

2022 Budget Hearing Statement

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Department of Administrative Hearings

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Good morning, Chairman Dowell and members of the City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today and update you on the Department of Administrative Hearings (DOAH). Several process modifications which were made during COVID-19 to divert foot traffic currently continue at DOAH. For example, Respondents are allowed to file motions to set-aside default judgements online. Also, those who have pending Building Code violations can email photos, receipts, paid invoices, permits and a sworn statement attesting to full compliance. The Building Department representative at DOAH reviews these documents. If the property owner is in compliance, the Law Department transmits a request to non-suit the case. The Coordinated Advice and Referral Program for Legal Services (CARPLS) continue to staff a dedicated phoneline and virtual advice desk for DOAH cases.

On November 23, 2020, DOAH received the authority to conduct virtual hearings.

On January 7, 2021, DOAH conducted its first virtual hearing of a non-vehicle case.

Since that date, there have been approximately 215 virtual hearings conducted in non-vehicle cases. Due to the extensive system and scheduling modifications,

parking, speed, and red-light camera cases began virtual adjudications on July 6, 2021. There have been 7749 virtual vehicle hearings requested as of September 17, 2021. This represents 6.0% of the total number of vehicle hearings requested at DOAH. DOAH anticipates that the number of virtual hearings will continue to increase as the public becomes more familiar with remote hearing functionality. Vehicle hearings can still be conducted via mail or in-person. Respondents continue to utilize the e-request method to upload their documents for contest by mail hearings. As of September 17, 2021, 61,296 Respondents used e-request to forward their documents instead of mailing their documents to the City.

DOAH remains committed to achieving its core mission in 2022 – providing a forum for fair and impartial adjudication, maintaining an exceptionally high level of courteous, respectful, and prompt customer service for the public. We will continue this work to efficiently and effectively serve all those who appear at DOAH.

Thank You.