
Indian School Corridor - Citywide Association
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**Systemic Problems & Budget Neutral Solutions
for the Jail Booking Process**

*Presented to the City of Phoenix on behalf of
both organizations by Ann Malone*

**Community Budget Hearings
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Background

As early as 1996, Phoenix Police Department management and frontline officers recognized that time spent by officers in the Jail Booking Process had become excessive and as a result, was detrimental to the budget, to officers, and to service delivery to the community. Since that time, no less than seven official studies with recommended solutions have been presented to policy makers including the final proposal which was put together by Phoenix PD and presented to this group in a meeting on August 15, 2008. *(See Appendices A thru F)* In spite of over 12 years of study, discussion and these proposals, the Jail Booking Process is still in need of repair.

Citizens on the Indian School Corridor first became interested in the Jail Booking Process problems as the result of our work with frontline officers to reduce the problem of repeat misdemeanor crime on our Corridor. We discovered that there are two main stumbling blocks for officers in making the types of repeat misdemeanor arrests that the business and residential communities require:

1. The length of time it takes the officer to book can more often than not take at least 2-4 hours to complete, if not more.
2. The insufficiency in sentence length once the booking process is completed is another major factor in officers not wanting to make the types of arrests that we as a community are asking them to make.

The real life consequence of these learned results of excessive booking time and criminals being released for time served in custody are that the officer makes the decision, consciously or not, that these criminals aren't worth arresting if he doesn't absolutely have to arrest them. It is not worth his time if he must spend all this time off the street just to see the criminal arrive there back at the same time or shortly after he does. For the purposes of this paper, we will be collaborating with PLEA only on what we can do to eliminate excessive booking times.

It is the goal of both of our organizations to assist Phoenix PD and Phoenix city management in resolving the problems that they and we have identified regarding the Jail Booking Process. We believe that the most valuable asset a city can have is the partnership of city management, police and the community they protect working together for the good of all.

The Two General Systemic Problems of the Jail Booking Process

Both city and Phoenix PD management told us in our August 15, 2008 meeting that they want to use non-sworn personnel in the booking process, in fact were moving toward it, but could not do so until two issues – budget and MCSO – were resolved. It was made clear to both of our groups at this meeting that PD management’s perception was that a great deal of the systemic problems in the Jail Booking Process stems from their *perceived* lack of cooperation from MCSO, and budgetary challenges during this fiscal crisis.

In addition, at the November 4, 2008 Public Safety Sub-Committee meeting Council Persons Mattox, Johnson, Stanton, and Williams encouraged the Indian School Corridor Association and PLEA to use our positive relationships with MCSO to work with City Staff and approach MCSO to solve these problems. The council members were unanimous in their recognition that the “people have clearly spoken and they want these problems solved,” and that “MCSO needs to help provide the solution.” In a subsequent email exchange, Councilman Mattox also said, “I hope all the stakeholders can work together to resolve these issues.” (*See Appendix G*)

In this time of fiscal crisis we as a city can not underestimate the effect on the budget of the opportunity costs of an officer being tied up in booking any longer than he has to be. By working together we can create the solution to this malingering problem of 12 years and finally streamline the Jail Booking Process to efficiency, reduce costs to the tax payer, and impact the budget in not just a neutral, but a positive way.

By involving those of us in the private sector and the Police Union to be the bridge of cooperation between MCSO and the City of Phoenix, we can lay the foundation for new relationships and future group problem solving. It is inclusion, not exclusion, which will get us through these harsh economic circumstances until better times return.

Specific Problems Identified

1. Officer Reluctance to Arrest Repeat Misdemeanor Criminals

Due to the excessive time required to complete the Booking Process there is reluctance on the part of frontline officers to commit to low-level misdemeanor arrests. This reluctance stems from two main reasons:

- a. The concern of the officer about being taken away from his/her primary geographic responsibility which is being in neighborhoods protecting citizens.
- b. Their concern for their fellow officers' safety by being unavailable to provide support to their fellow officers in their geographic area should the need arise for back-up.

2. Manpower Management

As mutually discussed and agreed upon at our August 15th meeting with Phoenix PD and city management, we all agreed that the idea of placing non-sworn detention officer "catchers" to expedite and complete the booking process in order to get frontline officers back into the community as quickly as possible was the ideal. However, management did not think it possible due to reasons 3 and 4 below.

3. Budget

As stated previously, during our August meeting with the Phoenix PD and city management it was agreed by all that Assistant Chief Montgomery's "catcher" solution to reduce booking times was the ideal, and that ideally, these "catchers" would ultimately be non-sworn. Executive Chief Lannon reiterated that "we are moving in that direction" since no one wants over-qualified sworn officers doing what non-sworn could be doing. As soon as the budget would allow such a transition, City Manager Fairbanks assured us that this was the logical conclusion to this process. Therefore, the only tangible problem we are now faced with is having the money to requisition and train these non-sworn detention officers.

