

Talking points for testimony

Good morning Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Nosse and members of the committee, for the record my name is Allison Williams and I am the Hood River County Administrator.

I am here to testify in support of including Hood River County's \$85 million bond request to fund the Courthouse Replacement Project in SB 5505. Hood River County requires state funding to address its failing courthouse which was ranked as one of the highest need facilities in the 2009 Oregon Courthouse Facilities Assessment.

As one of the smallest counties in the state with one of the state's lowest overall permanent property tax rates at \$1.42/\$1,000 in taxable assessed value, combined with an overall debt limit below what would be required from current cost estimates for a new facility, self-funding of this project is infeasible.

Hood River County has a population of 24,406 and 46% of households have household incomes below \$75,000 per year, and bonds would place an overwhelming burden on taxpayers. These constraints highlight the need for collaboration and support from the State of Oregon.

We recognize that aging, unsafe infrastructure is not a unique problem to Hood River County, and we are aware of the growing list of important needs across the state, however the state laid out a plan in 2009 to provide a framework for working with counties on courthouse rehabilitation and replacement.

Hood River County strongly encourages your bi-partisan support of the capital funding request for Hood River County to build a new courthouse.

Hood River County Priorities



Commissioners

Jennifer Euwer, Chair
jennifer.euwer@hoodrivercounty.gov

Leticia Moretti, District 1
leticia.moretti@hoodrivercounty.gov

Arthur Babitz, District 2
arthur.babitz@hoodrivercounty.gov

Ed Weathers, District 3
ed.weathers@hoodrivercounty.gov

Chad Muenzer, District 4
chad.muenzer@hoodrivercounty.gov

Data

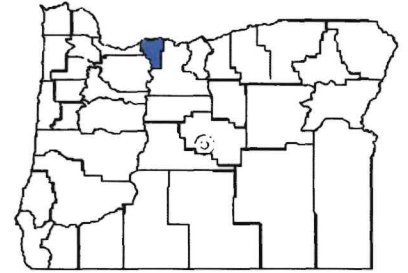
Population: 24,406
County Forest: 34,577 acres
Percentage of tax exempt property: 75%
Permanent property tax rate: \$1.42
Four urban renewal areas
Median Income: 84,500
Percent in poverty: 10%
Percent of households with income below \$75,000: 46.1%
Hispanic or Latino population: 30.7% adult/44% youth

Our Vision

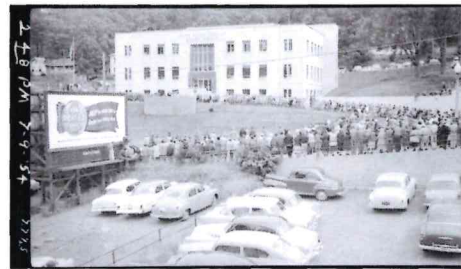
A Small County with a Big Mission: Quality of Life for All
We aspire to enhance the quality of life for all residents, focusing on inclusive and accessible services that meet the diverse needs of our population. Our vision emphasizes our approachable nature as a small county while highlighting our ambitious goals.

Background

Hood River County was established in 1908 as the thirty-fourth county in the State. Named for the Hood River, a tributary that flows into the Columbia River, the 533 square mile county is the second smallest County by land area in Oregon. The local economy is based on agriculture, tourism, industry and services. The Historic Columbia River Highway passes through the County, and it is one of a few counties that owns its own forest which is a tremendous asset to the county, but impacted the county's permanent tax rate which is one of the lowest in the state.



State of Oregon Capital Funding Request Courthouse Replacement:



Hood River County seeks to secure funds for the replacement of its courthouse and administrative facilities. Hood River County's courthouse remains one of the lowest ranked/highest need courthouses in the State of Oregon as a result of the 2009 Courthouse Facilities Assessment with an overall ranking at that time of 2.64, ranking it 46th out of 48 courthouses statewide. The facility was characterized as "expecting to suffer severe structural and non-structural damage in the design earthquake." This facility provides the location for statutorily required public services. Hood River County is one of the smallest counties in the state and has one of the state's lowest overall permanent property tax rates at \$1.42/1000, and an overall debt limit below current cost estimates making self funding such facilities infeasible.

The project is in the planning phase which will be completed by June 2025. Alternative funding opportunities will be put in place in 2026. Formal design and construction documents would be prepared in 2027, followed by bids and construction. A 24-month construction window is anticipated with additional time required for temporary relocation of services, and a bond election. The funding request anticipates early 2029 will be mid-point of construction.

