



**STRENGTHENING
EXPERTISE FOR THE
CITIES WE SERVE**

Districting and Voting



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Setting Expectations



The Question of Districts



Voting Systems



Closing Thoughts



Setting Expectations

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Closing Thoughts



SETTING EXPECTATIONS

What you won't get

- Direct answers to questions about which option is “best”
- Possible solutions that don't have any downsides

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SETTING EXPECTATIONS

What you will get

- Information about some of the system options
- Direct answers about what some of the scholarship, plus some logic and experience, says are the likely effects of various system options



THE QUESTION OF DISTRICTS



Vote
Here

POLLING
PLACE



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TWO MAIN OPTIONS



At Large



Single-Member Districts



At Large

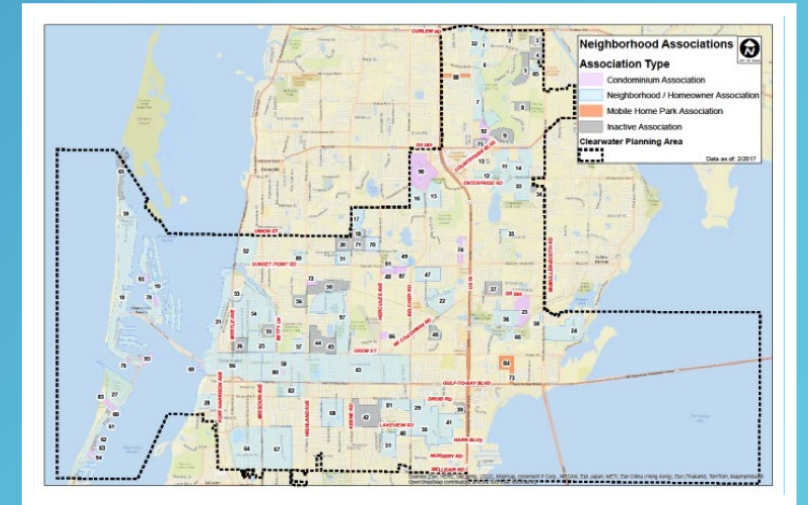
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- Every voter can vote on every seat
- Every voter is a constituent of every sitting councilmember



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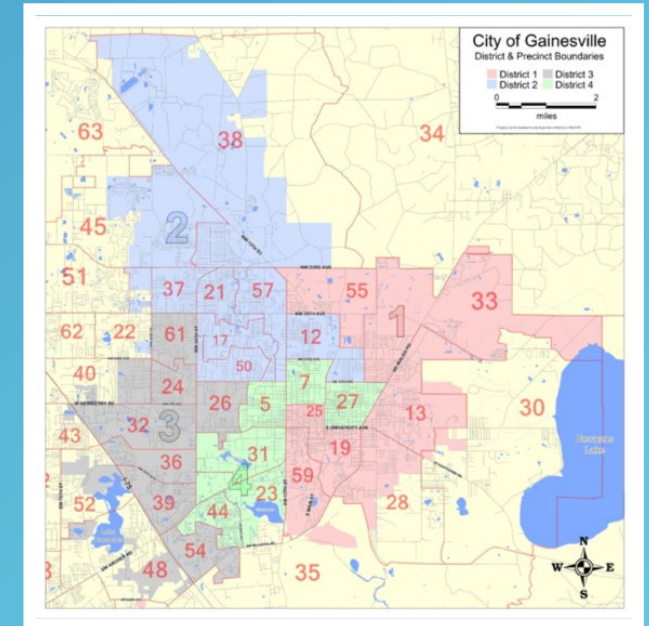
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Single-Member Districts

- Councilmembers may be more familiar with their districts
- A polarized majority in a particular district can win the seat
 - ▶ Minority voices may be more represented
- Cost of entry is less



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Underrepresentation and Districts

Whether or not single-member districts are likely to improve representation of under-represented groups depends on three primary factors:



Size



Concentration



Polarization

Do Single-Member Districts Matter?

Research suggests:

- Under certain conditions, single-member districts are likely to increase Black representation
 - ▶ There may be a gender dimension – Single-member districts may help Black men but not Black women
- The evidence is more mixed when it comes to representation of Hispanic/Latinx communities

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Do Single-Member Districts Matter?

