



CITY OF OREGON CITY

CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION

AGENDA

Commission Chambers, Libke Public Safety Facility, 1234 Linn Ave, Oregon City
Tuesday, November 09, 2021 at 6:00 PM

Typically there are no public comments at work sessions, but written comments are accepted by:

- *Email recorderteam@orc.org (deadline to submit written testimony via email is 3:00 PM on the day of the meeting)*
- *Mail to City of Oregon City, Attn: City Recorder, P.O. Box 3040, Oregon City, OR 97045*

CONVENE WORK SESSION AND ROLL CALL

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Commission's adopted goals and available staff resources shall be considered when recommending future agenda items. The Commission may add an item to a future agenda with consensus of the Commission.

1. List of Future Work Session Agenda Items

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Presentation Regarding FCS Rate/SDC Benchmarking Study
3. Discussion of the Mayoral Appointment Process to City Positions
4. Discussion of Alternatives to the Current Method of Electing Commissioners to Fill Certain "Positions"

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Beaver Creek Employment Area Blue Ribbon Committee - Commissioner Frank O'Donnell

B. Citizen Involvement Committee Liaison - Commissioner Adam Marl

C. Clackamas County Coordinating Committee (C4) - Appointed: Mayor Rachel Lyles Smith
Alternate: Commissioner Adam Marl

D. Clackamas County I-205 Tolling Diversion Committee - Appointed: Commissioner Adam Marl
Alternate: Commissioner Frank O'Donnell

E. Clackamas Heritage Partners - *Commissioner Rocky Smith, Jr.*

F. Clackamas Water Environment Services Policy Committee -
Appointed: Commissioner Rocky Smith, Jr.

G. Downtown Oregon City Association Board - *Commissioner Denyse McGriff*

H. Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) - *Appointed: Mayor Rachel Lyles Smith* *Alternate: Commissioner Denyse McGriff*

I. OC 2040 Project Advisory Team - *Appointed: Commissioners Adam Marl and Denyse McGriff*

J. Oregon Governor's Willamette Falls Locks Commission - *Vacant until State Appoints Mayor Rachel Lyles Smith*

K. Oregon City Tourism Stakeholder's Group - *Appointed: Commissioners Frank O'Donnell and Rocky Smith, Jr.*

L. Oregon City/West Linn Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge Concept Plan Project Advisory Committee - *Appointed: Commissioner Denyse McGriff*

M. South Fork Water Board (SFWB) - *Mayor Rachel Lyles Smith, and Commissioners Frank O'Donnell and Rocky Smith, Jr.*

N. Willamette Falls and Landings Heritage Area - *Appointed: Commissioner Denyse McGriff* *Alternate: Commissioner Frank O'Donnell*

O. Willamette Falls Legacy Project Liaisons - *Mayor Rachel Lyles Smith and Commissioners Frank O'Donnell*

ADJOURNMENT

PUBLIC COMMENT GUIDELINES

Complete a Comment Card prior to the meeting and submit it to the City Recorder. When the Mayor/Chair calls your name, proceed to the speaker table, and state your name and city of residence into the microphone. Each speaker is given three (3) minutes to speak. To assist in tracking your speaking time, refer to the timer on the table.

As a general practice, the City Commission does not engage in discussion with those making comments.

Electronic presentations are permitted but shall be delivered to the City Recorder 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

ADA NOTICE

The location is ADA accessible. Hearing devices may be requested from the City Recorder prior to the meeting. Individuals requiring other assistance must make their request known 48 hours preceding the meeting by contacting the City Recorder's Office at 503-657-0891.

Agenda Posted at City Hall, Pioneer Community Center, Library, City Website.

Video Streaming & Broadcasts: The meeting is streamed live on the Oregon City's website at www.orcity.org and available on demand following the meeting. The meeting can be viewed on Willamette Falls Television channel 28 for Oregon City area residents as a rebroadcast. Please contact WFMC at 503-650-0275 for a programming schedule.



CITY OF OREGON CITY

Staff Report

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-657-0891

To: City Commission
From: City Manager Tony Konkol

Agenda Date: 11/9/2021

SUBJECT:

List of Future Work Session Agenda Items

BACKGROUND:

December 7, 2021

5-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan

ARPA Funding Discussion

OC Sidewalks Repair Assistance Program Adoption Follow-up

January 11, 2022

OC 2040 Check-in

Joint Meeting w/HRB on Design Guidelines 101

Abandoned Building Regulations Presentation by Code Enforcement Manager

OC/WL Pedestrian Bridge

Additional Upcoming Items (These items are in no particular order)

Beavercreek Road Concept Plan (Thimble Creek) Funding Discussion

Boards and Committee's Orientation Manual Review and Discussion

Canemah Area - Encroachments in the Right-of-Way Policy Discussion

Charter Park Discussion (Last five – Sportcraft Landing, McLoughlin Promenade, Ermatinger House, Dement Park/Property, and Clairmont Way)

Clackamas County Water Environmental Services (WES) Rate Differential

Clackamette Park Boat Ramp

Climate Action Plan Presentation (City of Milwaukie)

Code Enforcement Complaint Process

Commission Policies and Rules of Procedure Review

Compatible Change Update

Construction Excise Tax

EcoNW Middle Housing Incentives (HB 2001)

Ethics Training

Metro Food Waste Program Requirements - Annual Review

Oregon Main Street Update by Sheri Stuart

Park Place Urbanization Study

Parks Special Event Fees and Application Process

Parking Rate Increase for Permitted Parking in Downtown Oregon City (Green, Purple, Orange, etc. Zones)

Railroad Quiet Zone Funding Discussion

Request for Recording Pre-App Conferences Follow-up

South Fork Water Board - Mountain Line Easements Vacation

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan Implementation Update

Water System Risk and Resiliency Review

Willamette Falls Legacy Project Operations and Maintenance Discussion



CITY OF OREGON CITY

Staff Report

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-657-0891

To: City Commission
From: Public Works Director John M. Lewis, PE

Agenda Date: 11/09/2021

SUBJECT:

Presentation Regarding FCS Rate/SDC Benchmarking Study

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

As a City Commission Goal, this is a presentation on the planned scope of work, necessary to address the goal.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Presentation providing an overview of Public Works efforts regarding the City Commission Goal 2/Strategy 3 to review and compare SDC and utility rates throughout Oregon City and the Portland Metro area.

BACKGROUND:

At the January 2021 Goal-Setting Retreat, City Commission identified *Goal 2: Invest in current and future capital needs for safe, sustainable infrastructure and City services*. To help implement this goal, Public Works is actively working with the FCS Group to undertake the work items included in *Goal 2 Strategy 3: Review SDCs and utility rates to strike a balance between SDCs and rates*.

Public Works entered into a contract with the FCS Group on October 11, 2021, in the amount of \$13,925. The Scope of Work is attached as Exhibit A and identifies those work items needed to accomplish Goal 2 Strategy 3. This strategy outlines the need for a third-party analysis of SDC charges and utility rates in Oregon City and throughout the region and possibly the state. In addition, FCS Group will coordinate with City Commission to ensure that the sample cities chosen (up to 20) are determined appropriate for inclusion in the analysis and share provide recommendations for two sample commercial customer types to use for comparison of the non-residential uses in the City.

While Goal 2 Strategy 3 only included Water and Stormwater SDCs, the analysis by FCS will include all those services impacting Oregon City's residents and businesses:

Water, Wastewater, Stormwater, Transportation, and Parks SDCs. This will provide a broader analysis and fuller picture of how Oregon City compares to communities throughout the Portland metro area and the state. Ancillary to the comparisons, FCS will capture findings that seem like innovative or unique strategies used by other agencies to finance their utility systems.

Once the analysis is completed, FCS will present the findings at a City Commission meeting and will provide a written memorandum outlining their findings.

OPTIONS:

1. For information only – no approval is required, but project direction is welcomed.

October 1, 2021

Mr. John Lewis, P.E.
Public Works Director
City of Oregon City
P.O. Box 3040
625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045

Subject: Rate / SDC Benchmarking Study

Dear Mr. Lewis:

FCS GROUP is pleased to provide this proposal to perform a rate and system development charge (SDC) benchmarking study for the City of Oregon City. The following task plan would apply.

1. Project Kickoff. Meet with City staff first by teleconference to discuss the first cut of up to twenty cities (and key districts) to be included and the rates and charges to be compared. The following are key assumptions:
 - The comparison cities will include many in the Portland Metro area, and several similarly sized cities statewide.
 - The comparable rates will include rates for all of those services impacting Oregon City's residents and businesses: Water, Wastewater, Stormwater, Transportation, and Public Safety (others?).
 - The comparable system development charges will include all of those services impacting Oregon City's residents and businesses: Water, Wastewater, Stormwater, Transportation, and Parks.
 - The charges to be compared will be for a typical single family residence, and up to two sample commercial customers with agreed-upon common characteristics.
2. Commission meeting. FCS GROUP will meet with the Commission virtually to agree on the up to twenty cities to be compared and confirm the commercial customer types to be compared.
3. Research. FCS GROUP staff will research utility rates and SDCs in the up to twenty cities and compile comparable SDCs and monthly charges for all services and customer types agreed upon in task 1.
4. Documentation. FCS GROUP will summarize its findings in brief memorandum, featuring a table, or tables, formatted for easy inclusion in a PowerPoint presentation.
5. Presentation. FCS GROUP will present its findings to the Commission in an on-site meeting, or virtually if preferred.

We propose to perform this work, as described above, for no more than \$13,925. A detailed budget spreadsheet is provided following.

City of Oregon City Rate / SDC Benchmarking Study FCS GROUP Proposed Budget

	Principal <i>Ghilarducci</i>	Consultant	Support		
Hourly Rate ==>	\$270	\$145	\$90	Hours	Cost
1. Project Kickoff	2.0	4.0	2.0	8.0	\$ 1,300
2. Commission Meeting	2.0	3.0	-	5.0	975
3. Research	2.0	48.0	-	50.0	7,500
4. Documentation	2.0	8.0	-	10.0	1,700
5. Presentation	8.0	2.0	-	10.0	2,450
PROJECT TOTALS:	<i>Hours:</i> 16.0	65.0	2.0	83.0	
	<i>Cost:</i> \$ 4,320	\$ 9,425	\$ 180		\$ 13,925

We appreciate the opportunity to work with the City again on this project. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (425) 336-1865, or johng@fcsgroup.com, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
FCS GROUP



John Ghilarducci
President / Principal



CITY OF OREGON CITY

Staff Report

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-657-0891

To: City Commission
From: City Manager, Tony Konkol

Agenda Date: 11/9/2021

SUBJECT:

Discussion of the Mayoral Appointment Process to City Positions

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The report is information for Commission discussion and direction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

For at least the last two decades the practice in the City has been that the Mayor appoints the members for almost all City committees and positions, largely based on Section 20 of the Oregon City Charter. The Commission has now asked what limits there are on the Mayoral appointment power and whether the Commission as a whole may place limits or be required to be consulted as part of the appointment process.

BACKGROUND:

Please see attached memorandum dated November 3, 2021.

OPTIONS:

1. Discuss and provide direction to staff on how to proceed



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor Lyle-Smith and City Commission
FROM: Bill Kabeiseman
DATE: November 3, 2021
RE: Mayoral Appointment of City Positions

I. INTRODUCTION

For at least the last two decades the practice in the City has been that the Mayor appoints the members for almost all City committees and positions, largely based on Section 20 of the Oregon City Charter. The Commission has now asked what limits there are on the Mayoral appointment power and whether the Commission as a whole may place limits or be required to be consulted as part of the appointment process.

II. DISCUSSION

A. History and Practice.

Oregon City Charter Section 20 provides as follows:

“The mayor shall appoint the committees provided by the rules of the commission. He shall sign all records of proceedings approved by the commission. He shall have no veto power and shall sign all ordinances passed by the commission within three days after their passage. After the commission approves a bond of a city officer or a bond for a license, contract, or proposal, the mayor shall endorse the bond.”

It has been the practice of the City for the Mayor to appoint all members of city boards or committees; however, the Commission has placed some restrictions on the Mayor’s appointment authority in certain circumstances. A quick summary of the boards and committees found in the City code, including who appoints the members, and what qualifications must be held, can be found below:

- Planning Commission. OCMC 2.24.030 requires all members to be appointed by the Mayor, but limits the interests of the members of the Planning Commission, prohibiting more than two members “engaged principally in buying, selling or developing of real estate for a profit,” also prohibits more than two members “engaged in the same business, trade, or profession.”

Honorable Mayor Lyle-Smith and City Commission

November 3, 2021

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- Arts Commission. OCMC 2.26.020 requires all members to be appointed by the Mayor, but also requires that a certain numbers of members be “from a broad spectrum of citizens representing” certain types of arts and requires a certain number to “reside inside the city limits.”
- Historic Review Board. OCMC 2.28.020 requires all members to be appointed by the Mayor, but requires all members to “have a demonstrated interest, competence or knowledge of historic preservation.” also requires one member each from the Canemah and McLoughlin neighborhoods, as well as an architect and member of the chamber of commerce.
- Citizen Involvement Committee. OCMC 2,30.030 requires all members to be appointed by the Mayor and must consist of two members from each neighborhood association in the City. The process requires each neighborhood association to submit two nominees to the Mayor and, if a member selected by the neighborhood association is not selected, a reason must be provided to the neighborhood association.
- Joint Housing and Fire Appeals Board. OCMC 2.32.020 does not indicate who will appoint the members of the board, but requires certain expertise on the board, such as a fire official and an architect.
- Traffic Safety Board. OCMC 2.36.020 requires six members to be appointed by the Mayor, two members appointed by the School District, and one from the Community College. There are no other requirements for membership.
- Library Board. OCMC 2.44.030 does not identify who will appoint the members of the board, but requires certain residency requirements.
- Civil Service Board. OCMC 2.48.020 requires all members to be appointed by the Mayor and requires the membership to be two commission members and one lay citizen.

There are other boards and commissions that are part of the City, including the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, South Fork Water Board, as well as any number of other boards or committees that are not part of the City. The only situation in which the Mayor does not appoint board members is in the Traffic Safety Board, which allows the OCSD and CCC to appoint certain members.

B. Analysis.

The language in the Charter is fairly simple – “The mayor shall appoint the committees provided by the rules of the commission” – however, several ambiguities are contained within, or are unaddressed by, that sentence.

- The Charter does not explain which boards or committees are those “provided by the rules of the commission;” are they only committees created by the Commission through its rules? If so, what

Honorable Mayor Lyle-Smith and City Commission
November 3, 2021
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does that mean for other committees? Could the Commission create a committee, e.g., the Planning Commission and provide for an alternative method of appointment?

- May the “rules of the commission” require additional process and limit the choices by the Mayor? It appears that the Commission has already done so by setting some limitations on membership on some committees, such as requiring certain professions or residency in the City, as identified above.

In resolving those ambiguities, the Commission has some latitude in interpreting the language in the Charter. In cases such as *Fifth Avenue Corp. v. Washington Co.*, 282 Or 591, 599-600, 581 P2d 50 (1978), *Gage v. City of Portland*, 319 Or 308, 315, 877 P2d 1187 (1994), the courts have held that, while the courts retain ultimate authority over the interpretation of a charter, local governing bodies, as the “popularly elected local officials directly accountable to their constituency” will be given some deference as to their interpretation of a charter, provided it is not “clearly contrary to the express language and intent of the Charter.” *Id.* However, any interpretation should also be careful of upsetting existing rules and the instability that can be caused by failure to follow existing precedent. *See e.g.*, *Farmers Insurance v. Mowry*, 350 Or. 686, 688, 695–96, 261 P.3d 2, 2, 6–7 (2011) (discussing conflicting needs for flexibility and stability in considering previous decisions of the Oregon Supreme Court). Moreover, to the extent the Commission simply decreed a different method of appointment, nothing would prevent a future Commission from altering this approach.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Charter does not provide much guidance regarding appointments to boards or commissions other than the brief statement that “the mayor shall appoint the committees provided by the rules of the commission.” The City’s past practice has been for the mayor to have generally unfettered discretion in making those appointments. To the extent the Commission wants to change that practice and ensure that the Commission has some say in reviewing appointments, the best way would be to propose an amendment to the charter setting out how the appointment process will work. That said, minor adjustments to the procedure, such as consulting with the Commission in advance, would certainly be allowed.



