

September 30, 2025

To: Deschutes County District Mapping Advisory Committee members

From: Lorri Benefield, Deschutes County Resident, Terrebonne

I have been a resident of Deschutes County since 1974 (more than 50 years), with a few years away for school and work. I have seen the county change in many ways during this time.

I support the process of identifying 5 County Commissioners based upon Districts/Areas rather than an "At Large" Basis. I believe this sets up a process to allow representatives outside the city of Bend to be involved with our County Commission.

I virtually attended your last meeting (9/24/2025) and would like to provide comments based upon your discussions.

I believe that you should focus your time on identifying and agreeing upon "Communities of Interest" then adjusting the geographic boundaries to achieve the relatively equal number of people per district.

The identification and agreement upon the "Communities of Interest", I believe, will be the most difficult part of your assignment. The rationale and discussions that you engage in to identify these communities, must also be the most transparent. This should be resolved to move forward. I also believe that the concerns about Demographics will be addressed and incorporated once the "Communities of Interest" are designated.

I agree that the most current information regarding population data (voter rolls, etc.) should be used to identify the Districts. The "American Communities Survey" information that was discussed, may not have the level of detail needed by this committee. A short review and discussion of the data seem appropriate, but may not be valuable for this effort. Please do not try to force this data to meet your objectives if it is not appropriate.

Voter rolls seem like a current representation of our population. No method will be perfect but this may be the best available at this time. Do not procrastinate for "better data". Make a decision and adjust as new data becomes available, including the 2030 census.

I do not believe you have been given "a problem to solve". You have been given a task to complete. That task is to improve the representation of the county residents, as the voters

directed, as it continues to grow. Please focus on this and identify the 5 separate Districts that represent the residents of those areas.

I recommend that the cities and communities within the county, including their surrounding areas, are a place to start to identify “Communities of Interest”. I recommend you start with the communities of Sisters, Redmond, LaPine, and Bend. These may need to also include Sunriver, Tumalo, and Terrebonne. These communities and their surrounding areas seem like they would have common interests. You will need to use your knowledge of the county to make those determinations.

Bend, as the largest city in the county, will probably need to be separated into portions of several Districts. If done fairly and inclusively, I believe this will allow representatives from outside the city of Bend to be included on the County Commission. If residents outside the city of Bend, but within the District, are encouraged to participate this would allow a more balanced representation of the county residents’ interests. As a proponent of the geographic area Districts, this has been my goal. Allow more representation from outside the city of Bend to participate at the county level.

A question for your consideration – Is there value in looking at the zip codes within the county to use as a place to start for determining “Communities of Interest”? I do not advocate for this, just a thought for you to consider.

My final request, please base all your proposals, deliberations and recommendations on the best way to achieve fair representation of all our county residents, not your own personal biases and agendas (we all have them).

You have been given an important assignment that will determine whether Deschutes County will continue to be a place that values all residents and their priorities or one that places one group of residents’ interests over another.

Thank you for taking the time to be a member of this committee. If you would like to ask questions or have clarification of my comments, I would be happy to provide any support that I can.

Lorri Benefield

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Why not use AI to generate different versions of the new district maps? That might be the only way for the maps to be non-partisan. Thanks for your efforts !

Karen Trachsel

DMAC members,

During your Committee meeting in Sisters there was discussion about the difference between the 2020 Census Population Counts and the Registered Voter Counts and how close they are. I think what is important to examine is not how close the overall numbers are, but how close the proportions of total population and registered voters in each precinct. We know that total County population was 198,253 and that there are 163,816 registered voters now. But to understand whether a proposed District map is fair or not we want to know whether each district encompasses 20% of the total County population or 20% of the total registered voters. So I took your table that lists the 2020 Census Population and Registered Voter Counts for each precinct and I added three columns to reflect what percent of the total population and what percent of the total voters lived in each precinct. Please see the attached table with these additional calculations.

You will note that there are precincts where the percent of the total population is very different than the percent of the total registered voters. For example, Precinct 5 had 4.31% of the population in 2020 but only has 3.35% of the registered voters in 2025. There are numerous other precincts where the percent of total population is very different than the percent of registered voters in 2025, including Precincts 6, 20, 29, 30, 31, 34, 36, 39, 46 and 47. This is critically important because bundling precincts by 2020 total population or by 2025 registered voters could result in a voter having significantly less or more voting power than bundling precincts using the other number. When you are assembling proposed districts the Committee needs to ensure fair representation to all voters.

