



February 14, 2019

Board of County Commissioners
Clackamas County

Members of the Board:

Approval of a Board Resolution
Confirming Commitment to Build a New County Courthouse

Purpose/Outcome	Define boards commitment to building a new Clackamas County Courthouse
Dollar Amount and Fiscal Impact	N/A
Funding Source	N/A
Duration	N/A
Previous Board Action/Review	The Board of County Commissioners requested a resolution to affirm Clackamas County's commitment to building a new courthouse.
Strategic Plan Alignment	This project aligns with three of the Board's five Strategic Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ensure safe, healthy and secure communities – the new courthouse will be large enough to accommodate the number of judges available and needed for this community and eliminate overcrowding that cause intermixing of jurors, the public, and offenders providing adequate circulation. •Build a strong infrastructure – the project will replace the outdated county courthouse in downtown Oregon City, which is too small to accommodate the number of judges needed for the community and is not seismically sound. •Build public trust through good government – the project will improve access to justice for all residents of Clackamas County.
Contact Person	Laurel Butman, Deputy County Administrator , 503-655-8893

BACKGROUND:

Clackamas County's courthouse was built in 1936 in the heart of downtown Oregon City. While it continues to serve hundreds – sometimes thousands – of residents daily, courthouse needs have outgrown the facility's ability to adequately meet the demands of our increasing population leading to long delays in criminal proceedings, civil cases, divorce and custody cases and other important legal matters.

Factoring in population growth, the significant safety risks, and functional impediments associated with the existing courthouse including a lack of adequate jury assembly space and secured access for defendants and witnesses, replacement of the courthouse is a necessary and wise investment.

In July 2017, the Oregon Legislature provided Clackamas County with \$1.2 million for planning costs associated with the project. Through the Oregon Courthouse Capital Construction and Improvement Fund, the state may allocate matching funds to go toward the replacement of county courthouses. In the case of the Clackamas County courthouse, what this means is the state would be able to provide 50 percent of the funds to cover the estimated project cost.

In addition to the Legislature's continued involvement in this process, the project also includes participation from the courts, the Clackamas County District Attorney's Office, the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office, the Oregon Department of Human Services, the Association of Oregon Counties' (AOC) Court Facilities Task Force, the city of Oregon City, and additional stakeholders.

The resolution presented to the Board today demonstrates and articulates the county's commitment to securing state funding to build a new courthouse in Clackamas County.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff respectfully recommends the Board approve the resolution confirming commitment to build a new courthouse in Clackamas County.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Schmidt
Director, Public and Government Affairs

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF CLACKAMAS COUNTY, STATE OF OREGON**

In the Matter of Affirming
Clackamas County's Commitment
to Building a New Courthouse



Resolution No. _____

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Whereas, the Clackamas County Courthouse was completed in 1937 at a time when Clackamas County's population was approximately 50,000 residents, and originally housed only 3 courtrooms and the offices of County Clerk, the Sheriff, the County Jail, and the District Attorney, all of whom have vacated except the last; and

Whereas, the courthouse configuration has not changed in the 82 years since and cannot adequately handle the services required by a population of more than 410,000 residents, which leads to delays of trials, civil and divorce proceedings, and incarcerations with real and lasting negative results; and

Whereas, the courthouse is old and obsolete to the point that it cannot be retrofitted to operate by modern standards, that certain parts are inaccessible to people with disabilities, and that equipment in use is well beyond its useful life and costly to maintain; and

Whereas, the courthouse's cramped areas result in overcrowding and close quarters, intermingling of victims, witnesses, jurors, prisoners, and defendants leading to potential safety concerns and causing undue emotional duress to victims and witnesses; and

Whereas, this region is at significant risk of earthquakes and tests indicate a high likelihood of soil liquefaction under the courthouse during such an event, which could lead to a potential slide of the building into the Willamette River and present a risk of death and serious injury to occupants; and

Whereas, Clackamas County has invested millions of dollars in preparation for this project, including owning the land for the proposed site on the Red Soils campus, having infrastructure in place, and dedicating personnel to the construction project; and

Whereas, Clackamas County has assembled a growing coalition that is supportive of a new courthouse, including elected county officers, judges, state senators and representatives, and city officials; and

Whereas, Clackamas County is seeking matching funds for construction of a new courthouse from the state of Oregon to cover approximately half of the costs of construction.

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF CLACKAMAS COUNTY, STATE OF OREGON**

In the Matter of Affirming
Clackamas County's
Commitment to Building a New
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Whereas, Clackamas County is committed to applying principled sustainability and livability practices in its construction projects including, wherever feasible, energy efficiency and LEED standards, use of efficient and durable products such as cross laminated timber, and consideration of trauma informed design in public safety projects; and

Whereas, delayed trials are contributing to jail overcrowding and leading to the early releases of alleged offenders back into the community.

NOW THEREFORE, the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners do hereby resolve and affirm that:

Clackamas County is committed to funding and building a new county courthouse. The County will ask voters if they are willing to fund the courthouse, as well as seek other funding opportunities. If voters are not willing to fund the courthouse, the county may have to make significant cuts to current programs and services in order to fund the courthouse. We will do that if we need to. Clackamas County is committed to funding and building a new county courthouse.

And hereby Clackamas County reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to partner with the State of Oregon and explore viable financing options to save taxpayers money in the construction of a new county courthouse for the benefit of all residents.

DATED this 14th day of February, 2019

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chair

Recording Secretary