

City of Lee's Summit

Municipal Court Operational Review

Report Presentation

July 14, 2026





Agenda

1. Context
2. Areas of Risk
3. Recommendations
4. Conclusion

Project Overview

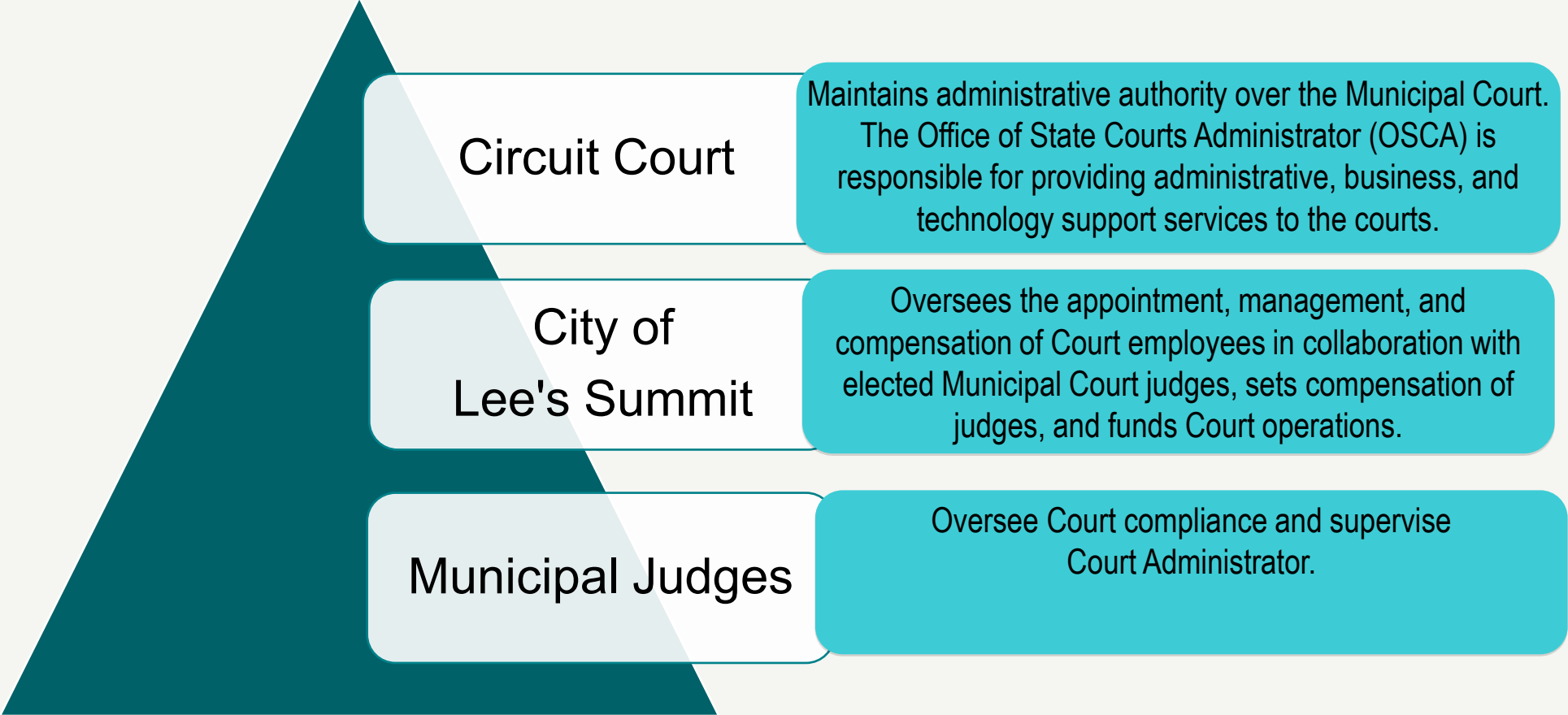
- Project work occurred October 2025 – February 2026
- Included staff interviews, customer interviews, document/process review, benchmarking against peer cities, and best practice review
- **Many improvements and changes may have likely been made since we were last onsite**



