

City of Seattle
Office of City Auditor



David G. Jones, City Auditor

December 15, 2009

The Honorable Greg Nickels
Seattle City Councilmembers
City of Seattle
Seattle, Washington 98104-1876

Dear Mayor Nickels and City Councilmembers:

Attached is our report, **Efficiencies Audit: Parking and Traffic Ticket Processing**. We reviewed the City of Seattle's parking and traffic ticket processing operations to determine whether there might be efficiencies that could be realized to help ease the City's current financial stress. We identified five areas of opportunity: 1) E-Ticketing, 2) Cashiering Operations, 3) Time Payments, 4) Continued Collaboration with the Department of Executive Administration, and 5) Call and Contact Center.

We incorporated responses into this report from the Seattle Municipal Court. Their formal written response is attached as Appendix 5.

We appreciate the cooperation received from the Seattle Municipal Court and the Seattle Police Department during our review process. If you have any questions regarding this report or would like additional information, please call Claudia Gross Shader at 206/684-8038.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David G. Jones".

David G. Jones
City Auditor

Enclosure

City of Seattle, Office of City Auditor

Efficiencies Audit: Parking and Traffic Ticket Processing

David G. Jones, City Auditor
December 15, 2009

Parking and Traffic Ticket Processing Efficiencies Audit

Executive Summary

At the request of the Seattle City Council, we reviewed the City of Seattle’s (City) parking and traffic ticket processing operations to determine whether there might be efficiencies that could be realized to help ease the City’s financial stress. We identified five areas of opportunity: 1) E-Ticketing, 2) Cashiering Operations, 3) Time Payments, 4) Continued Collaboration with the Department of Executive Administration (DEA), and 5) Call and Contact Center. The findings are summarized in the table below:

Opportunity Area	Description	Potential Operational Efficiency(ies)	Potential Savings or Increased Revenue
E-Ticketing	Seattle Police Department (SPD) Traffic officers convert from paper to electronic tickets. Would require upfront investment (\$700,000 to \$1,200,000).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced manual scanning in SPD. Physical audits in SPD replaced by automated reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save \$135,000 annually by reducing data entry, scanning, and ticket preparation in SMC (2.5 full time equivalent positions (FTE)). Recover \$38,000 annually in penalties for the share of tickets previously lost or not timely filed. Generate approximately \$448,000 to \$1,200,000 annually from increased traffic enforcement resulting from automation of Officer Reports.
Cashiering Operations	Close Quick Pay Window and redeploy SMC Customer Service staff to handle general questions and basic services from walk-ins who are currently served by SMC Cashiers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer transactions for cashiers. Performance measurement could indicate further efficiencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save approximately \$90,000 annually by reducing cashiering. This could include closing Quick Pay window in outer lobby (1.5 FTE). Might result in longer wait times.
Time Payments	Contract with SMC’s collection vendor to administer time payments. No additional annual cost to City as vendor recovers its costs through user fees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better visibility to status through management reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Save approximately \$174,000 annually by contracting with SMC’s collection vendor to administer time payments (3 FTE). This will increase costs to customers, and might result in an increased number of requests for community service.
Collaboration with DEA	Expand collaboration with DEA, where feasible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient coordination of any replacement system for MCIS with DEA’s systems. 	N/A
Call and Contact Center	Identify and implement appropriate best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance measurement could indicate further efficiencies. 	N/A

Note: We have included the response of the Seattle Municipal Court after each section of this report. The Court comments are also included in their entirety as Appendix 5.

Introduction

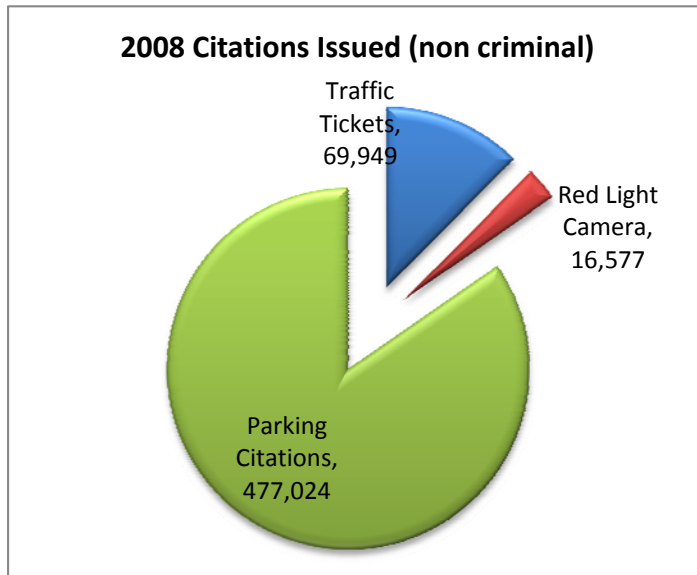
The Seattle City Council asked the Office of City Auditor to review the City of Seattle’s (City) parking and traffic ticket processing operations to determine whether there might be efficiencies that could be realized to help ease the City’s financial stress. Our office worked with the Seattle Municipal Court (Court/SMC), the Seattle Police Department (SPD), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), and the Department of Executive Administration (DEA) to develop this report. We also coordinated our efforts with the State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). During our audit, SMC personnel were thoughtful and cooperative in spite of the uncertainties of current and potential budget cuts and the reporting limitations of the Court’s management information system.

SMC Response:

The Court involved the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) because, under the authority of the State Supreme Court, the AOC has exclusive responsibility and authority for non-financial audits of courts in Washington State. (Washington State Court Rules, General Rule 32).

Scope

Our review covered the processing of fines and fees related to parking tickets (i.e., citations), traffic tickets (i.e., infractions, also called infraction citations), and red light camera tickets (i.e., citations). Criminal charges and related fines and fees including bail, warrants, and restitution were not included in the scope of the review.¹



In 2008, SMC received \$15.4 million in revenues from parking tickets and approximately \$3.1 million from traffic and red light camera tickets. The ticket counts for 2008 are listed in the chart to the left.

For the purposes of this report, parking and traffic ticket processing includes: the loading or entering of parking and traffic ticket data, the receipt and entry of payments into the system, processing billing and other correspondence, receiving payments (including time payments), generating and tracking pre-collections notices, sending accounts in a timely manner to collections, generating management reports, and providing

customer service related to all of the above. Ticket processing also includes receiving hearing requests,

¹ In 2008, the total volume of payments SMC processed related to criminal charges was approximately 7,500 transactions. In some cases, a criminal charge is associated with a non-criminal ticket (e.g., Driving Under the Influence and speeding ticket) and these require more complex processing.

creating cases for parking tickets going to a hearing, and scheduling and rescheduling of hearings in compliance with state and local court rules. However, hearing processes were not included in the scope of this review.

We worked with SMC to identify four areas that might present opportunities for efficiency:

1. Paper Traffic Tickets
2. Standard Payments for Parking and Traffic Tickets
3. Special Payments for Parking and Traffic Tickets (including time payments)
4. Customer Service Related to Parking and Traffic Ticket Payments.

Our audit methodology included discussions with SMC and AOC to refine our scope, interviews and data-gathering with SMC managers and staff, data collection from other jurisdictions, and issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to identify systems options in the marketplace that might offer efficiencies (attached as Appendix 1).

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

For each of the four areas, we provide below a brief description of the current operations and offer opportunities for potential quantifiable savings, increased revenue, and/or operational efficiencies.

SMC Response:

This review was undertaken with a fieldwork deadline of August. Therefore, its scope was limited to infraction citation processing, including relevant aspects of cashiering and customer service. In addition to identifying possible efficiency improvements, the City Auditor has outlined proposals to outsource Court jobs and to increase revenues associated with traffic citations.

Although this audit was not intended to include criminal matters, the tasks, systems, and people that are involved in infraction citation processing are often the same as those used for criminal matters. Adjudicating criminal charges is a serious responsibility that can involve complicated and high-stakes transactions. The Courts handling of these matters directly impacts citizens' access to justice, public safety and liberty issues.

The efficiency and effectiveness of Court operations should always be evaluated in the context of the Trial Court Performance Standards. Published by the National Association for Court Management (NACM), the Standards are designed to ensure Access to Justice; Expeditiousness and Timeliness; Quality, Fairness, and Integrity; Independence and Accountability; and Public Trust and Confidence.

Paper Traffic Tickets

Over ten years ago, the Court realized considerable efficiencies in data processing and records management when SPD parking enforcement officers (PEOs) began issuing electronic parking tickets

using handheld ticketing devices. Today, however, SMC still manually processes paper traffic tickets issued by SPD officers. A move from paper to e-tickets for traffic would result in efficiencies for the Court. Officials from both SMC and SPD were very enthusiastic in their support of this efficiency option. However, it would require new software and hardware systems to realize potential savings and increased revenue.

Current Operations SPD staff estimate that the fifty-four officers in SPD's Traffic Division issued the large majority of the City's approximately 70,000 traffic tickets in 2008; the balance of the tickets were issued by patrol officers. Traffic tickets are currently issued in a four-copy paper format. The driver receives one copy, and the officer retains one copy. Tickets issued by the Traffic Division are manually scanned² by SPD staff into files for record-keeping. SPD's data center sends two copies of the ticket to SMC. SMC Records personnel manually enter the ticket data into the Court's Municipal Court Information System (MCIS).³ SMC Records personnel also manually scan⁴ the tickets into an archive application.

