A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE CAMBRIDGE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

December 20, 2022 @ 5:30 p.m.
REMOTE ONLY – VIA ZOOM

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this meeting will be REMOTE ONLY via ZOOM.

The zoom link is: https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/83253118929
Meeting ID: 832 5311 8929
One tap mobile +13092053325,,83253118929# US

Agenda Items – Tuesday, December 20, 2022

I.   Roll Call

II.   Introduction by Chair, Kathy Born

III.   Adoption of Meeting Minutes from meeting of November 22, and December 6, 2022

IV.   Meeting Materials Submitted to the Committee to be placed on file
        ● Communications from Committee Members
        ● Communications from Council Members
        ● Communications from the Public
        ● Other Meeting Materials

V.   Community Engagement Plan + Interviews (20 minutes)
        ● **Facilitator**: Anna. **Goal**: Review and take action on list of interviewees and interview questions

VI.   Round Table Discussion (60 minutes):
        In your opinion:
            What is working about the city council / manager form of government?
            What are the challenges about the city council / manager form of government?
            Should the city form of government stay the same or change?
        ● **Facilitator**: Anna. **Goal**: Preliminary discussion - each member shares their answer

VII.   Review of Cambridge City Manager and City Council powers and responsibilities (15 minutes)
        ● **Facilitator**: Libby and Anna. **Goal**: Overview of current structure and discussion

VIII.   Public Comment

- Members of the public are invited to share their ideas or comments with the committee

MINUTES OF THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
Tuesday, December 6, 2022

The Cambridge Charter Review Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, December 6, 2022. The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30p.m. by the Chair of the Committee, Kathleen Born. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this meeting was remote via zoom.

At the request of the Chair, the Clerk called the roll.
Kaled Abebe – Present
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Present
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Present
Nikolas Bowie – Present
Kevin Chen – Present
Max Clermont – Present
Jennifer Gilbert – Present
Kai Long – Present
Patrick Magee – Present
Mina Makarious – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Present
Ellen Shachter – Present
Susan Shell – Present
Jim Stockard – Present
Kathleen Born, Chair - Present
Present – 14 Absent – 1. Quorum established.

Chair Born opened the meeting with the Adoption of the Minutes of the November 8, 2022, meeting and recognized a motion from member Jim Stockard and seconded by member Patrick Magee.

Kaled Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Yes
Max Clermont – Yes
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarious – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born, Chair - Yes
Yes – 14 No – 0 Absent – 1. Motion passes.

The Chair noted that there was one Communication from member Jessica Acevedo.
The Chair recognized a motion from member Kevin Chen and seconded by member Kai Long to place the Communication on file.

Kaled Abebe – Yes
Jessica DeJesus Acevedo – Yes
Mosammat Faria Afreen – Yes
Nikolas Bowie – Yes
Kevin Chen – Yes
Max Clermont – Yes
Jennifer Gilbert – Yes
Kai Long – Yes
Patrick Magee – Yes
Mina Makarious – Absent
Lisa Peterson – Yes
Ellen Shachter – Yes
Susan Shell – Yes
Jim Stockard – Yes
Kathleen Born, Chair - Yes
Yes – 14 No – 0 Absent – 1. Motion passes.

Anna Corning introduced the Committee Values Statement Proposal that the writing team has been working on.

Members Lisa Peterson and Mosammat Faria Afreen thanked the writing team and had clarifying questions with some parts of the statement and suggestions for improvement. Discussion between members took place on small changes to be made to the Values Statement.

A fist to five vote was done, with fourteen members voting to take action and accept the Committee Value Statement with a five vote and one member noted as absent.

Michael Ward from the Collins Center did an overview of the Plan E Charter. They also did a detailed review of an Exemplar Charter, which included preamble, incorporation; short title; definitions, legislative branch, executive branch, school committee, administrative organization, financial procedures, elections, citizen participation mechanisms, general provisions, and transition provisions. They noted that the legislative branch is where the Charter begins to define division of powers between the executive and legislative branch, which all depends on what the Committee decides on form of government.

Member Susan Shell questioned what the procedure is when a change in the Charter is put into effect and clarification on how the Charter Review Committee was set up. Michael Ward responded and provided information on what the process would be for the Charter Review Committee.

Member Kaleb Abebe had a clarifying question on amending current charter versus drafting new language. Michael Ward responded with pros and cons of doing each. Anna Corning also noted that the Committee would not be starting from scratch if new language was drafted and would be able to use existing text from other sources.

Member Jennifer Gilbert noted that Charter Committee's focus is to have the government be more accessible. They noted it could be a good idea to start from scratch to reach common goals, create a more readable Charter, and the opportunity for all people to have power within the government.

There was discussion between members Mosammat Faria Afreen, Ellen Shachter, and Lisa Peterson on the positive effects of drafting new language and that change could be good, noting that this would be a good opportunity for the Charter.

Anna Corning asked members to vote fist to five on drafting new text for the Plan E Charter, with fourteen members voting five and one member noted as absent.

The next topic that Anna Corning introduced was to review the forms of government.

Michael Ward did a quick overview of the basic forms of government in Massachusetts, which included examples from both City and Town governments. Noting that Cambridge uses City form of government that has the option to use a Mayoral form (elected Mayor leads executive branch) or Council- Manager form (appointed Manager leads executive branch). They opened it up to the Committee, looking for what questions members had and what information members need to know so the Committee can start moving forward.

Member Susan Shell asked if there was any general information, pros and cons, or any thought out research that members could look at to help with decision making. Michael Ward responded that it is something the Collins Center could provide. Anna Corning noted that they have also put resources on the Charter Review website about charter and charter review.

Member Ellen Shachter questioned if the City Council or department heads from the city in the Executive branches would be able to give feedback on their thoughts. They also questioned if a survey is possible, to which Michael Ward responded noting that surveys have be done in the past. Michael suggested that it could be possible to get a panel of Mayors, Managers, and Councillors from other cities to hear their perspectives. Anna Corning mentioned the possibility of getting a list of interviewees that could include previous mayors, managers, and department heads from the City of Cambridge, to gather their thoughts and feedback.

Member Mosammat Faria Afreen noted that they would be interested in seeing how cities in other countries are run. They noted that they are interested in seeing the Charter create a form of government which welcomes community participation.

Member Jennifer Gilbert had comments on community participation and elections and how the Charter can focus on the good of both Mayor and Manager government.

Member Nikolas Bowie noted they would like to see what other forms of government look like besides the two presented and the importance of expanding government to look beyond the City of Cambridge and Massachusetts.

