IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

)	
)	
)	GENERAL ORDER RE:
)	REQUESTED HEARINGS
)	ON PENDING PARKING
)	CASES
)	
)	

The Court, being fully informed, hereby issues the following FINDINGS:

1. All prior findings in general orders related to COVID and staffing shortages issued by this Court in 2020 and 2021 are hereby incorporated by reference.
2. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to staffing shortages, similar to many courts statewide, the Bellingham Municipal Court has a large backlog of cases, including hundreds of criminal cases and probation matters whose resolution must take precedence over parking tickets in order to preserve public safety and due process.
3. Efforts to alleviate the risk of COVID, such as telephonic and electronic hearings, have been utilized, but are staff-intensive and have exacerbated staffing shortages.
4. Due process, as required by the constitutions of both the United States and State of Washington, as well as court rules and statutory authorities, require that people facing a deprivation of property in the form of parking fines be afforded a court hearing within a reasonable time. Unforeseen circumstances beyond the Court's control, including the pandemic and lack of court staff and, with safety being of utmost importance for all those who enter the courthouse, timely parking hearings have proven to be impossible.

Now, therefore, it is hereby ORDERED:

1. In the interests of justice, any parking tickets in which a hearing has been requested, by the date of this Order, not already resolved by payment or judicial decision, filed in the Bellingham Municipal Court between May 1, 2021 and October 31, 2021, are hereby DISMISSED.
2. The Clerk shall notify the City and all affected parties of this decision to the extent reasonably practical.

DATED this 3 day of November, 2021.

DEBRA LEV,
Presiding Judge