

From: Bill Galaway
To: [CouncilAll](#)
Subject: Charter Review - The Case for Wards
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City Council Members;

As you prepare for next week's discussion on the proposed charter changes, I wanted to give you my thoughts ahead of time so that you would have them and I would not take up time next week espousing them. Please note these are my personal opinions, and not the committee's. However, these are no different than what I conveyed to the committee.

We all have a common enemy - the lack of time to do everything we want. As council members, you have even less time than most of us. You all have (presumption on my part) full time jobs, you have families, friends, interests outside of city business. You serve on various committees and boards in support of the city and other constituents. It has to be extremely tough to fully understand all the issues facing the city of Bend. You all are to be commended for trying.

In any decision making process, we rely on two inputs: our own knowledge and experiences, and what others tell us. When we are time constrained, our ability to expand on our knowledge and experience is somewhat limited, therefore we augment with what others tell us. As councilors with full time jobs, with having to serve on many committees and boards, you are more time constrained than most, which means that your inputs for issues outside of where you work and live have to be primarily from others.

The situation will only get worse. At an average of 9 people moving to Bend a day, we will add over 30,000 residents over the next 10 years. We will add over 2,000 acres to our boundaries, and begin the process of expanding the UGB again. How can we ever expect a system that was developed when Bend was a small town to be able to adequately support a growing city of 90,000, let alone 120,000 residents in 10 years? We need to put in a system that supports Bend 10-20 years from now and not look at what is best for Bend today.

The only thing we can guarantee with a ward system is geographic diversity. However, I believe it can do much more. A council member in a ward system should have a much greater level of knowledge and experience with the issues in their area of the city than what can reasonably happen today. They can bring that knowledge and experience to the council, and not rely on what others tell them. This is what every city we interviewed told us was the primary benefit of their ward system. They also told us that every council member understands it is city first, ward second.

A ward system will have the added benefit of strengthening the neighborhood association system, and in my mind actually make it relevant. Under a ward system we should align the NA's to fit under the structure of the ward, meaning 2-3 NA's per ward. The council member would utilize the NA system to communicate with their constituents, also use it to gather input. The council member could have town halls in

their ward to communicate directly with the constituents using the NA system. When candidates from a ward are running for office, the NA structure could help facilitate debates so the residents get a better feel for the candidates.

Which ward system should we have? My personal opinion is that 50 years from now, when Bend has a population in excess of 200,000, we should have 6 discrete wards with council members elected by ward. A ward system that moves us towards that end game makes the most sense to me, which is why I favored the 3 ward model with 2 councilors per ward. Irrespective of my personal belief, the ward system proposed is a good starting place.

Should we vote by ward or city wide for the candidates? Again, I think of what the end game is, and favor a process that gets us there. However, I firmly believe we should not let this issue get in the way of moving forward with a ward system. Sometimes we need to take baby steps first, not go directly to sprinting.

We should not be looking at the current state and seeing what is best for today. We should look forward, determine the best model for our city, and develop a transition plan to get there. We should not be afraid of change and the bumpy transition process that will no doubt happen.

Thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to serve on this committee, and for considering my input to the process.

Bill Galaway
Charter Review Committee Co-Chair
Chairman, Southeast Bend NA