

Increasing Voter Participation: Aligning Village and Federal Elections & Lengthening Village Terms of Office



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Background

Larchmont/Mamaroneck Village share the following:

- Elections in the Villages of Mamaroneck and Larchmont are currently held on the first Tuesday following first Monday of November, each year.
- Each village trustee and mayor serves a term of two years.
- Village of Larchmont and Mamaroneck justices serve four year terms
- There are four village trustees, two village justices and one mayor

As of now Mamaroneck village officials are elected in two groups:

- **Group 1:** three trustees are elected every two years on EVEN numbered election years; Village justices are staggered every two years and are elected in EVEN numbered years as well
- **Group 2:** mayor, one trustee are elected every two years on ODD numbered election years
 - Mayor Tom Murphy and Trustee Nora Lucas were up for reelection in November of 2021

Current Election Format

ODD Year Elections - 1 trustee slot, 2 candidates

2019 GENERAL

MAMARONECK - VILLAGE TRUSTEE

	TWD	DEM NORA A LUCAS	CON STEFANIE LIVIDINI	WOR NORA A LUCAS	TFV STEFANIE LIVIDINI	W/I IRREGULAR	TOTAL CANVASS	BLANK - VOID	TOTAL BALLOT
Town of Mamaroneck - 1	70001	69	40	4	18	0	131	12	143
Town of Mamaroneck - 2	70002	110	50	4	27	0	191	22	213
Town of Mamaroneck - 3	70003	252	60	4	33	0	349	20	369
Town of Mamaroneck - 4	70004	182	40	12	31	0	265	14	279
Town of Mamaroneck - 5	70005	73	34	6	25	0	138	8	146
Town of Mamaroneck - 17	70017	191	28	3	24	0	246	8	254
Town of Mamaroneck - 22	70022	127	40	6	23	0	196	18	214
Town of Mamaroneck - 23	70023	238	39	8	23	0	308	15	323
Town of Mamaroneck - 27	70027	120	42	6	35	0	203	10	213
Town of Rye - 1	160001	164	47	13	28	0	252	14	266
Town of Rye - 2	160002	188	85	10	63	1	347	23	370
Town of Rye - 3	160003	192	43	13	27	0	275	14	289
Town of Rye - 4	160004	123	58	13	57	0	251	12	263
Town of Rye - 24	160024	116	97	14	51	0	278	19	297
Town of Rye - 28	160028	166	68	4	42	0	280	16	296

2020 GENERAL

MAMARONECK - VILLAGE TRUSTEE

	TWD	DEM DAN NACHEZ	DEM VICTOR M TAFUR	DEM KELLY S WENSTRUP	W/I IRREGULAR	TOTAL CANVASS	BLANK - VOID	TOTAL BALLOT
Town of Mamaroneck - 1	70001	319	318	328	0	965	562	1527
Town of Mamaroneck - 2	70002	342	351	355	3	1051	776	1827
Town of Mamaroneck - 3	70003	555	569	585	13	1722	1005	2727
Town of Mamaroneck - 4	70004	411	423	438	10	1282	857	2139
Town of Mamaroneck - 5	70005	225	224	234	1	684	459	1143
Town of Mamaroneck - 17	70017	428	432	443	7	1310	511	1821
Town of Mamaroneck - 22	70022	283	282	290	1	856	584	1440
Town of Mamaroneck - 23	70023	502	505	521	6	1534	662	2196
Town of Mamaroneck - 27	70027	253	249	260	7	769	545	1314
Town of Rye - 1	160001	369	363	371	0	1103	712	1815
Town of Rye - 2	160002	488	476	479	4	1447	965	2412
Town of Rye - 3	160003	495	458	470	0	1423	659	2082
Town of Rye - 4	160004	340	327	338	7	1012	845	1857
Town of Rye - 24	160024	393	394	393	16	1196	910	2106
Town of Rye - 28	160028	355	346	351	9	1061	625	1686

EVEN Year Elections - 3 trustee slots, 6 candidates

Voter Registration: 2010-19

Year	# of Voters
2010	10,082
2011	10,274
2012	10,364
2013	10,668
2014	10,524
2015	10,474
2016	10,707
2017	11,632
2018	11,186
2019	11,558

On the left is the number of ACTIVE Registered Voters in Village of Mamaroneck, 2010-2019

