Region and its municipalities sticking with first-past-the-post

Halton Region will be following its member communities lead in the 2018 municipal election and will stick with the first-past-the-post voting model to elect its chair.

The announcement, made in a memo at the region s regular meeting of council on March 29, was expected as the towns of Oakville, Burlington, Milton and Halton Hills all decided not to switch to ranked ballots in the next election.

Upper-tier municipalities that have directly elected offices (ie. the member does not also sit on a lower-tier council) may only pass a bylaw authorizing the use of ranked ballots to elect those offices if all of the lower-tier municipalities within it have passed bylaws authorizing the use of ranked ballots to elect the lower-tier offices, wrote Mark G. Meneray, Commissioner of Legislative and Planning Services in a memo to council.

Essentially, that means the region cannot switch to ranked ballots until all four of its member municipalities decide to do the same.

The councils of the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton and the Town of Oakville have resolved to maintain the first-past-the-post system and not use ranked ballots for the 2018 municipal election. This means that the Regional Chair will also be elected by the first-past-the-post system in 2018, added Meneray.

All Ontario municipalities were given the option to switch to ranked ballots in future elections after the province passed Bill 181, dubbed the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016. The legislation, which became law last June, gives municipalities the option of using ranked ballots or sticking with the first-past-the-post model as they see fit.

First-past-the-post means the person with the most votes wins, but ranked ballots go through rounds until one candidate receives a majority (at least 50 per cent plus one vote).

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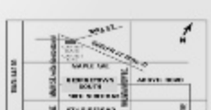

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