



# Independent District Commission

## Independent District Commission Meeting May 31, 2023, 6:00 p.m. Minutes

### Attendance

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

Staff Present			
Sofia Alvarez-Castro, City of Portland	Diana Shiplet, City of Portland	Autumn Carter, NEX Strategies	Kimi Shigetani, Flo Analytics
Alex Brasch, Flo Analytics			

### Welcome

Co-chair Lumley welcomed everyone. Sofia provided zoom logistics and informed everyone how to access interpretation.

Co-chair Lumley provided an overview of the meeting agenda. Co-chair Hanson stated she wanted to remind the group of the expectation that there is no such thing as a perfect map, and the group is not trying to be perfect this evening. Instead, the goal is to be as responsive as possible to the feedback received so far and to get to maps good enough to spark meaningful public engagement this summer.

### Commission Business

Autumn informed the group that there are no excused absences and the minutes for May 17 will be on the next agenda as they were not completed in time for this meeting.

### Vote on co-chairs for July 1 – August 31.

Autumn informed the group that more than three people expressed interest in being co-chairs for the July 1 – August 31 term. Because of this the group will use modified consensus, per the Commission's rules to determine the chairs.

*Co-chair Lumley nominated Comm. Laurente.*

*Co-chair Hanson nominated Comm. Judd.*

Discussion: Comm. Chisholm stated he was originally interested in serving as a co-chair but has come to realize he is a passionate advocate for one of the maps, which may not be appropriate for being a co-chair. He will instead support the nominations of Comms. Laurente and Judd if they are interested in accepting the nominations.

Comm. Laurente stated he will accept the nomination and informed the group he hopes to approach the role of co-chair by listening well. He plans to attend as many of the upcoming public hearings because how the community solicits and receives input from the community will really determine how the final map is approved, what voices are likely to be heard at city hall in the future, and how future district commissions are likely to approach their work.

Comm. Judd stated that he will accept the nomination and informed the group that his focus in becoming a commissioner was to serve others and ensure that historically underrepresented communities had a voice. He believes that there are two aspects to the work of this commission – first delivering a map as required by charter and second having a process that validates those maps in the community. This requires the commission to be responsive to community feedback, take the time to reach out to community members historically underrepresented, and listen to how these maps may impact community members' lives. It's important to use these next few months to find new ways to reach out to community members.

*Group approved the appointments of Comms. Judd and Laurente as co-chairs for a term of July 1 to August 31, 2023.*

### **Sample Map Discussion**

Co-chair Lumley provided a reminder of the district plan criteria. Kimi stated that the Flo Analytics team is here to present the latest versions of the sample maps for modification and discussion. Alex informed the group that the maps he's presenting are variations of previously reviewed sample maps 9, 10 and 11.

Group requested and received clarity on the numbering of the maps. Group agreed to focus on sample maps 9b, 10, and 11b in this meeting. Flo Analytics informed the group of the minor adjustment they made to the sample maps moved forward at the last meeting based on the direction given.

Comm. Manjarrez requested that the commissioner presenting maps take the time to re-ground the group in the approved criteria they used for developing maps. Additionally, she requested that the commission focus on maps they want to move forward rather than ones they want to eliminate, and to focus only on one map at a time for clarity. Autumn thanked Comm. Manjarrez for her requests and provided the group clarity about the process moving forward.

Comm. VanSickle-Robbins stated that adjustments made between sample map 9 and sample map 9b were mostly due to attempting to bring the overall population deviations down and to keep the Monteville and East Tabor business districts whole. This map conforms to the two approaches approved at the last meeting of keeping a west of the river district whole and an outer east side district whole, which includes all four school districts in that area. The outer east district's western border attempted to keep as much of the Jade District and Lents District whole as possible. The west district includes Westmoreland, Sellwood, and Eastmoreland because they are connected by multiple bridges and are both demographically and socio-economically similar to many areas west of the river. It purposely

divides the Central City 2035 plan into three districts to promote cooperation between districts and to avoid packing significant community assets and institutions within a single district. The division between the North/Northwest district and the South/Southeast district was made to ensure as many neighborhood associations as possible were whole. Comm. Valdini stated that in helping create this map she spent a lot of time considering preventing “asset packing”.

