Pierce County Council

930 Tacoma Ave S, Rm 1046
Tacoma, WA 98402-2176
(253) 798-7777
www.piercecountywa.org/council

Remote Participation is provided by calling in to (253) 215-8782 using Webinar ID: 963-5627-6700, or using the zoom link for this meeting: https://piercecountywa.zoom.us/j/96356276700

PIERCE COUNTY DISTRICTING COMMITTEE

The Honorable Frank Cuthbertson, Chair
Sharon Hanek, Member
Justin Leighton, Member
Douglas G. Richardson, Member
Joy Stanford, Member

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
October 12, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda

4. Districting Master Interview
   - Berk Consulting

5. Other Business

6. Adjournment

DISTRICTING MASTER CRITERIA

1. Software experience, including knowledge of GIS;

2. Ability to engage with the public and with the Committee to work through the process;

3. Timeliness;

4. Non-partisan (non-biased);

5. Understanding the communities of interest and the larger community;

6. Cost; and

7. Compliance with state law.

Pierce County
DISTRICTING MASTER

B‖‖BERK
STRATEGY ▪ ANALYSIS ▪ COMMUNICATIONS

September 16, 2021

Attn: Linda Medley, Committee Clerk
Pierce County
SENT VIA EMAIL

RE: Pierce County Districting Master | PROPOSAL

Dear Members of the Consultant Selection Panel:

BERK Consulting, Inc. (BERK) is pleased to submit our proposal and qualifications for Districting Master consulting services in support of Pierce County's 2021 redistricting effort.

For more than 30 years, BERK has worked with communities in Washington State and Pierce County, helping them navigate politically complex challenges in the areas of growth forecasting and allocation, housing, equity, and annexation and growth management. In addition to robust GIS and data analysis, we bring direct familiarity with the county's community makeup, local jurisdictions, and political context. Our team has experience working with Pierce County on planning efforts at both the local and county level including the current Housing Action Strategy. This experience will prepare us well to support the County Districting Committee's efforts to analyze and communicate the potential equity implications of alternative districting plans.

GIS and spatial analysis are core to BERK's work and we employ rigorous and defensible analytical methods in every project. BERK's GIS team includes skilled professionals with experience in advanced cartography, spatial data analysis, demographics analysis, and development of interactive mapping and data visualization tools. As Pierce County's Districting Master, BERK would leverage our knowledge and experience to help the Committee ensure fair and equal representation for all residents of Pierce County.

Team Availability. We confirm that the project team included in this proposal is available to complete the work on time and on budget. If needed, we have a team of 27 planners, analysts, and facilitators who could also support this work.

We look forward to discussing this project with you in detail. In the interim, more information about our firm, approach, team, and client satisfaction can be found on our website: www.berkconsulting.com.

Sincerely,

Brian Murphy, Principal
BERK Consulting, Inc.

Kevin Gifford, Project Manager
BERK Consulting, Inc.

Project Understanding

The Pierce County Districting Committee ("Committee") is seeking technical assistance with redrawing Pierce County's Council Districts using 2020 Census data to ensure fair and equal representation for all Pierce County residents. BERK Consulting will provide GIS, spatial data analysis, and demographic analysis expertise to support and inform the Committee's process, including technical analysis to inform the formulation of new districting plans, iterative analysis of districting alternatives, comparison of alternatives to 2010 district boundaries, and preparation of a final districting plan.

BERK will work with the Committee to identify key criteria and metrics for the evaluation of draft districting plans based on statutory and County Charter requirements. We assume the Committee members will lead development of these criteria, with BERK providing input on technical feasibility, data availability, and potential challenges for implementation.

BERK has already collected population and map data from the 2020 Census Redistricting Program, based on legal framework requirements and best practices for drawing equitable and representative district boundaries. We will use this data and Esri's Redistricting software package to efficiently develop districting plan alternatives and evaluate those alternatives based on the Committee's criteria. We will also evaluate key measures of representation and equity, and ensure the analysis meets statutory and County Charter requirements as well as compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits procedures that discriminate "on the basis of race, color," or membership in one of several "language minority groups." BERK will also collect supplemental data as necessary to support analysis of equity considerations as identified by the Committee.