2011 -> $3204/10,274$ = roughly 31.2% of registered voters

2013 -> $3977/10,668$ = roughly 37.3% of registered voters

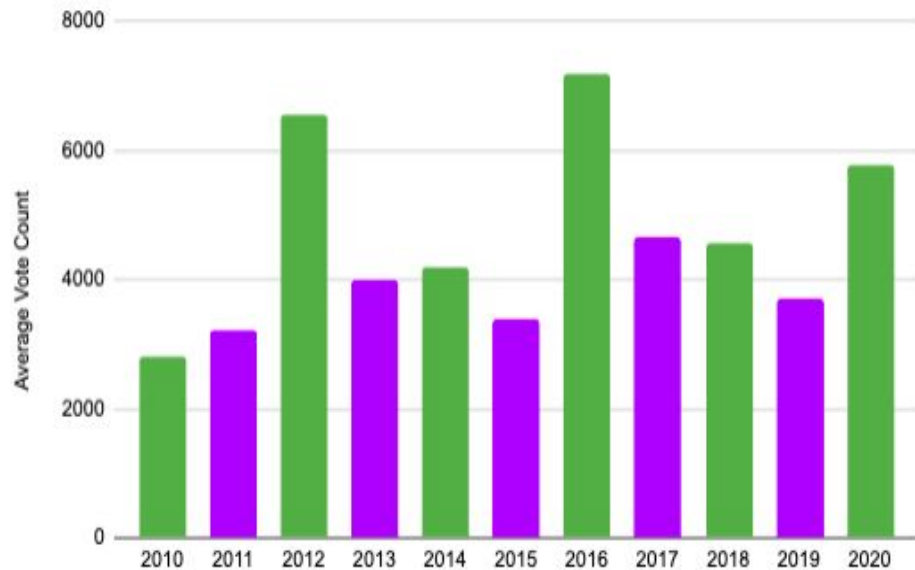
2015 -> $3377/10,474$ = roughly 32.2% of registered voters

2017 -> $4650/11,632$ = roughly 40.0% of registered voters

2019 -> $3710/11,558$ = roughly 32.1% of registered voters

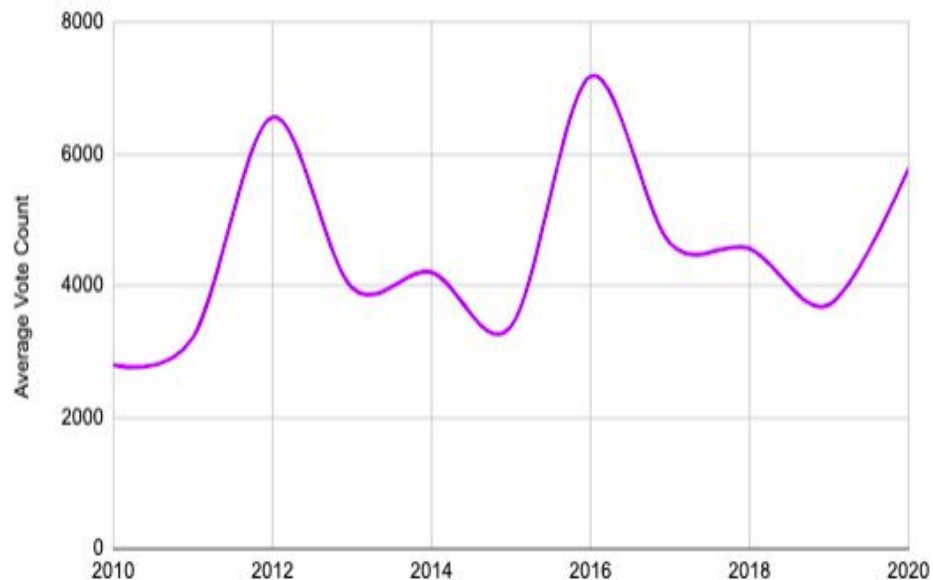
Voter Turnout (2010-20)

Average Turnout for VoM Trustee Elections, 2010-2020



Average Vote Count	2798	3204	6562	3977	4206
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014

Average Turnout for VoM Trustee Elections, 2010-2020



3377	7184	4650	4565	3710	5770
2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020

*Green is On Cycle, Purple is Off Cycle

Source:

<https://citizenparticipation.westchestergov.com/election-dates-and-calendars/enrollment-figures-and-election-results>

