# Somerville Ranked Choice Voting Committee Meeting

11-18-2026

# Agenda

1. Declare the meeting to be in order and establish quorum
2. Review of the committee's charge and scope
3. Public engagement process
4. Timeline and future meetings
5. Evidence from RCV in other areas
6. RCV choice design
7. Resident concerns/comments

# Committee Charge and Scope

Recommendation #36: Establish a Ranked Choice Voting Study Committee.

The committee recommends the creation of a Ranked Choice Voting Commission to explore ranked-choice voting, propose a measure to adopt ranked-choice voting, and outline an implementation strategy for Somerville.

Policy Considerations: The committee had several considerations for this recommendation. The Fair and Open Elections Task Force, convened in 2018, voted unanimously to recommend RCV as a vehicle to increase the diversity of the candidate pool and make elections more transparent and open. The 2020 Statewide Ballot Initiative had a 75% approval vote in Somerville, despite not passing statewide.

Interview feedback from critical members of city staff and elected officials noted several concerns about the complicated nature of RCV and issues other states had with the implementation. Because of these, the committee voted to recommend that within 6 months of the passage of the charter the city shall convene a Ranked Choice Voting Commission to adopt RCV and outline an implementation strategy for Somerville.

Source here

# SECTION 9-7: TIME OF TAKING EFFECT

(c) A voting method shall be considered ranked-choice voting if the municipal voter ranks candidates in order of preference.

The Committee's report shall include: **a) the elected offices to be selected by this voting method, b) a timeframe and strategy for implementation, c) infrastructure and equipment requirements, d) a cost analysis, e) a comparative analysis of other voting methods, f) an analysis of potential equity concerns, and g) a community education plan.**

Amherst's similar report is here
https://amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/53914/RCVC_Report_2020-12-01

# Public engagement process

These meetings are public.

Should we have additional ways for the public to weigh in?

If so, what are the best approaches?

# Timeline and future meetings

We have 17 months to produce a report.

Are there earlier deadlines that we should be seeking to hit?

December 9 at 6pm has the most respondents for the next meeting.

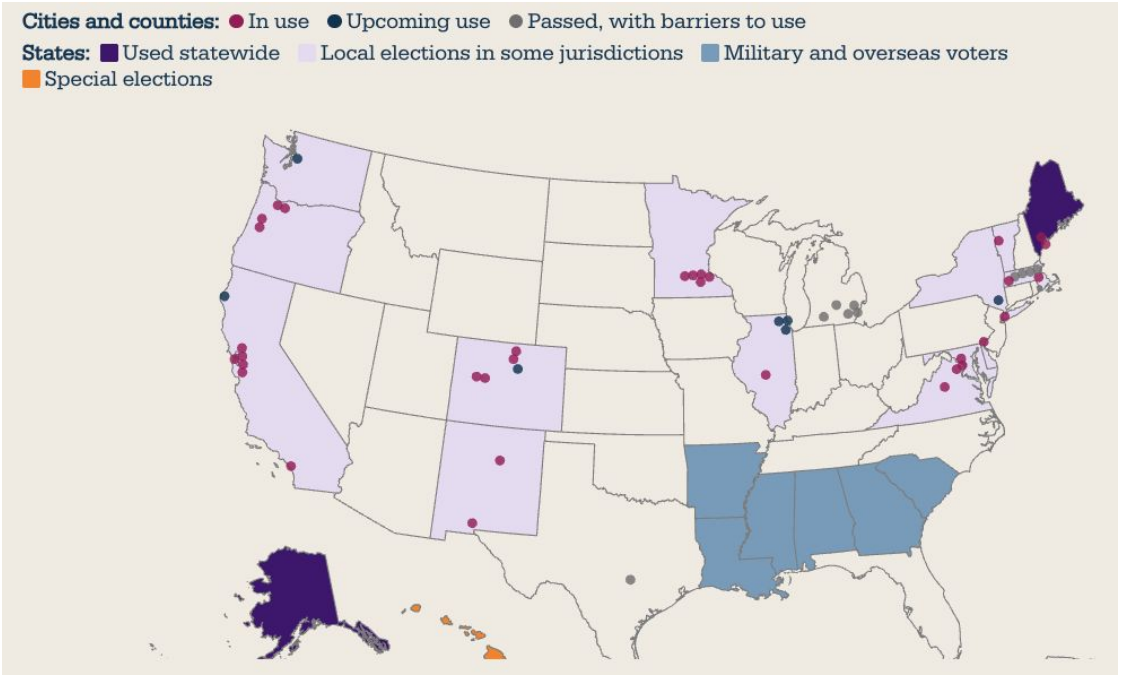
# Evidence from where RCV is used and what type

Source for RCV data:

- https://ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice_voting_(RCV)
- https://fairvote.org/
- https://amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/53914/RCVC_Report_2020-12-01

# Where is it used

Source: FairVote



# Types of RCV

| Type | Instant Runoff Voting | Proportional Representation | Sequential | Bottoms-up |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Single seats | Yes | | | |
| Multiple seats | | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Where it's used | Alaska, New York City, Maine | Cambridge, Portland, OR | | Seattle, Washington DC |

Source: https://fairvote.org/prcv-vs-sequential-vs-bottoms-up/

# RCV Design: Somerville elections

Currently, voters elect:

- 1 Mayor city-wide
- 7 City Councillors, 1 per ward
- 4 City Councillors, at-large (city-wide)
- 7 School Committee Members, 1 per ward

Questions:

- Should all offices be elected via RCV?
- Which RCV method?
- Are preliminary elections needed?

# Resident Concerns/Comments