



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: December 3, 2025

SUBJECT: Recommendations from the District Mapping Advisory Committee to the BOCC

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Ballot Measure 9-173, approved by voters in November 2024, expands the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) from three to five members. The two new positions will be elected at-large in 2026 for an initial two-year term which will begin in January 2027. The BOCC met several times between November 2024 and May 2025 to consider transitioning from five at-large Commissioner positions to establishing individual Commissioner districts.

On March 31, 2025, the BOCC voted to initiate the process of drafting Commissioner districts for voter consideration in 2026. On May 5, 2025, the BOCC majority voted to form a committee with members selected through BOCC nominations.

The District Mapping Advisory Committee (DMAC) was comprised of seven appointed members. The County contracted with Neil Bryant to serve as facilitator and chair. The DMAC members were as follows:

Name	Appointed By
Bernie Brader	Commissioner DeBone
Ned Dempsey	Commissioner DeBone
Matt Cyrus	Commissioner Adair
Phil Henderson	Commissioner Adair
Andrew Kaza	Commissioner Chang
Carol Loesche	Commissioner Chang
Melanie Kebler	Commissioner Chang

DISTRICT MAPPING ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Meetings

Orientation

The DMAC convened for an orientation meeting on August 27, 2025.

Weekly Meetings

The DMAC met every Wednesday from September 10 to November 12, 2025, for a total of 10 meetings. The committee conducted business, drafted maps, and provided final DMAC recommendations to the BOCC. Meetings were scheduled from 1–3 p.m.

The DMAC met once in Sisters on September 17, 2025; in Redmond on September 24, 2025; and in La Pine on October 1, 2025. All other meetings were held in Bend.

Community Listening Session

The DMAC held a community listening session in Bend on October 16, 2025. The meeting took place in the evening and gave members of the public an opportunity to comment on DMAC activities.

Communications

Website

The DMAC website can be found at Deschutes.org/DMAC. Meeting schedules, materials, video recordings, draft maps, data, and other related materials are available there.

Public Input

Each DMAC meeting began with up to 30 minutes of public comment, limited to three minutes per person. Comments could also be emailed to dmac@deschutes.org. All emailed comments were distributed to DMAC members before each meeting and posted on the DMAC website. The DMAC held one community listening session.

Data and Resources

At the first DMAC meeting, committee members were given 2020 census population counts by precinct and registered voter counts by precinct as of August 26, 2025. Members were also given a county precinct map. Additional data and resources were provided over the course of the DMAC meetings.

The information provided to the DMAC for their consideration included:

- 2020 census population counts by city and precinct
- Registered voter counts by city and precinct as of March 1, 2022
- Registered voter counts by city and precinct as of August 26, 2025
- Registered voter counts by city and precinct as of November 1, 2025
- Deschutes County Precinct Map
- Maps of each of the 50 precincts in Deschutes County
- American Community Survey (ACS) overlays for two draft maps

- Overlays included:
 - African American Population
 - Hispanic/Latino Population
 - Native American Population
- New Building Permits issued in Deschutes County between January 1, 2022 – October 20, 2025
 - The data was presented by precinct for 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025, and included permits issued and the number of units

Map Drafting Criteria

The DMAC was given a BOCC approved set of guidelines to use for its map drafting process. Over the course of the meetings, the DMAC asked the BOCC, through staff, to clarify two criteria:

1. Can the DMAC propose a map with 4 districts and one at-large seat?
 - a. The majority of the BOCC clarified they want one draft map with five districts and no other options for consideration.
2. Due to challenges to accommodate all the map-drafting criteria, does the BOCC prefer splitting some precinct lines *or* increasing the targeted population range from 5% to 10%?
 - a. The majority of the BOCC clarified that they prefer not splitting precinct lines and to update the language in section 4. b. of the criteria to read: "Maps should be drawn to approximately equal population size, to be within a 10% range between the largest and smallest district."

One other issue raised and discussed by the BOCC during the DMAC process was the "Missoula Model". This model would divide the county into districts, require candidates to reside in the district they seek to represent, and keep countywide, at-large voting for all commissioner positions. A majority of the BOCC did not support adopting the "Missoula Model".

