



# City Council Report

**Date:** August 23, 2021  
**To:** City Council  
**Through:** John Pombier, Assistant City Manager  
**From:** Honorable John Tatz, Presiding City Magistrate  
Shawn Haught, Court Administrator  
**Subject:** Court Security Improvement Grant

## Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Mesa City Council (hereafter, “the Council”) to accept an award from the Administrative Offices of the Courts (hereafter, “AOC”) to improve security at the Mesa Municipal Court (hereafter, “the Court” and “the Courthouse”) by window tinting the east and rear side of the Court building.

## Background

On January 28, 2021, the AOC issued a memo announcing an opportunity for courts throughout the state to apply for grant monies (FY 2022) for court security improvements, as outlined in the Court Security Standards of the Arizona Code of Judicial Administration, § 5–301. Two of the requirements of the application were to attach a recent Court Security Assessment (hereafter, “Assessment”) performed by a third party to determine the Court’s security needs, and an estimate to remedy the identified security need(s). On March 9, 2021, the Judicial Branch Security Department (hereafter, “JBSD”) performed an onsite assessment of the Court’s security measures. On March 24, 2021, the Court received the detailed Assessment. The JBSD strongly recommended that the Court “install tinted/reflective film on all exterior windows to limit visibility into the building from the outside.” Former Court Security Coordinator, Wade Pew, reached out to a vendor who had previously done tinting for the City of Mesa to get an estimate to attach to our application, which we received on March 23, 2021.

Originally, the goal was to add security tinting to the entire Courthouse, an estimated cost of \$72,200. Currently, only the 1st-floor rotunda windows have security tinting; the remaining windows are untinted, giving public visual access to our courtrooms & jury assembly room, public counters, & staff offices. The rear of the Courthouse, a design with north & west faces, has no tinting. This presents a serious security issue due to the three levels of public parking in a garage just 45 yards away; public can see directly into judicial and staff offices, which presents a security risk. Based on the estimate, the Court was awarded a partial grant of \$32,490 on June 25, 2021, to tint the “rear of building.”

Subsequently, the Court was made aware that the estimate from the tinting company was an “eyeball estimate” that came in too high; it listed the cost to tint the rear of the Courthouse at \$32,490. After the tinting company measured the windows, they indicated that both the rear **and** the east side could be tinted for \$32,490. The Court acknowledges this tinting project would need to go through the bidding process.

## **Discussion**

A security issue identified by the Assessment can be remedied by the recommended security tinting of the Courthouse, albeit only a partial tinting for now; we intend to apply for subsequent AOC court security grants, hoping to tint the south-facing windows, thereby completing the project.

## **Alternatives**

The alternative is to reject the awarded \$32,490 in grant funds and then seek to use budget dollars to fund the important project. The Court currently does not have monies specifically allocated for this security improvement. Taking no action whatsoever would continue to pose a security risk for courthouse staff and judges.

## **Fiscal Impact**

Accepting the awarded \$32,490 in grant funds would have no fiscal impact on the City of Mesa. The Court would benefit greatly from these funds. Further, the tint blocks over 80% of the UV rays and heat, which will save the City in electricity costs. Anecdotally, the window tinting company that gave us the estimate informed us that they did a \$100,000 tinting job on a building in Phoenix. The building’s owner purportedly recovered (utility savings) the tinting costs in 2 years