

## ACTION PLAN

### Citations

1. It is recommended that the Court and the Police Department regularly conduct audits on the use and quality of the electronic handheld devices.
2. It is recommended that the Court and Police Department develop an agreed upon formal, documented process that would improve erroneous citations and ensure that missing or voided citations are reconciled with the Court or properly resolved in a timely manner.
3. In the future, evaluate the use of electronic ticket writers and consider the possibility of replacing handhelds with tablets, mobile computing devices already available in officer vehicles, etc. that are capable of automatically syncing the information into Incode. This is a joint effort between the Court, Police Department, Information Technology Department, Public Safety Dispatch, the Budget Office and potentially the Fleet Division.
4. It is recommended that a timely review of voided citations occur in a timely manner by a supervisory-level position within the Police Department and have the prosecutor review citations with errors or missing information that may get dismissed.
5. Include an educational component to the implementation of the CVE program. This will require the Accounting Division of the Finance Department to set up account numbers to track the collected fines separately.
6. Implement an audit process for the CVE citations to ensure accountability, timeliness, accuracy and efficiency that involve the Court and also the Police Department.
7. It is recommended that the Court keep record of all the citations that need to include all pertinent information, including social security number, per the Transportation Code requirement.

### Defendant Options

8. It is recommended that the Court implement a deferred disposition online request option through the Court's payment system.
9. It is recommended that tiered flexibility be granted at the window and online for deferred dispositions for speeding violations.
10. Add an electronic form to the Court's website, similar to the jury response form, which would allow defendants to submit community service requests to the Court.
11. Consider expanding options for defendants who need to prove compliance, but wish to avoid a visit to the Court (i.e./online, mail, email, phone, fax).

12. Court Administrator and Deputy Court Administrator should continue to stay up-to-date on new online services that the City's current software vendors provide and consider implementation of these services.

## Dockets

13. Maintain walk-in arraignment docket.
14. Monitor the impact of annexation, the hand-held device ordinance, and the CVE program.

## Arraignments

15. Court Clerks should receive in-house training on ways to more effectively review defendants' options at the window.
16. Court staff should work with the Police Department to implement and enforce the Municipal Court Security Plan.
17. Develop a process that conveniently allows insurance verifications be sent to other Court staff to allow for the Court Docket Coordinator to continue other court processes.

## Return to Court for Compliance

18. Utilize the Incode feature to begin receiving electronic DSC certificates and driving records from participating vendors however, defendants will continue to have the option to submit hard copies to the Court.
19. Offer more options to defendants to show compliance such as an appearance by affidavit via email, mail, or fax. Widely communicate any new options through the website, signage, and information provided by the Court.
20. Set-up an email account to receive defendants' proof of community service.
21. Consider communicating the option of community service more broadly.

## Plea Bargaining & Trials

22. It is recommended that the Court re-purpose the second courtroom (currently used for storage) for attorney pre-trial use.
23. Consider having more than one computer available to attorneys by repurposing the "kiosk" computer from the lobby.
24. Court Administrator should continue to stay up-to-date with potential offerings from the court software vendors that would give attorneys online or portal access to their cases and evidence.

## Collections Improvement Program

25. Dedicate a position to the Collections Improvement Program as a Collections Improvement Specialist and evaluate the program after implementation to determine further needs.

26. Consider implementing Tyler Notify, a feature that would call defendants who do not comply with their payment plans.

## Warrants

27. Incorporate a quality control process into the warrant process.
28. Seek other means of answering the general inquiry phones besides the staff responsible for processing warrants in order to eliminate data entry errors or other errors that can create wrongful arrest warrants.
29. Review all aspects of Incode to ensure that all features are currently being utilized.
30. Review the Warrant Reconciliation Policy, MC Policy WRTDIV 06 now that the Public Safety Dispatch staff has access to the Incode system.
31. The Police Department should consider purchasing body cameras for the Warrant Officers housed within court per the availability of funding and approval from management.
32. Consider implementing a regular report by the Warrant Officers to the Court Administrator of the calls made so that this can be reconciled with the payments made by those defendants.
33. The Police Department should consider providing access to jail time served (credit) records to the Bailiff.
34. Redistribute some warrant responsibilities to the Collections Improvement Specialist and Bailiff to allow Warrant Officers to spend more time serving warrants.
35. The Bailiff should be assigned additional responsibilities for when he/she is not in a court session.
36. Consider the possibility of having court staff run driver's license checks in order to streamline the warrant process.
37. Acquire the Incode SQL report writing tool, available at no cost, which removes the manual process.

## Communications

38. Update the option brochure to be laymen friendly by reducing the amount of detail on the brochure and clearly stating plea options and sub-options available. Include contact information and the online services that are available.
39. Provide more information and options in the IVR system to reduce the number of calls directed to Court staff. Phone calls should be funneled through the City's 311 system before reaching the Court.

40. Work with the Communications Department to conduct benchmarking on other court websites to determine how to best organize the information on Sugar Land's website and determine if information is missing.
41. Provide training for Court Clerks on the appropriate language to use to expand their ability to resolve more cases at the window.
42. Create a layman-appropriate video to show on the television screen in the lobby, court website, and place the current lobby television in a more visible location. Also consider creating a pamphlet in multiple languages.
43. Collaborate with the Communications Department to update the jury summons form to enhance its clarity. Communicate the ability to complete the form online.

## Department Structure

44. Restructure the department into three functions: Court Services, Customer Service and Warrants/Collections.
45. Reclassify the Deputy Court Administrator and two current positions into three supervisor-level positions that would each oversee a division.
46. Reclassify a current position into a mid-level supervisor that reports to the Customer Service Supervisor to provide staff with opportunities for advancement.
47. Reclassify a current position into a Collections Improvement Specialist position that reports to the Warrants/Collections Supervisor.
48. It is recommended that the Senior Secretary be assigned the primary position to answer phone calls.
49. Add one new position under the Court Services division to align Sugar Land with the best practice, improve succession planning for the position, and plan for the future "retirement" of the two volunteers currently assisting the Court Docket Coordinator.
50. Continue moving toward a paperless courtroom process. Remove some courtroom paperwork duties from the prosecutor and redistribute it to the courtroom clerks and other Court staff.
51. The Court Administrator should work with the City Attorney to balance the workload of the prosecutor and the clerks by determining what is appropriate assistance for the prosecutor. In the future, it may be necessary to provide greater administrative assistance to the prosecutor through a part-time law clerk or intern.
52. It is recommended that the Police Department work with the City Attorney to grant the prosecutor access to video evidence to save both parties time and effort.
53. Consider adjusting the Bailiff's hours to coincide with the Court's hours of operation.

54. It is recommended that Court staff continue to maintain policies on cash handling and maintain separate controls when staff is removed or changes positions within the department.
55. It is also recommended that Court collaborate with the Police Department on establishing secure forms of transporting and safeguarding written citations from the Police Department to the Court and creating and maintaining a log that reconciles issued citations to ensure checks and balances of citation records between the Police Department and the Court.
56. It is also recommended that Court leadership attend the TMCEC training and determine any impacts to Court operations resulting from the Legislative Session and communicate these impacts to other departments that are impacted as well.
57. Consider becoming a court of record.