

**MOVING TOWARD EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC
MANAGEMENT IN THE MARICOPA COUNTY
JUSTICE COURTS**



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Abstract

As societal demands place more responsibility on courts to be proactive rather than reactive, the Maricopa County Justice Courts struggle tremendously with this concept of external expectations of being ahead of internal court-focused objectives. Customer service is becoming a priority among all the other things courts are responsible for each day. Would it not be helpful if courts at least knew the direction in which they were headed in the future? How do we change the court culture of separate, individual, exclusive courts, to that of a collaborative, decision-making, customer-centric court? It is becoming increasingly difficult to prioritize what is important and what should be the mission, vision, and goals of the Justice Courts. Is the court's priority how it accomplishes its work or centered more on the impact its work has on those who use the services? The point of this research paper is to begin the discussion of a new strategic plan in the Maricopa County Justice Courts and is aimed at answering these questions.

Not since 2010 has the Justice Courts developed its strategic plan. It is uncertain whether that plan still drives the decision making process among the courts, or if it ever did. The time has come to have this conversation and for the courts to begin to take ownership of its future. Perception of courts is dwindling and there is a growing sentiment from the public for government to be more accountable and transparent. How do courts accomplish accountability and transparency when they do not publish a relevant strategic plan? How is it measured and how is it clearly evident to

others when it is not evident to the primary stakeholder, the Justice Courts themselves? Many courts are being asked to incorporate evidence based practices along with striving to achieve a higher level of effectiveness and efficiency. These are great aspirations, but what do they truly mean for the Justice Courts?

How are the Justice Courts doing in keeping up with these changes and maintaining public trust and confidence? In order to answer that question, the Justice Courts have to measure their performance and have a vested interest in advancing courts as an aligned organization in the future. The courts should have a meaningful strategic agenda that allows management to set priorities, focus on issues, and make strategic decisions using sound management tools and principles to elevate the organization. The general research methodology and design employed in this project was a direct sampling strategy that was applied to the judges and the rest of the staff to gauge the readiness for change to the court culture by developing a new strategic plan. Court users were also surveyed to determine their perceptions of access to justice and the fairness of court procedures.

The findings of this project illuminate the fact that while the public generally rates the courts in the eighty-fifth percentile, there still remain fifteen percent of the public who are not satisfied with the services of the Justice Courts. That equates to approximately 900 individuals each month who are dissatisfied after their experience in the Justice Courts. Based on the conclusions and recommendations derived from the research, there is work to be done in the Maricopa County Justice Courts. The public desires more technology from the courts to improve their experience. Through an abbreviated version of the High Performing Court Framework (HPCF), the court staff sees a need to improve in the areas of organization, human, information, and technology capital.

This research project begins a larger conversation in areas that should be used to galvanize the court in developing a new and relevant strategic plan that produces long lasting systemic management changes to the Justice Courts. A new management plan and a new mindset might even produce a new court culture for the future while increasing the public's access to justice. Transparency and accountability are expected and since no court is self-funded for its entire operation, financial accountability must be part of the conversation. Courts are not excluded from budget conversations regarding adequate funding and fiscal accountability required for good government. The notion of a coordinated set of courts, created by effective strategic planning and management, makes this research project important, relevant, and purposeful for the Maricopa County Justice Courts.

Introduction

Joe Patron was summoned to appear in court on a garnishment case. He arrived in downtown Phoenix at 7:30 am and struggles to find parking. After paying ten dollars to park his car, he follows the lifeless crowd in front of him to what appears to be a courthouse. After waiting fifteen minutes to get through court security screening to enter the building, Mr. Patron approaches the information desk to find out where his case will be heard. After spending five minutes with court personnel, they determined that his case was not being heard at the central court building in the Maricopa County Superior Court, it was to be heard in the Maricopa County Encanto Justice Court a quarter of a mile away. He follows the directions given to him by the Superior Court staff and upon approaching the Downtown Justice Center located at 620 West Jackson Street; he quickly realizes there is a line out the door. As he stands in line to enter the court building, another court customer says, "it moves pretty quickly" which settles Mr. Patron's anxiety since it is now 8:15 am and his summons says to appear in court at 8:30 am.

Finally he makes it through security and asks the security guard where he is to go next, the security guard replies, "stand in line where all of the people are standing and someone at one of the ten windows will help you soon." He stands in one of two lines that have approximately twenty people in each of them. Mr. Patron quickly notices that it is now 9:00 am. There are eight other windows open, two of which have a court customer service representative standing behind the glass, and six windows that are unstaffed and empty. He begins to move over to ask a question of one of the staff but then is discouraged by a court customer who says he will lose his place in line. Since

there are now only five people in front of him, he quickly gets back into line. Looking behind him, he sees that the line has grown even longer.

Mr. Patron finally reaches the front counter at 9:15 am. He is informed by the person at the window that he was due to report to courtroom 105 at 8:30 that morning and Mr. Patron replies, "that's what I have been trying to do for the last hour and a half". Frustrated, he proceeds down the hallway to courtroom 105. As he enters the courtroom the judge is hearing a case so he takes a seat in the back of courtroom. After the judge finishes the case, the clerk says, "all rise", and the judge leaves the courtroom. People leave the courtroom and as the clerk is gathering her belongings, Mr. Patron walks to the front and asks the clerk, "When does the judge return?" The clerk tells Mr. Patron that he will be back after lunch. Mr. Patron states, "I am here on a garnishment case; so when will that happen?" The clerk asks for his name as he hands the clerk his court summons. She tells Mr. Patron that a judgment was entered and he will need to go to the front counter to discuss what happened in his absence and receive a copy of the order of judgment. Since Mr. Patron did not appear, he was found responsible and a judgment for the plaintiff was entered. The judge also granted the plaintiff's motion to start the garnishment process. Mr. Patron is visibly distraught and bewildered. His company just reduced his hours at work, there is a child on the way, and he took an unpaid, half day off work to come to court.

He returns to the front counter, waiting another twenty minutes just to be told that a copy of the judgment order will not be ready until tomorrow. This is because it has not been entered into the system as the clerk that was in the courtroom has left for the day and no one can touch her paperwork. The staff member did tell him he will receive a

notice in the mail in seven to ten business days from the of the judge's ruling and at that time he can request a hearing to have the court reconsider the decision in his case. The staff member also stated that most people do not win these cases because if they owe money, the judge always rules in favor of the plaintiff.

Mr. Patron becomes outraged, very loud, and shouts obscenities at the front counter staff. The staff being unable to calm down the escalating Mr. Patron grows concerned for their safety so they push the panic button located below the counter. This panic button summons three armed sheriff's officers to the scene who confronts Mr. Patron regarding his behavior. After a brief discussion with the officers, Mr. Patron is then escorted out of the building and instructed not to return to the court again that day. One of the officers tells Mr. Patron that next time he needs to control himself or he will be arrested for disorderly conduct and making threats. Overheard by a bystander, the last words spoken to Mr. Patron by one officer are, "Be thankful we did not arrest you. Have a good day."

While this is not a typical day for a person making contact with the Justice Courts; but if this happens in the courts every week or every month, how many times is acceptable? Could technology have aided in avoiding some of the pitfalls Mr Patron experienced in the Justice Courts? How does the court improve upon such situations like that of Mr. Patron's experience; by reinventing themselves, focusing more on the customer experience, and less on the courts internal operations? Can courts make the change that allows them to focus their attention away from itself and more on the individuals standing outside the customer service window, on the phone, in the lobby, or appearing in a courtroom? A new strategic and management plan can improve the

negative experiences such as Mr. Patron's and improve public perceptions of the courts.

Background

The Maricopa County Justice Court system is the largest limited jurisdiction court in the state with twenty-six Justices of the Peace, and over 300 full time employees, in the fourth or fifth (depending on the source), largest county in the United States. The Justice Courts are facing some uncertain times as a judicial branch. They have experienced a greater than thirty percent turnover in justices of the peace due to elections over the last four years. With greater scrutiny from the public, the demand for easier access to case information and increased usage of technology to conduct court business forces the court to do and be better. The general public expects courts to have the technology of many modern organizations such as online payments, web based browsers, applications (apps), and access to court records, as though they are using a search engine such as Google from their cell phone or tablet.

The Justice Courts have not taken a comprehensive review or had a conversation about their strategic plan in the last eight years. On the day Mr. Patron came to the court the Justice Courts did not carry out the mission in their current strategic plan which is to "provide professional judicial services to court users so they can obtain timely and economical justice within their community". More than 6,000 people walk through the Justice Court doors each week and if ten percent are dissatisfied, that means six hundred people each week are not happy with the service they receive from the Justice Courts. Is this an acceptable number? Does it make the statement that a shift is needed towards a strategic plan that moves the Justice Courts

towards managing the issues such as those experienced by Mr. Patron? Difficulty in finding court buildings, long lines, excessive wait times, cumbersome phone trees, and the lack of electronic access to court documents are what the citizens can expect from the Justice Courts, then why should the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors (BOS) allocate annual taxpayer dollars to fund the Justice Courts outdated strategic plan?

Justice Courts are created by the BOS in Maricopa County and is based on geographical boundaries known as precincts. Within the county, each precinct typically defines a community and has an elected Justice of the Peace to adjudicate and resolve disputes.

