



Independent District Commission

Independent District Commission Meeting #5

April 19, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendance

Commissioners					
Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Amanda Manjarrez	X		Paul Lumley	X	
Arlene Kimura		Excused	Ransom Green III	X	
David Michael Siegel	X		Sharon VanSickle-Robbins	X	
DaWayne Judd	X		Steve Fleischman	X	
Joshua Laurente	X				
Kari Chisholm	X				
Lamar Wise	X		Alternate Commissioners		
Melody Valdini	X		Marta Hanson	X	
Neisha Saxena	X		Sohrab Vossoughi		X

Staff Present			
Sofia Alvarez-Castro, City of Portland	Nicole Forbes, City of Portland	Kimi Shigetani, Flo Analytics	Alex Brasch, FLO Analytics
Amber Ontiveros, Ontiveros & Associates, LLC - Facilitator			

Welcome

Comm. Saxena welcomed everyone. Amber Ontiveros provided Zoom logistics and introduced the sign interpreters.

Commission Business

Comm. Saxena provided an overview of the meeting agenda. She informed the group that Comm. Van Ness submitted her resignation from the commission, and that Comm. Green III will be elevated to a voting member. Comm. Fleischman wondered if the reasons for the resignation could be shared with the commission as lessons learned. Sofia said that Comm. Van Ness sent an email to commissioners but did not include her reason for resigning. Group discussed concerns that this and other emails had been blocked by the City's spam filters. Sofia stated she will follow up with technology staff to find a resolution and recommended that people cc the Independent District Commission email address .

Comm. Saxena stated it was the end of her and Comm. Van Sickle-Robbins' term as co-chairs. Commissioners Lumley and Hanson volunteered for the role of Co-Chairs beginning May 1st through June 30th.

Wise/ Chisholm m/s to approve Comms. Lumley and Hanson as co-chairs for May 1 – June 30, 2023. All agreed, motion passed.

Public Comment

Amber informed community how they can testify this evening.

Hank Schottland – shared a presentation titled, “District Maps. How do ‘communities of interest’ relate to neighborhoods, income, and other demographic factors?”. He stated there are other factors that are important but will focus on these. He stated that using the Districtr tool, he put together a fairly tradition map with a goal to preserve what some may think of as their areas and keep population as equally balanced as possible. Though this process and research he learned that the city had already done some interesting work in the City’s 2035 Comprehensive Plan, updated in 2020. They highlighted where in the city where growth was going to occur and so where investment dollars needed to flow. This was useful in terms of where to draw district boundaries because where you draw them would either reinforce or run counter to what was already in the plan. He outlined how using the city’s plan elements, he could refine his map to identify underserved communities and maintain centers of services for residents to understand and identify communities of interest.

The Commission requested that Mr. Schottland send his presentation to the commission, with annotations. Group discussed whether they could allow more time for Mr. Schottland to complete his presentation as there currently is no one else signed up for testimony.

Lumley/Chisholm m/s to allow Mr. Schottland additional time to complete his presentation, noting that there are no other members of the public signed up for testimony today. All approved, motion passes

Mr. Schottland completed his presentation, regarding how he developed a variety of maps, using information from sources such as the City’s 2035 Comprehensive Plan, City’s proposed investments in city services, median income levels, concentrations of renters, etc.

Comm. Manjarrez thanked Mr. Schottland for presenting and reminded the group that the comprehensive plan is generally used for land use planning purposes. While the information is useful, the commission should keep its purpose in mind.

Chisholm/Lumley m/s to skip the five-minute break in the agenda due to the early ending of the scheduled public comment time. All agreed motion passed.

Additional District Plan Criteria

Flo Analytics presented a series of four sample maps, based on maps submitted in DistrictR and commission discussions had to date. Group discussed the presentation. Concerns were raised regarding:

- How much Neighborhood Association boundaries were used in defining the districts presented
- Use of decennial data versus ACS
- Use of census blocks, equity index, metro council districts and how to overlay those on the sample maps
- How neighborhoods are defined – official neighborhood associations, neighborhood identifiers, etc.
- Some of the sample maps split east Portland into two districts
- Some of the districts in sample maps appear to be not contiguous

- How Flo Analytics or commissioners keep the criteria in mind when drawing sample maps
- In many of the sample maps, concentrations of wealthy Portlanders is high in three of the four districts, meaning they could have greater voting power on Council than the one district being shown with a majority of low-income resident.