Opportunity 1: E-Ticketing

We contacted law enforcement officials in Las Vegas NV, San Jose CA, Snohomish County WA, and Kitsap County WA, all of whom have recently implemented e-ticketing systems for traffic tickets. In these jurisdictions, officers use either a handheld device or a water-proof tablet computer with a small printer to issue traffic tickets. Ticket data is sent to the police and court databases through either wireless transmission or daily batch uploads, eliminating the need for scanning and data entry. The ticketing software offers text prompts, auto-population of data fields, and bar code scanning to reduce the ticket writing time for officers. The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department has issued e-tickets for seven years. For routine traffic enforcement, they were able to cut their ticket writing time by 80% due to electronic streamlining features such as auto-population of fields and barcode scanning.

Potential Upfront Costs: If the City were to pursue e-ticketing for traffic, SPD and SMC would need to develop complete technical and system requirements to determine the actual implementation and operating costs. However, we have developed some preliminary⁵ cost ranges for consideration. A preliminary cost/benefit analysis is attached as Appendix 2. Also, the City would have to consider options for funding the implementation. Other jurisdictions that we contacted used various implementation funding methods including cash, grants, and vendor-pay-per-ticket options⁶.

Based on the cost data provided by other jurisdictions and discussions with SMC and SPD information technology staff, we estimate that the implementation costs for deploying e-ticketing to SPD's Traffic

² When the tickets are scanned, both at SPD and SMC, an image of the ticket with the officer's handwriting is created for the file. The scanned image does not populate data fields in the SPD Records Management System (RMS) or in SMC's MCIS.

³ The Court processes the tickets filed by SPD in the format provided.

⁴ See note 2 above.

⁵ It is premature to provide a true estimate of upfront costs without the specifications of a potential future e-ticketing system. Estimates of development costs and staff time to integrate this new solution will depend on the technical scope and new business process.

⁶ Some vendors offer a pricing option by which their costs for all systems and services are recouped through an incremental charge that is remitted to the vendor for each ticket issued. In the City of Los Angeles, for example, the vendor receives approximately \$3.00 for every parking ticket issued. This per-ticket-fee includes the costs of handheld ticketing devices, the ticket processing system and support, ticket processing staff, customer service representatives, and noticing and administrative review. The per-ticket-fee to the City decreases if the parking ticket volume exceeds 200,000 per month, and there is a cost of living escalation rate built into the fee.

Division could range from \$700,000 to \$1,200,000⁷. Annual costs, primarily wireless charges and thermal paper, could range from \$56,000 to \$137,000. It is important to note that actual costs will vary based on the particular system specifications that SPD and SMC choose to implement. For example, some ticketing devices are more expensive but have benefits of durability and screen readability.

Potential Quantifiable Savings: SMC has identified personnel in their Records Unit who currently perform manual ticket preparation, scanning, and data entry for paper tickets. The large majority of this body of work would be automated with e-ticketing. However, there would still be a small amount of data entry for paper parking and traffic tickets issued by SPD patrol officers. Potential annual savings from the reduction of 2.5 FTE in SMC Records is approximately \$135,000.

An additional opportunity for efficiency is in the elimination of tickets that are currently dismissed because they had not been entered into the Court's system within the required five day period or those tickets that never show up in the system at all. Based on 2008 data⁸, we estimate that there might be gains of up to \$38,000 annually in penalties that might otherwise not have been recovered.

Potential Increased Revenue: The SPD Traffic Unit has reviewed the functionality offered by one of the current e-ticketing systems. SPD Traffic officers indicated that an e-ticketing system would offer more enforcement time. The waterproof devices would allow more enforcement in inclement weather. Also, they indicated that officers could save at least one hour per day, time that they currently spend manually writing Officer Reports on the back of the Court copies of traffic tickets. The Officer Report is a narrative that includes the specific location, a description of the police vehicle, the direction the radar is pointed, and a specific description of reason for stop and violation. Samples of Officer Reports are included in Appendix 3. E-ticketing systems allow for streamlined entry of the type of information in the current Officer Report through pre-programmed common entry choices and auto-population of fields.

We developed an estimate for increased revenue based on reprogramming the hour per day that officers reportedly use to write Officer Report narratives.⁹ During an hour of routine enforcement, SPD Traffic indicated that they currently issue between two and four traffic tickets. SPD data indicates that in 2008, the Traffic Division issued an average of 2.75 tickets per enforcement hour. Based on 54 traffic officers issuing a range of one to 2.75 additional tickets per work day, City revenue from traffic enforcement with e-ticketing could increase by a range of approximately \$448,000 to \$1,200,000 annually (See Appendix 2). We think that this is a reasonably conservative estimate range. However, it would require that the traffic officers spent that additional hour on enforcement and were not otherwise redeployed.

Potential Operational Efficiencies: E-ticketing for traffic tickets would offer additional operational efficiencies that we were not able to quantify, but that would offer opportunities to redeploy incremental amounts of staff time. These potential efficiencies could be gained by:

⁷ SMC staff indicate that the future of MCIS is in question. An options analysis for system replacement is currently in process. Therefore, any investment to program and update MCIS to receive e-tickets would need to be replicated in the replacement system. This cost is not included in this preliminary cost estimate.

⁸ In 2008, 345 cases were dismissed because the ticket was not presented or not filed timely, representing \$105,664 in penalties. Of that amount, 64% goes to the State; and 36% or \$38,039 would be the City's share.

⁹ The Lieutenant who oversees the Traffic Squads informally surveyed the traffic officers to determine how much time they spend hand-writing officer reports on the back of traffic tickets. They reported spending one hour per day.

- Eliminating manual scanning of tickets into the SPD records system, and
- Shifting from physical audits of SPD ticket books to audits of e-ticketing system reports by SPD's Audit and Accreditation Unit.

SMC Response:

Regarding the Auditor's recommendation to implement infraction e-ticketing:

We agree with the auditor's observation that electronic citation processing eliminates some handwriting/reading errors and keyboarding errors, and has the potential to reduce labor costs.

Most of the City's parking citations have been completed by Police and filed electronically with the Court since the early 1990s. Switching to e-tickets for infractions would require the Court to re-engineer its infraction and criminal traffic citation business processes. Based on preliminary discussions, the Court believes it is likely any labor cost reduction will be partly offset by some new work: When uploaded, some citations will have to be placed in a queue for review to determine whether the defendant has previous SMC history, to avoid creating multiple records for the same defendant. This is not necessary with parking citations.¹⁰

When a project of this nature is funded, the Court will work with the Police Department as needed to help select a vendor and implement electronic infraction citations.

The court applied to the Executive earlier this year to be included in Stimulus Package funding to initiate technology projects toward achieving a paperless court, including e-ticketing. This application was not granted.

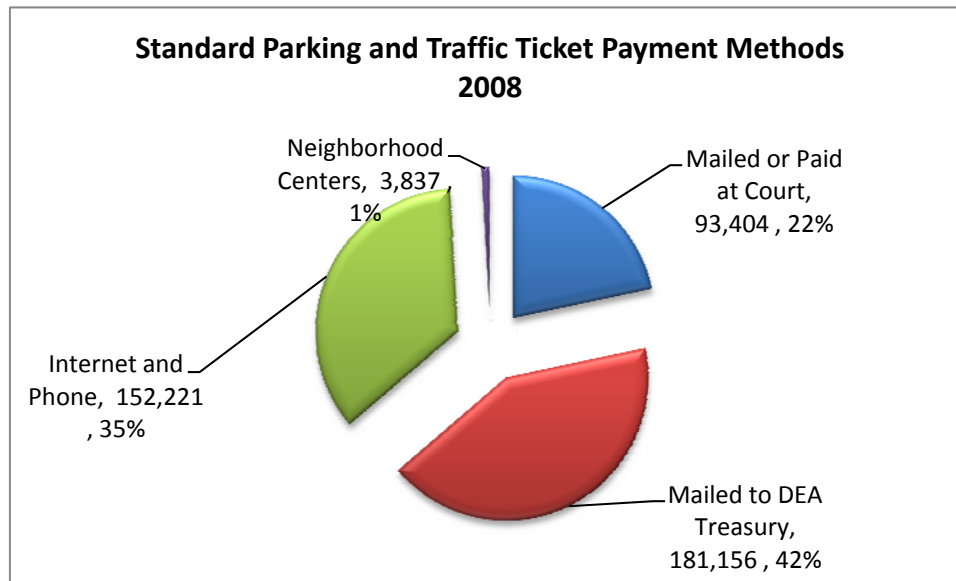
The \$38,000 figure cited by the Auditor represents the City's share of revenue from all citations that were dismissed in 2008 because they were not filed or were filed late. It should be noted that all properly filed charges are subject to technical and factual challenges. Therefore, the \$38,000 is an upper limit to the amount of revenue that would likely be realized.