Research suggests:

- Single-member districts do not appear to increase the representation of women
 - ▶ Some research indicates they are more likely to prevail in at-large systems
- The voting system may affect representation as well

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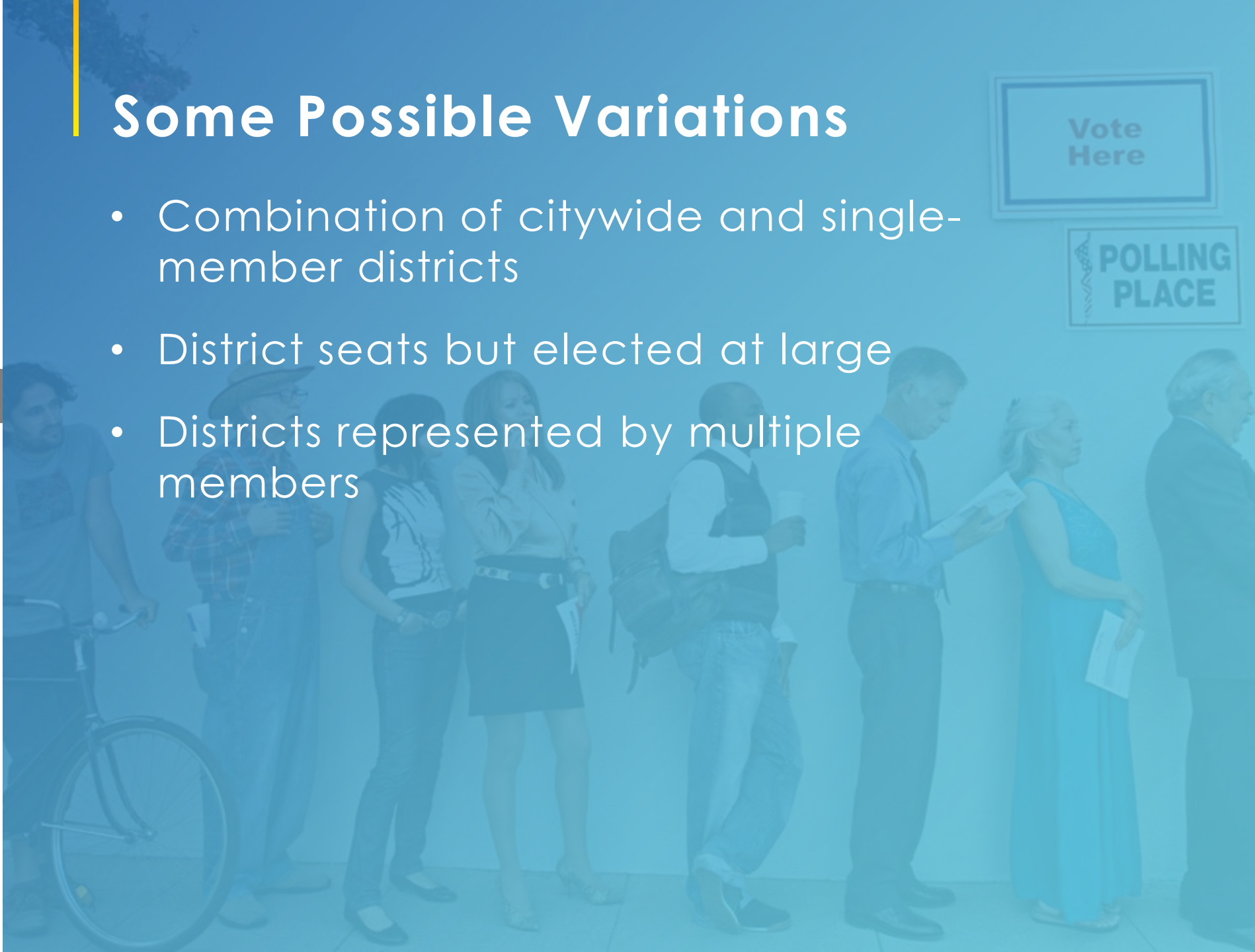
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Some Possible Variations

- Combination of citywide and single-member districts
- District seats but elected at large
- Districts represented by multiple members



Electing Councils: The National Picture

Breakdown of Types of Council Elections by City Size (2001) (n=649)

	Small (25,000- 69,999)	Medium (70,000- 199,999)	Large (200,000 And Up)
At-Large	48.9%	43.7%	16.4%
Mixed-System	25.0%	25.4%	38.2%
District	26.1%	31.0%	45.5%

Source: Svara, James H. [*Two Decades of Continuity and Change in American City Councils*](#). Washington, DC: National League of Cities, 2003.