Group discussed appreciation for the ways this map includes important community organizations within the east district. Co-chair Lumley asked if there were any of the approved criteria which sample map 9b may not meet. Comm. VanSickle-Robbins stated she doesn’t believe there are any. She stated she spent lots of time considering communities of common interest and decided that, due to public input received, it was important to honor existing neighborhood boundaries as much as possible in this map. Group discussed the couple of small census tracts in which neighborhood boundaries divide, which make determining which district that tract should sit in challenging.

Comm. Laurente stated that as a transit-reliant Portland, one of his priorities in developing sample map 10 was prioritizing transit corridors over neighborhood association boundaries. Thought about how people may identify with the neighborhoods they live both in and nearby in more fluid ways than static lines on a map. He used max lines as dividing lines because they may be intuitive to most Portlanders. He encouraged the Commission to be cautious when relying on neighborhood association boundaries given that many are curiously drawn and may have been created without robust community engagement. He also prioritized having the boundaries make intuitive sense to Portlanders. He also thought it was important to keep the St. Johns neighborhood with North Portland and to not divide the Albina district at all. Additionally, based on input received he did not use Columbia Blvd. as a dividing line, in order to keep the neighborhoods on either side connected. He stated that instead of thinking of a west-side district, he instead tried to think of it as a “river” district and used transit lines to define the east/west dividing line.

Group discussed how Comm. Laurente used transportation lines as district boundary lines, and whether the criteria around connected by transportation links is more about using transportation lines to connect points within a district or if it is more about using transportation links as boundaries which could bond a district together. Group expressed appreciation for the ways Comm. Laurente thought about neighborhood associations. Group discussed what minor alterations Comm. Laurente may be open to considering to this map.

Group discussed concerns with potential asset packing in the west side district in sample map 10. Comm. Valdini provided an overview of the recent webinar by California Common Cause regarding asset packing and the ways civic assets within a district may increase the overall power of that district, based on the higher visibility of councilors, connections to other agencies, and potential funding given to candidates who run in that district. Group discussed whether or not this is of great concern in Portland with our public financing of city campaigns. Campaign financing is not the only concern, given the loopholes in our financing system and because of higher visibility of councilors within those districts, including easier access to state or federal officials. Lastly, there is a concern about perceived imbalances in the districts, if one has a greater number of high value assets.

Comm. Chisholm outlined the criteria used in creating sample map 11b. He stated that it started with one west side district and one east side district which includes all non-Portland Public School District school districts. Then everything in the City of Portland’s Central City 2035 plan was included into one district, with the exception of the Albina and Lloyd District neighborhoods. He stated that additionally, it

was important to include the Central City 2035 area with downtown. Comm. Chisholm stated by combining the renter-centric areas on the east side with the renter-centric areas on the west made for a common community of interest and brings down the overall median income in the west district. In the area of Sandy Boulevard, both neighborhood boundaries and Sandy Blvd. were used as dividing lines. Lastly, he stated that he felt it was important to include the entire Jade business district in the same district but recently has learned that members of the AAPI community have indicated that they would like the Jade District separated in order to potentially be able to advocate for their interests with representatives of two districts. Because of this he will be requesting modifications to this sample map 11 to respect that desire. Comm. Saxena stated that part of this map was wanting to uplift the outer southwest area, which is a community not often considered in mapping.

Group discussed how the Commission has defined communities of interest. Comm Manjarrez stated that she's concerned about the decision to decide to keep all the west side whole as a community of interest. Comm. Chisholm stated that particularly when creating a map with all of the outer east side in one district, which has clearly been requested by community, it is almost impossible to divide the west side given the population in the area.

Comm. Manjarrez raised concerns about how sample maps 10 and 11 may marginalize those who live east of the river and could cause a violation of the voting rights act, particularly with the number of valuable assets located in the west districts in both of these maps. She also raised concerns that both of these maps may break up the culture and communities of those living in the central east side area.