¹⁰ A driver's license number is the only unique identifier that SMC typically collects and stores from infraction defendants. However, SMC does not have a license number for every defendant record, so other characteristics (name, DOB, etc.) will have to be compared and ultimately, a Court employee may have to decide whether to assign a citation to an existing defendant's record or to create a new defendant record. Parking citations do not have this issue, because the unique identifier is the vehicle's license plate, and a defendant record is not created unless a hearing or time payment is scheduled.

Standard Payments for Parking and Traffic Tickets

The Court might realize some efficiencies by shifting some customer transactions now performed by Court cashiers to Court customer service staff. Closure of cashiering windows could offer savings, but would result in longer wait times.

Current Operations: A breakdown of payment methods for 2008 is shown below.



Most parking and traffic tickets were paid in full and in a timely manner. Payments by mail to DEA Treasury, internet payments, and phone (IVR) payments accounted for about 77% of transactions. City staff at seven neighborhood service centers accepted payment on approximately 1% of

the tickets. And 22% percent were mailed directly to or paid in person at the court. An additional 184,419 transactions were in collections, and are not captured in the chart because they cannot be isolated by year of origin. These are handled by Alliance One, the Court's collections vendor.

In 2008, SMC had 13.5 cashiers and two supervisors who staffed the payment windows, jail release office, and specialty desks at the Courthouse. In the 2009 mid-year budget cut, the staff was reduced to 12.5 cashiers and two supervisors.

SMC also has customer service staff who answer questions about ticket payment processing (discussed later under Customer Service Related to Parking and Traffic Ticket Payments). Citizens can also establish time-payment plans and community service arrangements (discussed later under Special Payments for Parking and Traffic Tickets). SMC is responsible for tracking and following up on any unpaid obligations. Citizens may request a hearing to challenge and/or discuss the ticket and the fine. If the citizen does not request a hearing and does not pay the obligation, the account will be automatically assessed a late penalty (\$25 for parking, and \$52 for other tickets) after a certain number of days and SMC will notify the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) about the delinquent account. Then if there is no action taken by the citizen on the account after a certain number of days, it is forwarded by SMC to a collection agency.

Opportunity 2: Cashiering Operations

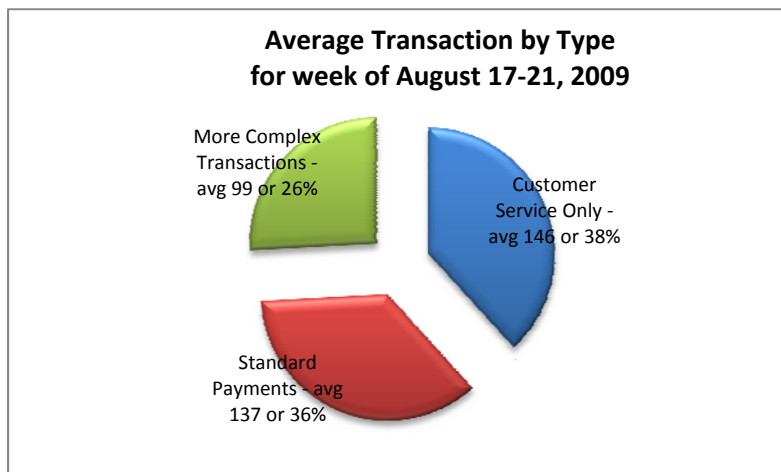
There are 18 service windows in the Seattle Municipal Court Justice Center and one at the King County jail. The staffing configuration for these windows is listed below. Cashiering staff at Windows 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and Quick Pay also can answer general questions. When no customers are at the windows, they process documents received in the mail (payments, proof of insurance, etc.).

Location	Function	Notes
Windows 1, 2	Alliance One Collections	Staffed by the Court's collections agency contractor, Alliance One. Receives payments in collections for SMC but also for other courts.
Window 3	Warrants/Cashiering	Staffed by SMC cashiers. However, the warrant window can process other types of transactions.
Windows 4,5	Customer Service	Often closed; staffed by SMC Customer Service representatives at management discretion. Can answer general questions about court operations or payments and can schedule hearings.
Windows 6, 7, 8, 9	Cashiering	Staffed by SMC cashiers. In practice, only 2 or 3 of these windows are open at a time; the others are closed. These windows can handle standard payments and more complex transactions that require supervisor approval or research.
Quick Pay Window	Cashiering	The Quick Pay Window is located in the Courthouse lobby before the security checkpoint. It is staffed by SMC cashiers and handles primarily standard payments and questions.
Windows 10, 11, 12	Public Defense Screening and Day Reporting	Staffed by the SMC Court Compliance Monitoring Unit; this work is not reviewed in the scope of this audit.
Windows 13, 14, 15, 16	Time Payments	Staffed by SMC Revenue Recovery clerks who set up time payment plans and accept the initial payment.
Window 17	Community Service	Staffed by SMC Revenue Recovery Clerks who set up community service plans; this work is not reviewed in the scope of this audit.
King County Jail	Jail Release and Booking	Staffed by SMC cashiers Monday-Saturday; this work is not reviewed in the scope of this audit. This assignment is staffed 17-18 hours per day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

SMC was not able to identify the number of 2008 cashiering transactions or payments received in person at the cashiering windows (Windows 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and Quick Pay). They also do not keep any transaction tallies or record any kind of cashiering performance measures. However, the unit managers and staff agreed, for the purposes of this audit, to keep tallies of the transactions at these windows for the week of August 17-21, 2009. Staff recorded counts for 24 different types of transactions from general questions and standard payments to more complex transactions that involved multiple violations or required research or supervisor approval. We noted in our field observations that some of these more complex transactions required extensive customer interactions, including working with non-native English speakers and customers with significant financial or legal issues.

A summary of the tally count is shown below, and the details can be found in Appendix 4.

Transaction Summary	8/17/2009	8/18/2009	8/19/2009	8/20/2009	8/21/2009	Totals
Customer Service Only: (General Questions, Wrong Court, Hearing Requests, Documents Certified)	160	181	145	137	106	729
Standard Payments	152	143	134	129	126	684
More Complex Transactions	119	92	78	57	147	493
Daily Total	431	416	357	323	379	1906



The breakdown of the transaction by type indicates that nearly 40% of the transactions that were performed by cashiers did not require any cashiering, research, or involve complex issues. These transactions included answering general questions, redirecting customers to a King County court, processing hearing requests, and certifying documents. The Court estimates that, since many of these transactions are quick information

requests, they constitute between 5-10% of the service window workload.

Potential Operational Efficiencies: One week’s worth of data was not enough to determine whether there were systemic inefficiencies in Cashiering Operations. In addition, the Court does not collect data on customer service metrics such as queue length or wait times. However, the data does suggest that some operational efficiencies might be gained if the Court utilized its Customer Service staff to answer general walk-in questions and provide basic services (but no payments)¹¹. This could eliminate approximately 40% of the transactions of the higher-paid cashiers stationed upfront at Court service windows.¹²

Also, the tallies of transactions-by-type collected for this audit are not typically collected by the Court. SMC should routinely collect this type of information to assess its operational efficiency. In addition, they should routinely collect customer service metrics such as length of queue and customer wait time. We found that the Municipal Court in Austin, Texas tracks many performance measures including a set

¹¹ This might be accomplished in a number of ways, including staffing Windows 4 and/or 5 for “General Questions”, or using a “greeter” position.

¹² As of August, 2009, there are 12.5 Court Cashiers. Typically, three to five cashiers are stationed at the Court service windows. Cashiering staff not stationed at the service windows might be at the Jail Release and Booking desk at the King County Jail or in the office behind the service windows where they process mailed-in payments, perform research, and process refunds and bankruptcies.

for customer service and ticket payment processing.¹³ The State of Washington’s Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) might also be able to help SMC develop appropriate performance measures that might inform future efficiency improvements.

Potential Quantifiable Savings:

The City could realize savings by reducing the number of cashiers, but this could lead to degradation in customer service. One possible example of this reduction could be the closure of the Quick Pay window in the outer lobby of the Court. This window had been planned in the design of the new Court building as a convenience for customers. Simple transactions can be conducted more quickly since customers do not have to pass through the security checkpoint. (Customers with more complex transaction are directed to the service windows beyond security.) During the week of August 17-21, 2009, Customer Service Only transactions accounted for 49% of the average daily transactions at the Quick Pay Window in the outer lobby. These transactions included answering general questions, redirecting customers to a King County court, processing hearing requests, and certifying documents. Standard payments constituted the large majority of the balance of the transactions.

Although Court officials consider the Quick Pay window a valuable customer service, its closure could result in annual savings of up to \$89,101 (for 1.5 FTE). The operational consequence of the closure of the Quick Pay window is that all customers would be required to pass through security to do their transactions. This closure would likely result in longer cashier lines for cashiering. However, we think that this could be mitigated by the deployment of Customer Service staff to answer general questions (see Potential Operational Efficiencies above).