Context



The Court: Divided Oversight Responsibilities



Trends Impacting the Municipal Court

- Lee's Summit is growing
 - 216% growth in population from 1985 to 2025
 - 188% growth in Police Officer staffing
 - Police partially drive workload for Court
- Court workload is also growing
 - New case filings have increased by 15% since 2019, and grew by 20% from 2023 to 2024
- Court structure has not changed
 - Number of judges and available court days has remained the same
- Almost 100% staff turnover since 2022
- Court fees/fines sufficiently cover expenditures
 - Fees/fine were over 97% of actual/budgeted expenditures from 2021-2025 (in some years over 100%)



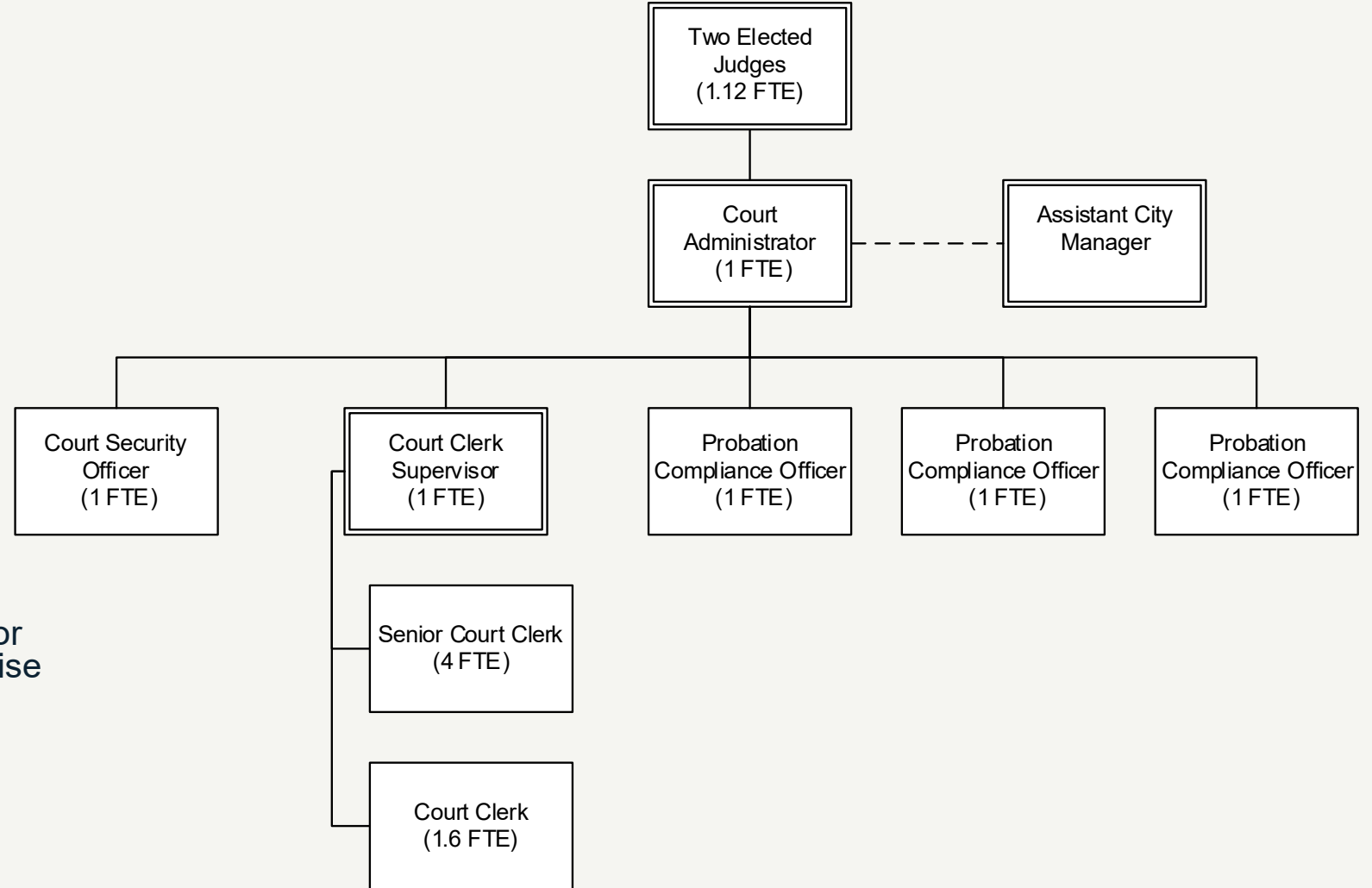
Municipal Court Organization Chart

Key functions include:

- Judicial functions
- Court administration
- Courtroom management
- Probation monitoring

NOTE: Job descriptions found online conflict and state that Court Administrator and Court Clerk Supervisor both supervise the Court Clerks.

