



## JOE BERNEY

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Lane County Commissioner  
Springfield District  
Joe.Berney@co.lane.or.us

DATE: 4/12/2019  
TO: Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
RE: HB 5005, relating to state financial administration

Co-Chairs Senator Girod and Representative Holvey and Members of the Subcommittee:

Lane County is requesting \$87.6M in state bonding authority in order to construct a replacement facility for the Lane County Circuit Court in downtown Eugene. We ask that you name this project as authorized for bond issuance during the 2019-21 biennium as you consider amendments to HB 5005.

This is a project that has been evolving almost since the inception of the Oregon Courthouse Capital Construction Improvement Fund, and was first submitted to the Chief Justice for consideration in 2015. This is not to say, however, that the Oregon Legislature first encountered the shortcomings of the Lane County Courthouse at that time. Indeed, the record is clear that as far back as 1996 there were statewide efforts to examine County Courthouses. In 1999 a statewide analysis was undertaken and repeated in 2006. The Lane County Courthouse has been well documented in its problems, and in particular is seismically vulnerable, has remarkably bad accessibility issues, and is unable to provide adequate separation between victims, the accused, and court staff.

The Oregon Legislature has previously authorized bond sales to support the planning and development of this project in 2016 and 2017. On behalf of the entire Board of Commissioners I'd like to express my thanks for your approvals of those earlier bonds. Over the course of the past three years we have been disciplined in our approach to this project. The following milestones are a sampling of the work we have undertaken and completed:

- A study of the long-term needs of the court via a contract with the National Center for State Courts that established space needs and functional adjacencies.
- Collaboration with the City of Eugene to examine a host of downtown Eugene development projects and where a new courthouse would be best located in relationship to other planned developments.
- A scoping study with a nationally recognized private firm to confirm the NCSC study and further refine the project requirements.
- A detailed cost estimate by an independent cost estimator experienced in developing project cost estimates for large public projects such that we could confidently budget for the development and final construction of the courthouse project.
- Referral to the voters of Lane County of a local ballot measure to authorize \$154M in local bonding authority.
- A local ordinance ensuring Lane County will not issue local bonds unless State bond authority is also granted.
- Formal adoption of a framework for a Community Benefits Agreement that will address local labor, local materials, and issues of equity related to the project.
- Current processes to select and hire a design firm and construction firm to complete the planning and design phases and begin construction.

Our voters will inform us of their decision on May 21, 2019. Passage of the bond measure would ensure the Legislature that we have the necessary matching funds in place for this project. We want

to further ensure that you understand this request, combined with the local bonding, plus \$4M in one time federal dollars that Lane County has saved for this project, will complete the project.

With the combined support of our community and the Legislative Assembly, the funding for this project can begin to be added to the previous bonding in short order. We are prepared to move forward with detailed design work and anticipate a groundbreaking on the project in early 2021 with final completion in 2023.

Thank you for your service to our state and for your consideration of this important project.

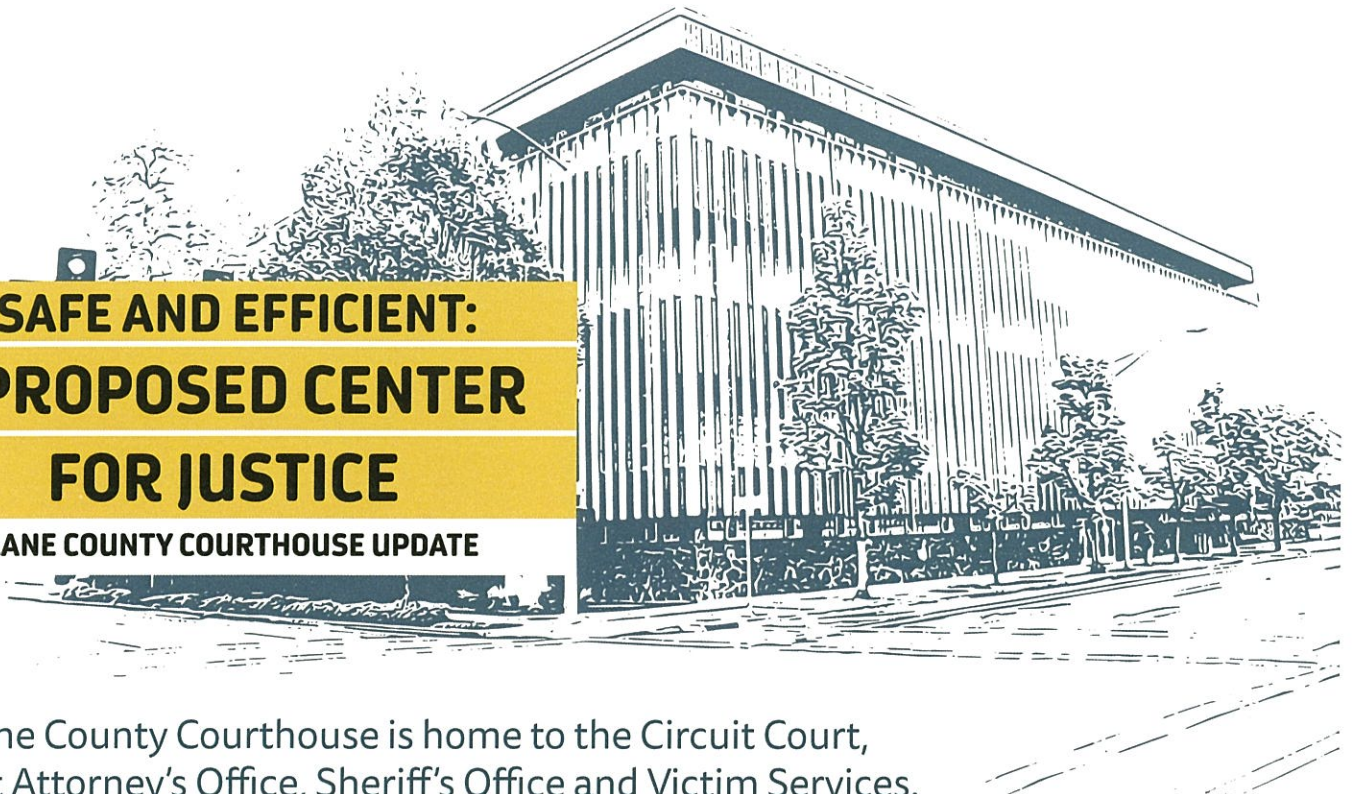
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Berney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Joe Berney  
Lane County Commissioner, Springfield District

