

PORTLAND TRANSITION TEAM

PUBLIC COMMENT REPORT

Date range: March 1st–31st, 2023

From March 1st through March 31st, the Portland Transition Team received a total of **87** public comments through our online comment form, via email and verbal public comment. **12** out of the **87** comments was submitted on behalf community-based organization(s). To date, we've received **208** public comments during the transition of Portland's city government.

Raw public comments received during March 1st through 31st 2023. Attachments are included at the end of the report.

Raw public comments
I am not alone in feeling that this “transition “ was force fed to us with a massive marketing campaign paid for by people with something to gain. How can the city address these concerns moving forward
Please represent all constituents not just ones you feel deserve more representation than others. If you feel you need to use identity politics please resign and allow someone who can be inclusive and unbiased to take your position. Do not rush the process.
I advocate for the Commission to consider the Regulatory boundary of the Central City (City Code 33.510) as a part of it's consideration when establishing geographic districts. The regulatory, land use, and lifestyle context of the Central City is distinct from Portland's typical residential neighborhoods, and should be recognized within the districting process. Neighborhood Association and Neighborhood Coalition boundaries have typically *not* recognized this boundary, resulting in poor representation of central city interests and needs. Given the distinct challenges and opportunities the Central City offers our city, it should be kept whole so that it can be appropriately served by our future government structure.
Why was Adam Briggs, a former Hardesty employee appointed Transition Community Engagement Coordinator? Seems like there might be some underhanded efforts to gerrymander a district where she could get elected again?
Make sure that you state that the type of voting system being used is "Single Transferable Vote." Don't use the generic term "Rank Choice Voting." Do not lump outer East Portland in with its inner neighbors -- they will be left out of conversations. It actually might make sense to break up lines so that neighbors with similar interests are aligned. The river boundary seems lazy to westsiders -- many would prefer a horizontal split, like I-84, which is a large barrier to neighbors on either side of it. Racial gerrymandering is not something that can happen in PDX!
Are you attempting to draw district lines on racial boundaries? This is illegal right?
Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments at this early stage of your deliberations. As a Maryland attorney and long-time environmental activist, my professional expertise and interest has been in environmental justice issues. Although one of the best things the city could have done for environmental justice would have been to create smaller single-member districts, the large multi-member districts will still provide some opportunities to make meaningful progress on environmental justice. So, I am writing to suggest that “environmental justice communities” be one of the “communities of common interest” for you to consider in the districting effort. And I would

suggest that the EPA “EJSCREEN” tool may be helpful in providing the data support for identifying some of these communities.

For illustration purposes, I’ve used the EJSCREEN tool to identify some of the census blocks that are more significantly impacted by environmental issues. The tool uses a number of “environmental justice indices,” shown here, to score census blocks for mapping. The census blocks can then be compared to the rest of the U.S., or the rest of the state, to determine a percentile rank, and overlay the indices on a map.

For this exercise, I asked the tool to map all the census blocks that scored in the top 25th percentile for environmental justice in at least 10 of the 12 EJ categories. (See the box.)

The result is shown on the map below.

The results should come as no surprise: less wealthy communities, communities along busy transportation corridors, and communities with polluting industry nearby are the ones identified by the screening tool. There are other EJ categories to consider, and other thresholds that may be appropriate, and there are other tools available, but this is just an example of the type of analysis that can, and should, be considered.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment as you begin the detailed work of drawing district lines under the new Charter Amendments.

I’m writing early in your process to draw your attention to the Charter’s new multi-member districts. The new districts are fundamentally different than single-member districts when it comes to representation, so your maps will need to carefully consider the differences.

With only four districts to draw and a relatively homogeneous demography, the ability to “gerrymander” at the district level will appear to be fundamentally difficult. But because the vote threshold for election to a council position is 25%+1, the sensitivity to line-drawing is great increased for any given geographic “community of common interest.” So, for one thing, it’s likely that your line-drawing will still need to be at a scale to protect discrete neighborhoods.

But there are other larger-scale considerations too. I’ve drawn two DistrictR maps (using very coarse precinct-level building blocks and older 2010 census data) for one such example.

With only four large districts, there will be a strong gravitational pull to draw them into Portland’s unofficial default geographic “quadrants” -- East, West, North(east), and South(east).

Even though you will find that a WEST district must ultimately cross the Willamette River to achieve a population balance, it will be very easy to find district lines that look like the current “quadrants”.

Because the districts elect multiple members, it could be possible for a “quadrant” to elect multiple members into different council districts. The most obvious example is that a single EAST district in the above map would guarantee that three councilmembers would come from the currently underrepresented far east side. However, as the map below shows, it is also possible to draw NORTHEAST district and a SOUTHEAST district in which the same underrepresented far east could elect slates of two members each for a total of four councilmembers. (And as a bonus, it creates a “downtown / inner-east” district that would seem to respect quite a few “communities of common interest” criteria.)

Sure, this coarse precinct-level mapping creates a “contiguity” anomaly over the Sylvan Highlands in the WEST district, and there’s more population imbalance than I’d like, but it could be easily ameliorated with block-level mapping. And there are obviously dozens of different choices that could be made at the edges. But the fact remains that the population east of Mt. Tabor could be expected to elect two councilpersons in each of two districts.

To be clear, I don’t propose either of these maps. But I submit them to illustrate the complexity (and creativity) that multi-member districts are likely to bring to your ultimate decision-making.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on criteria and data issues as you begin your work. I am writing at this early stage to direct your attention to some less obvious aspects to your work which will impact the lines that you draw. Indeed, the new Charter makes your job much easier in some ways, and much more difficult in others. In particular, the differences between multi-member districts and single-member districts will require that your criteria, and your data analysis around those criteria, be sensitive to those differences.

1. Criteria for district numbering should be established

Not only will the District Commission be drawing lines for each district, but I believe it will also be responsible for designating a number for each district. And the choice of that number will determine which districts are elected for two years in 2024 and which districts for four years. More critically, the numbering determines, forever, whether the district election is held in presidential years or non-presidential years.

From my recollection of their deliberations, I believe it was the intention of the Charter Commission that the two districts which have had historically higher voter turnout would vote in non-presidential years, and districts with historically lower voter turnout would vote in presidential years. But it isn't clear to me that the Charter Commission wrote that particular intent into the charter language.

So, the District Commission should make clear what the criteria will be for doing the district numbering. If voter turnout IS a criterion, for example, the District Commission needs to say as much, and it needs to decide how the criteria will apply and what data will be used.

Likewise, if the choice is simply a random drawing, that needs to be stated earlier, not later.

2. Census blocks and election administration should be adopted as formal criteria

The Charter Amendments provide some mandatory criteria for your consideration as you draw districts, but it allows for additional criteria if you choose to add them.

I would suggest adding express criteria regarding a preference to not split census blocks, and a preference to accommodate election administration issues, should they arise. I suggest this because, based on your preliminary discussions with your consultant advisors, it seems that you are open to considering these as implied criteria given data and technical limitations. But these are, in fact, criteria that do not fit into the mandatory criteria, so they should be acknowledged and made explicit for the sake of transparency.

3. The Commission should set a target or range for the "equal population" criterion

Although you've heard from your consultants and advisors that there is a relatively loose "legally acceptable" range for population deviations from one district to another, I would hope that the District Commission could aim for a target range substantially better than what is legally acceptable. Mostly though, I am concerned that without setting a target range in advance, it will be too easy to trade away population deviations in service of other district criteria in the name of "practicability."

4. The Commission should deprioritize "compactness" relative to the other criteria

Unlike in Congressional gerrymanders that can extend for hundreds of miles, "compactness" in urban city council districts simply doesn't have a tangible or meaningful impact on voters or representation, other than simple appearance. Compactness is not a criterion required by federal law or Oregon state law. Meanwhile compactness is difficult to quantify and thus difficult to balance against other competing criteria. Much more important than compactness is equal population, and the critical accommodation of "communities of common interest." I think it was a mistake for the Charter Commission to add the criterion, and although it is now a requirement, I would urge the Commission to deemphasize it in the name of "practicability" in service of more important priorities.

5. The Commission should prioritize neighborhood-scale communities of common interest

The very purpose of district-based representation is that a councilmember can focus on the problems of the district. District-based city councilmembers need to be neighborhood activists, advocates, and organizers, as well as neighborhood-scale trouble-shooters,

problem-solvers, social-workers, mediators, facilitators, and ombudsmen. City council, relieved of the commission form of government, will focus much more on highly localized city services and related constituent work. Councilmembers should be the voice for their district, but they are also the eyes and ears for the city in the district. Indeed, district-based councilmembers are a critical early-warning system for city government. They can diagnose problems and propose better solutions earlier because they have a more detailed local understanding.

Although multi-member districts are very large, a lower threshold for election means theoretically that some neighborhoods, or coalitions of neighborhoods, within a district are likely to have sufficient voting power to elect one of the three representatives. This was advertised by the Charter Commission as a rationale for multi-member districts over singlemember districts (which many people preferred), and it is therefore a critically important structural feature to preserve in the line-drawing process.

To retain the advantages of district-based representation in multi-member districts, keeping neighborhoods whole should be a major priority. Keeping similar neighborhoods together should likewise be a priority. And where similar and contiguous neighborhoods have 25% or more of a district population, such neighborhoods should not be split from each other.

I expect that this will be the major job of the Commission as you do your work to draw the lines. At this stage, I would urge the Commission to simply commit to acquiring the data on neighborhood demographics, and the neighborhood maps needed to do this work.

I am writing in support of the districting criteria as outlined by the Charter Commission and mirrors that of the State districting code (ORS 188.010) and Multnomah County. I feel that the criteria are more than sufficient for determining the four districts and allow for including data points such as libraries in the process. I encourage the Districting Commission to use the existing criteria.

Will there be equal comments from four districts if it is S.E. Portland and S.W. Portland and N.E. Portland and N.W. Portland? Hoping all four neighborhoods will be represented equally. If not you may have lawsuits. Hope not.

I applied for the government transition advisory committee and received a confirmation of application received. What is the timeline for selection of this committee?

I am glad Portland has decided to reform city government structure, maybe we can say once again that we have a city that works to pick up trash, remove & resettle homeless from public rights of way, & revitalizes bars & restaurants.

