

Seattle Municipal Court
Community Court Charter

Whereas the Seattle Municipal Court, in partnership with the Seattle City Attorney and Associated Counsel for the Accused, opened a pilot Community Court in March of 2005; and

Whereas the pilot Community Court has offered a promising new way of addressing defendants who commit non-violent, quality of life offenses; and

Whereas the pilot project has been managed through an ad hoc steering committee that has used a community advisory body to draft a sentencing grid and receive community input on community court issues; and

Whereas the City of Seattle has received a United States Department of Justice grant under the *Community-Based Problem Solving Initiatives* grant program which will facilitate a significant expansion of the Community Court; and

Whereas further development of the Community Court would benefit from a formalization of its' management structure and community advisory body; and

Whereas this formalization would position the Community Court to flexibly incorporate best practices emerging from the problem solving courts movement,

NOW, THEREFORE, the undersigned signatories on behalf of their respective organizations agree that this document shall constitute the Charter for the Seattle Municipal Court Community Court.

1. Purpose and Intent of the Charter

The purpose of this charter is to formalize the operations and management structure of the Community Court and its' Community Advisory Board.

Nothing in this charter shall be construed to:

- Interfere with the Seattle Municipal Court's judicial independence; or its' prerogatives and responsibilities to manage the court's business and how cases are calendared; or interfere with judicial obligations under the Washington Code of Judicial Conduct; or
- Interfere with the Seattle City Attorney's prosecutorial prerogatives and responsibilities under the Seattle City Charter or interfere with prosecutorial obligations under the Washington Rules of Professional Conduct; or
- Interfere with Associated Counsel for the Accused's prerogatives to provide indigent defense representation to Municipal Court defendants or otherwise interfere with defense counsel obligations under the Washington Rules of Professional Conduct.

This charter is, however, intended to foster a collaborative partnership that permits criminal cases to be resolved in the Community Court in a manner that ensures due process of law, helps defendants avoid further criminal conduct, holds defendants accountable through community service and close judicial monitoring, and provides restitution to the community. This charter is also intended to position the Community Court to readily adopt best practices that emerge from the problem-solving courts movement.

Given the voluntary nature of this collaborative partnership and the independent authority that each party possesses, Community Court management decision-making is necessarily based on a consensus model. The parties commit to strive towards reaching such a consensus in manner that will not violate any of the parties' values, responsibilities, or obligations.

2. Management and Committee Structure

The following management and committee structure shall exist for the Community Court.

- Community Court Executive Committee

The Community Court Executive Committee shall constitute the principal policy making body for the Community Court. Membership on the Executive Committee shall include the Seattle Municipal Court Judge designated as the primary judge presiding in the Community Court, the Seattle City Attorney, and the Director of Associated Counsel for the Accused, the principal agency providing public defense services in the Community Court. A current list of these parties is attached as Exhibit A of this document and these parties are the signatories below. That exhibit shall be updated as parties change.

The Executive Committee's responsibilities include resolving the principle policy issues and operational problems facing the Community Court, advocating for or providing sufficient budgetary and personnel resources for the court to meet its' mission, and approving day-to-day operations and management recommendations made by the Community Court Steering Committee.

The Executive Committee shall meet on a quarterly basis. The Executive Committee may meet additionally as pressing issues arise.

- Community Court Steering Committee

The Community Court Steering Committee shall constitute the principle operational management group for the Community Court. Membership on the Steering Committee shall include the members of the Executive Committee; the Chief of the Public & Community Safety Division of Seattle City Attorney's Office; the Director of the Seattle Municipal Court's Court Resources Center; the Director of Seattle Municipal Court's Probation Department, the Chief Clerk of Seattle Municipal Court; the Court Monitor for Community Court; and a representative of the Seattle Police Chief.

The current list of these parties is attached as Exhibit B. That exhibit shall be updated as parties change. Other individuals from the signatories' organizations or others may also participate on the Steering Committee from time to time as specific needs arise.

The Steering Committee responsibilities include identifying and making recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding policy questions facing the court, managing the day-to-day operations of the court, implementing Executive Committee decisions; and staffing the Community Advisory Board. This committee shall also be responsible for maintaining a Community Court website describing the purposes, outcomes, and activities of the court; publishing a quarterly community court newsletter for distribution to the Community Advisory Board and the broader public; and assessing and making recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding the budget, personnel, and resources needed to operate the court.