The DMAC map-drafting criteria were updated on October 27, 2025, as follows:

1. Each district, as nearly as practicable, shall:
 - a. Be contiguous
 - b. Utilize existing precinct lines
 - c. Not unreasonably divide communities of common interest and geographic boundaries
 - d. Consider current growth patterns
 - i. i.e. building permits and UGB expansions
2. No district shall be drawn for the purpose of favoring any political party, incumbent elected official or other person.
3. No district shall be drawn for the purpose of diluting the voting strength of any language or ethnic minority group.
4. Population
 - a. The DMAC will be provided with the following three data points in a table by precinct for consideration. Staff and the GIS support team will work with the DMAC to support additional data requests as available.

- i. Census Population
 1. Census population data is from 2020, and an updated count will not be available until 2031.
 - ii. Voter Registration data from February 2022 (the date of the newly configured precincts based on state-wide re-districting).
 - iii. Current Voter Registration data will be provided as requested by the DMAC.
 - b. Maps should be drawn to approximately equal population size, to be within a 10% range between the largest and smallest district.
5. Draft map will have five districts.

Population

At the precinct level, the DMAC had access to the 2020 census population and updated voter registration data. Staff did not have access to updated census estimates at the precinct level after 2020. During the October 15, 2025, DMAC meeting, a motion was made to use the updated voter registration data as the primary population data set.

- The motion carried on a 4 -3 vote
 - In favor: Bernie Brader, Matt Cyrus, Ned Dempsey, and Phil Henderson
 - Opposed: Andrew Kaza, Carol Loesche, and Melanie Kebler

Voter registration and census population data were provided for each draft map.

Maps

Over the course of its meetings, the DMAC considered 11 variations of draft district maps.

During the September 17, 2025, DMAC meeting, members asked staff to create draft maps for the committee to consider and potentially use as starting points in their work.

Committee members gave staff additional direction and considerations for drafting the maps. Those included:

- Apply the Library Board District map in one of the draft district maps
- Consider cities and unincorporated towns (i.e. Tumalo and Terrebonne)
- Present at least two options for splitting the City of Bend:
 - north/south split
 - east/west split
- Start with population centers
- Review the State House Districts map and see if it can be applied to a Commissioner district map
 - After reviewing the House Districts population counts staff determined it was not viable to use this as a draft map starting point

Staff considered all the information and drafted three starting maps for the DMAC, titled Maps 1, 2, and 3. The DMAC then created two new versions of Map 2 by moving precincts between districts. Those maps were initially titled 2B and 2Bv2.

Members of the public also submitted maps, titled PS 1, PS 2, PS 3 and PS 4 (PS = publicly

submitted). The DMAC made precinct-level edits to PS 3 and initially titled the new map as PS 3B.

To reduce confusion, the DMAC changed the naming conventions to A, B, C, and so on.

Ultimately, Map 2Bv2 became Map A. Map PS 3B became Map B. The DMAC then made precinct-level edits to Map B, creating a third map titled Map C.

FINAL DISTRICT MAPPING ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOCC:

A majority of DMAC members made three recommendations to send to the BOCC:

1. The DMAC recommends the BOCC consider Map C for the district map
 - a. In favor of the recommendation: Bernie Brader, Matt Cyrus, Ned Dempsey, and Phil Henderson
 - b. Opposed to the recommendation: Andrew Kaza, Carol Loesche, and Melanie Kebler
2. The DMAC recommends the BOCC use a random process to number the districts
 - a. In favor of the recommendation: Bernie Brader, Carol Loesche, Matt Cyrus, Ned Dempsey, and Phil Henderson
 - b. Opposed to the recommendation: Andrew Kaza and Melanie Kebler
3. The DMAC recommends to the BOCC that if voters approve the map, then redistricting should occur after the 2030 census
 - a. In favor of the recommendation: Bernie Brader, Matt Cyrus, Ned Dempsey, and Phil Henderson
 - b. Opposed to the recommendation: Carol Loesche and Melanie Kebler
 - c. Abstained: Andrew Kaza

NEXT STEPS:

- Would the BOCC like to discuss next steps at this meeting or a subsequent meeting?
 - Which may include but not limited to:
 - Voting on the DMAC's three recommendations
 - Numbering districts for Map C
 - Process and timeline

BUDGET IMPACTS:

N/A

ATTENDANCE:

Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager

Neil Bryant, DMAC Facilitator

Nick Lelack, County Administrator

Steve Dennison, County Clerk