



Internet Voting and Ranked Ballots 2018 Municipal Election

Special Committee of the Whole
January 30, 2017



Purpose



- Continuation of discussion of internet voting from October 5, 2015
- Outline recommended voting method options for 2018 election
- Introduce the ranked ballot system and provide context for staff's recommendation
- Q & A

Background – Internet Voting



- *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (Act) requires Council to pass a by-law authorizing the use of alternative vote counting equipment or alternative voting method
- Clerk responsible for administering municipal election, providing for any procedure which is not already identified in Act
- Clerk also required to ensure municipal election process is accessible for persons with disabilities

Newmarket Context

Previous term:

- Staff to explore use of internet voting for October 27, 2014 election
- January, 2014
 - Council workshop
 - PIC
 - Phone survey (805 participants): 48% prefer internet, 41% prefer paper ballot (balance undecided/no response)
 - Online survey (100 participants): 81% prefer internet
- Staff recommended use of internet voting (together with internet voting terminals in voting places)
- January, 2014 referred consideration of internet voting to 2018 election; authorized use of vote tabulators for 2014 election

Newmarket Context cont'd



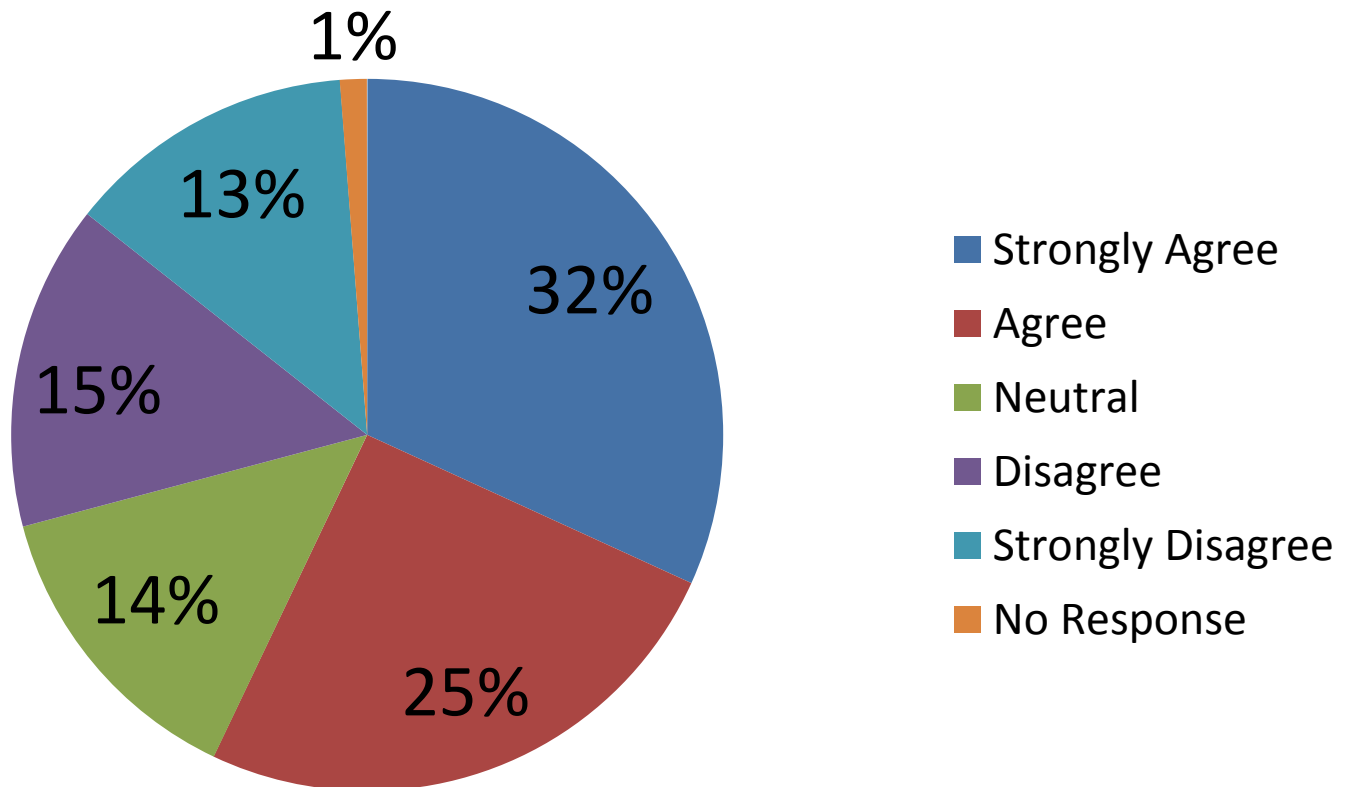
Current term

- Council workshop October 5, 2015
 - Two options were presented regarding internet voting with recommendations to come forward at a future Committee of the Whole meeting
- Amendments to Municipal Election Act, 1996 completed by Province in July 2016 (Bill 181)
 - Moved timeframe forward for approval of voting method
 - Now required by May 1, 2017
- By-election for Ward 5 Councillor held using vote tabulators in October 2016
- December 2016 survey (results presented today)
 - phone survey (347 participants)
 - Internet survey (140 participants)

2016 Survey Results – Internet Voting portion



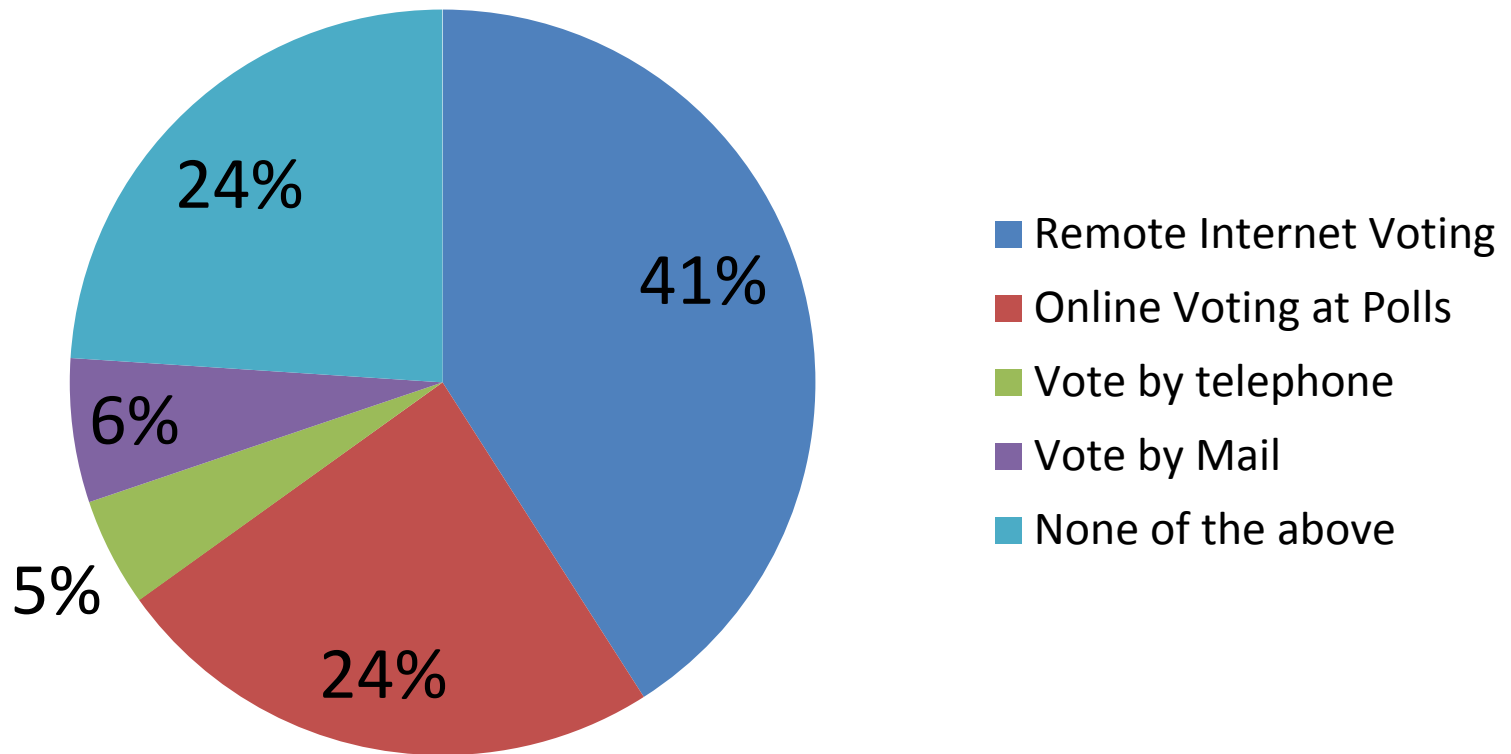
Please rate your level of agreement to the following statement: "I
Would Feel Comfortable Casting my Vote Online"