Member Kai Long noted they liked the idea of having both a Mayor and City Council and noted they agreed with the idea of looking at other forms of government in other countries to help make our politics not dependent on personality versus what they are going to do if elected.

Member Max Clermont made comments on a Town Manager and town meetings, and how the City could incorporate something similar to a town meeting in city government because of the positive benefits.

Member Lisa Peterson questioned what the accountability should look like for Mayors and City Managers, what form of resident involvement is best to hold them to their accountability and if there are any additional ways accountability can be built into the system.

Michael Ward offered final comments and answered some questions that were brought to their attention during discussion with members.

Member Jim Stockard asked for guidance from Michael Ward on good public bodies.

Chair Kathleen Born questioned how to further define the interactions between the City Council and City Manager and if the budgeting process would be able to tie policies together.

Kevin Chen noted members have made a lot of good points and have raised interesting questions. They brought up the possibility of using citizen juries.

Jessica DeJesus Acevedo asked for clarifying comments on what the writing process would look like for drafting a new Plan E. They asked for more data on cost of elections and campaigns, and how this reflects the representation and leadership in Cambridge.

Anna Corning opened Public Comment.

Public Comment
John Hawkinson spoke on the City Manager's 90 Day Report.
Jameson Quinn spoke on discussions from today's meeting.

Adjournment at approximately 7:53p.m.

Dear Cambridge Charter Review Committee:

As you know, I'm interested in helping you as you consider the Cambridge voting system. To do so, I've written the document below. But I understand: not all of you will want to read such a long treatise. So here's a short summary:

I start out by giving some history of municipal single transferable voting (STV) — both in Cambridge, the one US city where it has survived the last 80 years, and in a few other American cities where it was adopted and then repealed. Though of course I have only a few paragraphs for each city I look at, I hope to give enough details to enrich the story from various points of view. If there's one overarching lesson from my own perspective, it's that Cambridge's STV proportional representation is well-liked, time-tested, and worth preserving. Thus, all my later suggestions are slight adjustments, not wholesale changes.

I go on to discuss some general issues that come up when choosing a voting system. There are no perfect voting systems: the choice always involves a trade-off between different values. Though conflict between those values is inevitable, the resulting compromises can still be clearly better or worse. I argue that, in my experience, willingness to combine rules in new ways helps in finding better compromises.

The Charter Review Committee will have to decide whether or not to recommend any changes to our municipal voting system; and if you do recommend changes, you will have to decide what those are. In order to make these decisions — even if you ultimately decide it's best to leave things as they are — you will have to think like voting method designers. And the first step is to clearly lay out the different values you'd like the voting system to embody. Thus, I lay out some of the different values that I think deserve consideration — though of course, which ones to prioritize is up to you.

The next section is the one I consider most important: my suggestions for improving Cambridge's system. I lay out three suggestions, ordered from small to large, with each depending on the ones before. First, fractional transfers; second, allowing tied preferences; and third, optional (one-tier) delegation. Though of course I only make these suggestions because I believe the arguments for them are convincing, I try to give a fair hearing to the arguments against as well.

Finally, at the end, I briefly discuss some other options aside from my recommendations, and explain some of my own history and qualifications in this matter.

I believe that this charter review process is an opportunity. Your committee can, with thoughtful choices, smooth out the wrinkles of Cambridge's voting system, making an already-outstanding system even better. And by doing so, you can turn it from a curiosity that's probably too complex for use outside a college town, to a model that can begin to be applied — and thus to enable healthier politics — in other city, state, or even federal jurisdictions.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jameson Quinn

Here's a more-complete table of contents:

1. Brief definition of the Single Transferable Vote system (STV)

Cambridge elects its 9 City Council members through the "Single Transferable Vote" (STV) system, which is one form of proportional representation (sometimes called ProRep, for short). An STV election proceeds as follows:

- Voters rank candidates in preference order. For instance, if the candidates were famed early authors, they might rank Murasaki first, Cervantes second, Shakespeare third, and leave Homer and Banabhatta unranked.
- Ballots are initially tallied for the candidate that they rank highest.
- A "quota" (the number of votes sufficient to win a seat) is defined based on the number of seats to fill; with 9 seats as in Cambridge, the quota is 10% of the votes + 1 vote. For instance, if there were 10,000 votes in total, a quota would be 1,001 votes. Thus, if all 9 seats are filled with one quota each, that totals just over 90% of the votes, leaving less than one quota of remaining votes that did not help elect a winner.
- Any candidate(s) who receives more than one quota of votes is elected. Any votes they have beyond a quota are redistributed (that is, added to the tally of) the voter's next un-eliminated preference. (In Cambridge, this is done through a process that randomly selects which of the candidate's ballots to redistribute). For instance, in the above example with 10,000 votes, if Cervantes had 1200 votes, he'd be seated with 1001, leaving 199 to be transferred. This procedure is carried out multiple times if necessary, until no remaining candidate has a quota of votes.
- If there are still seats left to fill, the candidate with the lowest tally is eliminated. Each of their votes is redistributed (that is, added to the tally of) the voter's next un-eliminated preference. Then the process repeats the previous step.
- If at any point the number of un-eliminated candidates is the same as the number of un-filled seats, all remaining candidates are seated. Note that this only happens if more than one quota of ballots are "exhausted" because they did not rank any available candidates. In practice, Cambridge typically does not reach this step.

This may seem like a complex process, but it's helpful to look at two things which remain true throughout:

- At every step of the process, including at the end, each continuing ballot **counts equally** — either as part of a quota of votes for an elected candidate, or as part of the tally for a not-yet-elected candidate.
- Except in the very last step (which generally is not reached in Cambridge elections), **each winner "uses up" an equal quota of ballots**; so they could be said to "represent" an equal number of voters.

"Exhausted" ballots—that is, ballots where every expressed preference already has been eliminated or already has a full quota—are the only exception to both of these invariants.

It's also worth noting here one myth about STV. Some voters believe that since they rank multiple candidates, their vote helps choose more than one of the winners. This is not true;

generally, each vote "helps" just one winner (in the sense that it ends up as part of their quota).

    a. STV is a variant of RCV

When discussing voting system reform, you might hear mentions of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). This is actually an umbrella term for two different voting methods: a single-winner system (also called Instant Runoff Voting/IRV or RCV1), and STV (also called proportional RCV, PRCV) a multi-winner system. They both share certain features: ranked (preferential) ballots and multiple rounds of counting using bottom-up elimination and vote transfers. But they have important differences as well. IRV/RCV1 is more commonly-used in the US, but it leads to more wasted votes, less diversity, and poorer representation than STV/PRCV.