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Questions 

VOTING SYSTEMS



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WHO WINS? SOME ELECTION SYSTEM OPTIONS

Plurality

Majority (with top two runoff if needed)

Ranked Choice Voting

Approval Voting

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WHO SHOULD WIN? CONDORCET AND BORDA

The Gold Standard: Condorcet Winner

- The candidate that beats every other candidate in a paired comparison

The Silver Standard: Borda Winner

- The candidate who secures the highest cumulative rank score

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DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION OF CONDORCET AND BORDA

**Demands on voters becoming
overwhelming**

3 candidates – 3 decisions
4 candidates – 6 decisions
5 candidates – 10 decisions
6 candidates – 15 decisions

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TWO CONCERNS ABOUT CONVENTIONAL METHODS

- The Condorcet or Borda winner often does not win
- They are subject to manipulation through strategic voting

An Example

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

An Example

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

Plurality Voting – B Wins

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

Plurality Voting – B Wins

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

Strategic Voting – Plurality – A Wins

A	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	B
E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

Primary/Runoff (Top Two)

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A and B in a Runoff

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A Wins

A	A	A	B	B	A	A	B	B
E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

The Condorcet Winner – C

	A	B	C	D	E			
E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

The Borda Winner - C

	1 st (4 pts)	2 nd (3 pts)	3 rd (2 pts)	4 th (1 pt)	5 th (0 pts)	Total Pts
A	3 (12)	1 (3)	1 (2)	3 (3)	1 (0)	20
B	4 (16)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	3 (0)	18
C	1 (4)	4 (12)	4 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	24
D	0 (0)	3 (9)	3 (6)	2 (2)	1 (0)	17
E	1 (4)	1 (3)	1 (2)	2 (2)	4 (0)	11

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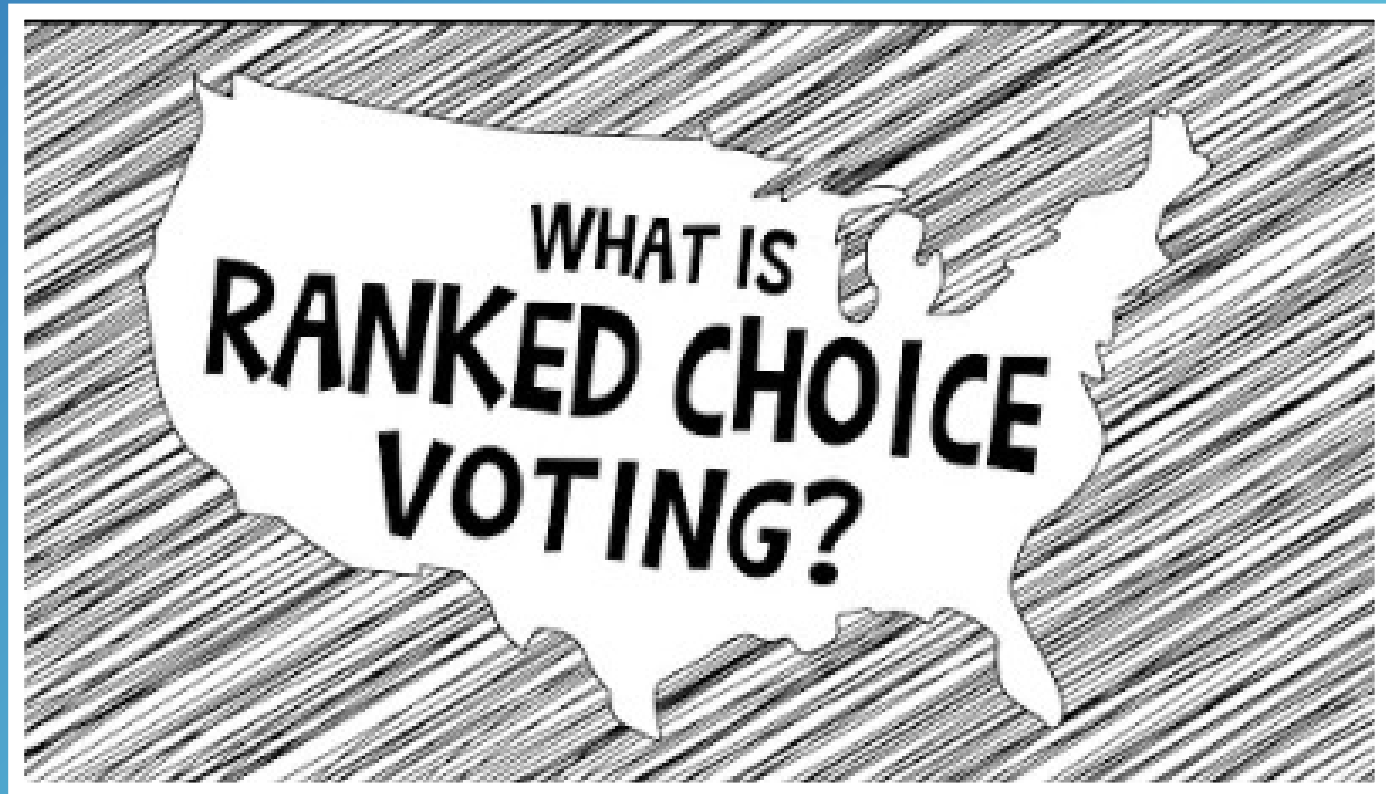
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RANKED CHOICE VOTING



