



City of Denton

City Hall
215 E. McKinney Street
Denton, Texas
www.cityofdenton.com

REVISED AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: MUNICIPAL JUDGE'S OFFICE

CM/ DCM/ ACM: COUNCIL APPOINTEE

DATE: JUNE 13th, 2017 (as revised June 11th)

SUBJECT (Agenda Item 17-720)

Changes to current Municipal Court processes to make the Court more accessible to defendants and assist those who are unable to pay or indigent.

BACKGROUND – (ISSUES AND CONCERNS)

The Court has become less accessible to defendants and more difficult to resolve cases without arrest. This is due to (a) increased automation, (b) court policies that have made it more difficult for a defendant to speak directly with the Judge (c) a state mandated OCA "Collection Improvement Program", (d) events in Ferguson, Missouri, recent Texas cases and legislative changes passed by the 85th Texas Legislature.

OPTIONS – (PROPOSED SOLUTIONS)

Continue as we have in the past and do only the bare minimum required by the legislature, or attempt to make changes giving defendants every opportunity to resolve cases without arrest.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement and develop the following system changes in Court process and policies:

- (1) "Date-Specific Dockets" for appearance before a Judge.
- (2) Notice and hearing after a defendant fails to appear or defaults on payment.
- (3) Open access to courts and "safe harbor" to allow case resolution without arrest or bond.
- (4) If arrested, release from custody without posting bond or immediate fine payment.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELATIONSHIP

This specific City Council agenda item contributes most directly to the following KFA and goal:

Related Key Focus Area: Safe, Liveable & Family-Friendly Community

Related Goal: 4.1 Enhance public safety in the community

EXHIBITS

Previously submitted with original Agenda Information Sheet on June 9th, 2017.

Respectfully submitted:

**Robin A. Ramsay, Judge Presiding
Denton Municipal Court**