My name is _____. I live in the Montavilla neighborhood of Portland. I am a more than 40 year resident of Northeast Portland. While I am supportive of a change in the form of city government in Portland that would provide commissioner representation according to neighborhoods; I am not in support of redrawing neighborhood boundaries and actually changing my neighborhood to include areas closer to downtown. The inner East side does not represent the population or concerns of the neighborhood I am living in. Please do not change boundaries as we move to charter reform. It was my understanding that a change to a charter form of government would finally give our neighborhood and its concerns a voice and help with our specific challenges. My community is very diverse and has need for more police protection and enforcement of drug laws. Our neighborhood suffers with continuous closures of businesses, most of which are minority owned, as a result of a significant increase in crime. We have regular fires from encampments and gun violence. Changing the boundaries would weaken the ability to address those issues. Please keep our boundaries so that the city can effectively address the specific and unique needs of our neighborhood.

There is a complication in ranked-choice voting that has not been address. Here is an example: Say candidate A is elected in the first round with 49% of the vote, and Candidate B falls just short at 24% of the vote, and Candidate C, D and E have lesser amounts. The 'surplus votes' A received are transferred proportionally to the other candidates, and now Candidate B has 35%. Now 10% of Bs votes need to be redistributed. What is unclear is this: Do you count the third-rank votes of Candidate A, or the second-rank votes for Candidate B? That needs to be clearly spelled out.

Hi my name is ___ and I live in NE Montavilla. I do not and my community does not want to be included in a district with the inner Eastside. We want more sweeps of dangerous camps and more police patrols and protection. We want more not less involvement from first responders. We want to have a say in sanctioned camps and we want actual security when they are put near us.

My name is ____. I live in the Montavilla neighborhood of Portland. I am a more than 40 year resident of Northeast Portland. While I am supportive of a change in the form of city government in Portland that would provide commissioner representation according to neighborhoods; I am not in support of redrawing neighborhood boundaries and actually changing my neighborhood to include areas closer to downtown. The inner East side does not represent the population or concerns of the neighborhood I am living in. Please do not change boundaries as we move to charter reform. It was my understanding that a change to a charter form of government would finally give our neighborhood and its concerns a voice and help with our specific challenges. My community is very diverse and has need for more police protection and enforcement of drug laws. Our neighborhood suffers with continuous closures of businesses, most of which are minority owned, as a result of a significant increase in crime. We have regular fires from encampments and gun violence. Changing the boundaries would weaken the ability to address those issues. Please keep our boundaries so that the city can effectively address the specific and unique needs of our neighborhood.

Our Montavilla neighbors and community business owners do NOT WANT TO BE IN A DISTRICT shared with the inner east side of Portland. My neighborhood, Montavilla is in need of more police, as crime, shootings, assaults, open drug dealing, drug use, theft, vandalism, break-ins are increasing and are out of control. We see citizens zeroing in on the criminals because police seem to be unavailable to even start investigating crimes other than murder & shootings. Ending non-sanctioned camping needs to happen, and soon, the state of these camps are downright dangerous and a hazard to all who live or pass by these camps. The slow or non-response to reported problem camps continue, months go by as neighbors wonder if their reports are even read. I have reported numerous camps over the past few years and have not received a SINGLE response to my complaints. The free-flow of drugs, and used needles being dumped on our streets and school yards is deadly...yet continues unchecked. Please consider my pleas above for effective RESPONSES by the city. Action matters. Feeling hopeless. -___

Hello, I live in the Mt. Tabor neighborhood. I do not want our districts gerrymandered in order to manipulate the most progressive outcome in policy and elections. I would like to be a part of a district that aligns with more centrist and logical views like we have in the east part of the county. I think the inner Eastside district should be cut off at around 39th so all the leftist elitists can have their district there. I want a city that prides itself on public safety. I want more police, I want the camping laws to be enforced. I want the homeless to be put into shelters and off of our streets. I want to stop giving grifting non-profits millions that end up doing absolutely nothing for our communities.

Portland Charter Commission Board of Commissioners Via electronic mail RE: Charter Review Resolution 2 Dear Commissioners: The NW District Association adopted a Resolution in January in general support of the Commission's proposals regarding governance and elections, but specifically recommending limiting the number of districts and the number of representatives from each district: For these reasons, the NW District Association endorses the work of the Charter Commission and supports a new city charter with a strong executive and the election of city commissioners based on geographic districts. We believe, however, that the number of District members should be limited to one per district, and the number of districts should be as few as reasonably possible. At our meeting last night, the NWDA adopted a further Resolution regarding the structure of proposed districts. The NWDA acknowledges that the Commission will likely defer addressing specific district boundaries, but nonetheless the NWDA believes that it is vitally important that districting reinforce and support existing neighborhood association boundaries as the fundamental geographic increment in any districting proposal: For these reasons, the NW District Association asks the Commission to employ the existing recognized neighborhood association boundaries as the basic geographic unit in assigning representative districts, and that school enrollment areas be considered an additional increment. These geographic areas represent the fundamental institutional and social infrastructure of our city, and should not be divided or distorted. We oppose using precincts, census tracts or zip codes for these reasons. Best Regards, Northwest District Association _____ President, NW District Association Board of Director

To: City of Portland, Independent Districting Commission March 13, 2023 Members of the Commission, Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the City of Portland districting criteria. My name is _____, and I'm writing on behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color. We are an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations dedicated to cross-cultural collective action for racial justice. For over twenty years, our coalition has worked to address institutional racism and economic disparities within our local and state systems and create viable pathways for communities of color to obtain self-determination, justice, and access to opportunities. We engaged with the charter review process very closely, and would like to emphasize that the districting criteria adopted into the City Charter via Measure 26-228 comply with state and federal law, including the Voting Rights Act. This is made clear in a memo from the City Attorney which was provided to the Independent Districting Commission. To us, it is important that as you consider any proposals for additional criteria that you take into account the requirement that these criteria must meet state and federal law. Adding additional criteria without this certainty could make the district plan vulnerable to legal challenges and delay implementation of the will of Portland voters. As supporters of Measure 26-228, we want to see the vision of Portlanders implemented swiftly and thoughtfully. Some of your most critical work will be inspecting communities of interest and receiving input from Portlanders about their experiences, concerns, and priorities. Adding additional criteria will limit the possibilities of map options and make it more challenging to maintain the widest possible number of communities of interest within districts. We would like to see as many possibilities for maps as possible so that Portlanders can shape the process through public engagement with the Independent Districting Commission. On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, we ask that you adopt criteria that will comply with state and federal regulations, and that will give us as many options as possible for drawing maps. That is likely the criteria already in place after the passage of Measure 26-228. Thank you for your consideration of this comment, and your service on the Independent Districting Commission. Sincerely, _____, Deputy Director Coalition of Communities of Colo

To: City of Portland, Independent Districting Commission Re: City of Portland Districting Criteria March 13, 2023 Members of the Commission, Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the City of Portland Districting criteria. My name is _____, and I am writing on behalf of Portland United for Change. We are a coalition that championed Measure 26-228 and are now working together to support successful implementation of the measure. We are grateful for your service on the Independent Districting Commission and appreciate the connections you each have made to your values and your communities throughout this process so far. Thank you for forming a public engagement workgroup and prioritizing hearing from Portlanders. As you consider criteria for districting, we wanted to highlight the vision and values driven statements regarding districting which Portlanders effectively said yes to when approving Measure 26-228 and the districting criteria that is now in the charter :

- Accountability: No matter what part of Portland we live in, our city government should represent all of us. Measure 26-228 will establish four City Council districts, with three councilmembers in each district who are accountable to their constituents.
- Representation: When city council members are elected citywide, some regions like East Portland do not get fair representation or the same quality of city services. But when council members represent a specific geographic area, people living in their district know who to contact for help and can hold their elected officials accountable.
- Meeting community needs: With multiple council members representing a district, elected officials can work collaboratively with each other and communities to effectively find solutions to the problems we face. Council members will have a better understanding of what their district needs and how to solve local issues. Please adopt criteria that will serve and reflect the vision of Portlanders, and that will be implementable and workable as you enter the next phase of your work to adopt a district plan. We also encourage you to look at additional specifications provided in public comment from the League of Women Voters and the Coalition of Communities of Color for additional input on what this process could look like

Lives in Hillsdale. Thanked group for their work and stated he submitted written testimony as well. Stated he was a vocal critic of the Charter Commission's proposal to create multi-member districts. He requested that the commission consider that districting of multi-member districts is different than districting of single-member districts because both geographic sensitivity and voter accountability is attenuated relative to a smaller single-member district and election thresholds are lower in multi-member districts. Communities of common interest can be a smaller percent and still be relevant. This means understanding the communities of common interest is both more important and more difficult for the commission. It will be important for the commission to have neighborhood-level maps and demographics. Additionally, he encouraged the commission to add criteria around the ways they want to use or not use data – such as not splitting census blocks. He stated that the commission needs to number the districts, which will determine which districts vote in presidential years and which vote in non-presidential years.

President of the League of Women Voters of Portland (LWV). Thanked group for their work. Stated that the current focus is on criteria and LWV urges the use of the criteria in the voter-adopted charter. It is similar to criteria used by other jurisdictions and is consistent with Oregon law. Though commission can add others, the charter criteria provides options to draw the four districts which will give Portlanders equitable, accessible and proportional opportunities for more meaningful representation. She stated that focusing the voter-approved criteria will build trust in the process among diverse populations thanks to the outreach efforts done by the Charter Commission. Much of the community support for the charter amendment was due to criteria outlined in the charter to be used by the Independent District Commission. The commission has the support needed to determine what constitutes communities of common interest, political boundaries and other site-specific issues which can be weighed, while using the charter criteria.

Former member of the Portland Charter Commission. Thanked the group for its work and stated she understands that the amount of information the commissioners need to learn is overwhelming. She provided context for how the criteria was determined for recommendation in approved Charter. A fundamental aim of the Charter Commission was to further participatory and growing democracy which would give voice to historically marginalized Portlanders, especially racial and ethnic minorities, and lower-income communities. Unfortunately, in addition to being a 75% white city, Portland's population is quite diffuse. The Charter Commission looked at maps of up to 12 districts, but no criteria applied could create single-member districts without a majority white, English-speaking population and that is the reason the commission decided to recommend four, multi-member districts with ranked choice voting. Lowering the election threshold, gives greater access to minority candidates and representation to meet a district's diversity. This also eliminates the need to include additional complexity and divisiveness in the district criteria. Using the state criteria allows for flexibility for this and future commission to respond to changes in perception around what constitutes a community of common interest.

