

JEFFREY A. HELFRICH
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 52



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 14th, 2024

Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey,
Members of the Committee

Corbett School District is seeking \$1.5 million in funding for the creation of a walking track around the school campus, and I want to share my support for my constituency and their proposal.

My district covers the Columbia Gorge from just east of the metro suburbs all the way to the Dalles, and south to Mount Hood. This district – without question the most beautiful in the state - presents an interesting mix of circumstances. On the one hand, the district is mostly rural, but with the draw of tourism and I-84 running along the northern border, there is a disproportionate amount of traffic throughout much of the district. For our smallest communities who lack substantial pedestrian infrastructure, this can pose a real danger.

Corbett is one example of this type of community. Traffic has been so congested on the Columbia River Highway in recent years, that ODOT has experimented with a timed-entry system to reduce traffic along what is known as the “Waterfall Corridor.” Corbett sits just at the beginning of this stretch of road, and it was the Corbett exit from I-84 where most folks would have been coming off the freeway. This offers a sense of the level of traffic that Corbett sees during the summer.

With all of this traffic, it is noteworthy that Corbett lacks much pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks. Ensuring that we have somewhere safe for students and community members to walk or run would be a major benefit to the local community.

The district has purchased the land necessary for this addition, but needs assistance to complete the project, especially after unanticipated weather-related repairs over the past two years.

I thank you for your consideration of this project, and respectfully request your approval of funding for my community.

Sincerely,

Jeff Helfrich