2. History

Cambridge adopted its current voting system, STV, for first use in the election of 1941. This was part of a wave of two dozen US cities adopting STV between 1915 and 1948. However, Cambridge is the only city where the system has survived until today. I'll attempt to briefly summarize this history for Cambridge and a few other cities. Of course, there's no way to boil years of political history in various cities down into a few paragraphs without simplifying things somewhat.

    a. STV in Cambridge:
        i.   Adoption: anti-corruption.

Cambridge first adopted STV, along with a council-manager system, in 1940. The reform campaign focused on "good government" issues such as corruption, in the context of then-Mayor Lyons (who would later be convicted of bribery and conspiracy.) Reformers included Harvard Law School dean James Landis, a prominent New Deal Democrat, as well as "old-guard Republicans" ([Koocher & Winters, 2006](#); http://rwinters.com/docs/CambridgePoliticalHistory20thCentury.htm).

        ii. Perpetuation: coherence.

In the recent (2022) book *More Parties or No Parties: The Politics of Electoral Reform in America*, political scientist Jack Santucci looks at the evidence on why STV survived all 5 repeal attempts in Cambridge (1952, 1953, 1957, 1961, 1964) while being repealed in every other US city of the era. One of his key findings is that the Cambridge pro-reform coalition learned to stem most "vote leakage" by limiting themselves to nominating just 5 candidates, a bare majority of seats. That is, they quickly learned to avoid vote transfers to non-endorsed candidates by not nominating candidates who would likely be eliminated.

    b. "Failed" STV elsewhere: examples
        i.   Lowell (Massachusetts): explicitly anti-minority repeal

Lowell adopted STV in 1943 and repealed it in 1957. Former mayor William Geary argued for repeal explicitly because the proposed replacement — at-large plurality — would keep minorities out of power:

> *One of the greatest weapons we Americans have to keep our system of democracy intact is that of majority rule… The day has long passed when we declare our nationality, such as French, Greek, Irish, Polish, Jewish, Portuguese, Syrian, Armenian, Lithuanian, or any other nationality. We are Americans….*

("An Open Letter to the Voters of the City of Lowell", Lowell Sun, Nov. 3, 1957, p29; https://newspaperarchive.com/lowell-sun-nov-03-1957-p-29/)

This suggests that the successful repeal was a bid to consolidate majority power by denying representation to ethnically-defined minorities; a goal most today would not endorse in those terms.

<blockquote>

ii. Medford (Massachusetts): proportional representation as brief stepping-stone to Catholic/Democratic control

</blockquote>

Medford used STV for just 2 elections, in 1950 and 1953. Demographics there were rapidly changing at the time, with substantial Irish and Italian immigration. PR seems to have been a stepping stone as these rising demographics, largely Catholic and Democratic, took power from the older Republican elite, mostly Protestant; and it seems to have been abandoned when that new majority was secure enough to trust that returning to at-large plurality would give it an even bigger majority of seats. In the election before ProRep was adopted, Republicans held 7 of 11 seats; in both of the councils elected under ProRep, that fell to 2 of 7; and once ProRep was repealed, that fell further to just 1 of 7 seats. (Source: H. Manuel Dobrusin, BU Dissertation, 1955; thanks to Jack Santucci for access)

<blockquote>

iii. Worcester (Massachusetts): "Vote leakage" dissolves reform coalition

</blockquote>

In Worcester, STV was used from 1949 until 1959, finally being repealed in 1960. Santucci studies this case at length, and argues that repeal was a coalition between Democrats—opposed to ProRep from the start—and Republicans on the reformist "Citizens' Plan E Association". He suggests that these Republicans had grown frustrated with recent "vote leakage" from their eliminated candidates to Democrats, and thus were willing to throw ProRep overboard in order to save the council-manager government structure.

<blockquote>

iv. Cincinnati (Ohio): STV transfers give a majority to cross-party "Charter" candidates, angering main line of both parties

</blockquote>

In Cincinnati, STV was adopted for 1925, then survived 4 repeal attempts before finally falling in 1957 (though it's been revived in recent years for their parks commission). Santucci's analysis suggests that this eventual failure happened after an election where vote transfers favored a centrist "Charter" coalition of Republicans and Democrats, to the detriment of main-line candidates from both parties who had collectively gotten more first-choice votes. Republicans were angry that they'd lost control despite having a plurality of the popular first-choice vote, while Democrats were angry that support had bled from their first-choice pro-labor candidates to the pro-income-tax Charter candidates (both Republican and Democratic).

This was a complex situation, but one lesson that Cambridge might draw is that dissatisfaction with STV can grow when voters are unclear on how to class candidates into coherent ideological groups. My third reform suggestion below is partly designed to help with this issue.

> v. New York City (New York): Bringing "mavericks" into line.

The STV system in New York City, lasting from 1937 to 1947, was atypical for the US in that it did not go hand-in-hand with a council-manager system. Instead, a relatively large number of municipal representatives combined with features that gave substantial veto power to large minorities. Santucci suggests that this, along with STV "vote leakage" that undermined the effectiveness of machine politics, made STV largely a weapon against Tammany Democrats, who opposed it from the start. But by the 1943 term, STV's voter-centric diversity was also making it difficult for the anti-Tammany Republican minority bloc to stay unified; so they abandoned support for the system. That is, not unlike in Cincinnati, it seems that insiders in both parties grew frustrated with elected representatives who owed them little and who bucked partisan discipline.

> c. General lessons

Overall, the examples above show two possible patterns for STV repeal: either a comfortable majority wants to expand their control yet further (Medford and possibly Lowell), or voters and power-brokers on "two sides" grow frustrated with STV electing representatives who lack party discipline or who simply aren't a member of voters' first-choice party (Worcester, Cincinnati, and NYC). Note that in the latter cases, STV advocates could still argue that it does respect voter's expressed preferences; but voters may still be unsatisfied with the results if they felt torn between ranking based on party and doing so based on individual candidate quality.

