



CITY OF GRESHAM

February 5, 2020

House Committee on Human Services and Housing
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Se. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Testimony regarding HB 4001-1

Dear Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the Committee:

I write regarding HB 4001 and the proposed -1 amendments. The City of Gresham applauds Speaker Kotek's desire to dedicate state resources to alleviate homelessness, and strongly supports state investments in the homelessness, substance-use-disorder, and behavioral health crisis in Oregon. Our community feels the burden of this crisis as it responds with severely limited financial resources trying to address a problem caused or exacerbated by overwhelming macro-economic and public policy issues outside of our control.

We also understand the Speaker's desire to relieve pressure on locating shelter spaces caused by Oregon's land use system. We do want to raise some concerns about some of the provisions in HB 4001-1. The amendment does not distinguish between those communities that operate prudently and can demonstrate a successful pattern of locating shelters through their existing land use systems, and those who have, perhaps, inappropriately applied their land use regulations to have the net effect of banning shelter completely. Thus, the preemptive force of Section 3 of the -1 amendment lands indiscriminately.

The City of Gresham has a pattern of success working with partners to locate shelter in Gresham. Working with Human Solutions, we facilitated the location of a Human Solutions Family Shelter for several years, navigating our land use system and working with our Fire/EMS officials to creatively mitigate fire risk and reach compliance. When the family shelter moved, we again worked with Human Solutions to locate their 90-bed women's shelter in Gresham in 2016, again allowing creative application of rules, and time to reach compliance. In addition to these examples, Gresham is home to a transitional shelter operated by Bridges to Change, a number of

Oxford Houses, and several in-patient treatment facilities, in addition to My Father's House's family shelter.

Our suggestion would be to alter the -1 so that when communities can demonstrate that they are applying land use provisions prudently, and that their actions do not have the net effect of banning shelter, they ought to be able to maintain their local land use authority. Siting shelter in a community, while protecting other land use values is not mutually exclusive. When considering preemptions of local control and authority, we believe the Legislature can draft legislation to ensure that communities exercising their local control in good faith are not unnecessarily restricted from building, growing, and developing in the way their local residents desire, as articulated in their comprehensive plans and local land-use provisions.

We urge the Legislature to further amend this legislation to insert that discernment. We all want better solutions and increased shelter for unhoused individuals, but in many communities, that can be done without completely removing any and all land use considerations.

Sincerely,

Eric Chambers
Government Relations Director