Ranked Choice Voting

Presentation to St. Louis Park

Human Rights Commission

August 15, 2017

What Is Ranked Choice Voting?

✓ **Ranked Choice Voting is a simple election process that allows voters to rank candidates in order of their preference – 1st choice, 2 choice , 3rd choice and so on.**

✓ **It works like a traditional runoff, but happens in a single election, eliminating the need for a separate high-cost, low-turnout primary in nonpartisan races (or runoffs in partisan races).**

✓ **In competitive multicandidate races, candidates need second- and third-choice votes to win.**
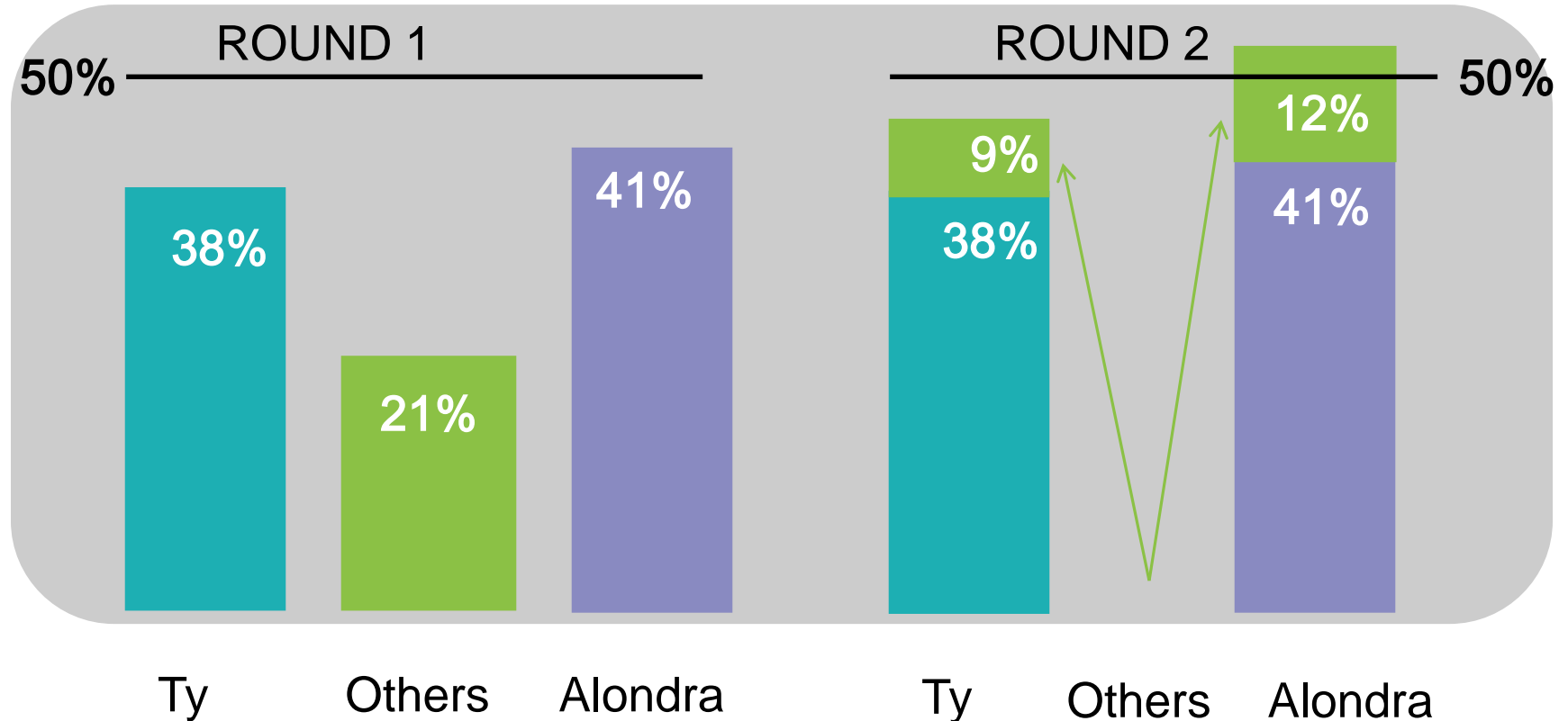
How Ranked Choice Voting Works