CITY OF OREGON CITY

Staff Report

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-657-0891

To: City Commission
From: City Manager, Tony Konkol

Agenda Date: 11/9/2021

SUBJECT:

Discussion of Alternatives to the Current Method of Electing Commissioners to Fill Certain "Positions"

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The report is information for Commission discussion and direction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Under the Oregon City Charter commissioners are elected to the Commission to fill certain "positions." The Commission wants to explore alternative methods to elect commissioners, including a system that, when multiple commission positions are on the ballot, the two top vote-getters would be elected, rather than election by position.

BACKGROUND:

Please see attached memorandum dated November 3, 2021.

OPTIONS:

1. Discuss and provide direction to staff on how to proceed



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor Lyle-Smith and City Commission
FROM: Bill Kabeiseman
DATE: November 3, 2021
RE: Options to Elect Commission Members

INTRODUCTION

Under the Oregon City Charter (the “Charter”) commissioners are elected to the Commission to fill certain “positions.” The Commission wants to explore alternative methods to elect commissioners, including a system that, when multiple commission positions are on the ballot, the two top vote-getters would be elected, rather than election by position. The remainder of this memorandum will identify the City’s current system and suggest an alternative method.

To the extent the Commission is interested in exploring other alternative methods of selecting commission members, there are a variety of publications available online that identify different options and explain the strengths and weaknesses of those methods. Some of the resources include:

http://archive.fairvote.org/rcv/brochures/City_Council_Manual.pdf

<https://www.lwvwa.org/resources/Documents/Review%20of%20Election%20Methods%202-12-20.pdf>

Most of the options in that summary are beyond the scope of this memorandum, but it does make for interesting reading.

DISCUSSION

The current method for selecting commissioners is sometimes called “City-wide Designated Seats – plurality,” in that each seat is subject to separate elections, those seats are all selected by a city-wide vote, and the winner does not need to amass over 50% of the votes cast. This method was adopted by the voters of the City in May of 1990 and is set out in Sections 7 and 8 of the Oregon City Charter:

Section 7 – Commission.

In addition to the Mayor, the commission shall be composed of four commissioners elected from the city at large for terms of four years each. The term of office of each member in office at the date of amendments to this charter in May, 1990 shall continue until expiration; provided, however, that the term of city commission position number 5 shall cease as of

Honorable Mayor Lyle-Smith and City Commission
November 3, 2021
Page 2

January 2, 1991. At the 1990 general biennial election, two members shall be elected, and at the 1992 general biennial election, two members shall be elected, and in each case on each fourth year thereafter, a like number shall be elected. The term of office of each commissioner shall commence on the 2nd day of January after the election of that commissioner in the preceding November, unless such date shall fall on a legal holiday, in which case such term shall commence on the following day. No person shall be elected to the office of commissioner for more than two terms of four years in any ten year period.

Section 8 – Commissioners.

Each office of commissioner shall be designated by number. The city recorder shall assign a number to each of the four commission positions. The numbers so assigned shall be certified by the city recorder to the commissioner in office holding that position. One copy of the certification shall be sent to the county elections officer. In all proceedings for the nomination and election of candidates for or to the office of commissioner, every petition for nomination, declaration of candidacy, certificate of nomination or election, shall state the position number of the office to which the candidate aspires, and the candidate's name shall appear on the ballot only for the designated position. Each voter shall have the right to vote for only one candidate for each position on the commission, and the candidate for each position receiving the highest number of votes for such position shall be considered elected. No person may file for more than one position at any single election.

Any change to the current method of electing commissioners will have to be approved by the voters.

The method that the Commission has discussed is sometimes called “City-wide At-Large – plurality,” because each seat on the Commission is elected city-wide and not to represent a specific area or seat, and the winner need not amass more than 50% of the vote. This method is used by several nearby cities, including West Linn and Lake Oswego. Below is proposed charter language to replace the current City Charter Sections 7 and 8:

Section 7. Commission.

The Commission is composed of a Mayor and four Commissioners, all elected from the City at large.

Section 8. Commissioners.

For the 2022 general election and subsequent general elections in even numbered years, the ballot shall include a single list of candidates for commission seats. Electors may vote for up to the same number of candidates as there are seats open. The candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected to fill open seats for expired terms.

Those provisions will govern most situations; however, Section 32, regarding the filling of vacancies, presents an additional wrinkle. It currently provides as follows:

Section 32 – Filling of Vacancies.

Honorable Mayor Lyle-Smith and City Commission
November 3, 2021
Page 3

Vacant elective offices in the City shall be filled by appointment. A majority vote of the commission shall be required to validate the appointment. The appointee's term of office shall begin immediately upon his appointment and shall continue until the next general election and until a successor is duly elected and qualified to complete the unexpired or new term of office as applicable. During the temporary disability of any officer or during his absence temporarily from the city for any cause, his office may be filled pro tem in the manner provided for filling vacancies in office permanently.

Under the underlined language, if a vacancy occurs and the next general election would be the end of the term of the vacant office, there is no problem. However, if the “next general election” occurs only part-way through a term, the next general election could have three positions up for election. In such a situation, how would it be determined who takes the unexpired term, such that there would be two commission positions up for election at the next general election?

There are a variety of ways the Commission could handle this issue. For example, the Commission could change the language in Section 32 so that an appointed commissioner simply fills out the unexpired term of the vacant commissioner. Alternatively, the Commission could have the person with the third highest number of votes take the shortened-term position. Or there may other alternatives to deal with vacancies early in a term.

CONCLUSION

The basic framework to allow for the two highest vote-getting candidates as commissioners is fairly straightforward. There is an issue of how to deal with vacancies early in a term that needs further direction. To the extent that issue can be resolved, the Commission could adopt a resolution sending to the citizens of Oregon City the opportunity to reform how commissioners are elected.



The Center for
Voting and Democracy

6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 610 – Takoma Park, MD 20912

Phone: (301) 270-4616 – Fax: (301) 270-4133

Email: info@fairvote.org

Website: <http://www.fairvote.org>

This Manual is intended to assist Charter Review Comissions, city officials, and other community leaders in determining what electoral systems will best meet the needs and goals of their community. Given that no system can accomplish every goal, this manual will help you analyze the consequences of adopting one system over another and will aid you in comparing the features of various electoral systems.

Should you desire more information about any of the voting systems discussed within this manual, please do not hesitate to contact us.

City Council Election Methods

INTRODUCTION

The range of options that exists for electing a municipal government is broader than many people realize. Voting systems can have a striking impact on the type of candidates who run for office, how representative the council is, which candidates are elected, which parties control the city council, which voters feel well represented, and so on. This booklet is intended to aid in the evaluation of possible city council election methods in order to ensure that the election method is determined by conscious choice, not inertia. A separate companion booklet, **Mayoral Election Methods**, deals with the selection of an executive.

A summary of this booklet can be found in the city council election method evaluation grid at Page 11.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING CITY COUNCIL ELECTION METHODS

It is important to recognize from the outset that no election method is perfect. Enhancing electoral performance in one area will sometimes weaken it in another. Choosing an election method requires setting priorities for various criteria and making trade-offs. Depending on your criteria, some election methods are far superior to others.

This first section sets forth 18 criteria for evaluating a city council election method. Most people will agree that all are real concerns, although they may disagree about their relative importance. In the following section 19 different election methods are scored on a scale from -2 to +2 on how well they perform on each of the criteria. The assigned scores necessarily contain an element of subjectivity, and it should not be assumed, for example, that a score of +2 is precisely twice as good as a +1.

1. Voter Choice
2. Competitive Races
3. Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems
4. Minimizing Wasted Votes
5. Majority Rule
6. Representativeness
7. Minority Inclusion
8. Resistance to Gerrymandering
9. Opportunity to Serve
10. Constituent Connection
11. Accountability
12. Balancing Stability and Responsiveness
13. Balancing Neighborhoods and the City
14. Issues Focused Campaigns
15. Manageable Campaign Costs
16. Ease of Voter Use
17. Voter Participation
18. Ease of Administration

1. VOTER CHOICE

Different election methods will encourage different numbers of candidates to run, and will thus impact the level of choice which voters have in choosing a city council. An election method should encourage enough candidates to compete in order for voters to feel they have real choices. Some voters will see any two candidates as representing a real choice, while others will see those same candidates as merely “Tweedle-Dum and Tweedle-Dee.” Some voters are motivated by the desire to vote defensively and block a candidate they oppose, while others participate only if there is a candidate who they admire and find inspiring. It is impossible to set an optimum number of candidates. A single choice is clearly not sufficient, but the effort to become informed about huge numbers of candidates may be daunting for some voters. As consumers, voters are able to choose among a wide range of automobiles or toothpaste brands, and consequently having only two options at the polls can seem inadequate. Election methods that encourage very large numbers of candidates generally have to rely on slates or political party labels to help guide voters.

2. COMPETITIVE RACES

Different election methods can increase or decrease the likelihood of competitive races. A wide field of candidates does not guarantee competition if most of the candidates have no chance of winning. In some systems, knowledge of past voting patterns can be used to predict a winner even before candidates are announced. A competitive race is one in which it cannot be assumed which candidate will win, and voters genuinely believe their votes might make the difference in the outcome. Methods with few competitive races shift the real selection process to the nomination procedure. This may be more or less transparent (nomination by primary, party caucus, petition, etc.), and involves significantly fewer voters.

3. PREVENTING “SPOILER” AND “SPONGE” PROBLEMS

Under some systems, the mere presence of a minor additional candidate may reverse or “spoil” the outcome of an election by splitting the majority vote. The risk that by voting for a favorite candidate, a voter might actually help elect the candidate the voter most disapproves of, frustrates many voters. Election methods with this “spoiler” problem are also open to intentional manipulation through the recruiting of candidates purely in order to capture some of the opposition vote. In some multi-seat systems, having too *few* candidates in a slate can also result in undemocratic defeats, as supporters’ remaining votes may go to candidates in an opposing slate. Such systems encourage filling slates with token “sponge” candidates to soak up stray votes of supporters.

4. MINIMIZING WASTED VOTES

The adjective “wasted” is not used judgmentally. The term is employed by political scientists to describe “votes that are not necessary to elect a candidate.” For example, in a winner-takes-all race, if Candidate A wins with 53% of the vote and Candidate B receives 47% of the vote, those 47% were “wasted.” In multi-seat systems, “wasted” votes can also refer to surplus votes above the winning threshold received by a winning candidate that could have gone to elect another candidate preferred by those voters. Under this definition, winner-take-all election methods result in at least half of all voters casting wasted votes, while many proportional methods have drastically lower rates of vote-wastage. In such systems most voters manage to elect at least one of their favorite candidates. Methods that produce many wasted votes discourage participation and undermine voters’ sense of ownership of government.

5. MAJORITY RULE

Majority rule is a fundamental principle of representative government. The principle can be applied both to individual races and to the makeup of the council as a whole. Ironically, most of the election methods used in the United States do not actually

adhere to this principle. Plurality elections, “spoilers,”^{Item 4.} gerrymandered districts can allow a minority of voters to overwhelm the majority. In a good election system the constituency that is a majority of the voting population should elect a majority of the council, as well as the executive.

6. REPRESENTATIVENESS

In a statement that applies equally well to the election of a city council as to that of Congress, John Adams, the second president of the United States, wrote:

“The principal difficulty lies, and the greatest care should be employed in constituting this representative assembly. It should be in miniature an exact portrait of the people at large. It should think, feel, reason and act like them. That it may be the interest of the assembly to do strict justice at all times, it should be an equal representation, or, in other words, equal interests among the people should have equal interests in it.”

This principle can apply to partisan elections, and non-partisan elections alike. Imagine a city where 60% of voters favor group A and 40% favor group B. Some election methods would tend to create a council in which 100% of the seats are filled by group A councilors, while other methods would tend to create a council where 60% of the seats are filled by group A councilors and 40% are filled by group B, more accurately reflecting the electorate.

A representative election method will assure not simply that the majority rules, but also that other substantial parties or groups get a voice on the council with a share of seats in rough proportion to their percentage of support among the voters. Voters feel well represented when they have helped elect a councilor who votes as they would. Voters who fail to elect a candidate of their choice may not feel represented at all.

7. MINORITY INCLUSION

This criterion is related to “representativeness” but primarily applies to groups, such as racial or linguistic minorities, not

necessarily represented by a political party or similar civic organization. “Descriptive representation” can provide both important symbolic and substantive improvements in representation of minorities. Some election methods allow for the creation of “majority-minority districts” designed to facilitate minority victories. Yet, these can reduce the overall representativeness of a council, as surrounding districts may be captured by the opposition party. The federal Voting Rights Act is intended to protect certain racial, ethnic and linguistic minorities from election methods that dilute their ability to elect representatives of their choice, although the Act is generally not interpreted to mandate proportional outcomes.

8. RESISTANCE TO GERRYMANDERING

To maintain roughly equal ratios of residents to councilors in the face of demographic shifts, election methods that divide a city into districts must periodically adjust district boundaries. The smaller the size of the district, the more prone the election method is to strategic manipulation through packing or splitting of like-minded voters. The result of gerrymandering is not just partisan advantage for one side, but also frequently the predominance of “safe” one-party districts without meaningful competition. U.S. Supreme Court rulings prohibit using race as a primary factor in drawing district boundaries, either for enhancing or thwarting minority election opportunities, but partisan and incumbent protection considerations are allowed.

9. OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

Ideally, a resident with the qualities necessary to be a good city councilor should have some chance to be elected, regardless of the neighborhood he or she lives in. Some election methods create “orphaned” voters and candidates, living in districts where a candidate of their party can never win, even if there is plenty of support city-wide. The community loses when high-caliber candidates are denied opportunity to serve on the council.

10. CONSTITUENT CONNECTION

Does the election method encourage voters to feel a connection to one of their city councilors, such that they feel comfortable contacting him or her, and confident that their opinions will be taken into consideration if they do so?

11. ACCOUNTABILITY

Elections are supposed to give voters the chance to hold elected officials accountable for their performance. It is important that the electorate have genuine choices and a viable alternative to the incumbent. However, gerrymandered “safe” seats, strong incumbency protection, and a lack of alternative candidates with any chance of winning, can reduce or eliminate accountability. Systems that promote “safe” seats and weak accountability can allow the election of low-caliber candidates, merely because they are of the “right” party.

12. BALANCING STABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

While criterion 11 refers to individual councilors, this related criterion refers to the council as a whole. Stability and responsiveness are opposing, yet desirable characteristics that ideally should counter-balance each other. Having either one in excess can be problematic. With too much stability, a city government becomes ossified and voters become apathetic. With too much responsiveness, tiny changes in public opinion may result in wide swings in governance and public policy, undercutting long-term planning. The balance is also affected by factors unrelated to the choice of election method. Having staggered or very long terms decreases responsiveness, but may also increase stability. While a single election may result in a switch of partisan control of a council, evidence overwhelmingly indicates that when federal, state, and city council seats come up for election at one time, mass turnovers that could threaten institutional memory almost never occur, with or without staggered terms.

13. BALANCING NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE CITY

It is significant that different neighborhoods have fair representation in municipal election systems, since city governments control the geographic distribution of resources (parks, road repairs, etc.). Yet tight neighborhood districting can foster a parochial balkanization where neighborhoods are set against each other, thus forfeiting a citywide perspective. Election methods that encourage domination by one party per district can be particularly problematic since they can create a dynamic where none of the councilors of a particular party have concern about the needs of residents in districts in which that party can't win any seats. Some election methods allow parties to essentially write off certain parts of the city. Ideally, every party (though not necessarily every councilor) should have an interest in appealing to voters in all neighborhoods. To achieve a good compromise, some cities use several multi-seat districts, rather than a single, citywide district.

14. ISSUES FOCUSED CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns in many cities are sometimes reduced to character assassinations. Election methods can reward negative campaign strategies, or alternatively encourage a focus on policy issues. When campaigns revolve around policy debate, the public not only gets to choose a city's direction at that moment, but also they become better informed about underlying issues, and consequently able to make judgments about policy choices that arise in the future. Campaigns that revolve around personalities do little to steer the city or prepare voters to assess future policy choices that may arise.

15. MANAGEABLE CAMPAIGN COSTS

Campaign costs should be manageable rather than minimal. Any system where candidates have little incentive to spend the money necessary to make the public aware of their positions on important issues is undesirable. Uncontested races, for instance, would ensure that costs were as low as possible, but would be unsatisfactory for this reason. On the other hand, excessively costly campaigns can exclude qualified candidates who lack

access to money. Contrary to many people's assumptions, sn Item 4.
districts are not necessarily correlated with lower campaign costs. Some election methods using larger multi-member districts can encourage the sharing of costs among a slate of candidates, and actually result in lower expenditures per candidate than single-seat districts.

