

Ranked Choice Voting

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to towncouncil@greenfield-ma.gov

Greetings,

I recently read a news article about the council discussing ranked-choice voting. I wanted to provide some resources from one of the groups that advocates for this type of reform:

<https://www.fairvote.org/rcv#rcvbenefits>

Obviously, it's an advocacy organization, but I think they still make some good points. Importantly, Greenfield could seek information from other cities across the US that have adopted it (with many [recently adopting](#) it):

<https://www.fairvote.org/rcv#where is ranked choice voting used>

Thus, Greenfield could reach out to some of these cities to ask how things went and what elected officials and voters in those locations thought of the system. I'm not sure if it is allowed or not, but one variant of ranked-choice voting with [multi-member districts](#) could also help increase diversity of views on the Council. I would also note that, in instances of many people running, voters would not necessarily need to rank all 11 candidates. Most RCV systems allow you to rank as many or as few candidates as you like. Thus, you can still vote the "old-fashioned way" if you only want to vote for one candidate, or you can rank some subset of them if you have an order of preference. There are also some variants that allow for [top-four primaries](#) to give voters more choice, and I think this could be useful as well (especially if you wanted to use RCV to narrow down a field and advance, say, a final four to the general election).

In any case, I hope the Council will give a fair amount of thought to such reforms, even if it ultimately chooses not to pursue it. Allowing voters to more-fully articulate their views and preferences, and making politicians more likely to have a majority of support versus a plurality would likely be good for democracy writ-large. While some of the benefits of reduced negative campaigning may not be as great at the local level, getting more citizens used to the system would help pave the way for electoral reforms at the state and federal level, the latter of which there is no doubt room for *significant* improvement.

Best regards,