Lives in the Pearl district. Has studied the creation of legislative districts for many years. Through this he has observed five things important for the commission's work: 1) the commission should do its best to reach plan completion by this summer, 2) the commission should not add criteria not required by federal, state or Portland law, 3) there will be no single perfect map – the commission will need to choose among many maps which all reach the minimum criteria 4) the commission should have staff and experts do analysis of maps submitted by Portlanders, and have this analysis available on-line, 5) the single-most important geographic feature in Portland is the Willamette River, and one district should be centered on the west of the river. The commission will need to include some in this district from the east side and Multnomah County maps are a good guide for determining where those areas in the east should come from.

Lives on the east side of Portland. Stated that the Charter Commission took its districting criteria straight from Oregon law, and after 18 months of public input and consultation with experts added "compactness" as an additional criteria. This results in a solid criteria list which largely matches with the State of Oregon and Multnomah County. The voters soundly approved this criteria in the November 2022 election. The criteria are robust and designed to accommodate present and future changes to Portland demographics. She stated she is impressed with how the commission has come to grips with the map-making process. Urged the commission to rely on its staff, experts, and attorneys and use only the Charter approved criteria. She thanked the commission for its work.

Stated she sent in written testimony and agrees with the people who testified prior about using the criteria already approved in the amended Charter.

Agrees with the use of legislative boundaries as one of the potential criteria. Stated that she lives in North Portland and that North Portland and Northeast Portland have lots of the same issues and so should be together. Additionally, separating outer and inner Portland is important because they have different issues. Encouraged the commission to use Multnomah County's boundaries as guidelines.

Representing Portland United for Change. They are a coalition that championed the charter ballot measure and are now working to support successful implementation. She thanked the commission members for their service and for using their values and connections to their communities. She also thanked the commission for forming a community engagement subcommittee. When considering criteria, please take into consideration the vision and values statements of the Charter Commission. These include: Accountability – no matter what part of Portland people live in they should have representation accountable to them; Representation

<p>– when representatives are elected city-wide some areas do not get the support or same quality of city services but geographic representation means people can hold their elected leaders accountable; Meeting community needs – with multiple representatives in districts they can work collaboratively to effectively find solutions and councilors will have a better understand of the needs of their district. Please adopt criteria which serves and protects the vision of Portlanders and will be implementable in the next phase of the commission’s work. She thanked group for their work and for leading with commissioner’s values.</p>
<p>representing Northwest District Association (NWDA). Forwarding a recommendation from the NWDA, which was sent to Charter Commission early in its process, that encourages use of the current recognized neighborhood association boundaries as the basic geographic unit in assigning geographic representative units and that school enrollment areas should be considered an additional increment. These areas represent the fundamental institutional and social infrastructure of our city. They oppose using precincts, census-tracks, or zip codes for these reasons.</p>
<p>Suggested the commission think about to what level people have access to city services. He stated that if there are groups, geographically based, that tended to be under-serviced by the cities then they should not be broken into multiple different districts. This is also known as the “cracking phenomenon”. These underserved communities need to have enough voting power to elect people who can respond to the lack of roads, parks, sidewalks, etc. and get the services that they have been denied. This hopefully will begin to level services across the city.</p>
<p>Should they determine how much variance in equal population the commission is willing to accept before moving into the mapping phase?</p>
<p>How do multi-member districts, and the possibilities of voting blocs, ties into the criteria of districts not being drawn for the purpose of favoring a political party.</p>
<p>How are transportation links are used – do they define the boundaries or are they part of the services within a boundary?</p>
<p>Are any overlays based on economic consumption or investment used to identify boundaries?</p>
<p>Regardless of criteria, there may be communities of common interest which may be in conflict with each other or communities which have similar interests but are too geographically separate to be combined into one district. How did other commissions deal with these conflicts?</p>
<p>Is use of whole census blocks need to be listed as an additional criteria?</p>
<p>Can voter turnout be a data set for review? Ms. Shigetani stated it can be - both for presidential and non-presidential general elections.</p>
<p>Given that our commission is different that other commissions in that we’re districting for multi-seat districts, are their best practices to look at regarding the common criteria or anything we should be looking at differently due to this difference?</p>
<p>Are there common conditions under which districting commissions are allowed to approve a map with greater than expected deviations in the equal population requirement?</p>
<p>Is it permissible to use voter turnout as part of its consideration?</p>
<p>Just wanted to say that it would be helpful if the charter amendment that we voted on was on the transition website under documents. Thank you</p>
<p>I am a taxpayer and small business owner that operates a small rental property business in Portland. I am deeply concerned about the drug / housing / crime crisis that has been unfolding in Portland. In particular, private homes are now being targeted for petty crime and vandalism. Any work of councilors should be focused on ensuring that Portlanders are safe</p>

in their homes (whether owners or renters) through aggressive / effective policing and prosecution of property and related crimes. This chaos needs to be curbed immediately.

I live in east Portland on the border of Mount Tabor and Montavilla. We have some unique issues here in east Portland in regards to crime, assaults, overdoses, and lack of police and emergency support. In addition to the area I reside, areas like Hazelwood, Rockwood and Lents have more safety concerns, crime, homelessness and emergency services than closer in neighbors. You can clearly see this difference if you review a crime or encampment map. I would ask that you geographically keep our districts on the east side past 60th, in another district. Our issues out here are more pronounced and it would be best to have a set of commissioners that live here and understand that. Thank you for your consideration and service to the commission.

Adding compact to the district requirements was a direct response to the fear and mistrust we heard repeatedly from Portlanders across the city—and especially by marginalized communities—that gerrymandering would be used to dilute their voting power by forcing them into oddly shaped districts with faraway neighborhoods with whom they shared little in common. How can we be sure, they asked, that the District Commission won't find some odd way to draw a district that would exclude us once again? We included "compact" as a promise to those voters that they could trust us—and you. So I am asking you to move forward in drawing districts that conform to the criteria set out in the Charter and resoundingly approved by Portland voters. As we launch into a wholly new government system, trust is one of the most important criteria we can all embrace.

I live in the Montavilla neighborhood. I believe the different neighborhoods should be separated into equal sections that only include nearby neighborhoods. Different areas in SE Portland don't have the same needs, so the representation should be equally divided geographically. For example, outer SE near Gresham should not be in the same district as inner SE near the waterfront. Where I live we want enforcement of the existing drug laws. I understand measure 110 decriminalized drug use, however the local police are refusing to make arrests for blatant drug dealing even near schools and parks where children play. We don't want any sanctioned homeless camps that do not exclude convicted criminals, pedophiles, active drug users, and the mentally ill near family residential areas. I support homeless services in my neighborhood that will provide security teams to keep the peace and enforce the law while providing safe rest to those homeless who are legitimately trying to get off the streets and who are law abiding, clean and sober, and mentally healthy. The homeless services that help with more serious issues that could present a danger to local citizens must be placed in industrial areas or the outskirts of town where they will not put tax paying law abiding citizens at risk. Portland is no longer safe or livable. No more unsanctioned camping, RVs and people living on the streets should be tolerated in residential areas any longer, create the alternatives and enforce a ban.

I've grown up in Portland and consider it my home for years to come, but the Montevilla community that I live in does not want to be in an inner east side district of Portland. We have been victimized by increasing crime and unenforced laws. We want more police presence, faster response times, and bans on street camping. We want transparency with how services are being distributed to homeless populations that are not under the purview or management of opaque non profits.

I am concerned that this plan of so many members of the city council will be very expensive for the cities tax payers. I also worry that a new city manager and office will be very expensive to maintain. I worry that is council members are not compensated that only wealthy Portlanders or retired residents can participate if meetings are held during the work day. I am interested in knowing how this committee will agree on these issues.

I am writing as an individual who has studied, taught and written about Portland history for 45 years. It is important that the district boundaries be simple and make intuitive sense to residents who are accustomed to thinking in terms of east and west sides and the very broad geography of North, Northeast, Southeast, and east of 82nd. This is especially important for the many Portlanders who voted against the charter change and who likely retain doubts ... don't make it harder for them to get on board.

1) If you divide the city into "communities of common interest", will that create further socioeconomic divides in the City of Portland? 2) I agree with the current City Commissioners in that anyone on the redistricting committee must reveal any conflict of interest, in terms of intent to run for public office. I would add: anyone who runs for public office, in one of the four new districts, must have resided in that particular district for at least one year before the district lines are finalized. The districts should be divided in a way that does not consider the residential addresses of any current City Commissioners. Thank you for this opportunity!

Please make neighborhood population data available to everyone on your distribution list and the public in general before the first hearing date.

This is still not a representational form of government! There will not be a council person from my neighborhood (oh, wait we don't have those anymore, just short term camping areas..) representing our interests/needs!

After a quick first review of the criteria , the one-sentence paragraph following the criteria, ".No district may not be drawn...". The double negative (no and not) confuses and contradicts the intent. Also, that is similar to the third criterion listed above. Perhaps that can be reworded to include these additional thoughts.

Hello, Thank you for serving on the Commission and this opportunity to comment. I would like to suggest that two additional geographic factors be considered in the Districting. First, the importance of neighborhood associations and business associations and how they will engage with the new Councilors for their area in representing their community. It may be necessary for the Commission to recommend adjusting some of the neighborhood boundary lines to fit into each District. Second, the different climate risks and their impacts on areas across the city. Wildfire, landslide, and stormwater risks are a concern in my Hayhurst neighborhood, for example, while urban heat islands are a concern in the more developed areas where trees and open spaces have been removed. Thank you again for your work on this critically important effort.

The charter commission did a fabulous job creating the current district criteria list and emphasizing they are all equally important. I oppose adding more criteria to this voter approved list. Doing so would only add more complexity to the boundary drawing task, and limit the IDC's ability to respond to individual community preferences on certain boundary details. The voter approved list gives the IDC the right balance of required criteria and the flexibility to fine tune boundaries for slightly differing needs and situations on the ground.

