

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
Monday, April 1, 2024**

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Mayor Graham, Councilors Hyatt, Bloom, Dahle, Hansen, Bloom, DuQuenne and Kaplan were present. Ashland Parks and Recreation Commissions Justin Adams, Jim Bachman, Jim Lewis, and Stephani Seffinger were also in attendance.

1. Public Input (15 minutes – Public input or comment on City business not included on the agenda)

Debbie Neisewander/Ashland – Spoke about ongoing issues with the Night Lawn and a recent arrest and confiscation. Asked for clarification regarding police rules. Felt that the City was actively working against the Night Lawn as well as the unhoused in general.

Scott Butler/Ashland – Voiced concerns that the Police were unfairly targeting the unhoused on the Night Lawn.

Nathan Yunnetta/Ashland – Spoke about his recent arrest and mistreatment by APD. Mentioned how APD had threatened him and his service animals. Felt that the City of Ashland and its residents were actively working against the unhoused.

Karen Greenwood/Ashland – Spoke about her experience with APD on the night lawn. Felt that she was being targeted explicitly by APD for being unhoused. Felt that the City of Ashland and its residents were actively working against the unhoused.

Yukon Smithe/Ashland – Spoke about his experience on the Night Lawn and recent encounters with APD. Felt that the citizens of Ashland did not care about the unhoused. Spoke about the challenges of having to move every day per the law while still getting tickets from APD.

2. DEI Assessment and Strategic Plan

City Manager Sabrinna Cotta and Paradigm Public Affairs CEO Tanya Settles presented the results from the DEI and Organizational Culture Assessment (see attached). Settles explained the reasoning behind Paradigm’s involvement, how data was gathered, and what the findings of the investigation were. She highlighted the strengths of the City’s employees regarding dedication, pride, and open-mindedness. She also highlighted areas of improvements in the fields of understanding sex/gender identity and disability She added that there was a lack of trust between staff and high-level leadership because of the amount of turnover and vacancies. She presented a vision for what future relations between staff could look like as well as the steps needed to achieve that vision.

Cotta presented (see attached) suggestions and steps to move forward to incorporate the findings of the DEI study. The main goals and topics included:

- Support the HR Department to build organization capacity and cooperate with reasonable autonomy.
- Focus on DEIA as part of organizational culture.
- Leverage the power of staff to work together.
- Improve Communication.
- Continue to enhance relationships between leadership & staff/leadership skills.
- Build trust between City staff & elected officials.
- Actively practice DEIA.

Kaplan thanked Cotta and Settles for their work. He noted that 13 of the 25 recommendations were considered “priority one.” He wanted to know how all the recommendations fit together and how to ensure the City could meet the proposed December 2025 deadline. He also asked if the City had enough resources for HR to complete the needed tasks and what could Council do to help with the process. Cotta responded that HR’s current capacity was hard to answer, as the department was still dealing with backlog and currently limited staffing. She added that a better answer would be available once budgeting for the next biennium had begun. She also added that one thing Council could do to help was to support HR both in their work and with funding.

Parks Commissioner Stefani Seffinger asked what the relationship would be between Parks and HR moving forward, what autonomy does HR have and how would it handle micro-aggressions from and towards commission and council members. Cotta responded that HR works with all City employees, regardless of role. She noted that microaggressions should be reported to HR and that there would be special protections for elected officials. Assistant City Attorney Carmel Zahran added that would be a legal analysis behind all policies and protections for City employees.

Dahle thanked Cotta and Settles for the report. He noted the issue around building trust between staff and high-level leadership. He wanted to know how fast could the City implement the needed changes and how best to monitor progress regarding the rebuilding of trust. Cotta responded that all staff will be given a copy of the report. Reporting would be a combination of an annual survey and additional reporting methods that had not yet been determined. She added that HR would come back to a future study session with updates. DuQuenne noted how some of the people who were interviewed as part of the survey felt that DEIA was a low priority and negatively impacted productivity. She wanted to know how the City was going to work with staff on the topic on microaggressions. Cotta responded there would be several training courses on the subject and pointed out that staff interacting with each other will also help address the issue. Settles added that different people are at different levels and move at different paces regarding their understanding of DEIA. She stressed that DEIA training alone is not an instant fix and that people need to time to move through the process. She supported the strategy as outlined by Cotta and encourages Council to support it as well. DuQuenne spoke about her initial experience when first joining the Council and how there was an issue with staff acknowledging her questions and input at that time. She wanted the training to help bridge the gap between City staff and Council as well as have staff become more aware of biases and equity moving forward. Hyatt asked about turnover rate

trends and cross training. Cotta says the turnover rate has stabilized at about six to seven percent with many of the recent departures related to retirements. She also spoke about the benefits of cross-training regarding increased productivity as well as covering for people if they are absent. Bloom asked about the reporting system for the City and if they had looked into an online reporting system. Cotta responded that staff could directly reach out to HR, the City manager, as well as legal. She noted that there was also an ability for staff to submit an anonymous complaint via phone or email, all of which are taken seriously. Hansen was surprised by the lack of racial diversity. He asked what the DEIA goals should be for the City regarding racial equity. Settles noted that the findings around racial diversity for the City reflected the demographics of both the City and within the State of Oregon as a whole. She noted that the City had received reports regarding racial micro-aggressions at work, but she was unable to investigate further within the report because of confidentiality issues. Hasen asked about goals that the City could set to increase racial diversity within staff. Settles responded that there already was a goal set for racial parity within City while noting that incremental change would be the best way to move forward. She also recommended the City cast a broad net when it comes to City employment. Hansen asked about succession planning and if those would fall under the umbrella of DEIA goals. Cotta responded that this is a universal issue with government across the board. She noted that there were five different generations currently in the workforce, each with different values and needs. Seffinger added that many City employees do not live within city limits because of the lack of affordable housing. She noted that the lack of housing could push away potential younger employees. Graham asked Settles how she defined diversity within the study. Settles responded that diversity is seen as everything that makes people both alike and different from each other, including veteran status, political ideology, and people living within multi-generational households. Graham stressed that she wanted Council to do the work regarding DEIA training and protocol to match what City staff were doing.

