

CITY OF GRESHAM

City Council

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Resolution

Resolution No. 3681

A resolution of the City of Gresham reaffirming the City's commitment to the rule of law and preserving public safety and calling for Federal Immigration Reform

Meeting Date: January 20, 2026
Service Area: Office of Governance and Management

Staff Member: Larry Morgan
Agenda Item Number: E-1

Requested Council Action and Suggested Motion:

Per Council direction at their business meeting on January 6, 2026, staff have prepared Resolution No. 3681 for their consideration

Public Purpose, Community Outcome, and Strategic Plan Alignment:

This resolution is a continuation of staff and Council efforts to preserve Gresham's safety and wellbeing in consideration of the numerous testimonies and communications from community members on the impact of federal immigration enforcement activities. The resolution has been prepared at the direction of City Council.

Gresham's mission is to foster a safe, thriving, and welcoming community for all. This resolution directly supports Gresham's strategic priorities in its intention to keep the community safe and resilient, to ensure a thriving economy for local businesses, and to build a vibrant community with a shared sense of belonging.

Background:

Over the past several months, the City of Gresham has experienced a marked increase in community concern related to federal immigration enforcement activity and its broader impacts on public safety, economic stability, and community wellbeing. Residents, business owners, faith leaders, educators, and service providers have contacted the City, participated in community meetings, and provided public testimony to City Council describing how these dynamics are affecting daily life in Gresham.

Community members have shared consistent themes: heightened fear when leaving the home; reduced foot traffic and lost revenue for small, locally owned businesses;

reluctance to access essential services such as grocery stores, schools, health care, and community programs; and growing uncertainty among families attempting to navigate an already complex system. Collectively, these concerns reflect not only individual hardship but a broader strain on community cohesion, economic vitality, and trust in public institutions.

City leadership and staff have treated these concerns with urgency and seriousness, recognizing that fear and uncertainty—have a real and measurable consequences for public safety, economic health, and the ability of residents to fully participate in civic life. In response, City staff initiated a coordinated, city-wide/cross-departmental effort focused on community education, economic stabilization, internal readiness, and intergovernmental collaboration.

For community members, the City partnered with the community-based organization Latino Network to host a “Know Your Rights” training aimed at providing accurate, accessible information and reducing misinformation. Additional trainings are scheduled in the coming weeks to meet continued demand and ensure broader community access. To strengthen two-way communication, the City established a dedicated feedback and inquiry channel—CommunitySafety@GreshamOregon.gov—allowing residents to share questions, concerns, and observed impacts directly with City staff.

In parallel, staff have been working with local economic associations and business groups to identify strategies to support small businesses experiencing reduced customer activity. This includes coordination with the City’s federal advocacy team to research and pursue potential aid opportunities and small-business assistance programs. Staff are also compiling a comprehensive list of resources—legal assistance, housing support, utility assistance, and tools for identifying local, state, and federal elected representatives—which will be consolidated into a one-stop resource hub on GreshamOregon.gov within the month.

For City employees, City Manager Eric Schmidt worked closely with Human Resources and the City Attorney’s Office to develop interim guidance and training to ensure staff understand both their responsibilities and limitations when interacting with federal immigration enforcement agents. This internal education effort launched with a citywide staff communication on Friday, January 9, followed by an open staff call on Monday, January 12, where employees were encouraged to ask questions, raise concerns, and seek clarification. An optional organization-wide question-and-answer session further provided space for staff to elevate operational challenges and identify areas requiring additional support or clarity.

Beyond internal actions, City staff continue to engage actively with regional partners, including local school districts, state legislators, and federal elected officials, recognizing that the impacts being experienced in Gresham are shared across jurisdictions. These collaborations have already resulted in coordination around food access, housing assistance, and utility relief, helping stabilize families.

Staff have also maintained close engagement with Congresswoman Maxine Dexter's office, working in partnership to address constituent needs and align local actions with federal awareness. This collaboration reflects the City's broader commitment to constructive intergovernmental engagement and practical problem-solving.