One issue with the accounts above is that, in keeping with Santucci's analysis, they are often couched in terms of why elites, such as party insiders or interest group leaders, would support or oppose repeal; ordinary voters are not the focus. Santucci says of this: "Whether voters like or dislike a system isn't important (to me) for explaining longevity. A system that is likely to provoke dislike certainly is harder to defend. But I think most voters form their opinions on adoption/repeal in response to direction from trusted politicians and political actors." (personal communication) While I don't disagree with his analysis, I'd reiterate that STV was, for a time, a successful and contagious reform, and survived the majority of the attempts to repeal it (56 attempts, 23 repeals). That is to say, it is not "a system that provokes dislike" per se, and here in Cambridge it is generally well-liked.

3. Choosing/designing a voting method
a. Impossibility theorems

Designing a voting system is a tricky balancing act. In the mathematical discipline of voting theory, there are several "impossibility theorems" that prove it's literally impossible for a

voting system to have all the characteristics we might reasonably want. For instance, Arrow's theorem shows (essentially) that the outcome of any non-dictatorial voting system sometimes depends on the options available — like somebody who changes their ice cream preference from chocolate to vanilla depending on whether strawberry is on the menu (which you would think should be irrelevant). The Gibbard-Satterthwaite theorem shows that "strategic voting" — where the system rewards you for concealing or falsifying your true preferences based on how you expect others to vote — is a possibility in any system.

      b.   Tradeoffs and design thinking

Still, even though it's impossible for any voting system to be perfect, it's definitely possible for one to be clearly better than another. That is, some systems are simply sub-optimal, and can be improved in one aspect without making them worse on others. And sometimes, even though there is a tradeoff between different values, there's broad consensus on which of those values is higher.

However, things are not always so clear-cut. When two values conflict, clear consensus on one side is, by its very nature, rare; so most often, the best answer is a compromise. In such cases, rather than insisting on perfection in one aspect at the cost of serious flaws in another, I find it's usually best to find a solution with only minor flaws in both. This means that "designing by checklist" is often a bad idea, leading to brittle solutions rather than robust compromises.

    4.   Values of democracy

Below, I've made a list of values one might favor. I have not put these in any order of importance; that will be your job. Luckily, though I've listed values separately if they conflict even occasionally, in many cases they point in the same direction.

      a.   My proposed (unprioritized) list of values

First off, there are voter-centric values:
- equality (of votes)
- representation (aka diversity — along different dimensions)
- accountability
- voice and involvement
- simplicity (for voters)

In particular, equality is such a basic value that it is protected by law at a fundamental, constitutional level. Note that both equality and diversity tend to be best under proportional (ProRep) systems.

Second, there are outcome-centric values — aspects of the broader political system that a good voting system should encourage, at least to some degree. These include:
- compromise
- coherence (of agendas; that is, the opposite of hyper-fractured, single-issue factionalism)
- stability (so that policies don't ping-pong between opposite extremes)

- transparency (which, in the context of elections, means that it should be clear why the winners won)
- leadership (choosing representatives who are well-suited to their jobs)

And finally, there are process-centric values: things that are good about a voting system in and of itself. These include:
- simplicity (including speed and cost) of the vote-counting process itself
- robustness of outcomes to minor or irrelevant changes in circumstances
- history (which is to say, whether a system has been shown to work in practice over time)

    b. Alternative lists of values

Others might divide up the possible goals differently. I'd like to point out a few alternative divisions I find useful/relevant:

Coppedge et al (2011) divide conceptions of democracy into 6 categories: electoral, liberal, majoritarian, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian; giving a number of indicators for each. McGann (2006) argues forcefully that this last category, equality, implies proportionality.

The Oregon-based Equal Vote Coalition (of which I'm a board member) lists five ideals for a voting system (https://www.equal.vote/better_voting): it should be simple, honest, expressive, accurate, and equal.

Warren (2017) divides democracy into 3 necessary functions (empowered inclusion, collective agenda and will formation, collective decision-making) and 7 activities (recognizing, resisting, deliberating, representing, voting, joining, and exiting).

    c. Cambridge's STV, rated by values

How does Cambridge do on the values listed above? In most regards, pretty well. Cambridge's STV system is a form of proportional representation, which makes it among the best in the country for formal equality and representation — perhaps the values most fundamental to democracy.

Proportional representation also minimizes wasted votes, which makes STV reasonably good at accountability and at giving voters a path to voice and involvement. Similarly, broad representation makes it above-average at leading to overall stability and at encouraging qualified leadership.

But still, it has its flaws. In my opinion, the worst of these is its complexity. It makes the task of casting an effective vote (one with sufficient candidates ranked so that it does not become exhausted) quite difficult. This issue is so severe that it even threatens to impact equality itself, as some potential voters cast unintentionally spoiled ballots or even just give up on voting entirely. It also impacts transparency and accountability; few voters can track who their vote actually ended up helping to elect, and candidates have no clear evidence about which specific voters they represent.

The current system is also, in my opinion, below-average at encouraging both compromise and coherent agendas. It incentivizes candidates to compete above all for first-choice rankings, pushing them to each find a separate base of 10% support. That could easily mean each focusing on a single divisive issue, rather than joining in groups to find common ground.

Finally, it's got one completely unnecessary flaw in terms of robustness: excess votes are transferred randomly, not fractionally (see below for how this could be changed). This procedure may have made sense in an era before computers, when processing vote transfers meant moving physical ballots from one stack to another. But in the modern age, STV has no need for that element of randomness.

5. Suggested improvements

I'll suggest three improvements to Cambridge's STV system. For each, I'll give the main rationale, and a simple description of how it would work. Then, after describing all three, I'll go into more depth on the possible arguments for and against each of them.

The overall context for these suggestions is that Cambridge's overall system has survived over 80 years and 5 attempts at repeal. This is evidence that it's good and well-liked; we should be looking for relatively minor improvements, not a wholesale rewrite. In other words, these suggestions are not exactly what I would give if starting from a blank slate (though they're not too far off).

Each of these suggestions depends on the ones that precede it. So it would be reasonable to implement #1, or #1 and #2, or all three; but not to implement, for instance, #2 without #1.

      a. Fractional transfers: (robustness, simplicity)

The first fix I'd suggest to Cambridge's STV system is uncontroversial: remove the randomness by implementing fractional transfers.

Let's pretend, for round numbers, that a Cambridge election had exactly 9,999 votes. For 9 seats, the quota would then be just over 10% of that: 1,000 votes. Say a given candidate A got 900 first-choice votes, then gets 200 transfers, bringing them to 1,100 votes in total. That's more than a quota, so they're seated; and their excess 100 votes should be transferred to those ballots next preference.

But which 100 votes should transfer? After all, all 1,100 of their votes are equally valid, equally important.