3. SB 1537 – UGB Expansion

Planning Commission Chair Brandon Goldman provided a presentation (see attached) and background on SB 1537 and how it hopes to streamline housing development and to allow for more affordable housing. Goldman stressed that guides for implementation were not yet fully fleshed out as the bill had only recently been passed by the State government.

Topics discussed included:

- Introduction to Senate Bill 1537
- Housing Accountability and Production Office
- Housing Infrastructure Support Fund
- Housing Revolving Loan Fund
- Legal
- Goal Post Rule
- Land Use Adjustment
- Urban Growth Boundary Expansions

Bloom asked for clarification on height restrictions. Goldman explained the different zones had different height requirements, with downtown having a 50-foot height restriction and residential areas having 35 feet. Bloom asked if those restrictions included the proposed climate friendly and equitable areas. Goldman responded that the climate friendly and equitable areas would all have 50-foot height restrictions. Bloom asked if developers could build up to 60 feet citing the senate bill, which Goldman confirmed was possible in those areas. DuQuenne asked if the senate bill would apply to Corman Mill District regarding adjustments and variances. Goldman responded that the adjustments would apply everywhere within City limits. As part of the proposal process, an entity would be able to request adjustments as needed if they fall within certain guidelines. Hyatt asked about the timeline for designating between Exclusive Farm Use zoning and Urban Renewal Agency zoning. Goldman was unsure of the process for legislative change at the County level will be but noted that the City's process would happen first. Hyatt asked if a property owner had to use all of the space. Goldman responded that the one-time expansion had a requirement that a property owner had not previously expanded their property. Hansen asked what the pros and cons are of the \$75 Million dollar loan fund over tax increment financing. Goldman responded that it would take less time. He noted that tax increment financing comes out of the City's pocket, while the loan fund would go through state funds. Graham asked if Goldman needed any direction from Council, which Goldman clarified that he did not. He explained that he was simply providing an update on behalf of the state to inform Council.

Council took a recess from 7:15PM to 7:20PM

4. Homeless Services Masterplan Subcommittee update

Housing Services Masterplan Subcommittee members Jan Calvin and Echo Fields provided a presentation centered around the recent work of the committee (see attached).

Topics Discussed:

- Who We Are
- How the Subcommittee Will Approach its Work, Tasks, and Timeline
- Preliminary Outline of the Subcommittee Report
- Subcommittee Roadmap
- Accomplishments thus far
- Timeline

Kaplan and Hansen thanked the subcommittee for their work. Hansen asked what phase two would look like and if Council would receive any recommendations from the Subcommittee in the future. Calvin noted that ultimately it would be up to the Council to figure out a course of action. Hansen asked if there would be a potential study session on their findings. Fields responded that Councilors Bloom and Kaplan would be the primary sources of information moving forward. Graham spoke about wanting a few points of recommendations and guidance that Council could work with moving forward regarding the issue of the unhoused. Fields felt that once all of the material had been pulled together, she predicted that several themes would begin to appear with testimony. She also noted that finding the funding and

resources to meet the challenges would be difficult. DuQuenne praised the subcommittee for their work and for providing data to inform Council on their course of action.

5. Adjournment of Study Session

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski

Attest:

Mayor Tonya Graham

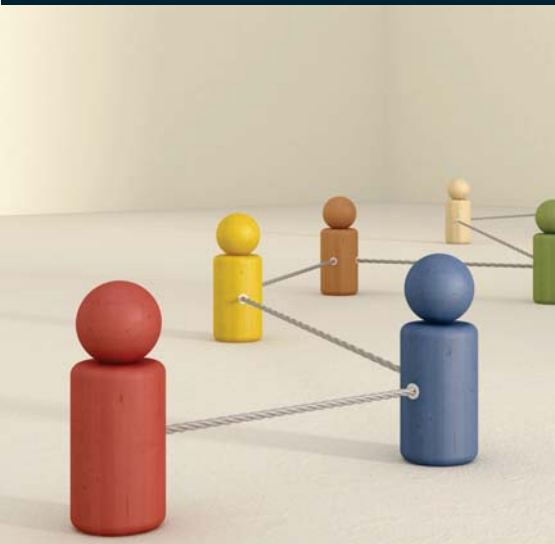


DEIA and Organizational Culture Assessment

Our Task

Understand, from the perspective of staff, DEIA, organizational culture and belonging.

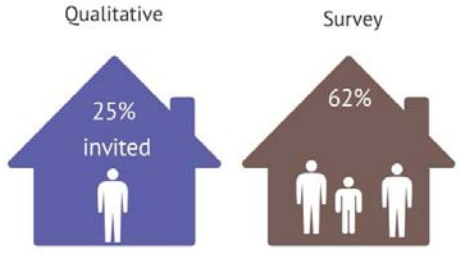
- Identify barriers to belonging.
- Partner with the City to identify solutions to DEIA challenges.
- Strengthen organizational culture without compromising what makes Ashland special and unique.