Please do not break or split up existing neighborhood boundaries.

I know the process is just beginning, but wonder if consideration has been given to looking at the current county commissioners to see if boundaries might be consistent with theirs. I know that excludes some of County District 4 but could work somewhat for the rest. This would make it easier for constituents. Also I still don't see the need for so many--but know that can't change at the moment.

I'm "the VoteFair guy," (not to be confused with the "FairVote" organization), author of "Ending The Hidden Unfairness In U.S. Elections," and subject-matter expert for the (unsuccessful) Ranked Choice Oregon ballot initiative. Unfortunately the current wording of the document titled CHAPTER 2.08 - ELECTION OF CANDIDATES has some serious flaws. Fortunately it's easy to refine the wording. As an important bonus, these wording changes will simplify voter education. Please go to the following webpage (at Ranked Choice Oregon dot

org) for the full explanation of my recommended wording changes:

<https://www.rankedchoiceoregon.org> The changes primarily refer to the "policy choices" named "Result of Voter Overvoting on the Ballot" and "Number of Candidates a Voter Can Rank on the Ballot." Please refer to the webpage above for all the details. In case the suggested changes officially must be requested in this feedback form, here are copies of the recommended wording changes: (2.08.010 G) "Highest-ranked active candidate" means the active candidate a voter has assigned to a higher ranking than any other active candidate in the contest being tallied. If more than one candidate would be a highest-ranked candidate because of an overvote, the ballot temporarily becomes inactive until the next round when one of the overvoted candidates might have become an inactive candidate. (TBD) If two or more active candidates become the highest-ranked active candidates then temporarily this ballot is counted as an inactive ballot. If the election result is close enough to trigger a recount or audit then such ballots can be matched with equivalent ballots on which the same active candidates are overvoted and the matched ballots are apportioned among the same-ranked active candidates in equal whole numbers. For example if two ballots rank candidates A and B as the current highest-ranked active candidates, one ballot counts as support for candidate A and the other ballot counts as support for candidate B. Any unmatched ballots are ignored during that elimination round. (2.08.020 B 2 a) If no candidate has a majority of votes, the active candidate with the fewest votes is defeated and the non-defeated active candidates retain the number of votes counted for them in any prior round. Each vote on a ballot that was counted for a defeated candidate in the prior round is then transferred to the next highest-ranked active candidate on that voter's ballot. If a ballot's next highest-ranked active candidate involves an overvote for more than one active candidate in that overvote the ballot is temporarily counted as inactive until the next elimination round. (2.08.020 C 2 b 2) Each ballot counting for an elected candidate is assigned a new transfer value by multiplying the ballot's current transfer value by the surplus fraction for the elected candidate, with the result truncated after four decimal places. "Surplus fraction" is calculated by subtracting the election threshold ("T") from an elected candidate's vote total ("V"), then dividing that number by that elected candidate's vote total, and then truncating that number after four decimal places, where the candidate's "vote total" is the total transfer value of all ballots counting for a candidate in a round of tabulation. Any ballots that helped to elect the candidate based on being the only active candidate in an overvote are given a transfer value of zero. (TBD) A candidate who is not marked at any choice level is regarded as ranked below all the marked candidates. (TBD) If a voter writes in the name of a write-in candidate, all the other ballots on which that candidate's name is not written are interpreted as if that candidate is an unmarked candidate. (TBD) Batch elimination: If preliminary tabulation information indicates that one or more candidates clearly cannot win according to criteria previously approved by Election Officials, and if the results will not change by eliminating all these unpopular candidates together, then these unpopular candidates can be eliminated together in the first elimination round. (TBD) If the ballot contains marks for the same candidate in more than one choice column then the highest-ranked mark is used and the other marks in that candidate's row are ignored. (TBD) "Pairwise comparison" means a one-on-one comparison between any two candidates that counts how many ballots indicate a preference for one of the two candidates over the other candidate and how many ballots have the opposite preference. The candidate with the larger pairwise count is the winner in this pair and the candidate with the smaller pairwise count is the loser in this pair. If both pairwise counts are the same then neither candidate wins and neither candidate loses this pairwise comparison. (TBD) If there is a tie in an elimination round then a pairwise comparison is used to identify which of the two candidates has fewer supporting votes and therefore is chosen for elimination. If there is still a tie then the outcome is determined by state law. (TBD) If the software used for the election does not interpret ballot marks as described in sections 2.08.10 and 2.08.30 and the

software-identified election winner could change as a result of following these rules then an audit is required and the winner or winners must be determined based on following the rules described in sections 2.08.10 and 2.08.30. (2.0830 A 1 a) Election Administered by Single County. If a city candidate election is administered by a single county elections officer, and that officer determines the voting equipment cannot accommodate eight ranking levels on the ballot, the number of ranking levels on the ballot for that election will be at least five ranking levels and is otherwise limited by the maximum number that the officer determines can be accommodated by the voting equipment. (2.0830 A 1 b) Election Administered by Multiple Counties. If a city candidate election is administered by county elections officers in more than one county, and one or more officers determines the voting equipment cannot accommodate eight ranking levels on the ballot, the number of ranking levels on the ballot for that election will be at least five ranking levels and is otherwise limited by the maximum number that can be accommodated by the voting equipment that can accommodate the lowest maximum number of rankings. To repeat, my full recommended wording changes, along with explanations about why the changes are needed, are at this webpage: <https://www.rankedchoiceoregon.org> If there is some reason that full document is not allowed as official feedback, here are the most important explanatory words: "The introductory statement that "voter intent cannot be determined where there is an overvote" is false. That statement is useful in Australian elections where voters write a number next to each candidate name. But ballots here in Oregon use darkened ovals in "choice" columns to indicate candidate rankings. So there will be no uncertainty about what the voter intended when they mark the overvote." Thank you for correcting the wording so that Portland's use of ranked choice voting is successful! ___ The VoteFair guy (and author of "The Creative Problem Solver's Toolbox")

I commend the city attorney for developing an election code based on research, thoughtfulness, and an unwavering commitment to expanding democracy. Your choices of 8 candidates and requiring write-in candidate certification unarguably advance that goal while demonstrating the integrity of the election system. My concern lies with the policies on skipped rankings and overvoting. While I understand the intent behind these choices, I fear that they will only create mistrust in the outcome of the election. By presuming (or "correcting") voter intent, these policies will open up the election to charges of fiddling with the vote. Moreover, these two corrective measures aren't necessary. A robust public education campaign to teach voters how to fill out the ballot is a better preventative tool and one that will build trust in our system.

I continue to oppose STV (what we have is NOT RCV) because it gives some voters more voice than other voters. I oppose disallowing tied rankings because those are legitimate voter decisions (e.g., I prefer candidates A and B to all the others but don't care which of the two gets elected if only one must win). The software to manage that is really trivial. The geographic districts are bound to be problematic because there are too few of them and therefore representation of diverse groups will be that much harder. Add to that the overweighting of sidekick candidates, and the goal of diverse representation will be defeated. What I see unfolding is an example of what a mentor of mine said, "If you want it bad, you get it bad."

TAKE HEED: Don't make this about race! Many of the committee members seem intent on illegal gerrymandering in some sort of misguided racial justice exercise. I will be the first to look at litigating your work product if you proceed with this approach.

I hope that we will not make the same mistake that was made when the neighborhood association boundaries were set. My understanding is that the NA boundaries match the grade school "watershed" boundaries, which were along major streets but not across them.

Keep kids safe while they walk to school. That means our NAs split residential and commercial nodes down the middle, sometimes in 2 dimensions.

Do not add any more criteria to the districting. The voters have approved what they approved. The Commission has no right to add criteria. This entire discussion should end immediately. Get on with your work.

Hello, our team at Oregon Ranked Choice Voting Advocates does not have any suggestions at this time related to the ranked choice voting policy recommendations. We appreciate all the work and detail the City and Transition Team has put into crafting the policy. Thank you!

I want to thank the commissioners that chimed in and reiterated the difference between making something a required / mandatory criteria, versus other items you can put on the commission's 'wish list' from what you learn in your outreach sessions. I want to specifically thank Commissioner Judd for pushing back on the way this is going to be presented to the public in this week's meeting. It appeared to me that several commissioners were also confused as to what was actually happening, and it's important that the public be made aware very specifically as to how creating new criteria could affect other items on the wish list, and how you won't be able to take this out at a later date. My opinion is that no other new criteria should be added by the commission - that is not what the voters asked for and this feels like it would be going above and beyond your stated scope, despite the fact that it is permitted to do so. I appreciate the testimony from Terry Harris and Flo Analytics also reiterated that you are going to have a heck of a time after getting public input deciding what order to put everyone's wish list items in to make this work, so don't overcomplicate the process for yourselves by adding another mandatory criteria. Thank you!

There should be 4 districts of approximately the same size and as contiguous as possible. For Northwest, the inclusion of St. Johns, Cathedral Park, University Park and Overlook would be a reasonable district. All 3 Councilors should have offices in the district, spread around. They could split the district into 3rds and each could take care primarily of 1/3 of the district, even if they voted on at large in the district.

Members of the Commission, My name is ___ and I am the Movement Building Director at Next Up Action Fund. Our mission is to build political power with diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. We encourage you to keep the criteria as is, and to think as expansively as possible about communities of interest. And, we agree with the explanation and examples of communities of interest that have been offered by Flo Analytics. Young people are a community of interest, and also not a monolith. Within the category of young people, there are a multitude of subsets of shared interests and shared public spaces. Every cultural community has young people, and we need to be able to capture the nuances and experiences of young Portlanders in the district plan. Adding more criteria may make this difficult, may open the district plan up to legal challenges, and may result in the commission being less able to design a plan that is responsive to the experiences, concerns, and priorities that you hear from Portlanders. We know that due to gentrification and displacement, Portlanders utilize schools and other services that are not close to where they live. For example, young Black Portlanders may live in East Portland due to displacement, and attend school in the Albina District of North Portland. The demographics of North Portland have changed drastically over the past two decades from predominantly Black to predominantly white. However, the Boise-Eliot/Humboldt student population has not changed, and the school has the largest volume of Black students in the state. Fewer than half of the student population live in the neighborhood of the school, and students travel long distances to attend the historically Black school. The history of the area is important, and has been uplifted by national media outlets as an example of the impacts of exclusionary laws, eminent domain, segregated housing, urban renewal, unfair lending practices, and other mechanisms that have shaped our city. Please keep the criteria as is, to allow for how Portlanders define their

communities of interest to guide the district plan. We each have unique relationships to people, places, and policies, and encourage the Commission to develop a district plan that is responsive to nuances of Portlanders' experiences and communities of interest.