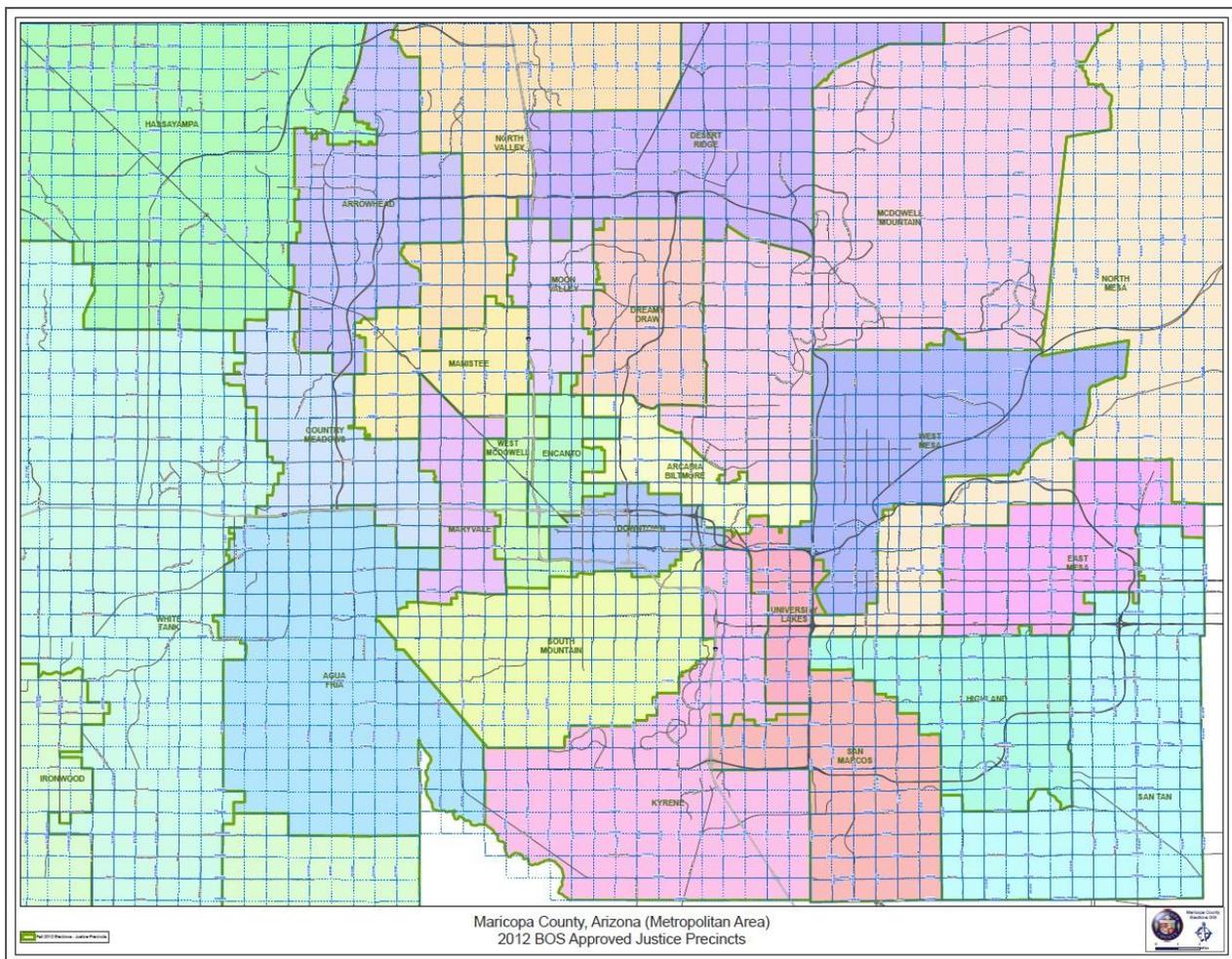


Figure 1 – MCJC Precinct Boundaries

The Justices of the Peace rule on cases such as disputes in civil and criminal traffic, criminal misdemeanors, civil and small claims, eviction actions, orders of protection, and injunctions against harassment. These cases rarely involve jail time for a finding of responsibility. The Justice Courts are often times referred to as the “people's court” since the types of cases heard by the justice courts are synonymous with cases heard on television shows such as the *People's Court* with Judge Judy.

In discussing judicial officers many have stated that it is similar to herding lions because it is near impossible to get the judges on the same page and to step in unison. This sentiment certainly describes the twenty-six, independently elected Justices of the Peace in Maricopa County. Instead of judges having a stake in the decisions of the bench, the judges in the Maricopa County Justice Courts have an attendance policy. This policy forces the judges to attend bench meetings if they are to have voting rights on bench decisions. Historically these decisions do not actually standardize operations for the courts they are merely a written directive. A judge does not have to follow this directive in their court; it is merely a suggested standard.

In the course of a single visit, Mr. Patron interacted with employees of more than five independent justice systems, partners, or court-related organizations, each of whom was doing their job as best they knew how. The sum total was an outcome that nobody would have wanted, not the courts and certainly not Mr. Patron. The purpose of this project is to begin the discussion on how the Justice Courts can coordinate their independent activities for better service to court users by creating a new strategic plan. The current Justice Court strategic plan from 2010 includes promises in its mission,

vision, and goals such as:

- Timely and economical justice within their community
- Community-based, user-friendly, efficient, and professional justice
- Timely, fair, and impartial justice in case processing by resolving 98% of all court cases in compliance with established court standards
- Expand public access to the court system by electronic filing and other case processing improvements, which will be 100% available in all 26 Justice Courts

The annual budget process brings several departments, including the Justice Courts, who simply change the dates of their strategic plan to coincide with future years to give the appearance that the goals are still relevant to the organization. Are these plans truly meaningful to anyone other than the budget office? While this project does not answer that question for everyone, it does examine how the strategic plan is utilized or rather, ignored by the Maricopa County Justice Courts.

How should this plan have changed the experience for Mr. Patron? Theoretically, there is nothing in the plan that would need to change in order to identify and or address Mr Patron's experience and the need to enhance and improve the public's access to justice. The Justice Courts do not always 'walk the talk' based on the promises made in the goals they set.

The Problem

The strategic plan has no acquiesce from top to bottom among the twenty-six courts. In "Ten Reasons Why Strategic Plans Fail" it was noted that, "Developing a strategic plan takes discipline, foresight, and a lot of honesty. Regardless how well you

prepare, you're bound to encounter challenges along the way." (Forbes, 2011) Avoiding certain traps can increase the value and acceptance of an organization's strategic plan. The Forbes list makes a useful template to apply the current Maricopa Justice Court experience and ensure a more effective strategic planning future.

1. Having a plan simply for plans sake:

The current plan was developed simply because "everyone is doing it". Maricopa County stresses strategic planning among all units of government. There is a requirement that each unit contribute objectives to the countywide strategic plan. The Justice Courts produced one in 2010 and have changed nothing more than the dates to match the fiscal year for the past several years.

2. Not understanding the environment or focusing on results:

Although the 'County Managing for Results' program requires all government entities to create measurable goals, the Justice Courts do not routinely focus on these results. Nor are these results discussed routinely or considered meaningful to the judicial bench and court management as an organization.

3. Partial commitment:

The existing plan was developed by a few members of the administrative staff and is not used as a tool for managing the courts. The judges have never committed to the current plan, thus eliminating a need to discuss the plan.

4. Not having the right people involved:

The judicial bench was not involved in the development of the current strategic plan. It is primarily the invention a past court administrator and blessed by the presiding judge.

5. Writing the plan and putting it on the shelf:

As noted, the plan has not been given a thorough overall since its inception in 2010.

6. Unwillingness or inability to change:

Individual courts continue to do their own thing and operate as autonomous entities or twenty-six separate courts,

7. Having the wrong people in leadership positions:

This is not necessarily the case here; however, the strategic plan is not used as a performance tool in its management plan.

8. Ignoring marketplace reality, facts, and assumptions:

Mr. Patron is not accounted for in the strategic plan. The current plan does not consider or rectify the failures that occurred in the case of Mr. Patron.

9. No accountability or follow through:

The strategic plan is not used as a performance management tool by any of the courts.

10. Unrealistic goals or lack of focus and resources:

There is currently no connection between the plan and resource allocation. Courts are allocated staff based on workload; performance is not a factor.

This project provides a guide as to how the twenty-six courts, behaving as a

single organization, can effectively manage court issues and plan for the courts future. The ideal scenario would improve customer service, give more attention to public access, and spend less time internally focused on the court as an institution. Leadership needs to insure that the Mr Patron's of the court system rarely if not ever, happen in the Justice Courts. The courts must begin to explore ways to measure, meet, and magnify the expectations of the public's ability to resolve their disputes in the Justice Courts. Having a new strategic plan will give the entire organization a clear view of the issues in the courts as well as the steps necessary to improve in areas that will enhance the future of the courts and its management.

The management of the strategic plan involves delivering on the mission, vision, and its goals of the Justice Courts and will become a living document that guides the court's role and responsibilities. By managing, communicating, and evolving into a new strategic plan, Justice Courts effectively become accountable and transparent to the citizens it is designated to serve. This would effectively open the court doors to the stakeholders such as the BOS who are the courts main funding authority, to insure the Justice Courts are fulfilling their constitutional responsibilities set forth in state statute. The Justice Courts along with the BOS have a responsibility to analyze, measure, and report outcomes, which foster public trust and confidence in the legal system such as the Justice Courts. When funded adequately, the Justice Courts are strengthened and may be recognized as a credible organization in their constitutional role to resolve disputes for the citizens of Maricopa County.