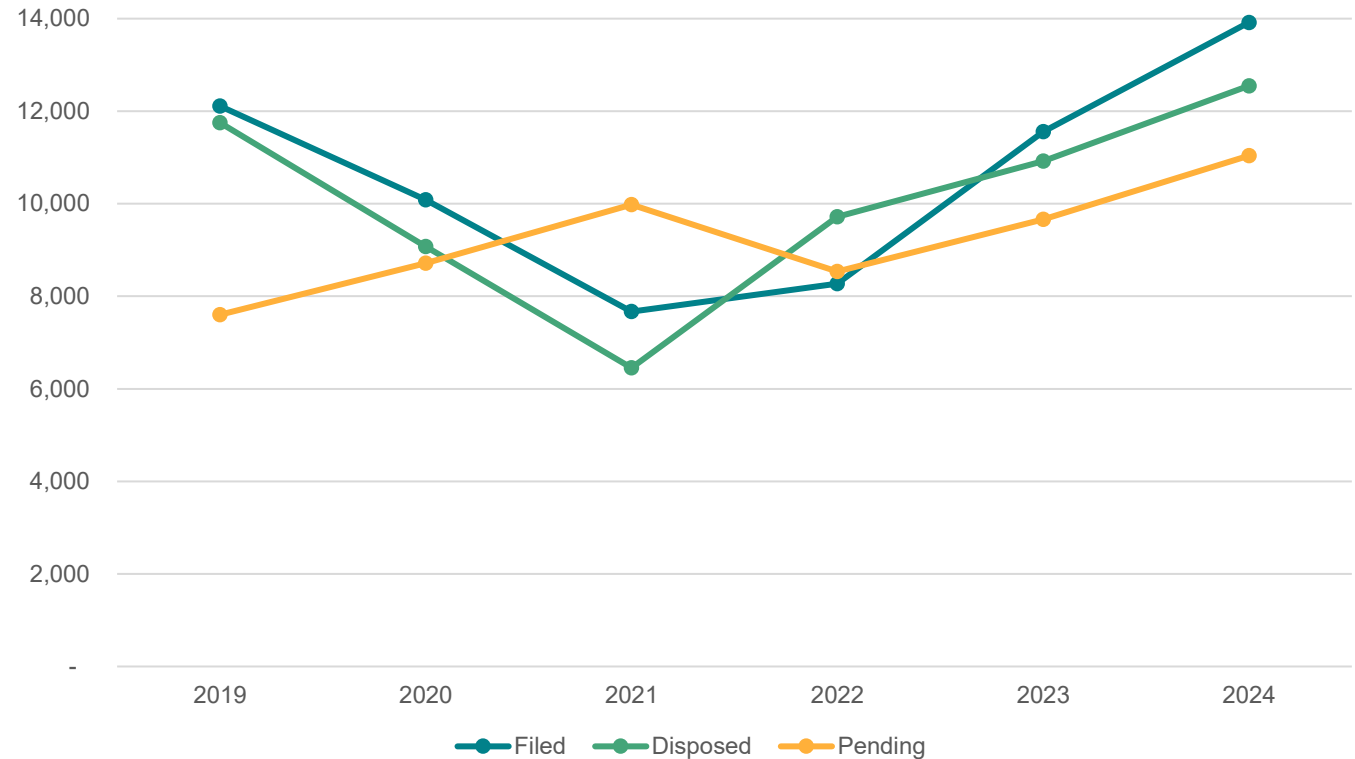
The City maintains flexibility between Senior Court Clerk and Court Clerk FTE count.