Lives east of the river. Stated when she moved to Portland she was bewildered by the current form of government, and she looks forward to the new form of government. Thanked the commission for its work in bringing about this change. Stated that what is most important about this process is that at least nine commissioners agree on a map – nothing could generate greater public confidence in the process. She stated that she supports flexibility in the criteria because the group doesn't know yet what the data, trial maps, etc. may show. Encouraged group to use the broadest set of criteria as possible to be able to use all the data they can. Struggled to figure out how being more explicit with the equitable distribution of public goods and services. Everyone knows that fixing inequities is a major driving force in the new form of government but is unsure what that means for districting. Are the four districts supposed to have equal distribution of goods and services? Or are districts to be judged by their ability to elect representatives who will promote the equitable distribution? This is very speculative, and she is opposed. There are other goals like increasing civic engagement which likely matter more.

Lives in northwest Portland and is the treasurer of the Northwest Neighborhood Association but is speaking for himself tonight, not the association. Wants to be absolutely certain that council members are required to live within the districts that they are elected. This will make them accountable to the members of that district. Council members should also have offices within the district and the council members should decide to split each district into three parts so that one member is responsible for an area and members of the public know who to contact. Stated that Portland is a great place to live, and he admires the city for going through this experimental process of redesigning its government to be more responsive to the needs of the people. Thanked group for its efforts in trying to collect as much information as possible.

Is testifying on behalf of The Coalition of Communities of Color. They encourage the commission to use the district criteria set forth in the amended charter and to continue the discussions of what the commission will need to identify communities of common interest without adding formal additional criteria. They believe that this districting commission's public engagement process will be the most impactful what features or communities should be taken into consideration. Will work hard to take public input in order to fully understand the ways communities of interest identify. There is a great deal of complexity across the city – geography, demographics, institutions, histories and other ways of experiencing Portland – making meaning of this would be best done through existing criteria. The Coalition would like to see as many maps as possible so that Portlanders can shape the final lines through public engagement and the existing criteria will give the most opportunities and options for maps. Encouraged the commission to listen to community members about what data is important to them. Also encouraged the commission to formally note for the record that understanding distribution of goods and services is important data for identifying communities of common interest but should not be its own criteria.

Lives in north Portland. Encouraged the commission to use the criteria outlined in Measure 26-228 and move onto what will be the challenging but also fun work of balancing criteria to develop district maps. Stated that a perfect map is impossible, but a map to move Portland into a future with more representation is possible. Equitable distribution of goods and services is an important element of legislating by the new city council and is best achieved by this commission figuring out how not to break up communities of common interest. Regarding comments about adhering to neighborhood boundaries, please keep in mind that the creation of many of these neighborhoods was due to development patterns by wealthy, white,

landowners. And, therefore, a concern for equity is undermined by rigid adherence to those neighborhoods. She stated that it's likely new community-based alliances will form due to the district lines and elections which facilitate better representation. She thanked the commission for its work.

Stated that Portland previously had a commission similar to what you propose. It was changed because of corruption. He hopes that the commission stays aware of this corruption possibility. Hopes that the commission takes the population of the Portland area and divide it four equal squares by population and do not gerrymander. He does not want a district map which looks like federal maps used to in Georgia.

Lives in northwest Portland. Thanked the commission for its work. Suggested the commission focus on the one criteria constitutionally required – the one-person, one-vote requirement mandated by the 14th Amendment. This is due to many lawsuits and court decisions regarding district criteria. He also urged the commission to not add any additional criteria. Adding criteria means there is potential for straying from the one-person, one-vote requirement and the greater chance the map may be litigated. He stated that there doesn't appear to be an explicit or implicit requirement in city Charter for the commission to add criteria. He anticipates that in developing maps with the help of demographers and specialists the commission is likely to find there are only a few options for consideration which meet legal requirements.

Lives in northwest Portland. She stated that it's important for everyone to understand how city resources are spread throughout the city and how different parts of the city may or may not have access to similar resources such as parks, supermarkets, street trees or libraries. This data may be useful in determining districts but does not need to be a criteria. This is because the districts will be quite large and may appear to have equal resources but when you view it at neighborhoods you can see the inequities. Additionally, having it as criteria rather than just useful data, may have unforeseen and negative consequences. Neighborhood associations or coalitions were originally formed due to Portland's form of government and the difficulty residents had in reaching elected officials. With the new form of government residents will have three people to speak to who can focus on community needs. So, neighborhood association boundaries may be a good place to start but should not be a criteria. Thanked the commission for its work.

Former Charter Commission member. Stated that the reason she encouraged the commission to add the criteria of compactness. It's because she gave over 150 presentations and heard from community members, largely in the east of Portland. What she continually heard was that they felt they did not have a voice in the city and did not matter to elected officials. It's no surprise that, given these feelings there is very low voter turnout in Portland's east side. When discussing districting with community members, and that it would give them a voice, they expressed suspicion. Even when she stated that it would give these historically disenfranchised community members equal voice to the wealthiest community members, they were concerned that maps would be drawn in a way to combine them with richer areas of town so that their voices still would not be heard. That's why the commission agreed to include the criteria of compactness. This was a promise to those people that the commission had heard their concerns and that the commission wanted to equally and equitably represent all Portlanders. She stated that this is why she opposes adding additional criteria around equitable distribution of public goods and services – as it may dampen the voices of the underserved by lumping them in with the more fortunate and more politically active neighbors. Thanked the commission for their time.

Representing LiUNA, local 97. This union typically represents "blue collar" workers and the union hall is located in outer east Portland. They have discussed the lack of infrastructure and the under investment in east Portland. Asked the commission, in a city where we are lacking critical infrastructure in key areas, even with so many people prepared to work and skilled in

their trades, why do we keep having this problem? He believes that the answer is that we have not centered working-class people in governance structure of our city. When talking about what a community of interest is, that should capture much of the important issues around distribution of public goods and services. He asked that the commission heavily weigh the needs of those areas of the city currently underserved when drawing the districts.

All commissioners should be required to live in the districts that they represent. Their Tax home should be in the district

Do you have a well defined time-line of how to get this done in time?

they DO have to live in their district. They will NOT be splitting up the district the way you asked. Most of us voters wanted that but unfortunately we were not allowed to vote on these things as separate line items to work out those types of details, they wanted it to be this way, without one person being held accountable for one area, in their words, to 'avoid NIMBYism'.

I feel like it would behoove the conversation to give a better definition of what creating extra / new criteria actually means. It sounds like most people providing feedback are asking for considerations, not mandatory criteria. As ___ is explaining right now!

I think ___ raises a good point: if resources are not distributed evenly, then drawing boundaries "equitably" ends up masking that inequality. (As an extreme example, imagine if parks were located west of I-205. If all districts were required to have an equal number of parks, not only would that require the eastern neighborhoods to be split up, there would be no commissioners representing people who would advocate for building more parks for those communities)

I don't need to testify, but one very specific question as you evaluate the criteria testimony tonight might be simply how to handle the INEQUITY felt in East Portland. Do you need to be careful that you inadvertently *pack* the lack of city services into a single district? If less wealthy East Portland could elect FOUR commissioners, does compactness work against that?

Thank you all for your thoughtful consideration of everyone's comments.

Please do not forget to take into consideration the existing Neighborhood Association structures when creating boundaries. We recently had a city-wide neighborhood summit and there were several people concerned that the new districts would split our neighborhoods. Thank you.

The three representatives of the districts should be required to live in the districts. Also, they should be elected on different cycles, so their terms overlap rather than start and end all at the same time. They should report quarterly on progress via a website or social media account that tracks accountability and improves communication with the residents of each district.

Hi there,

I was recently perusing your great transition website and wanted to reach out! Like Portland, Seattle will be switching to RCV (although on a longer timeline) and we at King County Elections will be implementing the change.

While we've met and gotten some great insight from Multnomah County Elections, I was hoping you all might also be willing to share some of your thinking and lessons learned to-date on implementing Ranked Choice Voting, especially from a communications and public engagement perspective. Is there someone there I could connect with? I was also specifically wondering if there as a video from the March 15 Public Listening Session? Thanks for any help you can provide!



To: City of Portland, Independent Districting Commission
March 13, 2023

Members of the Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the City of Portland districting criteria. My name is Jenny Lee, and I'm writing on behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color. We are an alliance of culturally specific community-based organizations dedicated to cross-cultural collective action for racial justice. For over twenty years, our coalition has worked to address institutional racism and economic disparities within our local and state systems and create viable pathways for communities of color to obtain self-determination, justice, and access to opportunities.

We engaged with the charter review process very closely, and would like to emphasize that the districting criteria adopted into the City Charter via Measure 26-228 comply with state and federal law, including the Voting Rights Act. This is made clear in a memo from the City Attorney which was provided to the Independent Districting Commission. To us, it is important that as you consider any proposals for additional criteria that you take into account the requirement that these criteria must meet state and federal law. Adding additional criteria without this certainty could make the district plan vulnerable to legal challenges and delay implementation of the will of Portland voters.

As supporters of Measure 26-228, we want to see the vision of Portlanders implemented swiftly and thoughtfully. Some of your most critical work will be inspecting communities of interest and receiving input from Portlanders about their experiences, concerns, and priorities. Adding additional criteria will limit the possibilities of map options and make it more challenging to maintain the widest possible number of communities of interest within districts. We would like to see as many possibilities for maps as possible so that Portlanders can shape the process through public engagement with the Independent Districting Commission.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, we ask that you adopt criteria that will comply with state and federal regulations, and that will give us as many options as possible for drawing maps. That is likely the criteria already in place after the passage of Measure 26-228. Thank you for your consideration of this comment, and your service on the Independent Districting Commission.