Organizations that launch strategic planning before they are ready are less likely to complete the process or to implement their plan due to not considering leadership

commitment or expected outcomes for the planning along with other avenues to achieve those outcomes. This situation is not only frustrating to staff and customers, but it can also be extremely costly. Forbes' "Five Steps to a Strategic Plan" (Forbes 2011) outlines the following steps:

1. Determine where you are
2. Identify what's important
3. Define what you must achieve
4. Determine who is accountable
5. Review, Review, Review

Though Mr. Patron's experience was extreme, this does not represent a significant number of court users; despite the fact that fifteen to twenty percent of court users believe courts need to improve. To prevent other court customers from having the same experience in the Justice Courts as Mr. Patron, this research paper addresses following questions:

1. What strategic priorities can be derived from the satisfaction survey that will drive systemic changes in the Justice Courts through a new strategic plan?
2. How can the judges become more committed and play a vital role in developing a new strategic plan and the management thereof?
3. How does the current court ideology and culture about itself vary from the results of the High Performing Court Assessment survey?
4. How do the results from the High Performing Court Framework validate the need to make changes versus how well courts believe they are

performing?

5. What are the commonalities in the information generated from the High Performing Court Framework Assessment that may be considered 'low hanging fruit' which the Justice Courts could prioritize?

This court project is designed to serve as a useful guide to substantiate Justice Court's future strategic plan that will corroborate future funding requests. This will focus on access and fairness for the public, changing court cultures, and utilizing performance measurements. This all plays an important role in seeking funding to produce the deliverables within the plan. The Justice Court's ability to resolve disputes for the citizens of Maricopa County in an effective, efficient, and timely manner is then achievable and gives credibility to the organization as a whole with realistic goals to strive towards and attain.

The research results will be used to help educate the bench and court administration on areas of concern that need to be addressed systemically throughout the organization while not singling out any particular court. In addition, adequate funding of the court is vital to achieving and sustaining the six essential elements for a high performance court framework which is the gold standard for courts across America. The courts must begin to forge ahead to open the gateway to be a better and more flexible court system in the future. This notion will transcend the Justice Courts as the model for limited jurisdiction courts across the country. It will eliminate the current pattern of making mistakes repeatedly throughout the organization, never having learned lessons, and making teaching moments from these mistakes. Teaching moments and sharing of experiences good and bad, will make the courts as an

organization more fluid, proactive, and less reactive in approaching issues that plague the court as a whole. This will enhance and improve the court experience for public and court users by putting the courts on the path of their true mission of “providing professional judicial services to court users so they can obtain timely and economical justice within their community”.

Literature Review

This court project intends to demonstrate the importance of strategic planning for courts. While developing a strategic plan is essential, it is more important to manage that plan to ensure its success. Courts historically have said that it is hard to measure justice and questions the legitimacy of placing a price tag on justice. Another school of thought suggests the strategic planning is not a court necessity as courts are mandated to perform statutory functions and are typically limited in their scope of work. However, the new CORE developed by the National Association of Court Management (NACM) includes “Strategic” planning as one of the guiding principles.

Known as the third branch of government, the courts mandated functions derived from the United States Constitution that created the courts, this is the key to all courts existence. If the Constitution established the judicial branch and its functions and duties written into law, then in theory, the founding fathers have already prescribed all court strategic plans.

In today’s society, more is being requested from courts in the way of accountability and transparency from the other two branches of government, the executive and legislative branches. When asked if the courts should be supported by the government, the public rates funding the courts as one of the lowest priorities. In order to change this public opinion, courts must make themselves more relevant to the conversation. What better way to do that then to provide a road map for others in the form of a strategic plan as to where courts are headed in the future. A good place to start this discussion of relevance for the Maricopa County Justice Courts is by

developing and managing a new strategic plan.

What is the issue?

The purpose of this project is to provide a guide as to how courts as an organization can effectively manage their strategic plan. One must first understand the court organization, governance, and culture which shapes its current structure. The management of the strategic plan involves delivering on the mission, vision, and goals of the court and is heavily dependent upon leadership. Ultimately, court leadership is responsible for managing the strategic plan and steering the ship to insure that plan becomes a living document, not just a something that ends up being a book on a shelf. More importantly, they are responsible for allowing others to see the importance of a strategic plan by providing focus. If the concerned parties, including the courts funding authority, do not have a clear focus, the courts agenda is meaningless making the strategic plan irrelevant. The strategic plan provides a road map in telling the story of how the court is doing and where the court is going in the future. We are in the midst of competition with other criminal justice partners and other governmental agencies for a piece of the ever-shrinking pot of county funds therefore, it is essential that we clarify our plan so that it is easy to understand. By managing, communicating, and evolving the strategic plan, the Justice Courts effectively become accountable by creating transparency for all interested parties.

This literature review examines five areas of court performance management: Governance, Court Culture, Access, and Fairness in the High Performing Court Framework and Strategic Management. This will paint a picture of what has been done, what the problems are, what is the current diagnosis, and how research encompassed

by this project will add value to what has already been discussed. The new brick in the wall of knowledge is that all prior research points to trial and state courts with little attention given to limited jurisdiction courts. Little or no attention has been given to how the concepts and principles of strategic planning, budgeting, and funding impact the administration, operations, and administrative functions in resolving cases for limited jurisdiction courts, similar to that of Maricopa County Justice Courts.

Governance

Courts need governance to develop policy and set priorities. This governance can define and improve development for courts. The Justice Courts governance provides each court control over the individual court and their staff. There is no stake in conformity, as the judges have no interest in telling other judges what is best for their court. The current governance is very self-fulfilling and does not create a balance between personal opinion and the administration of justice. It is understandable why such a high price is placed on judicial autonomy knowing the history of their road to independence. In the early 2000's, consolidation was the way courts were being operated and the Maricopa County Superior Court absorbed the Justice Courts. This experiment is one that proved to be detrimental to Justice Courts as cases were delayed and the courts became a place of bureaucratic inefficiency. So much that court administration as a centralized unit was devoid of power to make decisions on behalf of the Justice Courts organization. In 2008, the Justice Court's were offered the opportunity of autonomy; they embraced the offer of newfound freedom because as a bench, they heavily favored governance as judicial independence. Essentially the new governance granted each judge all authority, leaving court administration as a lame

duck with little to no management authority in the loose-jointed Justice Court organization. This autonomy, while it strengthens the judge's position as an independent elected official, raises questions as to the importance and value given to the management and administration of justice. The future of the courts is uncertain and is based on a sense of a mutually agreed upon relationship between the judges and the court administrator. Regardless of who is at the helm, the public and the court stakeholders expect transparency and accountability from the Justice Courts.

Mary Campbell McQueen, the President of the National Center for State Courts stated that "court leaders should consider what is called a loosely coupled organization model for governing courts and look to the processes and mechanisms that the leaders of those organizations use to achieve effective governance" (McQueen, pg.1). McQueen describes a scenario similar to what the Justice Courts are experiencing, "loosely coupled organizations have tensions between institutional commitment and individual independence", despite a dependence on external funding sources. (McQueen, pg.1) McQueen describes the current state of courts in terms of a loosely coupled organization having five characteristics:

- Federated governance structure
- Accountability versus autonomy
- Unpredictable connections
- Complex and knowledge extensive decision-making
- Competing demands of integration and specialization

While the Justice Courts may demonstrate all five characteristics somewhere in the twenty-six courts, the theme that ties them together is the notion of respect and

trust. The level of trust is a vital characteristic that holds or chokes the notion of “loosely coupled” organizations. One of the key components to an effective ‘loosely coupled’ organization is the legitimacy of the organization through a model of shared trust and respect between the bench and court administrator. Without shared trust and respect, it is highly improbable that the organization is operating in an effective and efficient manner. There is no agreement as to where the middle ground is and no trust that either party has not crossed the lines of independence and autonomy. Due to this, there is no clear path or focus for either the judicial bench or administration for the future or the best approach on getting there. This makes the development and management of a strategic plan seemingly pointless or impossible.

Court Culture

Justice Courts operate from a position of power which has not always been the case. From 2005 to 2008 court consolidation and movements throughout many courts caused the Justice Courts of Maricopa County to be controlled by the Maricopa County Superior Court. When the Justice Courts were given back administrative control, the established governing body locked down the notion of centralized power and moved the court towards positional power, stripping court administration of any decision making power and/or equal partnership in the administration of justice. Each judge carries the title of elected Justice of the Peace; in essence, they are their own court administrator. Judges handle many issues themselves that usually a court administrator would address in other court systems. The positional power granted to each judge in many cases has extended to their Clerk Supervisors (Market Range Title), otherwise referred to as the Court Manager. This design further exasperates and creates disconnect

between court administration and the judicial bench on countless issues in the Justice Courts.

“In our country judicial independence means not just freedom from control by other branches, but freedom from control of other judges” (Provine, 1990). In these few words, Doris Marie Provine captures the challenges facing any effort at court governance. Accepting the above as a truth, how are decisions made on behalf of independent actors who see themselves as autonomous adjudicators and as part of a system? Stated another way, how do you balance self-interest with institutional interests while attempting to respect both?

It is critical to understand the cultural challenges of effective governance if improved models are to advance. Rather than their future colleagues placing judges on the bench governors, legislators, or the electorate contribute to the sense of independence at the onset of a judicial career. Consequently, the mandate that judges place do not derive from the judicial institution, they result in a decreased sense of organizational identity for many new judges. This sense of independence poses a significant obstacle to creating a system identity and in turn commitment to the decisions of a governing authority. Appreciating, understanding, and working with this self-interest orientation will be critical to any form of court governance. Soliciting input and allowing an opportunity to be heard along with providing a forum for debate will explain why an issue is important and how a decision was made. This ensures effective lines of communication that are important in any organization. The culture of courts makes such activities imperative.