Growing workload, slower case processing

Lee's Summit recovered quickly from pandemic backlog, but has since faced growing caseload, turnover, and technology challenges

- All case filings rose by 15%
- Alcohol/Drug Related Traffic filings increased by 101%
- Other Traffic cases comprised 88% of 2024 filings, grew by 22% since 2019
- A typical goal for clearance rate is 100%



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Clearance Rates	97%	90%	84%	118%	95%	90%

Areas of Potential Risk



Two Areas of Potential Risk

- Compliance with Revised Statutes of Missouri, Supreme Court Rule 37, and Circuit Court rules
- Financial Management and Controls



Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA) Court Review: February 2022

- February 28, 2022, Court Review - Observations requiring corrective action
 - › Practices inconsistent with applicable laws



Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA) Court Review: July 2025

- July 25, 2025, Court Review - Observations requiring corrective action
 - › Inaccurate records and case updates in system
 - › Poor management of bonds and checks



Finance Management and Controls

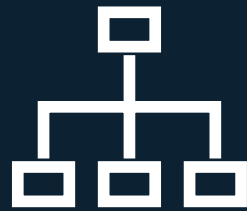
- Both OSCA and Internal City Finance Department audit of Court identified some internal controls weaknesses and concerns
- Raftelis has similar concerns regarding cash handling and internal controls and financial management



Recommendations



Court Supervision and Management



1: Prioritize implementing a formal management system connecting the City's Court Liaison/Assistant City Manager, Judges, and Court Administrator

Formalize City Liaison role to create closer link between City and Court. Hold regular meetings and advocate for Court needs.

2: Engage experienced outside assistance to drive needed changes

City should invest in temporary experienced Missouri Court Administrator as consultant to provide leadership and drive improvements forward

3: Establish an internal policy that any external reviews of the Court be shared with the judges and City Manager, along with an action plan that includes deadlines to correct any deficiencies

Policy should establish that any internal audit or review is shared by all judges and City Manager within two weeks of receipt, accompanied by action plan to address findings

4: Develop a policy manual consistent with Missouri state law, Supreme Court Rule 37, and 16th Circuit Court Rules to guide the work of Court staff

- Develop a policy and procedures manual and train staff so operations are consistent and in compliance
- Policy should include required use of technology as appropriate
- Develop draft policies for review by staff, revision, and then adopt

5: Train Court staff in their specific roles and ensure a backup for each position.

Develop a policy and procedures manual and train staff so operations are consistent and in compliance

- Once staff master their job duties, they should be trained as back-up for at least one other position

6: Provide mandatory supervisory and leadership training for all supervisors

- Provide supervisory training for all supervisors and leaders in the Court to promote self-reflection and mitigate potential claims

7: Ensure all Court employees receive timely annual performance evaluations.

- Best practice to support employees; provides expectations and supports accountability and staff development

8: Close Court on specific days each month to focus on implementation of needed changes and to train staff.

- Some peers close each week for a period of time for internal work; supports the goals to implement recommendations and improvements

9: Develop a prioritized plan to address Court backlogs.

- The Court should develop a plan to address each backlog and phase it over time by priority
- The plan can be used to support requests for resources from the City

Financial Management and Controls



10: Improve financial internal controls and require the Court to comply with City Finance Department procedures for accounting and cash handling.

- Best practice procedures should be used to ensure checks and balances with regard to cash counting and handling
- City Finance can provide guidance to the Court on best practices and support checks and balances

11: Make daily, secured cash deposits to the bank as is best practice, and contract for daily secured courier service if needed.

- Daily cash flow is best practice per GFOA
- The City can contract for a courier service (e.g., Brinks or Loomis) if needed for secure deposit

12: Provide City Finance with access to Court bank accounts

- City should work with OSCA to request additional access to financial accounts

Staffing and Capacity



Court Days in Context

Total court hours per judge difficult to determine for peers given varying arrangements, and several also have Pro Tem judges (+)

Lee's Summit and St. Charles, MO are only cities here with elected judges (*)

	Weekly Court Days				
Judges	5	4	3	2	1
8	Kansas City MO				
5	Wichita				
2	Springfield+ Kansas City KS+ Olathe Overland Park Topeka	Independence		Lee's Summit*	
1	Columbia+ Lawrence		Lenexa Salina Shawnee	O'Fallon+	St. Charles*

Estimating Court Days Needed using Judicial Workload Case Weights

- Recent Missouri assessments by National Center for State Courts (NCSC) defined weighting in minutes for specific case types, to apply to new filings
 - › Traffic / Municipal Ordinance: 4 min.
 - › Misdemeanors / Municipal Cert. / Trial de Novo: 18 min.
- Study estimated 99 minutes or 1.65 hours of non-case activity per day for judges (training, administration, presiding judge duties, etc.)
- 2024 filings would call for 18% more Court Days than 2019, not including non-case time or backlog

Time Needed	Per Week
New Case Filings	3.0 days
Pending Cases	2.4 days
Total	5.4 days

13: Increase judge onsite time by one court day per judge, for a total of four judge office days per week, and supplement with an on-call Pro Tem judge position as needed

- A review of peers shows only O'Fallon and St. Charles have the same or less court days Court volume has grown over time
- Conservative increase to provide additional courtroom and office time while implementing process improvements
- Use of Pro Tem judge can assist in high-volume periods as needed

14: Promote one Probation Compliance Officer to a supervisory position overseeing the Probation program.

