disclosure and election law issues.

## AREAS OF FOCUS

### Condemnation and Eminent Domain

We have represented municipal clients in acquisition projects, such as arterial street development and expansion, utility (including pipeline) corridor development, golf courses, transit stations and rail corridors, convention centers, and municipal purchase and condemnation of private utility systems. We have both prosecuted and defended inverse condemnation cases, including actions relating to property taking through regulation or failure to issue land use permits, as well as noise and odor complaints.

### Construction

Foster Pepper has an extensive history of working with government agencies on construction and design issues. Our experience ranges from the preparation of simple construction contracts and foreclosure of liens to the litigation and arbitration of multi-million dollar claims. We are familiar with all types of construction projects, having participated in the resolution of construction disputes involving public administration buildings, multifamily and single-family residences, schools, hospitals, assisted living facilities, waste water treatment systems, industrial facilities, power plants, high-rise office towers, warehouses, roads, bridges, and docks.

### Contracts and Procurement of Goods and Services

Foster Pepper develops and defends creative procurement programs for Washington municipal governments. We are very experienced in public bidding requirements, payment and performance bonds, prevailing wage rules, and the other rules and regulations unique to public construction contracting.

### Employment and Labor

Foster Pepper has extensive experience representing municipalities and government agencies, many with union-represented workers. We currently provide services as employment and labor counsel for numerous housing authorities, cities, public hospital districts, fire protection districts, water/sewer districts, and other governmental units.

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### Public Records & Open Government

Foster Pepper's Public Records & Open Government team has direct experience working with the public records and disclosure obligations of nearly every type of public entity, including cities, counties, school districts, public utility districts, port districts, public hospital districts, and housing authorities. Our experience includes assisting with drafting or responding to public records updating entities' policies and procedures, providing training to help assure an entity's compliance with current legal requirements, including one-on-one training for its public records officer or a half-day session for the entity's staff, and offering litigation services to defend public records request responses or prosecute requests in the applicable regulatory or court proceedings; and, litigation support for private interests to protect from disclosure confidential or proprietary information. Learn more by visiting Foster Pepper's public records blog -- [Local Open Government](#) -- for regular legislative and legal updates in this fast-evolving area. Learn more about our [Public Records & Open Government](#) experience.

### Public-Private Partnerships

Foster Pepper has been instrumental in the siting, permitting, and legal defense of major public and public/private projects. We have repeatedly been successful in obtaining regulatory approvals for major regional facilities and in defeating challenges before administrative tribunals and in the courts.

### School Districts

Our firm has served as general counsel, special counsel and bond counsel to school districts for more than 60 years. We offer a full range of legal services to assist school districts on matters involving school finance (bonds, levies and state funding), capital facilities development (construction, real estate, land use and environmental law), insurance coverage, litigation and administrative proceedings, and employment. We currently represent over 120 school districts in the State of Washington.

### Solid Waste Management

Foster Pepper has extensive experience assisting our municipal clients in the environmental, land use, and procurement aspects of their solid waste management systems.

### Utilities

Foster Pepper lawyers routinely counsel our municipal clients on establishing municipal utilities, developing rate ordinances, acquiring right-of way, and siting and permitting treatment facilities, among other things. We bring to clients our considerable resources in environmental, land use, and construction law to each representation.