16. EASE OF VOTER USE

Voter effort is increased by methods requiring voters to evaluate a high number of candidates or understand a complex ballot. Some election methods are also less intuitive than others, and may require more voter education, especially as new voters, unfamiliar with a city's election method, vote for the first time. However, just as a person can use a telephone without understanding the wiring and electronics inside, real-world experience suggests none of these election methods are at a level of complexity that voters can't readily learn to use them. Many voters in jurisdictions with more involved election methods actually prefer them. Thus, greater ease of use should not be confused with greater voter satisfaction.

17. VOTER PARTICIPATION

Voter participation or "turnout" is an important indicator of a democracy's health. The United States ranks near the bottom – 139th among nations of the world – in voter turnout in national elections. Turnout in municipal elections is even lower – dipping into single digit percentages in many U.S. cities. Voter turnout is closely correlated with the incentives created for political groups to mobilize their supporters and with voters' perceptions of whether or not their votes are important, meaningful, and effective. How important an election is (electing a dog-catcher vs. a president, or a figure-head mayor vs. a powerful mayor) is not affected by the election method. However, election methods can determine how "meaningful" and "effective" a citizen's vote is, and consequently can influence voter participation.

An "effective" vote in political science terms is one cast for a winning candidate. Voters who always vote for candidates who lose often give up participating. In a non-competitive district

consistently won by candidates of a particular party, however, even an “effective” vote may not be “meaningful.” A “meaningful” vote is one where the outcome of an election may actually depend on whether the voter participates. For example, a race with only a single candidate, or where everyone can correctly predict a landslide winner, does not encourage participation since voters may not feel their vote is “meaningful.” Voter turnout is greatly influenced by how well an election method satisfies the criteria above.

18. EASE OF ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

All else being equal, election methods that are simpler and less costly to administer are better. But it is rarely the case that all else is equal. While election administrators naturally tend to elevate this criterion to a paramount position, policy makers should resist the temptation to defer to their preferences. If better, more democratic election methods involve more preparation or effort on the part of those conducting the election, this may be a worthwhile trade-off. Campaigns in many cities are sometimes reduced to character assassinations. Election methods can reward negative campaign strategies, or alternatively encourage a focus on policy issues. When campaigns revolve around policy debate, the public not only gets to choose a city’s direction at that moment, but also they become better informed about underlying issues, and consequently able to make judgments about policy choices that arise in the future. Campaigns that revolve around personalities do little to steer the city or prepare voters to assess future policy choices that may arise.

ELECTION METHODS

This section describes a range of election methods that can be used for electing a city council. This analysis does not deal with certain other variables that can have an impact on election of a city council, such as partisan vs. nonpartisan elections, modes of nomination, and city manager vs. mayoral systems. It should also be noted that some of these election methods may be combined (for example, having some at-large seats elected by cumulative voting, with other seats elected from single-member districts with runoffs).

The election methods described in the next section can be classified into three broad categories. Election methods 1-9 are “winner-take-all” methods, 10-13 are “semi-proportional” methods, and 14-19 are “full representation,” also called “proportional” methods.

1. Single-Member District - plurality (SMP)
2. Single-Member District - majority - separate runoff (SMR)
3. Single-Member District - majority - instant runoff (SMI)
4. City-wide At-Large - plurality (CAP)
5. City-wide Designated Seats - plurality (CDP)
6. City-wide At-large- majority by separate runoff (CAR)
7. City-wide Designated Seats - majority by runoff (CDR)
8. Multi-Member Districts - plurality (MDP)
9. Mixed (at large and districts) - plurality (MXP)
10. Cumulative - At-Large (CUA)
11. Cumulative - Multi-Member Districts (CUD)
12. Limited - At Large (LAL)
13. Limited - Multi-Member Districts (LMD)
14. Choice - At-Large (CHA)
15. Choice - Multi-Member Districts (CHD)
16. Optional Party - Multi-Member Districts (OPD)
17. Party List - Open (PLO)
18. Party List - Closed (PLC)
19. Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

A brief explanation and analysis of these 19 options according to the criteria outlined above follows. There is a summary table at the centerfold of this booklet. Item 4.

1. Single-Member District - plurality (SMP)

This is the most common election method in the United States. Cities are divided into electoral districts, and only voters living in a given district may vote for the candidates, who must also reside within the district. Whichever candidate receives the most votes in a district is declared the winner, even if that candidate received less than 50% of the votes cast. As dealt with here, SMP covers elections in which a single seat is up for election at a time in each district, even if the district has more than one seat, with staggered terms (and thus is not literally “single-member.”) New York City is an example of a city that uses SMP.

1. **Voter Choice** (-2) Due to a combination of safe seat gerrymandering and concern about the spoiler-effect of having more than two candidates, SMP tends to restrict voter choice, with single candidate elections being commonplace.
2. **Competitive Races** (-1) Either through natural division along neighborhood boundaries, or as a result of intentional gerrymandering SMP elections tend to result in limited choices and few competitive races, although occasional political or demographic shifts result in brief periods of competitive contention in given districts. Occasional spoiler situations can also create unexpectedly competitive races.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (-2) Whenever more than an optimal number of candidates who appeal to the same constituency run, there is a risk of a spoiler dynamic.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (-2) SMP generally produces the highest ratio of wasted votes of any method. Since a candidate can win with less than half the votes, it often happens that a majority of voters waste their votes.
5. **Majority Rule** (-2) Since candidates can win with less than half the votes under SMP, gerrymandering and/or spoiler scenarios allow a minority of voters to defeat the will of the majority, both within a district and city-wide.
6. **Representativeness** (-1) SMP is not designed to reflect all views within a given district or entire community. Instead, the largest block of voters can win a disproportionate share or even sweep 100% of the seats.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (0) Minority candidates may win when district boundaries are drawn favorably (so long as the minority is geographically concentrated), or as a result of a spoiler scenario, but this is not assured by SMP. Ironically, the creation of so-called “majority-minority districts” may allow the election of minorities but also actually reduce the overall

representativeness of a council as the surrounding districts become safe seats for an opposing party.

8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (-2) SMP is particularly vulnerable to manipulation through gerrymandering.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (-2) Candidates from across the city will serve, but ‘orphaned’ candidates who would be superior councilors but happen to live in unfavorable districts are essentially precluded from serving on the council.
10. **Constituent Connection** (0) Many people assume single-member districts encourage a strong connection between councilors and constituents, because the small geographic area increases the chances for personal contact. While this is partially true, it is frequently counter-balanced by the fact that a substantial portion of the electorate (even a majority in the case of a multi-candidate race) may strongly oppose the winning candidate, and feel no connection at all.
11. **Accountability** (-2) As a result of gerrymandering (and homogeneous neighborhoods) SMP tends to create safe-seat fiefdoms with incumbents in most districts rarely threatened by voter accountability.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-1) With a preponderance of gerrymandered safe seats, SMP tends to be overly stable. However, because of the winner-take-all nature of this method, relatively small shifts in public support can occasionally result in dramatic shifts in council makeup. This periodic hyper-responsiveness of SMP is rather crude – more akin to the suddenness of an on or off light switch, than a gradual dimmer switch.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-2) SMP can fuel inter-neighborhood battles over access to city resources. Candidates tend to be rewarded for parochialism over “big picture” perspective.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (-1) Because SMP tends to have single candidate or two candidate races, personality-focused campaigns and personal attacks are more likely than under other many other methods.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (+2) The overall cost of campaigning is generally modest due to the small number of voters needing to be mobilized, and the low number of candidates.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+1) SMP is one of the simplest election methods. The only difficulty is that some voters face a quandary about whether to vote for a favorite candidate, or a less preferred choice who may have a better chance to defeat a strongly opposed candidate.
17. **Voter Participation** (-1) For reasons discussed above, SMP generally has low voter turnout. With some districts having little or no competition, overall city turnout is reduced even if some districts have hotly contested races with relatively high turnout.
18. **Ease of Administration** (+2) SMP is among the simplest systems to administer, with the only complexity being the number of different ballots that are required.

2. Single-Member District - majority - separate runoff (SN Item 4.)

This method is the same as SMP, except that if a winning threshold of 50% is not surpassed, the top two candidates in a district face off in a subsequent runoff election. Another variant treats the first round of voting as a primary to reduce the field to just two finalists for the subsequent round of voting. SMR does *not* include election methods that set a winning threshold lower than 50%. Cities where a runoff only occurs if no candidate gains more than 40% of the vote, for instance, resemble SMP more than SMR, except for being somewhat harder to administer. Examples of cities using SMR are Los Angeles, and Chicago.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Because SMR alleviates the spoiler concern, more candidates are willing to offer themselves than under SMP.
2. **Competitive Races** (-1) Although the “spoiler” disincentive is removed, encouraging more candidates to run, gerrymandering or simple demographics tends to minimize truly competitive races. The elimination of the spoiler dynamic may result in a more crowded and competitive first round, and a non-competitive runoff.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (+2) Runoffs are designed to eliminate the spoiler dynamic, allowing split majorities to coalesce on a single candidate in the runoff.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (-1) SMR produces somewhat fewer wasted votes than SMP.
5. **Majority Rule** (0) While better than SMP due to the fact that the winner in each individual district must earn a majority vote, gerrymandering can still allow a minority of voters city-wide to defeat the will of the majority.
6. **Representativeness** (-1) Same as SMP.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (-1) Minority candidates may occasionally win under SMR if there are favorable district boundaries (and if the minority is geographically concentrated). However, gerrymandering often undercuts this possibility.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (-2) Same as SMP.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (-2) Same as SMP.
10. **Constituent Connection** (0) Same as SMP.
11. **Accountability** (-2) Same as SMP.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-1) Same as SMP.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-2) Same as SMP.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (-2) Separate runoff elections often generate extreme negative campaigning.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (-1) Because of the need to raise money for a second election quickly, campaign costs are particularly high under SMR.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (-2) SMR essentially doubles the effort required under SMP (when a runoff is needed). Many voters fail to vote in one of the two elections.

17. **Voter Participation** (-2) Because of the need for voters to turn out for a second election, SMR is even worse than SMP in terms of voter turnout for one or the other of the two elections required.
18. **Ease of Administration** (-2) SMR can double the cost and effort of administering elections compared to SMP.

3. Single-Member District - majority - instant runoff (SMI)

This is the same as SMR except that the runoff occurs at the same time as the original election. Rather than selecting a single candidate, voters rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate is the first choice of at least 50% of the voters, a runoff count can be conducted using the rankings on each ballot so that a separate election is unnecessary. The candidates with the fewest votes are eliminated (either sequentially, or in a batch) and the votes that they gained are redistributed in accordance with the voters' lower-ranked choices until one candidate has won a majority of the vote. San Francisco, CA has recently adopted this method.

- 1 **Voter Choice** (+1) Same as SMR.
- 2 **Competitive Races** (-1) Same as SMR.
- 3 **Preventing "Spoiler" and "Sponge" Problems** (+2) Same as SMR.
- 4 **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (-1) Same as SMR..
- 5 **Majority Rule** (0) Same as SMR.
- 6 **Representativeness** (-1) Same as SMP and SMR.
- 7 **Minority Inclusion** (-1) Same as SMR.
- 8 **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (-2) Same as SMP and SMR.
- 9 **Opportunity to Serve** (-2) Same as SMP and SMR.
- 10 **Constituent Connection** (0) Same as SMP and SMR.
- 11 **Accountability** (-2) Same as SMP and SMR.
- 12 **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-1) Same as SMP and SMR.
- 13 **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-2) Same as SMP and SMR.
- 14 **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Because candidates want both to distinguish themselves from multiple candidates, and to seek second preferences from supporters of other candidates, SMI tends to favor less negative campaigning and more issues-based campaigns.
- 15 **Manageable Campaign Costs** (+2) Same as SMP.
- 16 **Ease of Voter Use** (0) While less burdensome than SMR, SMI requires extra thought and attention due to the use of a ranked ballot.
- 17 **Voter Participation** (0) Since the spoiler problem is eliminated, and there is only a single election, SMI encourages higher voter turnout than SMP and SMR.
- 18 **Ease of Administration** (0) SMI is simpler than SMR (just one election), but more complicated than SMP due to the need to tally rank-order ballots.

4. City-wide At-Large - plurality (CAP)

Under this system, all city voters vote for all of the seats up for election. The candidates with the highest vote totals win the seats, whether or not they have support from 50% of the voters. Cities using this method include Cincinnati, OH and Detroit, MI.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) With so many seats up for grabs, more voters are likely to find candidates they can enthusiastically support. However, the winner-take-all nature of CAP can often still discourage candidates from minority perspectives from even entering the race.
2. **Competitive Races** (-1) While strategic use of "bullet voting" can create some unpredictability, the dominant group generally wins all, or nearly all seats.
3. **Preventing "Spoiler" and "Sponge" Problems** (-2) In addition to the usual spoiler dynamic of SMP, CAP also can cause undemocratic outcomes if *fewer* than the optimal number of candidates appealing to a given constituency run. When there are too few candidates in a slate, supportive voters may give their remaining votes to the least objectionable candidates in the opposing slate, resulting in the edging out of a preferred candidate in the favored slate. The mathematics of multi-seat plurality voting encourages the recruitment of so-called "sponge" candidates to fill out a slate.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (-2) Like SMP, CAP generally produces a high ratio of wasted votes. CAP adds an additional wrinkle, in that many voters "bullet vote," – that is they don't use all of the votes to which they are entitled – to strategically help favored candidates. Such withheld votes are essentially the same as wasted votes since they are thrown away and do not go to winning candidates.
5. **Majority Rule** (0) Although minority candidates may win some seats (or in rare cases even a majority of seats!) if too many candidates supported by the dominant group split the vote (the spoiler issue), as long as the number of the dominant constituency nominees is suitable, the dominant group can generally win a sweep of all seats.
6. **Representativeness** (-1) CAP is similar to SMP, but potentially even less representative as 100% sweeps by the dominant party or group are more likely.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (-2) Minority candidates are unlikely to win seats under CAP. For this reason, some cities using this method have been subject to Voting Rights Act lawsuits. A city may be forced to abandon this method if a class of voters protected under the Voting Rights Act can show a dilution of their voting strength.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+2) CAP is not subject to gerrymandering.

9. **Opportunity to Serve** (-1) Because CAP makes it difficult for any candidate from a minority constituency to win a seat, entire segments of society are essentially precluded from serving on council. However, candidates of the dominant group can win regardless of which neighborhood they reside in.
10. **Constituent Connection** (-2) CAP tends to have among the weakest connections between councilors and their constituents, both because of sheer numbers and the fact that substantial minorities (or even majorities) may feel that none of the councilors really represent them.
11. **Accountability** (0) Councilors who alienate too many of their previously supportive constituents may be subject to replacement. However, city-wide incumbency and name recognition make defeat unlikely. Further alienating minority constituents can be risk-free.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-2) Similar to SMP, except there is somewhat greater risk of a complete removal of incumbents in a hyper-responsive reaction to a modest swing of voter sentiment. Though the likelihood is small, it means that staggered terms seem warranted in the case of CAP.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-2) In communities using CAP, most councilors often come from a few neighborhoods, with other areas having little or no representation.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (0) Thematic and slate campaigns are common, and can allow a somewhat greater focus on policy than on personal attacks. Crowded fields of candidates, however, may put an undue emphasis on mere “name recognition” campaigns.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (-1) The overall cost of campaigning is relatively high due to the large number of voters needing to be mobilized to achieve a winning threshold, and the large field of candidates in which it is necessary to stand out. However, party-based team or slate campaigning can moderate this in many cases.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+1) CAP is fairly simple except that there is a risk of accidental over-voting (unless the voting machine prevents such errors).
17. **Voter Participation** (0) For the reasons discussed above, CAP generally has modest voter turnout.
18. **Ease of Administration** (+2) CAP is possibly the simplest method to administer, with a single ballot design for the entire city.