Any organization such as the courts operate the way they do because the people

within that organization want it that way, or they are complacent in accepting the operational structure. (Ostrom and Hanson, 2010) “The inherent conflict between managers and professionals results basically from a clash of cultures: the organizational culture, which captures the commitment of managers, and the professional culture, which socializes professionals”. (Raelin, pg. 1) Professional court administration, whether in the form of court administrators, chief judges, or judicial councils, must operate in a world of concrete goals, more formal authority, and task interdependence if the needs of the organization are to be met. Due to judges being called upon to take on administrative roles, the culture of a judge being equal and a presiding judge being only a first among equals frequently results in a lack of appreciation for the qualities needed in a leader. This can result in the practice of choosing administrative leaders based on seniority rather than administrative competence or selecting judges who are least likely to challenge individual judicial autonomy. The desire for a personal legacy can result in a personal agenda at the expense of organizational needs.

The culture of courts also directly affects non-judicial, professional administrators who are responsible for ensuring effective and efficient court operations however, in most instances they lack the authority of chief operating officer positions found in other government or business environments. Court executives, presiding judges, state court administrators, and chief justices ideally function as a management team. The extent to which this ideal relationship exists can vary greatly. Something as simple as whether a court executive has a seat at the table during bench meetings or whether they are relegated to the back row speaks volumes about the role of the executive in the operation of the court and the existence of a true management team. As identified by

Raelin the following are eleven principles steer the court culture in the right direction:

1. A well-defined governance structure for policy decision-making and administration for the entire court system
2. Meaningful input from all court levels into the decision-making process
3. Selection of judicial leadership based on competency not seniority or rotation
4. Commitment to transparency and accountability
5. A focus on policy level issues, delegation with clarity to administrative staff, and a commitment to evaluation
6. Open communication on decisions and how they are reached
7. Clear, well-understood, and well-respected roles and responsibilities among the presiding judge, and court administrator
8. A system that speaks with a single voice
9. Authority to allocate resources and spend appropriated funds independent of the legislative and executive branches
10. Positive institutional relationships that foster trust among other branches and constituencies
11. The judicial branch should govern and administer operations that are core to the process of adjudication

Access and Fairness

Through their autonomy, Judges have given little attention to access and fairness in the courts. While the strength of the individual spawns creativity and individualism, it is in the strength of the collective that will move the courts in a direction that results in

public trust and confidence. The introduction of evidence-based concepts and principles for a highly effective and functional organization that utilizes performance data will minimize access barriers. The court has attempted collecting and analyzing data either through faulty methodology, delivery system, or interpretation of the information. The specific question of access and fairness has been answered yet totally lost in translation. The court's inability to provide clarity to this picture may contribute to the court's unwillingness to adopt a process that has been repeated hundreds of times.

High Performing Court Framework

The High Performance Court Framework (Ostrom and Hanson, 2010) clarifies what court leaders and managers can do to produce a high quality administration of justice. It consists of six key elements:

1. Administrative Principles define high performance. They indicate the kind of administrative processes judges and managers consider important and care about.
2. Managerial Culture is the way judges and managers believe work gets done. Building a supportive culture is critical to achieving high performance.
3. Perspectives of a high performing court include: (a) Customer, (b) Internal Operating, (c) Innovation, and (d) Social Value.
4. Performance Measurement builds on Court Tools to provide a balanced assessment in areas covered by the Customer and Internal Operating Perspectives.
5. Performance Management concerns the Innovation Perspective and uses

performance results to refine court practices on the basis of evidence-based innovations. It also fulfills the Social Value Perspective by communicating job performance to the public and policy makers.

The Quality Cycle is a dynamic, iterative process that links the five preceding concepts to a chain of action supporting ever-improving performance. The principles of the High Performing Court Framework serve as a useful tool to determine whether an organization is achieving some desired outcomes. It signifies where an organization is performing and gives suggestions as to where they might want to improve to overall increase the efficacy of the court.

Strategic Management

Strategic management takes the concept of strategic planning into a living document that gives purpose and meaning to an organization. It is an organization's commitment to purpose and meaning which builds public trust and confidence. Strategic management causes an organization to drive the strategic plan throughout the organization to every function. It provides people with an answer to the question "What is my contribution?" In short, the plan becomes an operational management tool, linked to budgets and performance management systems. It gives every employee a focus from their work to the priorities of the organization.

Strategic planning is defined as "a systematic, interactive process for thinking through and creating an organization's best possible future" (Martin, 1992). It is an essential element of sound management for any organization. Over the past two decades, strategic planning has become a fundamental component of court management in judicial systems throughout the United States and around the world. In

1999, the National Association for Court Management wrote, “Visioning and strategic planning can help court leaders shape their courts and organizational environments” and provided the following list:

- Challenging court and justice system practitioners to think beyond day-to-day problems
- Fostering, developing, and sustaining internal and external cooperation, collaboration, and partnerships
- Allocating and using limited resources strategically
- Improving day-to-day court management practices
- Enhancing court-community communications and increasing public understanding of and satisfaction with the courts and the justice system
- Creating futures driven by the judiciary’s deepest commitments: equal justice under law, independence and impartiality; equal protection and due process; access to justice; expedition and timeliness; accountability; and public trust and confidence

Yet the announcement of a project to create a new court strategic plan amid acute fiscal woes may be regarded as counterintuitive or possibly as potentially wasteful of precious time and resources. Many ask, “Why now?” while the more appropriate question is “Why not now?” The two-sided coin representing crisis and opportunity is relevant in court administration like never before. The current economic crisis can stimulate the requisite sense of urgency and institutional resolve needed to affect positive change in business processes and court culture. On a daily operational basis, the only thing more challenging than current conditions is trying to lead and manage a

court or justice system without a clear plan for the future. Without carefully conceived justifications for expenditure requests, evidence-based criteria for success, and the collaboration of justice system partners, it is difficult to address mutual problems. A structured process of priority setting with a focus is important for every organization at any time. This is more important when budgets are tight and cuts in services have been mandated or are imminent. Several court systems and individual jurisdictions recently have used various forms of strategic planning successfully to:

- Triage operations and services to ensure that the court can continue to perform its constitutional functions effectively
- Identify functions that can be improved, eliminated, or automated without significant cost or reduced services to the public
- Suggest potential revenue enhancements and cost elimination
- Redesign systems, operations, and services
- Address specific caseloads that increase during an economic crisis

If the courts desire to be relevant it is equally important as to know where you have been and where you are currently; more importantly is to know how you got there and where you are going in the future.

Methodology

The general research design employed is a direct sampling strategy that was applied to the judges and the rest of the staff to gauge the readiness for change in the court culture in developing a new strategic plan. Since the audience of judges, staff, and the public is clearly targeted and defined, who is better to provide answers about the Maricopa County Justice Courts as an organization than they are? To develop the strategic priorities of the Maricopa County Justice Courts, the project needed to understand the knowledge, willingness, and priorities of the judicial bench. Based on the model utilized by National Center for State Courts, a modified version included thirty-three questions of the High Performing Court Assessment Tool (HPCAT) was administered. Twenty-six Justices of The Peace were asked to aid in the development of markers that will serve as conversation in the development of the courts strategic priorities.

Ten areas within the HPCAT were assessed to measure each category for where the bench believes courts are performing well and areas that may require attention and or improvement. In addition, while the survey was made accessible to the entire organization for openness and comparative purposes, the judicial bench was clearly the focus. While the previous court administration may have been the visionary and author of the past strategic plan, it will take all of the twenty-six courts comprised of the bench, staff, administration, the public, and stakeholders if a focus is to be obtained that will be useful to all.

Public feedback was sought using the HPCAT Access and Fairness survey with two regional courts and two stand-alone courts for sampling purposes to give an

impression of how the public feels compared to the responses provided by the twenty-six Justice Courts and administration. Of course, the Access and Fairness survey relies on the voluntary participation of court users at any given time and is therefore not a random sample; however, it provides useful feedback. If respondents share the same sentiments and views as the courts do of themselves, or if they differ, it is a logical starting point for the strategic plan conversation to begin. The methods used to collect the data for analysis purposes are outlined in the following statements. The data collection was compiled by means of an online survey using Survey Monkey. The Access and Fairness questionnaire was distributed in court lobbies to the public on various days and times over two-week period.

Formulation of the Sample Pool

Prior to the data collection it was necessary to define the instrument as well as formulate the delivery system to engage the primary pool of respondents, that being the judges. In order to have them engage in the actual survey, the following steps took place that gave ownership and importance to the data collection from a judicial perspective:

- Collaboration with the National Center for State Courts to utilize their survey instruments gives credibility and credence to the results
- Internal conversations took place with Presiding Judge, Court Administrator, individual Justices of the Peace and the entire judicial bench

Data Collection

The first objective was to determine how many questions from the hundred

questions in the HPCAT the judges would be willing to answer. Several conversations were had with the presiding judge, individual judges, and the bench to determine how much time they would be willing to dedicate to answering the survey. It was determined that they would be willing to spend ten to fifteen minutes. With that in mind, and the assistance of the project advisor, the hundred question HPCAT was modified to only include thirty questions. The questions chosen for the research project were specifically selected to align as close as possible to the Access and Fairness survey being administered to the public. In describing the sample, the following elements are of importance:

- The universal population selected for the modified HPCAT was the entire Maricopa County Justice Courts. There are currently 334 full time employees in the Justice Courts of Maricopa County.
- The researcher created an online account and the data was collected utilizing Survey Monkey. The pools of potential respondents were notified by email when the survey was available online. (Appendix A)
- The survey was made available from October 6, 2014 through October 17, 2014.
- The author collected the data and only he had access to the Survey Monkey account to protect the integrity of the data collection.
- The overall response rate was twenty-nine percent and while the data collection took two weeks, respondents were given one week to respond to the survey. Due to a low number of responses after one week the timeline to respond was extended an additional week. There were 118

responses to the Access and Fairness survey by the public.

