

Criminal Justice Committee Chair Councilmember Carter  
To Lead City Council in Addressing  
Expedited Screening and Disposition Initiative  
At Thursday's Regular Council Meeting

News Release

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New Orleans  
City Council

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New Orleans, LA - May 19, 2009- At Thursday's regular City Council meeting, the Council will address as one of its Orders of Business, a presentation from local criminal justice leaders and national experts about the Expedited Screening and Disposition Initiative, which launched on March 31. The presentation will begin at approximately 11:00 a.m. on Thursday May 21 in the Council Chamber.

The Expedited Screening Initiative will expedite all practices from arrest to arraignment (the court appearance at which charges are presented) for simple possession drug cases. These cases account for roughly one third of all arrests on state charges.

District "C" Councilmember Carter said, "The successful launch of this Initiative represents a positive sign that the City's criminal justice leaders are committed to working together to advance meaningful reforms."

Beginning with simple possession drug cases, the Initiative will move New Orleans more in line with national good practices by:

- Expediting the time in which police officers complete and transmit their reports and the time in which the district attorney's office screens these cases
- Conserving public safety resources by rapidly screening out weak cases, swiftly deciding to charge strong cases, and

allowing a shift of effort to investigate and prosecute serious violent cases in a timely and effective manner

- Ensuring that public defenders are assigned at the earliest opportunity, and providing an opportunity for them to effectively counsel their clients
- Automating and streamlining data entry and information transmission, through efforts of the sheriff's and clerk's offices and the other participating agencies

Chief Public Defender Derwyn Bunton, District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro, Criminal Sheriff Marlin Gusman, Clerk of Court Arthur Morrell, and Superintendent of Police Warren Riley will be present at Thursday's regular Council meeting to discuss their agencies' participation in the Initiative.

Michael Jacobson, the Director of the Vera Institute of Justice, will provide a national perspective on the challenges and opportunities for criminal justice reform in New Orleans.

Jon Wool, who directs Vera's work in New Orleans, will describe the development of the Initiative, present preliminary performance results, and discuss opportunities for expansion.

The Initiative is one of five that the City's criminal justice leaders agreed to implement as part of the Criminal Justice Leadership Alliance - a coalition of the City's criminal justice leaders formed in 2007 to implement reforms to the City's criminal justice system.

For more information on the Criminal Justice Leadership Alliance (CJLA) and the Expedited Screening Initiative click [here](#).

## **New Orleans City Council**

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; Council Vice-President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.