WHAT WE DID



DEIA and CULTURE ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW STAFF PARTICIPATION



- 11 Findings
- 25 Recommendations
- 3 Broad Goals

What We Found: Strengths



Pride in City and Work



Dedication to Service



DEIA Makes Ashland a Better Place to Work



High Value of Internal and External Accountability



High Capacity for Learning

What We Found: Opportunities

1. The City of Ashland government is generally perceived to be a welcoming place, but there are opportunities to improve:

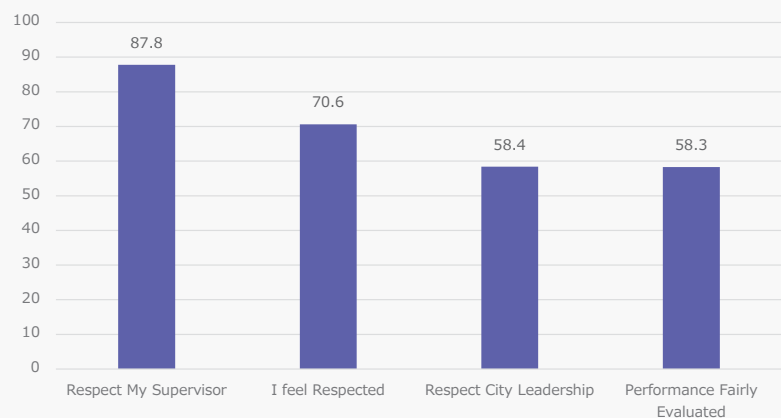
- Sex, gender identity
- Disability

2. Key Barriers to Belonging

- Trust between staff and City government leaders
- Structural barriers related to Human Resources
- Microaggressions related to gender/gender identity and disability

What We Found: High Respect & Regard for Others

Perceptions of Respect
(Percent who agreed/strongly agreed)



What We Found: Low Levels of Trust with Leadership

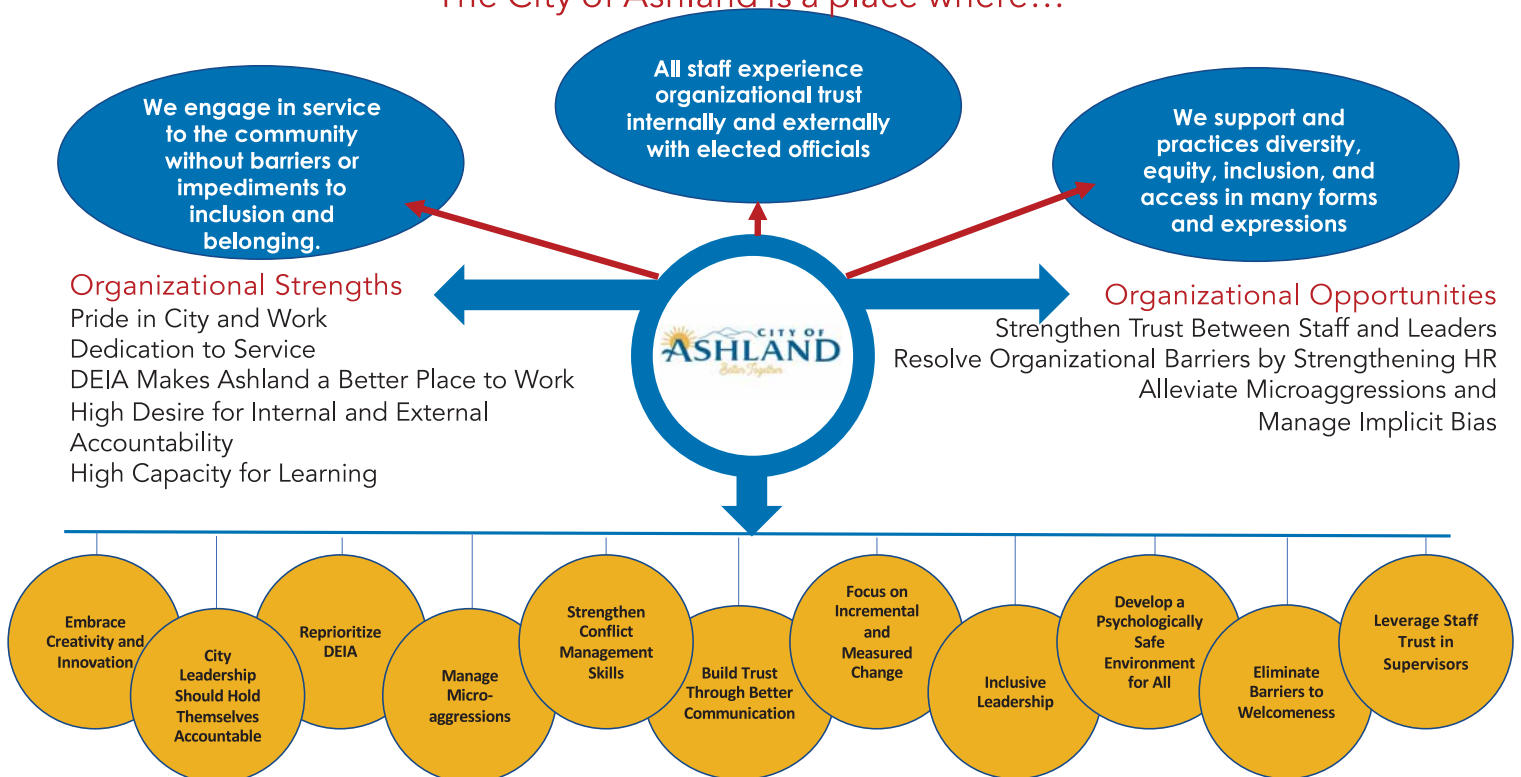
About 1/3 of survey participants reported that they do not trust high level City leadership

