

## PROJECT BRIEF

### City of Portland District Commission Project

July 2023 – September 2023  
Katie Gavares

#### PROJECT GOAL

The overall goal of the project was to support the Independent District Commission's decision-making process to create a citywide map with four geographic districts. The Oregon Summer Fellow (OSF) worked with the City of Portland Transition team to support community engagement efforts, analyze public input, and document the District Commission's deliberations and process.

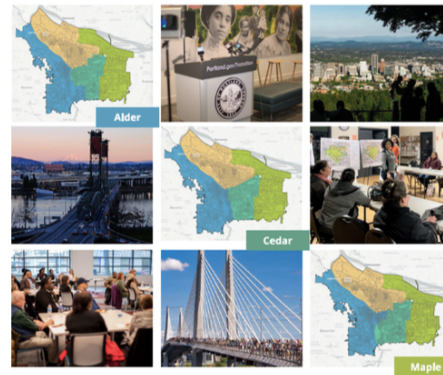
#### STRATEGY

Over the 10-week fellowship, the OSF worked directly with the Transition team staff to execute the District Commission in-person and zoom public hearings. After the public comment period closed, the OSF assessed all public testimony, online survey, phone line and emails through a content analysis. The analysis was summarized in a report and presentation to the District Commissioners before they began their final deliberations. The in-depth analysis of themes helped the commissioners stay accountable to communities of common interest, designing a map that best represented city residents. The final phase of the fellowship was documenting this inaugural process in the final report to serve as a guideline and template for the future redistricting efforts and ensuring transparency with the public.

#### CHALLENGES

The Independent District Commission's timeline was pre-determined by the Charter Reform Ballot Measure 26-228 that created four new geographic districts and initiated this work. The Measure's fast timeline made it challenging to complete the public comment report in three days and prepare data reports for commissioners in between weekly meetings. It was also a challenge in the 10-week

#### Independent District Commission Public Comment Report



July 2023

**Portland Transition**

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*Public Comment Report authored by Oregon Summer Fellow for the Independent District Commission.*

fellowship to ensure equitable representation in the community engagement and testimonies. The Transition team and Independent District Commission lacked the time and resources to reduce barriers for deeper engagement. Finally, the Charter Reform was a highly visible and political effort. The OSF and commission's work was threatened by impending litigation. It was a challenge to express the community input and show how it influenced deliberations, while ensuring all internal and external communications were consistent with the legal criteria.

#### RESULTS

At the completion of the fellowship, the OSF achieved the following results.

- High engagement numbers on this technical mapping exercise with 816 public comments in one month.
- Authored a public comment report that highlights communities of common interest and policy preferences.
- Documented Independent District Commission's process, outlining how the criteria was followed, the deliberations, and recommendations for future redistricting efforts.