



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

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News Release

To: Press
From: Cambridge Election Commission
Re: Modifying the Municipal Ballot Design for the City of Cambridge
Date: May 1, 2019
Ct: Election Commission (617) 349-4361

***** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****

City of Cambridge Board of Election Commissioners Modifying the Municipal Ballot Design for the City of Cambridge

The City of Cambridge Board of Election Commissioners would like to invite the public to a meeting on Wednesday, May 15, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. at the Election Commission, 51 Inman Street, 1st Floor to discuss modifying the design of the City Council and School Committee Municipal Election ballots. The Board requests that anyone who is unable to attend the meeting, please submit questions and comments at elections@cambridgema.gov

In Cambridge Municipal Elections, voters rank the candidates in order of preference by marking numbered ovals next to the candidates' names. With twenty-six (26) candidates for City Council in 2017, the highest number of candidates since Proportional Representation was computerized in 1997, it became evident that ballot modifications would be needed to address a further increase in the number of candidates and to improve the usability.

Instead of having the same number of ovals as candidates, the Election Commission is considering capping the number of ovals at fifteen (15). There would be no limit to how many candidates run for City Council or School Committee, but the ballot would only have fifteen ovals next to each name, even if there are more than fifteen candidates.

Most Cambridge voters will be able to continue voting the same way they always have. In the past five elections, the average voter ranked five candidates on their ballot. Over 95% of voters ranked fifteen or fewer candidates.

The modified ballot will not change the results of the election. Election data from the 2013, 2015 and 2017 Municipal Elections was tested, and it was determined that the results would have been the same if voters had been limited to fifteen choices.

The Election Commission anticipates that this change will make the ballot easier for the voter to read and mark, leading to fewer spoiled ballots.