

February 9, 2022

House Committee on Housing
Oregon Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chair Campos, Vice-Chair Morgan and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon, we are committed to the collaborative effort and continued discussion to find long-term solutions to reduce racial disparity among people experiencing homelessness. As you discuss the continuation of the task force in the -3 amendment to House Bill 4051, we wanted to place several process concerns on the record that we have witnessed in the convening of the task force, with the hope of creating a more transparent discussion and better public process as the conversation continues.

In the creation of the Task Force on Homelessness and Racial Disparity, our primary concern was that this would be a process driven with a pre-determined outcome. While participating in good faith throughout the task force discussion, this is still a significant concern. Additional concerns with the process include – a condensed timeline, a lack of data to inform decisions, and a failure to comply with public meeting law.

Of specific concern was a failure to follow the statutory guidance established by the Legislature for the Task Force in House Bill 2100. **In the final report to the Legislature, 14 of the 35 recommendations included, failed to receive the statutorily required majority vote of the members of the task force.**

Condensed Timeline & Lack of Data

After the initial Task Force Kickoff on November 29, 2021, that failed to include legislators, the Task Force met five times between **December 20, 2022, and January 12, 2022** – a truncated timeline due to multiple factors including delays in appointment of Task Force members, identification and procurement of a third-party facilitator, end of the year holidays, and other constraints due to unpredictable COVID-19 conditions.

There was a common theme throughout the discussion about the need for more data and ensuring that the available data for homelessness needs improvement to be fully actionable. The data analyzed in the report focused on the existing need using the 2020 Point In-Time (PIT) Count. This report failed to analyze and take into consideration who is currently receiving funding and homeless services, which should be a critical component in determining how to equitably meet the need for those experiencing homelessness.

Failure to Comply with Public Meeting Law

A majority of the Task Force conversation took place in small groups and by asynchronous feedback via a slack channel. **The small group conversations and slack channel were not available to members of the public who were trying to follow the conversation.** To our knowledge, there is also no recording of these discussions available to the public. Finally, we are concerned that members of the Task Force had the ability to go back and add insight or make revisions to the notes from earlier small groups discussions that could alter the summary of the discussion, despite not participating in that conversation.

Final Recommendations: Failure to Receive Majority Vote of Task Force Members

Notwithstanding the compressed timeline (December 20, 2021 - January 12, 2022) and lack of in-depth task force conversations, 35 recommendations were included in the final report to the Legislature. **Of these recommendations, 14 were included in the final report despite failing to receive the statutorily required majority vote of the members on the Task Force.**