



MEMORANDUM

January 5, 2026

To: Media and Other Interested Parties
From: FairVote Minnesota
Re: The Impact of Ranked-Choice Elections in Minnesota Cities

2025 Ranked Choice Voting Elections in Minnesota: Bloomington, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, St. Louis Park and St. Paul

Executive Summary

The 2025 municipal elections in Minnesota's RCV cities demonstrated—clearly and convincingly—that Ranked Choice Voting is working as intended.

Key takeaways:

- **Record or near-record turnout** across all five RCV cities, including Minneapolis's all-time high of 55%.
- **Strong voter engagement**, with high rates of ballot completion and downballot participation.
- **Efficient election administration**, including successful use of automated tabulation in St. Paul.
- **Diverse and representative outcomes**, with continued gains for women and candidates of color
- **Civil, issue-focused campaigns**, even amid competitive fields and independent expenditures.

- **RCV functioning smoothly and normally**, now a routine part of local elections in Minnesota.

RCV is no longer new or experimental in Minnesota—it has become a normal, trusted part of Minnesota's local elections, and continues to strengthen democracy city by city.

Summary

In November 2025, the cities of Bloomington, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, St. Louis Park, and St. Paul each held municipal elections using ranked choice voting (RCV). They were among 14 cities and counties across the country to use RCV on Election Day, alongside others—most notably New York City—that held RCV elections earlier in the year.

Across Minnesota's RCV cities, the elections featured strong choices for voters, record turnout, high downballot participation, innovations in campaign strategy, and important election administration advancements.

A total of 109 candidates competed for 36 seats, with competitive fields across nearly all of the races. Candidates and campaigns increasingly understood how RCV works and, in some cases coordinated ranking strategies—while voters exercised independent and diverse preferences.

Of the 36 races, most were decided in the first round of tabulation, while 8 required additional rounds of tabulation to determine the winner:

- Minneapolis Mayor
- Minneapolis Ward 5
- Minneapolis Park Board At-Large
- Minneapolis Park Board District 4
- Minneapolis Park Board District 5
- St. Paul Mayor
- St. Louis Park Ward 1
- Bloomington Ward 1

The RCV or runoff results in the St. Paul's mayoral race was known on Election Night and the results in Minneapolis, St. Louis Park and Bloomington races were announced the next day.

Turnout and Participation

- **Minneapolis** set a new turnout record at **55%**, surpassing its previous high of 54% in 2021.
 - **94.4%** of mayoral ballots remained active through the final round.
 - A full **76%** of voters ranked their ballots in the mayoral election.
 - Downballot participation reached record highs for the Parks and Recreation Board and the Board of Estimate and Taxation.

- 76.7% of those who cast a ballot voted in the Parks and Recreation Board At Large race
- 72.2% cast a ballot in the Board of Estimate and Taxation race
- **St. Paul** saw **39.6% turnout** in its first contested mayoral race since 2017, when turnout reached 38.5% under RCV.
 - **92.7%** of ballots remained active in the final round of tabulation.
- **Minnetonka** reached **33.0% turnout**, rising quickly under RCV since 2021, when turnout grew to 28% and then to 32% in 2023, over turnout of 20.5% in 2017 and 2019.
- **Bloomington** continued its steady upward trend, with **27.8% turnout**, up from prior comparable elections.
- **St. Louis Park**, despite no mayoral race, achieved a new turnout record of **25.6%**, surpassing both its first RCV election and its last pre-RCV contest.

Representation and Candidate Diversity

RCV continues to support larger, more diverse candidate fields and representative outcomes:

- **Nearly half (16 of 36) elected candidates** were Black, Indigenous, or people of color.
- **Half of all winners** were women or non-binary.
- Minnetonka and St. Paul elected their first female mayors, which will join all female city councils elected under RCV.
- In St. Paul, Mayor-elect Her will also be the city's first Hmong mayor.
- In Minneapolis, **9 of 13 City Council members** and **4 of 9 Park Board members** are people of color.

By eliminating low-turnout primaries and consolidating elections into November, RCV lowers barriers to entry and allows candidates from underrepresented communities to compete on a more level playing field.

Election Administration and Results Timing

RCV elections were administered smoothly across all five cities, with nearly **100% valid ballots** once again.

