

We Deserve Democracy!

Toronto is the most multi-cultural urban centre in the world. We have the potential to become an inspiration to the world.

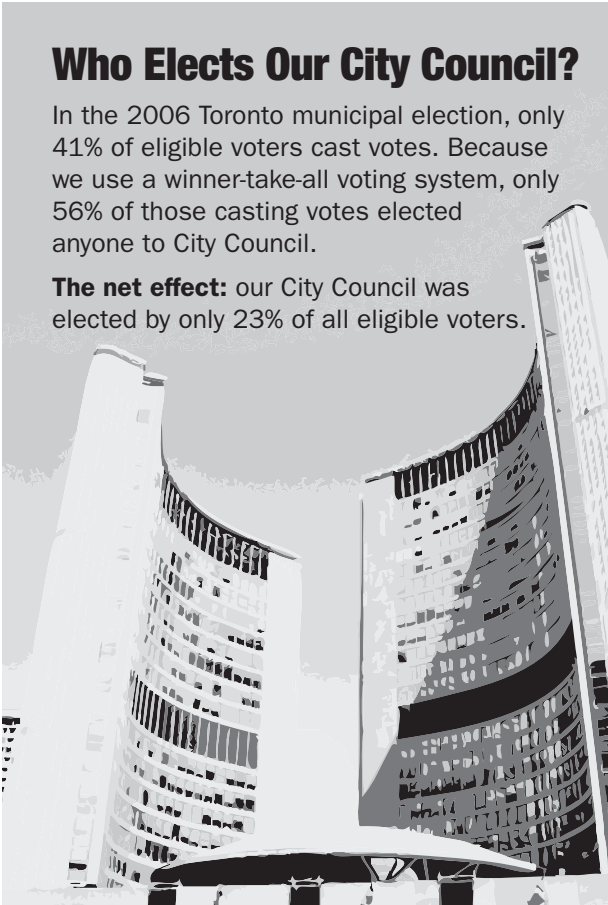
But that potential will be squandered if we remain hobbled by an antiquated electoral system.

Toronto needs to develop a fair and modern voting system suitable for a 21st century urban centre with a diverse population.

Who Elects Our City Council?

In the 2006 Toronto municipal election, only 41% of eligible voters cast votes. Because we use a winner-take-all voting system, only 56% of those casting votes elected anyone to City Council.

The net effect: our City Council was elected by only 23% of all eligible voters.



.....

“ *Proportional representation [PR]...encouraged fairer racial and ethnic representation [in Ohio]. It produced the first Irish Catholics elected in Ashtabula, and the first Polish-Americans elected in Toledo. In Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Toledo, African-Americans had never been able to win city office until the coming of PR.* ”

Dr. Douglas Amy

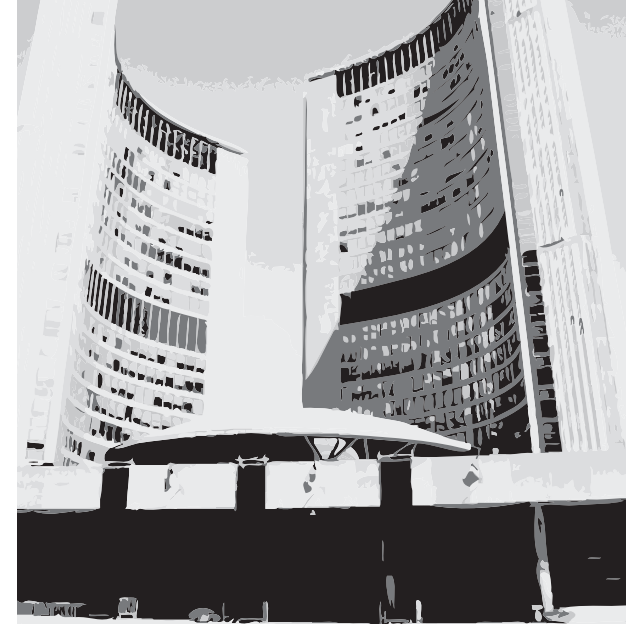
.....

**Fair Vote Canada
Toronto Chapter**

For more information:
office@fairvote.ca
416-410-4034
fairvote.ca/toronto



Fair Voting *for* Toronto



How to Create a City Council That Represents All of Us



**Fair Vote Canada
Toronto Chapter**

1

Problem 1: Winner-Take-All Elections

Winner-take-all voting means that voters have to *compete against one another* to win representation on City Council. Only a portion of voters in each ward can elect a Council member. Many, sometimes most, remain unrepresented.

2

Problem 2: A Lack of Diversity on Council

The current voting system also tends to create councils that do not reflect the rich diversity of our communities. Larger groups of voters are over-represented, while smaller groups are under-represented.

3

Problem 3: Micro-Wards and Micro-Politics

Individual ward councillors have more incentive to be micro-focused on pleasing one small group of voters in one ward than being broadly focused on the overall needs of the city.

The Fix: Fair Voting and Full Representation

A new and fairer voting system would produce the foundation for healthy representative democracy and a City Council created by and accountable to all voters and residents of Toronto.

The key to genuine representative democracy is having electoral districts (we usually call them wards or ridings) that elect more than one politician.

One politician simply cannot represent all voters in one district because people have many differing views. That's why most advanced democracies have electoral districts where voters can elect a number of representatives.

Benefits of a Full-Representation Voting System in Toronto

- 1) eligible voters will have more reason to vote because their votes will count
- 2) a richer diversity of candidates will be encouraged to compete and will be elected: the multi-cultural face of the city will become visible in the council chamber
- 3) elected officials will have more incentive to rise above micro-politics and micro-thinking and focus instead on addressing broader community needs

How Might a Full-Representation System Work in Toronto?

1) Multi-councillor wards

One option is to merge current wards in to larger wards, allowing voters in each to elect three, five, seven or more councillors. (The more that are elected in one district, the better, in terms of ensuring all voters can elect someone to represent their views.)

Voters would then use a ranked ballot, ranking candidates as they wished.

2) Two types of councillors: ward and at-large

Another approach is a mixed system in which some council members are elected to city-wide seats while others are elected in wards.

For example, one-third of seats in Council could be converted to city-wide at-large seats. Every voter would cast a vote for a local ward councillor, as we do now. But every voter would also be able to vote for citywide at-large candidates.

Another variation, rather than citywide at-large seats, would be to divide the city into several large regions (perhaps based on the old pre-amalgamation municipalities) and have voters in each of those regions elect a number of at-large councillors, in addition to their ward councillors.

.....

We need full representation... we need democracy!