5. City-wide Designated Seats - plurality (CDP)

This is identical to CAP except for the fact that candidates declare for designated seats. The candidate for each seat with the highest vote count wins, even if that is less than 50% of the vote. The designated seats may simply be numbered seats, or may have geographic designations with the candidates being required to live in a particular area of the city. This differs from a district system in that all voters in the city vote for all of the seats, rather than just those voters residing in a certain district. Cities that use CDP include Seattle, WA, Austin, TX, and Tucson, AZ.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Same as CAP.
2. **Competitive Races** (-1) Same as CAP.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (-2) Same as SMP.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (-2) Same as SMP.
5. **Majority Rule** (-2) Same as SMP.
6. **Representativeness** (-1) Same as CAP.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (-2) Same as CAP.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+2) Same as CAP.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (-1) Same as CAP.
10. **Constituent Connection** (-2) Same as CAP.
11. **Accountability** (+1) Because gerrymandering is not possible, and challengers can target individual incumbents, it is somewhat easier to hold councilors accountable under CDP than under SMP or CAP.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-2) Same as CAP.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-2) Same as CAP. Cities that require candidates to live in specific neighborhoods create only an illusion of neighborhood sensitivity. The fact that these councilors are elected by all city voters, and can win even if every resident in “their” district opposes them, means they aren’t necessarily representative of those neighborhoods.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (-1) Same as SMP.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (-1) Same as CAP.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+1) Similar to SMP, except the large number of races each voter participates in requires them to gather more information. Some voters are also frustrated when they are forced to choose between two candidates that they like in one race, while in another they disapprove of all of the candidates.
17. **Voter Participation** (0) Same as CAP.
18. **Ease of Administration** (+2) Same as CAP.

CITY COUNCIL ELECTION METHOD PERFORMANCE SCORES		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Item 4.
		S M P	S M R	S M I	C A P	C D P	C A R	C D R		M D P	M X P	C U A	C U D	L A L	L M D	C H A	C H D	O P D	P L C	P L O	M M P
1	Voter Choice	-2	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1		+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1
2	Competitive Races	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	+1	+1		-1	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2
3	No “Spoiler” or “Sponge” Problem	-2	+2	+2	-2	-2	+2	+2		-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	+2	+2	+1	+2	+2	0
4	Minimizing Wasted Votes	-2	-1	-1	-2	-2	-1	-1		-2	-2	0	0	0	0	+2	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2
5	Majority Rule	-2	0	0	0	-2	+2	+2		0	-1	0	0	0	0	+2	+2	-1	+2	+2	+2
6	Representativeness	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-2	-2		-1	-1	+1	+1	0	0	+2	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2
7	Minority Inclusion	0	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2		-1	-1	+1	+1	0	0	+2	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1
8	Resistance to Gerrymandering	-2	-2	-2	+2	+2	+2	+2		-2	-1	+2	0	+2	0	+2	+1	0	+2	+2	+1
9	Opportunity to Serve	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-1	-1		-1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	0	0	+1
10	Constituent Connection	0	0	0	-2	-2	-2	-2		0	-1	+1	+2	0	+2	+1	+2	+2	-2	-1	+2
11	Accountability	-2	-2	-2	0	+1	0	+1		0	-1	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	+1	-1	+1	+1
12	Stability vs. Responsiveness	-1	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2		-1	-2	-1	-1	-1	-1	+2	+2	+1	+2	+2	+2
13	Neighborhood vs. City Balance	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2		-1	+1	-1	+1	-2	+1	-1	+2	+2	-1	-1	+2
14	Issues Focused Campaigns	-1	-2	+1	0	-1	0	-2		+1	0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1
15	Manageable Campaign Costs	+2	-1	+2	-1	-1	-2	-2		+1	0	-1	+1	-1	+1	0	+2	0	+2	0	0
16	Ease of Voter Use	+1	-2	0	+1	+1	-2	-2		+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-1	0	+2	+2	+2	+2
17	Voter Participation	-1	-2	0	0	0	-2	-2		0	0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+1	+1	+1
18	Ease of Administration	+2	-2	0	+2	+2	-2	-2		+1	+1	0	0	+2	+2	-1	-1	+1	+2	+1	+1

6. City-wide At-Large - majority by separate runoff (CAR)

CAR is the same as CAP except that there is a winning threshold of 50%. If 7 seats are up for election, and 2 seats remain unfilled in the first election because only 5 candidates surpassed the majority threshold, then typically a runoff election is held in which the top 4 un-elected candidates vie for the remaining 2 seats. Scottsdale, AZ uses a form of CAR.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Same as SMR.
2. **Competitive Races** (+1) The elimination of the spoiler disincentive and gerrymandered safe seats results in more competition. This competition, however may be limited to contests within the dominant group.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (+2) Same as SMR.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (-1) Same as SMR
5. **Majority Rule** (+2) The majority is assured of controlling the council.
6. **Representativeness** (-2) CAR creates a homogenous council with election of any seats by candidates from a second party or group unlikely.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (-2) The CAR majority requirement makes it very hard for any candidates outside the dominant group to win any seats. Only widespread bullet voting may allow minority inclusion.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+2) Same as CAP.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (-1) Same as CAP.
10. **Constituent Connection** (-2) Same as CAP.
11. **Accountability** (0) Same as CAP.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-2) Same as CAP.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-2) Same as CAP.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (0) Same as CAP.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (-2) CAR can result in even more expensive campaigns than CAP, having all of the challenges of CAP plus the added cost of quickly raising funds for a separate runoff election.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (-2) The effort required of the voter is doubled in each case where a runoff is called.
17. **Voter Participation** (-2) Same as SMR.
18. **Ease of Administration** (-2) Whenever an election goes to a runoff, the work and cost involved in administering the election essentially doubles.

7. City-wide Designated Seats majority by separate runoff (CDR)

CDR is the same as CDP except that each seat requires a 50% winning threshold, with a runoff between the top two candidates declared for each seat remaining unfilled from the first round election. This is essentially the same as the variant that treats the first round of voting as a “primary” to reduce the field to just two finalists for the subsequent round of voting.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Same as SMR and CAR.

2. **Competitive Races** (+1) Same as CAR.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (+2) Same as SMR.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (-1) Same as SMR.
5. **Majority Rule** (+2) Same as CAR.
6. **Representativeness** (-2) Same as CAR.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (-2) Same as CAP.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+2) Same as CAP.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (-1) Same as CAP.
10. **Constituent Connection** (-2) Same as CAP.
11. **Accountability** (+1) Same as CDP.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-2) Same as CAP.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-2) Same as CDP.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (-2) Same as SMR.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (-2) Same as CAR.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (-2) Same as CAR.
17. **Voter Participation** (-2) Same as SMR and CAR.
18. **Ease of Administration** (-2) Same as CAR.

8. Multi-Member Districts - plurality (MDP)

MDP is similar to SMP except that more than one seat per district is filled at a time. Only voters residing within a district vote can vote for candidates running from that district, and the candidates with the most votes are elected to fill the number of seats that are open. In some varieties of MDP, different seats may have different terms, with the top vote-getters getting the longer terms. (MDP should not be confused with councils that are elected from multi-seat districts with staggered terms, where only one seat per district is filled in a given election. Such a system functions like SMP.)

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Same as CAP.
2. **Competitive Races** (-1) Same as CAP.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (-2) Same as CAP.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (-2) Same as CAP.
5. **Majority Rule** (0) MDP is somewhere between SMP and CAP. With larger districts, manipulation through gerrymandering is more difficult but still possible. Spoilers are also still a danger.
6. **Representativeness** (-1) Same as SMP.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (-1) Minority candidates can have a chance to win seats under MDP if districts are drawn favorably. However, since the majority ultimately draws the district boundaries this is not assured.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (-2) MDP is still subject to gerrymandering.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (-1) Because MDP makes it difficult for any candidate from a minority constituency within a district to win a seat,

entire segments of society are essentially precluded from serving on council.

- 10 **Constituent Connection** (0) Same as SMP
- 11 **Accountability** (0) Councilors who alienate their core constituents may be subject to replacement. However, further alienating minority constituents is essentially risk free.
- 12 **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-1) Similar to SMP.
- 13 **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-1) With larger geographic districts than SMP, MDP is somewhat less parochial, though still often lacking a true citywide perspective.
- 14 **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Thematic and slate campaigns are common, allowing a somewhat greater focus on policy than on personal attacks.
- 15 **Manageable Campaign Costs** (+1) The overall cost of campaigning is moderate, especially when party-based or slate campaigns work in tandem with one another.
- 16 **Ease of Voter Use** (+1) Same as CAP
- 17 **Voter Participation** (0) Same as CAP.
- 18 **Ease of Administration** (+1) MDP is a fairly simple method to administer.

9. Mixed - At-Large and Districts - plurality (MXP)

MXP has some at-large council seats voted for on a citywide basis, and other council seats filled by voters in single-member districts. In this account, only the plurality case is considered (top vote-getters are elected, regardless of whether the 50% threshold is passed). However, a combination of district and city-wide seats can be used with a variety of election methods, such as majority runoff, limited, cumulative, choice, etc. An evaluation of those other election methods can be found under the pure example of each below. Boston is an example of a city using MXP.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Same as CAP
2. **Competitive Races** (-1) Same as CAP
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (-2) Same as CAP.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (-2) Same as CAP
5. **Majority Rule** (-1) Although the dominant group will generally win a majority or all seats on the council, gerrymandering within districts along with the spoiler dynamic sometimes allows majority will to be defeated.
6. **Representativeness** (-1) Same as SMP.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (-1) Inclusion generally depends on “majority-minority” district seats.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (-1) While somewhat better than SMP since the at-large seats are not subject to gerrymandering, district seats

may still be gerrymandered and be decisive in determining control council.

9. **Opportunity to Serve** (+1) A resident is not automatically precluded from winning a seat due to living in the “wrong” neighborhood, because both the district and the at-large routes to election are available. However, candidates from minority groups often do not have an opportunity to serve.
10. **Constituent Connection** (-1) MXP shares the characteristics of SMP and CAP, and is thus ranked between the two.
11. **Accountability** (-1) MXP shares the characteristics of SMP and CAP, and is thus ranked between the two.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-2) Same as CAP.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (+1) MXP is supposed to provide a balance. However, the party with control of the council has no incentive to pay attention to neighborhoods in which their candidates can’t win.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (0) Same as CAP.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (0) The cost of campaigning depends on whether a citywide or district seat is sought. High spending for the citywide seats may also ratchet up the spending for district races to achieve visibility.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+1) Same as CAP.
17. **Voter Participation** (0) Same as CAP
18. **Ease of Administration** (+1) MXP involves running two kinds of elections at once, but since both are simple, the score is still positive.

10. Cumulative - At-Large (CUA)

In a multi-seat election each voter has as many votes as there are seats to be filled. With CUA, however, each voter is allowed to distribute his or her votes as desired – either one per candidate, or more than one vote for fewer candidates, or even all votes for just one candidate. For example, if three seats are open, a voter might give one vote to each of three candidates, or two votes to one and one vote to another, or all three votes to just one candidate. Cumulative voting complies with the “one-person, one-vote” requirement as all voters have equal voting strength. Cumulative voting has been used to settle several Voting Rights Act lawsuits because it allows minority voters to pool their votes, so avoiding a total shutout from the representative body. Over 80 jurisdictions in the U.S. use cumulative voting. The system is also used by many stock corporations to assure minority shareholders have an opportunity for representation. One variant of cumulative voting deserving special consideration is the form used in Peoria, Illinois. Rather than placing a certain number of marks next to candidates’ names to indicate the number of votes given, the voters simply place a single mark next to their chosen number of candidates. In a three-seat election, if a voter marks three candidates, they each

get one vote. If the voter marks one candidate, that candidate automatically gets all three votes. If the voter marks two candidates, each gets one and a half votes. This variant of cumulative voting has much to recommend it since the risk of spoiling one's ballot by over-voting is largely eliminated. It is the Peoria variant of cumulative voting that is scored here.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Voters choose between multiple candidates, and also get to decide how to apportion their votes. However, strategic use of CUA encourages limiting nominations to avoid spreading a group's votes to wide and thin. Depending on the nomination procedure, there is even some risk of reaching a equilibrium where each group nominates exactly the number of seats they are likely to win, thus restricting voter choice.
2. **Voter Competitive Races** (+1) CUA ensures almost all races are competitive, though the possibility of equilibrium mentioned in criterion 2 may reduce competition.
3. **Preventing "Spoiler" and "Sponge" Problems** (-2) If a constituency spreads their votes between too many candidates, they may fail to elect candidates who would have won if fewer similar candidates had run.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (0) Minority voters are *not* consigned to casting wasted votes, unless too many of their candidates run and split the vote. However, overly popular candidates may receive far *more* votes than needed to win. Such votes are also wasted, since had those voters known their favorite candidate would win, they could have given their votes to alternate choice candidates, so electing more councilors they approve of.
5. **Majority Rule** (0) The majority group is likely to elect a majority of the council. However, if too many candidates of the dominant group face off, or votes are overly cumulated onto too few star candidates, it is possible for a minority to elect a majority of the council.
6. **Representativeness** (+1) CUA is superior to all of the preceding methods in allowing a fully representative council. However, representativeness depends on parties or slate groups coordinating nominations or voting cumulation.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (+1) CUA is superior to all of the preceding methods in allowing inclusion of minority candidates on the council. The success of minority candidates, however, depends on coordinating nominations or voting cumulation.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+2) Same as CAP.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (+2) High caliber candidates from any part of the city, and from both dominant and minority groups are able to win seats.
10. **Constituent Connection** (+1) Many voters will have a favorite candidate who they successfully helped elect. The connection is less likely to be based on geography than on policy or group commonality. The citywide magnitude, however, limits how much attention each constituent may receive.
11. **Accountability** (+1) An alienated group of constituents can defeat an incumbent by not concentrating their votes on that candidate next time.

However, there is a risk that this may split the vote and inadvertently elect a candidate the alienated voters consider to be even less desirable. Item 4.

12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-1) CUA tends to create a stable government-returning incumbent, with or without the equilibrium described in criterion 2 and 3. However, dissatisfaction among a group of voters can result in additional nominations, bringing the spoiler dynamic into play, and so swinging the council away from a responsive direction.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-1) CUA does not guarantee neighborhoods representation, unless like-minded voters who cumulate votes happen to be geographically concentrated.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) CUA tends to promote group-endorsed slates, which frequently put issues at the center of campaigns. With greater voter choice, moreover, personal attack campaigns are of less benefit to candidates. However, personal loyalty and individual candidate campaign strategy for cumulating votes can result in internal party divisiveness, rather than team efforts around a common platform.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (-1) Same as CAP.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+1) CUA with Peoria-style voting ranks the same as CAP. The open-ended variant of cumulative voting has a higher risk of over-vote spoiled ballots and would rank 0 or -1. To be used effectively, CUA requires organized voters who nominate appropriate numbers of candidates.
17. **Voter Participation** (+1) Since both dominant and minority groups have the possibility of electing representatives, participation is enhanced.
18. **Ease of Administration** (0) The vote tabulating procedure is more involved than many other methods. Continuing voter education on how to use cumulative voting is necessary.

11. Cumulative - Multi-Member Districts (CUD)

This is the same as CUA, except that there are multiple districts with multiple seats. Voters within each district use cumulative voting to fill the seats from their district.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Same as CUA.
2. **Competitive Races** (+1) Same as CUA.
3. **Preventing "Spoiler" and "Sponge" Problems** (-2) Same as CUA
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (0) Same as CUA.
5. **Majority Rule** (0) Same as CUA.
6. **Representativeness** (+1) Same as CUA.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (+1) Same as CUA.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (0) While gerrymandering is not impossible, its effectiveness for manipulating results is limited due to the semi-proportional nature of the election method.

9. **Opportunity to Serve** (+2) Same as CUA.
10. **Constituent Connection** (+2) CUD has both the connection described in CUA as well as a neighborhood scale benefit.
11. **Accountability** (+1) Same as CUA.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-1) Same as CUA.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (+1) More than one party will have an interest in serving every neighborhood.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Same as CUA.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (+1) Same as MDP.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+1) Same as CUA.
17. **Voter Participation** (+1) Same as CUA.
18. **Ease of Administration** (0) Same as CUA.

