

City of Gresham

Measure 26-239

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

As volunteer members of the City of Gresham Finance Committee, we review the city budget in detail each year. Committee members have a wide range of political perspectives, though we are coming together to show support for the public safety levy.

The City has a budget structure that raises insufficient property tax revenue to pay for basic government services. Gresham has a permanent property tax rate of \$3.61 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation; that is one of the lowest rates in the state, especially when compared to cities of comparable size (Eugene is \$8.15, Portland is \$7.69, Salem is \$6.81, and Hillsboro is \$5.39). Gresham's property taxes only fund 44% of police and fire costs (the remainder comes from fees, and grants). As our community grows, staffing levels for Police Officers and Firefighters are insufficient to provide the services that the community needs.

The Gresham Safety Levy will preserve up to 34 police jobs, and 21 fire jobs. New funds will be prioritized for police and mental health crisis response (62.5%), fire (35%), and homeless services (2.5%). The average Gresham homeowner could expect to see an approximate tax increase of \$28.50 per month.

The public safety levy is a common sense, modest proposal. If passed, the City will establish an oversight committee to oversee all levy funds. That oversight will ensure that the funds are spent efficiently, effectively, and on the services that voters approve. As volunteers, we will continue to closely monitor and exercise oversight.

Gresham residents appreciate the importance of effective local government services -- including police officers, firefighters, mental health crisis response, and outreach services to the unhoused. We urge voters to support adequate funding for those basic government services.

Rusty Allen
Jan Baker
Dave Dyk, Chair
Claire Lider
Mike Schultze
Theresa Tschirky, Vice-Chair

Gresham Finance Committee Members

(This information furnished by Dave Dyk)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

We are only as strong as we are safe. Gresham can only be strong if Gresham is safe.

I support Measure 26-239 because I believe it's a big step returning to a safe city. The levy is specific and transparent. My priorities of funding police, fire, homelessness and mental health are all in the levy.

The levy specifies that no less than 62.5 percent of the

funds received will fund police, including sworn officers and their needed support staff. Twenty-six police positions will be funded. Those funds will return special teams like the homeless support and traffic enforcement. It will also fund gun violence prevention measures and drug investigations.

Thirty five percent of the levy will fund our professional fire department, adding 16 new jobs. When it's necessary to call 911, citizens expect a quick response. Current staffing levels and budget restraints negatively affect 911 response times.

Homelessness is not a 9 to 5, five days a week problem. The levy addresses the true need allowing for assistance every day of the week.

Last, but certainly not least, those experiencing a mental health crisis will be better served with the levy. For the past decade, Gresham has had a quality mental health team within the police department. They partner with health care professionals to deescalate situations and find appropriate solutions. The levy will add much needed medical professionals to the team.

It is not easy to pay for a tax increase. But this levy is dedicated to reducing crime, expanding much needed homeless services, and will move Gresham in a safe direction.

The levy expires in 5 years at which time it will be reviewed by the voters. In the meantime, the levy calls for the funds to be placed in dedicated fund with community members oversight of how the funds are spent for accountability.

Please join me and my family in voting Yes on Measure 26-239. Keep Gresham strong by keeping Gresham safe.

(This information furnished by Sue Piazza, Gresham Council President)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

Vote YES to Keep Our City Safe

We Have a Crime Problem in Gresham

- Shooting incidents have increased by 140% since 2020.
- Homicides have increased by 233% since 2014.
- Robberies have increased by 50.5% since 2017.
- Arrests for weapons crimes have increased by 59% since 2014.
- Vehicle thefts have increased by 70% since 2014.
- Vandalisms have increased by 28% since 2014.

We Need More Police Officers

Gresham Police on average, has 9 patrol officers on duty at one time. For a population of over 114,000 people, this is simply unacceptable. Gresham Police only has 21 more police officers than it did in 1992 even though population has grown by nearly 58% since then.

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What Does This Levy do for Our City?

Allows Gresham Police Department to continue to hire new sworn officers.

Allows Gresham Police Department to hire essential non-sworn employees who assist sworn staff with criminal investigations.

Allows Gresham Police Department to reinstitute these recently lost specialty units:

- Neighborhood Enforcement Team (NET)
 - Specifically addresses homelessness, camping on public and private property, livability, chronic nuisance properties, abandoned RV's.
 - Works directly with the City's Code Enforcement and Homeless Services to find long term solutions for our homeless population.
- Behavioral Health Unit (BHU)
 - Addresses acute mentally ill persons that need immediate intervention.
 - Connects with service providers and available local services.
 - Allows for long term solutions and follow up to address needs.
- Traffic Division
 - Reinstitution of directed DUIL enforcement, traffic safety missions for pedestrians, school zones, speeding, and motor vehicle crash reductions.
- School Resource Officers (SRO)
 - Officer assigned to each high school (Gresham, Sam Barlow, Centennial)
 - Focus on keeping our children safe and protected from both outside threats and internal conflicts.
- Special Enforcement Team (SET)
 - Directed enforcement on drug and gun crimes, thefts, stolen vehicles, burglaries, robberies, shootings, and drug overdose deaths in our neighborhoods.