- The information is coded utilizing the Likert scale for both surveys and summarized in ten categories outlined as follows:
 - Procedural Satisfaction
 - Human Capital
 - Efficiency
 - Information Capital
 - Effectiveness
 - Technology Capital
 - Productivity
 - Public Trust and Confidence
 - Organizational Capital
 - Support of Legitimizing

The data was placed in an excel spreadsheet sheet which allows the data to be calculated for comparative purposes. These comparisons will be discussed later in the reported findings.

Working Title of Sample Pool of Respondents	Response Rate	Response Pool	Response Count
Justice of The Peace	73.1%	26	19
Supervisor	96.2%	26	25
Lead	28.0%	25	7
Court Staff	16.2%	247	40
Administration	37.0%	27	10
	29%	351	101

Figure 2 – Sample Pool of Respondents

Comparison of HPCF modified survey versus Public Access and Fairness survey

There were attempts made to match the questions of the HPCF survey to the

questions of the Access and Fairness survey, in reality the questions are completely different and meant to obtain information from two entirely different audiences. This was not the only problem encountered in the research; the most obvious was in administering the public survey. While there were many individuals that refused to take the satisfaction survey, the informal feedback received and heard is that experiences such as Mr. Patron's is not uncommon. Many of the individuals that declined to take the survey were distraught and fed up with their experience in the Justice Courts. This is why it is important to focus a serious portion of the new strategic plan on customer service and improving access to courts for the public.

Overcoming the public's unwillingness to engage in the survey process without infringing on their individual right to conduct court business was a serious consideration and concern. Despite informing the public that their responses would be anonymous and was a two-to-three minute survey which would lend itself to improving their experience and overall customer service; their responses were; "don't bother me with a survey" or "I don't have time to help the courts". The researcher administering the survey felt as though there was an overwhelming sense of distrust by the public towards the courts in general. There is a disparity in the results, this is most likely caused by the small number of respondents who actually were willing to participate in the survey. This made the comparison somewhat skewed when attempting to compare the results of the HPCF responses from court staff versus the responses from the Access and Fairness from the public.

Findings

Finding 1

The public reported a higher level of Procedural Satisfaction than Justice Court staff.

The first finding in the overall rating of Procedural Satisfaction was rated at a 3.58 out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis. (Appendix A2) This finding was not surprising for an overall score despite the judge's rating this as 3.94. Comparing this with the results from the Access and Fairness survey questionnaire, the general public gave the five questions related most closely to procedure (11-15) a combined average score of 4.21. Those members of the public responding to the survey left the court feeling as if they had their day in court. Of course, the respondents were neither a random sample or necessarily otherwise representative of all court users. It is likely that those having experiences similar to Mr. Patron's did not respond. 15.8 percent were dissatisfied with their experience; this amounts to approximately 950 dissatisfied court users.

Finding 2

The Justice Courts rating for Effectiveness was generally positive.

The second finding in the overall rating of Effectiveness was rated at a 3.63 out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis. (Appendix A3) This is expected as the courts have a high volume of traffic cases that gives the feeling that courts tend to resolve cases on their daily calendars at an expedited rate based on volume. That gives credence to the judge's rating of 3.94 as all calendars are finished daily and continuances typically only occur when self represented litigants dispute the

ticket and ask for additional hearings in which other parties must be notified to appear in court. The public gave the court a rating of 4.12 or 82.4 percent as it related to the question "I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time". The responding public was able to conduct and conclude their court business on that particular visit. The court is in a better position to judge this aspect. Despite this fact, there are still over a thousand individuals weekly based on the 17.6 percent rating that believe the courts are not effective in allowing individuals to "get their court business done in a reasonable amount of time".

Finding 3

The Justice Courts were harder on themselves regarding Efficiency than the responding court users.

The third finding in the overall rating of Efficiency was rated at a 3.44 out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis, which represents a 68.8 percent. (Appendix A4) This is not surprising as courts do an adequate job in dealing with the day-to-day case calendaring and processing. However, they struggle as an organization to address case maintenance and system clean up for the purpose of backlog cases, case management, and record keeping. The judges are not involved in case management and only deal with the case as it enters the courtroom. They rarely have to deal with the case management side of case after they have rendered a decision in the courtroom. Therefore, they rated this element at 4.05. This may be why the responding public had an average rating of 4.26 for "The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case". The case file for the hearing is typically intact. It is the follow up that courts struggle with when the public inquire

about things such as whether the Department of Motor Vehicle have been notified once there case has been resolved and all fines and fees have been paid in full.

Finding 4

The Judges and responding court users gave the Justice Courts higher ratings for Productivity than might be expected.

The fourth finding in the overall rating of Effectiveness was rated at a 3.21 out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis. (Appendix A5) The issue of long lines on heavy arraignment days versus how many staff is required in a court is still a constant battle across the organization. The Justice Courts have not addressed the issue of standardization or a best court practice, therefore each court while co-located in buildings operate independently. There is no synergy; when courts have a backlog, are short staffed and/or experiencing a high volume calendar; they are left to their own devices as to how to handle the day. The judge's rating of 3.77 is surprisingly high, but then again, they were not elected to assist other courts so they focus on their own court with little thought given to the concept of the greater good. The public gave the court a rating of 4.27 as it related to the question "I was treated the same as everyone else". This high rating should not be taken as a validation that the experience was good but that they were all equally provided a level of customer service that in actuality has no comparison since most customers do not come to Justice Courts on a regular basis.

Finding 5

The Justice Courts rating utilizing the High Performing Court Assessment questionnaire for Organizational Capital is not passing.

The fifth finding in the overall rating of Organizational Capital was rated at a 3.08

out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis which equates to 62 percent. (Appendix A6) This rating is not out of character for where the Justice Courts are as an organization. Currently the courts consider themselves twenty-six individual courts. Organizational issues are addressed on an individual basis and handled autonomously, not as a court system or a collective whole. The Justice Courts operate based on judicial directives which may or may not be followed in each court. The judge's rating of 3.33 or 66 percent is telling in that they realize not enough attention is given to this category. This category is an internal issue for which the public would not have any knowledge; as a result, no inference can be determined from their responses. However, this finding is critical as the questions that comprise the finding involve discussions with judges, staff, and administration on strategic planning, performance measurement, and how to solve court business problems.

Finding 6

The Justice Courts rating utilizing the High Performing Court Assessment questionnaire for Human Capital receive failing grade.

The sixth finding in the overall rating of Organizational Capital was rated at a 2.98 out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis. (Appendix A7) This rating is a failing grade at 59 percent; not uncommon for the Justice Courts as an organization. The judges are elected officials and their concern is rooted in their judicial duties and retaining office in the next election. In the current court structure, it is quite understandable to score low as an organization as employees know what they do, though not always why they do it. The employees focus is on their responsibilities each day, not the organization as a whole or the judge's next election. The judge's rating of

3.33 makes perfect sense as they are always cognizant of what they need to do to get reelected and retain their office as the Justice of the Peace. Again, this category is an internal issue for which the general public would have no knowledge or understanding, thus no inference can be determined from their responses. However, it speaks volumes to the courts ability to communicate the strategic agenda and how employee performance and focus in the organization are linked to the strategic plan.

Finding 7

The Justice Courts rating utilizing the High Performing Court Assessment questionnaire for Information Capital shows they are not passing.

The seventh finding in the overall rating of Information Capital was rated at a 3.41 out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis. (Appendix A8) While not the lowest rating, it still indicates room for improvement with the score of 68 percent. Court and case information is readily available as the result of a solid case information system known "iCIS". This system eliminates concerns with regards to case information and management but this information is not easily accessible to the public. The judge's rating of 3.72 is realistic while still leaving room for improvement. The public gave the court a rating of 4.10 as it related to the question, "The way my case was handled was fair". This rating provides consensus from the public that the courts are competent and prepared to handle their case but it is not an indication of their satisfaction. If 18 percent are not happy with the way their case was handled, then over a thousand people a week are dissatisfied with whether their case was handled fairly by the judge, staff, or both.

Finding 8

The Justice Courts rating utilizing the High Performing Court Assessment

questionnaire for Technology Capital shows they are not passing.

The eighth finding in the overall rating of Technology Capital was rated at a 3.30 out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis. (Appendix A9) This score of 66 percent is not passing score; this rating is not surprising since the courts are struggling with moving into the digital age. For years, courts have used paper and new technology such as eFiling and digital imaging of documents are emerging. The courts as a culture are usually not receptive to change. The judge's rating of 3.19 is not surprising as they are even more reluctant to change, especially technological changes, as the benefits of such technology are not clear and evident to the judges. The public gave the court a rating of 3.82 that was the lowest of all as it related to the question "The court's Website was useful". This rating relates to the generation of customers in our courts who walk in with the internet and social media in the palm of their hand with cell phones and tablets. The public expects technology in courts to be as fruitful as the internet and social media they typically experience in their daily lives.

Finding 9

The Justice Courts rating utilizing the High Performing Court Assessment questionnaire for Public Trust and Confidence shows they are not passing.

