

April 21, 2021

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, Rayfield and Members on the Committee,

This is a critical time as we work to recover from the pandemic and economic crisis. We can accomplish a lot by working together, and the City of Gresham is excited to partner with the State to deliver critical investments for our residents. This crisis has disproportionately impacted vulnerable Oregonians and exasperated systemic inequities. We need to invest in the communities that have been most impacted and provide the investments to assist in their recovery. An equity approach is essential for accountability, and to ensure these funds benefit those most in need.

The City has developed this \$30 Million package of catalytic investments in East Multnomah County and Gresham for state consideration. We urge your support and collaboration where we can jointly leverage our shared funds.

- **Youth Opportunity**
 - East Metro Outreach, Prevention, Intervention - \$2,000,000
 - Gradin Community Sports Park - \$6,000,000
 - School District and City Recreation Facilities Partnership - \$2,000,000
- **Housing Stability**
 - Housing Technical Assistance and Down Payment Support - \$2,000,000
 - Housing Preservation and Investment - \$6,000,000
- **Economic Recovery**
 - Small Business Grant Assistance - \$2,000,000
- **Infrastructure**
 - Digital Inclusion - \$9,000,000
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvements - \$1,165,000

We are proud that Gresham is one of the most diverse and young communities in the state of Oregon; over 36% percent of our population are residents of color, and over 29,000 of our residents are under the age of 20.

However, we also face significant challenges. Residents in Gresham have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; of the six zip codes with the highest cases in the Portland metro area, five of them are located within Gresham. Those same five zip codes in Gresham are also among the twelve zip codes with the highest COVID case rates in the state overall. Based on research by the Oregon Employment Department, East Multnomah County has the highest concentration of poverty in the state. Over one in five of households in Gresham receive federal food assistance, and more than thirty-four percent of renting households are severely rent burdened. Reducing poverty in East Multnomah County will alter the trajectory of poverty in our state.

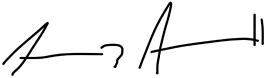
Prior to the pandemic, the City accomplished a lot with fewer resources per capita than many of our peers. As a result of Measure 50, Gresham's \$3.61 permanent tax rate is one of the lowest of any full-service city in

Oregon. While the American Rescue Plan is providing critical resources to our City, the need is significantly higher than our available resources.

Attached to this letter is a more detailed description of the investments that the City of Gresham is seeking. Supporting East Multnomah County will require a coordinated and collaborative approach. These projects and programs were carefully developed to complement other efforts at the county and state level while providing resources for the City of Gresham to address historic and systemic racial disparities through investments in youth opportunity, housing stability, economic recovery, and infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Travis Stovall
Mayor
City of Gresham

City of Gresham
American Rescue Plan Funding Priorities
for Consideration by State of Oregon

Youth Opportunity

East Metro Outreach, Prevention, Intervention (EMOPI)	East Metro Outreach, Prevention, Intervention (EMOPI) invests in a culturally-responsive program to address root causes of youth violence. Gresham and community partners have found that the best way to address rising violence is via culturally-responsive community organizations that provide outreach, prevention, and early intervention services to youth.	\$2,000,000
Gradin Community Sports Park	Gresham’s Gradin Community Sports Park will enhance livability and recreation access for a diverse community experiencing significant poverty, while also boosting Oregon’s economy and enhancing assets in the growing sports-recreation sector. This investment will construct soccer fields, softball fields, permanent restroom and concession facilities to help complete this 32-acre park as a regional asset and a host for tournaments. There are currently no tournament play spaces in East Multnomah County. The project has already completed the Master Plan phase and construction of Phase I amenities.	\$2,000,000 - \$6,000,000
School District Recreation facility upgrades and partnership	Investment in a School District/City Partnership for recreation facility development will create partnerships with Gresham school districts in order to expand recreational opportunity for Gresham’s youth. In 2020, the City solicited significant community feedback as part of a parks planning study. The community asked that Gresham’s parks be available to underserved communities and meet a variety of uses.	\$2,000,000

Housing Stability

Housing technical assistance and down payment support	Housing technical assistance and down payment support. Gresham’s Welcome Home Program provides technical assistance to first time home buyers and utilizes federal funds from the Home Investments Partnership (HOME) program to partner with Portland Housing Center and provide down payment and closing costs. The interest and demand for this program exceed our available resources.	\$2,000,000
Housing preservation and investment	Affordable housing preservation and investment. This investment would provide local resources for securing regulated affordable housing for Gresham renters, 34% of whom pay more than 50% of their income on rent. Utilizing the state registry and notification system, properties are in need of reinvestment and extension of their affordability contracts to protect residents at risk of displacement and address Gresham’s desperate need to increase housing stability.	\$1,500,000 - \$6,000,000

City of Gresham
American Rescue Plan Funding Priorities
for Consideration by State of Oregon

Economic Recovery

Small Business Grant Assistance	Small business grants to support small businesses, particularly BIPOC owned businesses, to assist in retail recovery. Small business is the lifeblood of Gresham’s historic downtown and Rockwood communities, but many businesses have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. Funding will also go to culturally-responsive organizations to provide technical assistance and support. State funds are leveraged by the Gresham implementation of HUD funds.	\$2,000,000
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Infrastructure

Digital Inclusion	Low-income and BIPOC Gresham residents are much less likely to have sufficient access to the internet: 39% of Gresham households making less than \$20,000 a year have no internet subscription. COVID-19 has made this digital divide even more problematic, as digital access has become critical for school, jobs, and access to services. Funds would be used to conduct community engagement, study, and implement programs to enhance digital inclusion: distributing tablets with built-in connectivity, internet assistance vouchers, public wireless networks, and digital literacy programming.	\$1,000,000 - \$9,000,000
Safety and Sidewalks Access	Gresham’s Active Transportation Plan is a landmark study that was developed with a robust community engagement process and a racial equity lens. Done in conjunction with Multnomah County’s Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program, the community identified investments to support safer pedestrian and bicycle access. Safety improvements in high crash corridors will address critical gaps in the transportation network.	\$1,165,000
Total		\$13.6M - \$30.1M