

HB 4037 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Housing and Development

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Meeting Dates: 2/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to use reasonable efforts to lease to the City of Salem surplus, unused, or underutilized property, owned by the Department and located within the City of Salem, for the city's use as transitional housing accommodations, subject to certain terms. Requires state agencies to assist DAS in making such properties available for lease. Sunsets January 2, 2026. Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon's rate of unsheltered homeless individuals is one of the highest in the United States. A 2019 Urban Institute report found that 24 percent of homeless individuals in Oregon, approximately 10,142, were unsheltered. According to Oregon Housing and Community Services, the number of unsheltered homeless individuals has increased by 37 percent since 2015, and the Department's 2019 Statewide Shelter Study calculated a shortfall of 5,800 emergency shelter beds for individuals and families. The 2019 Point-in-Time Count for Mid-Willamette Valley estimated at least 1,151 homeless individuals in Marion and Polk Counties, with at least 352 unsheltered.

Oregon law allows local governments to establish and regulate transitional housing accommodations within their urban growth boundary for individuals and families who lack permanent or safe shelter. Intended for use on a limited, seasonal, or emergency basis, transitional housing includes yurts, huts, cabins, fabric structures and tents, in addition to areas that allow overnight vehicle stays in parking lots or facilities. Transitional housing accommodations may provide access to water, cooking, and other basic hygiene services.

House Bill 4037 A requires the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to lease surplus, unused or underutilized state real property owned by the Department to the City of Salem for the city's use as transitional housing accommodations. Leased properties cannot be used for a purpose other than as transitional housing. Leases cannot require the city to pay more than the actual costs of entering the lease agreement, set the initial lease term for longer than 18 months, or include use of improvements on the property except for parking lots. The city must indemnify the state for any liability associated with use of Department property and restore property conditions at the end of the lease term. The measure also directs other state agencies to assist in making such properties available for lease.