The way it currently works, their ballots would be placed in order. A random ballot would be chosen to be the first to transfer, then every 11th vote from there on would be transferred. (There are some additional complications, for instance to allow this process to happen separately in different precincts.)

This random choice means that exactly the same set of ballots could lead to different outcomes. And it's entirely unnecessary. In 1969, Brian Meek laid out a system of fractional transfers that's now generally recognized as superior. In Meek's method, in the example above, all 1,100 votes would transfer, but each would get a fractional "weight" of 1/11 (about 9%), thus ensuring that the total "weight" of transferred ballots was 100 as desired. (As above, there are additional complications — in this case, when votes are transferred to candidates who have already won. But just saying "Meek's method" is enough to clarify how such edge cases are handled.)

      b.   Equal rankings (simplicity for voters, compromise, equality)

My second and third suggestions are primarily intended to make the system easier for the voters. I believe that asking voters to evaluate over 2 dozen candidates, and put them into a strict preference order, is burdensome; and, as always, these burdens can fall unequally, accentuating existing imbalances.

Thus, my second suggestion is to allow equal rankings (tied preferences). If, as a voter, I have three candidates I like slightly less than my favorite, I shouldn't be forced to choose which goes second, third, and fourth; I should be able to just group them all as second choices.

This could be allowed without changing the basic ballot format. You could still have a matrix of bubbles, with one row per candidate, and one column per preference rank. On such a ballot, you'd still fill in one bubble per row. The only difference is, your ballot would still be fully valid even if you filled in more than one bubble in a column. For instance, in the example above, I'd fill in three bubbles in the "second choice" column.

On the counting side, this would be supported by fractional weights, just like the Meek system in my first suggestion. In the example above, if my first-choice candidate were eliminated, my vote would count at ⅓ weight for each of my 3 second choices. If one of them were then eliminated, it would now count at ½ weight for each of the two remaining; if only 1 remained, my ballot would go back to full weight. Only when that last of the three was eliminated (despite my full-weight ballot in their tally) would my vote switch to the candidate(s) at the next preference rank (third rank, in this case).

Of course, in combination with the Meek system above, actually calculating all the fractional weights involved would be tiresome without a computer. But the underlying principles are clear and straightforward, and correct results could be independently verified by separate computer programs or even hand calculations.

      c.   Optional tiered delegation (simplicity for voters, accountability, leadership, coherence)

My final suggestion continues in the vein of making things simpler for the voters. The simplest possible ballot would just choose one preferred candidate. To enable such a vote to be effective in an STV system, I suggest an optional, tiered delegation system.

This could work as follows:

- Before the election, but after the list of official candidates is finalized, each candidate would have the chance to publicly designate one or more other candidates as "allies". For instance, candidate A might designate B, C, and D as their "allies". There would be a clear deadline for such designations. Ally-ship would not have to be mutual.
- (Optional: After seeing the designated allies of other candidates, candidates would have a chance to un-designate others who did not designate them. For instance, if A had designated D as an ally, but D had not designated A as an ally, A could then de-designate D. The deadline for such changes would be just a couple of days after the first deadline. Adding this option is intended to encourage up-front communication without last-minute surprises, and thus to actually deter cases where it would need to be used.)
- Each candidate's designations would be available to voters when voting — whether on the ballot, or as supplementary materials available in each voting booth.
- The ballot would also have an additional checkbox (or similar) marked "do not designate".
- If a voter leaves a blank preference rank for a given candidate, and does not check "do not delegate", then any candidates designated as allies by any of the candidate(s) that voter ranked first, would be implicitly given the next rank(s) below any above-bottom ranks given explicitly by that voter (ordered by the number of top-ranked candidates who designated them as allies).

For instance, let's say there were 26 candidates, one for each letter of the alphabet, and I gave them the following ranks:
A: 1
B: 1
C-U: blank
V: 2
W: 3
X: 3
Y: 25
Z: 26

In this case, rank 3 (W and X) is the best above-bottom rank I gave explicitly, as ranks 25 and 26 for Y and Z are contiguous with the bottom possible rank.

Let's also say that A counted B, C, and D as allies; and that B counted D and E as allies.

In this case, D is a designated ally of two my favorites, so would be implicitly ranked 4 on my ballot; and C and E are each allies of one of my favorites, so would be implicitly ranked 5.

     d. Arguments for and against

The three suggested improvements above are my own. I hope I've convinced you that I have some expertise in this domain, but still, I would not want you to blindly trust the guidance of

one self-appointed expert. So I think I should give an honest appraisal of the possible arguments for and against.

Of course, I believe these are good suggestions, so I think the arguments against them are wrong. So although I'll do my best to lay out the arguments against each suggestion fairly, I'll also follow that up by saying why I think those arguments are wrong.

#1: Meek fractional transfers

I believe my first recommendation is about as simple and uncontroversial an improvement as is possible. Experts generally agree that randomness is undesirable, decreasing stability and legitimacy; and though they might have minor disagreements about which transfer formula is best, Meek's is generally agreed to be a solid choice. For instance, it's used for local elections in New Zealand, and is the form [recommended](#) by the Proportional Representation Foundation (https://prfound.org/resources/reference/). Although it might involve some costs in updating Cambridge's current computer programs, multiple reference implementations of Meek's algorithm exist in various computer languages, so I believe these costs would be reasonable (as the original costs to create the program we currently use were — I'm told it cost under $25K in the mid-90s).

However, in all fairness, there is one arguable, though minor, advantage to the current system that Meek doesn't share. This hinges on a rather technical point. When transferring surplus votes, the current system is based on starting from a randomly-chosen ballot and transferring every nth ballot from there on. But if some of these ballots selected to be transferred from the winner are exhausted (have no further preferences), there is a procedure for replacing them with an equal number of that same winner's non-exhausted ballots. This can end up effectively transferring some voting power from exhausted ballots (those that vote for only a few candidates, all of whom have been seated or eliminated) to non-exhausted ballots which had landed on the same winner.

Some might argue that this transfer of voting power was a good thing (although others would see it as bad). On the good side, it prevents voting power from being wasted, and the ballots which are recipients of the power have at least one candidate in common with those which are donors, so they are perhaps likely to be "ideological allies". I do not believe that this argument is a sufficient reason to keep the current lottery-based transfers. It's a minor edge case; arguably not a good thing to begin with; and any arguable advantages it has are better addressed by my suggestion #3 below.

