



# CITY OF HOUSTON

## Municipal Courts

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Municipal Courts Commences Payment Kiosk Pilot**

HOUSTON, Texas – A new City of Houston payment kiosk debuts today at the 1400 Lubbock Municipal Courts building. Procured by the City of Houston Municipal Courts Administration Department to reduce citizen wait time, the payment kiosk is the first of many the City wants to procure and place throughout Houston by the end of 2010.

“We hope these machines will be a continuation of our goal to decentralize City services and also to give us the ability to balance/reallocate staff resources,” stated Mayor Annise Parker. “This is just another step to promote better services for all Houstonians.”

The payment kiosk can be configured to provide a variety of City business payment transactions for the public. The current vendor, PayEase, is a Chicago-based company that provided the machines currently in operation in Chicago. Their program mirrors the model being considered for Houston.

“After 18 to 24 months of researching best practices of other large courts, we found a strong trend towards the use of technology and customer self sufficiency to support a more streamlined approach to court processes,” stated Sahira J. Abdool, Director and Chief Clerk of Municipal Courts Administration. “We want to provide citizens with as many choices as possible to take care of their business without unnecessary delays.”

The court kiosk will accept cash and credit card transactions for open/non delinquent traffic, non-traffic and parking citations. Users will be assessed a \$2.00 convenience fee per session. No juvenile or delinquent payments will be accepted by the kiosk at this phase of the pilot but plans are underway to include all court transactions.

“Each and every new initiative implemented at the City of Houston Municipal Courts is planned with the customer as our number one priority,” said Presiding Judge Berta Mejia. “The kiosk initiative is yet another prime example of providing customer-driven options and services to those we serve. We hope that as we add more of these stand-alone payment centers in key locations, long lines will become a thing of the past.”

Following a successful pilot within the Municipal Courts, the City will seek bids and then procure additional machines in preparation for use in other departments and citywide implementation. Other departments that are looking at future use of the kiosks include the Houston Public Library, Administration & Regulatory Affairs, Health and Human Services, Public Works and Engineering, Parking Management and the Houston Police Department.

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