



STATE OF THE COURT ADDRESS
SEATAC MUNICIPAL COURT
2012

Good evening Mayor, Council Members, city staff, and citizens. I am honored to be here. My name is Elizabeth Bejarano, and I am currently serving as the Judge for SeaTac's Municipal Court.

We have begun our focus this year on improving access to justice. Collectively, Washington courts process more than two million case filings every year (that is more than one filing for every three citizens of our state). More than one and a half million of those cases are handled at the district and municipal courts, otherwise known as "The People's Courts". By conducting outreach, providing more information to the public, increasing the level of customer service and working more efficiently, we are improving access to justice, and truly making SeaTac Municipal Court a "People's Court". One huge leap we made towards those goals was to acquire the finest Court Administrator. Paulette Revoir, as you know served more than 20 years for Snohomish County District Court, and she brought with her an unbelievable wealth of experience, commitment and work ethic. She is a fantastic leader who has taught the clerks ways to increase efficiencies and to be more productive, using the tools we already have at our disposal.

We now have a clerk stationed at the counter with a computer, using their time and energy more efficiently, allowing them to be more responsive to the public. I have to thank Pat Patterson, James King and Bart Perman for their assistance in accomplishing the work needed to be able to have a clerk at the counter.

We continue to improve our web page for greater accessibility, increasing the information available and accessible through our web page. We now have the ability to allow people to pay their fines and costs on-line. People also have a 1-800 number that is available for making payments over the phone during the week and on weekends. These services do not cost the City any money to operate as they are fully offender funded. It not only makes payment to the court more convenient for people, but it also saves clerk's time spent processing payments.

We are exploring the possibility of providing information on court hearings through the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook. We have had many folks come in to observe court, some of whom have decreased mobility, so we are also exploring the possibility of televised court hearings on a regularly scheduled basis.

We have been working to reduce costs by re-arranging our interpreter calendars and warrant recall calendars. Last year, I began addressing arrest warrants on a daily basis, to decrease jail costs for people who appear after a warrant has been issued. Through this effort alone we saved nearly \$13,000 in jail costs between September and December of last year. When you multiply that savings over the span of the year, the reduction in costs to the City becomes significant.

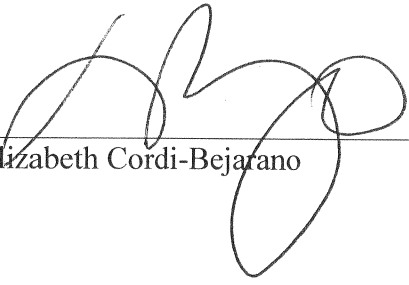
I have been allowing appropriate defendants to complete community service by assisting the Highline Botanical Garden so that the city receives a benefit from people who cannot afford to pay their fine to the court.

I have worked with teachers at Tyee the past two years, and I have gone to speak with the students at Tyee in their classrooms. I had the students visit the court, conduct mock trials, and tour the police and court facilities.

This year, we are formally celebrating Law Week during the first week of June. The theme for this year's events is, "No Courts, No Justice, No Freedom." We are working with local students to come before Council with a Proclamation request. We are going to have classes from local schools come in and observe court and conduct mock trials. Some of SeaTac's finest Officers will be conducting interactive presentations on DUI and Police K-9 investigations. We are also hoping to have a presentation at the Senior Center, as well as an interactive presentation with the Somali community. We are planning these events with the cooperation of the police department, the prosecutor, council members and the schools to coordinate events, trials and visits. We will keep you updated on our scheduled events.

We will continue to expand the "Access to Justice" program to address greater accessibility for those whom English is a second language, to increase accessibility at the court facilities for those with disabilities, and to provide more information to the public through the use of the web page, a quarterly newsletter, social media outlets and televised hearings. I look forward to continuing the progress begun and working to serve the needs of the community in the years to come.

Finally, you may have received the Court's new quarterly newsletter. I thought that it would be a nice tool to educate folks about what is going on at the court, the services we offer, and little bits of court and constitutional trivia. It will be published on a quarterly basis via the web. If you haven't seen the newsletter, we have it published on our webpage, and you can sign up to receive it automatically. Thank you again for allowing me to serve as your judge!



Judge Elizabeth Cordi-Bejarano