Sincerely,

Jenny Lee, Deputy Director
Coalition of Communities of Color

Terry J. Harris

5047 SW 18th Pl.

Portland, OR 97239 terryjharris@gmail.com

To: Portland Independent District Commission
Re: Comments on environmental justice data and criteria
Via: email submission

March 8, 2023

Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments at this early stage of your deliberations. As a Maryland attorney and long-time environmental activist, my professional expertise and interest has been in environmental justice issues. Although one of the best things the city could have done for environmental justice would have been to create smaller single-member districts, the large multi-member districts will still provide some opportunities to make meaningful progress on environmental justice.

So, I am writing to suggest that “environmental justice communities” be one of the “communities of common interest” for you to consider in the districting effort. And I would suggest that the EPA “EJSCREEN” tool may be helpful in providing the data support for identifying some of these communities.

For illustration purposes, I’ve used the [EJSCREEN tool](#) to identify some of the census blocks that are more significantly impacted by environmental issues. The tool uses a number of “environmental justice indices,” shown here, to score census blocks for mapping. The census blocks can then be compared to the rest of the U.S., or the rest of the state, to determine a percentile rank, and overlay the indices on a map.

For this exercise, I asked the tool to map all the census blocks that scored in the top 25th percentile for environmental justice in at least

10 of the 12 EJ categories. (See the box.)

Indexes Threshold Map Widget

Step 1. Select type of Index:
 EJ Indexes Supplemental Indexes

Step 2. Select location:
 Compare to US Compare to State

Step 3. Select Index percentile range:
 Lower bound: 75 Upper bound: 100

Step 4. Select number of indexes or individual Indexes (maximum 12) within percentile range:
 10 or more indexes are within the percentile range

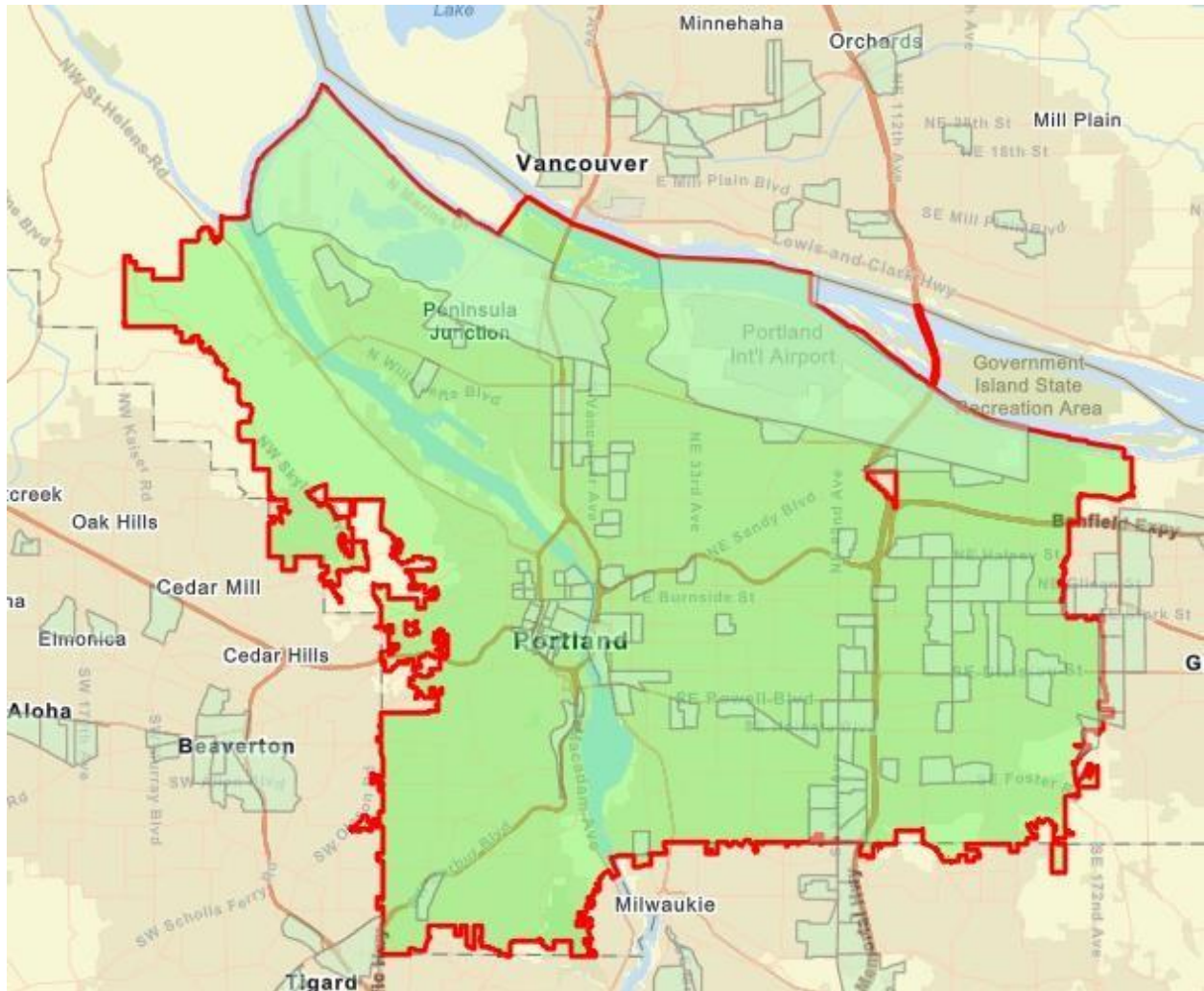
Or

Select All

Particulate Matter 2.5 Ozone
 Diesel Particulate Matter Air Toxics Cancer Risk
 Air Toxics Respiratory HI Traffic Proximity
 Lead Paint Superfund Proximity
 RMP Facility Proximity Hazardous Waste Proximity
 Underground Storage Tanks Wastewater Discharge

Add To Map Reset

The result is shown on the map below.



The results should come as no surprise: less wealthy communities, communities along busy transportation corridors, and communities with polluting industry nearby are the ones identified by the screening tool. There are other EJ categories to consider, and other thresholds that may be appropriate, and there are other tools available, but this is just an example of the type of analysis that can, and should, be considered.

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To: Portland Independent District Commission

Re: Comments on Data and Districting Criteria

Via: email submission

March 8, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on criteria and data issues as you begin your work. I am writing at this early stage to direct your attention to some less obvious aspects to your work which will impact the lines that you draw. Indeed, the new Charter makes your job much easier in some ways, and much more difficult in others. In particular, the differences between multi-member districts and single-member districts will require that your criteria, and your data analysis around those criteria, be sensitive to those differences.

1. Criteria for *district numbering* should be established

Not only will the District Commission be drawing lines for each district, but I believe it will also be responsible for designating a number for each district. And the choice of that number will determine which districts are elected for two years in 2024 and which districts for four years. More critically, the numbering determines, forever, whether the district election is held in presidential years or non-presidential years.

Section 3-101. Time of Taking Office and Terms.

~~Beginning with elections held in 2006, if any candidate for the office of Mayor, Commissioner, or Auditor receives a majority of the votes cast in a primary election for that office, that candidate shall be elected. If no candidate for such an office receives a majority of the votes cast in the primary election, the names of the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes cast shall be declared nominees and their names shall appear on the general election ballot in that same year. The nominee receiving the highest number of votes in the general election shall be elected.~~

Except as otherwise provided in this charter, those elected shall take office on the following January 1 following the general election in which they are elected and shall hold office for four years. If, at the end of ~~four years~~ a term, no successor is yet elected and qualified, the incumbent shall continue to hold office until a successor is elected and qualified.

Except as otherwise provided in this charter, at the November 2024 election, the Mayor and all Councilors from District No. 1 and District No. 2 are elected for a term of four years. At the same election, the Auditor and all Councilors from District No. 3 and District No. 4 are elected for an initial term of two years. At subsequent elections, those elected hold office for four years.

~~Except as otherwise provided in this charter, the Mayor and Commissioners for positions 1 and 4 shall be elected every fourth year beginning in 2004, and the Auditor and Commissioners for positions 2 and 3 shall be elected every fourth year beginning in 2006. [May 3, 1913, new sec. 41; rev. 1914, sec. 123; 1928 pub., sec. 123; am. Nov. 8, 1932; 1942 recod., sec. 3-101; am. Nov. 6, 1962; May 18, 2004, sec. replaced.]~~

From my recollection of their deliberations, I believe it was the intention of the Charter Commission that the two districts which have had historically higher voter turnout would vote in non-presidential years, and districts with historically lower voter turnout would vote in presidential years. But it isn't clear to me that the Charter Commission wrote that particular intent into the charter language.

So, the District Commission should make clear what the criteria will be for doing the district numbering. If voter turnout IS a criterion, for example, the District Commission needs to say as much, and it needs to decide how the criteria will apply and what data will be used. Likewise, if the choice is simply a random drawing, that needs to be stated earlier, not later.

2. Census blocks and election administration should be adopted as formal criteria

The Charter Amendments provide some mandatory criteria for your consideration as you draw districts, but it allows for additional criteria if you choose to add them.

Section 3-110. District Plan Criteria.

The Commission, or the City Council if the Commission is unable to adopt a plan, ensures that each district, as nearly as practicable, will be contiguous and compact, utilize existing geographic or political boundaries, not divide communities of common interest, be connected by transportation links, and be of equal population. No district may be drawn for the purpose of favoring any political party, incumbent elected official or other person. No district may be drawn for the purpose of diluting the voting strength of any language or ethnic minority group. Additional criteria may be considered, consistent with state and federal law.

I would suggest adding express criteria regarding a preference to not split census blocks, and a preference to accommodate election administration issues, should they arise. I suggest this because, based on your preliminary discussions with your consultant advisors, it seems that you are open to considering these as *implied* criteria given data and technical limitations. But these are, in fact, criteria that do not fit into the mandatory criteria, so they should be acknowledged and made explicit for the sake of transparency.

3. The Commission should set a target or range for the “equal population” criterion

Although you’ve heard from your consultants and advisors that there is a relatively loose “legally acceptable” range for population deviations from one district to another, I would hope that the District Commission could aim for a target range substantially better than what is legally acceptable. Mostly though, I am concerned that without setting a target range in advance, it will be too easy to trade away population deviations in service of other district criteria in the name of “practicability.”

