

Submitted July 15, 2022

Dear Multnomah County CRC,

Congratulations on reaching the end of your service.

I have three final comments. Two suggestions for your report and a final comment about the costs vs benefits of implementing RCV before Portland votes to approve it.

1. Rural and smaller cities representation on the CRC.

You received several comments from rural residents about the importance of making sure the county's rural areas are represented on the Charter Review Committee (CRC), and the committee seemed to support that goal. The charter revisions you are recommending will allow all CRC members to be selected from a relatively small area in east Portland, with no representatives at all from rural areas or smaller cities (Troutdale and Gresham).

The proposed charter amendment language says "The Office of Citizen Involvement shall endeavor to appoint a committee that represents the diverse communities in the county." But there is no definition of "diverse communities." To many people, the phrase won't mean including representatives from rural and small cities communities. OCI could easily interpret the required use of the 4 commissioner districts to be sufficient to ensure adequate geographic diversity.

Your draft report doesn't mention a goal to include representatives from rural areas and smaller cities in the CRC.

The OCI does not currently appear to consider residents in rural communities or the small cities in Multnomah County as members of valuable geographically based communities when recruiting or selecting the members of any committee – in their eyes, rural residents of the county who rely solely on the county for law enforcement, land use, and transportation operations are no different than residents of the city of Portland who receive city services.

Even if the current OCI leadership has learned that there might be some value in recruiting voices from these non-Portland communities, there is nothing in the proposed Charter language or your draft report to instruct future OCI leadership on this point. If it is documented in your report then rural residents can push OCI to implement your goal.

Please add a sentence to your report to explicitly express a goal for OCI to include representatives from the county's eastern and western rural areas as well as our smaller cities (Troutdale and Gresham) in the CRC.

2. Clarify your basis for entrusting CRC member selection to OCI.

On page 9 of your draft report, you explain your willingness to empower OCI to select future CRC members:

The committee discussed concerns about putting membership selected in the hands of county elected officials or county staff, but after learning more about OCI's application process, agreed that their preference was to task OCI with membership selection.

I heard only one very quick and somewhat vague verbal overview of the OCI application process in one subcommittee meeting – it went by so quickly that I couldn't even take notes. I believe I heard that OCI also recommended CRC applicants to legislators for their selection. I haven't seen those OCI processes documented for your committee. I suspect that OCI's application and selection process can change at any time. Since the basis for your decision was your trust in OCI's excellent processes, I suggest that you document in your report the key elements of those processes in your report. It would help readers understand your decision, and while it won't bind future OCI staff to continue processes you liked it documents your goals.

Also, the application and selection processes are related but can be considered separate processes --currently OCI runs the application process but does not officially select committee members. In this sentence, the draft report refers first to the application process as the basis for your trust in OCI, then to the selection process as if they were the same process, leading to the conclusion that because the application process you learned about was good you decided to also trust OCI to implement a selection process that you know nothing about. I suggest you clarify this in addition to documenting the key elements of the OCI process.

### 3. Cost/Benefit of implementing RCV for Multnomah County alone.

The county has 8 elective offices – Chair, 4 Commissioners, Auditor, District Attorney and Sheriff. On average there are 4 county offices on the ballot every 2 years. If the City of Portland's complex and increasingly controversial charter reform measure is not adopted but your proposal to implement Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for county elections passes, Multnomah County will bear the full cost of implementing RCV for just those 4 races. That's a substantial cost burden with a small benefit -- money that could otherwise be spent on social services and public health.

Best wishes, thank you for your service, and thank you for considering these comments.

Carol Chesarek