12. Limited - at large (LAL)

In a multi-seat election each voter is granted a number of votes smaller than the number of seats to be filled. For example, if there are seven seats to be elected, each voter might be allowed only five votes, or perhaps just one vote. LAL is a system intended to discourage a 100% homogeneous council and allow at least some seats to be filled by minority parties and groups. Strategic coordination of the number of nominations is usually necessary for any minority success with LAL however, since the spoiler problem still exists. Philadelphia is an example of a city using LAL within a mixed at-large and district system.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Same as CUA.
2. **Competitive Races** (+1) Same as CUA.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (-2) Same as CAP.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (0) Similar to CUA.
5. **Majority Rule** (0) Same as CUA.
6. **Representativeness** (0) This score depends on the ratio of seats to permitted votes per voter. For example with five seats to fill, if each voter gets three votes, the second party has a good chance of winning a seat or two, and a score of 0 is achieved. With a single vote per voter, a party with support from about one fifth of the electorate can expect to win one of the five seats, and the score would rise to +1.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (0) Typically, only very large minorities (such as the number two political party) have access to inclusion. Inclusion of minority councilors depends largely on the number of votes granted to each voter compared to the number of seats. The smaller the number of votes granted to each voter, the greater the chance that minority candidates may win some seats.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+2) Same as CUA.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (+2) Same as CUA.
10. **Constituent Connection** (0) Since most voters are able to elect at least one councilor with whom they agree, LAL scores higher than CAP.

11. **Accountability** (+1) Same as CUA.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-1) Same as CUA.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-2) Similar to CAP.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Similar to CUA.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (-1) Same as CUA and CAP.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+1) Same as CAP.
17. **Voter Participation** (+1) Same as CUA.
18. **Ease of Administration** (+2) Same as CAP.

13. Limited - Multi-Member Districts (LMD)

This is the same as LAL except that there are multiple districts with multiple seats, and voters from within the district use limited voting to fill the seats from their district.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Same as CUA.
2. **Competitive Races** (+1) Same as CUA.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (-2) Same as CUA
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (0) Similar to CUA.
5. **Majority Rule** (0) Same as CUA.
6. **Representativeness** (0) Same as CUA.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (0) Same as LAL.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (0) Same as CUD.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (+2) Same as CUA.
10. **Constituent Connection** (+2) Same as CUD.
11. **Accountability** (+1) Same as CUA.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (-1) Same as CUA.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (+1) Same as CUD.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Same as CUD.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (+1) Same as CUD.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+1) Same as CAP.
17. **Voter Participation** (+1) Same as CUA.
18. **Ease of Administration** (+2) Same as SMP.

14. Choice - at-large (CHA)

Choice voting (also called “single transferable vote” or STV) is a form of limited voting in which voters maximize their vote’s effectiveness through ranking choices. In consequence, like-minded groups of voters are assured of representation in rough proportion to their share of the electorate. The vote tallying procedure is complicated to describe, but the voters’ task is reasonably simple. Voters rank candidates in order of preference, putting a “1” by their

first choice, a "2" by their second choice and so on. Voters can rank as few or as many candidates as they wish. A voter's lower choice will never count against the chances of a higher choice. To determine winners, the number of votes necessary for a candidate to earn office is calculated as $1/(\text{number of seats} + 1) + 1$. In a race to elect three seats, for instance, the winning threshold would be one vote more than 25% of the vote, since no more than three candidates could ever reach this threshold. After counting first choices, candidates who have attained the winning threshold are elected. To minimize the number of wasted votes, "surplus" ballots beyond the threshold are transferred to remaining candidates according to voters' next-choice preferences. After transferring surplus ballots, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. All of his or her ballots are distributed among remaining candidates according to voters' next-choice preferences. This process continues until all seats are filled. A simple computer program can handle the count, although in many places it is done by hand. Choice voting has been used in over 20 U.S. cities at one time or another. Cambridge (MA) has used it since 1941.

1. **Voter Choice** (+2) The absence of any spoiler dynamic, and the opportunity for minority inclusion removes most impediments to potential candidates.
2. **Competitive Races** (+1) Ballots with large numbers of candidates can hinder challengers, as name recognition can be very important. However, there is normally intense competition for the final seats.
3. **Preventing "Spoiler" and "Sponge" Problems** (+2) There is no spoiler issue as the votes of like-minded voters that are initially split among similar candidates will eventually re-coalesce through the vote tabulation process.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (+2) There are very few wasted votes since both the surplus votes of winners and otherwise wasted votes of certain losers get transferred to possible winners. The majority of voters see a candidate to whom they gave support elected.
5. **Majority Rule** (+2) A majority will elect a majority of council seats.
6. **Representativeness** (+2) Each significant party or slate can expect to elect a share of seats roughly proportionate to its level of support among the voters. If a party has support from 60% of the voters, that party can expect to win about 60% of the seats, and a party with 20% support can expect to win about 20% of the seats. The more seats up for election the closer the proportionality.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (+2) Candidates from minority groups can win a share of council seats in proportion to their support within the population, regardless of how many similar candidates split the vote.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+2) Same as CAP.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (+2) Same as CUA.
10. **Constituent Connection** (+1) Same as CUA.

11. **Accountability** (0) It is hard for a challenger to target a par Item 4. councilor for removal. Each councilor is elected by a relatively small segment of the community. Councilors have an interest in being faithful to that base, but can't be sure exactly who voted for them. Since the election is citywide, and incumbency brings name recognition, it is harder for that original core to hold the successful candidate accountable.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (+2) CHA behaves like a dimmer switch, with gradual changes in council make-up reflective of changes in the electorate.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-1) While it is possible for a candidate to win a seat by campaigning only in a selected neighborhood, most successful candidates will gain support from throughout the city. Some neighborhoods may feel slighted.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Personal attacks can easily backfire (losing alternate preferences from other candidates' supporters), so negative campaigning is avoided. Endorsement slates bring an issues focus to campaigns. However, the need for first preference votes can encourage campaigns around personal loyalty, rather than common platform. Intra-party rivalry can develop.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (0) Although the campaign is citywide, the total number of votes needed to win is a tiny fraction of a typical citywide election. A greater reliance is placed on mobilizing a candidate's core support than on appealing to the non-political swing voters, who drive up the cost of campaigns in plurality and majority election methods.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (-1) While experience shows that ranking candidates is a simple task for voters to learn, the sheer number of candidates to evaluate (even though ranking additional candidates can be optional) in a city-wide CHA election poses a challenge to some.
17. **Voter Participation** (+2) The high scores on the criteria above combine to promote higher voter participation with CHA.
18. **Ease of Administration** (-1) Ongoing voter education is required, as new voters will typically be unfamiliar with rank-order ballots. If a hand-count is used, the labor for tabulating results can be several times that of a plurality election. However, optical scanner or touch screen voting machines with a simple computer program can alleviate that labor cost.

15. Choice - Multi-Member Districts (CHD)

This is the same as CHA except the city is divided into multi-member districts of between three and ten seats per district. The population per district can vary as long as the number of seats corresponds to the population.

1. **Voter Choice** (+2) Same as CHA.
2. **Competitive Races** (+1) Same as CHA.

3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (+2) Same as CHA.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (+1) Similar to CHA, but a smaller number of seats means that not as many voters will elect their choice.
5. **Majority Rule** (+2) Same as CHA.
6. **Representativeness** (+1) similar to CHA, except the smaller number of seats per election means rougher proportionality and that smaller parties or slates will have less chance of victories.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (+1) While minority candidates are assured a chance for election, the smallest minority groups able to win seats under CHA will lose out under CHD.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+1) Gerrymandering is almost pointless since both majority and minority parties are virtually certain to win seats in every district regardless of where boundaries are drawn.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (+2) Same as CUA.
10. **Constituent Connection** (+2) Same as CUD.
11. **Accountability** (+1) Same as CUD.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (+2) Same as CHA.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (+2) All parties have an interest in voters throughout the city and from all neighborhoods, and each district is assured a voice on the council.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Same as CHA.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (+2) The total number of votes needed to win a seat is very modest. Candidates can target supportive constituents within the neighborhood rather than expensive to reach non-political swing voters.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (0) the number of candidates to evaluate and rank is smaller than under CHA.
17. **Voter Participation** (+2) Same as CHA.
18. **Ease of Administration** (-1) Same as CHA.

16. Optional Party - Multi-Member Districts (OPD)

OPD is a form of limited voting in which each voter has a single vote that he or she can cast for a single candidate in a multi-seat election, or for a party slate of candidates. As with CHA, a winning threshold is calculated based on the number of seats and votes cast. Candidates who exceed the winning threshold are elected. There is no ranking of candidates, so candidate-votes are not transferred. However, votes cast for a party slate are automatically distributed to whichever candidate of that party is closest to reaching the winning threshold based on the candidate-votes received. Voters who feel they know enough about the individual candidates to support a favorite can vote for that candidate, while voters who don't feel they have that level of information, or who wish to support whichever candidate of a particular party can use their help the most, have the option of picking a party instead of a candidate.

Independent candidates can be elected on the strength of individual can votes or as part of an ad hoc independent slate. Item 4.

1. **Voter Choice** (+2) Similar to CHA with the added option of choosing a party.
2. **Competitive Races** (+2) The competition for the final seats is always intense.⁰
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (+1) Similar to CHD, except dependent on wide use of party vote option.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (+1) While similar to CUD, the party vote option allows more votes that would otherwise be wasted on losers or as surplus for winners, to instead go to other possible winners. If enough voters cast party votes the number of wasted votes can be reduced to CHD levels.
5. **Majority Rule** (-1) Same as CUD.
6. **Representativeness** (+1) OPD is superior to LMD because each voter has a single vote and wasted votes are reduced by use of the optional party vote.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (+2) Minorities identified with a particular party (such as Republicans in a strongly Democratic city) can win seats. Other minorities can win seats even as independents due to the limited vote.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (0) Same as CUD.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (+2) Same as CUD.
10. **Constituent Connection** (+2) Same as CUD.
11. **Accountability** (+1) If a councilor's core supporters feel alienated, they may unseat that councilor by voting for an alternate choice. This can have the magnified effect of also transferring those ballots cast for the party slate rather than any individual candidate.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (+1) Similar to CHD, OPD is both stable and responsive, except the slightly greater possibility for wasted votes can result in unexpected shifts from election to election.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (+2) Same as CHD.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Parties' strategic interest in promoting party slate votes tends to generate a focus on issues and party platform. However, candidates themselves have a strong interest in stressing their individual character, rather than common platform.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (0) OPD encourages party-organized team-effort slate campaigns, but individual candidates still seek to win hard-to-reach swing voters, which is more expensive.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+2) Voters can select either a favorite candidate or party, and so can comfortably vote based on the level of information they feel they have about the candidates.
17. **Voter Participation** (+2) Similar to CHA. Even voters who don't feel they know enough about the individual candidates can feel good about participating by making a party choice.

18. **Ease of Administration** (+1) Administration is simple, except it requires a subsequent mathematical operation to apportion the party slate votes to determine which candidates will be successful.

17. Party List - Closed (PLC)

Each party (or ad hoc slate) nominates a list of candidates, who are placed in order of priority (for example by a caucus, convention or primary). Voters select a party or slate, rather than individual candidates. The council seats are filled from the lists in proportion to the share of votes each party or slate receives. This is among the most common election methods in Europe and South America.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) Voters choose a party rather than a candidate. At least two choices are available (unlike SMP, for example), but more voter choice depends on having more parties to choose among.
2. **Competitive Races** (+2) The fully proportional nature of PLC assures that every election will be competitive as to the number of seats held by each party, though not necessarily as to which party will have control of the council.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (+2) PLC has no spoiler dynamic.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (+2) The fully proportional nature of PLC assures that nearly every vote will contribute to the election of a desired councilor.
5. **Majority Rule** (+2) The majority of voters are assured of electing a majority of council seats. If no party has majority support among the electorate, majority coalitions will form for council votes.
6. **Representativeness** (+2) Each significant party or slate can elect a proportionate share of seats.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (+1) While independent minority candidacies are possible, minorities not incorporated into party slates do not have as good a chance of winning seats. However, parties have an interest in incorporating minorities.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+2) Same as CHA.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (0) Independent candidates are at a disadvantage.
10. **Constituent Connection** (-2) Voters cannot select individual candidates, and the list order for each party slate is established prior to the election. In lieu of a councilor to constituent connection, PLC relies on a party to constituent connection.
11. **Accountability** (-1) Individual councilors are not held accountable so much as the party slate as a whole is. PLC promotes a party system accountable to its platform, rather than individual constituencies.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (+2) Same as CHA.

13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-1) Same as CHA.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+2) PLC campaigns are about issues, rather than personalities.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (+2) Parties win most of their seats based on their core voters, who do not require much spending to turn-out. The expensive-to-reach swing voters only determine which party will get the marginal seats. Thus, effective campaigns can be mounted at low expense.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+2) The simplest ballot possible, since it doesn't even need candidate names.
17. **Voter Participation** (+1) While nations using list election methods have much higher voter participation than those using winner-take-all systems, this is closely related to having numerous parties to choose from. In a country such as the U.S., with an extremely narrow range of parties and many voters alienated from the parties, such high participation cannot be assumed. However, new political parties existing only in that particular city might be expected to form.
18. **Ease of Administration** (+2) The simplest election method to administer.

Item 4.

18. Party List - Open (PLO)

Each party (or independent slate) nominates a list of candidates. Each voter selects one favorite candidate from their preferred party or slate. Each voter's vote counts effectively for both the individual candidate and the party or slate that candidate belongs to. The candidates from each party or slate are placed in an ordered list for each party or slate according to how many votes each candidate received. The council seats are filled from the lists in proportion to the overall share of votes all candidates from a party or slate received. Thus if candidates of party A received 60% of all votes cast, that party will fill 60% of the council seats taking from their list in the order each candidate was placed on the party list by the voters.

1. **Voter Choice** (+2) Depending on number of parties contending.
2. **Competitive Races** (+2) Same as PLC.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (+2) Same as PLC.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (+2) Same as PLC.
5. **Majority Rule** (+2) Same as PLC.
6. **Representativeness** (+2) Same as PLC.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (+1) Same as PLC.
8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+2) Same as PLC and CHA.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (0) Same as PLC.

10. **Constituent Connection** (-1) Some councilors may have a stronger connection to the party than to their constituents.
11. **Accountability** (+1) Individual candidates are accountable to their core voters (who can defeat the councilor by selecting a different candidate from the same party). However, candidates are less accountable to party voters and their party platform than under PLC.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (+2) Same as PLO and CHA.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (-1) Same as PLO and CHA.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Same as OPD.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (0) Same as OPD.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+2) PLO is extremely simple.
17. **Voter Participation** (+1) Same as PLC.
18. **Ease of Administration** (+1) Same as OPD.

19. Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

Sometimes called the German system, MMP combines single seat districts (elected by plurality or instant runoff) for some council seats, with a citywide party list system for other council seats. Voters get both a candidate vote for their district and a party vote for additional citywide seats. Depending on how closely the district results mirror the citywide party vote, additional council seats are created and filled from the party lists so that every party has a total number of seats roughly proportionate to popular votes. Thus the size of the council may be adjusted as needed to assure proportionate results.

1. **Voter Choice** (+1) There will always be meaningful choices. The district races may offer narrow choices, while the choices in the party races depend on the number of parties contending.
2. **Competitive Races** (+2) Even if there is not a competitive race in a given district, the party vote is always competitive.
3. **Preventing “Spoiler” and “Sponge” Problems** (0) The spoiler dynamic, and thus the voter dilemma, persists if plurality voting is used for the district seats. However, this is compensated for in terms of overall council make-up by the supplemental seats that are based on party votes. Use of separate or instant runoff voting for district seats would raise this score to +2.
4. **Minimizing Wasted Votes** (+2) Even if a voter wastes his or her district vote, the party vote compensates and is rarely wasted.
5. **Majority Rule** (+2) Same as CHA.
6. **Representativeness** (+2) Same as PLC.
7. **Minority Inclusion** (+1) Same as PLC.

8. **Resistance to Gerrymandering** (+1) Although the districts c Item 4. gerrymandered, there is little incentive to do so, since the additional party seats will compensate.
9. **Opportunity to Serve** (+1) Parties can draw qualified candidates from any part of the city, and independents from locally dominant groups can win district races. However, minorities outside the party structure are effectively excluded.
10. **Constituent Connection** (+2) Voters can contact either a district councilor (for local concerns) or a party councilor for broader policy concerns.
11. **Accountability** (+1) District councilors can be targeted for removal. These councilors are more accountable to their local constituency, while party seat councilors are more accountable to the party and its platform.
12. **Balancing Stability and Responsiveness** (+2) Same as CHA.
13. **Balancing Neighborhoods and the City** (+2) Same as CHD.
14. **Issues Focused Campaigns** (+1) Same as OPD.
15. **Manageable Campaign Costs** (0) Same as OPD.
16. **Ease of Voter Use** (+2) Voters vote both for a district seat and a party.
17. **Voter Participation** (+1) Voters who favor any of the contending parties have an incentive to participate, as do those with competitive district races.
18. **Ease of Administration** (+1) Same as OPD.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

A useful exercise might be to assign weighted values (from 0 to 10) to the criteria based on how important you feel each is in your city. For example, you might decide that “opportunity to serve” is of no concern and give it a weight of zero, that “ease of administration” is of some importance and give it a weight of three, that “majority rule” is critical and give it a weight of ten and so on. Next, multiply the assigned weight for each criterion by the performance scores in the different areas (from -2 to +2) for the election methods listed in the table at the center of this booklet. Once each weighted criterion has been multiplied by the performance score for a particular method, these products can be added together so that a total score for that method is arrived at. Some election methods will likely end up with negative totals and others with positive ones -- with the highest positive score being the best election method, according to the values of the person or group carrying out the exercise.