2016 Survey Results – Internet Voting portion



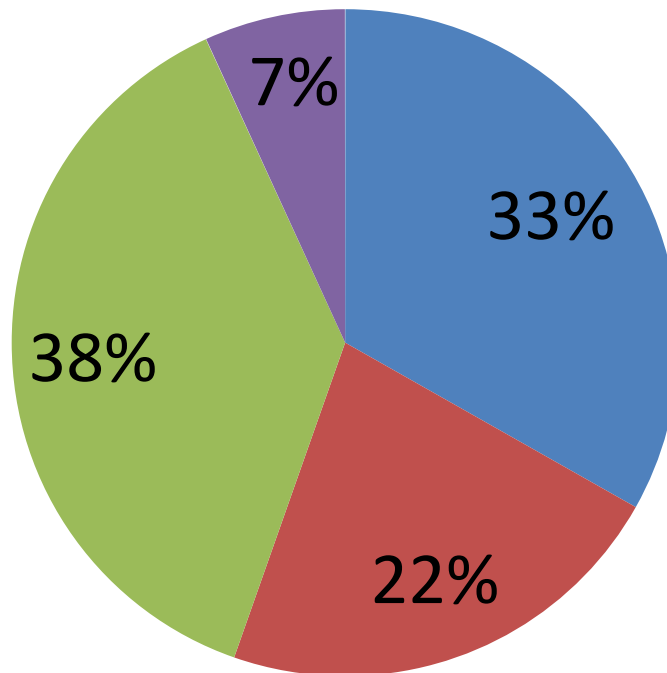
Which alternative voting method would you most like to see in 2018?



2016 Survey Results – Internet Voting portion



Which, if any, of the three options would you prefer for the 2018 election?



- Option 1: Voting at polling station with traditional paper ballots and tabulators
- Option 2: Remote internet voting
- Both Option 1 and Option 2
- No opinion

Options



Option 1 (Recommended)

- Hybrid model of a combination of internet voting during advance voting period & voting day and vote tabulators at voting locations
- Special voting opportunities for residents in seniors' homes, long term care facilities & hospitals

Options cont'd

Option 2 (status quo)

- Use of paper ballots and vote tabulators (current method) with process improvements and voting location changes
- Special voting opportunities for seniors, long term care residents & hospital patients

Internet Voting in Ontario



- Internet voting growth among Ontario municipalities:
 - 2003: 12 (255,837 electors)
 - 2006: 20 (397,537 electors)
 - 2010: 44 (783,887 electors)
 - 2014: 97 (2.4 million electors)