Project Approach

Task 1. Project Kick-Off and Ongoing Coordination

BERK will participate in a project kick-off meeting with the Committee to confirm the scope of work and project roles, establish project schedule and communication protocols, and begin discussion of evaluation criteria and analysis methods. The Committee has established a two-month timeline for the analysis, so gaining a clear understanding of the Committee's needs and expectations and developing precise evaluation criteria early in the process will allow BERK to finalize our methodology and perform the necessary analysis in an efficient and timely manner.

BERK will also attend all Committee meetings and participate in ongoing coordination meetings with the Committee chair as required.

Task 2. Data Collection and Analysis Design

Supplemental Data Collection

As described in the Project Understanding, population and spatial data published by the 2020 Census Redistricting Data Program will form the principal inputs for the districting analysis. BERK will collect supplemental public data as needed to support analysis of local conditions, such as natural boundaries, specific equity considerations, communities of interest, or voting districts and election history.

Analysis Design

Based on the established criteria, BERK will develop a standardized GIS analysis framework for evaluation of districting plans based on the use of Esri's Redistricting for ArcGIS software. This software package offers a streamlined workflow and rapid iteration of district boundary evaluations. If additional customization is needed, or the Committee desires detailed analysis of specific geographic areas or demographic factors, BERK is also proficient with several open-source spatial analysis tools for redistricting. Significant advances in open-source methods over the last ten years provide a tremendous opportunity to supplement traditional

GIS tools with emerging packages that can rapidly test for adherence to important criteria (e.g., compactness and equity). This combination of tools will allow for rapid iteration of plan alternatives and summary outputs, including maps, visualizations, summaries of key metrics, and outcomes related to Committee-established criteria. BERK will include several evaluation methods in our model based on the Committee's guidance. These methods could include:

- **Equal Population.** A cornerstone principle of district delimitation throughout the United States, equal population across districts is one of the first layers of analysis for all potential districting plans. BERK will ensure that plan iterations based on additional Committee-defined criteria always produce district outputs within an acceptable range of population variation, with appropriate measures to help the Committee evaluate deviation from target levels.

- **Contiguity and Compactness.** BERK will evaluate the level of contiguity and compactness for all districting plan options. Because there is no single definition (or standard) for compactness, BERK will help the Committee consider various measurements, how those measurements relate to representation and equity, and the trade-offs associated with optimizing for compactness relative to other potential criteria.

- **Communities of Interest.** Like compactness, there are several ways to interpret (and preserve) communities of interest in the context of districting. Examples include communities with shared cultural, economic, racial, ethnic, or other social interests. This principle may also relate to jurisdictional boundaries (towns, cities, school districts, election precincts, etc.). Based on the Committee's guidance, BERK will design methods to assess the impact of district plan options on communities of interest across Pierce County. In Task 3, BERK will use these methods to produce a variety of visual outputs that will help the Committee weigh trade-offs related to representation.

- **BIPOC Representation and Equity.** An important aspect of every districting exercise involves careful consideration of non-White racial and ethnic communities. BERK will feature a series of analyses that evaluate the demographic and geographic distribution of non-White and Hispanic/Latinx communities across Pierce County — particularly in relation to 2010 district boundaries — to assess (1) whether population changes and movements since 2010 have put any communities at risk of underrepresentation, and (2) whether the conditions under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act might apply to one or more communities within the county.

Deliverables

- **Methodology Memorandum.** This document will describe the final design of the evaluation framework, including data sources and analytical tools and methods employed. This memorandum will guide the alternative development and evaluation in Task 3 and be attached to the final districting plan.

Task 3. Districting Plan Development and Alternative Evaluation

Based on the criteria established by the Committee and using the methodology developed during Task 2, BERK will prepare and test a series of districting plan alternatives using the following steps.

- **Step 1: Population, Contiguity, and Compactness.** We will first assign a population target based on updated 2020 Census data, and aggregate Census blocks to iteratively construct plan options with districts of roughly equal population (using a pre-defined limit for standard deviation). We will also apply contiguity and compactness constraints during the block aggregation process. We will subsequently apply statistical tests to assess district outputs along several measures of compactness.