Funding sought: \$85,826,843

Request to Oregon Legislature for courthouse funding and match – 50% or \$42,913,421

Gap: \$42,913,421

Phase One Site Acquisition/Design/ Construction documents: \$8.5 million (state would pay 50%)

2025-27 CAPITAL FUNDING REQUEST PROJECT INFORMATION FORM

Legislative Fiscal Office
900 Court St. NE, H-178
Salem, OR 97301



CONTACT INFORMATION FOR RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION

Organization Legal Name Hood River County

Organization Type Municipality Federal Tax ID Number 93-6002297

Address 601 State Street

City Hood River State OR Zip Code 97031

Contact Person Allison Williams

Contact Phone (541) 386-6827 Contact Email allison.williams@hoodrivercounty.gov

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name Hood River County Courthouse Replacement

Project Description

Hood River County seeks to secure funds for the replacement of its courthouse and administrative facilities. Hood River County's courthouse remains one of the lowest ranked/highest need courthouses in the State of Oregon as a result of the 2009 Courthouse Facilities Assessment with an overall ranking at that time of 2.64, ranking it 46th out of 48 courthouses statewide. The facility was characterized as "expecting to suffer severe structural and non-structural damage in the design earthquake." This facility provides the location for statutorily required public services. Hood River County is one of the smallest counties in the state and has one of the state's lowest overall permanent property tax rates at \$1.42/1000, and an overall debt limit below current cost estimates making self funding such facilities infeasible.

Project Location City of Hood River

Project Schedule (Please describe the project's readiness, including planned start and end dates and any remaining permits, approvals, or other steps that must be completed prior to beginning.)

The project is in the planning phase which will be completed by June 2025. Alternative funding opportunities will be put in place in 2026. Formal design and construction documents would be prepared in 2027, followed by bids and construction. A 24-month construction window is anticipated with additional time required for temporary relocation of services, and a bond election. The funding request anticipates early 2029 will be mid-point of construction.

PROJECT BUDGET

Estimated Project Cost

Construction/Renovation	<u>\$ 204,540,891</u>
Site Improvements	<u>Included above</u>
Land Acquisition	<u>Included below</u>
Architectural and Engineering Fees	<u>Included below</u>
Equipment	<u>Included below</u>
Contingencies	<u>Included below</u>
Other Costs (specify) <u>Land acquisition/A&E/permit/etc.</u>	<u>\$ 71,589,312</u>
Other Costs (specify) <u>current planning process</u>	<u>\$ 325,000</u>
Estimated Total Project Costs	<u>\$ 276,455,203</u>

Amount Requested \$ 85,826,843 * **Percent of Total Project Cost** 31%

Type of Funding Requested General Obligation Bond

* includes
100% of
OJD/OPDC
FF&E

Matching Funds

State Funds (source) _____	_____
Federal Funds (source) _____	_____
Private/Other Grants _____	_____
Donations/Gifts _____	_____
Other Revenues/Financing (source) _____	_____
Other Revenues/Financing (source) _____	_____
Total Matching Funds	<u>\$ 0</u>

OTHER INFORMATION

Grants financed through the issuance of bonds are not available until bonds are sold. Multiple factors impact the timing of sales; however, many sales often occur during the last six months of the biennium (Oregon's biennial budget begins on July 1 of odd-numbered years and runs through June 30 of the next odd-numbered year). Significant decreases in revenues or changes in financial conditions subsequent to authorization may also delay or prevent the issuance of bonds, which means that the approved projects or grants would also be delayed or not funded.

Public works projects, including any project that uses \$750,000 or more of public funds for constructing, reconstructing, painting or performing a major renovation on a road, highway, building, structure or improvement of any type, may be subject prevailing wage requirements. Grant recipients must comply with prevailing wage rate laws and should consult the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries to determine whether a project is subject to prevailing wage.

Please return the completed form and any supporting documentation to:
Walt Campbell, Principal Legislative (Bonding) Analyst
LFO.CapitalProjectRequests@oregonlegislature.gov



Hood River County Board of Commissioners

Allison Williams, County Administrator

COMMISSIONERS

601 State Street · Hood River

Jennifer Euwer – Chair
Leticia Moretti – District No. 1
Arthur Babitz – District No. 2
Ed Weathers – District No. 3
Chad Muenzer – District No. 4

March 24, 2025

Legislative Fiscal Office
900 Court St. NE, H-178
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Bonham and Representative Helfrich,

A Small County with a Big Mission: Quality of Life for All. Hood River County's vision emphasizes our approachable nature as a small county while highlighting our ambitious goals.

Built in 1954, the Hood River County Courthouse provides the location for statutorily required services for Hood River County, including the Circuit Court, District Attorney, Victim's Assistance, Sheriff, Parole & Probation, Emergency Management, and Veteran's Services. These services are essential for the day-to-day safety of the region and especially critical during a disaster or emergency. The 2009 Oregon Courthouse Facilities Assessment placed the facility as one of the lowest ranked/highest need courthouses statewide. The facility was characterized as "expecting to suffer severe structural and non-structural damage in the design earthquake." During an emergency when the community relies on these services the most, it is imperative that our residents, visitors, and businesses know that these critical services and facilities are functioning.