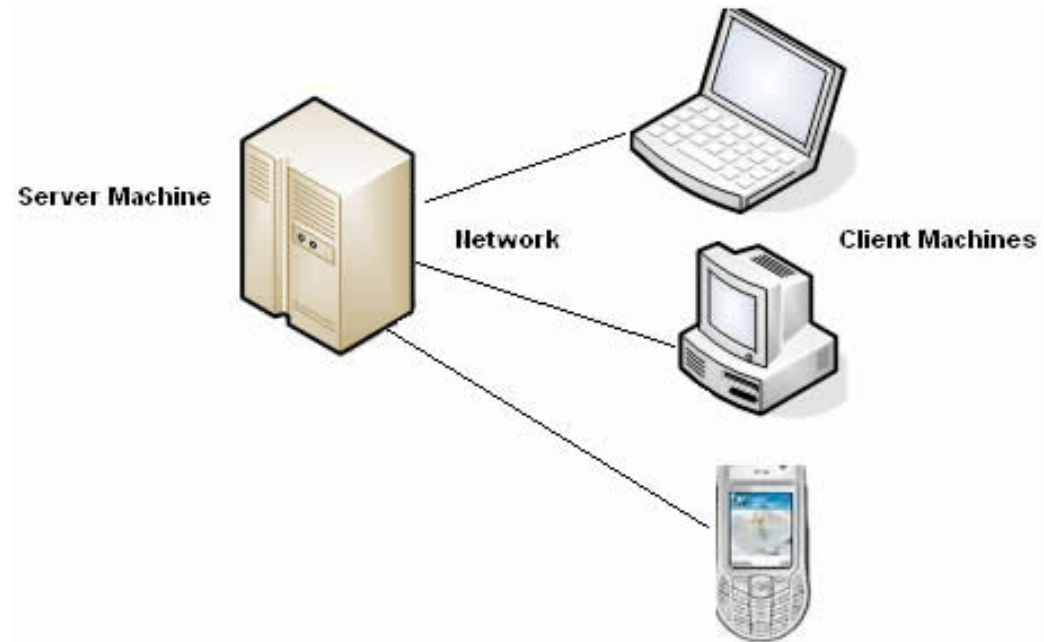
Considerations



- Communications
 - Greatest factor in ensuring internet voting implementation success was a comprehensive education & support campaign
 - 2018 Municipal Election education & outreach plan could include:
 - Traditional communications tactics, tie-in to existing social media presence, Town events
 - Demonstrations, workshops & “pop ups” for both public & candidates
 - Online, telephone & in-person voter support before & during election period

Considerations, Cont'd

- Security Framework
 - Hosting environment
 - Web application
 - Voting process
 - Voting device



Considerations, Cont'd



- “One-Step” Authentication:
 - Voter notification package sent to voter, includes PIN
 - Voter enters PIN, together with credential (e.g., full birth date)
 - Voter provided access to vote online
- “Two-Step” Authentication:
 - Voter notification package sent to voter, includes PIN
 - Voter registers to vote online using PIN, together with credential (e.g., full birth date) & creates own credential
 - Registered voter sent voting package by mail or encrypted email with second PIN
 - Registered voter enters second PIN & own credential created when registering
 - Registered voter provided access to vote online

Considerations, Cont'd

- Corrupt Practices
 - Coercion
 - Impersonation
 - Stealing or tampering with voter information letters
 - Vote buying

