

APPENDIX 1 – HOW STV AND FPP FUNCTION AS ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

Single Transferable Vote (STV)

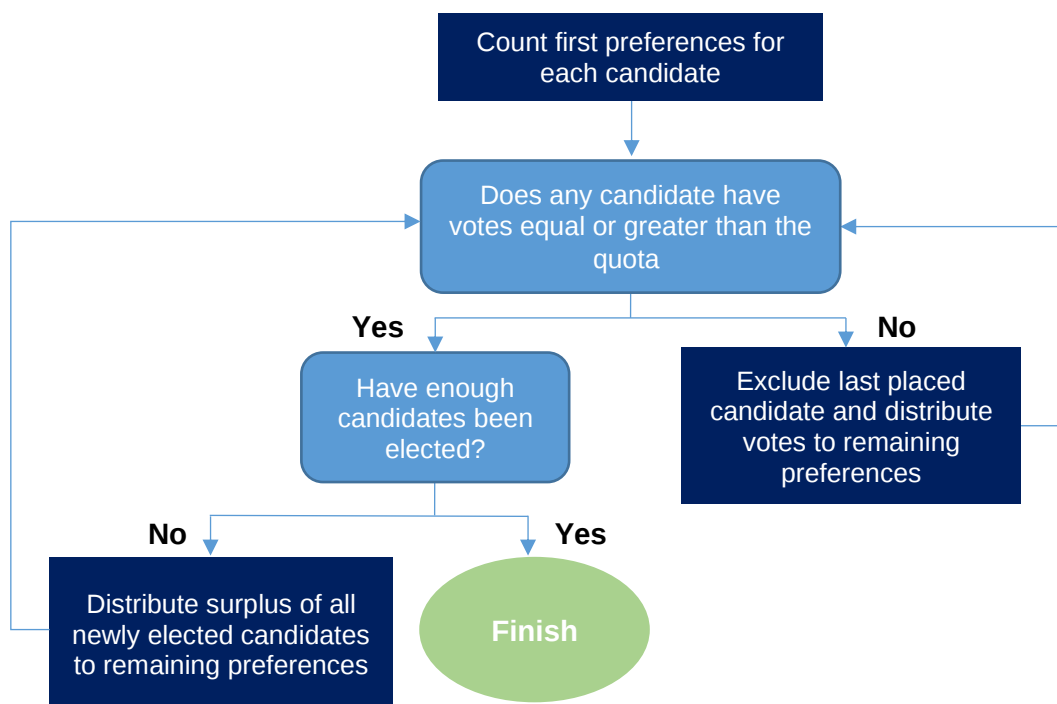
In its simplest form, STV means that voters are able to rank candidates in order of preference, rather than simply pick their most preferred candidate for each vacancy.

Under the STV electoral system, a voter has one vote, but can indicate their preferences for all of the candidates. Their vote can be transferred if their most preferred candidate is so popular the candidate does not need all of their votes, or is not popular at all with other voters.

In an election to select three councillors for a ward in a council election, under STV, a voter would write “1” next to the name of their preferred candidate, “2” next to their second preferred candidate and so on. Under FPP, a voter would place ticks next to the names of up to three candidates, which means a voter would have three votes.

The number of vacancies and votes determines the quota a candidate must reach to be elected. The formula for deciding the quota is the total number of valid votes, divided by the number of vacancies plus one. This process is illustrated in the diagram below.

How votes are counted under STV



First Past the Post (FPP)

Under the FPP electoral system, the candidate with the most votes wins. This is a very simple method of electing candidates and is widely used throughout the world. Although FPP is very simple, some people have argued that the results of an FPP election may not always reflect the wishes of the majority of voters. The following examples demonstrate how results of FPP elections may vary. Where one candidate has a clear majority of votes, it can be seen that the majority of people did support the winning candidate.

	Number of Votes	Percentage of Votes
Candidate One	140	70%
Candidate Two	20	10%
Candidate Three	20	10%
Candidate Four	20	10%
	Total Votes = 200	Total = 100%

In this example, the winning candidate received 70% of the total votes. However, the winning candidate might receive more votes than any other one candidate but receive fewer votes than the other candidates put together.

In this case, the winning candidate received 40 percent of the total votes; the other candidates received 60 percent of votes. It could be said that the election result did not reflect the wishes of the majority. Some people have also argued that even when the winning candidate receives the majority of the votes, many people's votes are "wasted".

	Number of Votes	Percentage of Votes
Candidate One	80	40%
Candidate Two	60	30%
Candidate Three	40	20%
Candidate Four	20	10%
	Total Votes = 200	Total = 100%

(Source: Department of Internal Affairs website www.dia.govt.nz and www.stv.govt.nz)