- **Step 2: Adjust for Communities of Interest.** Based on the Committee's guidance, BERK will evaluate the extent to which district plan outputs from Step 1 preserve or split communities of interest. Where desired, BERK will adjust boundaries and reapply tests for population and compactness.

After each step and associated test, we will rapidly produce a series of maps, visualizations, and summary statistics for the Committee's review and consideration. BERK will organize outputs by key criteria to provide the Committee with clear and comprehensible information to inform productive conversations.

BERK assumes that development and evaluation of the districting alternatives will be an iterative process. The standardized evaluation framework established in Task 2 will allow us to rapidly and efficiently develop and evaluate new alternatives in response to Committee feedback. Each districting alternative will be analyzed using the evaluation framework, and BERK will provide a summary of district-level outcomes.

Deliverables

- **Draft Districting Plan.** This deliverable will consist of a summary of the districting alternatives considered and a recommended districting plan for Committee deliberation, including a district boundary map and associated tables/charts describing the evaluation results.

Task 4. Final Districting Plan

Upon selection of a preferred districting alternative by the Committee, BERK will prepare a final districting plan, including:

- Maps of the selected district boundaries;
- Analysis of the final plan using the standard evaluation framework, including key population/demographic metrics and an assessment of the final plan's compliance with established criteria and regulatory guidance; and
- A comparison to the 2010 district boundaries.

The final districting plan will include documentation of analysis methodologies employed during the planning process, including any changes to the initial methodology established in Task 2.

Team Qualifications

Relevant Expertise

GIS and Data Analysis. GIS is a core element of BERK's practice. Our GIS team members are formally trained in advanced GIS analysis, cartography, geo-processing, and spatial database management. With both deep expertise in traditional Esri products and demonstrated experience with open source platforms, BERK can select from a variety of existing tools and methods to address key project needs and important client questions. We select our tools carefully to design efficient and reproducible geospatial analysis workflows that are capable of rapid iteration and summarized outputs. BERK also specializes in compelling, user-friendly visualizations to help decisionmakers understand policy implications, particularly related to equity.

Common applications of GIS in our work include:

- **Demographic Analysis** – using both Census data and qualitative research to summarize relevant populations characteristics including race, ethnicity, national origin, language spoken, age, and socio-economic status.
- **Interactive Mapping and Visualization** – presenting spatial data in intuitive and engaging applications for mobile and browser to support understanding by non-technical audiences.
- **Online Public Outreach** – development of customized online interactive maps for soliciting place-based comments from community members.

Experience with Complex, Politically Sensitive, and High-Profile Projects. For more than 30 years, BERK has been a trusted resource for legislative bodies, state agencies, and local communities on complex community planning projects. We are experienced in working side by side with decisionmakers and providing succinct and supportive information throughout political processes. As a neutral third party, BERK is adept at distilling information on both sides of an issue and presenting facts, supported by data, to usher difficult conversations through the political process in highly charged, highly visible projects.

Report Writing and Editing Expertise. Our project team has expert skills in the analysis and synthesis of quantitative and qualitative information, and a portfolio of reports that are respected for their accessibility and understandability. We prepare clear summary-level materials that distill complex information and analysis. Using information design principles, schematics, color, and well edited text, our reports are designed to effectively convey the content and conclusions.

Team Organization

The BERK team will be led by **Kevin Gifford**, a Senior Associate at BERK with a focus in GIS and spatial data analysis. He will serve as the primary point of contact for this project. He will be supported by Associate Principal **Kevin Ramsey, Ph.D.,** for methodology development and interpretation. Associate **Josh Linden** will provide additional analytic capacity. Members of our proposed team work together on numerous projects and have demonstrated success working collaboratively and efficiently on large, high-profile efforts.

Beyond this dedicated core team, BERK has additional staff capacity to support discrete GIS-related analysis and tasks if needed. This internal capacity ensures that we will be able to handle a heavier workload in the fall months as outlined in both the RFP and our proposed scope of work.