WHY:

Turnover or vacancies in leadership positions

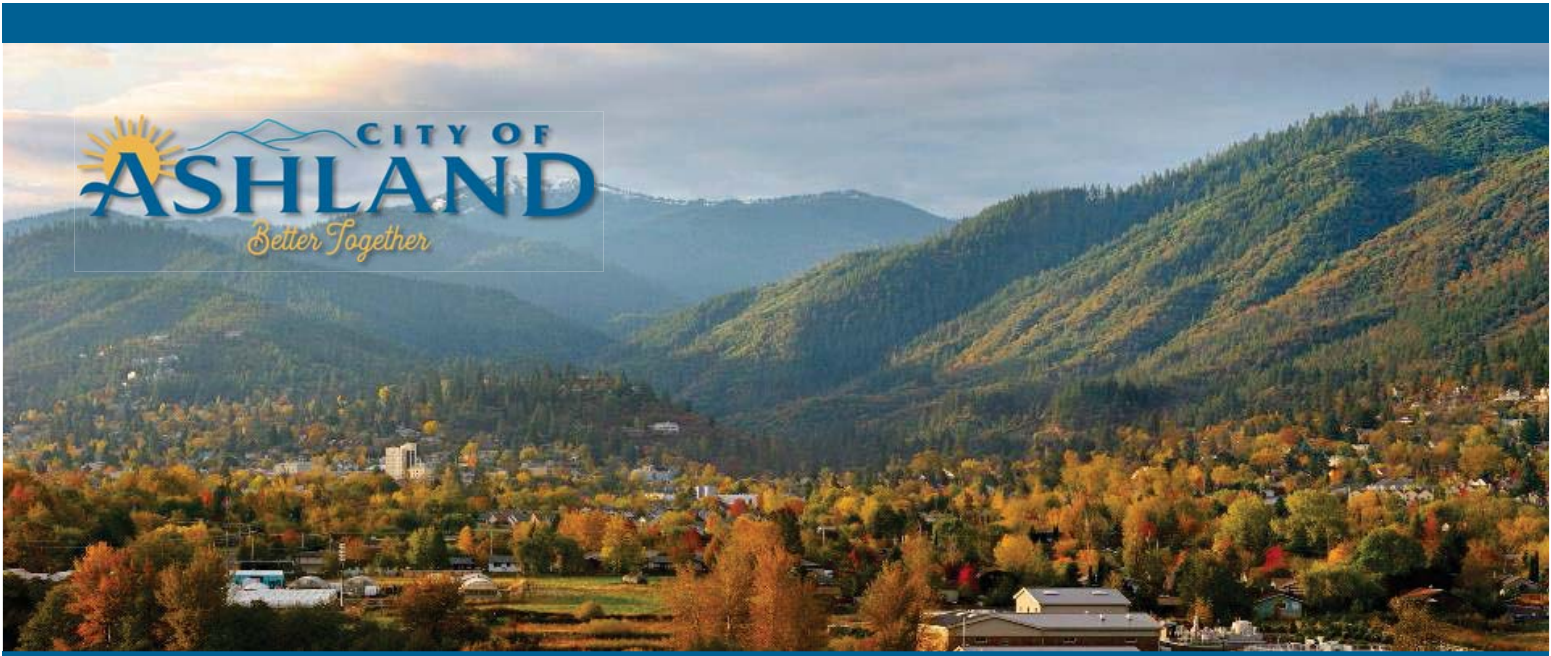
Relationship between City and previous Council contributed to feelings of distrust

Staff Vision for Organizational Transformation The City of Ashland is a place where...



THANK YOU!

Questions?



DEI Assessment Next Steps

Goal 1

Support the HR Department to build organizational capacity and cooperate with reasonable autonomy

- AMC update
- Increased HR FTEs this BN
- Handbook update Lexipol
- Annual HR survey
- Annual Trainings for all staff
 - Anti-harassment
 - Pending: Supervisor trainings
 - Implicit bias training



Goal 1

Focus on DEIA as part of organizational culture

- Annual performance reviews city-wide
 - More than annual check-ins
- Blind application review
- Succession planning
- Micro-aggression training



Goal 1

Leverage the power of staff to work together

- Cross team collaboration
- Department head collaboration
- Liaison support group
- Professional book club
- Lunch & Learns
- HR Roadshow
- City Manager Listening Sessions
- Staff appreciation events



Goal 2

Improve Communication

- Annual survey
- Friday update emails from CM
- All user emails
- Distribution of CM report & newsletter
- CM Listening session
- HR Roadshow



Goal 2

Continue to Enhance Relationships between leadership & staff/ leadership skills

- Supervisor training & employee training
- Professional development opportunities
- Goal: Employer of choice
- Comp & class study



Goal 2

Build trust between City staff & electeds

- Staff recognition at Council meetings
- Council members participation in employee appreciation events
- Town Hall
- Coffee & Conversations
- Elected official training



Goal 3

Actively Practice DEIA

- Implicit bias training
- Professional development opportunities
- DEIA staff committee
- Professional development book club
- Lunch & Learn



QUESTIONS?





