

Ranked Ballot Voting

A Place of Possibility



Background

- First-past-the-post electoral system has been used in Canada for federal, provincial and municipal elections
- Beginning in 2018, municipalities in Ontario have option to use ranked ballots for council elections
- In 2018 Municipal Election, the City of London, Ontario was the first municipality in Canada to use ranked ballots
- In 2018, City of Kingston and the City of Cambridge opted to put a question on the ballot to allow electors to vote on using ranked ballot voting in future

What is First-Past-The-Post?

- The candidate that wins the highest number of votes wins the right to represent a particular elected office
- The winner does not need an absolute majority (more than 50 per cent of the votes cast for office)



500 votes



300 votes



350 votes

What is a Ranked Ballot Voting?

- Ranked ballots allow voters to rank candidates in order of preference for a particular office. For example, when voting for mayor, a voter can rank one or more candidates for that office
- Ranked ballots allow a voter to express additional preferences if their first choice is eliminated in the first (or in a later) round of counting



Ranked Ballot Video

Pick your favorite

COLOR

The ranked-choice voting way

0:02 / 1:10



Ranked Ballot Counting Process

1. Polls close after voting
2. Count all ballots
3. Determine if any candidates have reached 50% plus 1:
 1. If yes, that candidate is the winner
 2. If no, eliminate the candidate in last place and distribute that candidate's votes. Return to step two – count all ballots. This process is repeated until a candidate has enough votes to win

Ranked Ballot Video

Ranked Choice Voting



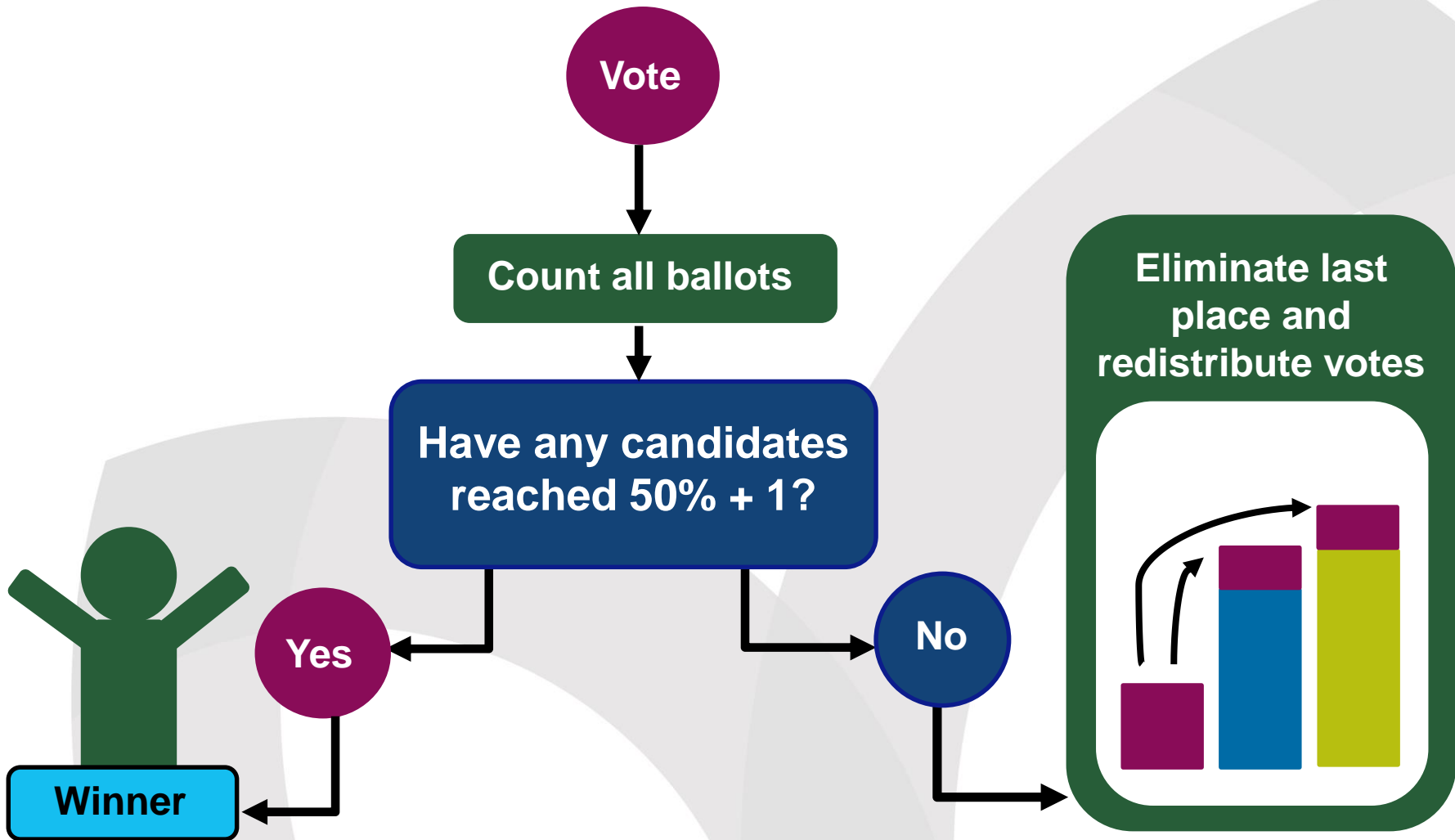
You've heard of Ranked Choice Voting, but what is it and how does it really work?



