

## **MPD FINE REVENUE SUMMARY**

**12/15/04**

The purpose of this report is to provide a workplan, as requested, relating to fine revenue generated by the Minneapolis Police Department. It is important to explain the historical report/tracking system for tickets, 2004 YTD fine revenue figures, and the new report/tracking system which will improve the ability to monitor fine revenue progress.

Prior to mid-2004, no tracking system existed to allow MPD to record, track or report on paper citations. When officers wrote tags for traffic or misdemeanor violations, paper citations were issued, and sent to Hennepin County for processing. From there, the MPD basically awaited the fine revenue paid by the County, with no real mechanism for knowing how much was owed. In general, the MPD will receive \$53.60 for every traffic violation that results in a full collection amount, with some variances for certain violations.

In the most basic sense, the MPD has no control over the disposition of the citations once they are issued. There are three main areas in which the outcome of the case is determined: 1)through the Hennepin County Violations Bureau; 2)through court proceedings with Hennepin County judges; and 3)the decision of the violator to pay the fine with no appeal. There isn't a report available from Hennepin County to indicate the percentages of cases dismissed by judges or hearing officers, or the percentage of violators who send in the fine without appeal. In a high percentage of cases brought before either a judge or a hearing officer, the violation may be sustained but the fine dismissed. Also, in cases where multiple violations were cited, it is pretty common practice for both judges and hearing officers to only obligate the violator to a fine for one of the violations even if all violations are sustained. A hearing officer may not waive a fine, but does have the authority to reduce it. Judges, on the other hand, have full authority to suspend a fine even if finding a violator guilty of an offense.

The MPD is charged \$5.00 for every offense written that is heard before either a judge or a hearing officer, regardless of outcome. An additional fine of \$10.00 is charged to the MPD for every offense in which the violator is found to be not guilty. Through October 2004, the MPD has paid \$145,935 in these administrative charges, and another roughly \$24,000 in fees can be expected through the end of the year, for an approximate annual total of \$170,000.

Each month, the Finance Department receives a check from Hennepin County for fees collected in the previous month. Through November (Jan-Oct collections), the amount received has been \$3,103,130.68. Based on projections, Finance expects the MPD will collect a total of \$3,642,726.96 for the entire year of 2004. The amount expected (or budgeted) at the beginning of 2004 was \$4,619,377.00 in fine revenue. The projected

shortfall of anticipated collections is \$976,650.04. The attachment shows the monthly collection totals YTD.

In 2003, the MPD increased the Traffic Unit by 12 officers, for a total staff of 24 patrol officers. The productivity of the augmented Traffic Unit was very good in May-December 2003. On average, the unit wrote about 3,500 tags per month. Additionally, because of budget issues, the MPD placed 13 officers (previously assigned as school liaison officers) into the precincts and designated them as precinct traffic officers. The main focus of these officers was to increase visibility and citizen contacts in high-accident and high-speeding areas, to improve the safety of the surrounding neighborhoods. Due to staff reductions, it is likely these officers were used for 911-response, decreasing the amount of time solely focused on traffic enforcement.

Because of the centralized nature of the Traffic Unit, it is possible to keep a record of the citations written by those officers. The productivity of the Traffic Unit has not decreased in 2004, and remains at the approximate levels of 2003. However, it is not possible to track the citations written by the precinct traffic officers, or the other officers on the department, thus it isn't known what the productivity levels are for citations – for 2004 or in comparison to previous years. However, it is known that the precincts have experienced a 10-20% staff reduction due to attrition. Based on the Traffic Unit productivity in 2003, and existing collection amounts, an additional \$800,000 in fine revenue was projected as an increase from 2003 figures, and expected to be an offset to 2004 MPD budget expenditures. As previously mentioned, it is not likely the MPD will realize fine revenue projections in 2004. What can't be determined is the degree to which that shortfall comes from fewer citations written by officers, a higher number of offenses and/or fines being dismissed or reduced, or a combination of both.

Fortunately, beginning January 1, 2005, the MPD will utilize an automated citation system for officers to use to write citations. Because it is electronic, the MPD will now have a mechanism to track all citations, dispositions, and revenue. Some officers have already been using this system in the last few months, but the entire department will be included starting next month. With this system, information will be stored in a database, with full report capability, and Hennepin County will use the same data from this database – so both agencies will be working from the same figures. The electronic citation system will include information on all citations written, ordinance/statute numbers, community codes, violator demographics, offense locations, full fee amounts, and vehicle information. Hennepin County will add in disposition information including fines, dismissals, reductions, and amount collected.

The electronic citation system is run through computers in squad cars, including a printer. The violator's driver's license is swiped into a card-reader, and instantly captured in the system. A small amount of officers, generally those assigned to foot beats, will still use paper citations due to not having a computer. The MPD is planning on having all of those paper citations manually added to the electronic citation system so there will be a true reflection of all citation data.

In summary, the MPD has been at the mercy of Hennepin County for many years relating to fine revenue. Specifically, the lack of a formal MPD database tracking all citations has resulted in an inadequate system for citation management and projections. By implementing an electronic citation system, the MPD will be able to work more effectively with Hennepin County in this area, save officer time by an automated card-swipe (for driver's license info) process, and be better able to project fine revenues for budgetary purposes. Finally, the MPD has also taken steps to maintain a dialogue with Violations Bureau hearing officers, by meeting monthly to discuss any recent issues, and stay on top of emerging trends. While historical citation information won't be available for comparison, the new system will launch the starting point for solid information to be stored, and used in a variety of reports – resulting in a better way of doing business all around.