- Provides technical supervision for Probation program
- Ensures consistency across Officers
- Can manage contacts with assistive programs and treatment centers

Probation Officer Caseload

Category	Number for One Officer in November 2025
Supervised Cases	200 (63 of which are Domestic Violence cases)
In warrant status not reporting	75
Unsupervised Cases	371
In warrant status (other)	107
TOTAL CASELOAD FOR ONE OFFICER	753

Per American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), Low Risk caseloads have a recommended ratio of 200 cases per officer.

Administrative (minimal risk) caseloads have ratio of 175:1 to 300:1

Specialty cases, such as early Domestic Violence, have ranges of 45:1 to 80:1

15: Add one new Court Clerk position to support the Probation program and reduce Probation Compliance Officer time on data entry and recordkeeping.

- Adds capacity to Officers by removing administrative workload and to Court Clerk staff who already back up Probation

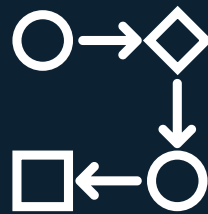
16: Increase Court Clerk capacity by making the current part-time Clerk position full-time to assist with overall Court operations.

- Part-time employee is already trained and knowledgeable about Court operations
- Adds 0.4 FTE Clerk capacity to address workload needs and backlogs
- Approximately 1.0 Clerk time added as result of making PT Clerk FT and moving Probation assistance to new Clerk position

17: Request funding to hire temporary help to clear backlogs and perform special projects as part of the annual budget process.

- Temporary assistance can help address prioritized improvements in the short-term

Process Improvement



18: Re-evaluate docket assignments to better balance workload across the two judges

- With data, Court can work to size dockets appropriately so that cases fit more closely within the allocated timeslot; administrative items can be held to end of the day

19: Implement cut-off times for Court check-in.

- Many peers have a cut-off time for court check-in, often within 15-30 minutes of last docket slot or within 15 minutes of docket start
- Court can also limit cases on each docket and establish fixed walk-in periods

20: Establish policies consistent with the 16th Circuit Court Rules that include deadlines for actions such as case filing and requests for continuances.

- Many peers have deadlines for these items consistent with 16th Circuit Court rules
- Making this change will require outreach to public prior to implementation

21: Review judge standards for assigning cases to probation and the public defender to manage workload and improve consistency.

- Court management should agree upon acceptable standards for referring cases to probation or the public defender; ensure program not overwhelmed by volume and remains effective

22: Provide alternate resources to provide information and assistance on assistive resources and programs to probation and judges.

- Create a central list of assistive program contacts, referrals, and resources for use by Court personnel
- In future, considering adding capacity to manage this resource

23: Consider developing an online request option for payment plans to reduce appearances.

- Reduce court traffic by offering online options for specific offense types
- Offer an online payment plan request; reduces in-person hearings, freeing up court time

Technology





24: Engage an IT professional/OSCA to ensure the Court is maximizing the use of Show Me Courts software.

- An external assessment of IT use in the Court can help increase processing efficiency and chain of control/logins, review system lags, review process workflow, and review report access and use



25: Create a culture of data-driven decision making for the Court and establish performance metrics.

- Court should build capacity to run reports and track metrics and make adjustments based upon performance

Security and Physical Environment






26: Reinstate the use of a courtroom podium/lectern at a reasonable distance from the judge.

- No cost solution to reinstate use of existing podium/lectern; reduces physical risk to judges and staff



27: Provide additional equipment at the check-in counter to allow Clerk staff to perform daily operational work while serving customers at the window.

- Low-cost investment for monitor and scanner can improve staff productivity while at the window



28: Ensure secured office space or lockers are available for the Court Security Officer, contracted officers, and sensitive materials.