Considerations - Strengths

Convenience

Accessibility

Positive reception
among voters in
other
municipalities

Considerations - Weaknesses



Increased
costs

Not much
impact on
voter turnout

Outreach and
education
required

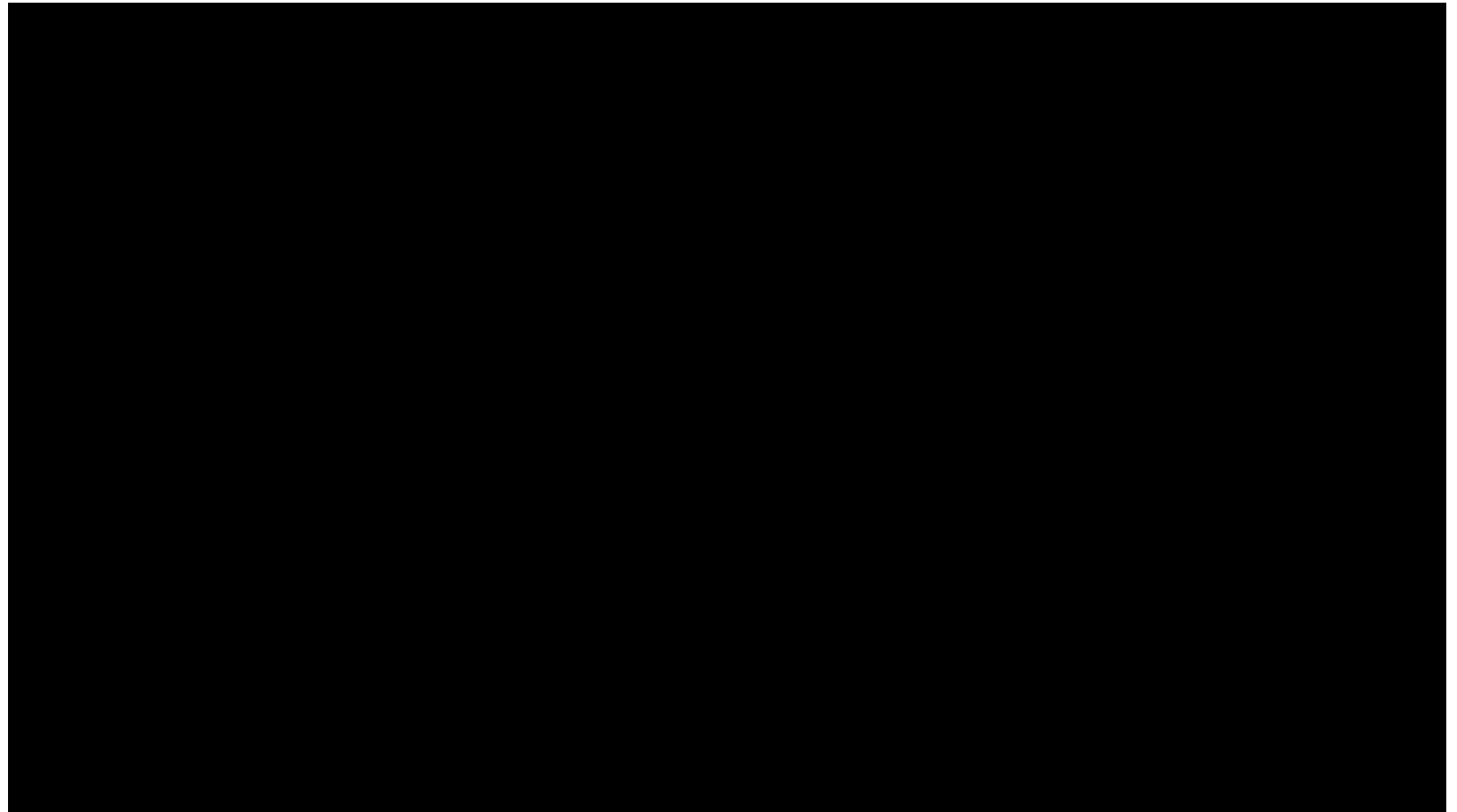
Ranked Ballots



- Bill 181 (*Municipal Elections Modernization Act*)
- Not currently used in Canada



Video – Minneapolis 2013



Ranked Ballots – the Regulation



- All municipal offices must be elected using ranked ballots
- School boards elections & referendum questions excluded
- All lower tier municipalities must authorize ranked balloting for Regional Chair to be elected by ranked ballot