SMC Response:

Regarding the potential savings identified by the Auditor from closing the Quick Pay Window:

The auditor observed in its sample of Quick Pay transactions, about half the transactions were payments and half were not. The auditor concluded that if the Court were to close the Quick Pay Window, the workload of both the remaining cashiers and customer service staff would increase, and customers would have longer wait times in both areas, not just in the cashier lines as the auditor acknowledged. The auditor did not identify any excess capacity in Customer Service. The Court does not understand or agree with the auditor’s statement that longer cashier lines “could be mitigated by the deployment of Customer Service staff to answer general questions”

The Court recognizes that when the City’s operating budget is strained, it may have to reduce its service levels in ways that are likely to decrease customer satisfaction. The Court eliminated one Cashier and one Customer Service Representative in its 2009 mid-year budget cuts, knowing that doing so would negatively impact customer service.

The Quick Pay Window provides significant customer service advantages that should not be discarded lightly. The Quick Pay Window was deliberately included in the Justice Center building design. If the Court closes the Quick Pay Window and eliminates additional Cashier

¹³ (For performance measures for the Municipal Court of Austin, Texas, see website: <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/eperf/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.Program&DEPT=460&PROGRAM=4PUB&ACTIVITY=4CSV>)

positions, citizens will have to undergo security screening to make simple payments and to ask simple questions, and wait longer in line for both. Longer lines at security screening will impact jurors, attorneys, and other citizens entering the Justice Center.

At the same time, the Court recognizes that a special function of this nature should not be maintained if it cannot be justified by sufficient work at an appropriate classification level. At the highest salary steps, a Cashier's hourly wage is just \$0.53 more than that of an Administrative Specialist 2. We believe that since about half of the transactions, and more than half of the workload of the Quick Pay Window are payments, the employment of a Cashier there is justified. The Court will continue to monitor the Quick Pay Window workload to ensure that it functions at a high productivity level.

Special Payments for Parking and Traffic Tickets (including time payments)

Shifting the administration of time payments to the Court's current collections vendor could result in potential savings and better management reporting.¹⁴

Current Operations: SMC's Revenue Recovery unit handles special payments including restitution and garnishments. They also set up and track time payments (before the account has gone into collection) and administer community service. As of August 2009, there are 10 staff in this unit.¹⁵ Staff from the unit indicated that time payment administration comprises approximately 35% of their total body of work.¹⁶

We included a review of this unit's operations in our 2007 audit entitled, Seattle Municipal Court Accounts Receivable and Revenue Recovery.¹⁷ At that time, we found that there was no single system for tracking time payments; each clerk managed their own set of payments using their own system and methods. Consequently, management had no global view of the aging, balance, or status of time payments. The Court was unable to identify the number of accounts on time payment and the number of individual time payments processed in 2008, but they were able to estimate that at any given time, there are approximately 4,500 active time payment accounts.¹⁸

Opportunity 3: Time Payments

Alliance One is the collection agency that handles overdue accounts for both Seattle Municipal Court and King County District Court. King County District Court also uses Alliance One to administer time

¹⁴ The City's labor agreement with Teamsters Local 763, representing SMC employees, allows the City to contract out for work if the contract will result in cost savings to the City. However, the contract provides that "prior to approval by the department head involved to contract out work under this provision, the Union shall be notified. The department head involved shall make available to the Union upon request (1) a description of the services to be so performed, and (2) the detailed factual basis supporting the reasons for such action. The Union may grieve contracting out for work as described herein, if such contract involves work normally performed by employees covered by this Agreement, and if that contract is the cause of the layoff of employees covered by this Agreement."

¹⁵ The Court's 2009 mid-year budget reduction eliminated this unit's supervisor position as well as one Administrative Specialist position.

¹⁶ We did not conduct direct observation of the Court's time payment unit during this review. However, direct observation was part of our 2007 audit.

¹⁷ (See report on website: <http://www.seattle.gov/audit/docs/FinalAuditReport-SMC-AR-RevenueRecovery.pdf>)

¹⁸ The Court estimates that approximately 15% of time payments are associated with criminal charges.

payments. If Alliance One had a similar arrangement with SMC, Alliance One would assume all the costs of time payment administration, which they would recover through user fees.

Potential Quantifiable Savings: Shifting non-criminal time payments to Alliance One could result in annual savings of approximately \$174,119 based on a reduction of 3 FTE's. There would be no additional upfront or annual costs to the City associated with time payment administration. Alliance One captures their payment through fees passed to the customer.¹⁹

This will create an additional financial burden on SMC customers. In addition the Court has indicated that a potential consequence of contracting out time payments might be an increase in the number of requests for community service (to avoid the fees associated with the time payments). If this occurred, additional FTE's might be needed to staff the community services area.

Potential Operational Efficiencies: Currently Alliance One provides King County District Court with management reports on their time payments that include daily aging, default, and balance reports. SMC has only default reporting today. Further, Alliance One indicated that their fulfillment rate (i.e., collection rate) on time payments is 65%, which is comparable to the 62% rate that SMC indicates it is currently achieving. It should be noted that in response to our 2007 audit, the court instituted policies and procedures to bring greater operational discipline and consistency to the administration of time-payments.

SMC Response:

Regarding the auditor's recommendation to outsource time payments:

The positions that would be affected by outsourcing time payments are represented by Teamsters Local 763. Therefore, a proposal to outsource work may result in labor tensions and be subject to negotiation.

The administration of time payments requires 3.5 FTEs, three full-time and one half-time employee. If non-criminal time payments were outsourced, the Court would need to retain 1.0 FTE to be available during all times that court is in session to administer criminal time payments.

Opportunity 4: Collaboration with DEA

The Court currently utilizes DEA Treasury's high-speed processing service for the majority of its mail-in payments. Also, DEA Treasury receives payments from the internet, phone, and neighborhood centers.

DEA Treasury staff participated in meetings and field observations, and during the course of this audit opportunities for additional collaboration were explored including DEA processing of some of the transactions mailed directly to the Court (approximately 32,000 in 2008), and the Court's plans to evaluate the use of DEA's receipting system.

¹⁹ The terms for the King County District Court's time payments that are administered by Alliance One include: 5-10% down payment, a \$15 initial set up fee, a monthly fee of \$4.75 for single accounts and \$8.25 for multiple accounts.

Potential Operational Efficiency: We identified no specific opportunities for efficiency through collaboration with DEA at this time. However, it makes sense for the Court to continue to collaborate with DEA, particularly if the Court replaces the MCIS system. The Court indicates that they are committed to continuing to work with DEA on further efficiencies where feasible.

SMC Response:

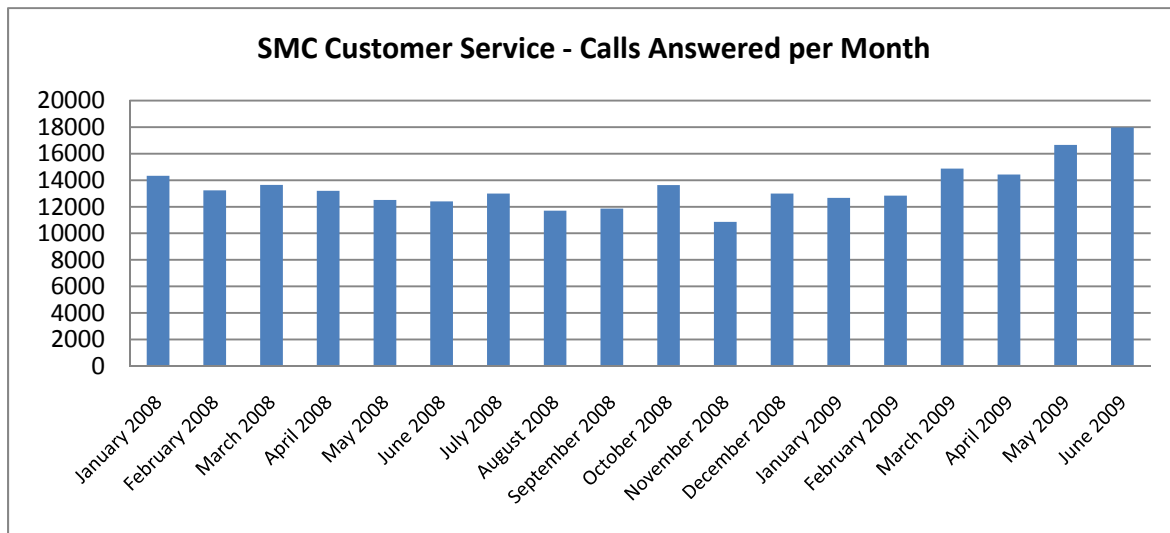
Regarding the auditor’s recommendation that the court continue to collaborate with DEA on payment processing.

As the auditor noted at page 5 of his report, DEA Treasury has been processing the bulk of infraction and parking citation payments for at least 15 years. The Court is grateful for this partnership and for the ongoing cooperation of Treasury’s personnel. In the course of this audit, the Court analyzed the categories of payments that it receives directly, and is considering the feasibility of directing more payments to Treasury.

Customer Service Related to Parking and Traffic Ticket Payments

Current Operations: Currently, there are 15 staff and two supervisors in the Court Customer Services unit. They primarily answer phone calls to the Court for general information, account balances, payment information, and hearing requests. SMC does not collect any data on the nature of the calls. Customer service personnel do not process payments in MCIS; however, they can take a payment on the phone by entering the customer’s data into the Court’s internet payment site. SMC could not provide the annual number of payments that are transacted this way.