#2: Equal rankings

The main advantage of my second suggestion, allowing tied rankings, is that it would make things easier for the voters. It's simply easier to group candidates into a few preference tiers than to separate them out into a strict, one-by-one preference order. This is especially needed because Cambridge elects 9 seats at a time, rather than the 3-5 usually recommended for using with STV is used; this leads to more overall candidates, and an even harder task for voters.

Allowing equal rankings would also mean fewer spoiled ballots (those that rank two candidates equal) and exhausted ballots (those that do not rank enough candidates to form part of a winning quota). That fixes a problem which may affect already-disadvantaged groups more.

In the three Cambridge City Council elections from 1997 to 2001, spoiled ballots averaged 4.3% of all ballots (that is, 43% of the quota it would take to win one seat); this is an ordinary spoilage rate for ranked choice ballots (eg, 4.3% in Maine https://www.governing.com/archive/sl-ranked-choice-voting-states.html). In Cambridge from 2003 onwards, this number seems lower in the ballot data I have available; I'm not sure exactly why this is. It may have to do with machines rejecting ballots, allowing voters to re-mark them, or it may be that some spoiled ballots are not being included for some reason. In the 2021 City Council election, spoilage was 0.8% of votes (8% of a quota), and despite a system which avoids exhausting votes when transferring surplus, exhausted votes by the penultimate counting round were 2.7% of votes (27% of a quota).

But I'd argue that this suggestion would have another important advantage: to better encourage compromise and cooperation. The current system strongly pushes candidates to campaign in competition for higher preferences. Not only is a first-choice vote strongly superior to a second-choice one; also, a second-choice one is far better than a third-choice one, and on down the line. With equal rankings allowed, that exclusive, competitive nature of the contest is lessened, encouraging candidates to "team up" even more — and I think that greater cooperation might carry over even between elections. Furthermore, during the counting process, this system would be slightly less likely to prematurely eliminate "compromise" candidates whose support is more broad than strong.

The main disadvantage of this suggestion is that teaching voters that it's OK to use tied rankings could be a problem if, in the future, they had to use a ranked-choice voting system that did not allow tied rankings. This could happen if they moved to a different jurisdiction, or in a hypothetical future statewide or nationwide ranked choice system.

The argument against that disadvantage is that allowing tied rankings is actually better. By including this feature, Cambridge would encourage any hypothetical future ranked-choice voting (RCV) system at the state or national level to also include that feature.

#3: Optional tiered delegation

This is the most extensive of these suggestions. I'll first give arguments for and against the general idea of delegation, then discuss the details separately.

The main advantage of delegation is that it makes voting (and having that vote matter) easier. In fact, you can simply choose one candidate and go home — as easy for the voter as plurality voting, yet with only a fraction of the wasted votes of that system. And yet, it would still allow highly-engaged voters the same control over their vote that they currently have.

It would also encourage candidates to form groups with coherent consensus platforms and plans, as opposed to focusing on one narrow issue or group and avoiding other questions.

These first two arguments are similar to those for suggestion #2 above; these two suggestions would synergize in these ways. But delegation has further advantages. Even losing candidates could affect the election through their choice of who to declare as allies (and thus, who gets their votes when they are eliminated). I believe this would help diverse groups organize, find leadership, and speak with clearer, more-united voices. I think that this kind of leadership, built on a foundation of legitimate grass-roots support, helps lead to unity, and thus to a fairer, more-proportional share of power, for various groups of voters, including those traditionally marginalized.

There are also clear possible objections to this idea. Democratic elections are primarily designed as a path for bottom-up power and accountability; delegation, even if limited and optional, would introduce a top-down aspect that some would argue does not belong.

The answer to these objections is just as clear. If you would trust a candidate as a representative, with power to vote on every issue before the council, why wouldn't you trust them with the much-narrower power to help decide how your vote transfers from them when they are eliminated?

…

That covers the arguments for and against the general idea of optional delegation. But there are also some more specific arguments for and against the specific details of my suggestion.

This proposal depends on my earlier suggestions; it's important that the system allows ties, so that a candidate's pre-designations can not be as fine-grained as a strict preference order. To see why, we should look at how similar ideas have led to problems, and how my proposal's single tier of allies would address those problems.

Delegated transferable voting is not a new idea. In Hoag and Hallet's classic 1926 treatise "Proportional Representation", this idea was already well-known: "This system was apparently first devised by Walter Bailey… in 1869…. It was known in America for many years as the Gove system on account of its advocacy by William H Gove, a member of the legislature of Massachusetts." And a related idea—Group Voting Tickets, with pre-designated preference declared by parties, not candidates—has been tried in various parts of Australia since it was first used there in 1984. But these GVTs have led to problems, with "preference whisperers" brokering deals that led to candidates winning seats with only a tiny handful of first-choice votes, and (recently in Victoria) a party that used a last-minute switch to get preferences without reciprocating, as an explicit thumb in the eye to the system. Such issues have led to GVTs being repealed in 3 of the 5 Australian jurisdictions that tried them, with active repeal movements in the other 2.

But this problem of "preference whispering" arises because GVTs are all-or-nothing: voters can either give a strict order for how their vote will be transferred, or they can give the power to set that strict order to a centralized party list. In my proposal, however, delegation goes to a candidate, not a party, meaning would-be "preference whisperers" have a harder job; but more importantly, the candidates' pre-declared lists consist of a single tier of allies, not a strict ordering. This means that when you delegate your vote, you give that power to a mix of

your chosen candidate and other voters. By spreading out that delegated power, this system drastically reduces the chance for corrupt back-room deals.

Another detail I've included in my proposal is the optional step 2, in which candidates who were not designated as allies by others can choose to de-designate those others in return. I realize this looks ugly. But the intention of including a mechanism for retaliating against betrayal is to stop it from happening in the first place. In Australia, under GVTs, there is no such mechanism; though good-faith negotiation about mutual preferences may be the norm there, the few cases of last-minute betrayal are newsworthy, and reflect badly on the whole system of GVTs. I think the suggested step would prevent this from happening, as it would only hurt both candidates involved if it did happen.

6. Other options
a. Single-seat wards/districts (with or without RCV)

One other voting system which your committee might consider is single-seat wards or districts. Within each district, various voting systems might be used, but I'll discuss the case of RCV.

Single-winner RCV generally has superior outcomes over plurality (aka vote-for-one); for instance, it reduces the chances of the spoiler effect (where two similar candidates split the vote, allowing a third to win with a minority). But even if it leads to more majority results, over 40% of the votes are still usually wasted on the losing candidate in each district. That's 4 times as many wasted votes as under STV.