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What is Ranked Ballot Voting?



Ranked Ballot Design

- There are different ways to design a ballot for a ranked ballot election. The design of the ballot is up to the municipal clerk. The design may depend on:
 - the kind of equipment being used for voting and vote counting
 - how many candidates are running
 - the maximum number of rankings allowed for each office

Ranked Ballot Sample Design

1st Choice	2nd Choice Must be different from your 1 st and 3 rd choice	3rd Choice Must be different from your 1 st and 2 nd choice
Select One	Select One	Select One
Apple <input type="checkbox"/>	Apple <input type="checkbox"/>	Apple <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Banana <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Banana <input type="checkbox"/>	Banana <input type="checkbox"/>
Cherry <input type="checkbox"/>	Cherry <input type="checkbox"/>	Cherry <input type="checkbox"/>
Orange <input type="checkbox"/>	Orange <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Orange <input type="checkbox"/>
Strawberry <input type="checkbox"/>	Strawberry <input type="checkbox"/>	Strawberry <input type="checkbox"/>

Ranked Ballot Sample Design

Sample Ballot

Candidates	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
	Must be different from your 1 st and 3 rd choice	Must be different from your 1 st and 2 nd choice	
	Select One	Select One	Select One
Apple	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Banana	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cherry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Orange	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strawberry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Why Ranked Ballot Voting?

- Claims made in support of using ranked ballots:
 - Could reduce strategic voting
 - Could reduce negative campaigning
 - Could result in a winning candidate better reflecting the desires of the majority of the voters
 - Could encourage more candidates to remain in the race until voting day without the threat of “vote splitting” between like-minded candidates

Why Not Ranked Ballot Voting?

- Claims made against using ranked ballots:
 - Increased costs due to new technology, creating new ballots and communicating changes to voting process
 - New way of voting in Ontario, which has been currently tested once in municipal elections (City of London)
 - Complicated process since some offices would still be elected using first-past-the post system (ie. school board trustee and, possibly, Regional Chair)

Making a Decision - Ranked Ballot

- Before passing a by-law to switch to using ranked ballots, council must hold a two-step consultation:
 - Host an open house to provide information to the public about ranked ballot elections
 - Hold a public meeting to hear feedback from residents

Public Consultation - Ranked Ballot

- During the consultation, at the open house and the public meeting, council must make all of the following available to the public:
 - information about how ranked ballot elections work, including how the votes are counted
 - an estimate of how much ranked ballot elections would cost
 - a description of any voting equipment and vote-counting equipment that is being considered for use in the election
 - a description of any alternative voting method being considered for use in the election

Passing a By-law - Ranked Ballot

- The deadline for a council to pass a by-law to switch to ranked ballots is May 1 in the year **before** the year of the municipal election (for example, May 1, 2021 for the 2022 election)
- Once the by-law is passed, ranked ballots must be used to elect **all of the seats on council**

Considerations for Ranked Ballots

- Additional costs and resourcing would be required for consultation, education and communication
- Counting the ballots in a ranked ballot election will take longer than counting the votes in a traditional election
- Intensive education and communication would be required
- Must use first-past-the-post system for school board trustees (and possibly for Regional Chair)

Next Steps

- Staff will bring forward a report and a recommendation for Council's consideration at a future meeting of Council, including options and costs.

Thank you!