The Department of Information Technology (DOIT) produces a monthly report for SMC that contains some standard performance tracking measures including: breakdowns by staff member, number of missed calls, talk time, time waiting in queue, etc. The chart below shows the monthly volume of calls from January 2008 through June 2009.



The average monthly call volume for this period was 13,493 calls with an average talk time of around 3 minutes.

Opportunity 5: Call and Contact Center

Potential Operational Efficiencies: A December 2008 consulting report sponsored by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) identified a number of call and contact center best practices that SPU could implement to improve the efficiency of its own call center operations. These included measures such as a tiered call resolution structure, supervisor monitoring of calls, greater web self-service, and the use of staff optimization software. The Mayor's 2009 proposed budget includes \$60,000 for a similar study to identify call center improvements for the Court.

Collecting data on the nature of their call center calls could also help the Court achieve greater efficiency. For example, frequently asked questions from callers might point to forms or processes that could be clarified or to opportunities to offer greater web self-service.

SMC Response:

Regarding the Auditor's discussion of the Customer Services Unit:

Of the 15 staff of the Customer Services Unit, six are usually assigned to telephone reception at any given time. Based on the data provided to the Auditor, each Customer Services employee answers about 80 calls per day when assigned to phone reception. This figure compares favorably to data from other City call centers, cited in a previous audit draft. Of course, calls to different lines of business may be very different in nature and in time required to conclude them. Therefore, the Court is not suggesting that such a comparison is definitive regarding either unit's performance.

The Court would be happy to participate in a study to identify potential call center improvements.

The Court acknowledges that collecting data on the nature of calls could identify opportunities to improve its forms, website, or other communications with the public. Court personnel will examine whether its call center software can be used for this purpose, or whether other software might be feasibly purchased.

Appendix 1



<p style="text-align: center;">City of Seattle</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Request for Information</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TITLE: City of Seattle Citation Processing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Due Date: June 17, 2009</p>
--

Schedule of Events	Date
RFI Release date	June 3, 2009
Last Day for Questions	June 10, 2009
RFI Due to the City	June 17, 2009

The City reserves the right to modify this schedule at the City's discretion. Notification of changes in the response due date would be posted on the City website or as otherwise stated herein.

This RFI is issued as a means of technical discovery and information gathering. This RFI is for planning purposes only and should not be construed as a solicitation nor should it be construed as an obligation on the part of the City to make any purchases. This RFI should not be construed as a means to pre-qualify vendors.

From the information provided by the respondents to the RFI, a determination will be made regarding any actual contracting through a procurement process. Any future contract that may be awarded must comply with City procurement requirements. The City of Seattle may utilize the results of this RFI in drafting a competitive solicitation (RFP) for the subject services/products/equipment.

Participation in this RFI is voluntary and the City will not pay for the preparation of any information submitted by a respondent or for the City's use of that information.

1. Project Overview.

The City of Seattle, ("the City") would like to explore options to improve efficiencies of the City's citation processing and achieve quantifiable savings. The City is seeking to gather information from vendors with an established history of handling a high-volume of citation transactions and handle government clients who generate the same or greater volume of citations as the City of Seattle.

Citation processing includes: the loading or entering of citation data, the receipt and entry of payments into the system, processing billing and other correspondence, receiving payments (including time payments), generating and tracking pre-collections notices, sending accounts timely to collections, and generating management reports.

There are two key opportunity areas:

1. Can the City manage the receipt, processing, and tracking of citation fines more efficiently?
2. Parking citations are mostly electronic. However, electronic traffic and non-traffic citations within the police department do not currently exist. Are there systems and services that could result in greater efficiencies for the City?

The City is not looking to replace its existing case management system at this time. However, we will consider replacing citation payment and receivables tracking functionality if there were quantifiable savings. We will also consider electronic ticketing for traffic citations if there are quantifiable savings.

We will look for efficiencies that will result in quantifiable savings over the processes the City currently has in place while providing the same level of service. For both of these areas, integration between the court system and police system is essential to the success of the project.

2. Background of Existing Operations.

Currently, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) issues citations with associated monetary fines to citizens for parking violations, traffic infractions, and non-traffic infractions. These fines are payable to the Seattle Municipal Court (SMC), which is responsible for tracking and following up on any monies owed. Information on the violations, the fines, and the citizen's payment history are maintained in the Court's Municipal Court Information System (MCIS).

MCIS is a customized database application that was implemented at the Court in 1990. MCIS is a relational database that is processed through an IBM Informix application running on the UNIX operating system. MCIS consists of 10 major modules to support court business. A custom-developed module handles citation processing.

In 2008, SMC received \$15.4 million in revenues from parking citations and over \$3.1 million from traffic and non-traffic infractions combined. The majority of parking tickets are issued by SPD Parking Enforcement Officers (PEO's) using handheld machines, and information on these tickets is electronically transferred to SMC and MCIS each evening. All traffic and non-traffic infractions, and some parking violations, are manually issued by an SPD Officer or PEO. These citations are manually entered into MCIS by SMC administrative staff.

Citizens can pay their Court obligations via mail, internet, phone, or in-person. In 2008, approximately 470,000 parking citations and 70,000 traffic citations were issued. Of that amount, the majority were either mailed in or paid via phone or internet (Mailed In = 194,690 items, Internet = 111,836 items, IVR = 39,941 items). The other citations were paid in person, contested, or went to collections.

SMC currently has 13.5 cashiers and two supervisors who staff the payment windows, jail release office, and specialty desks at the Courthouse. Additional City staff at seven neighborhood service centers also accept payment on some citations (They do not, for example, accept a payment on accounts in collections at the neighborhood service centers). SMC also provides customer service staff who answer questions about citation payment processing.

Citizens can also establish time-payment plans and community service arrangements. SMC is responsible for tracking and following up on any unpaid obligations. Citizens may request a hearing to challenge and/or discuss the citation and the fine. If the citizen does not request a hearing and does not pay the obligation, the account will be automatically assessed a late penalty (\$25 for parking, and \$52 for other infractions) after a certain number of days and SMC will notify the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) about the delinquent account. Then if there is no action taken by the citizen on the account after a certain number of days, it is forwarded by SMC to the collection agency.

3. Information Request

Please provide answers in the number format below.

3.1 Vendor Information - Describe the following:

- 3.1.1. Number of years of experience in providing citation processing services to government clients with transaction volumes equal or greater to the City of Seattle.
- 3.1.2. Indicate the number of staff and areas located that could support the City of Seattle.
- 3.1.3. Provide the location of your office(s) that might support the City of Seattle and indicate the number of technical personnel at that location.

3.2 Government Clients.

- 3.2.1. Please list three or more of your government clients with equal or greater transaction volumes and provide their contact name, email address and phone number. The City may use this information to interview government clients.
- 3.2.2. Provide a summary of the system and services for the above referenced government clients.
- 3.2.3. Describe specific quantifiable savings, if any, these government clients achieved as a result of your services.

3.3 Service Offerings.

- 3.3.1. Given your understanding of the current operations at the City of Seattle, which of your systems and services offerings might result in the greatest efficiency for the City?
- 3.3.2. The City is not looking to replace its existing case management system at this time. However, we will consider replacing citation payment and receivables tracking functionality if there were quantifiable savings. We will also consider electronic ticketing for traffic citations if there are quantifiable savings. Please indicate whether you offer the following systems and services:
 - a. Citation management software

- b. Hosted client-server system
- c. Web-based application service
- d. Electronic ticketing for traffic citations
- e. Interface development services
- f. Customer service/call center systems and services
- g. Other related systems and services (Please describe)

3.4 Citation Management Software Services

3.4.1. Please indicate how your citation management software offers the following functionality:

- a. Receipting
- b. Receivables Tracking
- c. Pre Collections Functions
- d. Noticing capabilities (generating and mailing pre-collections notices)
- e. Time payment administration (generating and tracking time payment notices or payments/withdrawals)
- f. Tracking of non-monetary obligations (e.g., community service)
- g. Integration with City's existing court case management system
- h. Interfaces with State Department of Licensing
- i. Interfaces with third party collections agencies
- j. Data "scraping" for paper citations
- k. Other

3.4.2. Are the above offerings available individually? For example, could the City purchase only Receipting functionality?

3.4.3. Provide a general overall description of a Citation Management Software package(s) and include Web engine, server environment and any database dependencies. The City is also interested in a hosted client-server system or web-based application service.

3.4.4. Describe the underlying software system and approach used to develop/maintain the application in sufficient detail to allow City staff to assess technical components.

3.4.5. Describe the real-time inquiry capabilities of the system.

3.4.6. Describe the management reporting capabilities offered. Provide sample reports and describe the flexibility of the reports including the ability to create ad hoc reports and download report data to other third-party software such as Microsoft Excel worksheets.