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Goal 3

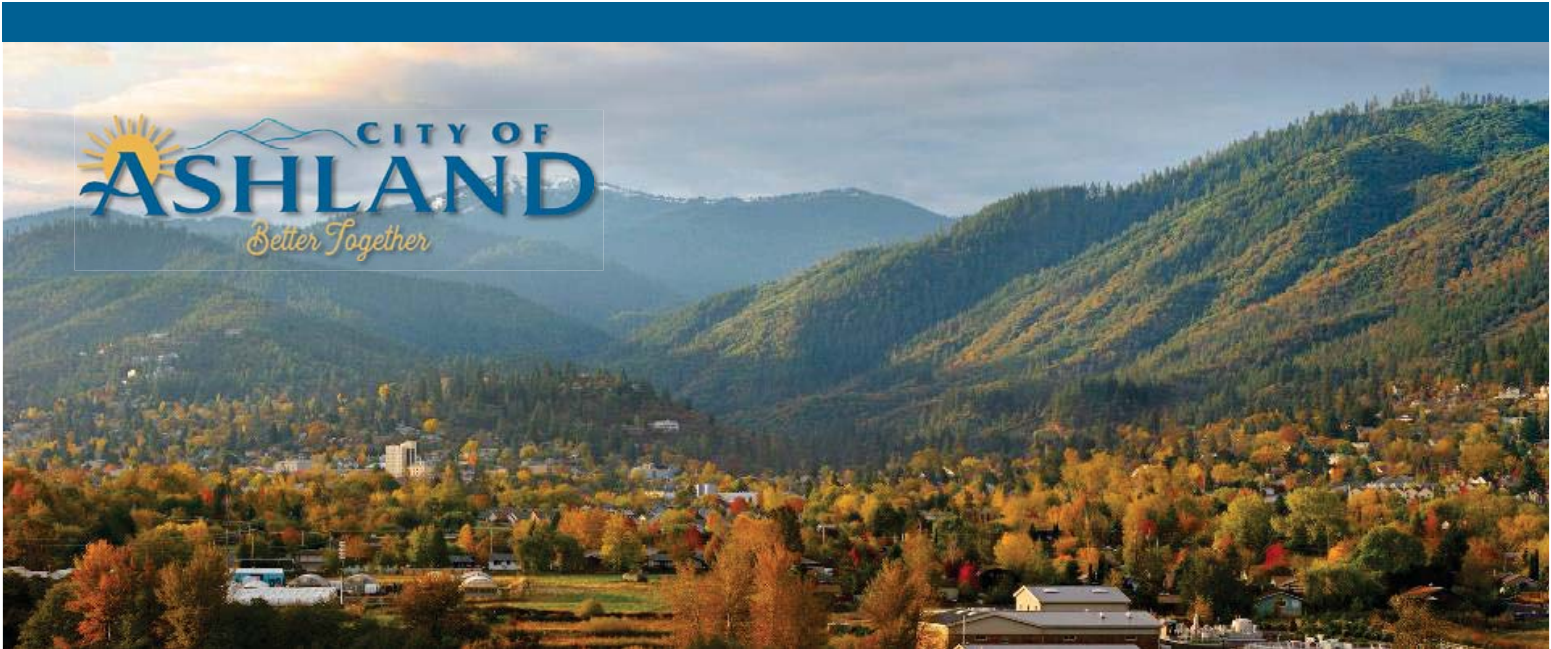
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QUESTIONS?





Overview of Senate Bill 1537 – Oregon's Housing Policy Reform

City Council
Study Session
4/1/2024

Introduction to Senate Bill 1537

Background: Initiated by Governor Tina Kotek, passed in the 2024 Regular Session.

Purpose: To streamline housing development, support affordable housing, and enforce housing laws effectively.

Key Features:

- Establishment of the Housing Accountability and Production Office.
- Enhanced funding for housing infrastructure.
- Established Land Use requirements and opportunities for housing development



Housing Accountability and Production Office

Role: Oversee housing initiatives in collaboration with the Department of Land Conservation and Development and the Department of Consumer and Business Services.

Responsibilities:

- Assist local governments and developers with housing laws.
- Enforce housing laws where necessary



