



City of Tigard Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Emily Oberdorfer, Presiding Judge
Holly Fenton, Court Operations Supervisor

Re: 26th Annual Court Report

Date: April 15, 2025

We are proud to present the 26th annual review of the Tigard Municipal Court.

About Our Court:

We are a court of limited jurisdiction, established by Article 4, Section 3 of the Revised City Charter. Our Court has concurrent jurisdiction with Washington County Circuit and Justice Court over all violations and misdemeanors triable in Tigard. Currently, the Municipal Court hears traffic violations and violations of City Ordinances. Most of our cases are for speeding and “red light” citations issued through the City’s photo enforcement program.

Court Goals:

The mission of the Tigard Municipal Court is to achieve the just, fair, and timely resolution of all matters that come before us. In service of our mission, the Tigard Municipal Court is committed to ensuring that all who enter or serve in our court are treated with respect, dignity, and professionalism. We affirm our responsibility to promote a court system free from bias and discrimination. Additionally, the court strives to serve as a community resource, providing education on public safety, Oregon law, and the legal process. In the upcoming year, we plan to:

- Continue engaging with the community by working with the Oregon Judges’ Association, the Oregon State Bar, the Oregon Association for Court Administration, local schools, participating in city-planned events, and recurring “Judge’s Corner” articles. For the second year, we are offering free wedding ceremonies in June to celebrate Pride.

- Continue our involvement in equity work, within the city and in the larger community.
- Continue with staff development, seeking opportunities to expand our knowledge base and exploring other ways to serve our community.

Our Team:

Our team is made up of our Judge, Supervisor, two Senior Clerks, four Court Clerk IIs, and an Administrative Assistant.

- Holly Fenton became our court supervisor in August. She has been with the court since 2017 and has been in municipal courts for over 25 years. Since taking over, she has been working diligently with contracts and PD on transitioning our photo enforcement program.
- We became a court of record in September 2024. All court clerks are trained to operate the FTR, which is the system used to record hearings and trials.
- Our cross-training system allows all clerks to train in each area of court operations. Our protocol ensures that every job is completed thoroughly, that nothing falls through the cracks, and that our systems are continually reviewed for improvement.
- Senior clerks handle complex administrative processes, case management updates, and process improvements, allowing more time for Clerk IIs to work on providing excellent customer service and processing the massive amount of paper, emails, and filings that come through the office.
- Everyone on the court team receives individual training and career development opportunities.

Caseload:

Our caseload is mainly driven by the Police Department's Photo Enforcement Program. For calendar year 2024, 12,752 cases were filed, which is 773 fewer than the same period the previous year and 6,159 fewer than in calendar year 2022.

- In 2023, we reported 6,987 photo enforcement speed citations; for 2024, that number was down to 6,422.
- 3,499 of the photo enforcement cases filed in 2024 alleged Failure to Obey a Traffic Control Device, or "photo red light."
- Citations issued from in-person stops were slightly up from the year before, with a total of 2,396, up from 2,330 last year.

Successes:

We take pride in the work we do for the City of Tigard and enjoy celebrating our daily accomplishments. Below are a few things we are especially proud of.

- We provide excellent customer service to our community. To ensure access to justice, we have made our most frequently used documents available in five different languages. We have three Spanish-speaking teammates and have become proficient in working with telephonic interpreters.
- We transitioned to a court of record in September 2024.
- We continue to hold “open court” every week to increase community engagement by giving people an unscheduled opportunity to speak with the judge. This is in addition to the scheduled arraignment date printed on their citation.
- On the first Thursday of each month, we open our courtroom to allow anyone sentenced to traffic school to appear and use city laptops and wi-fi to complete their online traffic safety program. Most of these individuals require assistance with computer use in general or lack access to a computer and Wi-Fi. Since implementing this assistance to the public, we have helped more than 20 defendants complete their traffic safety education course.

Team Member Development:

Our team works well together, respects one another, and believes the best about each other. We are proud to work for the City of Tigard and support our Community Promises for Excellence and Equity.

- Judge Oberdorfer continues to serve as Vice President of the Oregon Judges Association. Judge O was appointed to the Oregon State Bar Legal Ethics Committee and the House of Delegates. She also serves on the education committee for the Oregon Judges Association and volunteers with the Board of Bar Examiners.
- Holly Fenton became court supervisor and is presenting a session at the Oregon Association for Court Administration Spring Conference on April 27, 2025.
- Coby Slaughter became a Senior Court Clerk and began Leadership Tigard.
- Karen Trammell represented Tigard in planning the Oregon Public Employee Diversity Conference.
- Maria Nguyen is participating in Unid@s Leadership Program, the Union Contract Committee, and the Joint Insurance Committee.

Photo Enforcement Update:

We are currently transitioning to a new vendor and will provide the council with an update once we have more information.

We invite you to ask any questions you may have.