

¡VÁMONOS!

CORNELIUS

Cornelius History and Points of Interest

Use the ¡Vámonos! map to explore Cornelius. The map's 5.5-mile biking and walking route passes seven city parks, through downtown, and along quiet streets sheltered under giant sequoias, Oregon white oaks and other large old trees.

The Cornelius story

The train tracks south of Baseline Street are the very reason Cornelius exists. In the 1870s, railroad tycoon Ben Holladay wanted to build a line from Portland to California. He asked towns to give him land in exchange for running the line through them.

Colonel Thomas Cornelius heard about Holladay's plans, so he bought 1,500 acres of land in 1871 in an area that was then called Free Orchard (named because an earlier settler had planted apple and pear trees). Cornelius told Holladay he was welcome to build his railroad right through it.

Cornelius built a house, warehouse and store in Free Orchard next to the planned rail line. In 1872 when trains started running, he began shipping grain, potatoes, hops and timber. He also built a creamery. Before refrigerators, milk had to be canned if it couldn't be used within a few days. Farmers brought milk to the creamery where it'd be canned and shipped out by train.

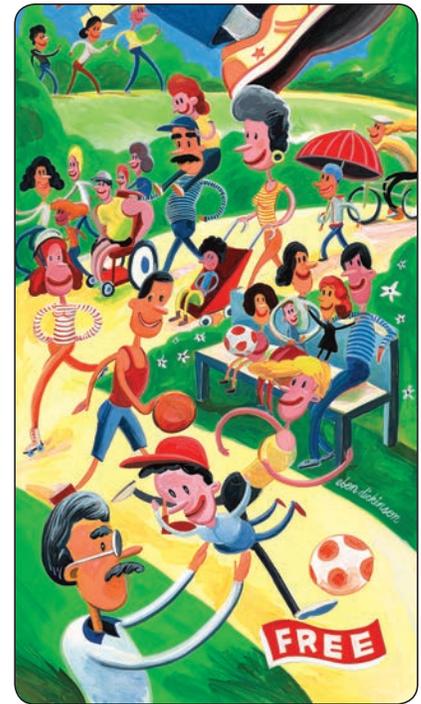
Cornelius spent the rest of his life promoting business and farming in Free Orchard, so in 1893 the town changed its name to honor him. Cornelius Pass Road is also named for him.

The logic behind Cornelius's streets

As you walk or ride through Cornelius, it's easy to figure out where you are:

- Baseline divides the town, north from south.
- East-west streets are alphabetical. North of Adair are Barlow, Clark, Davis, Fremont, etc. All are names of men who explored or developed the land.
- East-west streets south of Baseline are alphabetical too, using words from nature: Alpine, Beech, Cherry, Dogwood, Elder, Fawn and so on.
- North-south avenues are numbered, west to east, from 1st Avenue at the Forest Grove border, to 31st on the east.

Here are sites you'll see on the main, 5.5-mile route, in clockwise order, starting from Centro Cultural.



Centro Cultural

Centro Cultural has been part of Cornelius since 1972, when 8 percent of the city's population was Latino. Today it is about 50 percent. Centro's goal: to offer tools that help educate and empower people in western Washington County. Among other services, it offers classes in ESL and GED, literacy, citizenship, computers, leadership training, art and culture and commercial kitchen certification.



Cornelius Wellness Center and the Metro rain garden

Completed in fall 2012, the Wellness Center is the newest facility in the Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Care system, which serves 34,000 patients each year in Washington and Yamhill counties.

Behind the Wellness Center, in an old alley, is the **Metro rain garden**.

Water and any contaminants it picks up flows through plant roots and soil, getting cleaned as it percolates into the ground on its way to the Tualatin River. The garden was funded by a Nature in Neighborhoods grant from Metro. It brings to life many of the missions of Virginia Garcia and its partners:

- Healthcare. Spending time in natural spaces is good for our mental, physical and spiritual health.
- Active transportation. Where cars once parked, people now walk and the community can gather.
- Education. Signs teach adults and kids about where we get our water and the importance of healthy water sources.
- Environmentalism. Beautiful landscapes don't just happen: they require the humans who live near them to be careful stewards so the next generations can enjoy a beautiful world.



City parks, heritage trees, neighborhoods, shopping, a movie theater, and a grade school are along the way to the next stop.

Historic Redwine House was built by Albert S. Sholes in 1909. He moved to Oregon in 1901 at age 57 because he thought it'd be better for his health. He started a bank in Hillsboro, and then bought one in Cornelius, called the Cornelius State Bank.

He ran it and became the town's mayor. In addition to his own home, Sholes built the three houses west of this home for family members, some of them were bankers too, so this area was called Bankers Row. Later, it was owned by the Redwines, who gave tours through it to school and community groups.

The house has 18 rooms in 3 floors; the top floor had a billiards room.

Free Orchard Park crosses over a wetland and creek that flows into the Tualatin River, a quarter mile south. Wetlands used to be called wastelands or swamps and were thought to serve no purpose other than to breed mosquitoes.

People would drain the water, and farm the wetland or fill it with soil. But wetlands are home to wildlife and native plants, and help keep downstream water clean for humans and animals. Today cities everywhere preserve or restore wetlands.

A connecting trail on the map leads to Steamboat Park, on the Tualatin River. There, steamboats stopped, in the days when good roads were nonexistent and the railroad hadn't yet come to town. Farmers in Free Orchard would bring their wheat and other crops to be loaded on to steamships.

Settlers began farming this broad Tualatin Valley in the 1840s.



Soils are rich and deep; they were carried down from the hills over thousands of years. Another source were Ice Age floods that carried soils from as far away as Montana and dropped them into the Willamette and Tualatin valleys.

Despite the good soil, early farmers had a problem: they couldn't get their products to markets in Portland. In winter, roads became so muddy wagons would sink to their axles or worse. In summer, dust and ruts made travel almost as difficult. In 1856, a newspaper reported: "Barns are now crammed with grain which ought to have been in market three years ago."

The solution: use the rivers as roads. So even though the Tualatin was narrow, shallow and overhung with tree limbs, it was the best way farmers could get their wheat, and later their fruit and timber to market. In 1867, the Oregonian noted that piloting a steamship down the river was not an easy task: "In summer, the size and great number of mosquitoes sometimes obscure the vision of the captain or attack him so furiously as to compel him to let go of the wheel.... collisions with the bank are not infrequent."

The steamboat era ended when the railroad came to town.

Learn more about all three ¡Vámonos! maps for Cornelius, Forest Grove and Hillsboro at

www.oregonmetro.gov/vamonos.