- 3.4.7. Describe specifically how the application systems would integrate with the City's existing handheld ticketing, IVR, internet payment systems and the City's collections - process or referrals and any benefits realized by such integration.
- 3.4.8. Describe specifically how the application systems would integrate with the City's existing Informix-based MCIS system and any benefits realized by such integration.
- 3.4.9. Describe specifically how the application systems would integrate with the State's Department of Licensing system and any benefits realized by such integration.
- 3.4.10. Currently, the city uses a bus technology to integrate data from one agency in the City of Seattle to another either with Web Services or direct database connections. This technology currently is used to move data from the SPD Parking Citation system to SMC's MCIS system. Describe how the software system would integrate with this data sharing solution.
- 3.4.11. Describe other integration methodologies most advantageous for the system.

3.5 Electronic Ticketing for Traffic Citations

- 3.5.1. Describe your capabilities for electronic ticketing for traffic citations.
- 3.5.2. Describe how this system might integrate with the City's existing MCIS system.
- 3.5.3. Describe how this system might integrate with a hosted client-server system or web-based application.

3.6 Other Citation Management Services

- 3.6.1. Describe your document imaging and "data scraping" capabilities and how they might be applied to the City's current paper citations.
- 3.6.2. Describe tracking and processing time payment systems and services (including generating and tracking time payment notices or payments/withdrawals).
 - a. Provide samples of time payment tracking reports.
 - b. Currently, some citations have multiple charges which are addressed separately in court. At the conclusion of a hearing, a defendant may end up with one payment plan covering all charges. Describe the system's capability for handling this type of time payment arrangement.
- 3.6.3. Does your system offer any tracking capability for non-monetary obligations such as community service? If so, please describe.
- 3.6.4. Describe your noticing capabilities (including generating and mailing pre-collection notices).

3.7 Technical and User Support

- 3.7.1. Describe how application support will be provided for both a hosted approach and a non-hosted approach, (specify differences, if any), including the availability of resources such as dedicated help desk or other service support.
- 3.7.2. Describe any interface development services that you offer including your experience developing interfaces with Informix systems.

3.8 Systems Requirements, Maintenance, & Support

- 3.8.1. Describe maintenance agreements, requirements that are offered for the type of solution which is being described. Include any standard maintenance and support programs as well as any expanded maintenance and support options that could be offered. Also please describe whether this support would be provided by third party contractors and the type of response and other provisions that might be required by the City, such as 24 x 7 coverage and any related costs affiliated with the level of support.
- 3.8.2. Describe system requirements including hardware and peripherals (e.g., scanners).

3.9 Training Support

- 3.9.1. If Vendor feels there are any specific training requirements please provide that information as to the scope and amount, location or method of delivery, potential additional costs and any other considerations that could be expected.

3.10Warranty

- 3.10.1. Provide a sample warranty which would be provided for systems and software purchase.

3.11Pricing Options.

- 3.11.1. Describe the types of pricing strategies that are in place for each of the following:
 - a. Citation management software
 - b. Hosted client-server system
 - c. Web-based application service
 - d. Electronic ticketing for traffic citations
 - e. Interface development services
 - f. Customer service/call center systems and services
 - g. Other related systems and services (Please describe)
- 3.11.2. Please provide examples of pricing structures used by other jurisdictions.

4. Questions

Questions shall be submitted in writing, whether by e-mail, fax or letter, to **the RFI Coordinator:**

Carmalinda Vargas-Thompson

Carmalinda.Vargas@seattle.gov

Tel# 206-615-1123

Fax# 206-233-5155

It is the responsibility of the interested Vendor to assure that they received responses to Questions if any are issued.

5. Receiving Question and Answers

The City will make efforts to provide courtesy notices, reminders, addendums and similar announcements directly to interested vendors. Notwithstanding efforts by the City to provide such notice to known vendors, it remains the obligation and responsibility of the Vendor to learn of any addendums, responses, or notices issued by the City. Such efforts by the City to provide notice or to make it available do not relieve the Vendor from the sole obligation for learning of such material.

6. Response Date and Location

- a) Information is to be received into the City Purchasing Offices no later than the date given on page 1.
- b) Information may be submitted in a hard-copy. FAX and e-mail copies are an acceptable substitute for the hard-copy original.
- c) **Mark the outside of your mailing envelope to say “RFI# City of Seattle Citation Processing”. This is important to proper handling of your response**
- d) The RFI response may be hand-delivered or must otherwise be received by the RFP Coordinator at the address provided, by the submittal deadline. Please note that delivery errors will result without careful attention to the proper address.
- e) Please do not use binders or plastic folders, unless essential due to the size of your submission. The City prefers simple, stapled paper copies. This reflects both the City interest in promoting environmentally preferable practices, and also to avoid heavy and bulky RFI packages that require significant storage space.
- f) The submitter has full responsibility to ensure the response arrives to the City Purchasing Office within the deadline. The City assumes no responsibility for delays caused by the US Post Office or any other delivery service.
- g) The City will consider supplemental brochures and materials. Respondents are invited to attach any brochures or materials that will assist the City.

7. Proprietary Material.

Respondents should understand that any records (including but not limited to information, response submittals, references, and any other materials) they submit to the City become public records under Washington State law (See RCW Chapter 42.56, the Public Disclosure Act, at <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/LawsAndAgencyRules>. Public records must be promptly disclosed upon request unless a statute exempts disclosure. Exemptions from disclosure include trade secrets and valuable formulas (See RCW 42.56.540 and RCW Ch. 19.108). However, public-disclosure exemptions are narrow and specific. Respondents are expected to be familiar with any potentially-applicable exemptions, and the limits of those exemptions.

Respondents are obligated to separately bind and clearly mark as “proprietary” information any records they believe are exempted from disclosure. The body of the information may refer to these separately-bound records. Respondents should mark as “proprietary” only that information they believe legitimately fits within a public-disclosure exemption.

If the City receives a public disclosure request for records that a Respondent has marked as “proprietary information,” the City may notify the Respondent of this request and postpone disclosure briefly to allow the Respondent to file a lawsuit under RCW 42.17.330 to enjoin disclosure. However, this is a courtesy of the City and not an obligation.

The City has no obligation to assert an exemption from disclosure. If the Respondent believes that its records are exempt from disclosure, the Respondent is obligated to seek an injunction under RCW 42.56. By submitting a Response the Respondent acknowledges this obligation; the Respondent also acknowledges that the City will have no obligation or liability to the Respondent if the records are disclosed.

8. Cost of Preparing Responses

The City will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Respondent in the preparation and presentation of information submitted in response to this RFI including, but not limited to, costs incurred in connection with the Respondent’s participation in demonstrations and the informational conference.

Appendix 2 - Preliminary Cost Benefit Analysis for E-Ticketing

Actual costs will vary based on the particular system specifications that SPD and SMC choose to implement.

	Year 1 Low Range	Year 1 High Range	Annual Low Range	Annual High Range
Estimated Costs (range is based on recent acquisitions by Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Kitsap County, San Jose, CA, and Seattle Parking Enforcement)				
Hand held devices for 60 traffic officers	156,000	270,000		
Hand held printers for 60 traffic officers	42,000	54,000		
MCIS and RMS Interface Development (based on Parking Ticket system)	150,000	350,000		
Docking Stations (based on Parking Ticket system; Las Vegas does not have docking station)		24,660		
Application and report customization (Based on Parking Ticket system)	250,000	250,000		
Officer overtime and training	35,000	35,000		
Servers and data transfer stations	45,000	45,000		
Project Management (SPD in house)	-	125,000		
Annual software license (Las Vegas has a per user license rather than a site license)		40,600	-	40,600
Annual wireless fees (at \$50/officer/month)			36,000	36,000
Annual warranty (based on Parking Ticket System)			-	39,000
Annual printer paper			20,000	20,000
IT Support Police (approx .25 FTE)			(in-house)	(in-house)
IT Support Court (approx .25 FTE)			(in-house)	(in-house)
Estimated Total Costs	678,000	1,194,260	56,000	135,600

Estimated Savings (based on numbers provided by Court Records Division)

	Annual Low Range	Annual High Range
Court Data Entry, Scanning, and Ticket Prep (based on Ad Spec 1, Step 3, and benefits at 33% per DOF)	134,825	215,720

Estimated Revenue (based on the 2008 experience of SPD Traffic Division)

	1 Addtl Ticket/Hour	2 Addtl Tickets/Hour	2.75 Addtl Tickets/Hour (SPD 2008 actual)
Additional Tickets per Enforcement Hour	1	2	2.75
Number of Officers (75% of 54 based on 2008 actuals)	40.50	40.50	40.50
Number of Enforcement Days (M-F highest volume)	260	260	260
Number of Additional Tickets	10,530	21,060	28,958
2008 Avg Net Revenue to City per Ticket	\$42.54	\$42.54	\$42.54
Total Potential Additional Revenue	\$ 447,955	\$ 895,910	\$ 1,231,877

Appendix 3

Sample Officer Reports

City of Seattle
 Office of City Auditor
 Parking and Traffic Ticket
 Processing Efficiencies
 December, 2009

OFFICER REPORT			
I OBSERVED DRIVING THE VEHICLE EB 1600-1700 BLK OF THE WEST SEATTLE BRIDGE IN SEATTLE WHERE THE SPEED LIMIT IS POSTED AT 45 MPH I WAS DRIVING A MARUSA SPA CAR EB WITH I NOTICED THE DRIVERS BEHIND ME FORMING UP BEHIND ME VERY QUICKLY. I WAS TRAVELING AT THE 45 MPH SPEED LIMIT. THE DRIVERS CAME UP CLOSE BEHIND ME THEN CHANGED TO THE LEFT LANE AND PANNED ME. I WAS ABLE TO PACE DRIVERS FOR APPROXIMATELY 55 MPH AS DRIVERS WERE NOT POTENTIALLY BEHIND ME WAS "CUTTING" OVER. NOTICE I BELIEVE BY A POLICE OFFICER.			
TRAFFIC	WEATHER	STREET	LIGHT
LT MED HV	CL RN FG SN	D W I S	D DWN DSK DK
WITNESS NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.)		PHONE	
ADDRESS		CITY	STATE ZIP
WITNESS NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.)		PHONE	
ADDRESS		CITY	STATE ZIP
INCIDENT NUMBER	RELATED CITATION/INFRACTION NUMBERS	APPROVING OFFICER/NO.	

