

REPORT TO THE 77TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BY THE
CAPITOL MASTER PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Capitol belongs to the people of Oregon, and the Legislature has an obligation to protect and preserve it. In our region, earthquakes are a serious threat. If a major earthquake strikes, the Capitol will likely be destroyed and lives lost.

Twenty years ago, the Legislature received a wake-up call when the Scotts Mills earthquake cracked the Rotunda, requiring extensive repairs. That wake-up call was echoed by the Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature in 2006 when it called for seismic improvements to the Capitol.

The Review Committee repeats that wake-up call today. The risks are real, and so are the safety and economic benefits of the Master Plan project as updated by the [Review Committee's Report to the Legislative Assembly](#) available online and distributed to members. In the considered judgment of the Review Committee, the project is the right thing to do for the State of Oregon, its People, and their State Capitol. Given these warnings, the time to act is now.

CONCERNS

For 75 years, the current Oregon State Capitol building has served the people of Oregon well. Over the decades, however, the Capitol has developed three main concerns.

Seismic Concerns: The risk and consequence of a major earthquake are real and severe. According to engineers, the Capitol is a collapse hazard in two different types of earthquakes: (1) an 8.0 magnitude Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake near the coast; or (2) a 7.0 magnitude crustal earthquake in the Willamette Valley.

If a large earthquake hits the Capitol, the consequences will be severe. These consequences include:

- The loss of life to visitors and employees.
- The loss of infrastructure for an entire branch of state government.
- The destruction of an historic Oregon symbol.

Other Life-Safety Concerns: The Capitol has developed other serious life-safety concerns over the years, including:

- Lead in the plumbing, ducting, and paint.
- Asbestos dangers where it is unsafe for workers.
- Electrical panels in unsafe locations that do not comply with code, and electrical distribution systems with no fire suppression.
- Many areas of the building are not protected by fire sprinklers or alarms, and many passages and ducts in the Capitol will likely act as chimneys, causing fire to spread uncontrollably from floor to floor.
- Other life-safety concerns discussed in the report.

Operational Concerns: Built in the 1930's during the Great Depression and expanded in the 1970's, the Capitol has struggled to meet the operational needs of the Legislature. For example, the Review Committee identified:

- Outdated building systems and building systems that conflict with office space.
- Inefficient allocation of space and duplication of equipment and cost.



- Inconvenient public services.
- ADA accessibility concerns.
- Other concerns identified in the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these concerns, the Review Committee makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Address the seismic and other life-safety concerns as top priorities and address the operational concerns when efficient opportunities arise. The Legislative Assembly should seismically retrofit the Capitol and correct the other life-safety issues throughout the building. When work is being done to achieve the seismic and life-safety repairs, it will be possible to do the work necessary to correct operational deficiencies at the same time in order to reduce overall construction costs.

Recommendation 2: Use guidelines for addressing the operational concerns, while leaving specific decisions to the Legislative Administrator and design team. The Legislative Assembly should provide guidelines for how space should be allocated and used in the Capitol, while leaving specific decisions about the location of offices in the Capitol to the Legislative Administrator and design team engaged in the construction. Further, needs within the Capitol change over time, and guidelines will provide useful direction while still giving the Legislative Administrator flexibility to address changing needs. The Review Committee has recommended a set of guidelines beginning at page 17 of the report.

Recommendation 3: Gain the early benefit of a planning consultant and then use the Construction Manager/General Contractor (“CM/GC”) contracting method with clear legislative oversight and a streamlined historic design review process. Early help from a planning consultant will lay the groundwork for a successful project. Further, the CM/GC contracting method is widely used on projects of this size. The project should be overseen by the Legislative Administration Committee with a single point of contact from the Legislature to the construction team. To the greatest extent possible, the historic design review process for the Capitol Master Plan should be streamlined and coordinated within a single entity.

Recommendation 4: Following the 2015 Session, temporarily vacate the Capitol and coordinate the Master Plan with projects planned by the Department of Administrative Services (“DAS”). Construction of the Master Plan project should begin following the 2015 Session with the anticipated completion of the project before the 2019 Session. The Capitol should be vacated for the duration of the Master Plan project. DAS is planning other construction on the Capitol Mall, and space in a new office building planned by DAS can be used to house the Legislative Branch during construction of the Master Plan project. Close coordination with DAS’s project will reduce overall costs and minimize complications with the Master Plan.

Recommendation 5: Fund the project in stages. The Legislature should fund the project in stages. First, a small initial expenditure should be made in the 2011-13 biennium to begin more detailed planning of the project. Next, a larger expenditure in the 2013-15 biennium should be made using bonding authority to complete the planning and design process. Finally, additional bonding authority should be granted beginning in the 2015 Session for the actual construction.