Thank you.

Phil Chang
Deschutes County Commissioner
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Deschutes County Voting Precinct List
With City Associations, 2020 Census Population and Voter Registration Counts

Voting Precinct	City	Population Counts	% of total population	Registered Voter Counts (As of 03/01/2022)	% of total registered voters (2022)	Registered Voter Counts (As of 08/26/2025)	% of total registered voters (2025)
1	Bend	3,594	1.81	2,895	1.87	2,891	1.76
2	Bend	4,897	2.47	3,724	2.41	3,985	2.43
3	Bend	5,993	3.02	4,346	2.81	4,715	2.88
4	Bend	4,691	2.37	4,018	2.59	3,937	2.40
5	Bend	8,546	4.31	5,151	3.33	5,480	3.35
6	Bend	5,534	2.79	3,869	2.50	3,856	2.35
7	Bend	2,120	1.07	1,605	1.04	1,747	1.07
8	Unincorporated	811	0.41	746	0.48	966	0.59
9	Bend	3,780	1.91	2,790	1.80	2,729	1.67
10	Unincorporated	82	0.04	45	0.03	53	0.03
11	Bend	1,651	0.83	1,522	0.98	1,757	1.07
12	Unincorporated	985	0.50	899	0.58	878	0.54
13	Unincorporated	4,620	2.33	3,690	2.38	3,770	2.30
14	Unincorporated	2,091	1.05	1,838	1.19	1,865	1.14
15	Unincorporated	2,810	1.42	2,642	1.71	2,653	1.62
16	Unincorporated	1,712	0.86	1,597	1.03	1,532	0.94
17	Redmond	10,363	5.23	5,363	3.46	8,589	5.24
18	Unincorporated	4,588	2.31	4,036	2.61	4,068	2.48
19	Unincorporated	1,645	0.83	1,462	0.94	1,456	0.89
20	Bend	8,195	4.13	5,648	3.65	5,938	3.62
21	Bend & Unincorporated	4,163	2.10	3,435	2.22	3,571	2.18
22	Unincorporated	186	0.09	370	0.24	367	0.22
23	La Pine	2,512	1.27	1,826	1.18	2,328	1.42
24	Unincorporated	1,779	0.90	1,313	0.85	1,318	0.80
25	Bend	7,221	3.64	5,134	3.32	5,546	3.39
26	Bend	3,755	1.89	2,607	1.68	3,290	2.01
27	Bend	3,215	1.62	2,575	1.66	2,922	1.78
28	Redmond	5,706	2.88	4,033	2.60	4,263	2.60
29	Redmond	7,207	3.64	5,589	3.61	6,598	4.03
30	Sisters	3,064	1.55	2,783	1.80	3,217	1.96
31	Unincorporated	3,427	1.73	3,237	2.09	3,374	2.06
32	Bend	4,617	2.33	3,229	2.09	3,462	2.11
33	Bend & Unincorporated	5,286	2.67	3,952	2.55	4,316	2.63
34	Bend	6,102	3.08	4,470	2.89	4,484	2.74
35	Bend	5,632	2.84	4,425	2.86	5,010	3.06
36	Redmond	10,019	5.05	9,704	6.27	7,584	4.63
37	Unincorporated	1,543	0.78	1,337	0.86	1,378	0.84
38	Unincorporated	2,580	1.30	1,816	1.17	1,807	1.10
39	Unincorporated	8,025	4.05	7,066	4.56	7,176	4.38
40	Unincorporated	1,484	0.75	1,587	1.02	1,636	1.00
41	Unincorporated	1,004	0.51	791	0.51	773	0.47
42	Unincorporated	5,235	2.64	4,451	2.87	4,494	2.74
43	Unincorporated	3,641	1.84	3,201	2.07	3,330	2.03
44	Bend	5,160	2.60	3,890	2.51	3,987	2.43
45	Unincorporated	1,328	0.67	1,112	0.72	1,077	0.66
46	Bend	6,407	3.23	4,471	2.89	4,647	2.84
47	Bend	3,222	1.63	3,107	2.01	3,213	1.96
48	Unincorporated	3,300	1.66	2,968	1.92	3,107	1.90
49	Unincorporated	638	0.32	525	0.34	651	0.40
50	Unincorporated	2,087	1.05	1,949	1.26	2,025	1.24
	Totals	198,253		154,839		163,816	