

City Council,

I would like to express my support for council moving forward with implementing a ranked ballot for the 2022 election. Ranked ballots will improve the civility of elections in Burlington, they are proven to encourage more civic engagement and get more candidates to put their names forward to participate, and I do not believe that additional studying of this issue will unveil any new information.

I think everyone here would like to improve the civility of elections in Burlington. The 2018 election in particular was marred with a number of unpleasant issues that turned off a lot of residents and reduced engagement overall in the process. And these issues occurred both in the mayoral race and in different ward races for council seats. A ranked ballot ensures that every candidate needs to focus on positive issues to avoid turning off any voters from choosing them as a second choice. It would make Burlington's elections more civil.

As was stated in the city's report, ranked ballots have been proven across many jurisdictions to encourage more citizens to engage in local politics, and more citizens to run for public office. This effect is considerably more pronounced for women, visible minorities, and those with disabilities. There was endless discussion in many wards going into the last election about people not choosing to run because they did not want to "split the vote". A ranked ballot would make the process far more accessible to all of Burlington and likely have the positive effect of increasing the diversity on council.

One thing made very clear on the city's report was that further study of this issue is not necessary. The two municipalities in Ontario that took referendums on the issue did not achieve the necessary 50% threshold, but both populations endorsed the idea. The municipality that ran their elections on ranked ballots did so successfully with positive feelings about the outcomes.

Ranked ballots are a good idea for Burlington, and my parting thought on the matter is: In all my research into this subject, I have not been able to find ANY jurisdiction that moved to a ranked ballot system and regretted it. It has been a positive change everywhere it has been implemented and council should move forward to implement it for our city's next election.

Andrew Drummond