4. The Commission should deprioritize “compactness” relative to the other criteria

Unlike in Congressional gerrymanders that can extend for hundreds of miles, “compactness” in urban city council districts simply doesn’t have a tangible or meaningful impact on voters or representation, other than simple appearance. Compactness is not a criterion required by federal law or Oregon state law. Meanwhile compactness is difficult to quantify and thus difficult to balance against other competing criteria. Much more important than compactness is equal population, and the critical accommodation of “communities of common interest.” I think it was a mistake for the Charter Commission to add the criterion, and although it is now a requirement, I would urge the Commission to deemphasize it in the name of “practicability” in service of more important priorities.

5. The Commission should prioritize neighborhood-scale communities of common interest

The very purpose of district-based representation is that a councilmember can focus on the problems of the district. District-based city councilmembers need to be neighborhood activists, advocates, and organizers, as well as **neighborhood-scale** trouble-shooters, problem-solvers, social-workers, mediators, facilitators, and ombudsmen. City council, relieved of the commission form of government, will focus much more on highly localized city services and related constituent work. Councilmembers should be the voice **for** their district, but they are also the eyes and ears **for the city** in the district. Indeed, district-based councilmembers are a critical early-warning system for city government. They can diagnose problems and propose better solutions earlier because they have a more detailed local understanding.

Although multi-member districts are very large, a lower threshold for election means theoretically that some neighborhoods, or coalitions of neighborhoods, within a district are likely to have sufficient voting

power to elect one of the three representatives. This was advertised by the Charter Commission as a rationale for multi-member districts over single-member districts (which many people preferred), and it is therefore a critically important structural feature to preserve in the line-drawing process.

To retain the advantages of district-based representation in multi-member districts, keeping neighborhoods whole should be a major priority. Keeping similar neighborhoods together should likewise be a priority. And where similar and contiguous neighborhoods have 25% or more of a district population, such neighborhoods should not be split from each other.

I expect that this will be the major job of the Commission as you do your work to draw the lines. At this stage, I would urge the Commission to simply commit to acquiring the data on neighborhood demographics, and the neighborhood maps needed to do this work.

Terry J. Harris terryjharris@gmail.com

Terry J. Harris

5047 SW 18th Pl.

Portland, OR 97239 terryjharris@gmail.com

To: Portland Independent District Commission

Re: Comments on multi-member districting issues

Via: email submission

March 8, 2023

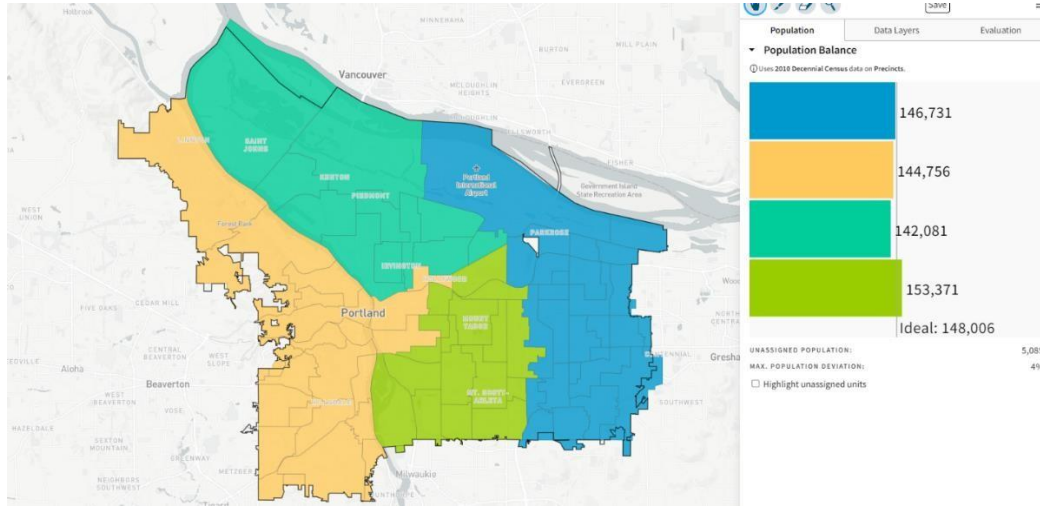
Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment as you begin the detailed work of drawing district lines under the new Charter Amendments.

I'm writing early in your process to draw your attention to the Charter's new multi-member districts. The new districts are fundamentally different than single-member districts when it comes to representation, so your maps will need to carefully consider the differences.

With only four districts to draw and a relatively homogeneous demography, the ability to "gerrymander" at the district level will appear to be fundamentally difficult. But **because the vote threshold for election to a council position is 25%+1, the sensitivity to line-drawing is greatly increased for any given geographic "community of common interest."** So, for one thing, it's likely that your line-drawing will still need to be at a scale to protect discrete neighborhoods.

But there are other larger-scale considerations too. I've drawn two DistrictR maps (using very coarse precinct-level building blocks and older 2010 census data) for one such example.

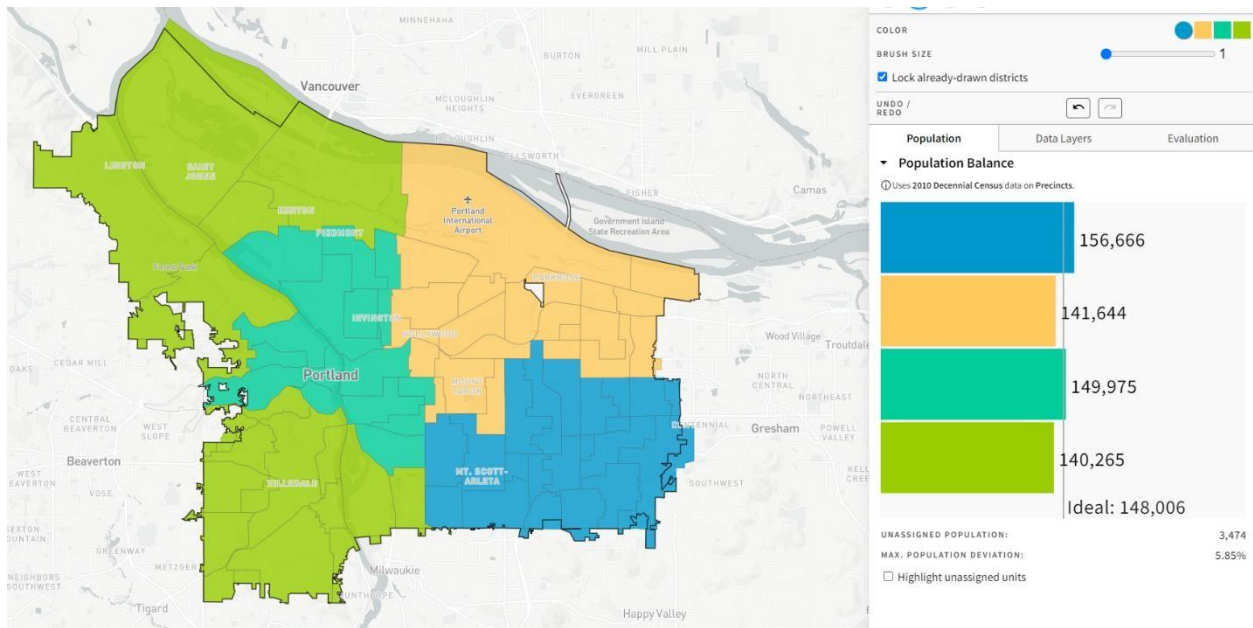
With only four large districts, there will be a strong gravitational pull to draw them into Portland's



unofficial
default
geographic
“quadrants” -
- East, West,
North(east),
and

South(east). Even though you will find that a WEST district must ultimately cross the Willamette River to achieve a population balance, it will be very easy to find district lines that look like the current “quadrants”.

Because the districts elect multiple members, it could be possible for a “quadrant” to elect multiple members into different council districts. The most obvious example is that a single EAST district in the *above* map would guarantee that **three councilmembers** would come from the currently underrepresented far east side. However, as the map *below* shows, it is also possible to draw NORTHEAST district and a SOUTHEAST district in which the same underrepresented far east could elect slates of **two members each** for a total of **four councilmembers**. (And as a bonus, it creates a “downtown / inner-east” district that would seem to respect quite a few “communities of common interest” criteria.)



Sure, this coarse precinct-level mapping creates a “contiguity” anomaly over the Sylvan Highlands in the WEST district, and there’s more population imbalance than I’d like, but it could be easily ameliorated with block-level mapping. And there are obviously dozens of different choices that could be made at the edges. **But the fact remains that the population east of Mt. Tabor could be expected to elect two councilpersons in each of two districts.**

To be clear, **I don’t propose either of these maps.** But I submit them to illustrate the complexity (and creativity) that multi-member districts are likely to bring to your ultimate decision-making.

Terry J. Harris terryjharris@gmail.com

To: City of Portland, Independent Districting Commission Date: March 23, 2023

Members of the Commission,

My name is Devin Ruiz and I am the Movement Building Director at Next Up Action Fund. Our mission is to build political power with diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. We encourage you to keep the criteria as is, and to think as expansively as possible about communities of interest. And, we agree with the explanation and examples of communities of interest that have been offered by Flo Analytics.

Young people are a community of interest, and also not a monolith. Within the category of young people, there are a multitude of subsets of shared interests and shared public spaces. Every cultural community has young people, and we need to be able to capture the nuances and experiences of young Portlanders in the district plan. Adding more criteria may make this difficult, may open the district plan up to legal challenges, and may result in the commission being less able to design a plan that is responsive to the experiences, concerns, and priorities that you hear from Portlanders.

We know that due to gentrification and displacement, Portlanders utilize schools and other services that are not close to where they live. For example, young Black Portlanders may live in East Portland due to displacement, and attend school in the Albina District of North Portland. The demographics of North Portland have changed drastically over the past two decades from predominantly Black to predominantly white. However, the Boise-Eliot/Humboldt student population has not changed, and the school has the largest volume of Black students in the state. Fewer than half of the student population live in the neighborhood of the school, and students travel long distances to attend the historically Black school. The history of the area is important, and has been uplifted by national media outlets as an example of the impacts of exclusionary laws, eminent domain, segregated housing, urban renewal, unfair lending practices, and other mechanisms that have shaped our city.