- Reduce risk due to unsecured sensitive materials
- Enhance security staff satisfaction by providing a secure storage location

In Conclusion



Staffing Projections are Conservative

- The Court definitely needs additional capacity and we have provided conservative additions to both judge and staff capacity for the short-term
- Data was not available to assess workload and staff capacity in greater detail
- Opportunities for process improvement will increase efficiency and should be implemented prior to determining additional staffing needs



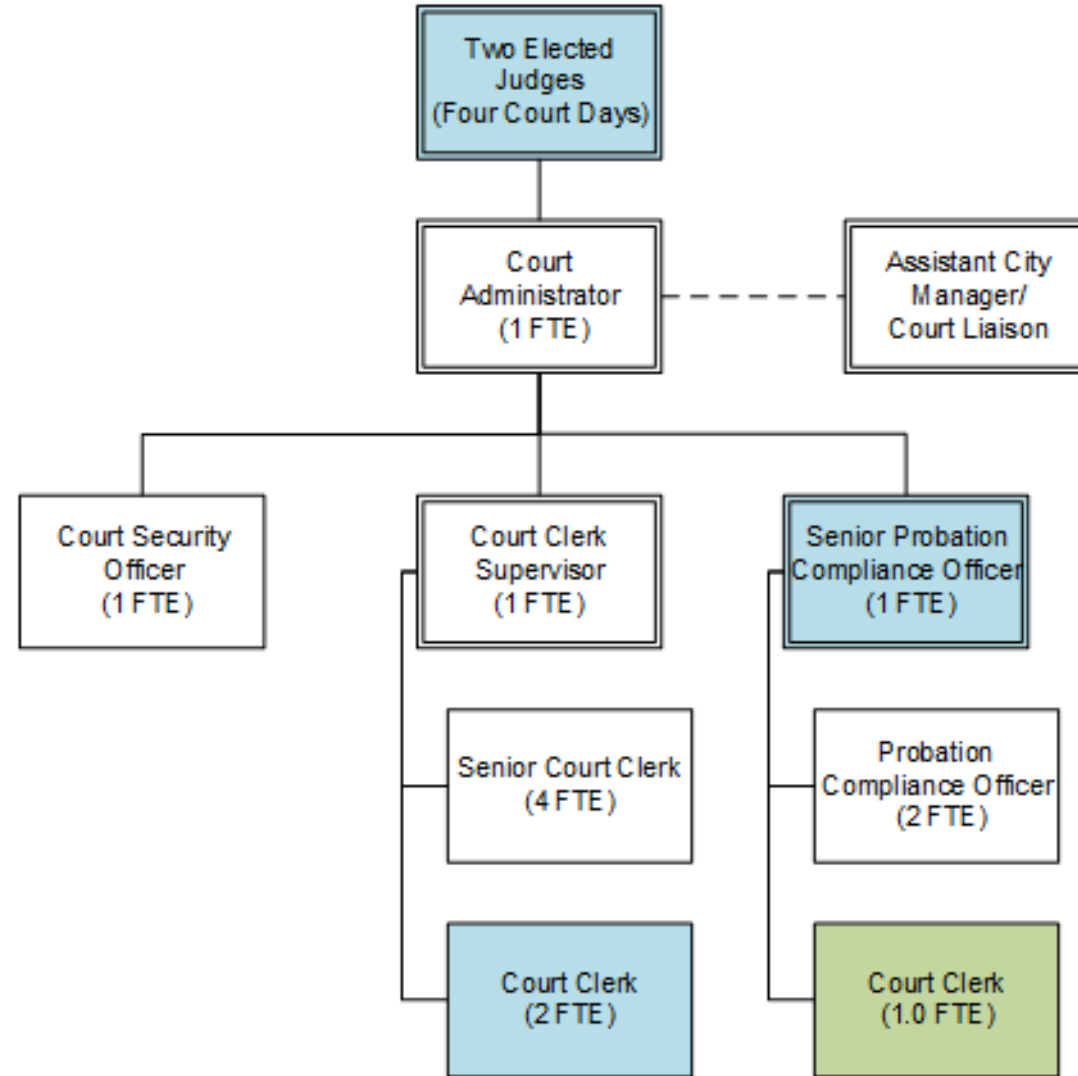
Proposed New Municipal Court Organization Chart

Changes:

- Add two Court Days for Judges, for a total of four per week
- +0.5 Court Clerk (move PT to FT)
- +1.0 Court Clerk to support Probation Officers
- Create Senior Probation Compliance Officer position (promotion)

GREEN = New Position

BLUE = Change to Position(s)



Q + A



Thank you!

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