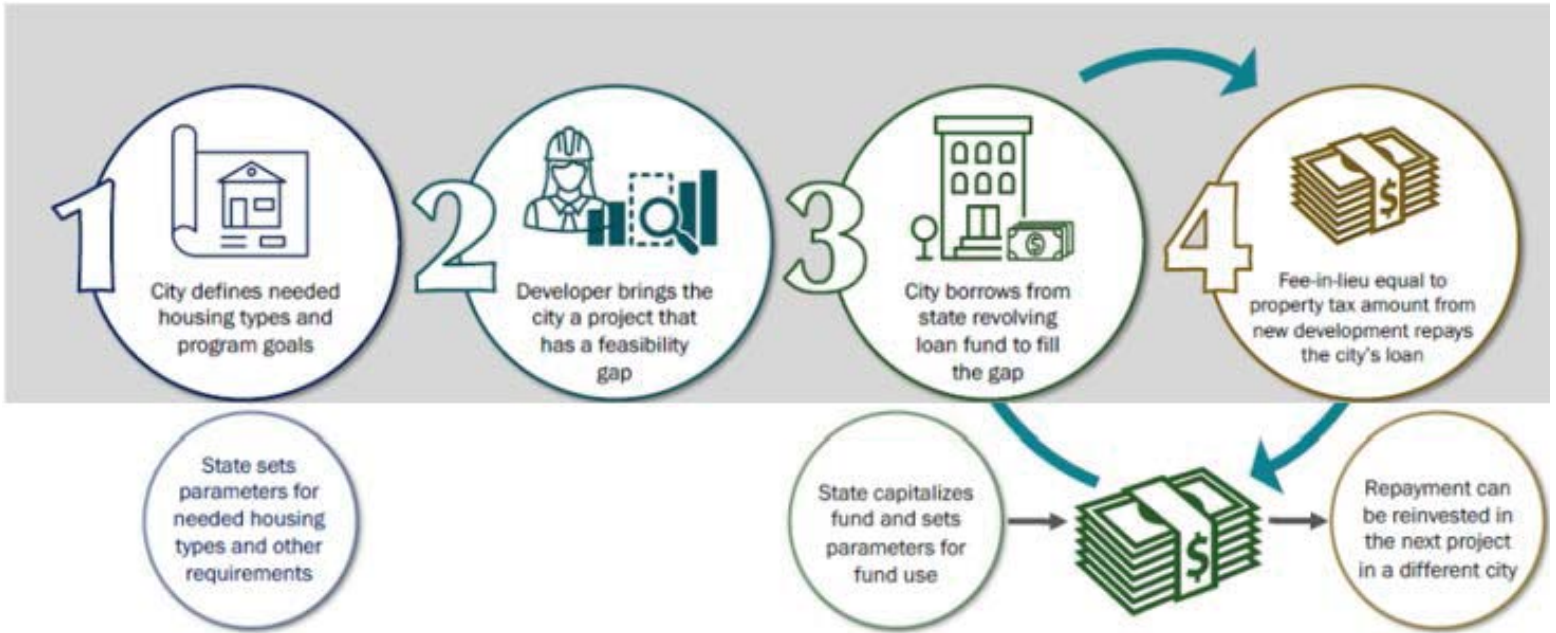
Housing Infrastructure Support Fund

- Provides local government support for residential development infrastructure.



Housing Revolving Loan Fund

•\$75 million Revolving Loan Fund created to provide subsidy for Middle Income housing development



Legal

Legal Fees

Expands eligibility for a housing development applicant to seek the courts award of legal fees in the event the court upholds a decision on appeal.



Goal Post Rule

If land use rules change during a development project, the developer can either follow the original rules or use the new ones without reapplying, provided they decide before the project's public review starts.



Land Use Adjustments

- Up to 10% reduction in minimum side or rear yard setbacks
- Up to 10% increase in maximum lot coverage.
- Up to 25% reduction in required common areas, open spaces, or landscaping areas.
- Building height can be increased by either one additional story or up to a 20% height increase, whichever is greater.
- Adjustments to facade materials and window areas to offer flexibility within the design.

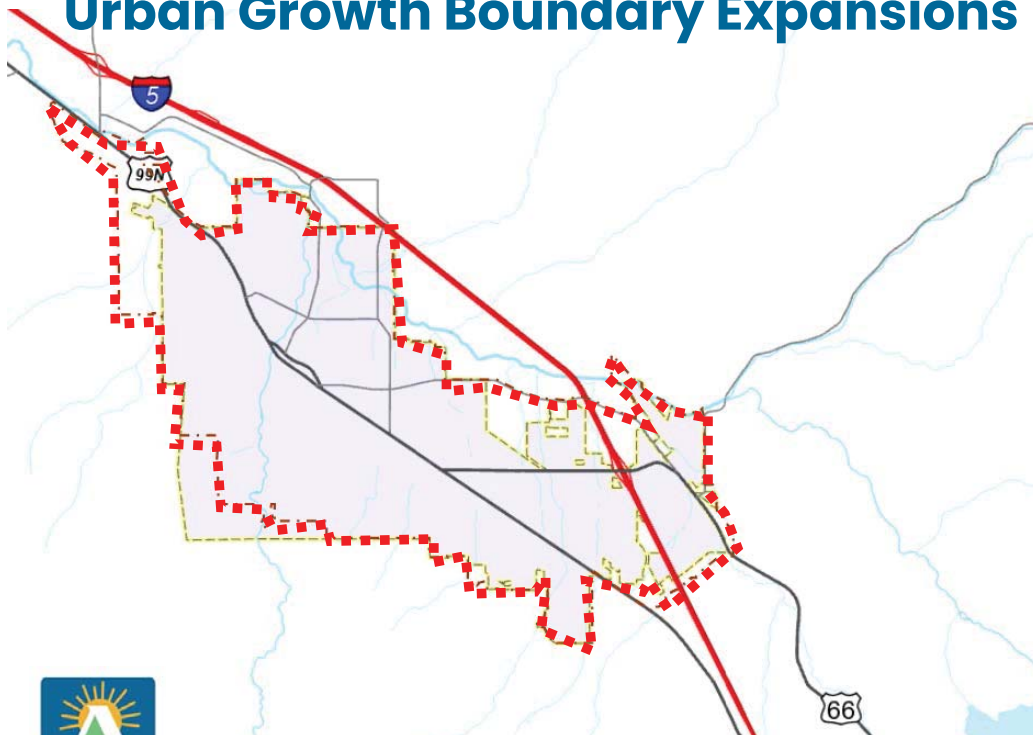


Land Use Adjustments

Mandated for Housing Developments of 6 units per acre or more, where the adjustment achieves at least one of the following objectives:

- To reducing costs or avoiding delays.
- To lower the sale or rental cost of the housing units.
- To increase the total number of housing units.
- To ensure the housing units are affordable for moderate-income households for at least 30 years.
- To ensure at least 20% of units are affordable for low-income households for at least 60 years.
- To add accessibility features
- To support housing affordability through zero equity, limited equity, or shared equity models for a period of 90 years.