Comm. VanSickle-Robbins stated she would like to have discussions about priorities which could help the commission drive to consensus, such as if community members who live in the Montavilla neighborhood are more interested in being connected with east Portland or with something more central or if keeping school districts whole is important. Several commissioners agreed that this prioritization of priorities would be useful.

Group discussed when maps submitted by Commissioners would be discussed. Flo Analytics stated that commissioners should submit their maps in DistrictR to be analyzed and should inform staff it's been submitted or label it to be identified as a commissioner map.

Group discussed that analysis and community input is necessary for all maps before they are removed from consideration, regardless of current Commission assumptions.

Group discussed concerns about the mapping tools available on the web for community members.

Group discussed some of the input they have received regarding neighborhoods such as: the importance of keeping the Cully neighborhood intact, or how disconnected St. Johns area feels from areas west of the river, or the importance of clearly defining the Jade District so it can remain intact. Some in the group raised concerns about adhering strictly to the neighborhood association boundaries determined by the City, as some are not reflective of how community views itself or the actual geographic boundaries of an area. Additionally, by sticking with them some neighborhood associations may feel that they "own" a particular elected official and those elected officials may feel the need to focus on one association at the expense of another.

Comm. Chisholm reminded the group that just because a map was submitted to DistrictR or shown as a sample map tonight, does not mean it is a good map. Instead, the commission should use it's own knowledge and connections to help determine what parts of maps are valid or support the commission's goals.

Comm. Hanson suggested that the commissioners submit maps in DistrictR and then be given two or three minutes at the next commission meeting to present the map, and their thought process in creating the map, to the commission. She stated she would like the commission to encourage greater public input, and that perhaps the commission needs to determine some specific questions or specific sample maps for community to react to. Group generally agreed to these suggestions.

Valdini/ Siegel m/s to requested that any community member interested in the Commission actively reviewing their submitting map(s) also submit public testimony explaining how or why they developed the map. All agreed, motion passes.

Valdini/ Saxena m/s to request community members answer the questions created by the community engagement committee to help the Commission define neighborhoods and communities of common interest, either via public input or in a meeting in the public comment period. All agreed, motion passes.

Chisholm/Siegel m/s to set aside time in the next meeting (or two) for commissioners to share any map(s) they have developed along with information on what they were trying to accomplish with the map(s). Comm. Fleischman offered a friendly amendment that motion to state that we set aside that time on the agenda, but that maps be submitted ahead of time to allow Flo Analytics time to analyze and provide perspective. Chisholm/Siegel agreed to this amendment. All agreed, motion passes.

Comm. Manjarrez raised concerns about upcoming meeting and how to balance presentations and discussions of commissioner submitted maps with input provided by the public about maps submitted – whether those are their own maps, maps from commissioners, or maps from other community members.

Comm. Lumly requested that the commission keep a running list of communities they have met with regarding this process.

Amber asked the group if they are ready to confirm interest in establishing an east Portland district. Group discussed the need to better define what that may look like before making that determination. Group agreed that, while temperature checks on areas of group consensus are important, they should be held until there is more clarity on what questions are needed to be asked and better clarity on when those decisions need to be made.

Group discussed things they would like to see on future meeting agendas including:

- A discussion regarding how the commission will define what is included in east Portland
- A critical path timeline to better understand commission timeline
- A discussion of what assumptions are included in maps given to public for feedback

Group discussed the possibility of having more than one maps for community input during the public hearings in June. They discussed how that may increase the required number of public hearings, particularly if there is no overlap of map areas. Sofia reminded the group that all the public hearings will be hybrid for easier access by community members. Group discussed if they wanted to limit the number of proposed maps to send for public hearings.

Alex provided information on the use of DistrictR and how community can either submit a map or submit information about a community. Comm. Valdini and Alex provided a review of the map submitted by Comm. Valdini. Group discussed how this is a great illustration of the hard choice between using school district boundaries or neighborhood association boundaries as dividing lines for districts.

