

Oregon voters poised to have say on national popular vote bill

PORTLAND (AP) — Senate President Peter Courtney has repeatedly blocked a bill that would permit Oregon to give all seven of its electoral college votes to the winner of the national popular vote during presidential elections.

But that is poised to change at next month's legislative session.

Courtney has said he would allow the Senate to vote on a popular-vote bill only if Oregon voters have the final say on the matter.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports that a bill introduced Monday, January 22, satisfies that demand. If passed next month, Senate Bill 1512 would send the popular-vote question to Oregon voters for their approval or rejection.

Supporters of the popular vote model claim it would be a more fair process than the current Electoral College system, which they said tends to underrepresent people living in more populous states.

VISION: 'Kitchen Table' meetings are part of process

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rather than waiting for problems to surface, he believes.

The last community vision in Sisters was completed in 2007.

The process involves "going to the community to glean what they know and want" to enable making future plans that will have buy-in from the community. With a current vision plan in place, elected officials, business owners, and residents can function with a better sense of confidence, according to Ames.

The City of Sisters is the project sponsor, providing funding and the services of City staff to the consultants. Deschutes County and the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) are contributing funds and providing staff time for background and technical information. Citizens4Community and the Ford Family Foundation will play a part in the process as well.

Portland State University has a think-tank called Oregon's Kitchen Table that has expertise in convening meaningful and productive meetings. They will be in charge of holding large and small (around the kitchen table) meetings with residents across Sisters Country. Because of Sisters'

tourist-based economy, the consultants will be reaching out to tourists as well for input.

An oversight committee will be meeting every two weeks throughout the entire process. Committee members include: Patrick Davenport, Sisters community development director; Nick Lelack, Deschutes County community development director; Scott Aycock, Community and economic development manager with COIC; Amy Burgstahler, former Sisters City councilor and citizen representative; and lead NXT consultant Ames.

A Vision Action Team comprised of citizens who are reflective of key stakeholder groups and the wider community will be involved in implementation of the vision plan that emerges from the process. The plan will be designed to provide longevity for the vision.

Ames has utilized his Oregon model of visioning while helping 25 cities of all sizes map their futures. By looking at where they currently are and where they are headed, cities can establish realistic long-term goals for where they want to be in the future. From there, action plans are developed and ongoing evaluation occurs to determine if the community is reaching its goals.

The model operates on the assumption there are four

different elements making up Sisters Country that need to be considered when analyzing the present and future of the area — livable Sisters, prosperous Sisters, resilient Sisters, and connected Sisters. There will be four community forums to discuss each of these elements. Input from those forums will help shape the community vision and action plan.

The visioning process involves going to the community to glean what they know and want

The strategic vision will guide City staff, City Council, City boards and commissions, as well as, hopefully, local organizations and businesses in planning, decision-making, and action-planning.

Ames shared with Council, "When a community is aligned around common goals there is a release of impressive power."

During January, the involved groups have been framing the process. Through March, pre-interviews will set the context for the project. Williamson will be conducting stakeholder interviews with opinion leaders throughout Sisters in order to create a community profile that will reflect all points of view and

every part of the community. She will be looking for common ground among all the disparate parties.

March through August will be the time for creating the vision, with a vision summit occurring in June. Development of the plan will begin in September, to be completed in January 2019.

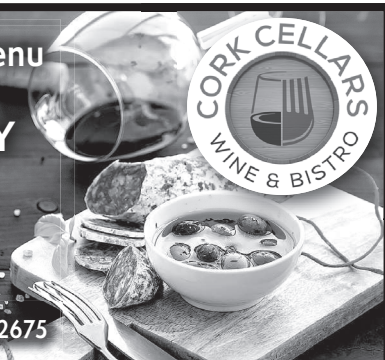
Another member of the consultant team, Steve Maher, will conduct online surveys as well as provide media and website management for the project.

In addition to interviews, there will also be one or two online surveys, the Kitchen Table local community meetings, the four community forums, and a vision summit where the entire community will be able to see the results of all the meetings and surveys and begin to prioritize plans and actions.

Some communities have gone one step further, creating "Game Changer Projects," ambitious and bold actions that are informed by their strategic vision plans. These projects guarantee that the vision plan becomes a living document and not something to just sit on a shelf and collect dust.

With everyone headed the same direction and guided by shared goals, Sisters Country will be equipped to stay out ahead of change, operating from a place of intention rather than reaction.

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