SOME ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Q. Doesn't the nomination process also have a major impact on the election process?

A. Yes. A wide variety of nomination options exist including gathering petitions, party caucus, and primary elections. However, the pros and cons of the various options are beyond the scope of this booklet.

Q. What about partisan vs. nonpartisan elections - is one system inherently better than the other?

A. No. Studies have found only slight differences in terms of impact on representation. In the United States the prevalence of one system or the other is primarily a result of regional differences and local custom. Most cities using partisan elections are in the Eastern United States, while nonpartisan elections are typical in the Western U.S. Even cities using nominally nonpartisan elections frequently have candidates trumpeting their partisan endorsements in any event.

Q. I've heard Israel and Italy cited as examples of full representation functioning poorly. Does full representation cause unstable governments, or give undue power to small parties?

A. No. The majority of governments elected using full representation are stable and moderate, with small parties playing a "junior" role. Italy and Israel have unique characteristics that make them exceptions. Full representation is the norm among many developed democracies that exhibit no such problems. Most countries using full representation (unlike Israel) require a substantial level of support to win seats, and do not experience Israel's or Italy's political turmoil. Problems mistakenly attributed to full representation are typically the result of a parliamentary system (as distinct from full representation), where the executive

is chosen by the legislative branch and can "fall" when a coalition party withdraws its support. Direct popular election of the executive (president of mayor) avoids this dynamic. Item 4.

Q. Our city currently uses staggered terms to prevent wholesale replacement of councilors and loss of institutional memory. Is this an important precaution?

A. No. City council elections generally have a lower rate of incumbency return than the overwhelmingly high rates for state and federal Houses of Representatives. Yet according to a national study 85% of incumbent city councilors who seek re-election are victorious. The rate of incumbency return under *all* election methods, even winner-take-all election systems, is very high. Institutional memory is hardly endangered, regardless of whether council seats are filled by staggered or simultaneous elections.

For more information visit:
www.fairvote.org

A Review of Various Election Methods

Updated February 2020

PREFACE

A major focus of the League of Women Voters of Washington is the continuing health of our democracy, including elections at all levels of government. Our work is based on discussion and consensus, coming to specific positions. On the issue of election methods, our applicable positions include:

- Support of state election laws allowing for more options for alternative election methods in governmental jurisdictions at both the state and local levels;
- Support of adoption of election methods that produce proportional representation when electing representative government bodies such as councils, legislatures and Congress.

At the turn of the 21st century, the League examined major alternatives of election methods used in western democracies and came to the above positions, which continue to address election methods well. That was nearly 20 years ago so the focus of this report is research and a report to bring up to date the information on election methods in use or under consideration for use in various places in 2020. Our goal, as always, is continuing education of League members, our elected officials and the public.

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Introduction

How should we choose our representatives?

In a representative democracy, citizens govern themselves through their elected representatives—a few are elected to make decisions for many. The tradition of democratic and republican institutions in western civilization dates back 2600 years, starting in city states such as Athens and Rome. Over time, people have tried many different ways of choosing those representatives. The question for today is whether we in Washington have the most effective way of choosing, and whether our laws should make it easier for governmental jurisdictions to experiment with other voting methods.

There are many ways to choose a representative. An election method or system (see adjacent box) defines the rules by which the choices or preferences of voters are collected, tallied, aggregated, and interpreted to obtain the results of an election. One such method, plurality voting, is the oldest of the modern age and is used in one-fourth of the countries of the world, including the United States, where it is used almost universally.

Yet, there are indicators that something is amiss with elections in the United States, and the public is becoming increasingly aware of our system's failings:

- Our country has one of the lowest rates of voter participation in the democratic world, there are numerous complaints about lack of choice among candidates and parties, and there is considerable distortion between votes cast and seats gained, often due to gerrymandering.
- Our election method draws legislative district boundaries that tend to reinforce a two-party system, and a disproportionately low percentage of women, minorities, and ethnic groups are elected to office.
- Small changes in the popular vote can produce huge swings in party representation.
- In Washington, if you vote with the majority in your district, you have representatives in Olympia who share your political views; otherwise you have none.

Most of the democratic world, however, uses other systems, and increasingly alternatives are under consideration in various parts of the United States, including in Washington, as preferable from numerous points of view.

The purpose of this report is to present in detail a number of voting methods in use or under consideration for use to help ensure that our elected officials better reflect their constituents' wishes and interests and, in the process, discourage gerrymandering.

This report also discusses gerrymandering, summarizes the laws that affect Washington's voting methods, provides a note on voting equipment required. In the appendix, besides a glossary and lists of resources, we include a description of the relationships between various voting methods and an example of criteria used in evaluating election systems.

Some commentators define an "election method" narrowly as a way of voting and counting the results. They define an "election system" more broadly to include how voters are registered and who may be registered, and often include standards for voting and tabulating equipment. Because many commentators use "election methods" and "election systems" interchangeably, this report will do so as well.

The Election Methods

Single-Winner Election Methods

- In these systems there is a single winner to represent a district or to fill a single position representing the district.
- They are often characterized as elections with single-member districts.
- These are all non-proportional. That is, the percentage of seats held by a political perspective or party in a legislative body may have no relationship to their percentage of the popular vote.

Single-winner voting systems include plurality, approval, score or range, and single-winner ranked choice (instant runoff) voting methods.

Plurality Voting

General Description

- Plurality voting is the prevailing method in the United States. It is a single-winner system, with representatives from single-member districts or single positions within a district. Election results are non-proportional.
- It is also known as first-past-the-post or winner-take-all

How It Works

- Each voter has a single vote.
- Here is a sample plurality election ballot filled out:

You have one vote	
Write an X beside the candidate that you prefer.	
RASPBERRY	
PEACH	
BLUEBERRY	X
ORANGE	

- The candidate with the most votes wins (with a plurality, not necessarily a majority).

- A common variation requires that the winner have a majority. To achieve this, a separate runoff election must be held between the top two candidates if neither had a majority in the initial election.
- Note: In Washington, in effect, the initial election is the top-two primary, the ‘runoff’ is the general election.

Where Used and For How Long

The plurality voting method is the second most frequently used form of election for national legislatures after the various forms of proportional representation.

It has been in use in the United States for electing members of the House of Representatives since the country’s formation. The Constitution (Art. I, Sec. 4) allows the state legislatures to set the “time, place, and manner” of the elections to the House and the Senate, unless Congress intervenes. Over the years, many states used this power to elect all or part of their congressional delegations at large. Since 1967, federal law has required that members of the House be elected from single-member districts.

With few exceptions, elections at all levels in Washington state, whether statewide, by district, by position, or at large, are plurality elections.

In England the plurality voting system was used to elect the House of Commons from 1295 to 1801, and the method has continued to the present as the House of Commons governs Great Britain. India adopted this method in 1952 for their lower house, and Kenya in 1992 for the lower house of their parliament.

Strengths

- Plurality voting is easily understood by the populace, and accepted because familiar.
- Like the other methods, it is easily adapted for machine counting.
- Depending on the ballot design, it can be error proof.
- It works well when there are only two parties or only two candidates to choose from. In such a scenario, the winner will necessarily receive more than 50 percent of the votes cast.
- Unlike some methods, approving a candidate cannot hurt that candidate’s chances, and not voting for a candidate will not fail to hurt that candidate’s chances.

Weaknesses

- When there are more than two candidates, the winner may not receive a majority of the votes and thus not be a true representative of their constituency.
- In Washington it is common for several members of a city council or county council to be elected at once and to be elected citywide or countywide. In such a system, voters from the majority perspective can succeed in electing all the members up for consideration, leaving a

significant minority of voters without representation. In an extreme case, 51% of the voters could obtain 100% of the representation. For the excluded 49% of voters the experience can reduce faith in the voting method.

- When there are more than two candidates, voters may be drawn to vote “strategically”. Their vote will then not reflect their true views on which candidate would best represent their views.
- Like other single-winner methods, the system is vulnerable to partisan gerrymandering.
- Since the drawing of the lines around a single-member electoral district inherently encloses a certain composition of voters, the creation of single-member districts for plurality elections inevitably influences election results even without partisan intervention – just as it does for other methods that elect one member per district.
- A slight change in voters’ views (for example, from 49% to 51%) may produce a reversal in which party has power and a reversal in policy. Conversely a large change in voters’ preferences (for example, from 20% to 40%) can result in no change in representation or policy.
- Because of the top-two primary, these weaknesses do not appear in the general elections in Washington state, but do come into play in the primaries.

Conflicting Opinions and Two-Edged Swords

- The plurality method tends to exaggerate legislative majorities for the winning party. For example, during the Thatcher years in England, the Conservatives commonly obtained 40% of the popular vote while gaining 60% of the seats in Parliament. Some commentators view this tendency as an advantage, since it means the legislature will be capable of decisive action. Others question the desirability of this tendency on at least two grounds:
 - It means that the legislature does not reflect the strength of the various political views in the electorate in proportion to their prevalence, and is to that extent unrepresentative. Its “decisive action” may run roughshod over the desires and interests of a majority of the voters.
 - It also means that a slight change in voters’ preferences (and a change in which party has the majority) can produce marked changes in policy from one election to the next.

Approval Voting

General Description

- Approval voting is non-ranking and non-proportional (although some scholars have devised a way to obtain proportional representation among multiple winners).
- It is most commonly used in single-winner elections.

How It Works

- Voters may vote for (“approve”) as many candidates as they wish. The method does not allow for distinguishing among the candidates approved.
- Here is a approval election sample ballot filled out:

You have four votes	
Write an X beside each candidate that you favor.	
RASPBERRY	
PEACH	X
BLUEBERRY	X
ORANGE	

- The candidate with the most approvals wins.

Where used and for how long

Approval voting was used for centuries to elect the Catholic pope (1294 to 1621), and was used in many USSR and Eastern European elections. It was used to elect the first four presidents of the United States, and was used in Greece during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In recent years, approval voting has been used for internal political party elections in some states and used to make ballot question decisions in some countries. In 1990, Oregon successfully used approval voting in a statewide advisory referendum on school financing, which presented voters with five different options and allowed them to vote for as many as they approved of.

Other than that, no governments have used approval voting for elections as of 2019. In 2018, the voters of Fargo, North Dakota, voted to use approval voting in elections of city officials beginning in 2020.

Currently, approval voting is used to elect the United Nation secretary-general, and is used by various scientific and engineering societies and by some other smaller groups.

Strengths

- Approval voting is simple for the voter to understand.
- The ballot is simple to design, to implement and to audit.
- The method may give otherwise invisible candidates more accurate and clear reflection of support.
- Unlike some methods, approving a candidate cannot hurt that candidate’s chances, and not

voting for a candidate will not fail to hurt that candidate's chances.

- Approval voting minimizes a decrease in voter satisfaction in unusual electoral situations when minor anomalies do occur.

Weaknesses

- If used in its single-winner form, approval voting will be vulnerable to gerrymandering.
- It's possible that two or more candidates will receive more than 50% of the vote or that no one will receive as much as 50%.
- There is no way to indicate the voter's favorite when the voter votes for more than one candidate.
- Approval voting strongly favors candidates who are perceived as most electable, basically allowing the media to sway who can win, as can happen in plurality voting.

Conflicting opinions and two-edged swords

- Some commentators emphasize that it opens the way for minority candidates and third parties. Others assert that it favors centrist, consensus candidates and discourages third parties.
- Some commentators point out that voters can express their sincere views in this method. Others show that if voters do vote sincerely, they will be vulnerable to vote-splitting and the spoiler effect. These commentators note further that to avoid vote-splitting, voters may organize for bullet-voting (voting only for one candidate) a form of strategic voting.

Score or Range Voting

General Description

- Score voting is a single-winner method that is non-ranking and non-proportional.

How They Work

- In **score voting** voters rate candidates on a scale (typically 0-5 or 0-10). Voters may give the same rating to more than one candidate.

- Here is a sample score voting ballot filled out:

Opposite each candidate write an X to score that candidate from 0 (Don't Support) to 5 (Strongly Support)						
You may give two or more candidates the same score. Leaving a candidate's line blank will count as a score of 0. Scores will be added together and the candidate with the most total points will be the winner.						
	DON'T SUPPORT					STRONGLY SUPPORT
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Raspberry					X	
Peach						X
Blueberry					X	
Orange	X					

- Depending on the specifics of a given method, the scores are added up or averaged, and the candidate with the highest total or average score wins. The ballot above uses the highest total score method.
- Range voting** is similar, except the voter may assign any number, including fractions or decimals, to a candidate, as long as it is within the stated range, for example, voting 2 1/2 or 2.5 for one of the candidates on a 0 - 5 scale.
- Here is a sample range voting ballot filled out:

Write in a score for each candidate that you support within the range of 0 (Don't Support) to 5 (Strongly Support)	
You may give two or more candidates the same score. You may write in fractional or decimal scores (for example, 2 ½ or 3.7). Leaving a candidate's line blank will count as a score of 0. Scores will be added together and the candidate with the most total points will be the winner.	
Raspberry	0
Peach	3.5
Blueberry	2
Orange	5

Where Used and for How Long

Range voting is used in many organizations, as well as for entertainment and sports competitions, such as by ESPN for NBA player rankings, by The Voice TV show for winners, and by Olympic judges.

Strengths

- Either of these methods may encourage more parties to run candidates.
- They may produce a more accurate measure of support for the voters' various political perspectives.
- They promote citizen participation - some studies of voting methods show score voting elects candidates with the highest societal intensity of happiness and with the least societal regret.
- Both methods are easy to understand.
- They minimize wasted votes.
- Either could make a primary election unnecessary.

Weaknesses

- Neither score nor range voting necessarily ensures majority support.
- Both methods are vulnerable to defensive voting.
- Both methods are vulnerable to gerrymandering.
- Neither method has been used in political elections to date.
- Giving a positive rating to a less preferred candidate can cause a more preferred candidate to lose.

Conflicting Opinions and Two-Edged Swords

None noted.

Single-Winner Ranked-Choice Voting

General Description

- Ranked-choice voting can be used for either single-winner or multiple-winner elections. Its use for multiple-winner elections is described in the Multiple Winner Methods section of this report, which follows.
- When used in a single-winner election, synonyms include instant runoff voting (IRV), alternative voting, and majority preference voting.

How It Works

- Voters can rank as many or as few candidates as they want, in order of preference.
- Here is a sample ranked-choice voting ballot filled out:

Rank your candidates in order of preference				
Mark one choice per candidate Mark one choice per column	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	3 rd Choice	4 th Choice
Raspberry		X		
Peach	X			
Blueberry			X	
Orange				

- First, all the first-choice votes are counted. If there is a majority winner that candidate is declared the winner.
- If there is no one who receives a majority, the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes is eliminated. The ballots that gave that losing candidate their first choice vote are transferred to the ballot's second choice, and the votes are counted again. If someone now has a majority that person is elected. This process of tallying, eliminating the last-place candidate, transferring votes as the ballots specify and re-tallying continues until one candidate receives a majority.

Where Used and For How Long

Ranked-choice voting (RCV), also known as instant runoff voting (IRV), is currently used in about twelve U.S. cities and the state of Maine, as well as in many national, state and local elections around the world. It has been used in Australia since 1918, and Ireland since 1921.

In the United States, Maine is the first state to use RCV for U.S. House and Senate primary and general elections, statewide and state assembly primaries, as of the 2018 election. Six states—Alaska, Nevada, Hawaii, Kansas, Iowa, and Wyoming—will use RCV for all or part of their Democratic presidential primaries in 2020.