Comm. VanSickle-Robbins stated that the commission has had lots of public comment stating that the Willamette River is a natural dividing line, which is how the decision made last meeting to keep everything west of the river in a single district came about. She also stated that she reviewed the Multnomah County boundaries to see if they were useful and found that their west district includes the neighborhoods of Sellwood-Moreland, Brooklyn, Hosford-Abernethy, Buckman, Kerns, and part of Richmond, Sunnyside, and Creston-Kenilworth. It also divides all four of the outer east side school districts. She stated that just saying there are historical boundaries already, doesn't mean those boundaries don't violate some of the criteria of this Commission, which means we must hear from the community on what should be kept whole.

Group discussed the specific ways the three maps presented differ from each other. Group also discussed use of the Central City plan, and whether the plan best suited to be managed by one district or by multiple districts. Group discussed whether sending two or three maps out for public input was most appropriate, and several commissioners expressed a desire to narrow the number of proposed maps down to no more than two. Group discussed whether some of the differences between the maps are too subtle for community to easily identify in order to provide useful input.

Alex adjusted sample maps 9b, 10, and 11 based on discussions in the meeting, including making the east and north boundaries around the Jade District consistent across all three maps and cleaning up the line near SE 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue in sample map 10. The adjusted maps will now be referred to as sample maps 9c, 10c, and 11c for the rest of this meeting.

Comm. Fleischman offered a proposal to have the group settle on how many maps they want to send for public input before they vote on which maps should be sent because knowing how many may be sent could influence which of the maps he approves. Group discussed whether there are significant

enough differences to sample maps 10c and 11c to send both to the community. Some expressed desire to send all three forward. Others in the group expressed a desire to send only one or two forward.

*Siegel/Lumley m/s that the Commission forward all three current sample maps (maps 9c, 10c, and 11c) for consideration at the public hearings.*

Roll call vote. 8 yes, 5 no. Motion passes.

Commissioners							
Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Amanda Manjarrez		X		Melody Valdini		X	
Arlene Kimura	X			Neisha Saxena	X		
David Michael Siegel	X			Paul Lumley	X		
DaWayne Judd	X			Ransom Green III	X		
Joshua Laurente	X			Sharon VanSickle-Robbins		X	
Kari Chisholm	X			Steve Fleischman		X	
Lamar Wise		X					

Comm. Fleischman stated that voting against sending all three was not a reflection on the quality of the maps but reflected a decision-making strategy for how the Commission can move its work forward.

### Community Engagement

Co-chair Hanson informed the group of the current community engagement approach and reminded everyone of the values the Commission agreed to – communication, equity, fiscal responsibility, transparency, accountability, collaboration, and anti-racism. The purpose of the upcoming public hearings is to meet community where they are and gather feedback on the maps in order to settle on a final map for consideration in August. Some of the desired outcomes for the public hearings is to engage communities not yet heard from, to allow all Portlanders to be involved in the process, and to be purposeful and intentional in continuing to live and use the Commission’s values. Having a good map is important but it is equally important to have strong community engagement in the process.

Sofia outlined the upcoming public hearings. Meetings will be virtual and in-person, locations will be determined now that the maps for input have been agreed upon. They will be accessible with ASL & Spanish interpretation, additional interpretation by request, and located near public transit. There will be translated educational materials, including printed maps. Each commissioner is requested to participate in a minimum of four of the hearings and will have assigned roles at the hearings. Sofia informed the group of the public outreach planned including things such as a mailer, paid advertisements, social media, press release, and outreach to community partners.

Co-chair Hanson stated that they were informed by Flo Analytics that the commission needs to label both the districts proposed and the three sample maps for consistency in communications. The co-chairs propose labeling the districts A, B, C, and D and the maps Alder, Cedar, and Maple. Group agreed to this naming convention.

