

Cornelius

Oregon's Family Town



February 13, 2026

Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

Re: Cornelius Recreation and Community Center Project Funding Request

Dear Committee Members,

The Forest Grove School District has replaced the old Cornelius Elementary School, adjacent to Cornelius City Hall, Public Library, and Police and Fire Departments. Much of the old school, well past its useful life, was removed. The gym, cafeteria, and associated administrative space is only 30 years old and is ideal for reuse as a community shelter, recreation and community center. The City is purchasing the building from the School District and we seek your support to establish this critical facility.

Cornelius has grown nearly 20% since 2019 and has nearly 15,000 residents. In 2024, the City developed a Concept Plan for the building renovation that reflects substantial community input for what needs the project will address. The building will serve not only residents of Cornelius, but those of neighboring communities including Forest Grove and unincorporated Washington County. It will serve as a needed center for community sheltering and will enrich lives. Planned uses include:

- Emergency shelter for extreme heat, cold, and other emergencies
- Youth and adult recreation, including basketball, pickleball, and exercise classes
- After school activities
- Activities for seniors
- Arts programming
- Community events

Beyond acquisition, the building requires renovation and updates to meet community needs. Local funding has been identified to cover 51% of total project costs. State funding is needed to complete needed resiliency upgrades, space realignments, and basic renovations.

OUR REQUEST

Local funding	\$2,100,000
Total Project Cost	\$9,850,000
State funds requested	\$5,000,000

Cornelius is a culturally rich and diverse community, with more than 50% of the community identifying as Latino. It has beautiful parks and natural areas, a growing cadre of small businesses, a friendly, welcoming atmosphere, and proximity and ties to agriculture. Cornelius is also a relatively low income community, and with local government revenue among the lowest in the greater Portland region, we cannot realize this critical project alone.

This space will help the City and community partners deliver needed services and programs, enhancing lives and supporting those who need it the most. It will address important needs of many demographic groups in the community, including adults, children and youth, and seniors. Most importantly, it will provide a space for the most vulnerable community members to shelter in an emergency.

We need your help to make this project happen. We urge you to fund this request, and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

The Cornelius Recreation and Community Center Coalition:

Jeffrey Dalin, Mayor



Angeles Godinez-Valencia, City Council President



Eden Lopez, City Councilor



Gregory Vaughn, City Councilor



Citlalli Nuñez-Barragán, City Councilor



Cornelius
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Dr. Suzanne West, Superintendent
Forest Grove School District



Melanie Johnston, Chair
Cornelius Boosters



Boosting the Cornelius Community
Since 1953

Maria Caballero-Rubio, Executive Director
Centro Cultural de Washington County



Bridget Cooke, Executive Director
Adelante Mujeres



Nathan Teske, Executive Director
Bienestar



David Morris, Chief
Cornelius Fire Department



Caprice Massey, Sheriff
Washington County

