LEE'S SUMMIT
MISSOURI

City Council Presentation
11.4.25

Judicial Operations & Compensation

Public Safety Partnership

- Fire
- Police
- Court system

Types Of Cases We Preside Over

Criminal cases involving dangerous activities such as:

- Domestic assault that includes strangling, choking, and attempted suffocations
- Child endangerment
- Drug possession – fentanyl, meth, cocaine
- Driving while intoxicated
- Road rage
- Illegal discharge of firearms
- High speed chases with people fleeing from police
- Threats to shoot up schools
- Assaults on law enforcement officers
- Assaults on individuals
- Animal abuse
- Felony level shoplifting
- Theft from homes and businesses
- Car theft
- Car theft by not returning rental cars
- Indecent exposure
- Trespassing
- Many cases involving people with serious mental illness

Additional Obligations Outside of Court

- On call each month 24/7
- Arraign prisoners daily and over weekends and holidays
- Decide who to incarcerate and who to release
- Decide alternatives to incarceration when jail space is exceeded
- Set bonds
- Issue warrants
- Field calls from police officers and the jail
- Meetings with police department
- Meetings with KC – Orca (KC Organized retail crime association)
- Meetings with the Crisis Intervention Team
- Work with Crisis Intervention Team in dealing with citizens in mental health crisis
- Meetings with ReDiscover – our mental health and drug resource provider
- Meetings with detention officers, Sergeants, and Captains
- Manage court staff to ensure compliance with state procedures
- Approve hiring of court staff

Current Court Structure Outdated

- Current two day per week system since 1981
- No organizational changes for 44 years
- In 1985 - 60 police officers and 33,000 citizens
- Our judiciary has not kept up with the growth of the city or with the additional duties imposed on Judges by increases:
  - In population and thereby, in crime
  - In supervisory duties imposed by Supreme Court
  - In duties imposed on courts and judges by changes in state laws
- Not in alignment with comparison communities providing municipal court services.

Lee's Summit Population History

1950 – 2,554
1960 – 8,287
1970 – 16,204
1980 – 28,742
1985 – 33,846
2000 – 70,700
2010 – 91,364
2025 – 107,281
2040 – 138,000 projected

Photo credit of LS Historical Society

Police Department Sworn Officers

1962 - 8

1985 - 60

1992 - 100

2025 – 173 officers (sworn hired) and 81 civilians

- Source: Deputy Chief Boenker and City of LS Website

Fire Department Stats

- 1960 – First paid chief. Previously, all volunteers
- 1967 – 8 full time, 11 volunteer firefighters
- 1977 – 33 full time,26 part time firefighters
- 1980 – 54 firefighters
- 1992 – 71 firefighters, 8 support staff
- 2025 – 172 firefighters and 26 support staff

Source: City of LS website and Chief Snider

Current Municipal Court Status

1981 – 2 Judges - 2 court days per week

2025 – 2 Judges - 2 court days per week

Our court system is <u>under stress</u> with only 2 court days per week.

Current Court System Outdated

We are inefficient and not serving our citizens, community partners, and employees.

We have overcrowding, excessive wait times, & safety concerns.

Resulting Court Overcrowding

Increase in population has resulted in increased crime, ordinance violations, and time needed in and out of court for processing and administrative duties. Longer court waits create additional burdens on our police department, staff and officers and are frustrating to our citizens.

What Are Neighboring Cities Doing?

Comparison cities hold court days in excess of 7 days per week running two courts simultaneously with smaller municipalities holding 4 days per week.

City	Population	No. of Judges	Court Days per Week	Court Days per Week per Judge	Total Court Days per Week
Kansas City, KS	152,933	2	5	5	14
Olathe	141,290	2	5	5	10
Columbia	130,900	1	4	4	4
Topeka	125,467	2	5	5	10
Independence	119,604	2	4	2	4
Lee's Summit	107,281	2	2	1	2
Lawrence	97,271	1	5	5	5
Shawnee	70,731	1	4	4	4
Comparable Averages*	119,742	1.6	4.6	4.3	7.3

More Court Days Needed

Given our growth rate and the level of excellence expected for our community, Lee's Summit needs 6 days of court per week with the two-judge system like our neighboring cities.