An advantage of ward-based elections is locally-accountable representation. But ward boundaries are still arbitrary, and will inevitably cut through many communities of interest or even of geography. And voters who prefer the candidate from another ward have no way to help that person be elected.

Ward-based RCV elections would have several times fewer candidates, making ballots somewhat simpler than the current at-large STV (at the cost of voter choice). And my suggestions #2 and #3 above would still be applicable if desired, allowing voting to be even simpler.

b. Multi-seat wards/districts with STV

Another option would be to divide the city into 3 wards of 3 seats each, continuing to use STV within each of those wards. This would mean about a third as many candidates on the ballot in each ward; again, simpler ballots.

Like single-seat wards, this would lead to slightly less voter choice. However, since there would be three winners from each ward, voters would still have a real choice as to which coalition they wanted to vote with; so I believe the reduction in choice is minor enough to be tolerable.

The largest downside of this plan would be an increase in wasted votes. Generally speaking, STV wastes just one quota of votes; but with 3-seat elections, a quota is 1/(3+1) or 25%, two and a half times as large as the current 10%. This could lead to less diversity, as groups of voters that are larger than 10% but smaller than 25% in each of the multi-seat wards would not have enough to elect a winner.

Still, this is a viable alternative, and could be combined with all three of my suggestions above.

        c.   Custom-designed voting methods

There are still further possibilities, if Cambridge is willing to redesign its voting system from the ground up. For instance, a hybrid district/at-large system (delegated MMP) could combine local representation, simple choose-one ballots, and proportional outcomes. If the committee is interested, I could provide further details on such methods.

7. My Qualifications

Why should you listen to me? Aside from being a Cambridge voter, I've been involved in voting theory and voting reform activism for over 20 years. When a group of trolls organized to take over the nominating process for the Hugo awards — the oldest science fiction literary awards — I helped design the "E Pluribus Hugo" (EPH) proportional nomination system; this system, still used by them today, successfully fended off the attack. I also wrote a paper on that system with noted computer security expert Bruce Schneier (https://www.schneier.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Proportional_Voting_System.pdf). I co-organized the British Columbia Symposium on Proportional Representation, which was influential in the design of the 2018 British Columbia electoral reform referendum. I'm a former board member of the Center for Election Science and a current board member of the Equal Vote Coalition. I've done both simulation-based and empirical behavioral studies comparing various single-winner voting systems. And my PhD dissertation in statistics involved methods for inferring racial patterns of voter behavior for the purpose of facilitating enforcement of the Voting Rights Act in redistricting (as mandated in *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 1986).

Bibliography

BC Symposium on Proportional Representation. Recommendations on Election Reform in British Columbia.

https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2019/09/38.-BC_Symposium_on_PR_submission_20180228_FINAL.pdf (2018).

Coppedge, M. *et al.* Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach. *Perspectives on Politics* **9**, 247–267 (2011).

McGann, A. *The Logic of Democracy: Reconciling Equality, Deliberation, and Minority Protection*. (2006).

Proportional Representation Foundation. *Reference STV Rules*. https://prfound.org/resources/reference/.

Quinn, J. & Schneier, B. A Proportional Voting System for Awards Nominations Resistant to Voting Blocs. 15 (2018).

Santucci, J. *More Parties or No Parties: The Politics of Electoral Reform in America*. (Oxford University Press, 2022).

The Equal Vote Coalition. *Better Voting*. https://www.equal.vote/better_voting.

Warren, M. E. A Problem-Based Approach to Democratic Theory. *American Political Science Review* **111**, 39–53 (2017).

- Former Managers
    - Robert Healy
    - Louis A. DePasquale
    - Richard Rossi
- Former Mayors
    - Marc C. McGovern
    - E. Denise Simmons
    - David P. Maher
    - Henrietta Davis
    - Alice Wolf
    - Anthony Galluccio
    - Ken Reeves
    - Henrietta Davis
- Former City Solicitors
    - Donald Drisdell
    - Arthur Goldberg
- Current Councilors / Mayor / City Manager (perhaps just a survey to this group)
- School Committee Members (could be included with the above group)
    - Rachel Weinstein
    - Mannika Bowman
    - Fred Fantini
- Former/Current Supt. of Schools
    - Kenneth Salim
    - Jeffrey Young
- Former Councilors
    - Tim Toomey
    - Dennis Benzan
    - Marjorie Decker
    - Jim Braude
    - David Sullivan
    - Craig Kelley
- Current department heads
    - (smaller department heads, offer a group opportunity or written survey)
    - Budget: Taha Jennings, Budget Director
    - Budget: David Kale, Assistant City Manager for Fiscal Affairs and Public
    - Elections Commission Director: Tanya L. Ford
    - Election Commissioner Larry Ward
    - Election Commissioner Ethridge King
    - Assistant City Manager for Community Development Iram Farooq
    - Assistant City Manager for Human Services Ellen Semonoff
    - Deputy City Manager.Chief Operating Officer Owen O'Riordan
    - Police Commissioner Christine Elow
    - DPW Commissioner Katherine Watkins
- Outside Cambridge Officials

- former Somerville Mayor Joe Curtatone
- former Framingham mayor Yvonne Spicer
- Michelle Wu
- Tom Ambrosino former mayor of Revere and current city manager of Chelsea

1. Name:
2. City Resident? _____ If yes, for how many years? _____
3. Current (former) role / relationship to City government:
4. Have you held other positions with the city?
5. What aspects of Cambridge government do you think function well? Please elaborate.
6. What aspects of Cambridge government do you think need improvement? Please elaborate.
7. Is there anything specific that you would like to see addressed by the charter review process?
8. What do you think works well because of the council-manager form of government? What are the challenges with the council-manager form of government?
6. Some of the items that the Charter can impact are issues such as terms for elected officers, department head and committee appointment authority, structure of and allocation of authority in City government, budget process, elections and voting. Do you have any thoughts you would like to share regarding those issues?
8. Can you think of any examples in which the charter has impacted your ability to perform your job duties?
9. Do you have any questions regarding the process?
10. Anything else you would like us to know that is relevant to the Charter Review Process?