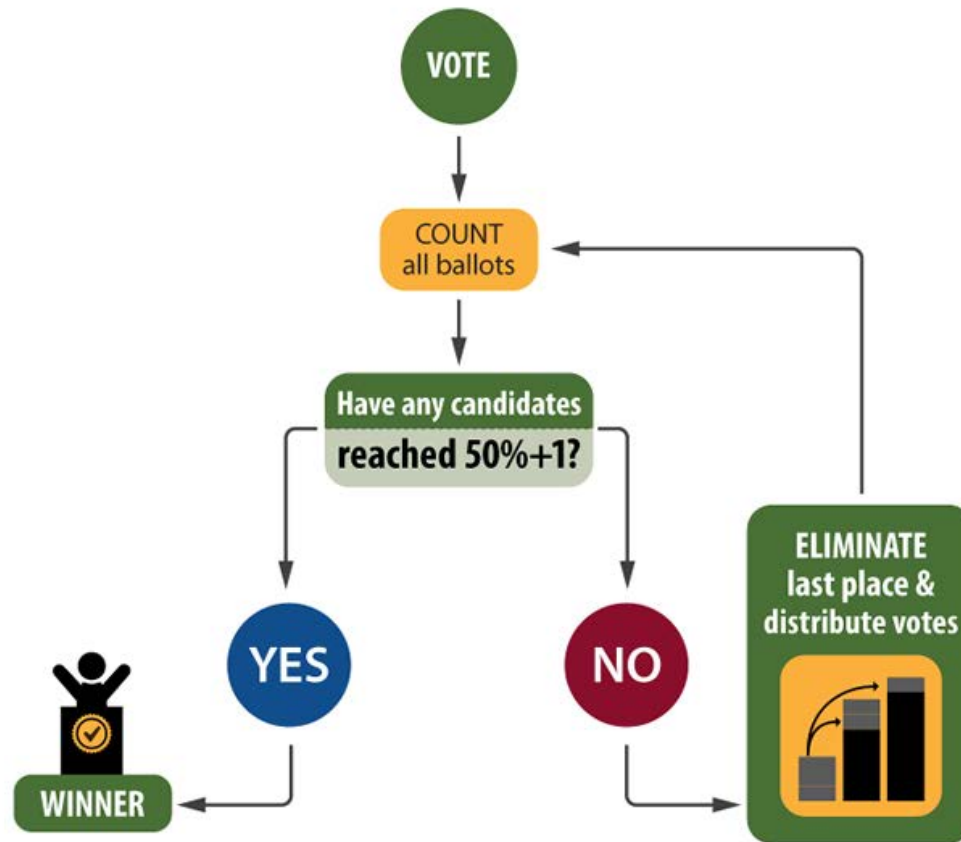
Ranked Ballots – the Regulation cont'd



Process

- Voters rank candidates in order of preference
- By-law determines number of choices & if not specified, 3
- A voter does not have to rank the maximum number of preferences
- Regulation provides for interpretation rules, reporting requirements for Clerk
- Clerk to determine method for elimination of candidates in each round by December 31, 2017

Ranked Ballots – the Regulation cont'd



Timelines

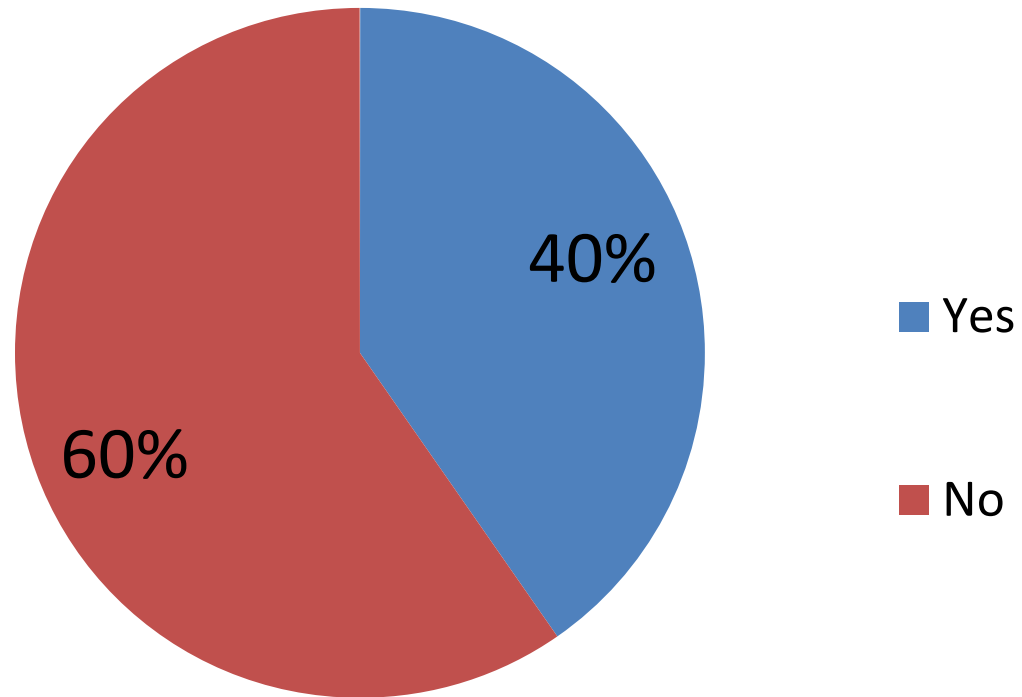
- Open House & Public Meeting must be held
- Council must consider cost, availability of technology & administrative impacts

Date (2017)	
February 2	Issue Notice of Open House (30 days notice required)
March 7/8 th	Open House
April 3	Public Meeting (special CoW)
April 24	Council Meeting – Adoption of By-law