The ninth finding in the overall rating of Public Trust and Confidence was rated at a 3.47 out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis. (Appendix A10) This rating was expected to be higher but for a myriad of reasons, it is not. While staff give people attention, many individuals do not come in contact with courts enough to understand all the court processes and procedures. In their brief encounter with the courts and in many instances their first and last encounter, they leave not understanding

what the courts do on their behalf. The judge's rating of 3.74 is good as they ask many questions of the people who appear before them and more times than not, render a decision giving resolution to the person appearing before the court, which provides a sense of closure. The public echoes this sentiment in their court rating of 4.36 as it relates to the question "As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case". The public understands their experience at the court however, comprehension does not always translate into trust.

Finding 10

The Justice Courts rating utilizing the High Performing Court Assessment questionnaire for Support of Legitimizing Authorities was a failing grade.

The tenth finding in the overall rating of Support of Legitimizing Authorities was rated at a 2.93 out of a possible 5 based on the Likert scale used in the analysis. (Appendix A11) This rating is equivalent of 60 percent. Many believe the third branch of government should not be obliged to the other two branches of government. The judges' rating of 3.00 confirms this sentiment, as they do not strive to seek approval from others in government for their constitutional duties. Remember, they are also elected officials that fill a place in the constitutional hierarchy of any federal, state, or local government. This category covers internal workings of government that the public does not really care for, nor do they have working knowledge to lend an informed response for comparison. There is significant room for improvement with 40 percent necessary to get a rating of 100 percent.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of this project was to identify potential indicators that would serve as a starting point for areas of improvement to be utilized in developing a new strategic plan. Based on the above findings, one can now summarize the findings into indicators and markers.

The key indicator can be summarized that the entire court and particularly the judges did not exceed a rating of 4.0 in one category. While coming close in Effectiveness with a 3.63, this gives credence that there is room for improvement in all categories on the path to becoming a High Performing Court. Markers indicate there is a distinguishable difference in the results of the court in comparison to the judges signaling there is a gap in the focus for the courts. While it is good that the public gave the courts a higher rating than that of themselves, time and more public input may reveal a different story. The survey was only an abbreviated version of the HPCF; the full survey may produce further findings. The pool of 118 responses may not be sufficient nor a large enough sampling to draw an accurate picture in formulating a clear conclusion. The pool is a small picture of the public that encounters the courts and only scratches the surface of larger symptoms in the courts. By combining the research findings with the above indicators, the following conclusions can be drawn.

Conclusion 1

The Bench will need to discuss and prioritize the results from the "High Performing Court Framework" (HPCF) to identify areas that require their attention and incorporate them into a strategic plan.

By using the abbreviated version of the HPCF only some information can be

extracted for the results. The one idea that all the findings have in common is that the courts can do better and need to pay attention to the areas where the scores are the lowest. This is the only way the experience of Mr. Patron and others like him can change in the future. The judges are clearly in the driver's seat for implementing changes within the organization while holding them accountable for court performance. They have the ability to win elections, change the public opinion, and give a clear focus into the future of the courts. Expectations from the public are changing and everyone wants information faster and more easily accessible. It is the judges role and responsibility to provide swift and fair justice in resolving disputes for the communities in which they live, were elected, and have sworn to serve. The researcher is not suggesting that judges do not take the oath of office seriously, but there is still work to do. As the third branch of government, we have a duty and responsibility to the taxpayers to be the best court in America; they deserve no less than our best. To start on that path, the following suggestions are recommended.

Recommendation 1.1

Create focus groups consisting of judges and court personnel to review the results of the HPCF and public survey.

Multiple focus groups would allow the various categories to be examined and will result in an open dialogue of suggestions and ideas that would lead to recommendations to the bench on ways to improve the ratings. As part of the focus groups charter, they would develop measurements and milestones that indicate progress towards systemic improvements that also add clarity to the goal of the entire organization. The result would produce increased transparency and

accountability to the work of the Justice Courts.

Recommendation 1.2

Have regular bench discussions on performance and improvements that will change the Justice Courts as an organization.

Through their responses, the judges realize they do not spend sufficient time on discussing performance and improvements for the courts. The twenty-six independent courts enjoy not being beholden to one another, never to fully realize that if one court suffers then they all suffer. Just as one finds success individually, they can also enjoy the same success as a whole. The bench should examine the scores and discuss how each of them deals with various issues. More importantly, instead of making bench directives, have administrative orders that serve as a baseline for effective and efficient tools to operate their courts. These baselines would then serve as benchmarks and a measurement of performance.

Conclusion 2

The Justice Courts have to focus on the 15 to 20 percent of court users that do not find court performance to be satisfactory.

If customer service and public access to justice is not a goal, how will the courts know when they have improved services for the user? When 1000 individuals each week do not have a good experience in the court, we must work towards a higher majority that is achievable with a strategic plan and sound management practice in place. Currently there is no usable strategic plan in place and courts have no intrinsic value to buy into strategic management. Courts are

comfortable operating with a trial by fire mentality with no proactive strategic planning. This continued practice will only keep courts incongruent and disconnected as an organization. Great organizations do not implore theoretical conjecture and summations to guide their success. Many attach themselves to a strategic plan with management agendas that measure their success. While all the issues impeding the courts, progress is not evident and there are enough indicators to warrant further exploration.

Recommendation 2.1

Assign the court administration management team the responsibility, duties, and tasks associated with monitoring and implementing the strategic agenda.

Justice Courts judges do not have the time to do all the footwork required to develop, monitor, and implement a new strategic plan. Giving authority to execute the necessary steps to organize a department wide strategic plan should be the responsibility of court administration. Why are they not the authors, researchers, and facilitators of the plan to insure it is robust, rich, and adequately strategic to carry out the vision of the judges for the court? As an organization, administration should take responsibility in order for the Justice Courts to reach the next level.

Conclusion 3

The Justice Courts acknowledge the use of information and technology is low despite the public's desire for more technology.

Based on the results of the public survey where the public's lowest score was in

the use of technology, the courts need to evaluate the technology needs of the court to align with public expectations. These expectations can develop into a strategic plan that is smart, measurable, and attainable. These goals can be strategically managed by administration. While the groundwork is laid and the findings speak for themselves, research is vital in serving as the backbone and foundation for a sustainable strategic plan. This can be accomplished through the following recommendations.

Recommendation 3.1

Champion the judges and staff to participate in the full HPCF assessment survey; thus creating larger buy-in based on the results to increase the use of technology to improve customer outcomes in the courts.

By completing the hundred-question survey and based on the results, the Justice Courts, as an organization will truly understand where they stand. It will illuminate additional changes as well as strengthen the points raised in the abbreviated survey that will lead to overall court improvements. While this only takes thirty to forty minutes to complete, the insight and valuable information from the hundred-question survey will prove to be most valuable to the courts. Courts will find enlightenment and direction in planning out their strategic agenda for the future of the courts.

Recommendation 3.2

Extend the Access and Fairness survey to all the courts over an established timeline.

This does not seem necessary, as the sample scores were relatively favorable for the courts however; one must ask how the courts would fare if the

survey was to be administered organization wide, for a longer period, and to a larger audience. Would it reveal lower scores? Would it identify more Mr. Patrons than first realized in the project? Since the survey was completed in a relatively short period of time and the courts in Arizona are seasonal in terms of spikes in case types, extending and expanding the survey period may yield different findings. Would the ratings still be favorable? There is no way to answer that question without taking the survey to a larger market.

Recommendation 3.3

Provide an electronic survey to customers.

We live in a digital age and everywhere you go everyone asks for customer feedback utilizing some sort of online data collection method. The courts could do the same thing. While they do not currently ask or require email addresses, this information could easily be obtained from court users. In addition, the website could be enhanced to provide a link to the survey thus soliciting constant public feedback on how well the courts are doing to serve their needs.

Recommendation 3.4

Coordinate the Justice Court survey with Superior Court.

The Superior Court of Maricopa County completes the Access and Fairness survey approximately every two years. The Justice Courts should request to be included in this cycle so that that the courts are able to benchmark their scores. Over time the data can be used as discussion points of where the courts have been, where they are currently, and where they need to go in the future. When incorporating this information, the courts would have an active

strategic plan by which they are measuring performance. In time, while strategically and organizationally managed, this would create a high performing court that is accountable and transparent to all.

Summary

The future of the Maricopa County Justice Courts lay in the balance as long as the court do not develop, implement, and measure the results of a strategic plan. The courts are not immune to the government fiscal dilemmas facing Arizona and across other courts in America. The pool of available funding is constantly shrinking, while the burden of the courts to resolve disputes continues. One can argue that caseloads are declining but, in the same breath one must voice the fact that the expectations for the cases we do have are increasing because of technology. Technology costs money but courts are not in the business of making money. They were independently created to give access to all who require a place to resolve their disputes. Increasingly, customer service demands are being placed on the courts to provide information faster and more efficiently. Moving forward, courts will struggle to find the necessary funding to be a player in the digital age if their voice is not heard. One way to be heard is to have a strategic plan that others are vested in and more importantly, a desire to help achieve.

A new strategic plan will help narrow the focus and give credibility and justification to why the Justice Courts operate in a certain manner. It will allow the court to be accountable to its stakeholders for its performance. When asking for funding and the allocation of resources to aid the courts agenda, the management plan becomes a place to compare and measure the value of such requests. This would make the process more fluid and justifiable to those that hold the purse strings and to the public.

A new strategic plan will give a clear vision and focus to courts and provide a cure for systemic issues ailing today's Justice Courts. While judicial independence is important, without a collective and cohesive concept, the twenty-six

Justice Courts in Maricopa County cannot survive what the future holds on their own. There is strength in numbers, and twenty-six elected officials plus 300 employees can make enough noise to wake an audience on their way to becoming an award winning high performing court. This would result in greater efficiencies, effectiveness, and overall customer satisfaction. In addition, while reducing employee turnover and customer dissatisfaction, it will result in improving the courts image and reputation as it relates to the public and its stakeholders. The Justice Courts have the potential to be a leader by providing a model for other courts across the country and abroad to follow. They would marvel while giving the highest praises to the Maricopa County Justice Courts, when referencing limited jurisdiction courts in America.