Vote YES to Keep Our City Safe

The Gresham Police Officer Association (GPOA)

(This information furnished by Daniel Tratro, Gresham Police Officers Association)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

The Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce fully endorses the Gresham Safety Levy, Ballot Measure 26-239. We know public safety is critical to economic development, job creation and a vibrant community. Measure 26-239 provides transparency, new police and fire officers, services to those struggling with homelessness and mental health issues, and it stabilizes the finances of the city of Gresham.

We urge a YES vote. While businesses are not always open to new taxes, investing in public safety is about as basic as it gets. In a competitive regional environment, we can't let the quality of life deteriorate. Good livability attracts businesses and families to our city.

WE urge a YES vote. Businesses need a safe environment, important for investing, expanding, or

locating in our area. We are a tipping point for economic development in our region. Passage of this measure will be a positive sign that we are open for business.

We urge a YES vote. Business owners have families and employees who play, live and go to school in Gresham. Safety is ultimately linked to the quality of all services our city provides.

We urge a YES vote. Business must stay competitive and profitable to remain in Gresham. That means regular reinvestments. This levy is a reinvestment providing a safer Gresham, encouraging businesses to reinvest, hire more staff, and increase services to customers.

Measure 26-239 has prioritized where the funds are going to be spent. The measure funds mental health and homeless services, as well as fire and police. The measure also puts a watchdog committee together for oversight. And Measure 26-239 will have the ripple affect to the entire region...Gresham is open for business and have prioritized safety to all who live, work, and play in our city. That is a welcoming message to our regional friends.

Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce strongly supports a YES vote on Measure 26-239.

Lynn Snodgrass, CEO Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce

(This information furnished by Lynn Snodgrass, Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

The unfortunate reality is that more and more of our friends and neighbors are struggling with mental health or emotional issues, some of which may culminate into an emergency response. There is a critical need for public safety services that are responsive to these needs, and include intervention and de-escalation approaches. Measure 26-239 will provide the critically needed support.

Voting YES on Measure 26-239 will help our fragile population that are in crisis, receive the mental health interventions they need. They will be safer. The community will be safer. The measure will also expand mental health assistance to the Homeless Services team. The expansion is a much-needed addition.

"Nothing is more important than having a well-trained, adequately staffed police force whether they are dealing with homelessness, traffic accidents, home thefts, or gun violence. Gresham police is at a critically low level, especially compared to the national average. Supporting measure 26-239 will put the right resources in place to meet the needs of the community." Robin Sells, Retired Gresham Chief of Police

The Safety Levy expands the current crisis response team to 10 clinicians, nurses, EMTs and case managers. The measure also funds staff to address reducing 911 calls by

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connecting callers with resources. The added personnel will respond efficiently to our community's behavioral health needs with citywide coordination.

Mental health advocates support Measure 26-239 because it will not only fund mental health resources and improve intervention responses for those in crisis, it will keep those in crisis safer.

Voting Yes on Measure 26 239 will address mental health needs.
Voting Yes on Measure 26-239 will set in motion crisis intervention.
Voting Yes on Measure 26-239 will provide de-escalation of a mental health situation.

Join us and vote YES on Measure 26 239

Theresa Rockove
Shammai Rockove
Laurie Monnes Anderson, Former Oregon State Senator
Diane McKeel
Michael McKeel
Tori Skelton, RN
Hannah Whipple, RN
Robert C. Sayson, MD

(This information furnished by Mike Ash, Gresham United for Safety)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

Whether playing in the park, walking in Gresham to a restaurant, or shopping at a business for a gift, we want to feel safe. With the rising crime, increased homelessness and increased drug overdoses and abuses of OxyContin and Fentanyl, our community is under siege. Gresham falls well short of enough emergency personnel to deal with the rising crime and drug overdoses.

"As a Business Owner who loves this community it breaks my "Dealer With A Heart" that we dial "911" and there are not enough police officers to respond to emergencies like car and cat convertor thefts. We all are forced to absorb the cost of property losses and that is financially painful. But when an employee loses a child to Fentanyl because police specialty units have been disbanded, that is a tragedy beyond measure. This levy will bring those units back."
Bess Wills, Gresham Ford

There is hope to reduce crime if we vote yes on Measure 26-239. Funding from the levy will ensure firefighters and police are available 24-7 to respond to emergencies in the community. Passage of the levy provides dedicated resources to prevent gun violence, address homelessness, and aid those experiencing a mental health crisis.