4. MCSO as the Perceived Problem to Fixing the Problem

Assistant Chief Montgomery expressed concern at the August meeting that to implement the solutions to her proposed Jail Booking Process, Phoenix PD would need the cooperation of Sheriff Arpaio. She indicated that previous contacts and requests for cooperation bore little to no fruit. In spite of this history, Phoenix PD management expressed the desire to work with MCSO to get the essential cooperation necessary to resolve these problems for the good of the officers and the community. It was at this time that the Indian School Corridor Association requested of the chiefs that we and PLEA be permitted to contact MCSO and see what we could get them to put on the table. The chiefs approved our request to use our relationships to build the bridge necessary to get the concessions we needed.

Specific Budget Neutral Solutions for the Identified Problems

In recognition of the current budget realities, the challenge is to solve the identified problems with budget neutral solutions.

1. Manpower Management

It is critical to maximize existing police officer resources when we have fewer officers available. Due to necessary budgetary cuts, we are now looking at 250+ vacancies on the Phoenix PD. Therefore, it is imperative that the skill set of each and every available officer is utilized in the most efficient and effective way possible.

By utilizing 14 non-sworn detention officers as “catchers” in the Jail Booking Process, we not only return 7 officers to the street (we get two non-sworn detention officers for every one sworn), we also create a force multiplier effect by freeing up significant police man hours dramatically reducing the time *every other* frontline officer spends at the jail to book.

2. Two Budget Neutral Sources of Funding

We can accomplish the hiring of these non-sworn detention officers in a budget neutral way by accessing 14 positions from the Prop 1 funds. These funds were voted in by the community for police *and the support personnel* they need to enhance police service delivery to the citizens of Phoenix. It is specifically to be used to recruit, hire, and train sworn police and support personnel. (*See Appendix H*) During the past 12 years the Police Department has demonstrated a strong desire to reduce time spent in the Jail Booking Process and now the community has joined our voice to theirs. The time is now to get our sworn officers out of the jail and back on the street allowing us to maximize those officers we do have.

A second possible source of funding, or to be used as a combination fund source with Prop 1 funds, are further cuts in the Police Department Budget, as proposed by PLEA. (*See Appendix I*)

3. MCSO – A Willing Partner

The original proposal made by Assistant Chief Montgomery not only required “catchers” but other physical plant improvements to SCB that are not financially possible at this time.

Not wanting to lose the cost benefits of getting our sworn officers out of the jail, both of our organizations approached MCSO as requested by police management and the Public Safety Subcommittee and we are happy to report that after significant discussion with MCSO they have agreed to assist and facilitate the Phoenix Booking Process at the jail in the following ways:

- a. MCSO will provide training for all Phoenix non-sworn detention officer hires at their Detention Officer Training Academy *at no cost to the city*. This saves the city **\$420,000 in hard training costs (14 non-sworn detention officers x \$30,000 MCSO cost to train each officer)** and untold dollars in the opportunity cost savings of the force multiplier effect on police man hours no longer spent at the jail and are returned to the street to service the community.

- b. MCSO has agreed to dedicate an area in the jail as a Phoenix Booking Room *at no cost to the city*. This will eliminate any Phoenix PD frontline officer from standing in line essentially competing for space and time with the other dozen or more jurisdictions also utilizing the jail. This dedicated space demonstrates tremendous goodwill for and appreciation on the part of MCSO for their highest volume customer, Phoenix PD. It further expands the opportunity cost savings of the force multiplier effect on police man hours as the dedicated space will even more rapidly return officers to the street to service the community.
- c. MCSO will dedicate one of their own Detention Officers to the Phoenix Booking Room so that our officers dropping off, and catchers receiving, prisoners don't get backlogged during high volume periods. This MCSO Detention Officer will be assigned to facilitate and assist an expedited booking process for Phoenix PD, their highest volume customer. MCSO is providing this service *at no cost to the city*.
Phoenix is saving \$45,099 (Salary + benefits) in the cost of this position while getting the benefits of an extra, non-sworn detention officer whose sole purpose is to enhance the experience for Phoenix PD. In addition, MCSO has created yet another force multiplier for us due to even further increased police man hours in the community rather than in the jail as a result of their guaranteed expediting of the Phoenix PD booking process a service they provide to no other jurisdiction.
- d. With these 3 major concessions and financial incentives given to us by MCSO, there is not only no need to retro-fit the Southern Command Station (which we can not afford to do anyway), we won't need a pilot program which would only benefit the officers at Squaw Peak Precinct. **MCSO is giving us the opportunity for a streamlined booking process that positively impacts the efficiency of every officer in every precinct throughout the city.** This is an even greater benefit than any of us thought possible when we parted in August.

A Letter of Commitment by MCSO regarding these valuable concessions and financial investments is being prepared and will be sent to the city in the next few days.

Summary

It is manifestly clear that the time is now for this decade old problem to be resolved and that it can be done in a way that is not only budget neutral, but includes valuable concessions (**\$420,000 + \$45,099 = \$465,099**) in addition to several force multipliers whose benefits we will begin to reap instantly.

The solution we have proposed here is a win/win for the *entire* city of Phoenix, *all* of her police, MCSO, and the community they are tasked to serve.

This proposal was made possible by *all* of the stakeholders working cooperatively together. And what price can we put on having laid the foundation for future cooperation among us?