Taken together, these actions represent a deliberate and comprehensive response to a complex and evolving situation. While no single action can fully resolve the challenges associated with federal immigration enforcement or the broader uncertainty around immigration reform, City staff are confident that these efforts have played a meaningful role in reducing confusion, supporting economic stability, and reaffirming Gresham's commitment to safety, community resilience, and access to information. Adoption of a Council resolution builds upon this work, formally affirming the City's values while reinforcing the actions already underway to support the Gresham community during a period of heightened uncertainty.

Recommendation and Alternatives:

1. Council may move to approve Resolution No. 3681 reaffirming the City's commitment to the rule of law and preserving public safety and calling for federal immigration reform.
2. Council may move to approve Resolution No. 3681 with amendments.
3. Council may choose to direct staff to conduct further work and bring the resolution back at a future date.

Budget/Financial Impact:

Expenditures associated with Resolution No. 3681 are included within the adopted FY25/26 budget.

Public Involvement:

N/a

Attachments:

A. Resolution No. 3681

Reviewed Through:

Eric Schmidt, City Manager
Ellen Van Riper, City Attorney
Christina Still, City Recorder

RESOLUTION NO. 3681

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF GRESHAM REAFFIRMING THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO THE RULE OF LAW AND PRESERVING PUBLIC SAFETY AND CALLING FOR FEDERAL IMMIGRATION REFORM

THE CITY OF GRESHAM FINDS:

WHEREAS, the City of Gresham is committed to protecting public safety while ensuring that all residents are treated with dignity, fairness, and due process under the law; and

WHEREAS, public safety and economic stability are mutually dependent on trust in public institutions, constitutional protections, and the ability of residents to participate fully in civic life without fear; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has heard that there are families afraid to go to work, send their children to school, access health care, or support local businesses, thus impacting our community fabric; and

WHEREAS, although this resolution alone cannot remedy the broader challenges surrounding immigration enforcement, it affirms that the City Council hears these concerns and calls on federal leaders to act in a manner consistent with constitutional protections and due process; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gresham respects the role of the federal government in enforcing federal law, while also affirming that such enforcement must be carried out in a manner consistent with constitutional protections, due process, and Oregon law; and

WHEREAS, local governments are not federal immigration authorities, and the City's responsibility is to ensure that its resources are used lawfully and in ways that promote community safety; and

WHEREAS, the City supports a transparent and measured enforcement approach that prioritizes individuals who pose a genuine and demonstrable threat to public safety and avoids practices that are broad, indiscriminate, or destabilizing to law-abiding residents; and

WHEREAS, due to the impacts of federal immigration enforcement activities on the health, safety, and economic stability of the community, the City Council affirms its commitment to stability, legality, and humanity, and to taking timely and lawful action to protect public safety, uphold both the Oregon and federal constitutional rights and liberties; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gresham and the City Council formally call on the President and the United States Congress to pass bipartisan comprehensive legislation to resolve the uncertainty surrounding immigration and to require that immigration enforcement efforts be conducted consistent with the United States Constitution, including the rights of all persons to due process of the law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF GRESHAM THAT:

1. The City Council affirms its commitment to stability, legality, and humanity in all local actions and policies and affirms the City of Gresham's commitment to follow and uphold state, federal, and local constitutional rights and liberties impartially, free from personal bias or external pressure.
2. The City Council declares an emergency necessitating federal immigration reform.
3. The City Council will take timely and lawful measures to protect public safety, uphold both Oregon and federal constitutional rights and liberties, and ensure that no resident is forced to choose between their livelihood, their family, and their basic sense of security.
4. The City Council directs the City Manager to continue and expand upon the measures and programs that have already been implemented to alleviate the adverse impacts upon the community caused by increased federal immigration enforcement, including devoting available funds to address food insecurity and utility assistance and establishing a community resource page on the City website where community members may access links to state and local organizations, programs, and information that may help them satisfy their individual and family needs.

Yes: _____

No: _____

Absent: _____

Abstain: _____

Passed by the Gresham City Council and effective on _____.

Eric Schmidt
City Manager

Travis Stovall
Mayor

Approved as to Form:

Ellen Van Riper
City Attorney