2016 Survey – Ranked Ballot portion



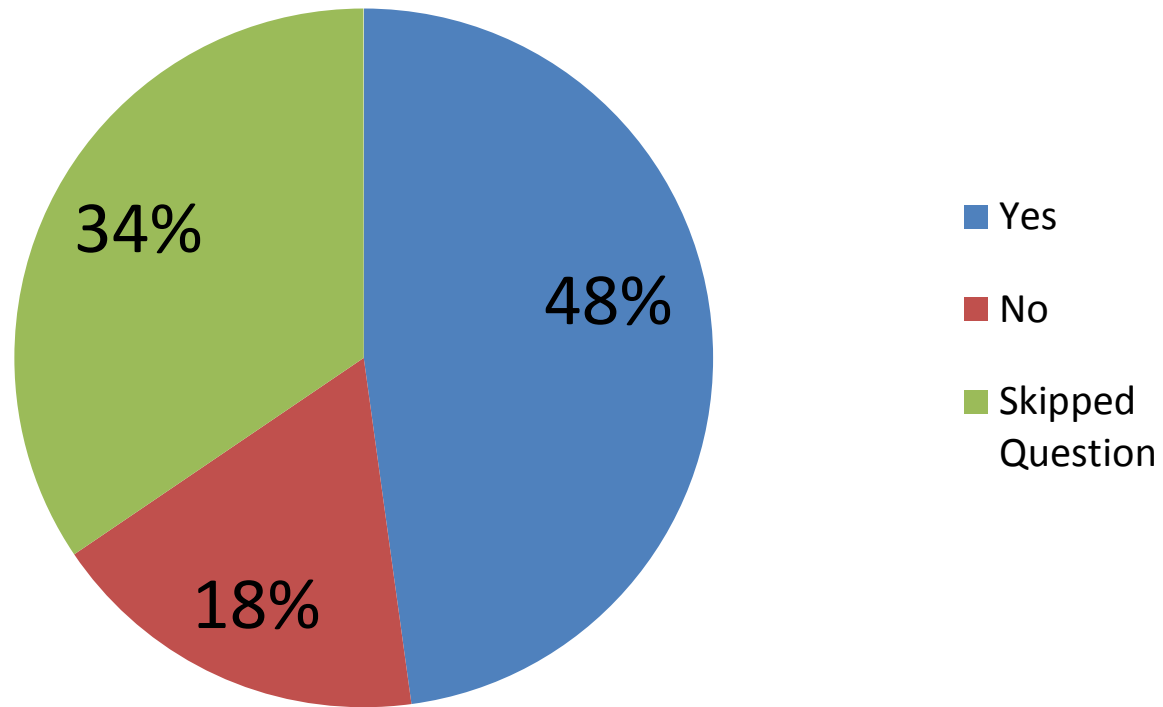
Do you know what a ranked ballot is?



2016 Survey – Ranked Ballot portion



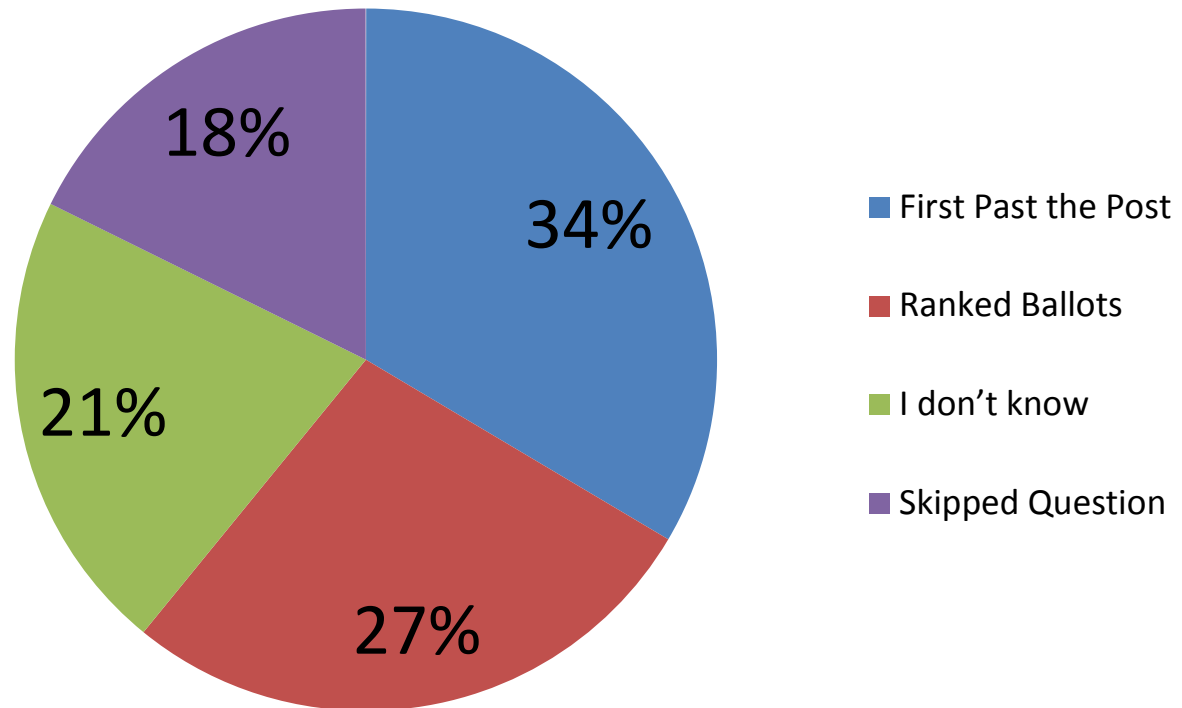
Would you like more information on Ranked Ballots?