fairvote.org/rcv#how_rcv_works

Ranked-Choice Voting

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A	3
B	4
C	1
D	0
E	1

Ranked-Choice Voting

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A	3
B	4
C	1
D	0
E	1

Ranked-Choice Voting

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A	3
B	4
C	1
D	0
E	1

Ranked-Choice Voting

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A	3
B	4
C	1
D	0
E	1

Ranked-Choice Voting – Nothing's Perfect

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A	3
B	4
C	1
D	0
E	1

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APPROVAL VOTING



youtube.com/watch?v=orybDrUj4vA

Approval Voting

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A	
B	
C	
D	
E	

Approval Voting

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A	5
B	4
C	8
D	4
E	3

Approval Voting

E	A	A	B	B	C	A	B	B
C	D	C	C	A	D	E	C	D
D	C	D	D	C	E	C	A	C
A	B	E	E	D	A	B	D	A
B	E	B	A	E	B	D	E	E

A	5
B	4
C	8
D	4
E	3

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CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Systems Matter
- Systems don't guarantee outcomes
- There is no "right" answer



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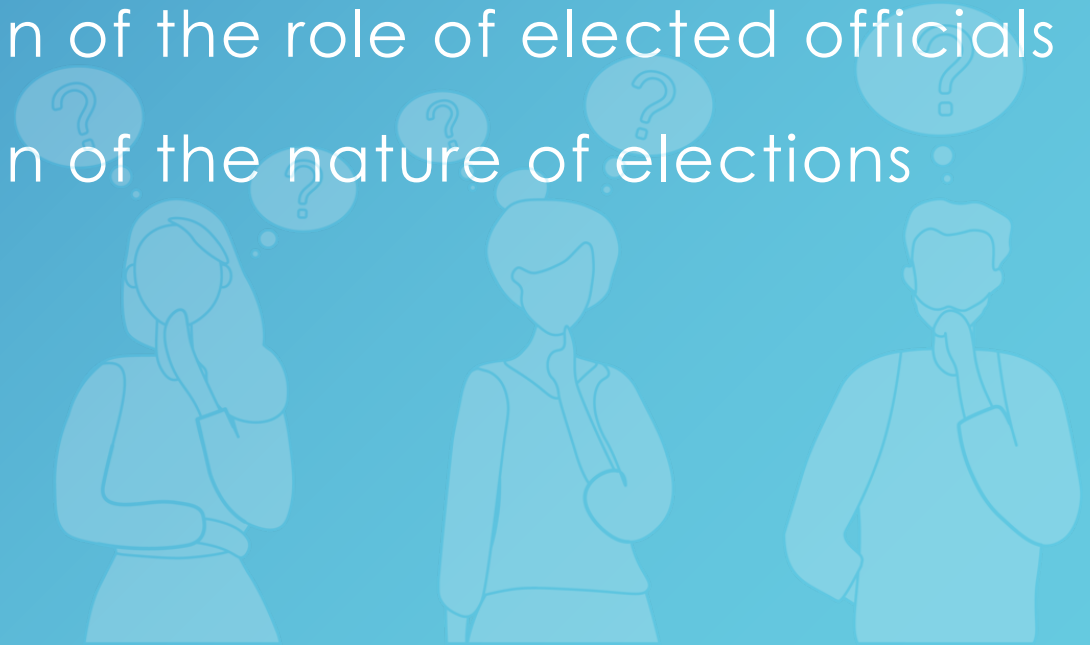
Closing Thoughts



CLOSING THOUGHTS

The choices should be driven by:

- the nature of the community
- the vision of the city in that community
- the vision of the role of elected officials
- the vision of the nature of elections





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