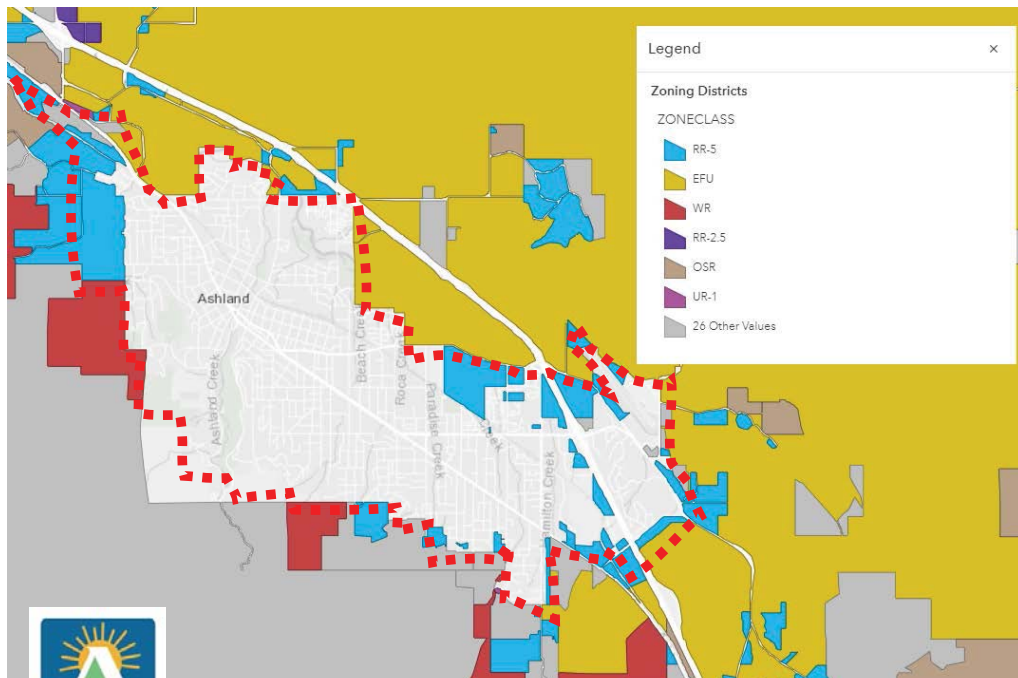
Urban Growth Boundary Expansions



Under Senate Bill 1537, cities can expand their UGBs if the area is in an **urban reserve areas (URA)**, or upon **non-resource lands**.

The City of Ashland faces unique challenges in pursuing urban growth boundary (UGB) expansions due to its lack of designated URAs and adjacent county zoning as Resource Lands (EFU and FR).

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	EXPAND UGB <50 acres	ADD URA <50 acres	EXPAND UGB >50 acres	ADD URA >50 acres
City of Ashland	Minor Amendment to Regional Plan	Minor Amendment to Regional Plan	Major Amendment to Regional Plan	Major Amendment to Regional Plan
	Need to apply to Jackson County	Need to apply to Jackson County	Need to apply to Jackson County	Need to apply to Jackson County
	Local & State Process equivalent to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.	Local & State Process equivalent to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.	Local & State Process equivalent to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Would require a supermajority vote of Technical (staff) & Policy (elected) Advisory Committees of six participating jurisdictions in a favorable recommendation to Board of Commissioners.	Local & State Process equivalent to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Would require a supermajority vote of Technical (staff) & Policy (elected) Advisory Committees of six participating jurisdictions in a favorable recommendation to Board of Commissioners.
	Would need to demonstrate land need, existing built density targets met in the city, analyze soil types, develop transportation plan, etc.	Would need to complete analyze soil types and agricultural assessment, develop transportation plan, etc	Would need to demonstrate land need & existing built density targets met in the city, analyze soil types, develop transportation plan, etc.	Would need to complete soil analysis, prepare transportation system plan, etc.
	Would require new Urban Growth Boundary Management Agreement with County	Would require new Urban Reserve Management Agreement with County	Would require new Urban Growth Boundary Management Agreement with County	Would require Urban Reserve Management Agreement with County

Urban Growth Boundary Expansions

Criteria outlined in SBI537 in Section 50 for a one-time addition to the UGB include:

- not having expanded its UGB in the last 20 years,
- lacking a single ownership tract of land over 20 acres within its UGB,
- having a higher percentage of extremely cost-burdened households compared to the state average,
- having greater than 25% of the rental households as severely rent-burdened

Projects developed within such expanded UGB boundaries will be required to offer 30% of residential units under affordability restrictions for at least 60 years.

QUESTIONS?





Homeless Services Masterplan Subcommittee Interim Report

April 1, 2024

Who We Are

The City received 15 applications from community members interested in engaging in this work. The Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee appointed 8 of those applicants to the subcommittee. The Subcommittee also includes three HHSAC members, one representative from APD, a Parks Commission member, and two Council liaisons.

Subcommittee members represent many different sectors of the community, who all bring unique, skills, experience, and perspectives to the process. The City is fortunate to have an amazing and talented group of people devoting their time, energy, and expertise to this work. Members include:

- Former SOU professors,
- Social service professionals,
- Parents,
- Individuals with law enforcement and criminal justice backgrounds,
- People with lived experience of homelessness,
- A health care provider,
- South Ashland residents,
- A law school student,
- A private consultant, and
- A small business owner.



How the Subcommittee Will Approach Its Work, Tasks, and Timeline

Approach

- The Subcommittee will gain an understanding of the level of homelessness and the homeless response services and systems in Ashland and affecting Ashland.
- The Subcommittee will prepare an inventory of local services and gather data currently available about people experiencing homelessness.
- The Subcommittee will prepare an outline for a “Money Map” to illustrate the current investments in responding to the homeless crisis.
- The Subcommittee will consider the strengths and weaknesses of the current homeless response system and gather perspectives from a cross-section of the Ashland community about the problem and how the City of Ashland can better address the complex issues of homelessness in Ashland.
- The Subcommittee’s findings, including the areas of greatest concern/need, current strengths in the homeless response system, and potential opportunities will be included in the Subcommittee Report.