2016 Survey – Ranked Ballot portion



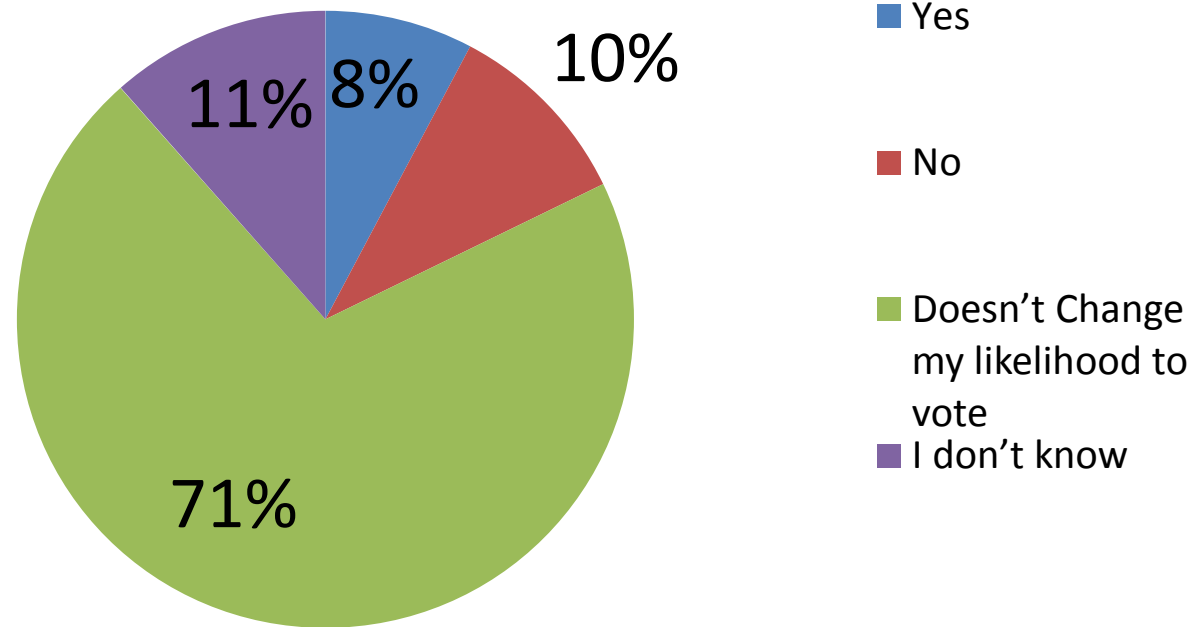
Which system do you prefer?



2016 Survey – Ranked Ballot portion



"I Would be more likely to vote in the 2018 election if a ranked ballot system was in place"



Considerations – Potential Strengths



Better reflects
“majority”

Reduces “strategic”
voting

Purports to reduce
negative
campaigning

Requires
candidates to
engage voters
broadly

Considerations – Potential Weaknesses



Relevance of 50%
when only 30%
participate?

Second or third
choice isn't first
choice

Transparency of
vote difficult to
explain

Interpretation
rules untested

Open to court
challenge, review
by Ombudsman

Administrative Considerations



- Interpretation & procedural issues: need for consistency across municipalities
- New ballot type
- Technology is new, requires impartial review of code to ensure compliance
- Comprehensive, multi-channel public & candidate education program required
- Extensive election training will be required
- Overall costs increase of ~1/3

Considerations - Public Education



Public Education Strategy

- Extensive public education and community outreach with dedicated staff would be required.
- A comprehensive strategy will need to be developed.
 - Public seminars, information sessions, workshops, a mock election, extensive support and digital outreach, and more will all be utilized

Questions?

