

PCOL – Facilities Committee
Recommendation for a Comprehensive Facilities Plan for the Capitol

Background

The Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature approved a recommendation made by the Facilities Committee to update a plan to renovate the capitol wings, seek funding and expedite the project. The wings were added to the capitol in 1977, and this renovation may include improving electrical and plumbing systems, safeguarding technology cables, improving fire suppression systems, stabilizing HVAC conditions for the current number of wing occupants, improving ADA accessibility and improving office space and furnishings. When committee and commission members discussed this recommendation, it was stressed that the capitol is the peoples' building and that the physical condition of the capitol calls for repairs. Members also commented that the price of renovation, no matter how extensive, will only increase over time. Therefore, it is wise to make an investment in renovation at the earliest possible opportunity.

The original capitol building, dedicated in 1938, is in need of similar renovations as the wings. As was explained to the committee, the old building has the same problems as the new building, but the wires, pipes and furnishings are even older. Also, the "Spring Break Quake" in March of 1993 caused damage to the original building and clearly illustrated the need for significant seismic upgrades.

In addition to the recommendation for renovating the wings, the commission has also approved a recommendation that the Legislative Assembly essentially experiment with annual sessions over the next few years. Commission members have acknowledged that if the Legislative Assembly eventually meets annually, a different load will be placed on the capitol in terms of space needs for legislators, staff and public and on water, electrical and HVAC systems.

The committee feels that in order to clearly illustrate the nature and expense of renovating the entire capitol, legislators and the public should see a plan for all future renovation projects including the wings, the old building, seismic upgrades and the possibility of moving some capitol occupants to other locations on the mall. If a detailed tactical plan is developed, then projects may be approved, budgeted for and monitored over a longer period of time. We feel that, with the input of legislative leaders in the process of planning, approval and budgeting, a comprehensive renovation project may gain and retain traction that can withstand changes in leadership and administration.

Committee Recommendation

The committee recommends that the Legislative Administration Committee, according to ORS 173.760 establish an advisory committee to develop a comprehensive plan for capitol renovation, meeting specified timelines.

The initial goal of the committee is to develop the comprehensive plan for capitol renovation including project outlines, approximate costs, funding sources and timelines. Subsequently, the committee will review the plan and progress on an ongoing basis and revise the plan when necessary.

In addition to recommending the formation of an advisory committee and development of a comprehensive plan, this committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly consider funding a renovation of the capitol a priority as it is the peoples' building and it is a wise investment to renovate as soon as possible.

As the advisory committee develops their comprehensive plan, this committee suggests that at least the following items be considered in the plan.

Seismic upgrade of the capitol

Areas of concern:

- Safety of occupants during a seismic event
- Ability of the building occupants to safely exit in the event of a significant seismic occurrence
- Secure marble tiles to exterior of the building

Renovation the original capitol building

Areas of concern:

- Safety (whether it is the ability to work in a safe environment (OSHA) or be safe from crimes);
- Electrical wiring and plumbing;
- Lighting in offices and hallways;
- Technology cabling;
- Space allocation;
- Lack of ergonomic furnishings;
- Need for four large caucus rooms;
- Need for committee meeting rooms that allow for roundtable discussion;
- Video and audio upgrades for committee rooms, and chamber floors;
- Public meeting and display space (capitol history center);
- Review ADA accessibility to the House and Senate chambers and to the wings
- Safety of the capitol grounds (whether it is the ability to get to entrances easily (handrails? more than one ADA entrance?) or being safe from crimes (crosswalk dangers, lighting in dark corners, big bushes to hide behind)