- **St. Paul** used automated tabulation software (RCTab), producing final results on election night within minutes—demonstrating a clear path toward faster reporting statewide.
- In the remaining cities, first-choice results were reported on Election Night, with additional tabulation completed the following day in the few races requiring it. In all these cities, a manual spreadsheet system was used to tabulate final results.
- Only **8 of 36 seats** required tabulation beyond first-choice counts. The overall competitiveness of these races—in particular Minneapolis and St. Paul mayoral

races—along with competitive races that did not require additional rounds of tabulation, drove historic voter turnout.

Campaign Tone and Voter Behavior

Despite competitive races and increased independent expenditure activity in Minneapolis, which was often divisive, the candidate campaigns remained largely civil and issue-focused across the five cities. Voters demonstrated comfort with ranking candidates and used the system strategically when they chose to do so. Efforts to discourage ranking were largely ineffective, reinforcing that voters understand and trust the process.

RCV Highlights Beyond Minnesota

- Around the country, more than 5.6 million voters in 19 cities had access to ranking their ballots this year, underscoring the growing acceptance and popularity of RCV across the nation, in red, blue, and purple states.
- **New York City** demonstrated the strength of RCV in the competitive Democratic Primary this year, yielding a large popular win by Zorhan Mamdandi. The lack of RCV in the competitive General Election highlights the advantages of Minnesota's single, ranked general election model.
- **Greenbelt, Maryland** voted 67% in favor of adopting RCV, continuing a national trend: **33 of the last 34 cities** to vote on RCV adoption have approved it.

See FairVote.Org for more details about the 2025 elections across the country.

Conclusion: RCV Is Normal, Trusted, and Here to Stay

The 2025 elections confirm what Minnesotans have experienced for over a decade: Ranked Choice Voting is easy for voters, manageable for administrators, and effective for democracy.

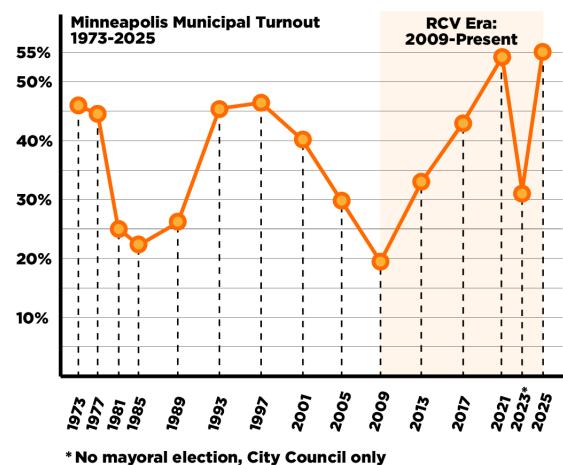
After more than a decade of use, RCV elections are no longer novel. They are routine, trusted, and increasingly expected. Voters rank confidently, campaigns adapt constructively, and results are delivered accurately and transparently. [Voter testimonials](#) again this year demonstrate that voters continue to find RCV easy to use, they like it, and they want to see it expanded to state and federal elections.

As more Minnesota communities explore RCV—and as election officials continue to refine administration—the evidence is clear: RCV strengthens choice, participation, representation, and confidence in our democratic process.

See the infographics on pages 5-6 summarizing the above information.

Charts and Graphs

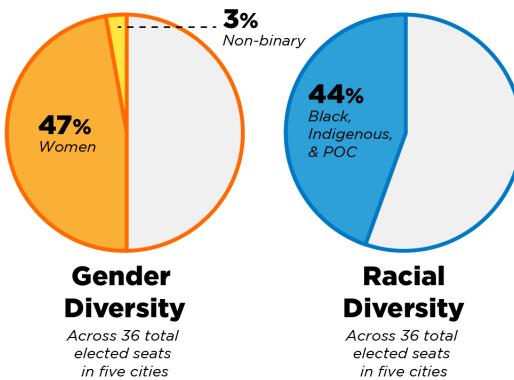
Higher Turnout



Turnout continued to increase across the five RCV cities. In Minneapolis, turnout has steadily increased over time since the first competitive RCV citywide mayoral election in 2013—reversing a trend of steady decline. In 2025, voters turned out at a record 55%.