### Next Steps

Co-chair Lumley requested that commissioners help with outreach and promoting the public hearings. He thanked the group for their work and acknowledged the challenging timeline for the commission’s work. Next full commission meeting is August 2, 6:00 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned, 9:09 p.m.**

Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Diana Shiplet, SPOT Coordinator

**Chat**

18:19:30 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff to Everyone:

For folks listening in, here is the direct link:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9faab0058d4445b8b3ff26ce9df9dc47/>

18:28:30 From Diana Shiplet, she/her, staff to Everyone:

Group will be focusing on sample maps 9b, 10, and 11b

18:46:32 From Commissioner Fleischman to Everyone:

Thank you for that explanation Comm. VanSickle-Robbins

18:49:17 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) to Everyone:

That was a fantastic explanation, thank you!

18:49:23 From Commissioner Manjarrez to Everyone:

Thank you so much for your thoughtful explanation grounded in the criteria! Incredible job

18:54:46 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) to Everyone:

I live near there and neighborhood lines are very fuzzy there

19:10:13 From Autumn Carter - Facilitator to Hosts and panelists:

Correction: Oregon Common Cause hosted and members of California Common Cause and the national org presented on asset concentration at the event.

19:10:23 From Autumn Carter - Facilitator to Everyone:

Correction: Oregon Common Cause hosted and members of California Common Cause and the national org presented on asset concentration at the event.

19:10:47 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff to Everyone:

For folks listening in, here is a copy of the conversation being referenced:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzUoQDIMbFA&feature=youtu.be>

19:11:07 From Commissioner Hanson to Everyone:

The webinar was also co-hosted by the North Star Civic Foundation

19:11:30 From Commissioner Manjarrez to Everyone:

The public financing is optional

19:11:36 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins to Everyone:

I believe Northstar Civic Foundation was also involved in hosting the Common Cause speakers

19:29:29 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) to Everyone:

Commissioner Hanson drew a map that did this that I found really interesting

19:38:40 From Commissioner Manjarrez to Everyone:

That makes sense

19:39:10 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) to Everyone:

<https://multco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b8a56e58e82b435b910ca68d025b11a1>

19:39:28 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) to Everyone:

^^^^ here is a link to the MultCo map

19:45:43 From Alex Brasch | FLO Analytics | he/him to Everyone:

I just uploaded a Word document that highlights a few of the primary geographic differences between Sample Maps 9b, 10, 11b.

19:45:54 From Commissioner Hanson to Everyone:

Thanks, Alex! Super helpful.

19:47:23 From Commissioner Chisholm to Everyone:  
Alex, can we get that "live update" to 11b that moves the blocks west of 82nd near the Jade District over to the S/SE district?

19:48:04 From Commissioner Chisholm to Everyone:  
...or does that require something more formal, Autumn?

19:50:35 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins to Everyone:  
9b could also be modified to move the north edge of the Jade District up to match that of the other maps

19:56:52 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) to Everyone:  
Chair Kafoury and Commissioner Bailey recently

19:57:00 From Commissioner Saxena (she/her) to Everyone:  
I work for the County in my day job :)

19:57:39 From Commissioner Chisholm to Everyone:  
So, at least two of the last three.

20:27:01 From Commissioner Manjarrez to Everyone:  
That makes sense to me. I'll take it off the table so that we don't open a can of worms

20:27:14 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins to Everyone:  
So the north boundary of the Jade District will become the same on all 3 maps

20:29:11 From Commissioner Laurente to Everyone:  
That would also balance out the population more

20:34:03 From Commissioner Chisholm to Hosts and panelists:  
I'm back

20:37:18 From Commissioner Lumley to Everyone:  
I have to leave the meeting and come back in. I can't hear anymore. Sorry!

20:42:16 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins to Everyone:  
But you'll achieve that discussion of the northeastern area by contrasting 9c and 10c

20:48:36 From Commissioner Judd to Everyone:  
Can a link be posted of the 3 maps under consideration?

20:51:34 From Sofia Alvarez, IDC Staff to Everyone:  
Thursday morning!

20:54:54 From Commissioner VanSickle-Robbins to Everyone:  
I agree with Commissioner Fleischman on what motivated my vote