Next Steps

Comm. VanSickle-Robbins thanked commission for allowing her and Comm. Saxena to serve as Co-Chairs. The next meeting will be May 3, from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned, 8:54 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Diana Shiplet, Project Coordinator

Meeting QnA

Q: I don't need to speak but would like to reiterate the suggestion of following current county/state legislative lines to a degree, obviously it won't be exact. And also to consider leaving the 'traditional' designated neighborhoods intact. I believe that will be simple for voters to understand and least likely to upset. It also separates outer East PDX from inner, something that sounds like it's very important to many people who have submitted comments previously.

I would also like to ask if the question from an earlier meeting was ever answered, I apologize if I missed it at another meeting, but is this IDC tasked with numbering the districts 1-4? It seems like this would make sense since you all have the data to know which 2 districts are the most underserved and would be voting in national presidential election years, and the other 2 will go in the off-year (midterms) that traditionally have lower voter turnout.

Thank you!

A: Yes, the within the IDC's scope to number the districts.

Q: Links to the material from the city:

- <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/13555574>
- <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/13555562>
- <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/comp-plan/2035-comprehensive-plan-and-supporting-documents>
- <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/comp-plan/documents/urban-design-direction/download>
- There are also a few documents here that may be helpful:
<https://hcpaw.portlandoregon.gov/u/4LK7nX-yulfysrud/7f1b5e53-59d6-4372-b9af-51089236163b?l>

Q: Would the Commissioners be interested in seeing the Comprehensive Plan vision at: <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/comp-plan/vision-growth-and-progress>. The city spent several years developing it, so thank you to Mr. Schottland for introducing to the discussion.

A: Could you submit that via public comment? districtcommission@portlandoregon.gov. The Commission received public comment reports two business days before meetings with comments received!

Q: The person who presented testimony with all the detailed maps had done extensive research. When asked, he said he was speaking only for himself. I may be out of line, but as a fellow citizen I am wondering what his professional background is. He was knowledgeable, backed up his data with facts and spoke with authority. Just a teensy bit uneasy with the Commission giving him credibility without knowing more about him, his motivation.

Q: How many neighborhood boundaries split up census blocks? re: neighborhood boundaries not matching school district boundaries... it is presumably only school district boundaries that don't split census blocks.

A by Mr. Schottland: They are not exactly the same.

There are some neighborhoods that are on the boundary between 2 others and ended up getting its own designation in RLIS. There are 93 "official" neighborhoods from a neighborhood association perspective but over 130 if you look at the more discrete list.

Meeting Chat

18:11:57 From Commissioner Siegel : Welcome Commissioner Green!

18:13:55 From Commissioner Hanson : Thank you, all! I'm looking forward to serving with Commissioner Lumley!

18:16:42 From Commissioner Lumley : Thank you, everyone! I also look forward to serving with Commissioner Hanson!

18:19:51 From Commissioner Saxena : I would be interested in the rest of this presentation too!

18:22:30 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff : Yup, no one else is signed up to testify

18:24:51 From Commissioner Fleischman : You may be looking at the Q&A, not Chat.

18:28:23 From Commissioner Saxena : Thank you for your comments and analysis, much appreciated!

18:29:20 From Commissioner Chisholm : Portland Central City Plan 2035
<https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/cc2035/about-cc2035-plan>

18:30:31 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins : I believe she also submitted a comment to that effect

18:33:12 From Commissioner Siegel : I would be interested in Flo's "take" on the map presented during our public comment period.

18:34:42 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff : Here are the maps Flo is presenting:
<https://www.portland.gov/transition/districtcommission/documents/idc-mtg-5-redistricting-summary-statistics-sample-maps-1-4/download>

18:35:46 From Commissioner Saxena : I agree with Commissioner Siegel. The map presented during public comment aligns with some thoughts I had as well

18:39:32 From Commissioner Chisholm : We also received this one as public comment with an explanatory memo from Terry Harris.

18:42:40 From Commissioner Siegel : I believe we said we'd allow Flo to proceed before questioning.

18:42:49 From Commissioner Manjarrez : That totally works for me

18:43:04 From Commissioner Chisholm : Let's keep going!

