



November 8, 2022 Coordinated Election	
Ballot Issue:	Ballot Item #2C City-Initiated Charter Amendment No. 3 (Ranked Voting)
Ballot Question	<p>Shall Article VIII of the Charter of the City of Fort Collins, regarding the conduct of City elections, be amended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require that for all regular city elections after January 1, 2025, the offices of Mayor and of each District Councilmember shall be elected using a “ranked voting method,” pursuant to the applicable Colorado statutes or, for City-conducted elections, procedures and deadlines adopted by the City Council by ordinance; • clarify the applicable law for coordinated elections; and • make minor conforming edits; and • shall Article IX of the Charter, regarding recall, be amended to incorporate the ranked voting method set out in Article VIII? <p>____ Yes/Support</p> <p>____ No/Oppose</p>
Timeline	<p>September 2021-May 2022: Conversations with Election Code Committee</p> <p>March 22, 2022: Presentation at Council Work Session</p> <p>June 21, 2022: Council considers Ordinance NO. 080, 2022 on first reading</p> <p>July 5, 2022: Council adopts Ordinance NO. 080, 2022 on second reading and places item on the ballot</p>
Chamber Position	<p>Opposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system has not proven to increase voter participation, which is one of the primary objectives of the proposal. • Compared to our current plurality system (“first passed the wire”) RCV introduces a great deal more complexity, cost and political gamesmanship without providing clear benefits to the community. • Although not always successful in promoting business-friendly candidates, the Chamber believes our current system is simple, transparent and clear. It works.
Some Basics	<p>The electoral system currently employed for local, state and federal elections is known as a plurality system, or “first past the wire”, wherein a candidate that garners the most votes is declared the winner.</p> <p>A ranked-choice voting system (RCV) is an electoral system in which voters rank candidates by preference on their ballots. If a candidate wins a majority (50% +1) of</p>

	<p>first-preference votes, he or she is declared the winner. If no candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated. First-preference votes cast for the failed candidate are eliminated, lifting the second-preference choices indicated on those ballots. A new tally is conducted to determine whether any candidate has won a majority of the adjusted votes. The process is repeated until a candidate wins an outright majority. This is also known as “instant run-off”, as it eliminates the need for subsequent elections in those jurisdictions that require a run-off among the top vote getters if no candidate receives a majority of votes.</p> <p>As of June 2022, two states (Alaska and Maine) had implemented ranked-choice voting federal and/or state-level elections. One state (Hawaii) had adopted but not yet implemented RCV in federal special elections and special elections to fill vacancies on county councils. Another eight states contained jurisdictions that had implemented RCV at the local level, including Colorado. Another four states contained jurisdictions that had adopted but not yet implemented RCV in local elections.</p>
<p>Other Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not yet clear what costs are associated with the implementation of Ranked Voting, nor is it clear whether Larimer County is able to fully manage the election and recount process utilizing this voting method. • Should a change to November Elections (Item #2B) be unsuccessful, it is unlikely in the near term that Larimer County would agree to manage elections on behalf of the City. The City does not currently have a department or staff dedicated to managing the election process.
<p>Arguments in support of the Amendment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCV assures that candidates that are <i>opposed</i> by a majority of voters cannot be elected, but rather the candidate that is <i>supported</i> by the majority will win. • RCV promotes more moderate candidates that can appeal to the majority of voters, if not outright, than as a secondary preference in the event of subsequent ballot tallies. • RCV promotes a more diverse candidate field and drive greater participation from under-represented populations as candidates are incented to appeal to voters beyond a political base of support and focus on issues rather than personalities.
<p>Arguments in opposition to the Amendment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCV introduces significant cost and complexity without demonstrating ability to produce a different outcome from a plurality system in the vast majority of elections in which it has been implemented. • To achieve its lofty promise, RCV requires voters to understand the positions of <i>all</i> candidates with ability to distinguish and assign relative support of each candidate in relation to all others. This effectively discourages participation among less sophisticated, new, and over-stretched voters. • The claim that RCV delivers a winner that garners the majority of votes is inaccurate. The winner is determined from the majority of ballots that remain in subsequent rounds, which falls well short of a majority of ballots cast. • RCV encourages political gamesmanship, whereby a slate of like-minded candidates run for office under the assumption one will emerge victorious over a candidate opposed by that slate.