# SAFE AND EFFICIENT: A PROPOSED CENTER FOR JUSTICE

## LANE COUNTY COURTHOUSE UPDATE



The Lane County Courthouse is home to the Circuit Court, District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office and Victim Services. Since it was built 60 years ago, the population it serves has more than doubled. Today, the building can't support the use it receives, and its physical systems are unreliable.



### OUT OF SPACE

Space limitations cause inefficiencies.

- Space issues lead to late start times, juggling of locations and last-minute changes and notice.
- Justice today is very different from the 1950s and the current building has inadequate space for victim services, mediation, and specialty courts for veterans, drug offenses, or mental health cases.
- There is no space for efficiency improvements such as mediation to avoid a trial, space for specialized programs like drug court, or the mental health program.



### LIMITED SECURITY, NO PRIVACY

The way the building is designed limits the Court's ability to provide privacy and security for victims:

- There is no place for people to have a confidential conversation with an attorney.
- There is no separation of space between opposing parties.
- Inmates share elevators and hallways with Courthouse staff, judges, witnesses and jurors.



### UNEQUAL ACCESS

Equal access to legal services is being constrained by the physical limitations of the Lane County Courthouse:

- Those in wheelchairs can't access public spaces or serve on some juries because of lack of access to courtrooms or the availability of bathroom facilities.
- Jurors in wheelchairs can't reach public portions of the building without being escorted through restricted-access hallways and back doors.

### BEYOND REPAIR

The building's combination of repairs have offered short-term solutions, but they are no longer enough:

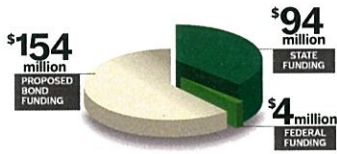
- Basic systems like heating, cooling and plumbing are faulty and no longer reliable or functional.
- The inmate transport elevator experiences frequent interruptions in service due to its age and the difficulty of maintaining old equipment. This causes inmates to be transported through public hallways and through the public elevators in the neighboring Public Service Building.
- Renovation would be more costly than new construction and would not accomplish the goal of more space.
- The building's technology, including methods for sharing information with a jury, or providing connectivity, does not meet the current standard for most courthouses in Oregon or across the country and also interferes with court processes.

# SAFE AND EFFICIENT: A PROPOSED CENTER FOR JUSTICE

## LANE COUNTY COURTHOUSE UPDATE

### BALLOT MEASURE 20-299

Ballot Measure 20-299 would provide \$154 million toward construction of a new Lane County Courthouse, which would be combined with an anticipated \$94 million in state funding and \$4 million in federal funding.



County Code prohibits Lane County from collecting any voter-approved bond funding unless the anticipated state funding is provided.

The estimated cost of the measure is \$0.27 per \$1,000 assessed value annually. If the measure does not pass, no additional assessment will be made and the project will not be completed.

### WORKING ON SOLUTIONS

Inspections and reviews of the current building have made one thing clear: remodeling the current building would not fulfill the need for space and security improvements. In considering the challenges the current Courthouse building poses, County Commissioners have placed a measure on the ballot, which, if passed, would fund construction of a new courthouse.

If passed, this measure would combine with state and federal funding to establish a new center for justice on the downtown block to the east of the Public Service Building. The County already owns this property.

### COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The Board of County Commissioners adopted five project goals as part of a community benefits agreement for courthouse construction. The agreement would prioritize:

1. Local businesses, contractors and workers.
2. Living wages and family health benefits.
3. Project workforce diversity and equity.
4. Sustainability objectives in design and construction.
5. Training and apprenticeship opportunities.

### VISION

If passed, a new courthouse would be built to serve as the center for justice throughout Lane County for a planned 100 years. The courthouse would be sized to flexibly and efficiently meet the current and future needs of the community.

Justice partners — including Oregon Public Defense Services, Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney's Office — would be included in order to increase access to representation.

Design would allow all users and community members to safely and equitably access justice-related services and resources and to participate in the justice system.

## ABOUT THE LANE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

### Services Provided in the Courthouse

- Circuit Court
- District Attorney's Office
- Lane County Sheriff's Office
- Emergency Operations Center
- Records and Archives
- Rural police and Search and Rescue dispatch

### Courthouse Statistics:

- Built in 1959
- Four stories
- 15 courtrooms
- 33,000 cases processed each year
- One entrance
- 274 full-time workers
- 650 daily visitors