Minneapolis Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53z9feUiqdg

MPR Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHRPMJmzBBw

RCV Example: Mpls. Ward 9, 2013

RCV Benefits In Municipal Elections

- ✓ **Increases voter participation by rolling two elections into one, bringing together the most voters with the most candidates in a single decisive election in November when turnout is higher and more diverse**
- ✓ **Eliminates vote splitting and ensures candidates win with the broadest possible support**
- ✓ **Increases opportunities for communities of color**
- ✓ **Saves the cost of a (nonpartisan) primary**
- ✓ **Fosters more civil and substantive campaigns**
- ✓ **Eliminates spoiler, wasted vote dynamics**
- ✓ **Reduces role of money in campaigns**

2017 St. Louis Park Primary Outcome

✓ **2017 is the last year St. Louis Park will hold a municipal primary. A primary was needed in the competitive 4-way race in Ward 1.**

✓ **Turnout was 12.6%, which is very low, though higher than in recent municipal primaries which have trended at 3-5%.**

✓ **Support for the four candidates was split, with no candidate receiving a majority of votes. The same would occur in the General Election without RCV.**

✓ **Under RCV, all candidates would be on the General Election ballot. This is especially important for candidates of color because low-turnout primaries disproportionately hurt candidates from underrepresented communities. People of color vote in significantly higher percentages in General Elections.**

✓ **RCV also prevents vote splitting and ensures support for candidates of color can be pooled, increasing the chance they'll be elected.**

Support For RCV In St. Louis Park

- ✓ **League of Women Voters-St. Louis Park**

- ✓ **City Councilmembers Sue Sanger, Anne Mavity, Thom Miller, Tim Brausen and Steve Hallfin**

- ✓ **Nearly all candidates running in 2017**

- ✓ **Sun Sailor and Sun Sailor editorialized in favor of RCV**

- ✓ **DFL Senate District 46**

RCV Reduces Voting Disparity Gaps

- ✓ **RCV is shown to increase representation for women and people of color by:**

  1) **Replacing low, unrepresentative, turnout elections with a single high-turnout and more diverse election General Election, and**

  2) **By allowing for multiple candidates appealing to the same community to run without splitting the vote**.

- ✓ **In cities with RCV, the share of candidates who are women and people of color has increased significantly.**

RCV Reduces Voting Disparity Gaps

- ✓ **In California, where RCV has been used since 2004:**
  - ✓ **People of color have won 60% of all contests**
  - ✓ **Women have won 40% of all contests**
  - ✓ **13 of 18 seats on the San Francisco council are people of color, up 8 before RCV**
  - ✓ **When implemented in San Francisco, effective voter participation increased by more than 300% in some neighborhoods. This is because all voters cast a ballot in a single high-turnout election. Before RCV, turnout in communities of color plummeted in the runoff, decreasing their influence in the final outcome.**

RCV Reduces Voting Disparity Gaps

- ✓ **In Minneapolis, where RCV has been used since 2009:**
- ✓ **Following the first truly competitive races in 2013, RCV resulted in the city's most ethnically diverse and gender balanced city council**
- ✓ **The first Somali-American, Latina, and Hmong candidates were elected to the city council**
- ✓ **This year (2017), the number of candidates who are women, people of color or from different political parties is at an historical high**
- ✓ **Competitive candidates of color are running in the mayoral race and 8 of 13 council seats**
- ✓ **Competitive women candidates are running for mayor and 11 of 13 council seats**

RCV Reduces Voting Disparity Gaps

✓ **In St. Paul, where RCV was introduced in 2011:**

  ✓ **In 2011 and in this year's mayoral race, highly competitive minor party candidates are running.**

  ✓ **In 2013, RCV elected the city's first Hmong city council member with second-choice votes. The second-placed finisher, also a candidate of color, was selected to be the councilmember's chief aide.**

  ✓ **In 2015, Rebecca Noecker was elected with second-choice votes to become the ward's first female councilmember.**

Are Races In St. Louis Park Competitive Enough To Need RCV?

Yes, if the past 5 election cycles continue to hold true. Without a primary, competitive 3-way plus races are likely to result in winners with less than a majority and produce spoiler dynamics.