OFFICER REPORT			
I OBSERVED DRIVING THE VEHICLE EB 2100-1900 BLK OF THE WEST SEATTLE BRIDGE IN SEATTLE IN A WELL PAVED BUT ONLY ONE DRIVERS WAS NOT DRIVING A BUS. I SAW DRIVERS IN THE RESTRICTED LANE OVER 500 FEET. I WAS EB ON THE WEST SEATTLE BRIDGE ON A SPA CAR. DRIVERS WERE IN THE RESTRICTED BUT ONLY ONE TO MY RIGHT. WHEN I APPROXIMATED TO FOLLOW DRIVERS TO TURN INTO BLK INTO THE FUTURE EB LANE, BETWEEN MARUSA CAR BUMPER TO BUMPER - VERY SLOW.			
TRAFFIC	WEATHER	STREET	LIGHT
LT MED HV	CL RN FG SN	D W I S	D DWN DSK DK
WITNESS NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.)		PHONE	
ADDRESS		CITY	STATE ZIP
WITNESS NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.)		PHONE	
ADDRESS		CITY	STATE ZIP
INCIDENT NUMBER	RELATED CITATION/INFRACTION NUMBERS	APPROVING OFFICER/NO.	

OFFICER REPORT

I OBSERVED DRIVING THIS VEH W/B, 600 B/W OF SPRING ST IN (EAST) THE WEING WAY FOR ONE BLOCK FROM 7 AVE TO 6 AVE DR THEN TURNED RIGHT ONTO 6 AS AND PROCEEDED N/B. I VERIFIED THAT SPRING ST IS CLEARLY POSTED AS WAY ONLY E/B AS 7 AVE & SPRING ST. I WAS ON INTERSECTION JCS OF 6 AVE AT SPRING ST WITH A CLEAR VIEW OF THE VIOLATION DR'S VEHICLE LICENSE TABL AND EXPIRED (JUL 07).

Debra G. ...
Orade, WA
8-2-07

TRAFFIC LT MED HV	WEATHER CL RN FG SN	STREET D W I S	LIGHT D DWN DSK DK
WITNESS NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.)			
ADDRESS			
CITY			
STATE			
ZIP			
WITNESS NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.)			
ADDRESS			
CITY			
STATE			
ZIP			
INCIDENT NUMBER	RELATED CITATION/INFRACTION NUMBERS	APPROVING OFFICER/NO.	

OFFICER REPORT

I OBSERVED DR DRIVING THIS VEH E/B, 400 B/W SW WEST SEATTLE BRIDGE IN SEATTLE IN A WELL PAVED BUT ONLY CAR, OVER 200 FEET BEFORE I FLAGGED DR OVER DR WAS NOT DRIVING A BUS. TRAFFIC WAS VERY SLOW MOVING IN THE OTHER E/B WAY. DR PASSED SEVERAL OTHER CARS.

Debra G. ...
Orade, WA
8-2-07

TRAFFIC LT MED HV	WEATHER CL RN FG SN	STREET D W I S	LIGHT D DWN DSK DK
WITNESS NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.)			
ADDRESS			
CITY			
STATE			
ZIP			
WITNESS NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.)			
ADDRESS			
CITY			
STATE			
ZIP			
INCIDENT NUMBER	RELATED CITATION/INFRACTION NUMBERS	APPROVING OFFICER/NO.	

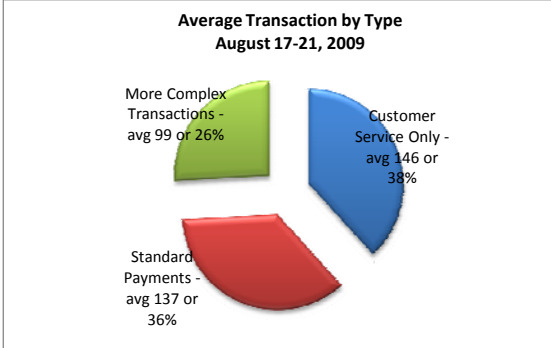
Appendix 4

8/17/2009 8/18/2009 8/19/2009 8/20/2009 8/21/2009

Transaction Summary	Totals					Avg for Week	
Customer Service Only: (General Questions, Wrong Court, Hearing Requests, Documents Certified)	160	181	145	137	106	729	146
Standard Payments	152	143	134	129	126	684	137
More Complex Transactions	119	92	78	57	147	493	99
Daily Total	431	416	357	323	379	1906	381

Transaction Descriptions and Counts

Standard Payments	152	143	134	129	126		
Standard Hearing Request	20	22	17	19	27		
Standard Hearing Multiple Citations	2	4	8	6	0		
Hearing Request No Ticket (Research req)	10	5	2	0	0		
Hearing Request w/ Interpreter	2	1	0	0	3		
Late Hearing Request (Need Supervisor)	4	3	0	0	0		
Payments No Tickets (Research req)	20	16	6	14	18		
Request for Late Fee Removal	7	5	2	2	3		
Wrong Makes Cancellation (Research req)	0	0	0	0	1		
Request to View Red Light Citation	4	1	1	1	0		
Research Missing/Misapplied Payments	0	0	0	0	1		
Request to Show POI	2	0	2	0	1		
Request to Show NVOL's		0	0	0	0		
Warrants	16	12	8	4	7		
Warrant Arrest	1	0	0	0	0		
Parking Adjudications	22	19	17	11	28		
Remove DOL Holds	5	3	1	2	11		
Requests for SMC History (Homeland Sec, Immigration)	6	6	4	1	2		
Military Background Checks	0	0	0	1	1		
DOL adjudications	10	13	1	3	17		
General Questions	108	127	113	109	62		
Customer in Wrong Court	13	16	5	3	11		
Getting Documents Certified	1	3	0	0	3		
Other (Bail Refund, Double Defendant, Copies, Referrals to Time Pay or Alliance One)	26	17	36	18	57		



Appendix 5

RESPONSE

from the Municipal Court of Seattle
to the Office of City Auditor's Review of **Parking and Traffic Ticket Processing Efficiencies**
October 5, 2009

Introduction

The Court involved the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) because, under the authority of the State Supreme Court, the AOC has exclusive responsibility and authority for non-financial audits of courts in Washington State. (Washington State Court Rules, General Rule 32).

Scope

This review was undertaken with a fieldwork deadline of August. Therefore, its scope was limited to infraction citation processing, including relevant aspects of cashiering and customer service. In addition to identifying possible efficiency improvements, the City Auditor has outlined proposals to outsource Court jobs and to increase revenues associated with traffic citations.

Although this audit was not intended to include criminal matters, the tasks, systems, and people that are involved in infraction citation processing are often the same as those used for criminal matters. Adjudicating criminal charges is a serious responsibility that can involve complicated and high-stakes transactions. The Courts handling of these matters directly impacts citizens' access to justice, public safety and liberty issues.

The efficiency and effectiveness of Court operations should always be evaluated in the context of the Trial Court Performance Standards. Published by the National Association for Court Management (NACM), the Standards are designed to ensure Access to Justice; Expeditiousness and Timeliness; Quality, Fairness, and Integrity; Independence and Accountability; and Public Trust and Confidence.

Paper Traffic Tickets

Opportunity 1: E-Ticketing

Regarding the Auditor's recommendation to implement infraction e-ticketing:

We agree with the auditor's observation that electronic citation processing eliminates some handwriting/reading errors and keyboarding errors, and has the potential to reduce labor costs.

Most of the City's *parking* citations have been completed by Police and filed electronically with the Court since the early 1990s. Switching to e-tickets for infractions would require the Court to re-engineer its infraction and criminal traffic citation business processes. Based on preliminary discussions, the Court believes it is likely any labor cost reduction will be partly offset by some new work: When uploaded, some citations will have to be placed in a queue for review to determine whether the defendant has previous SMC history, to avoid creating multiple records for the same defendant. This is not necessary with parking citations.¹

When a project of this nature is funded, the Court will work with the Police Department as needed to help select a vendor and implement electronic infraction citations.