Please keep the criteria as is, to allow for how Portlanders define their communities of interest to guide the district plan. We each have unique relationships to people, places, and policies, and encourage the Commission to develop a district plan that is responsive to nuances of Portlanders' experiences and communities of interest.

Thank you,

Devin Rui [Testify in person at the 3/22 meeting \(6pm\)](#) or submit via email to DistrictCommission@portlandoregon.gov by 3/29



Northwest District Association

March 22, 2022

Portland Charter Commission Board of Commissioners

Via electronic mail

RE: Charter Review Resolution 2

Dear Commissioners:

The NW District Association adopted a Resolution in January in general support of the Commission's proposals regarding governance and elections, but specifically recommending limiting the number of districts and the number of representatives from each district:

For these reasons, the NW District Association endorses the work of the Charter Commission and supports a new city charter with a strong executive and the election of city commissioners based on geographic districts. We believe, however, that the number of District members should be limited to one per district, and the number of districts should be as few as reasonably possible.

At our meeting last night, the NWDA adopted a further Resolution regarding the structure of proposed districts. The NWDA acknowledges that the Commission will likely defer addressing specific district boundaries, but nonetheless the NWDA believes that it is vitally important that districting reinforce and support existing neighborhood association boundaries as the fundamental geographic increment in any districting proposal:

For these reasons, the NW District Association asks the Commission to employ the existing recognized neighborhood association boundaries as the basic geographic unit in assigning representative districts, and that school enrollment areas be considered an additional increment. These geographic areas represent the fundamental institutional and social infrastructure of our city, and should not be divided or distorted. We oppose using precincts, census tracts or zip codes for these reasons.

Best Regards,
Northwest District Association

Parker McNulty

President, NW District Association Board of Directors

the NorthWest District Association is a 501(3)c tax-exempt organization
2257 NW Raleigh St. Portland Oregon 97210 503 823 4288

northwestdistrictassociation.org



To: City of Portland, Independent Districting Commission
Re: City of Portland Districting Criteria March
13, 2023

Members of the Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the City of Portland Districting criteria. My name is Samantha Gladu, and I am writing on behalf of Portland United for Change. We are [a coalition](#) that championed Measure 26-228 and are now working together to support successful implementation of the measure.

We are grateful for your service on the Independent Districting Commission and appreciate the connections you each have made to your values and your communities throughout this process so far. Thank you for forming a public engagement workgroup and prioritizing hearing from Portlanders. As you consider criteria for districting, we wanted to highlight the vision and values driven statements regarding districting which Portlanders effectively said yes to when approving Measure 26-228 and the districting criteria that is now in the charter :

- **Accountability:** No matter what part of Portland we live in, our city government should represent all of us. Measure 26-228 will establish four City Council districts, with three councilmembers in each district who are accountable to their constituents.
- **Representation:** When city council members are elected citywide, some regions like East Portland do not get fair representation or the same quality of city services. But when council members represent a specific geographic area, people living in their district know who to contact for help and can hold their elected officials accountable.
- **Meeting community needs:** With multiple council members representing a district, elected officials can work collaboratively with each other and communities to effectively find solutions to the problems we face. Council members will have a better understanding of what their district needs and how to solve local issues.

Please adopt criteria that will serve and reflect the vision of Portlanders, and that will be implementable and workable as you enter the next phase of your work to adopt a district plan. We also encourage you to look at additional specifications provided in public comment from the League of Women Voters and the Coalition of Communities of Color for additional input on what this process could look like.

To: Portland, Oregon
From: Drew Penrose, Policy Consultant, FairVote
Re: Portland's March draft code regarding ranked choice voting
Date: Mar 21, 2023

FairVote is a nonpartisan organization seeking better elections for all by researching and advancing voting reforms that make democracy more functional and representative. We are a leading national voice on ranked choice voting, with 30 years of work on the issue.

As an organization that believes in a more inclusive and equitable democracy, we are excited to see the city of Portland making progress toward implementation of ranked choice voting. The draft code for implementing ranked choice is an excellent start. It follows many of what FairVote has identified as the best practices in legislative drafting for ranked choice voting, and where it differs, it does so in a way that reflects a robust discussion to ensure the choices best fit Portland's unique context. We applaud the diligent and careful work that the city staff took in compiling this draft.

The policy of requiring write-in candidates to register for their votes to be counted is a smart way to simplify election results without sacrificing the important role of write-ins. Our research into the use of write-in votes in Cambridge, which elects its city council citywide with proportional ranked choice voting, suggests that the city could also provide only one write-in line irrespective of the number of winners, if ballot space is an issue. Cambridge permits multiple write-in lines for its nine-winner elections, but in 2019, only 26 voters total, out of about 20,000, actually used more than one write-in line. Because the system promotes voters having a robust choice among diverse candidates, the write-in line becomes less commonly used.

We did identify one technical issue that we recommend changing, involving how tabulation ends under proportional ranked choice voting. The rules regarding proportional ranked choice voting only specify that tabulation ends under one condition, described in (C)(2)(a): "If the number of elected candidates plus the number of active candidates is less than or equal to the number of seats to be filled, then all active candidates are declared elected and tabulation is complete." The words "tabulation is complete" do not appear anywhere else in (C)(2).

We recommend adding one sentence to subsection (C)(2)(b), which describes candidate election, to state that tabulation also ends after three winners have been identified. So altered, that subsection will read, in part, as follows (with the new text in bold):

If any active candidate has a number of votes greater than or equal to the contest's election threshold, that candidate is declared elected. **If the number of elected candidates is equal to the number of seats to be elected, tabulation is complete.**

...

If there are any questions regarding this recommendation or any other policy choices, we would be happy to follow up with additional details.



League of Women Voters¹® of Portland

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(503) 228-1675 • info@lwvpx.org • www.lwvpx.org

March 20, 2023

To: Julia Meier, Maja Haium, and Reed Brodersen

From: Debbie Kaye, President League of Women Voters of Portland (LWVPDX)

for the LWVPDX Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) Team

Re: LWVPDX Comments on draft RCV code

The League extends its most sincere congratulations on the excellent draft RCV code prepared using a comprehensive team effort by election officials and attorneys from both Multnomah County and the City of Portland. Most appropriately, the RCV Resource Center, founded by election administrators with RCV implementation experience in jurisdictions across the country, served as an expert consultant.

Election officials in Multnomah County and Portland are seasoned professionals and their collaboration, along with the RCV Resource Center, can fairly be described as a RCV code development dream team. The League is particularly impressed by this team's research on RCV and other election data in other jurisdictions. This practical research approach made a valuable contribution to the draft RCV code, while this collaborative team ensured that the code is the best fit for Portland. We are also pleased to report that in response to our review request, the draft RCV code was highly praised by FairVote, a national group with thirty years of RCV experience.

Another important point is that Multnomah County has a solid relationship with a well-respected voting technology vendor, Clear Ballot, which has experience with RCV software. Use of this technology includes security procedures and must meet certification requirements. Consultation with election officials by the Charter Review Commission indicated the feasibility of using RCV for the November 2024 elections.

This feasibility is borne out by the draft RCV code and this recent quote from

Multnomah County Elections Director Tim Scott: "this is not the hardest problem we'll solve in our careers." <https://rosecityreform.substack.com/p/tim-scott-this-is-not-thehardest>

Adoption of the RCV code is a first step that will be followed by the Multnomah County elections office working with Clear Ballot, which includes extensive testing and meeting rigorous certification

standards. The job of the City Council in April is to vote “yes” on this excellent RCV code, honoring the mandate from the voters who strongly supported charter reform last fall.

The League also highlights Clear Ballot’s mission statement, “We create technology that empowers our customers to improve democracy” because it echoes the League’s commitment for robust implementation of the intertwined improvements in governance and elections adopted by Portland voters.

The League of Women Voters of Portland:

To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government.

Education for any new system is prudent and RCV education is mandated in the charter. The League anticipates supporting a budget request for RCV education expected to be included in Mayor Wheeler’s budget. A RCV educational focus on the voter experience is a League priority.

The backdrop for RCV education is the RCV code that governs vote counting by election officials. As with the current winner-take-all voting, Portlanders do not need to read election code to vote and the same applies to the RCV code. The League suggests, however, that the appropriate use in the code of instant runoff voting and single transferable vote terminology be succinctly supplemented by clarifying that both use ranked choice voting. The difference is that the top ranked candidate will win mayor and auditor contests and the top three ranked candidates will win in each council district.

The League especially supported electing councilors with RCV in multi-seat elections since it provides both proportional and geographic representation. Proportional representation means groups of significant size such as the “working class”, people of color, young people, renters, or seniors have a greater opportunity to elect a councilor who understands their concerns. The League refutes any notion that this element of Portland’s new charter raises any Voting Rights Act or other legal concerns. In addition to the City Attorney’s memo on this point, this analysis by a RCV legal expert is also helpful reading:

<https://www.pdxcharterfacts.com/blog/votingrights-act>

Regarding the policy choices reflected in the draft RCV code, the League has a great deal of respect for the thoughtful efforts of the collaborative Multnomah County and Portland team of attorneys and election administrators. In terms of the number of ranking options, the draft RCV code strikes a sensible balance between providing robust ranking opportunities for voters and recognition of technological factors. The League also appreciates the draft code’s emphasis on honoring the intent of voters. On this topic, we highlight Oregon’s long-time experience with bipartisan ballot inspection boards to assess voter intent. This legal requirement at election offices bolsters the draft RCV code’s emphasis on honoring voter intent. Finally, the League

supports the requirement for certification of write-in candidates, especially since it ends the current need for election workers to count votes for fictional candidates. The proposed certification requirement is a reasonable step that is not a threat to democracy and respects the time of election workers.

In summary, the League supports the excellent draft RCV code and appreciates the opportunity to comment before it is finalized for the council vote in April. We recognize that minor adjustments to a good draft may be reasonable, but do not believe that major changes to the draft RCV code are required. Thank you again for the great collaboration between Multnomah County and Portland attorneys and election officials to bring RCV to Portland voters on the required timeline.