"Our First Responders of Gresham are highly regarded by surrounding agencies for their skill, training and dedication; they risk their lives daily to protect our community and help make it a better place to live for all. I know personally that our police department in particular has been greatly understaffed and overworked yet continue risking their lives

daily because no one else will. I support providing our first responders of Gresham with what they need to perform their calling with the knowledge and joy, that the community they serve "has their back". Robert C. Sayson, MD

A YES vote on Measure 26-239 brings back confidence in our safety.

Join Bess, Dr. Bob and many other neighbors and vote YES on Measure 26-239

(This information furnished by Mike Ash, Gresham United for Safety)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

Mental health issues and homelessness affects all of us. Compassion and concern for those that are homeless or experiencing a mental health crisis is appropriate. Measure 26-239 provides funding for intervention and de-escalation tactics helping connect those who are homeless or experiencing a mental health crisis to services.

The safety levy will add staff to respond on the weekends and evenings to those experiencing homelessness and connect them to addiction, mental health, and other rehabilitative services.

The livability of our city depends on the funding we set aside for public safety concerns. The vitality of the city depends on where the funding goes to provide public safety to our citizens. Measure 26-239 is dedicated funds to address the public safety issues we experience when we drive down our streets or walk in our parks. We do not have enough police officers, fire fighters, professionals who deal with homelessness, or case management staff to keep pace with the rising numbers of homelessness.

Measure 26-239 restores teams within the department that specialize in addressing specific areas like neighborhood livability, traffic enforcement, and the behavioral health unit that provides trained health professionals to help people in crisis.

"It worries me to see more and more people and families in our community struggling. As a school board member, I see it up close. We need to take action to support them, and Measure 26-239 will help. By investing in these supports, we can assist those in need and make our community safer for all." Cathy Keathley.

Measure 26-239 will turn the tide and fund the critical departments necessary to bring safety to all in Gresham.

Endorsed by: (partial list)

Andrea Pickett, My Fathers House Exe Director
Sandra Forquer
Alan Cohen
David Miller
Lisa D. Brown
Aaron P. Smith
David Young

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Ryan C. Johnson
Michelle Metzger
Russell Schneider

(This information furnished by Mike Ash, Gresham United for Safety)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

Gresham was once a safe community. Years passed without gun violence. But unfortunately, gun violence has taken a dramatic rise in recent years.

“Shots fired” is not something we ever want to hear in our community. Police presence curbs that behavior and reduces the possibility of harm.

Gresham only has on average 8 police officers per shift for 114,000 residents. That low number does not provide comfort and security to families, business owners, or visitors. Gun violence has increased dramatically in the past 3 years in Gresham.

Gun violence causes severe damage to our community, destroying lives and too often creating cycles of retaliatory violence. Gun violence also makes the entire community feel less safe as it is visible, dramatic, and too often harms bystanders.

Focused resources are critical for addressing gun violence, helping both to build relationships to prevent violence from occurring and de-escalate cycles of violence once they begin.

Passage of Measure 26-239 will increase the number of officers available to protect our citizens. It will provide dedicated resources to reduce gun violence.

“This levy comes at a critical time for our community ! This is not ‘campaign speak’, this is real. Join all that are supporting this measure. United together, we can regain safety and security we all deserve.” Mark Eisenzimmer

We can't afford to put off these critical investments - now is the time to reverse this disturbing escalation of gun violence.

We are voting YES on the levy and we urge you to support Measure 26-239.

Endorsed by (partial list)

Shane Bemis, former Mayor of Gresham
Michael Patrick
Bob Skipper, Multnomah County Sheriff, Retired
Cathy Keathley
Delaney Johnston
Diane McKeel, Former Multnomah County Commissioner
Erin Beggs
Mark Kost
Lori Stegmann, Multnomah County Commissioner, District 4
Craig Junginger, former Police Chief

(This information furnished by Mike Ash, Gresham United for Safety)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

WHY WOULD A SENIOR, ON A FIXED INCOME, VOTE YES ON MEASURE 26-239?

HERE IS WHY !

- Seniors in our community depend on reliable emergency services when they call for help.
- Seniors recognize the importance of overall community livability by investing in services to address homelessness and mental health.
- Seniors are willing to make the investments needed to improve our fire and police services and reduce 911 response times. (Responses to priority calls, due to the low numbers of officers and fire personnel, were 35% slower in 2022 than they were in 2020.)

Seniors, like all Gresham citizens, rely heavily on safety when they grocery shop, drive on our streets, or walk their pets in a park.

Safety is important to seniors, whether on a fixed income or not.

“I love living in Gresham, but I need to know I will receive a quick response when I experience an emergency or call 911. Measure 26-239 will help make our community safer for local seniors like myself as well as our entire city.” Gini Moldovanyi

Voting YES on Measure 26-239 is an investment worth making. We are voting YES and are telling all of our friends and family to do the same. Join us and vote YES on Measure 26-239.