Cambridge Plan E Division of Roles: City Manager and City Council

Government Operation	Manager Role	City Council Role	Mayor
Appointing / Removing Department Heads	Appoints / Removes all departments, commissions, boards and offices of the City for whose administration he is responsible. (s.104) The City Manager may authorize the head of a department, commission or board, or the holder of an office, for whose administration he is responsible, to appoint and remove subordinates in such department, commission, board or office. (s.104) The City Manager shall report every appointment and removal made by him to the City Council at the next meeting thereof following such appointment or removal. (s.104)	Appoints / Removes City Manager and fixes compensation. (s.103) Evaluates annually. (s.116A) Appoints City Auditor and City Clerk (s.18) Hears report of the City Manager regarding reports of every appointment and removal made by him at the next meeting thereof following such appointment or removal. (s. 104) May not direct or request the appointment of any person to, or his removal from, office by the City Manager or any of his subordinates, or in any manner take part in the appointment or removal of officers and employees (s.107)	Mayor can appoint secretaries or of the stenographers, clerks, telephone operators and messengers connected with his office, and the mayor may remove such appointees without a hearing and without making a statement of the cause of their removal. (s.25)
Appointments on Boards / Committees	Appoints / Removes all boards and committees for whose administration he is responsible, subject to confirmation of City Council. (s.104, 105) The City Manager may authorize the head of a department, commission or board, or the holder of an office, for whose administration he is responsible, to appoint and remove	Approves board and committee appointments of the City Manager by majority vote. (s.105) May not direct or request the appointment of any person to, or his removal from, office by the City Manager or any of his subordinates, or in any manner take part in the appointment or removal of officers and employees (s.107)	

	subordinates in such department, commission, board or office. (s. 104)		
Finance	Approves contracts over $$$ threshold and modifications thereof. (s. 29)	Appoints a City Auditor who has charge of the accounts of the City and from time to time audit the books and accounts of all departments, commissions, boards and offices of the City, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as the Council may prescribe, in addition to such duties as may be prescribed by law. (s.18)	
Budget Development	Prepares and submits budgets to City Council and may require all departments, commissions, boards and offices of the City, of estimates of the amounts necessary for their expenses. (s.104)	Reviews and votes budget as presented by the City Manager (MGL c.44, s.32)	
Ordinances		By majority vote of full Council adopts motions, resolutions, and ordinances (except adjournment which is majority of those present) (s.18, 99) Exercises the legislative power of the City except as provided to the School Committee or City voters (s.95, 97)	

Daily Operations	City Manager is responsible for the administration of all departments, commissions, boards and officers of the City, except that of the City clerk, City auditor, any official appointed by the governor or any body elected by the voters of the City. (s.103) Acts as chief conservator of the peace within the City; supervises the administration of the affairs of the City; ensures that the laws of the commonwealth and the ordinances, resolutions and regulations of the City Council are faithfully executed; and makes recommendations and reports to the City Council regarding the affairs of the City; keeps the City Council fully advised of the City's financial condition and its future needs. (s.104) The City Manager shall have and possess, and shall exercise, all the powers, rights and duties, other than legislative, had, possessed or exercised, immediately prior to the adoption of this plan, by the mayor, board of aldermen, common Council and all other boards, commissions and committees of the City and their members, severally or collectively, except such as are by this chapter conferred upon the school committee or are otherwise provided for thereby. (s.104)	The City Council may make inquiry into municipal matters within its jurisdiction and make information requests of the City Manager (or their designee) and may request him to be present to answer written questions relating thereto at a meeting with 1 week's notice of the questions asked. (s.19) City Council has all legislative functions other than those delegated to the City Manager or the School Committee. (s. 95, 97) Except for the purpose of inquiry, the City Council and its members do not directly manage department operation and shall "deal with" department operations solely through the City Manager. City Council shall not give orders to any subordinate of the City Manager either publicly or privately. (s.107)	Mayor is Chair of City Council, and ceremonial head of government. (s.100)
Schools			Mayor is the Chair

			of the School Committee (s.31)

Framework for considering Mayor and Manager forms of government

Below are charts comparing a Mayor form of government with a Council-Manager form of government. The information on these charts refers to Massachusetts cities. Other states may vary in significant ways from what is presented here. The first section presents factual information about the differences between the two forms. The second and third sections present some pros and cons frequently cited for the two different forms of government.

Basic Ways in Which the Forms Differ		
Item	**Mayor Form of Government**	**Manager Form of Government**
1. Method of selection of chief executive	1. Election	1. Appointment by Council
2. Method of removal	2. Election or recall vote	2. Dismissal or non-renewal of contract by Council
3. Tenure	3. Typically two or four years. Currently majority is two years, but the trend is toward four years	3. Set by contract. Parameters can be included in the charter
4. Veto powers	4. Mayor can typically veto certain Council actions	4. Manager cannot veto Council actions

Selected Strengths for Each Form of Government			
Item	**Mayor Form of Government**		**Manager Form of Government**
1. Political leadership	1. City is managed by a well-known resident with the political clout to push major initiatives and to advocate on its behalf with external entities	1.	Separation of political leadership from managerial leadership can help take the politics out of executive decision-making, and chief executive will not be distracted by reelection or other campaigns
2. Professional management	2. Elected mayor may bring in professional skills from professional or personal background that a career administrator may not have	2.	Recruiting and hiring a manager allows City to find someone with experience, skills, and knowledge of best practices, and does not restrict pool to residents who have the political skills to win a election
3. Accountability	3. Having mayor directly accountable to the voters for decisions creates clear incentive for performance	3.	Having manager accountable to a council means that performance can be reviewed and discussed regularly
4. Separation of powers	4. Council can provide a political check on the mayor	4.	Council can focus on policy-making and oversight while manager can focus on management and operations of the City

Selected Challenges for Each Form of Government			
Item	**Mayor Form of Government**		**Manager Form of Government**
1. Political leadership	1. Performance and direction of City both extraordinarily dependent on personal characteristics of one individual	1.	City lacks a single figure with the sufficient political clout to push major initiatives and advocate strongly for the City externally
2. Professional management	2. Elected mayor may not have any professional experience help to governing a municipality	2.	City that runs into a period of high turnover in the manager's position may have difficulty in recruiting and retaining manager
3. Accountability	3. Directly accountable mayor may be less likely to make tough short-term decisions with long-term benefits	3.	To maintain his/her job, manager needs only to maintain a coalition with a one vote majority on a council, regardless of performance
4. Separation of powers	4. Conflicts between mayor and council can deteriorate from healthy checks & balances into prolonged conflict	4.	A politically savvy manager can find ways to usurp some of the council's legislative power

Edward J. Collins., Jr Center for Public Management
University of Massachusetts Boston