Preliminary Outline of the Subcommittee Report:

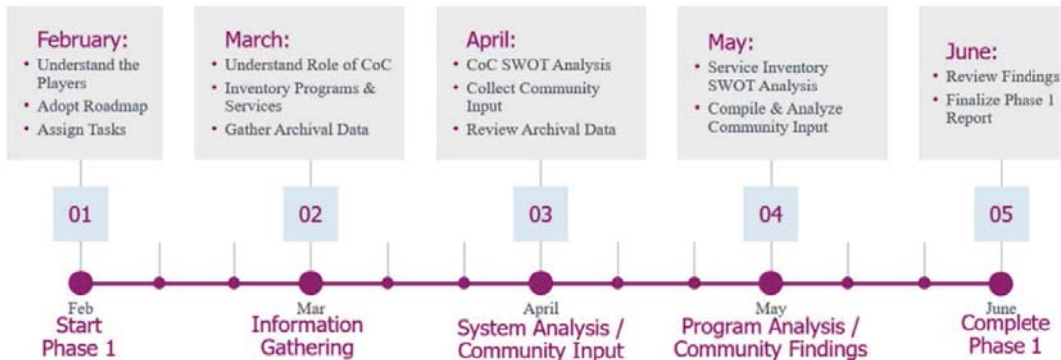
- The Players Addressing Homelessness
- The Responsibilities of a Continuum of Care (CoC)
- Services Inventory
- Data about People and Programs
- Outline for a Money Map
- Community Perspectives
- Subcommittee Conclusions





Homeless Master Plan Subcommittee Roadmap 2024

Five Months to Provide the Foundation for Informed Decision-Making



For more information: Homeless Services Masterplan Subcommittee - Housing Program - Planning Division - Community Development - City of Ashland, Oregon



Accomplishments thus far...

- Developed a collective understanding – or at least familiarity – with the players on the local, regional, state, and national level working to address homelessness.
- Commitments to inventory more than 80 local programs, ranging from small volunteer-run services to permanent supportive housing. The list could have been much longer, but it is focused on programs whose primary purpose is to serve people experiencing homelessness.
- The Subcommittee developed its plans to gather community input on the effects of homelessness in the community through the following:
 - Surveys and interviews with business owners and employees.
 - Outreach interviews with people experiencing homelessness.
 - Online surveying of front-line staff serving people experiencing homelessness.
 - Online surveying of school employees, and
 - Community outreach and online surveying of the general public.



Updated Timeline																	
PROGRESS-->																	
Component	Information	Who	28-Feb	HHSAC	3/5 City Council	12-Mar	27-Mar	3/28 HHSAC	4/1 City Council	9-Apr	24-Apr	14-May	22-May	11-Jun	26-Jun	TBA HHSAC	TBA Council
The Players Addressing Homelessness	Name, purpose (role or mission statement), major functions, type of governing body or authority, geographic area served (city or cities, county or counties, state, nation)	Staff	PRESENTATION: The Players Addressing Homelessness														
The Responsibilities of a Continuum of Care (CoC)	Organization Planning Coordinated Entry System Homeless Management Information System Reports to HUD Project Monitoring Local Funding Competition Annual Consolidated Plan Informing Local Jurisdictions	TBA				PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION: Responsibilities of a CoC DISCUSSION: Identify info. to gather about OR-502				PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION & SWOT ANALYSIS: The Local CoC							
Services Inventory	Homeless Services Matrix - Information about programs/services addressing homelessness in or affecting Ashland	4 people 5 people 3 people	assign SO/SO assign ES/TH assign PH				Update on Service Inventory progress			Update on Service Inventory progress	PRESENTATION: Services Inventory		SWOT ANALYSIS of Services Inventory				
	Other (non-homeless) Services Matrix Barriers to Accessing Services	Staff All									DISCUSSION: Barriers to Accessing Services						
Data about People and Programs	HMS Data	Jan					Update on data collection progress			Update on data collection progress	PRESENTATION: Data		ANALYSIS: Data				
	School McKinney-Vento Data	Staff															
	Jackson Co. Housing Authority	Staff															
	First Responders	Echo															
	Emergency Departments Affordable Housing Inventory	Echo Staff															
Outline for Money Map	Government Funding - Sources, purpose, and most current allocation	TBA															PRESENTATION: Draft Money Map
	Major Program Budgets - Annual budget by source (government, foundations)	TBA															
Community Perspectives	See list of various populations in Approach, Tasks, and Timelines document	TBA					Decide on populations, who will do outreach, and how to reach each pop.			Finalize community outreach plans, communications, and survey tools	Update on community input progress	Review public input highlights	PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION: Community input / findings				
Communications with HHSAC and City Council	Plan communications with the Health & Human Services Advisory Commission and City Council	All	Decide content and format for reporting to HHSAC and City Council	Provide HHSAC w/ IHPS Approach, Tasks & Timeline	3/5 - Provide Council w/ IHPS Approach, Tasks & Timeline		Decide content and format for reporting to HHSAC and City Council	3/28 - Share plans for community outreach with HHSAC	4/1 - Study Session - Share plans for community outreach with City Council					Review draft report. Suggest revisions. Discuss format for reporting to HHSAC and City Council	Review final report and plans for sharing with HHSAC and City Council	Share final report with HHSAC	Share final report with City Council

April 1, 2024

Next Steps

Next month we will be compiling and reviewing the information collected and will conduct the Council-requested SWOT analysis to help identify gaps and opportunities for future consideration.

QUESTIONS?