The Steering Committee shall meet regularly on a monthly basis. The committee may meet additionally as pressing issues arise.

- The Community Court Community Advisory Board

The Community Advisory Board is the principle vehicle for community involvement in the Community Court. Membership is designed to involve a broad range of interests within the community including neighborhood and business groups, social service providers, and public agencies at the state, county, and local level. Membership on the board shall include a representative from each police precinct's citizen advisory board; the Seattle Neighborhood Group; the Metropolitan Improvement District; the Downtown Business Association; Street Outreach Services, the United Way of King County, Seattle Mental Health, the Washington Department of Corrections, King County Department of Public Health, the Central Staff of Seattle City Council, the Mayor's Office, the Department of Finance, the Office of Policy and Management, and the Human Services Department.

Additional members of the advisory board may be added as they are identified by the Steering Committee and approved by the Executive Committee. Current membership of the Board is attached as Exhibit C of this document. This exhibit shall be updated as parties are added or change.

This Community Advisory Board's responsibilities include exploring and making recommendations concerning issues and problems facing the Community Court; assisting the Court in obtaining necessary budget and resources to meet its mission; and otherwise representing the community's interests in discussions with the Executive and Steering Committees. The Board's exploration of issues can include but is not limited to what the sentencing grid should be in community court; what performance expectations should exist for community service and social service providers; identifying appropriate community service projects across the city; identifying additional social service providers in the community, and assessing additional services needed in the Community Court.

This committee shall meet on a quarterly basis and shall be staffed by the Steering Committee. This committee will receive a monthly report by regular or electronic mail concerning the activities and outcomes of the community court.

3. Effective Date of Charter; Dissolution and Amendment; Changes in Membership

This charter shall take effect upon the signatures of the undersigned parties and shall remain in effect until such time as one of the signing parties expresses an intention to no longer be bound by the terms of this Charter or changed circumstances necessitates a further refinement of the Charter. Changes in committee membership do not require a new charter and can be accomplished by attaching an updated exhibit reflecting the new parties, initialed by the members of the Executive Committee.

Signed this _____ day of June, 2006.

Hon. Fred Bonner
Presiding Judge,
Seattle Municipal Court

Thomas A. Carr
Seattle City Attorney

David Chapman
Director, Associated Counsel for
the Accused

Exhibit A

The Executive Steering Committee for the Community Court consists of:

Hon. Fred Bonner, Presiding Judge of Seattle Municipal Court
Thomas A. Carr, Seattle City Attorney
David Chapman, Director, Associated Counsel for the Accused

Signed this _____ day of June, 2006.

Executive Committee. Initials

Exhibit B

The Steering Committee for the Community Court consists of:

Hon. Fred Bonner, Presiding Judge of Seattle Municipal Court
Thomas A. Carr, Seattle City Attorney
David Chapman, Director, Associated Counsel for the Accused
Robert W. Hood, Chief, Public & Community Safety Division, Seattle City Attorney's Office
Lori Cox, Director of the Seattle Municipal Court's Court Resources Center
Suzanne White, Director of Seattle Municipal Court's Probation Department
Robert White, Chief Clerk of Seattle Municipal Court
Robert Lee, Community Court Court Monitor
A representative of Seattle Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske

Signed this _____ day of June, 2006.

Executive Committee. Initials

Exhibit C

The Community Advisory Board consists of representatives of:

- ,North Precinct Advisory Board
- ,South Precinct
- ,West Precinct Advisory Council
- ,South Precinct Crime Prevention Coalition
- ,Southwest Precinct Advisory Board
- ,Seattle Neighborhood Group
- ,Metropolitan Improvement District
- ,Seattle Mental Health
- ,Street Outreach Services
- ,Downtown Business Association
- ,King County Public Health
- ,United Way of King County
- ,Central Staff of Seattle City Council
- ,Mayor's Executive Staff
- ,The Department of Finance
- ,The Office of Policy and Management
- ,Washington Department of Corrections
- ,Seattle Police Department

Signed this _____ day of June, 2006.

Executive Committee Initials