

# CITY OF RENTON FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Renton Municipal Court to introduce Community Court

*Court will deal with low-level offenders; virtual information session on March 2*

**RENTON, WA** – Renton Municipal Court will launch Renton Municipal Community Court to bring a new approach to dealing with low-level offenders.

Judge Kara Murphy Richards will oversee Renton Municipal Community Court.

“Community courts can help these people turn their lives around while keeping a focus on community safety and accountability,” she said. “I see the effects of homelessness, addiction, poverty and mental illness every day. These people need our help.”

Community courts work to keep individuals who commit the lowest level crimes out of jail. The court uses a problem-solving approach based on rehabilitation and accountability to work towards a reduction in reoffending. The “courtroom” is informal. Usually, it consists of a conference table, instead of a bench, with the defendant, lawyers, and the judge seated together.

Sentences combine punishment, such as requiring offenders to pay back the community through community service projects, with enrollment in pre-trial diversion programs, such as drug treatment or mental health counseling. Participants will have on-site access to services and weekly or bi-weekly court hearings.

“A community court removes many of the barriers people currently face when seeking help,” Judge Murphy Richards explains. “It gives the judge and the lawyers time to get to know the people we serve. This relationship will support and reward those who progress.”

Judge Murphy Richards will host a [Renton Municipal Community Court Informational Forum via Zoom](#) on Tuesday, March 2, from 7-8 p.m. Active participation is limited to the first 50 individuals to register. The forum will also stream on YouTube. Attendees can get questions and concerns answered, and court staff will explain how the community can get involved.

## About the City of Renton

*The City of Renton, Washington, with a population of 105,500 (2020), is located on the southeast shore of Lake Washington, just south of Seattle. Renton's strong economic base, diverse marketplace and favorable business climate have attracted nationally recognized companies that wish to provide employees and their families an outstanding quality of life. Renton is the home of Boeing, PACCAR, IKEA, the Seattle Seahawks, and the eternal resting place of Jimi Hendrix. More information is on our [website](#), in [news releases](#), or on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Nextdoor](#).*

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