



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, Oregon
(541) 388-6570

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

BOCC MEETING MINUTES PUBLIC HEARING ON DRAFT DISTRICT MAP

6:00 PM

TUESDAY January 20, 2026

Barnes Sawyer Rooms
Live Streamed Video

Present were Commissioners Phil Chang, Anthony DeBone and Patti Adair. Also present were County Administrator Nick Lelack; Strategic Initiatives Manager Jen Patterson; and BOCC Executive Assistant Brenda Fritsvold.

This meeting was audio and video recorded and can be accessed at the Deschutes County Meeting Portal website www.deschutes.org/meetings.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Chang called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and relayed instructions for receiving testimony, including that testimony would be limited to two minutes per speaker and that speakers would be called forward in groups as sign-up forms were received. He asked that attendees remain respectful toward one another during testimony and stressed that the hearing was intended to facilitate understanding of differing perspectives.

Commissioners Adair and DeBone each thanked attendees for participating and stated appreciation for public involvement.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ACTION ITEM:

1. Public Hearing — Commissioner District Draft Map

Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager, reviewed the background of the 2024 voter-approved expansion of the Board of County Commissioners from three to five members and subsequent Board action to initiate the consideration of Commissioner districts. Patterson summarized the formation and work of the District Mapping Advisory Committee (DMAC), including meeting frequency and locations and the availability of meeting materials and comments through the County's website. Patterson outlined the DMAC's recommendations that the Board forward Map C to the voters and engage in a future redistricting effort after the 2030 Census if a district system is approved.

Patterson explained that following the scheduled public hearings, the Board will consider whether to refer a measure to the voters. Chair Chang added that the second public hearing would occur the following morning during the regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The public hearing was opened at 6:15 pm.

- Rodney Cooper testified in support of geographic district representation, saying that the county-level representation for rural residents differs from that of city residents who also elect city officials. Cooper referenced the federal system of representation as context and was concerned that at-large elections could allow the population of Bend to determine county elections with the result that rural residents would lack sufficient representation.
- Martha Lussenhop testified in opposition to Map C, noting that the expansion to five commissioners did not include voter approval of electing commissioners by district. She described concerns regarding the DMAC's composition and process and said that the proposed district arrangement would result in outcomes not aligned with overall county voting patterns.
- Keith Rockow looked forward to being represented by someone with whom he shares a personal connection and who understands the issues and threats facing his community. He supported having districts and said these would ensure fair and balanced representation.
- Dave Klym testified in support of Map C, saying that it was the fairest of the options and expressing concern that without districts, at-large elections could result in one-party control. Klym said district elections would better protect rural representation.
- Lou Capozzi testified in opposition to Map C, stating concerns about the composition of the DMAC and its repeated 4-3 votes.

- Joe Craig testified in opposition to Map C, referring to prior public statements and past charter-related votes and saying that Commissioner positions should remain at-large.
- Stephanie Hunter opposed the proposal to create districts, saying that the interests of Redmond residents are best supported when candidates must campaign countywide and that limiting voters to a single district race would reduce the influence of Redmond voters and their incentive to engage civically.
- Gloria Olson opposed creating districts, saying that the current at-large system requires candidates to spend time across the county and builds community familiarity between candidates and residents. She did not view the existing system as broken and urged keeping the Commissioner positions at-large.
- Joyce Durban testified on behalf of the League of Women Voters, stating that districting should occur on the 10-year census cycle using accurate and complete information. She opposed creating districts mid-cycle and said mid-decade changes undermine public trust.
- Carol Loesche, a member of the DMAC, described her role as the only non-affiliated voter on the DMAC and shared her concerns that Map C would advantage one political party based on registered voter distribution. She said if districts are pursued, they should only be considered after the 2030 Census.
- Michelle Martin testified in opposition to Map C, saying that the map would reduce representation and create divisions through district boundaries. She urged retaining at-large elections so Commissioners remain accountable to the entire county.
- Jim Barnett urged the Board to drop Map C and restart the process with broader input before drawing maps. He further raised legal concerns about the use of voter registration data rather than total population in map development, referencing constitutional and state legal provisions which require population-based equality.
- Nathan Jenkinson described how Map C would divide portions of Redmond, assigning some residents near Redmond to districts grouped with other areas, and attributed irregular boundaries to reliance on precinct lines. He said that districting, if pursued, should be based on census population data rather than voter registration numbers.
- Mark Kelley described Map C as an example of gerrymandering intended to shape outcomes over time. Citing examples of prior Board decisions, Kelley was concerned that Map C would affect future governance outcomes based on partisan politics.
- Tony Oliver testified in support of Map C and said the process was intended to be fair and not driven by political party considerations. She said having geographic districts would improve representation by allowing Commissioners to focus on the concerns of one area.
- Donna Lipscomb reminded that voters approved Measure 9-173 to expand the Board, but not to adopt districts. She objected to district-only voting because it would reduce the ability of voters to cast ballots for all commissioner seats.
- Sheila Kelley opposed Map C as it would limit residents to voting for only one commissioner position. Describing concerns about the DMAC selection and process, Kelley said Map C should not be advanced to voters.