Other cities also set high water marks. Despite not having a mayoral election in 2025, St. Louis Park set a new turnout record at 25.6%. Bloomington and Minnetonka also saw increases from their last comparable elections, with Minnetonka achieving its highest turnout since 2001 and second-highest since at least 1985. St. Paul also hit its highest turnout for at least the last two decades.

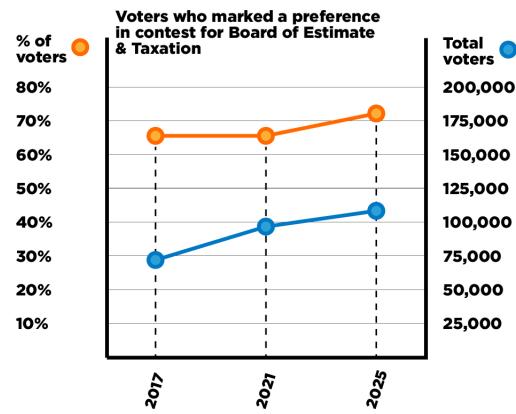
Diverse Results



In 2023, voters in St. Paul and Minnetonka elected city councils of entirely women for the first time in their histories. They continued that trend in 2025, Minnetonka voters elected women to the mayoralty and to the council seats that were up for election. St. Paul elected a woman to serve as mayor for the first time in its history.

Overall, the trend of RCV cities across the metro electing diverse groups of elected officials continued. Of the 36 candidates elected, 17 were women, one was non-binary, and 16 were Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color.

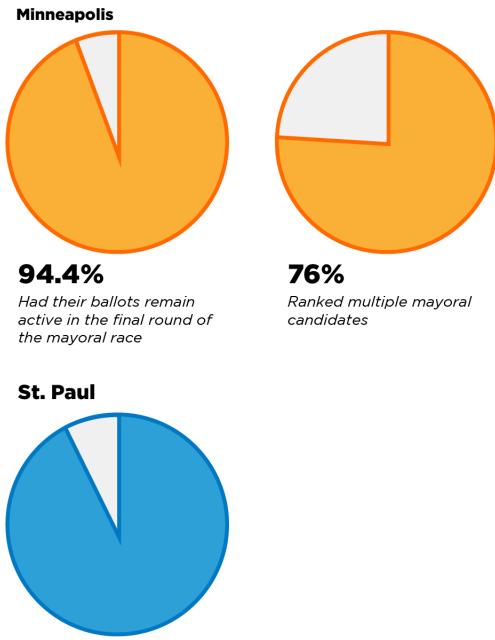
More Downballot Participation



In addition to rising turnout across the metro, participation in downballot races is on the rise. In the Minneapolis race for Board of Estimate and Taxation, 106,682 (72.2% of total ballots) votes were cast, compared to 95,625 (65.8%) in 2021 and 69,694 (65.8%) in 2017.

In the Parks Board At Large race, 113,348 raw votes (76.7% of those who cast a ballot) were cast, compared to 106,650 (73.4%) in 2023 and 84,347 (79.6%) in 2017.

Voters Understand RCV



Voters have continued to demonstrate an understanding of ranking and the power it gives their ballot. A total of 76% of voters marked more than one choice in the Minneapolis mayoral race.

Those who didn't rank did so believing their top choice would likely be a finalist in tabulations—as demonstrated by the 94.4% of ballots that continued to the final round in Minneapolis (and 92.7% in St. Paul).

Results in Record Time



4 Hours

For St. Paul to report fully tabulated results

Results reporting in Minnesota's RCV races was smooth and quick—with first round results being reported on election night and all tabulations by the end of the following day.

In a first for Minnesota, St. Paul used automated tabulation software (RCTab), producing final results on election night within minutes—demonstrating a clear path toward faster reporting statewide. Whereas St. Paul's traditional hand count tabulation method would have taken several days, full tabulations were reported at midnight on election night.

Sources:

[Minnesota Secretary of State Election Results](#)

[Minneapolis Election Results](#)

[St Paul Election Results](#)

[St. Louis Park Election Results](#)

[Bloomington Election Results](#)

[Minnetonka Election Results](#)

[Fairvote \(national organization\)](#)

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