Endorsed by (partial list):

Joan D. Albertson
Warner Allen
Mike Ash
Bob Avila
Bonnie Johnson
Gini Moldovanyi

(This information furnished by Mike Ash, Gresham United for Safety)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

Customer and employee safety is vitally important to businesses. Rising crime affects the livability of our community and the prosperity of businesses. Controlling and reducing vandalism, shoplifting, and homeless vagrants are concerns for businesses. Gresham will not continue to be a vibrant community without a healthy business environment and that starts with safety measures. A safe community is good for local business, job retention and creation.

Measure 26-239 assures specific, priority funding and

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accountability of how the funds are spent. It adds 26 positions for police and mental health support increasing safety for businesses as well as residents. It restores the traffic enforcement, behavioral health unit and the homelessness response team. That will benefit the community and businesses, keeping the customers and employees safe.

When businesses invest in a community, they are all in. They purchase property, improve existing buildings, hire staff, and plan for growth. All are in jeopardy, and businesses leave, when crime rises to unacceptable levels. Measure 26-239 will stabilize our public safety departments.

We support Measure 26-239 because it:

- Increases police and their ability to respond to rising crime
- Prioritizes funding assuring tax dollars go to police and fire
- Requires citizen oversight who will be the watchdogs for accountability

Please join us and vote YES on Measure 26-239

Endorsement list (partial):

Karen Johnston
Bev Coomler
Bess R. Wills
Vicki Moen
Sue Piazza, Gresham Council President
Doug Walker
Michael McKeel, Chairman Fire District 10
Amy Tipsord
Mark & Debbie Eisenzimmer, Cascade Athletic Clubs
Greg Moen
Steven A. Johnston, All About Automotive, Inc.
Terry Tipsord
Preston Wills
Martin Coomler, Reliable Logistics LLC
David Ligatich

(This information furnished by Mike Ash, Gresham United for Safety)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

Gresham voters please **VOTE YES** for public safety.

The Gresham Fire Department has not kept up with the growth and call volume that has risen dramatically since 1990.

The Fire Department needs your help and attention.

- Since 1990, over 30 years, the Gresham area has had the same fire resources.
- Fire unit responses has grown 300% and Gresham's population has soared.
- Public education was cut in 2008 and the fire inspections are not being kept up in public spaces such as schools.

- The average response time is over 9 minutes due to limited resources while national standards is 4 minutes.
 - Brain damage begins in as little as 5 minutes without breathing.
 - Fire doubles in size every minute and the window for the Fire Fighters to rescue someone is shrinking

THE GRESHAM COMMUNITY NEEDS MORE FIRE FIGHTERS!

What the community gets with a **YES VOTE!**

- 12 Additional Fire Fighters to staff a Rescue at Station 72
- Maintain 4 Fire Fighter position funded by ARPA
- 3 Fire Marshal positions to address public education and inspection needs.
- Mobile Health program to handle low acuity calls and keep fire engines available for the community.

The Fire Fighters want a safe and healthy community and we need your help and support to do it.

Please **VOTE YES** for safety!

Gresham Professional Fire Fighters, IAFF

(This information furnished by Kevin Larson, Gresham Professional Fire Fighters, IAFF Local 1062)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

The Coalition for Gresham's Future urges a 'Yes' vote on the Gresham Safety Levy

This levy will enable our community to foster a safe, thriving and welcoming community for all. A 'yes' vote on Measure 26-239 ensures resources to create stability and deliver exceptional services in our community.

Minutes matter in an emergency. The goals of the Gresham Safety Levy include:

- Stabilize police and fire services to keep pace with the growing demands for emergency services
- Increase our ability to respond to the increasing impact of homelessness in our community
- Expand specialized mental health services to better serve our community and free up emergency services for more critical responses

"Preserving and protecting Gresham's beauty and livability depends on dedicated, consistent, and reliable funding for critical services. Measure 26-239 will add critical police, fire, homeless, and mental health services to keep our city safe. We hope you'll join us in voting 'YES' for Measure 26-239 this May!"
Gresham Mayor Travis Stovall

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Former Gresham Mayors Shane Bemis and Karylinn Echols

The following community members and organizations urge your support for the Gresham Safety Levy:

Historic Downtown Gresham Business Association
East Metro Association of Realtors
Gresham Police Officers' Association
Gresham Professional Firefighters IAFF Local 1062
East County Rising PAC
Beyond Black CDC
Play Grow Learn
Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations
Center for the Arts Foundation
Small business owners: Sue O'Halloran, Claire Lider,
Patton Echols, Shannon Chisom

For additional endorsements and information see:

www.CoalitionforGreshamsFuture.com

Paid for by the Coalition for Gresham's Future PAC

*(This information furnished by Karylinn Echols, Coalition for
Gresham's Future)*