The method is currently used in these twelve cities: Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, and San Leandro in California; Telluride, Colorado; Portland, Maine; Takoma Park, Maryland; Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, and St. Paul, Minnesota; Santa Fe and Las Cruces, New Mexico. Eleven additional cities, including New York City, plus Benton County, Oregon, are planning to use it in future elections.

Voters in Pierce County, Washington, approved a charter amendment to use RCV in 2006 and used it in the 2008 election. The voters of the county repealed its usage in 2009 due to a number of special factors, including having adopted the system when infrastructure was far more costly than it is now; the state's adoption of the top-two primary system, negating the need for RCV in the minds of many voters; and political unity between both establishment parties against the new method. There was also an unfortunate winner in one of the elections whose election stigmatized IRV for many members of the public, even though he had polled first in every round of counting, and so would have been the winner even in the absence of IRV.

Strengths

- Negative campaigning is inherently discouraged since candidates risk alienating voters who might give them second-choice votes
- Ranked-choice voting defeats the spoiler effect and makes it possible for voters to rank their choices honestly.
- Ranking more than one candidate won't hurt the chances of your most favored candidate; second choices are not even examined unless the top choice can't win.
- Third-party and independent candidates can viably run for office without concern for being the spoiler.
- Experience shows that where RCV has been adopted, more non-traditional candidates including women and people of color run and win elections
- Elections have the potential for cost savings because primaries may be eliminated. The savings would accrue both to the candidates (not having to campaign for both the primary and the general election) and to the taxpayers.
- The method promotes representative government through increased voter turnout. RCV increases voter participation when combining the primary and the general election into one single election where turnout is the greatest and most diverse.

Weaknesses

- As with all single-winner methods, single-winner ranked-choice elections are vulnerable to gerrymandering.

Conflicting Opinions and Two-Edged Swords

- A greater diversity of candidates is likely to run – and to win. Some view this feature as a justified expression of democracy while others consider it a negative outcome.
- With more choices on the ballot, voters will need to do more research on the qualifications of more candidates. This is viewed by some as an extra burden on voters, and others as empowering voters with more choice and opportunity to get educated on a host of candidates. It is, in any event, already necessary for voters in a primary.
- Candidates will need to expand their campaign efforts to reach out to more voters to vie for their opponents' second and third choice votes. This may result in increased campaign

costs. On the positive side, candidates report they liked the shift to RCV as it resulted in more civil campaigns and gave them opportunity to get to know more voters.

- Some say that the time necessary to tabulate multiple rounds of counting may result in the need to wait longer for final election results, but others point out that with current election equipment, the computer's tabulation work is virtually instantaneous whatever voting method is being used. Any delays in reporting results arise because mail-in ballots don't all arrive for counting until days or even weeks after "election day."

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Multiple-Winner Methods

- Multiple -winner voting methods include party list, ranked-choice voting with multiple winners, and cumulative voting.
- In each of these methods there are multiple winners, all selected in a single general election.
- Winners may be elected from a single district or from the state as a whole.
- Multiple-winner methods are all proportional or semi-proportional and to that extent make both the spoiler effect and gerrymandering impossible.

Party List Voting Methods

General Description

- The party list voting methods allocate seats proportionally among parties.
- The party lists are either closed or open.
- The elections are non-ranking and elect representatives from multi-member districts.

How They Work

- In a **closed list election**, voters vote only for a party. Candidates for the legislature are listed on the ballot under the name of the party or published separately.
- Here is a sample closed list ballot filled out:

You have one vote.								
Mark X in the box below the party that you prefer.								
A party's seats in the legislature will be allocated in proportion to the votes that the party receives.								
Citrus Party			Tropical Party			Temperate Party		
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mr. Orange			Ms. Papaya			Ms. Apple		
Ms. Lemon			Ms. Mango			Mr. Pear		
Ms. Grapefruit			Mr. Passionfruit			Ms. Peach		

- A party's share of the total vote determines the number of seats that the party will hold in the legislature. The actual representatives are automatically selected by going down the list on the ballot in order until that number of candidates is reached. For example, if the

Tropical Party is allowed 2 seats, Ms. Papaya and Ms. Mango would automatically be selected.

- In an **open list election**, the voters have a certain degree of control over the order of candidates in the party list. Voters vote both for a candidate and for a party. Their vote for a candidate tends to move the candidate higher on the list of candidates for that party.
- Here is a sample open list ballot filled out:

You have one vote.

Your vote will count for both a candidate and a party.
Mark X in the box beside the candidate that you prefer.

Your vote for the candidate will help to make it
more likely that the candidate will serve.

•

A party's seats in the legislature will be allocated
in proportion to the votes that the party receives.

Citrus Party		Tropical Party		Temperate Party	
Mr. Orange		Ms. Papaya		Ms. Apple	
Ms. Lemon		Ms. Mango	X	Mr. Pear	
Ms. Grapefruit		Mr. Passionfruit		Ms. Peach	

- As in a closed list election, the party vote determines the number of legislative seats that the party will control. The candidate vote helps to determine where a candidate appears in the party list.
- Candidates who receive more candidate votes appear higher on the list. Then, as in a closed list election, the members who will actually serve are found by going down the list, now revised, for as many seats as the party is entitled to.
- In either method there is typically a percentage-of-turnout threshold that a party has to reach in order to receive any seats.

Where Used and for How Long

Party list voting systems are the most frequently used systems in the world. About a third of the world's countries use one form or another of party list methods for electing the national legislature. Belgium adopted party list voting in 1899, the first country to do so.

Strengths

- Representation in the legislature is proportional to the political perspectives of the voters.

- Because the system is used in multiple-member districts, gerrymandering is impossible.
- Campaigns are more likely to be about issues than about personalities.
- The issues that a party campaigns on are more likely to be the ones that they act on if elected.

Weaknesses

- The spoiler effect operates between parties. For example, a voter might be most sympathetic with party X, but instead vote for party Y, believing that party Y will be more likely to obtain a position of power in the legislature.

Conflicting Opinions and Two-Edged Swords

- To proceed with legislative action, parties often need to form coalitions. Some view this as leading to instability, and cite the example of Italy. Others say that in most of the countries where party list voting prevails there is no more instability than in countries that use other systems. In some cases there is greater stability because the complex of forces in the coalition actually represents the complex of views in the public. Examples are Holland and the Scandinavian countries.
- Party list elections give the political parties commanding roles in determining who the candidates are and ultimately who the members of the legislature are, especially in closed list systems. Some view this feature as providing clarity about the policies that those ultimately elected will follow, and accountability to the party platform. Others would prefer that the voters have greater control.

Ranked-Choice Voting with Multiple Winners

General Description

- Ranked-choice voting with multiple winners is a ranking, proportional and multi-winner system, suitable for elections to any elected body (for example, a legislature, county council, or city council).
- Synonyms include single transferable vote (STV) and proportional representation (PR).

How It Works

- Voters vote for as many candidates as they favor and they rank their choices in order of preference.

- Here is a sample ballot for a ranked-choice election with multiple winners, filled out:

To vote, put an X opposite any candidate that you favor. Put the X in the first column for your favorite candidate. Put it in the second column for your next favorite candidate, and so forth.				
1 choice per candidate 1 choice per column	1 st Choice	2 nd Choice	3 rd Choice	4 th Choice
Ms. Raspberry		X		
Ms. Peach	X			
Mr. Blueberry			X	
Mr. Orange				
Ranking more than one candidate won't hurt the chances of your most favored candidate.				

- The threshold for winning an election is determined based on turnout and the number of members being elected from the district. A threshold which produces the greatest proportionality in the result is the turnout divided by one more than the number of members being elected, plus one more vote. If, for example, five legislators were being elected from the district, the threshold would be one-sixth of the turnout plus one more vote. Therefore, in an election with 1200 voters, any candidate wins when they receive 201 votes. Any additional votes for that candidate (the surplus) would go proportionately to the voters' second choices.
- The vote counting proceeds by rounds, with votes for last-place candidates and surplus votes for winning candidates in each round being reallocated to the voters' next choices. This continues until all seats are filled.

Where used and for how long

Multi-winner ranked-choice elections, also known as single transferable vote elections, have been used in several countries including India, Nepal, and Pakistan to select their national senates, in Ireland since 1919, in Australia for senate and state level elections, in Malta, New Zealand since 1992, and in Scotland for local council elections since 2007. In the United States, Cambridge, Massachusetts has used it since the 1940s for the nine-seat city council and six-seat school board elected citywide, and Minneapolis uses it for some elections. Most recently, Eastpointe, Michigan used it to resolve a federal Voting Rights Act lawsuit for two city council seats (at-large, proportional) in November 2019. Its use is also popular among organizations, corporations, and universities.

Strengths

- Campaigns are more civil, as candidates tend not to attack their opponents for fear of turning away the second- or third-choice votes of people who vote for their opponents.
- There is no spoiler effect. That is, you can vote for the candidate that you favor without fear that your vote will throw the election to someone that you really don't like.
- With multi-member elections and proportional representation (PR), parties are represented in proportion to the votes they receive.
- Commentators have said that with at least five members in a district, gerrymandering is effectively impossible.
- The ranking that voters are called on to do is intuitive and reflects choice-making in daily life.
- Ranked choice voting tends to increase voter participation.
- It increases representation for women and for racial, ethnic, and political minorities.

Weaknesses

See the next section.

Conflicting Opinions and Two-Edged Swords

- Some complain that the method will lead to the election of candidates who are not members of the two establishment parties, and will in that sense be “fringe” candidates. Others find this tendency to be a benefit, since the legislature will more accurately reflect the range of views in the electorate.
Some complain that the vote-counting system is too hard for voters to understand. Others note that voters need not understand counting systems in detail in order to vote and that the voters' role in ranking choices on the ballot is easy and intuitive

Cumulative and Limited Voting

General Description

- Both cumulative voting and limited voting are non-ranking and potentially proportional.
- They are most often used in multiple-winner elections (multi-member districts).

How They Work

- In **cumulative voting**, voters may cast as many votes as there are seats to fill.
- The voter may distribute those votes among the candidates in any way the voter chooses, including giving multiple votes to a single candidate, or splitting the votes among several candidates.

- Here is a sample cumulative voting ballot filled out:

You have four votes	
Mark X beside any candidate that you support. You may place more than one X beside a candidate.	
RASPBERRY	
PEACH	X X X
BLUEBERRY	X
ORANGE	

- The candidates with the most votes win.
- Limited voting** differs from cumulative voting only in that voters have fewer votes than there are seats to fill. The proportionality of limited voting is correspondingly weaker.
- Here is a sample limited voting ballot filled out:

You have two votes	
Mark X beside any candidate that you support, but not more than two X's in total. You may place more than one X beside a candidate.	
RASPBERRY	
PEACH	X X
BLUEBERRY	
ORANGE	

Where, when, how long used

The system is used in a variety of local governmental units, e.g. cities, counties, school boards. It is also used widely in electing corporate boards of directors and in homeowner associations and other non-governmental units.

It was used for over 100 years to elect members of the Illinois House of Representatives. When it was adopted in the mid-nineteenth century, a majority of voters in Chicago were Republicans, while a majority of voters in the rest of the state were Democrats, reflecting the Civil War regional division of parties. With each district having three representatives, cumulative voting enabled Democrats in Chicago and Republicans in the rest of the state to obtain representation. However, the two parties would often collaborate to place, for example, two Republicans and one Democrat

on the ballot in a Republican district, guaranteeing the election of all three, and shoehorning the voters into the parties' choices. This meant that the parties acting together controlled representation instead of allowing the voters to pick representatives that the voters might have chosen for themselves.

Strengths

- The cumulative and limited voting methods can defeat gerrymandering if the voters organize to do so. For example, if a district has been set up to favor the party of candidate Z so that voters favoring candidate Y are in a minority, they may nevertheless succeed in electing candidate Y if they each put all their votes behind candidate Y. Their success depends on the voters for candidate Z not being organized and splitting their votes between Z and a third candidate. If the voters favoring candidate Z do organize, and put all their votes behind Z the effort at gerrymandering will succeed.
- Like the other multi-winner methods, cumulative and limited voting are helpful when an area has a large number of minority voters scattered throughout the community so that it is difficult to draw district lines that would include a decisive number of them.
- Both cumulative and limited voting methods allow voters to vote for more than one candidate without having to decide which they prefer.

Weaknesses

- Voting results are only roughly proportional.
- Both methods may encourage negative campaigning and extremist ideological candidates and parties.
- Minority voters need to be organized and not split their votes in order to achieve representation.
- Parties and candidates may have conflicting strategies. The parties want as many of their candidates as possible to win while a given candidate will want as many votes as possible for him or herself.

Conflicting Opinions and Two-Edged Swords

- Some argue that allowing voters more than one vote violates the 'one person, one vote' principle, thought to be fundamental to our democracy. Others observe that the essentials of the principle are preserved since every voter has the same quantity of voting power.
- Some suggest that allowing more than one vote per voter is confusing to the voters. Others observe that where the system is in use, voters have managed well.
- Multiple-member districts are by necessity larger areas with weaker geographical links between representatives and their constituents. There may, however, be stronger links of other kinds (political perspective, race and gender, for example).

- Because districts are potentially larger both in territory and population, some worry that campaign costs will be higher. Others note that there may be pre-existing links with more voters based on gender, race or political perspective.

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Hybrid Systems

STAR (Score, Then Automatic Runoff) Voting

General Description

- STAR stands for “Score, Then Automatic Runoff”.
- STAR produces a single winner in single-member districts or single positions within a district.
- As will be explained below, STAR can also be used in multi-member districts. It can produce some level of proportionality in multiple winner elections through a variety of methods that include multi-winner bloc voting and elections with multiple runoffs.

How It Works

- In either single- or multi-winner districts, voters score candidates on a scale of 0 to 5, just as in score voting, and are allowed to give any score to any or all of the candidates.
- Here is a sample STAR ballot filled out:

Opposite each candidate write an X to score that candidate from 0 (Don't Support) to 5 (Strongly Support) You may give two or more candidates the same score. Leaving a candidate's line blank will count as a score of 0. Scores will be added together and the candidate with the most total points will be the winner.							
	DON'T SUPPORT	0	1	2	3	4	5 STRONGLY SUPPORT
Raspberry						X	
Peach							X
Blueberry					X		
Orange	X						

- In the first round of counting, all the scores for a given candidate are totaled.
- In a **single-winner STAR election**, there would follow an automatic and instant runoff between the two highest scoring candidates. In the runoff, each voter's full vote is given to the runoff candidate that the voter rated higher. The winner is the candidate who has received the most runoff votes.

In the ballot example above, if Raspberry and Blueberry were the two highest scoring candidates after counting all ballots, this voter's ballot would go into Raspberry's count.

- For **multi-member district elections**, experts continue to study ways to achieve a level of proportionality in a STAR election. **STAR with bloc voting** and **proportional STAR voting** are two of the methods under consideration. As in a single-winner STAR election, voters only fill out a ballot once. The difference is in how the ballots are tabulated.
- In a **STAR election with bloc voting**, the two highest scoring candidates advance to an automatic runoff, just as in the single-winner method. Theorists suggest the following for what would happen next:
 - The finalist who was scored higher by more voters wins the first seat.
 - There is then a runoff between the next two highest scoring candidates. This process continues until all positions are filled.
- For **proportional STAR voting**, academic experts are attempting to work out how this could be achieved.

Where Used and For How Long

STAR voting was first conceived in 2014. As of 2019, the STAR voting system has only been used in non-governmental settings, e.g. in Dartmouth alumni officer elections and University of Colorado student body officer elections, in experimental elections (Portland Forward), and in computer simulations. The multi-winner bloc STAR voting will be used by the Democratic Party of Oregon for choosing delegates to their national convention, and by one Oregon county for their internal elections.

Strengths

- Like score, range and ranked-choice voting STAR voting allows voters to express nuanced support for candidates.
- Like these other systems again, it maximizes the number of voters whose preferences will be factored into the election.
- Proponents claim that the candidate with the most consensus support tends to win.
- The method may increase honest voting by reducing incentives for voters to cast ballots strategically or insincerely.
- It can eliminate the cost of primaries for both governments and candidates.
- It encourages positive campaigning since candidates are scored on their own merits.
- It allows an opportunity for third party candidates to be competitive.

Weaknesses

- Having been developed only in 2014, STAR voting has not yet been tested in any political elections.
- It does not satisfy the strict majority criterion: the candidate that the most voters would prefer may not have made it past the top-two primary.
- In its single-winner version, it is vulnerable to gerrymandering.