In 2024, DLR Group initiated a space feasibility analysis and projected cost estimate for the project, estimating \$85,826,843 to meet the needs of the County and State court functions. Initial planning costs will total \$325,000, and the Oregon Judicial Department has provided \$42,549 in ARPA funding to the County to support the project. Hood River County is respectfully requesting Oregon's Senators and Representatives support for:

- \$117,451 for the remainder of the 50% cost share of the planning cost to advance project readiness
- \$8.5 million to fund site acquisition and development design and construction documents
- HB 5012 and SB 5055, which include Hood River County's \$85 million bond request to fund the Courthouse Replacement Project

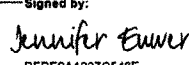
Hood River County is one of the smallest counties in the state and has one of the state's lowest overall permanent property tax rates at \$1.42/\$1,000 in taxable assessed value. These factors combined with an overall debt limit below what would be required from current cost estimates for a new facility makes self-funding this project infeasible. Given that the population of 24,406 and that 46% of households have an income below \$75,000 per year, bonds would place an overwhelming burden on taxpayers. These constraints highlight the need for collaboration and support from the State of Oregon.

More than 19,000 people used the Courthouse in 2024. This project will achieve the County's objective to provide a modern, safe facility and make the County and its critical services more resilient to natural disasters. Improved, energy-efficient infrastructure will also meet the goals of the community-led 2018 Hood River County Energy Council Master Plan.

Aging, unsafe infrastructure is not a unique problem to Hood River County, and we are aware of the growing list of important needs across the state. In order to tackle some of the biggest issues, the County needs to be able to rely on its critical facilities, and that begins with the Courthouse.

Hood River County strongly encourages your bi-partisan support of the capital funding request for Hood River County to build a new courthouse. Enhancing safety and ensuring that this critical facility for the region can provide services without interruption is a project that cannot be delayed.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Jennifer EUWER

Hood River County Board of Commissioners Chair



Hood River County Board of Commissioners

COMMISSIONERS

601 State Street · Hood River, OR 97031 · (541) 386-3970 · FAX (541) 386-9392

Jennifer Euwer – Chair
Leticia Moretti – District No. 1
Arthur Babitz – District No. 2
Ed Weathers – District No. 3
Chad Muenzer – District No. 4

April 8, 2025

1207 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Maxine Dexter

Hood River County's Commissioners have long prioritized the need to update inadequate facilities that support County operations and services. Built in 1954 in downtown Hood River, the Hood River County Courthouse provides the location for statutorily required services for Hood River County, including the Circuit Court, District Attorney, Victim's Assistance, Sheriff, Parole & Probation, Emergency Management, and Veteran's Services. These services are essential for the day-to-day safety of the region and especially critical during a disaster or emergency. The 2009 Oregon Courthouse Facilities Assessment placed the facility as one of the lowest ranked/highest need courthouses statewide. The facility was characterized as "expecting to suffer severe structural and non-structural damage in the design earthquake." During an emergency when the community relies on these services the most, it is imperative that our residents, visitors, and businesses know that these critical services and facilities are functioning.

In 2024, DLR Group initiated a space feasibility analysis and projected cost estimate for the project, estimating \$85,826,843 to meet the needs of the County and State court functions. Initial planning costs will total \$325,000, and the Oregon Judicial Department has provided \$42,549 in ARPA funding to the County to support the project. Hood River County has requested Oregon's Senators and Representatives support for the remaining planning costs to advance project readiness, \$8.5 million to fund site acquisition and development design and construction documents, and Oregon HB 5012 and SB 5055, which include the County's \$85 million bond request to fund the Courthouse Replacement Project. Funding from the USDA Community Facilities Grant Program through the Community Funded Project program would provide the necessary support to fund the next phase of this project.

Hood River County is one of the smallest counties in Oregon and has one of the state's lowest overall permanent property tax rates at \$1.42/\$1,000 in taxable assessed value. These factors combined with an overall debt limit below what would be required from current cost estimates for a new facility makes self-funding this project infeasible. Given that the population of 24,406 and that 46% of households have an income below \$75,000 per year, bonds would place an overwhelming burden on taxpayers. These constraints highlight the need for collaboration and support from our state and federal partners.

More than 19,000 people used the Courthouse in 2024. This project will achieve the County's objective to provide a modern, safe facility and make the County and its critical services more resilient to natural disasters. Improved, energy-efficient infrastructure will also meet the goals of the community-led 2018 Hood River County Energy Council Master Plan.

Hood River County strongly encourages your support of the Community Funded Project Request to build a new courthouse. Enhancing safety and ensuring that this critical facility for the region can provide services without interruption is a project that cannot be delayed.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Jennifer Euwer

Hood River County Board of Commissioners Chair