18:43:11 From Commissioner Hanson : Agreed!

18:53:36 From Commissioner Manjarrez : Same

19:04:51 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins : It seems like some of the maps populate 3 districts with significant communities of the most advantaged Portlanders and I worry that could disenfranchise communities that have had little representation

19:08:59 From Commissioner Saxena : apologies -- had some technical difficulties and my laptop just restarted itself!

19:09:48 From Commissioner Hanson : To me, it's the "compact" criteria that's most questionably met in this case by #4

19:10:04 From Commissioner Saxena : ^^ same

19:10:17 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins : I worry that we're encouraging all of this public map drawing on Districtr and then we're using the other tool because the data layers are more attuned to our deliberations. Not sure this supports accessibility.

19:10:17 From Commissioner Siegel : Agree.

19:10:22 From Commissioner Manjarrez : To that point, I'd be curious about how our transportation routes criteria plays in here

19:13:00 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff : <https://districtr.org/plan/180449> Commissioner Valdini's map

19:13:28 From Commissioner Manjarrez : 2 and 4

19:13:52 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) : I think Hank did a map that essentially does that

19:14:31 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) : what Commissioner Valdini said about preserving both a central district and an eastside district

19:17:12 From Commissioner Manjarrez : I talked about concerns about “cracking” of east portland, but also want to be wary of “packing” central folks <- just to use more districting terms 😊

19:22:20 From Commissioner Fleischman : My drafts are <https://districtr.org/edit/181658?event=portland2023> and <https://districtr.org/edit/181526?event=portland2023>. I drew these to learn about the process and begin to dig in to the criteria.

19:25:25 From Commissioner Manjarrez : I 150% agree

19:25:34 From Commissioner Wise : AGREE

19:27:26 From Commissioner Hanson : @Sofia — I like the idea of combining it all in one

19:27:32 From Commissioner Hanson : ... “Map” page on the website

19:27:46 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff : I can do that tomorrow to make it easier

19:35:16 From Commissioner Manjarrez : I think that’s a great idea

19:36:02 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins : I would love to see more encouragement of public maps that represent their communities vs. having to draw a whole map

19:36:39 From Commissioner Wise : I agree Chisholm... huge equity issues associated with that strategy

19:36:59 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) : I agree as well

19:40:41 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins : Can we reach back out to those who have already submitted comments and ask them to submit a map that outlines their community?

19:43:05 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff : @Comm VanSickle-Robbins, I will look into this, to see I we can do that

19:57:00 From Commissioner Valdini to Hosts and panelists : Quick process question: how do commissioners submit maps to FLO? I tried last week but I don’t think the map found them.

19:57:49 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff : If any Commissioner wants to submit a map, send it to me or directly to flo and CC' me so I can track them.

19:58:37 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff to Hosts and panelists : Here is Alex's abrasch@flo-analytics.com email, don't forget to cc'. THanks!

20:00:49 From Alex Brasch | FLO Analytics | he/him : Thanks Sofia. Send the map URL will work well.
For example, this is the map that you created Comm. Valdini. Also, I processed your map during the break.
<https://districtr.org/plan/180449>

20:06:18 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff to Commissioner Chisholm(Direct Message) : If you'd like to do the poll, I suggest a motion, to do a poll as a temperature check in general

20:14:49 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff : Just a reminder, the charter requires us to have two hearings in each of the proposed hearings, in the case you have multiple maps for public comment.

20:15:07 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff : *districts

20:15:17 From Commissioner Hanson : We can creatively locate them!

20:17:12 From Commissioner Siegel : Deadlines will help.

20:18:18 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) : Happy to support that transition

20:31:00 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins : Arborlook is the combination of the Arbor Lodge and Overlook neighborhoods

20:34:01 From Commissioner Chisholm : But that's exactly why we should NOT consider each map in the gallery as a "vote" or "something to consider". Sometimes, they're just iterations on a theme; someone is trying things out.

20:48:26 From Alex Brasch | FLO Analytics | he/him : Thank you Comm. Van Sickle. I had not heard of that combination before, but makes perfect sense!