- In its bloc voting version, it is designed to elect majority-preferred candidates.

Conflicting Opinions and Two-Edged Swords

- STAR voting doesn't always pass the later-no-harm criterion, meaning that in a STAR election a voter may hurt the chances of the voter's favorite by showing support for others. Some commentators view this as a failing. Proponents say that the failure of this criterion is counterbalanced by the tendency to elect compromise centrist candidates and is required in order to mitigate strategic voting incentives.

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Mixed-Member Proportional Voting (MMP) and Parallel Voting

General Description

- Both mixed-member proportional (MMP) voting and parallel voting systems are an amalgam of single-winner voting in districts and proportional representation encompassing larger districts, for example, a whole state.
- Synonyms for parallel voting are the supplementary system and the mixed member majoritarian system.
- Both MMP and parallel systems are used for multi-winner elections to a body such as a legislature or county council.

How They Work

- The district election in either method can in principle be any form of single-winner election, for example, plurality or ranked-choice. In practice the district elections are all plurality elections wherever MMP or parallel elections are practiced.
- The proportional representation election may be any form of proportional representation election, but is usually a party list vote.
- In either method, the voter is given two votes – one for a representative and one for the voter's party of choice.

- Here is a sample mixed-member proportional ballot filled out:

You have 2 votes			
One vote on this side for your district representative		One vote on this side for a party, in order to allocate <u>all</u> the seats in the legislature in proportion to party votes	
First vote		Second vote	
Richard Smith, Lemon Party			Lemon Party
David Green, Raspberry Party			Raspberry Party
Olive Worden, Orange Party	x	x	Orange Party
Rachel Ostrovski, Apple Party			Apple Party

- In **MMP elections**, the result on the party side of the ballot determines at least at first the number of seats that the party will have in the legislature. These seats are filled first with party candidates who have won district races. If there are additional seats to be filled they are filled with candidates named on the party list. If on the district representative side of the ballot, a party wins more seats than it would be entitled to from its proportion of party list votes, “overhang seats” can occur. Depending on the specific implementation, the party may fill the overhang seats. For example, if a party is entitled to four seats because of the results on the party side of the ballot but five members of that party have been elected on the district side, the party would be allowed to seat the fifth “overhang” candidate. The seating of overhang candidates actually increases the total number of seats in the legislature. Although overhang seats are common in MMP elections, they would not be expected to add more than a few additional seats in total. Again depending on the implementation, if a party is entitled to more seats than it would be allowed as a result of the party election, balancing seats may be granted to other parties in order to preserve proportionality.
- In a **parallel system**, there are no “overhang” seats. Both the number of district seats and the overall number of party seats are fixed in advance and don’t change.

- Here is a sample parallel election ballot filled out:

You have 2 votes			
One vote on this side for your district representative		One vote on this side for a party , in order to allocate the <u>party</u> seats in the legislature in proportion to party votes	
First vote		Second vote	
Richard Smith, Lemon Party			Lemon Party
David Green, Raspberry Party			Raspberry Party
Olive Worden, Orange Party	x	x	Orange Party
Rachel Ostrovski, Apple Party			Apple Party

Where Used and for How Long

Mixed-member proportional (MMP) representation originated in Germany after WWII. It is currently being used in some form in Germany, Bolivia (1994), Lesotho (2002), New Zealand (1996), Thailand (2019), South Africa (in all municipalities but not national elections), Scotland, Wales and for the London Assembly.

Four countries are considering proposals for moving to MMP representation nationwide: Canada, Costa Rica, Sri Lanka and South Africa.

Countries that have switched to other methods but that formerly used MMP representation include Albania (2001-2005), Hungary (1990-2012), Romania (2008-2016), and Venezuela (until 2009).

Parallel voting is the third most frequently used system for electing national legislatures. It is used in Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, among many others.

Strengths

- Both methods combine close geographical relations between representatives and voters with proportionality of representation for all the significant political perspectives in the country. In a mixed member system, the proportionality is strong. Parallel voting is weaker in this respect since proportionality arises only among the seats elected on the party vote side.

Weaknesses

- Voters don't always understand that the party vote is more important than the vote for the district representative in that the party vote determines the number of seats the party will hold.
- These systems can give rise to various forms of strategic voting.

Conflicting Opinions and Two-Edged Swords

- The distinction between party representatives and district representatives can create two factions among legislators: one group that is primarily obligated to a territory and another from a party list without geographic ties and more obligated to the national or statewide party. This lack of unity and the need for working in collaboration with other parties may make it more difficult for a party to achieve its policy goals, but it could also reduce polarization and gridlock.
- Both multi-member proportional elections and parallel voting elections are subject to gerrymandering in the district elections. Some observers believe that gerrymandering in MMP would not affect the election results in a negative way.

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Overarching Aspects for All Systems

What follows are aspects of Washington elections that are not tied to any particular voting system.

a) The Issue of Gerrymandering

Gerrymandering is the practice of drawing electoral district boundaries in order to predetermine subsequent election results. It is increasingly recognized as an affliction whenever Americans are choosing the members of a legislative body, e.g. U. S. House of Representatives, state legislatures, county and city councils. Gerrymandering is possible because in any single-winner system of elections, the way district lines are drawn inherently affects election results.

A few states, Washington among them, use citizen commissions at least to some degree beyond the influence of politicians. (See the 2017 LWVWA report on redistricting at www.lwvwa.org/redistricting.) In most states, the lines are drawn by politicians and aim to achieve political results favorable to those drawing the lines—keeping incumbents in office, achieving or preserving a legislative majority. Even if it is not politicians who draw the lines, each district inevitably includes a certain composition of voters, and whatever array of voters are included largely predetermines voting results in the district until the next redistricting.

As we have noted, there are various forms of multi-winner elections that effectively make gerrymandering impossible.

b) Elections in Single-Member Districts, Elections to a Single Position, At-Large Elections

All of Washington state's elections are required by law to elect people to one position at a time. This is by definition true of offices with a single holder such as governor or mayor.

It is also true when we elect a body such as either house of the state legislature or the local county council. We elect state senators one to a district. We elect state representatives two to a district, but one to a position. In counties that have the commissioner form of government, county commissioners are elected at-large in countywide general elections, although they must each reside in different commissioner districts, and may have first fought out primaries in their respective commissioner districts. The same goes for city councils, port district commissions, public utility district (PUD) commissions, school boards, and on down the list of our numerous local elected boards.

All of these elections are subject to Washington state's top-two primary rule, and are vulnerable to gerrymandering.

c) Washington's Top-Two Primary

Washington was the first state in the country to establish a top-two primary voting system, rather than a party nominating system. The two candidates who receive the most votes in the primary

advance to the general election regardless of their party preference. This kind of primary was adopted by initiative in November 2004, and was approved by the voters by nearly 60 percent.

One result of having no more than two candidates in the general election is that the spoiler effect can have no influence at that level. There is no penalty if a voter votes for the candidate that the voter actually prefers.

The spoiler effect does operate in the primary, and therefore tends to encourage strategic voting at that level.

Another difficulty with the top-two primary is that if there are many candidates, there may be more votes in the aggregate for the candidates that lose in the primary than for those who win. It is then hard to say that the ultimate winners are “the choice of the people.”

d) Voting Equipment

All of the presently installed ballot reading and tabulating systems are capable of handling plurality elections and Washington’s top-two primaries. Without going into details, it should be possible for all counties in Washington state to adapt their vote-recording and tabulating equipment to any of the systems described in this report without major effort or expense. Vendors are prepared to deliver equipment and software capable of handling all the systems discussed in the report.

At present in Washington state, for example, nine counties have vote-recording and tabulating equipment that is entirely ready for ranked-choice elections; 26 can record RCV ballots, but must export the results to separate tabulating equipment; and four are not presently able to count RCV ballots.

Other than plurality voting, the various methods discussed in this report would require redesigned ballots. Often the ballots would include two kinds of elections—for example, ranked-choice voting for the city council and plurality voting for the state legislature. Some commentators have expressed alarm as to whether voters will be able to follow how they are to vote when faced with two different election methods on the same ballot. Experience has shown, however, that voters can manage well.

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Appendix A: Glossary

At-large election – In many Washington counties, cities and other local bodies, many positions in the relevant governing council (County Council, City Council, Port Commission, etc.) are elected at-large. The entire county or city, for example, is the “district” from which they are elected. The entire electorate of the county or city concerned participates in the election.

Bullet-voting – In a non-ranking form of election like cumulative voting, limited voting, approval voting, or score or range voting, putting all the voters’ votes, approvals, or scores on one candidate in collaboration with other voters who have a similar political perspective – a form of strategic voting.

Election method - the voting and vote-counting processes in an election

First-past-the-post election – The same as a winner-take-all election or a plurality election. See winner-take-all, majority, plurality.

Gerrymandering – The practice of drawing electoral district boundaries in order to affect subsequent election results, a form of election-rigging. Gerrymandering is often used to ensure as much as possible the reelection of incumbents. It is a risk in any single-winner voting system.

Insincere voting – A synonym for tactical or strategic voting. See “lesser of two evils”, spoiler effect.

Lesser of two evils – the dilemma that voters frequently face in a plurality election: they feel compelled to vote for someone that they don’t really favor (the lesser of two evils) – and not vote for the candidate that they really do favor – so that the candidate that they most dislike is not given an advantage. See insincere, tactical and strategic voting and the spoiler effect.

Majority election – an election in which the threshold for election is more than half of all the votes cast (50%+1). Contrast plurality election, proportional representation election.

Multi-member district - an electoral district from which two or more members are sent to the body being elected (e.g., legislature, county council). Washington has the appearance of multi-member legislative districts, but since we elect representatives to specific seats, these seat-by-seat elections effectively function like an election from single-member districts. In a true multi-member district system, all candidates in a legislative district would compete against each other.

Multiple-winner election – an election where two or more people are elected to a body in a single pool. It is not to be confused with an election in which there may be more than one representative from a given district, but each is elected independently. Proportional representation (ranked-choice election in any of its multiple-winner forms), cumulative voting, and limited voting can be used for multiple-winner elections.

“One person, one vote” – a principle adopted by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1962 requiring congressional districts and legislative districts within a state to have substantially equal

populations. The principle does not, however, necessarily lead to equality in representation. For example, between states the population of congressional districts varies from about 500,000 to about 1,000,000 depending on the state. Between the largest state and the smallest, the number of people represented by a single U.S. Senator is different by a factor of 69. These inequalities are carried into the Electoral College, where the number of Electors in each state's delegation is the sum of the number of representatives in its congressional delegation plus two for the two senators.

Overhang seats - In a mixed-member proportional (MMP) election, if a party is entitled by virtue of the results of the party side of the election to four seats but five members of that party have been elected on the district side, the additional seat is called an "overhang seat".

Plurality election – an election in which the threshold for election is that the candidate receive more votes than any other candidate. In such a system, the winning percentage may be significantly less than a majority. Contrast majority election, proportional representation election.

Proportional representation election - an election in which the percentage of seats held by a political perspective or party in a legislative body corresponds closely with the perspective's or party's percentage of the popular vote. Proportional representation is not possible in single-member districts. The degree of proportionality increases as the number of representatives from the district increases.

Single-member district - an electoral district having a single representative in a legislative body. The Washington State Senate is an example of a body elected with single-member districts. The Washington State House has two members per district, but they are each elected to separate positions within the district. It is as if they had separate districts which happened to overlap.

Single-position election – an election to a position in a district in which there are two or more separate "positions" in the body concerned. Examples are the two positions in a Washington state legislative district, the two positions in the county council districts in some charter counties, and the three positions in the county commission of a Washington county that has the county commissioner form of government.

Single-winner election – an election where there is a single winner, for example, elections from a single-member district, single-position elections, and at-large elections.

Strategic voting – A synonym for insincere or tactical voting. See lesser of two evils, spoiler effect.

Spoiler effect – A candidate that the voter prefers, but who lacks sufficient support to win, is often referred to as a "spoiler." The presumption is that a vote for such a candidate may cause a candidate more strongly opposed to the voter's views to win. See tactical, strategic and insincere voting, lesser of two evils.

Tactical voting – when a voter casts a ballot that does not reflect the voter's true preference among candidates. It is sometimes done in hopes of avoiding a victory by a candidate that the voter does not favor at all. See insincere and strategic voting, spoiler effect, lesser of two evils.

Threshold for election – generally speaking, the number of votes that a candidate must receive in order to be elected. The threshold (often expressed as a percentage of the turnout) varies depending on the type of election.

- Majority election – a candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast (more than half).
- Plurality election – a candidate must receive more votes than any other candidate. A plurality threshold may be significantly lower than a majority, depending on the number of candidates, and how the voters vote.
- Proportional representation election – a candidate must receive a number of votes roughly inversely proportional to the number of seats being filled. For example, if five seats are being filled, the threshold is one-sixth of the votes cast plus one more vote. If the election is a list proportional representation election, the threshold is not for individuals, but the percentage of the overall vote that a party gets determines how many of its members are elected.

Voting system - All elements of the election, including the laws, the equipment, the voting and counting process. In the literature, election method and voting system are often used interchangeably.

Wasted votes – In the sense used by political scientists, wasted votes are those that do not increase representation for those voting. The votes for any losing candidate are wasted in this sense. Beyond these, there are also the votes for a winning candidate beyond the number that the candidate needed to win (surplus votes). It is by manipulating where wasted votes of either type are concentrated or dispersed (“packed” or “cracked”) that gerrymandering achieves its aims.

In the United States, the term tends to be used in a very specific way: it refers to votes cast for a third-party candidate, and it carries the implication that one who votes for a third-party candidate aids the election of someone else.

Winner-take-all election – a single-winner voting system in a single-member district or the equivalent, in which the person receiving the most votes is the winner.

- May operate under either a plurality or a majority principle.
- Vulnerable to gerrymandering and the spoiler effect.

See single-member district, single-winner election, single-position election, at-large election.

Appendix B: An Example of Criteria for Evaluating Methods

This toolbox does not attempt to evaluate the various systems using criteria. It merely reports what others have said about each of the systems.

Theoreticians and other students of voting systems have identified numerous criteria by which to evaluate voting systems. For example, the League of Women Voters of California has developed the list of criteria shown in the box below. Other lists have dozens of criteria, and there are numerous lists of criteria.

Whether for single or multiple winner contests, the League supports electoral methods that:

- Encourage voter participation and voter engagement
- Encourage those with minority opinions to participate, including under-represented communities
- Are verifiable and auditable
- Promote access to voting
- Maximize effective votes / minimize “wasted” votes
- Promote sincere voting over strategic voting
- Require the winner to receive a majority of the votes for executive and single-seat offices
- Are compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including vote-by-mail

Source: League of Women Voters of California
lwvc.org/position/electoralprocess

Appendix C: How the Various Election Systems Are Related

The systems share various characteristics with one another, and they do this in several different ways. The tables below show some of these relationships of systems of significance. All of the systems named in these tables are described in detail in this report.

One way to classify elections is by whether the result of the election is non-proportional, semi-proportional, or proportional; that is, how well the percentage of seats held by members of a political party corresponds to that party's percentage of the popular vote.

Non-Proportional Systems (Single Winners)	Semi-Proportional Systems (Multiple Winners)	Proportional Systems (Multiple Winners)
Plurality Voting (Winner-Take-All, First-Past-the-Post) Approval Voting Score or Range Voting STAR Voting Single-Winner Ranked Choice Voting	Cumulative Voting Limited Voting	List Proportional Representation Multi-Winner Ranked Choice Voting

Another way of classifying voting systems is based on whether voters rank their choices of candidates or simply express a yes – or a score – for one or more candidates. Using that system, the following methods are classified thus:

Ranking Systems	Non-ranking Systems
Single-Winner Ranked-Choice Voting Multiple-Winner Ranked-Choice Voting	Approval Voting Cumulative Voting List Proportional Representation Plurality Voting (Winner-Take-All, First-Past-the-Post) Score or Range Voting STAR Voting Mixed Member Proportional Representation Parallel Voting

Finally, some systems are hybrids of two of the other systems:

System	Takes elements from
Mixed-Member Proportional Representation	Winner-Take-All (WTA) and one of the forms of Proportional Representation (with the PR part of the election determining in part how many of the WTA winners will serve)
Parallel Voting	Winner-Take-All and Proportional Representation (not dependent on one another)
STAR Voting	Score Voting and Instant Runoff Voting

Appendix D: Resources

Single Winner Voting Systems

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