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Comparable Averages*	119,742	1.6	4.6	4.3	7.3

Current Municipal Court Status

Comparable Cities Budget For Judicial Expenses

City	Individual Judge Pay	Population	No. of Judges	City Total Judicial Cost per Year**	Retirement	Court Days per Week	Court Days per Week per Judge	Total Court Days per Week
Kansas City, KS	$ 158,000	152,933	2	$ 316,000	Yes	5	5	14
Olathe	$ 164,838	141,290	2	$ 329,676	Yes	5	5	10
Columbia	$ 152,131	130,900	1	$ 152,131	Yes	4	4	4
Topeka	$ 134,171	125,467	2	$ 268,342	Yes	5	5	10
Independence	$ 77,000	119,604	2	$ 154,000	Yes	4	2	4
Lee's Summit	$ 38,325	107,281	2	$ 76,650	No	2	1	2
Lawrence	$ 140,192	97,271	1	$ 140,192	Yes	5	5	5
Shawnee	$ 116,688	70,731	1	$ 116,688	Yes	4	4	4
Comparable Averages*	$ 134,717	119,742	1.6	$ 211,004	Yes - 100%	4.6	4.3	7.3
Lee's Summit - Current	$ 38,325	107,281	2	$ 76,650	No	2	1	2
Lee's Summit - 5/1/26	$ 51,000			$ 102,000	No	2	1	2

Over the last 44 years Comparison Cities Have:

- Increased court operations budgets to meet demands of their cities
- Increased days in court to support operations and meet demand
- Increased compensation of the Judges to provide more court days
- Made cost of living and CPI adjustments along with the increases to meet operational demands
- Provided retirement and other benefits

Current Municipal Court Structure

Over the last 44 years, Lee's Summit has increased the number of court administrative staff and increased their compensation to stay competitive in the market.

During the same time period, compensation to the judges has lagged despite the far greater demands imposed of them due to the growth in the population served, more supervisory duties imposed by Supreme Court such as supervision and hiring of court staff, and increased duties imposed on courts by changes in state laws.

Current Municipal Court Status

Over the last 44 years our comparison cites have invested more than twice as much as the City of Lee's Summit to support the judicial and municipal court systems.

During the same time frame, there have only been a few inflationary increases in Lee's Summit's budget for judicial compensation. These inflationary increases for judicial operations have not kept up with the increased demands of the court system.

Request the City Align with Comparison Cities

Increase investment in judicial operations including:

- Additional court days
- Market rate compensation
- Market rate retirement benefits
- Annual cost of living adjustments

Proposal

- Increase additional court days to 6 (3 days per judge)
- Increase the judicial compensation to comparison average of $211,004 (market average)
- Market rate retirement benefits (TBD)

City	Individual Judge Pay	Population	No. of Judges	City Total Judicial Cost per Year**	Retirement	Court Days per Week	Court Days per Week per Judge	Total Court Days per Week
Comparable Averages*	$ 134,717	119,742	1.6	$ 211,004	Yes - 100%	4.6	4.3	7.3
Lee's Summit - Current	$ 51,000	107,281	2	$ 102,000	No	2	1	2
Proposal	$ 105,502	107,281	2	$ 211,004	Yes	5	3	6

Additional Investment by City

Cost of investment:	$211,044
Salary as of 5.1.26:	$102,000
Difference:	$109,044

Additional Annual Investment: $109,044 + Retirement

Return On Investment to the City

- Increase number of court dates per week to 6 (3 per judge)
- Reduce overtime paid to police, court staff and prosecutor's staff
- More manageable dockets and provide better services to citizens
- Appropriate time to supervise and manage court staff and collaborate with police and community partners
- Time to do bond forfeitures to bring additional revenue to the City
- Dedicated specialty dockets to alleviate overload and allow Judges more time in courtroom and office.
  - Trial dockets
  - Attorney plea dockets
  - Retail theft dockets
  - Warrant set aside dockets
  - Bond forfeiture dockets
  - Animal control docket
  - Codes dockets
  - Probation violation dockets
  - Domestic Assault dockets
  - Interpreter dockets
  - Public Defender dockets
  - Arraignment dockets
  - Start mental health/drug dockets

Conclusion

Thank you for your time and consideration.

As an integral part of the public safety partnership with police and fire, we trust you will partner with us as you have with the fire and police departments and give us the tools necessary to expand our court system to ensure that we can adequately provide for the safety and welfare of our citizens.