If the courts are to experience a better tomorrow, then the prior recommendations are an excellent starting point for the strategic plan discussion because this project does include markers to guide the priorities necessary to clarify their focus. This focus will open the door to new conversations and opportunities on how the Justice Courts can prepare for a new strategic plan. This plan will serve as the backdrop and roadmap for the future. If done correctly, it is filled with promise, hope, and a bright vision for the future Justice Courts in the coming days.

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Appendices

Appendix A: High Performing Court Framework Assessment

Figure A1: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Procedural Satisfaction							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Individuals find the Justice Court website useful?	3	14	36	58	10	3.48	121
Users of Justice Courts are able to get court business done in a reasonable amount of time?	1	12	25	73	10	3.65	121
Litigants believe the judge listened to their side of the story before he or she made a decision?	2	15	29	54	19	3.61	119
Average Rating						3.58	

Figure A2: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Effectiveness							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Judges throughout Justice Courts enforce policies to insure procedural fairness?	1	17	32	59	12	3.53	121
Users of Justice Courts are able to get court business done in a reasonable amount of time?	1	10	25	75	10	3.69	121
Regardless of the number cases scheduled on a single day, all litigants court business is done in a reasonable amount of time?	1	16	20	69	15	3.67	121
Average Rating						3.63	

Figure A3: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Efficiency							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Courts identify and actively manage the backlog of cases older than established benchmarks?	2	32	27	46	14	3.31	121
Justice Courts keep pace with the incoming caseload by disposing of as many cases as are filed each year?	2	29	37	38	15	3.29	121
Justice Courts actively manage the case record to insure data is accurate and current?	1	18	17	63	22	3.72	121
Average Rating						3.44	

Figure A4: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Productivity							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Courts regularly evaluate whether a new service is required to assist with case-flow processing to improve the customer's court experience?	6	29	36	35	14	3.18	120
Justice Courts know how many staff is required to pay adequate attention to customer needs?	7	32	31	36	14	3.15	120
Justice Courts have shown steady and measurable reduction in the time it takes to resolve a case while improving the quality of customer service?	5	20	40	45	10	3.29	120
Average Rating						3.21	

Figure A5: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Organizational Capital							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Judges and court administration clearly define the court's strategic plan to implement changes to improve court operations and practices?	7	29	39	41	6	3.08	122
Discussion of the strategies and performance results is a regular item on the agenda of judges', managers' and administrative meetings?	6	28	48	28	11	3.08	121
Judges, court managers and administration meet together regularly to discuss how to solve business problems?	7	27	47	29	11	3.08	121
						Average Rating	3.08

Figure A6: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Human Capital							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Court leadership clearly communicates the department's strategic plan for the court's future?	7	33	31	42	7	3.08	120
Employees understand how their performance is aligned to the strategic plan?	11	31	35	37	6	2.97	120
Employees recognize a line of sight from their position to the Justice Courts strategic plan that allows their performance to contribute to the overall plan?	10	34	43	26	7	2.88	120
						Average Rating	2.98

Figure A7: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Information Capital							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Court's use performance data and results to improve court business processes?	4	25	39	45	8	3.23	121
Justice Court judges and staff have confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the court information/data?	3	13	27	62	15	3.61	120
Justice Courts actively monitor customer issues to insure individual cases are handled fairly?	2	22	35	49	13	3.40	121
						Average Rating	3.41

Figure A8: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Technology Capital							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Courts business needs articulated by judges, managers, and staff drive the acquisition and use of technology such as an Electronic Data Management System?	4	27	36	46	8	3.22	121
Justice Courts take advantage of opportunities presented by technologies to rethink and improve processes?	6	26	32	49	8	3.22	121
Justice Courts case management system promotes consistency and quality of the data entered into the system?	6	16	32	51	16	3.45	121
						Average Rating	3.30

Figure A9: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Public Trust and Confidence							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
People leaving court know what to do next about their case?	3	14	32	61	10	3.51	120
Based on court procedures, staff pay adequate attention to the public's needs?	3	12	17	67	21	3.76	120
Justice Courts solicit input regarding public perceptions on what can be done to improve the courts performance?	6	24	43	41	6	3.14	120
						Average Rating	3.47

Figure A10: All Staff Ratings

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Support of Legitimizing Authorities							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Courts regularly publicize the results of their performance measurements?	6	25	58	30	2	2.98	121
Justice Courts publicize the actions taken to improve performance and refine practices?	6	27	61	24	3	2.93	121
Justice Courts routinely discuss their strategic agenda with stakeholders?	7	21	75	14	4	2.89	121
						Average Rating	2.91

Figure A11: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Procedural Satisfaction							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Individuals find the Justice Court website useful?	0	1	6	10	2	3.68	19
Users of Justice Courts are able to get court business	0	1	4	11	2	3.78	18
Litigants believe the judge listened to their side of the story before he or she made a decision?	0	0	1	10	8	4.37	19
						3.94	

Figure A12: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Effectiveness							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Judges throughout Justice Courts enforce policies to insure procedural fairness?	0	1	1	14	3	4.00	19
Users of Justice Courts are able to get court business done in a reasonable amount of time?	0	2	3	12	2	3.74	19
Regardless of the number cases scheduled on a single day, all litigants court business is done in a reasonable amount of time?	0	2	4	9	4	3.79	19
						3.84	

Figure A13: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Efficiency							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Courts identify and actively manage the backlog of cases older than established benchmarks?	0	1	2	12	4	4.00	19
Justice Courts keep pace with the incoming caseload by disposing of as many cases as are filed each year?	0	2	2	10	5	3.95	19
Justice Courts actively manage the case record to insure data is accurate and current?	0	0	2	11	6	4.21	19

Figure A14: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Productivity							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Courts regularly evaluate whether a new service is required to assist with case-flow processing to improve the customer's court experience?	0	2	7	7	3	3.58	19
Justice Courts know how many staff is required to pay adequate attention to customer needs?	0	1	5	7	6	3.95	19
reduction in the time it takes to resolve a case while improving the quality of customer service?	0	0	7	9	3	3.79	19
						3.77	

Figure A15: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Organizational Capital							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Judges and court administration clearly define the court's strategic plan to implement changes to improve court operations and practices?	1	3	5	8	2	3.37	19
Discussion of the strategies and performance results is a regular item on the agenda of judges', managers' and administrative meetings?	1	3	7	3	4	3.33	18
together regularly to discuss how to solve business problems?	1	4	5	5	3	3.28	18
						3.33	

Figure A16: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Human Capital							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Court leadership clearly communicates the department's strategic plan for the court's future?	1	4	3	9	2	3.37	19
Employees understand how their performance is aligned to the strategic plan?	1	5	4	8	1	3.16	19
to the Justice Courts strategic plan that allows their performance to contribute to the overall plan?	2	2	9	4	2	3.11	19
						3.21	

Figure A17: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Information Capital							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Court's use performance data and results to improve court business processes?	1	2	6	7	3	3.47	19
Justice Court judges and staff have confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the court information/data?	1	2	0	12	4	3.84	19
Justice Courts actively monitor customer issues to insure individual cases are handled fairly?	0	1	4	11	3	3.84	19
						3.72	

Figure A18: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Technology Capital							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Courts business needs articulated by judges, managers, and staff drive the acquisition and use of technology such as an Electronic Data Management System?	1	9	3	5	1	2.79	19
Justice Courts take advantage of opportunities presented by technologies to rethink and improve processes?	1	5	4	8	1	3.16	19
consistency and quality of the data entered into the system?	1	1	5	9	3	3.63	19
						3.19	

Figure A19: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Public Trust and Confidence							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
People leaving court know what to do next about their case?	0	0	4	14	1	3.84	19
Based on court procedures, staff pay adequate attention to the public's needs?	0	1	2	13	3	3.95	19
perceptions on what can be done to improve the courts performance?	1	1	7	9	1	3.42	19
						3.74	

Figure A20: Justice of Peace Rating

Justice Courts - High Performing Court Assessment							
Support of Legitimizing Authorities							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor	Agree	Strongly	Rating Average	Response Count
Justice Courts regularly publicize the results of their performance measurements?	1	3	8	6	0	3.06	18
Justice Courts publicize the actions taken to improve performance and refine practices?	1	4	10	3	1	2.95	19
Justice Courts routinely discuss their strategic agenda with stakeholders?	1	5	8	3	2	3.00	19
						3.00	
						answered question	19

Figure A21: Sample Pool of Respondents

Working Title of Sample Pool of Respondents	Response Rate	Response Pool	Response Count
Justice of The Peace	73.1%	26	19
Supervisor	96.2%	26	25
Lead	28.0%	25	7
Court Staff	16.2%	247	40
Administration	37.0%	27	10
	29%	351	101

Appendix B: Access and Fairness Survey Results

Figure B1: Access & Fairness

Access and Fairness Responses	Average Score
1. Finding the courthouse was easy	4.12
2. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand	4.35
3. I felt safe in the courthouse	4.57
4. The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service	4.16
5. I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time	4.12
6. Court staff paid adequate attention to my needs	4.32
7. I was treated with courtesy and respect	4.51
8. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed	4.34
9. The court's Web site was useful	3.82
10. The court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business	4.24
11. The way my case was handled was fair	4.10
12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision	4.06
13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case	4.26
14. I was treated the same as everyone else	4.27
15. As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case	4.36

Appendix C: Survey Questionnaires

High Performance Court Self-Assessment Survey

Purpose

The purpose of the High Performance Court (HPC) Self-Assessment survey is to familiarize you with the success factors addressed in the High Performance Court Framework by reviewing the current status of your court. The HPC Self-Assessment survey consists of a number of statements and you are asked to consider the extent to which each statement applies to your court.

