

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC**King County State of the Court and Bellevue Community Court Update**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**INFORMATION
ONLY**

This agenda item features a State of the Court presentation from the King County District Court and an update on the new Bellevue Community Court from the City of Bellevue. King County District Court Presiding Judge Robertson will provide key insights into current efforts to enhance equitable access to justice, operations, and priorities. Bellevue staff will present on the launch of the new community court, which aims to reduce recidivism by connecting individuals charged with low-level misdemeanor offenses to resources, services, and support.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The City of Bellevue has an Interlocal Agreement with King County District Court (KCDC) to perform municipal court services. King County District Court Presiding Judge Robertson will provide Council with a State of the Court presentation. Judge Robertson will share an overview of King County's leadership, operations, organization, and services provided; statistics for both Bellevue's and King County's 2024 caseloads; and the upcoming launch of the Bellevue Community Court and Resource Center.

In addition, Bellevue staff will present further details on the expanded partnership with KCDC to launch a community court in Bellevue. King County Library Services (KCLS) are also a critical aspect of this expanded partnership, as the KCLS Bellevue Regional Library is providing the physical space for the weekly community court and resource center.

King County community courts are a collaborative effort between King County District Court, local cities, service providers and other public agencies. In addition to the Bellevue Community Court, there are King County community courts in Auburn, Redmond, and Shoreline/Kenmore.

Community court is an alternative to traditional court for eligible, nonviolent, less serious misdemeanor cases. Community courts work to identify and address the underlying challenges people face that often

contribute to involvement with the criminal justice system. The goal is to increase safety for everyone by holding community court clients accountable, while helping them improve their lives.

Community court increases collaboration between the criminal justice system and other systems, including mental health, substance use disorder, other human services, housing, employment, and education. King County community courts handle selected non-violent misdemeanor cases; the specific misdemeanors heard at each community court vary by city, as agreed upon by the City's Prosecutor. Potentially eligible offenses include trespassing, disorderly conduct, theft, and drug possession. Driving-related cases and domestic violence cases are not eligible. Community court participants must not have any violent felony convictions in the last five years; any pending violent felony charges; or a sex offender history. The Bellevue Police Department will provide security for the court. The Bellevue Probation Division will provide access to court-mandated programming designed to support the goals of community court, including rehabilitative resources aimed at addressing the underlying issues contributing to low-level offenses and promoting long-term community integration.

A community resource center is an integral component of community court. Each community court is made up of two rooms: the court room and an adjacent room, called the "resource center." Both the court room and the resource center rooms operate at the same time, one day per week. The resource center at each community court includes on-site and virtual community partners that provide a wide array of services. By coming together in one place, agencies are better able to collaborate and provide immediate access for court participants. Resource centers are available to all members of the public in addition to the community court participants.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Comprehensive Plan:

HS-15. Improve access to services throughout the community by removing physical and systemic barriers and empowering individuals to overcome other barriers that may exist.

Strategic Target Areas:

Community Safety and Health

All people feel safe, valued and welcome. Bellevue promotes a community where all people can thrive, feel safe and enjoy access to city amenities and services. We are committed to providing a proactive range of prevention, intervention, enforcement and support activities to protect life, property and the environment. The city offers high quality services across the justice system, from prosecution of misdemeanors and traffic infractions to equitable access to public defense to probation services focused on support and accountability.

High Performance Government

We value strong regional partnerships, advance common goals and advocate for Bellevue's interests on issues including infrastructure, public services, growth, and finance.

1.4 Advocate for the City's interests and foster supportive partnerships and dynamic leadership at the federal, state and regional levels.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact related to this information-only presentation.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A