- 2009 – 3-way primary for Ward 4 (Ross, Theobald, Peterson)
- 2011 – 3-way primary for Mayor (Spano, Brausen, Johnston-Madison)
- 2013 – 3-way primary for Ward 3 (Santa, Arries, Lindberg)
- 2015 – 4-way primary for Mayor (Spano, Edlavitch, Segal, Evans)
- 2017 – 4 way primary for Ward 1 (Rog, Shekleton, Stout, Kaplan)

RCV Is Proven And Simple

In Minneapolis in 2013:

- ✓ **Turnout was over 80,000, highest in 12 years**
- ✓ **88% of voters ranked their ballots for mayor – 78% used all 3 choices**
- ✓ **85% found RCV simple to use**
- ✓ **Valid ballot rate of 99.94%**
- ✓ **Nearly 70% want to continue using RCV; nearly two-thirds want to see it expanded to state elections**

RCV Is Proven And Simple

In St. Paul in 2015 (Ward 2):

✓ **83% of voters found RCV simple to use**

✓ **73% of voters ranked their ballots**

✓ **70% of voters like and want to continue using RCV in St Paul**

Turnout Is Up In RCV Races

✓ **By eliminating the low-turnout primary, RCV increases voter participation in the election of the winner several fold**

✓ **Turnout is also up under RCV races**

Minneapolis:

- **Mayoral race, 2013 – turnout was 80,000, the highest for a municipal election in 12 years**
- **Ward 5, 2013 – turnout was the highest in a decade in the city's lowest turnout ward**

St. Paul:

- **Ward 1, 2013 special election – turnout was 33% higher than in 2011, and the highest in 8 years.**
- **Ward 2, 2015 open seat – turnout was 6% higher than in 2011**

Ranked Choice Voting Ballot

SAMPLE CITY AND SCHOOL DISTRICT BALLOT
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
NOVEMBER 3, 2015

Follow these Ranked Voting instructions carefully:
• Select only one candidate for each of your choices
• You are not required to choose more than one candidate
• Do not select the same candidate for more than one choice
• To vote, completely fill in the oval next to the candidate of your choice, like this: ⬤

CITY OFFICES

COUNCIL MEMBER
WARD 4
VOTE FOR ONE

1st choice	2nd choice (if any)	3rd choice (if any)
Select one	Select one	Select one
◯ TOM GOLDSTEIN	◯ TOM GOLDSTEIN	◯ TOM GOLDSTEIN
◯ RUSS STARK	◯ RUSS STARK	◯ RUSS STARK
◯ write-in, if any	◯ write-in, if any	◯ write-in, if any

St Paul 4-6
Turn over ballot to vote on school board offices
VOTE FRONT AND BACK OF BALLOT

OFFICIAL BALLOT
Judge_____
Judge_____

SAMPLE CITY AND SCHOOL DISTRICT BALLOT
SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NOVEMBER 3, 2015

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS
To vote, completely fill in the oval(s) next to your choice(s) like this: ⬤

SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICES

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER
VOTE FOR UP TO FOUR

◯ JON SCHUMACHER
◯ LINDA FREEMAN
◯ GREG COPELAND
◯ SCOTT RASKIEWICZ
◯ ZUKI ELLIS
◯ KEITH HARDY
◯ AARON ANTHONY BENNER
◯ STEVE MARCHESE
◯ MARY VANDERWERT
◯ write-in, if any
◯ write-in, if any
◯ write-in, if any
◯ write-in, if any

Turn over ballot to vote on city office
VOTE FRONT AND BACK OF BALLOT

St. Paul uses a mixed RCV and school board ballot (front and back), similar to what a ballot in St. Louis Park would look like. It works very smoothly and effectively.

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DO NOT Overvote

DON'T #1

Do not choose more than one candidate for a single choice

REMEMBER! – For single or multiple seat offices, you can only mark one candidate per column

DO NOT Repeat A Ranking

DON'T #2

Do not choose the same candidate more than once.

REMEMBER! – It doesn't help your 1st choice to rank him or her more than once or to not rank anyone else.

DO NOT Skip A Ranking

DON'T #3

Do not skip a column

Note! – When a skipped ranking is encountered, the ballot is counted for the next highest ranking (as required under the voter intent rules in the Mpls RCV ordinance).

CITY OFFICES

MAYOR — Rank your first, second and third choice candidates in the columns below. One to be elected.