The court applied to the Executive earlier this year to be included in Stimulus Package funding to initiate technology projects toward achieving a paperless court, including e-ticketing. This application was not granted.

Regarding the Auditor's recommendation to assess an administrative fee for each ticket issued:

Setting aside any policy concerns, the Court believes that it may not assess or collect an administrative fee for Court transactions unless specifically authorized to do so by state law or court rule. For example, state laws explicitly grant courts the authority to assess and collect fees for deferral agreements, proof of insurance dismissals, and copies of Court records. These laws also set or cap the fee amounts. Court personnel do not see anything in the statutes or court rules that would authorize the City or Court to assess a per-ticket-processing fee for infractions.

The \$38,000 figure cited by the Auditor represents the City's share of revenue from all citations that were dismissed in 2008 because they were not filed or were filed late. It should be noted that all properly filed charges are subject to technical and factual challenges. Therefore, the \$38,000 is an upper limit to the amount of revenue that would likely be realized.

Standard Payments for Parking and Traffic Tickets

Opportunity 2: Cashiering Operations

Regarding the potential savings identified by the Auditor from closing the Quick Pay Window:

The auditor observed in its sample of Quick Pay transactions, about half the transactions were payments and half were not. The auditor concluded that if the Court were to close the Quick Pay Window, the workload of both the remaining cashiers and customer service staff would increase, and customers would have longer wait times in both areas, not just in the cashier lines as the auditor acknowledged. The auditor did not identify any excess capacity in Customer Service. The Court does not understand or agree with the auditor's statement that longer cashier lines "could be mitigated by the deployment of Customer Service staff to answer general questions"

¹ A driver's license number is the only unique identifier that SMC typically collects and stores from infraction defendants. However, SMC does not have a license number for every defendant record, so other characteristics (name, DOB, etc.) will have to be compared and ultimately, a Court employee may have to decide whether to assign a citation to an existing defendant's record or to create a new defendant record. Parking citations do not have this issue, because the unique identifier is the vehicle's license plate, and a defendant record is not created unless a hearing or time payment is scheduled.

The Court recognizes that when the City's operating budget is strained, it may have to reduce its service levels in ways that are likely to decrease customer satisfaction. The Court eliminated one Cashier and one Customer Service Representative in its 2009 mid-year budget cuts, knowing that doing so would negatively impact customer service.

The Quick Pay Window provides significant customer service advantages that should not be discarded lightly. The Quick Pay Window was deliberately included in the Justice Center building design. If the Court closes the Quick Pay Window and eliminates additional Cashier positions, citizens will have to undergo security screening to make simple payments and to ask simple questions, and wait longer in line for both. Longer lines at security screening will impact jurors, attorneys, and other citizens entering the Justice Center.

At the same time, the Court recognizes that a special function of this nature should not be maintained if it cannot be justified by sufficient work at an appropriate classification level. At the highest salary steps, a Cashier's hourly wage is just \$0.53 more than that of an Administrative Specialist 2. We believe that since about half of the transactions, and more than half of the workload of the Quick Pay Window are payments, the employment of a Cashier there is justified. The Court will continue to monitor the Quick Pay Window workload to ensure that it functions at a high productivity level.

Special Payments for Parking and Traffic Tickets (including time payments)

Opportunity 3: Time Payments

Regarding the auditor's recommendation to outsource time payments:

The positions that would be affected by outsourcing time payments are represented by Teamsters Local 763. Therefore, a proposal to outsource work may result in labor tensions and be subject to negotiation.

The administration of time payments requires 3.5 FTEs, three full-time and one half-time employee. If non-criminal time payments were outsourced, the Court would need to retain 1.0 FTE to be available during all times that court is in session to administer criminal time payments.

Opportunity 4: Collaboration with DEA

Regarding the auditor's recommendation that the court continue to collaborate with DEA on payment processing.

As the auditor noted at page 5 of his report, DEA Treasury has been processing the bulk of infraction and parking citation payments for at least 15 years. The Court is grateful for this partnership and for the ongoing cooperation of Treasury's personnel. In the course of this audit, the Court analyzed the categories of payments that it receives directly, and is considering the feasibility of directing more payments to Treasury.

Customer Service Related to Parking and Traffic Ticket Payments

Regarding the Auditor's discussion of the Customer Services Unit:

Of the 15 staff of the Customer Services Unit, six are usually assigned to telephone reception at any given time. Based on the data provided to the Auditor, each Customer Services employee answers about 80 calls per day when assigned to phone reception. This figure compares favorably to data from other City call centers, cited in a previous audit draft. Of course, calls to different lines of business may be very different in nature and in time required to conclude them. Therefore, the Court is not suggesting that such a comparison is definitive regarding either unit's performance.

Opportunity 5: Call and Contact Center

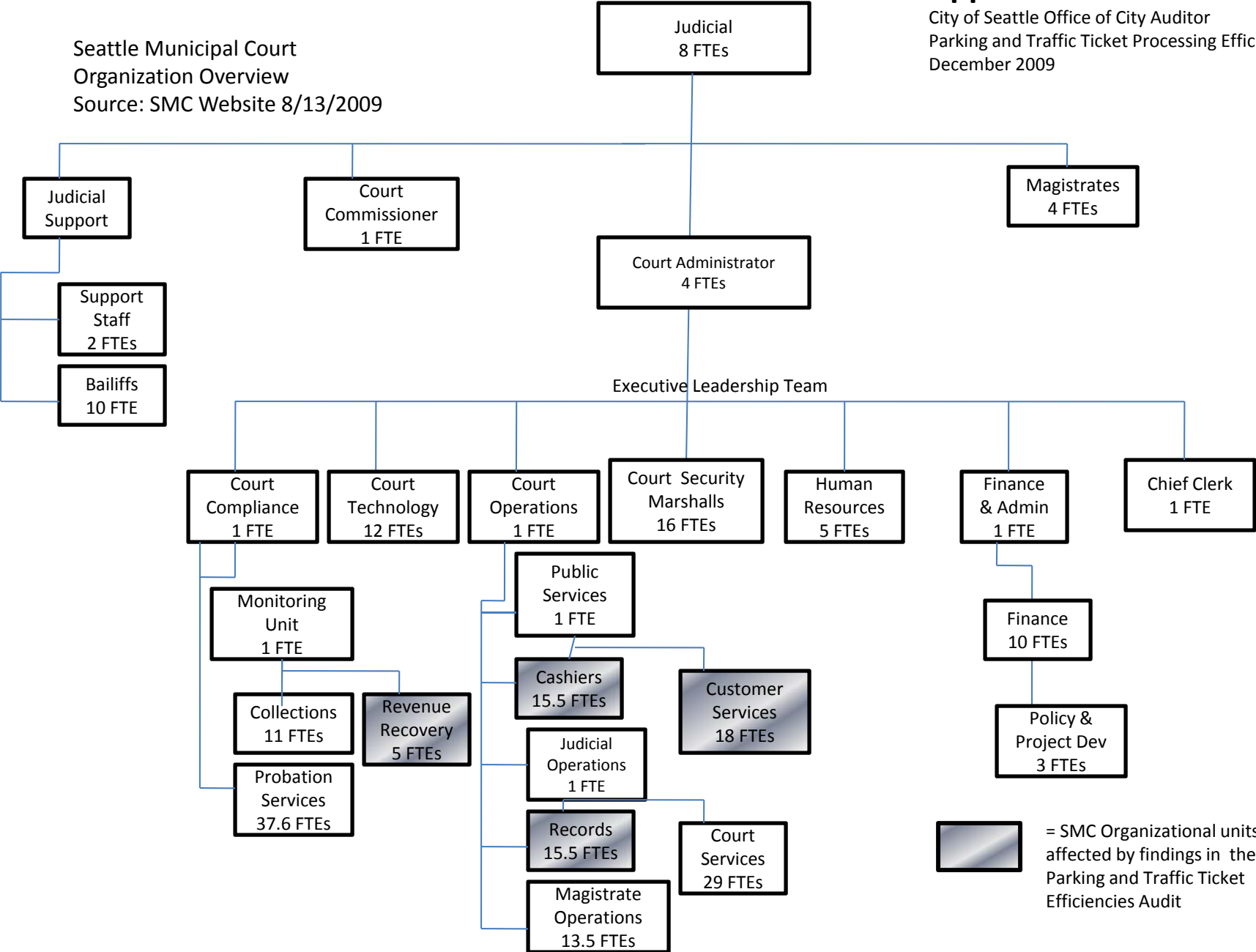
The Court would be happy to participate in a study to identify potential call center improvements.


The Court acknowledges that collecting data on the nature of calls could identify opportunities to improve its forms, website, or other communications with the public. Court personnel will examine whether its call center software can be used for this purpose, or whether other software might be feasibly purchased.

Appendix 6

City of Seattle Office of City Auditor
 Parking and Traffic Ticket Processing Efficiencies Audit,
 December 2009

Seattle Municipal Court
 Organization Overview
 Source: SMC Website 8/13/2009



 = SMC Organizational units affected by findings in the Parking and Traffic Ticket Efficiencies Audit