Kevin Gifford (Project Manager) has a background in urban planning with a focus on GIS, spatial data analysis, and data visualization. Kevin specializes in the development of analysis and data tools to inform public policy decisions, including comprehensive planning, growth forecasting and allocation, Urban Growth Area (UGA) sizing, buildable lands analysis, and other forms of land use analysis. Kevin is an experienced project manager, having led numerous complex community planning and data analytic projects.

Prior to joining BERK in 2013, Kevin worked as a Planner and GIS Analyst at AHBL and ICF International. Kevin earned a Master of Urban Planning and a Bachelor of Environmental Design, cum laude, from Texas A&M University and a Master of Information and Data Science from the University of California, Berkeley.

Relevant Project Experience

- City of Lakewood Employment Capacity Update
- City of Seattle Mandatory Housing Affordability EIS
- City of Seattle Housing Needs and Supply Analysis
- City of Tacoma Affordable Housing Action Strategy
- Kitsap County Buildable Lands Program Update
- Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan Update SEIS

Kevin Ramsey, Ph.D., (Strategic Advisor) is a geographer specializing in demographic analysis, housing, and land use policy. He excels at designing nuanced policy studies involving both spatial analysis and evaluating potential equity implications of proposed actions. He also has experience working with legislative bodies and committees to assess complex challenges, evaluate trade-offs of proposed strategies, and develop recommendations. This includes work with King County to apply the Determinants of Equity framework and Equity Impact Review Tool to new kinds of policy questions.

Relevant Project Experience

- Pierce County Housing Market Study
- Pierce County Affordable Housing Incentives Evaluation
- City of Tacoma Affordable Housing Action Strategy
- King County Urban Growth Capacity Report and Implementation
- City of Seattle Democracy Voucher Program Evaluation
- City of Seattle Analysis of Housing Needs and Supply

Prior to joining BERK, Kevin worked for the U.S. EPA's Smart Growth Program where he led and advised the development of geospatial data and tools to support local planning and policy making. Kevin has published research in peer reviewed journals and earned a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Washington.

Josh Linden (Analyst) has a background in urban planning, election assistance, spatial analysis, data visualization, and policy evaluation. He specializes in designing data products to inform sensitive policymaking, and is passionate about ensuring equitable access to political and electoral processes. Prior to joining BERK in 2021, Josh managed politically sensitive election and governance projects for several international development organizations, including the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. He has worked directly with election management bodies in Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda, providing technical assistance to strengthen election administration and refine legal frameworks. He also served as a data visualization specialist for a range of democracy and governance programs, funded by USAID. Currently the co-chair of the Bureau and Budget Advisory Committee for Portland's Bureau of Transportation, Josh is pursuing a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University. He has a Master of Arts in Democracy and Governance from Georgetown University and a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs from James Madison University.

Relevant Project Experience

- King County Urban Growth Capacity Report and Implementation
- Kenya Electoral Assistance Program (International Foundation for Electoral Systems)
- Uganda Electoral Assistance Activity (International Foundation for Electoral Systems)
- Egypt International Election Observation Mission (Democracy International)
- South Africa Election Observation (Democracy International)
- Iraq Governance and Performance Accountability (DAI)

Cost Proposal

We propose a **total budget not to exceed $44,970.** This estimate is based on our proposed scope of work included in this submittal. We would be happy to revise this estimate after further conversation with the County.

		BERK Consulting			
		Kevin Gifford	**Kevin Ramsey**	**Josh Linden**	**Total Hours and**
		Project Manager	Strategic Advisor	GIS Analyst	**Estimated Cost**
	2021 Hourly Rate	**$170**	**$185**	**$140**	**by Task**
Task 1: Project Kick-off and Ongoing Coordination with Committee		40	8		$ 8,280
Task 2: Data Collection and Analysis Design		20	14	40	$ 11,590
Task 3: Districting Plan Development and Alternative Evaluation		32	4	72	$ 16,260
Task 4: Final Districting Plan		18	4	36	$ 8,840
Total Estimated Hours		**110**	**30**	**148**	**288**
Cost (Hours*Rate)		**$18,700**	**$5,550**	**$20,720**	**$44,970**

Estimated Project Total   **$44,970**