1 1st Choice	**2** 2nd Choice, if any Must be **DIFFERENT** from your 1st choice	**3** 3rd Choice, if any Must be **DIFFERENT** from your 1st and 2nd choices
Select one	Select one	Select one
● HARALSON, Apple Party	○ HARALSON, Apple Party	● HARALSON, Apple Party
○ HONEYCRISP, Classic Party	○ HONEYCRISP, Classic Party	○ HONEYCRISP, Classic Party
○ MCINTOSH, Apple Party	○ MCINTOSH, Apple Party	○ MCINTOSH, Apple Party
○ REGENT, Cold Hardy Party	○ REGENT, Cold Hardy Party	○ REGENT, Cold Hardy Party
○ SNOWSWEET, Apple Party	○ SNOWSWEET, Apple Party	○ SNOWSWEET, Apple Party
○ FIRESIDE, Apple Party	○ FIRESIDE, Apple Party	○ FIRESIDE, Apple Party
○ SWEETANGO, New Party	○ SWEETANGO, New Party	○ SWEETANGO, New Party
○ write-in, if any	○ write-in, if any	○ write-in, if any

Ballot Errors Under RCV

✓ **Over vote: Overvotes occur in all elections and are caught by the machine. These are "spoiled" ballots and redone by voters. Initially, there are slightly higher overvotes under RCV than under traditional city elections. Highest overvote rates occur under partisan primaries (6-7% in Minneapolis).**

✓ **Skipped ranking: This is an infrequent error. When this occurs, the next highest ranking is counted.**

✓ **Defective ballots are extremely rare. The valid ballot error rate in the citywide 2013 mayoral race was 99.94%. It was similar in St. Paul.**

✓ **Under votes are not errors, but are highly discouraged because they result in higher ballot exhaustion rates. Voters are encouraged to rank.**

Where RCV Is Used

✓ **RCV is used in countries across the world, including Ireland, Scotland, Australia, London (England) and others**

✓ **Maine is first state to adopt RCV statewide – first use in 2018**

✓ **RCV is growing across the US:**

- **Bay Area: San Francisco, Oakland, San Leandro and Berkeley**
- **Minneapolis and St. Paul**
- **Portland, Maine**
- **Hendersonville, North Carolina**
- **Takoma Park, Maryland**
- **Telluride, Colorado**
- **Benton, Oregon**
- **Upcoming implementations in Sarasota (FL) Santa Fe (NM), Memphis (TN)**
- **Several southern states use RVC for military and overseas voting**
- **Cities in Michigan, Colorado, Oregon, New York, Washington and Maryland are exploring RCV.**

RCV Implementation

✓ **Minneapolis and St. Paul have paved the way for other cities in Minnesota, especially in Hennepin and Ramsey County.**

✓ **The RCV ordinance, implementation process, educational materials, training guides, tabulation method and results reporting procedures are in place and adaptable for communities like St. Louis Park, minimizing start-up time and costs.**

Voter Education

✓ **RCV is simple and quick for voters to learn, but they must be informed of the switch.**

✓ **Education is conducted by the city, FairVote MN and the LWV. FairVote MN also partners with community organizations that do voter engagement work.**

✓ **FairVote MN's education includes events, door knocking, phone banking, traditional and social media, and candidate training.**

✓ **Education by cities typically includes information brochures, videos, sample ballots, trained election judges and information to the media.**

✓ **The voter education model in Minneapolis and St. Paul is nationally recognized and emulated.**

✓ **No need to reinvent the wheel – existing education materials and processes can be readily adapted for RCV in St. Louis Park**

Process For Adopting RCV

Like Minneapolis and St. Paul, St. Louis Park has a city charter which can be amended to change the way it conducts its local elections. The charter can be changed in one of two ways:

1. By approval of the voters (ballot measure)
   - A question can be placed on the ballot through a citizen petition or by a majority vote by the city council or charter commission.

2. By unanimous vote by the city council (this is how the recent decision to eliminate the city primary was made)
   - The city council must submit a charter amendment proposal to the charter commission for review, though does not need its approval to amend the charter by either a unanimous vote or to place a question on the ballot.

Minneapolis & St. Paul Election Chiefs On RCV

The 2015 RCV election was "the smoothest election I've seen in my 14 years administering St. Paul elections." - *Joe Mansky, Ramsey County Elections Manager*

"I'm proud of the work we've done in administering RCV with efficiency, transparency and trust." - *Casey Carl, Minneapolis City Clerk*

What Voters Say About RCV

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgVp0WDANhk