Directions

- The web-based version of the survey can be found at: Survey Monkey
- The survey contains a list of 30 statements. Read each statement and then, based on your experience, please determine how well you think the statement describes the way your court currently performs.
- For each statement, please indicate the extent to which you think each statement is true using the following scale:

(5) Strongly Disagree; (4) Disagree; (3) Neither Agree or Disagree; (2) Agree; (1) Strongly Agree

Background Information

(Check the appropriate box. Your answers are confidential.)

Position:

- Judge
 Pro Tem
 Administrator/Manager
 Lead/Supervisor

In what location do you work?

- Regional Court
 Stand-Alone Court
 Court Administration

How long have you worked in the Justice Court system?

- Less than 5 years
 6 to 10 years
 11 to 20 years
 More than 20 years

Are you familiar with the Justice Court's Countywide strategic plan?

- Yes
 No

Procedural Satisfaction

1. Individuals find the Justice Court website useful.
2. Users of Justice Courts are able to get court business done in a reasonable amount of time.
3. Litigants believe the judge listened to their side of the story before he or she made a decision.

Effectiveness

1. Judges throughout Justice Court's enforce policies to insure procedural fairness.
2. Regardless of the number cases scheduled on a single day, all litigants court business is done in a reasonable amount of time.
3. Justice Courts pay adequate attention to individual needs.

Efficiency

1. Justice Court's identifies and actively manages the backlog of cases older than established benchmarks.
2. Justice Court's keep up with the incoming caseload by disposing of as many cases as are filed each year.
3. Justice Court's actively manage the case record to insure data is accurate and current.

Productivity

1. Justice Court's regularly evaluates whether a new service or process is required to assist with case-flow improving the customer's court experience.
2. Justice Court's knows how many staff is required to pay adequate attention to individual needs.
3. Justice Court's has shown steady, measurable reduction in the time it takes to resolve a case while maintaining or improving the quality of customer service.

Organizational Capital

1. Judges and court administration clearly define the court's strategic plan to implement changes needed to improve court operations and practices.
2. Discussion of the strategies and performance results is a regular item on the agenda of judges', managers' and administration meetings.
3. Judges, court managers and administration meet together regularly to discuss how to solve court business problems.

Human Capital

1. The Justice Court leadership clearly communicated the departments strategic plan for the courts future.
2. Employees understand how their performance is aligned to the strategic plan.
3. Employees recognize a line of sight from their position to the Justice Courts strategic plan that allows their performance to contribute to the overall plan.

Information Capital

1. Justice Court's uses performance data and results to improve court business processes.
2. Justice Court judges and staffs have confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the court information/data.
3. Justice Court 's actively monitors customer issues to insure the individuals case was handled was fairly.

Technology Capital

1. In our court, the business needs articulated by judges, managers, and staff drive the acquisition and use of technology such as an Electronic Management Data System (EDMS).
2. Our court takes advantage of opportunities presented by technologies to rethink and improve our processes.
3. he case management system promotes consistency and quality of the data entered into the system.

Public Trust and Confidence

1. People leaving court People leaving court know what to do next about my case
2. Based on court procedures , staff paid adequate attention to the public's needs
3. Justice Court 's solicit input regarding public perceptions on what can be done to improve the courts performance.

Support of Legitimizing Authorities

1. Justice Court's regularly publicizes the results of its performance measurements.
2. Justice Court's publicizes the actions taken to improve performance and refine practices.
3. Justice Court's routinely discusses the Justice Courts strategic agenda with stakeholders.

Your opinion counts!

Maricopa County Justice Courts

Please take a few minutes to tell us what you think. Your views will help the court improve our services. We estimate it will take no more than 5 minutes to complete the survey. For each item below, please circle the number that best reflects your opinion, based on your experience with the Court. In addition, we ask a few questions about you to help us understand your views. We are not asking you for your name or any other identifying information. Your answers to this survey will not be connected to or influence any business you have with the court.

	Circle the number				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5
3. I felt safe in the courthouse	1	2	3	4	5
4. The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service	1	2	3	4	5
5. I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time	1	2	3	4	5
6. Court staff paid adequate attention to my needs	1	2	3	4	5
7. I was treated with courtesy and respect	1	2	3	4	5
8. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed	1	2	3	4	5
9. The court's Web site was useful	1	2	3	4	5
10. The court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business	1	2	3	4	5

If you are involved in a legal matter and appeared before a judge today, please complete questions 11-15 also. Your answers will have no effect on your case.

11. The way my case was handled was fair	1	2	3	4	5
12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision	1	2	3	4	5
13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case	1	2	3	4	5
14. I was treated the same as everyone else	1	2	3	4	5
15. As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case	1	2	3	4	5

How could we have served you better today? _____

Please share any additional comments you would like to make: _____

→ Please Turn Over and Continue →

Court Name _____

Please answer the following:

What did you do in Court today?
(check all that apply)

- Search court records
- File papers
- Make a payment
- Get information
- Attend a hearing or trial
- Other, please describe: _____

What type of case brought you to the courthouse today?

- Criminal
- Civil
- Traffic
- Small Claims
- Orders of Protection
- Other: _____

How do you identify yourself?
(check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other: _____

Please check one description below that best describes you:

- Involved in a court case/legal matter
- Friend or family member
- Victim or witness
- Juror
- Member of the public
- Business user (e.g., messenger, process server, etc.)
- Private attorney
- County Attorney/staff
- Public Defender/staff
- Law enforcement officer/staff
- Other: _____

As part of my visit to the court, I made use of information from (check all that apply):

- viewing the Court's Web site
- information that a friend/relative translated for me today (My native language is: _____)

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

How often are you typically in this courthouse?

- First time in this courthouse
- Once a year or less
- Several times a year
- Regularly

What is your age?

- 18-25 years old
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56+

Appendix D: Maricopa County Justice Courts (2015 Published Strategic Plan)

JUSTICE COURTS - 2015

Department Mission: The Mission of the Justice Courts is to provide professional judicial services to court users so they can obtain timely and economical justice within their community.

Department Vision: The vision of the Maricopa County Justice Courts is to provide community-based, user-friendly, efficient, and professional justice.

Department Values:

- Strategic Issues
 - Governance. Arizona Supreme Court Administrative Order 2008-059 established a new governance and administrative structure for the Justice of the Peace Courts in Maricopa County, increasing the responsibility and authority of the Justice Courts; thus challenging their ability to provide justice to Maricopa County residents in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. The new governance and administrative structure for the Justice of the Peace Courts in Maricopa County, returns day-to-day control of staff in each court to individual justices of the peace, giving them greater responsibility and authority for the budgets of their respective courts and management of their caseloads.
 - This Strategic Issue is addressed by the following Strategic Goal(s):
 - By June, 2016, the development of the administrative infrastructure required by Supreme Court Administrative Order 2008-59 to support the administrative and operational requirements of the individual Justice Courts will be at 100% compliance.
 - Increased Workload. Annual population increases and economic instability contribute to significant increases in annual Justice Court case filings.
 - This Strategic Issue is addressed by the following Strategic Goal(s):
 - By June, 2015, the Justice Courts will provide timely, fair, and impartial justice in case processing by resolving 98% of all court cases in compliance with established court standards.
 - Public Access. Improving Technology in case filing and case processing can allow court customers to access information and services remotely, instead of needing to visit court facilities in person, and saves them considerable time.
 - This Strategic Issue is addressed by the following Strategic Goal(s):
 - By June, 2015, the Justice Courts and justice agencies will expand public access to the court system by electronic filing and other case processing improvements which will be 100% available in all 26 Justice Courts.
 - Revenue Collections. Justice Courts are responsible for collecting an increasing variety of fines, fees, and restitution from litigants and defendants, and dispersing those monies to Treasurers for the State of Arizona and Maricopa County for the welfare of citizens.
 - This Strategic Issue is addressed by the following Strategic Goal(s):
 - By June, 2015, the Justice Courts will expand timely access to accurate and coordinated financial information to increase revenue collections to 80% from 70% during fiscal year 2013.

- Unnecessary Delay. Increasing delay in case processing negatively impacts the purpose of the Justice Courts: 1) To do individual justice in individual cases, 2) To provide a forum for the resolution of legal disputes, 3) To protect individuals from the arbitrary use of government power, 4) To deter criminal behavior, 5) To protect the vulnerable.
 - This Strategic Issue is addressed by the following Strategic Goal(s):
 - By June, 2015, the Justice Courts will provide timely, fair, and impartial justice in case processing by resolving 98% of all court cases in compliance with established court standards.
- Strategic Goals
 - By June, 2015, the Justice Courts and justice agencies will expand public access to the court system by electronic filing and other case processing improvements which will be 100% available in all 26 Justice Courts.
 - By June, 2015, the Justice Courts will expand timely access to accurate and coordinated financial information to increase revenue collections to 80% from 70% during fiscal year 2013.
 - By June, 2015, the Justice Courts will provide timely, fair, and impartial justice in case processing by resolving 98% of all court cases in compliance with established court standards.
 - By June, 2016, the development of the administrative infrastructure required by Supreme Court Administrative Order 2008-59 to support the administrative and operational requirements of the individual Justice Courts will be at 100% compliance.