- Paul J. Lipscomb testified regarding legal standards for districting and said election districts must be based on total population rather than registered voter counts, citing constitutional “one person, one vote” principles and Oregon state requirements.
- Amanda Page said while districting can appear to improve representation, the proposed district arrangement did not distribute representation fairly.
- Pete Shepherd said that the proposal to advance Map C to voters was incomplete and that the County had not sufficiently assessed litigation risk and fiscal exposure.
- Dylan Levi said as an independent, unaffiliated student voter who lives in a rural part of the county, he was disappointed in the restraints imposed by the BOCC on the DMAC. He said Map C was rigged and would be detrimental to democracy, and would have particular negative effects on those who live in Redmond.
- Joe Weymiller referred to previous decisions by the BOCC which affected him and stated his support for a ranked choice voting system as an alternative approach for improved representation.
- Contessa Mendoza supported moving forward with Map C, saying that although the process was constrained, DMAC had completed it both as tasked and without using political party voting data. She said differing geographic areas should have representation reflecting where residents live.
- Jane Killefer discussed civics education concepts related to redistricting and representation and urged slowing down the redistricting effort to ensure fair and equal representation for county residents.
- Chuck Humphreys stated his opposition to Map C, saying that the simplest and fairest approach is to retain at-large elections as districting is susceptible to political manipulation.
- Ellie Gaines reminded that additional commissioner seats were approved as at-large positions and said a districted system would reduce the ability of voters to vote for each seat. She asked that the Board not forward Map C in view of concerns about process and fairness.
- Mary Fleischman described concerns about the transparency of the process, including assigning position numbers to districts while the Board was still holding hearings. Asking that the Board stop the current effort and allow a future, expanded commission to consider election system changes, she suggested that any future ballot question should focus on whether to district at all rather than selecting among maps.
- Mary Pantenburg relayed her opposition to Map C and described concerns about representation outcomes relative to countywide political preferences. She noted that younger residents are becoming involved due to perceived risks to democratic processes.
- Kim Mander said there was not a clear community mandate for the districting process, which she viewed as rushed and at risk for legal challenges and associated costs.
- Alice Weston was concerned with potential impacts of the districting proposal on civil liberties and the democratic process, saying that environmental justice and climate

work depend on democratic participation and fair electoral processes. She urged the Board not to proceed with Map C.

- Jane Simmons stated her support for the DMAC's work and said Map C was the best available option among those considered. Simmons said rural residents, including farmers and ranchers, need representation and that population distribution makes that difficult without districts.
- Dave Roth voiced his support for Map C and thanked Commissioners DeBone and Adair for forming the DMAC and moving forward with five districts.
- Ben Schimmoller testified in support of having districts and described his experience working with legislative mapping in Oregon. He said having district representation would help residents identify an accountable commissioner for a defined area, while at-large elections would increase workload and make it more difficult to be heard.
- Greg Bryant supported a model that would include district representation while retaining at-large voting for commissioners. He did not support the district-only election approach presented in Map C.
- Freddy Finney-Jordet shared his preference for proportional representation and described Map C as unfair. He called for the Board not to advance Map C to voters.
- Amelia DuBose stated support for ranked-choice voting and said that the districting process reduced confidence in elections as it was rushed and lacked sufficient public input.
- Tom Cohen stressed that the signature-gathering effort to expand the Board did not include an intent to adopt districts. He urged continuing at-large elections with no districts unless voters later decide otherwise.
- Tracy Miller said the voter-approved expansion of the Board from three to five commissioners was intended to improve representation without necessarily adopting districts. Adding that the districting process appeared rushed, she reminded that county services and daily life cross the proposed district boundaries and urged either retaining at-large elections or ensuring that any future approach preserves broad voter participation.
- Morgan Schmidt noted that voters will elect multiple BOCC seats this year and said concerns about representation could be addressed through upcoming elections. She urged allowing the expanded board to be seated before making further changes to the election system.
- Bill Schertzhiger was disappointed with the division in the room as evidenced by remarks using the terms "them" and "us." He said many speakers were operating from emotion and not facts.
- Andrew Kaza, a member of the DMAC, referenced his experience serving on the DMAC and said implementing districts could reduce campaign costs.

Following in-person testimony, the Board moved to online testimony.

- Jean Carlton said Map C was flawed and raised concerns about the legality and transparency of the process. She said no other Oregon county uses voter registration

- data to establish commissioner districts and urged waiting for accurate census data and participation by newly elected commissioners before changing election systems.
- Darren Ash opposed establishing districts as that would reduce each voter's ability to vote for multiple commissioner positions. He noted that the geographic composition of the proposed South County district includes portions of Bend and was concerned that Bend-area precincts would influence representation in a district intended to represent communities in the South County.
 - Mark Stockamp testified in support of Map C, noting that proponents of the ballot measure which expanded the Board promised better representation for voters. He said Oregon counties with five-member commissions often have districts and expressed concern that at-large elections could result in commissioners concentrated geographically, thereby reducing effective representation and accountability.
 - Lena Berry said Map C would split Redmond-area voting patterns and dilute rural voting strength by dividing rural communities across districts. She raised concerns about potential legal challenges, urged retaining at-large voting, and advocated for proportional ranked-choice voting as an alternative approach.

There being no one else who wished to speak, the public hearing was closed at 8:04 pm.

After testimony concluded, a question was asked regarding how voting would work in the upcoming May election. It was clarified that in 2026, all voters would vote for every BOCC seat on the ballot.

Chair Chang said deliberations by the Board on the proposal to forward Map C to the voters were scheduled to occur the following day after the second public hearing.

ADJOURN:

Being no further items to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

DATED this 26th day of February, 2026 for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.



PHIL CHANG, CHAIR

ATTEST:



RECORDING SECRETARY



ANTHONY DEBONE, VICE CHAIR



PATTI ADAIR, COMMISSIONER