Analysis: VoM Voter Turnout

**ON CYCLE Elections have
36.9% more turnout than OFF
CYCLE Elections**

Average Turnout for OFF CYCLE Elections

$$(3204 + 3977 + 3377 + 4650 + 3710) \div 5 = 3783.6$$

Average Turnout for ON CYCLE Elections

$$(2798 + 6562 + 4206 + 7184 + 4565 + 5777) \div 6 = 5182$$

$$5182/3783.6 = 1.369595095 = 136.9\%$$

Average Turnout Percentage of Registration for OFF CYCLE Elections

$$(31.3\% + 37.3\% + 32.2\% + 40.0\% + 32.1\%) \div 5 = 34.58\%$$

Average Turnout Percentage of Registration for ON CYCLE Elections

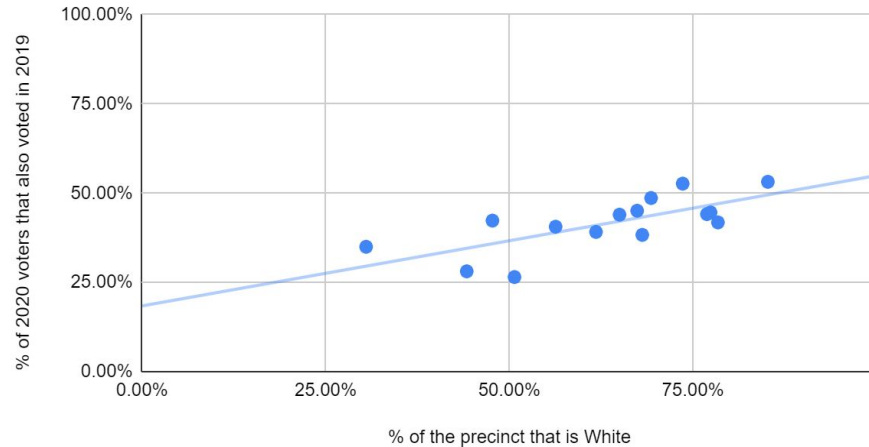
$$(27.7\% + 63.3\% + 40.0\% + 67.1\% + 33.2\%) \div 5 = 46.26\%$$

Demographic Composition of Off Year Elections

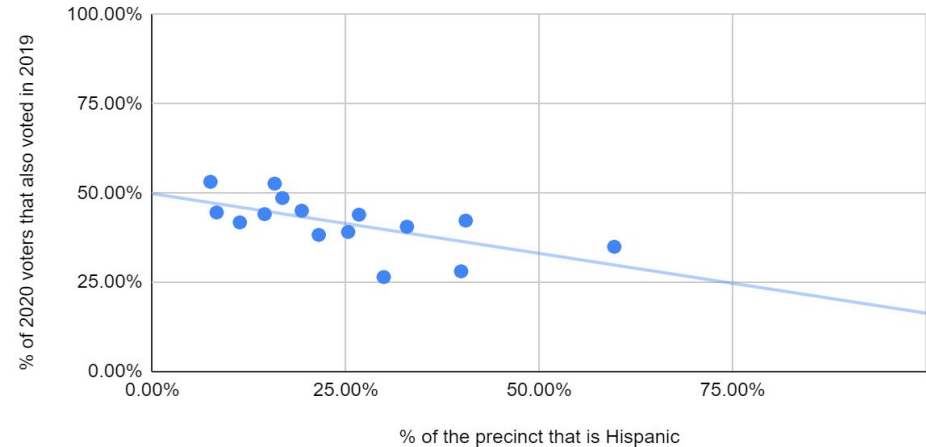
Off year elections affect the racial-ethnic composition of the electorate:

- In precincts with higher hispanic populations, turnout is lower in off-cycle elections, compared to non-hispanic districts.
- In precincts with less hispanic population, turnout is higher in off-cycle elections, when compared to more hispanic precincts.

% of 2020 voters that voted in 2019 compared to the % white population of the district



% of 2020 voters that voted in 2019 compared to the % hispanic population of the district



Proposal One:

*This chart assumes each official will win each election

Board of Trustees	Tom Murphy	Nora Lucas	Daniel Natchez	Lou Young	Victor Tafur
Current Term Ends	November 2023	November 2023	November 2022	November 2022	November 2022
Alt. Term Start	November 2023	November 2023	November 2024	November 2024	November 2024
Alt. Term End	November 2026	November 2026	November 2028	November 2028	November 2028

"...If such resolution or local law shall become effective, the offices, the term or terms of which have been reduced, shall thereafter, except as is otherwise provided in subdivision seven of this section, be filled for terms of two years commencing at the beginning of the official year following the next general village election at which such offices are to be filled. No such resolution or local law, however, shall become effective within thirty days prior to a general village election." - Section 3-302, Subpoint 5b

Proposal Two:

*This chart assumes each official will win each election

Board of Trustee	Tom Murphy	Nora Lucas	Daniel Natchez	Lou Young	Victor Tafur
Current Term End	November 2023	November 2023	November 2022	November 2022	November 2022
Alt. Term Start	November 2023	November 2023	November 2024	November 2024	November 2024
Alt. Term End	November 2026	November 2026	November 2028	November 2028	November 2028
Alt Term 2 End	November 2028	November 2030	November 2032	November 2032	November 2032

"...If such resolution or local law shall become effective, the offices, the term or terms of which have been reduced, shall thereafter, except as is otherwise provided in subdivision seven of this section, be filled for terms of two years commencing at the beginning of the official year following the next general village election at which such offices are to be filled. No such resolution or local law, however, shall become effective within thirty days prior to a general village election." - Section 3-302, Subpoint 5b

Relevant New York State Laws

The New York State Village Law explicitly stipulates election years can be changed to odd or even by the will of the Board of Trustees or by permissive referendum

Section 3-302 – Subpoint 7


“Biennial elections. a. The board of trustees of any village which has provided that the terms of office of all trustees, or the terms of office of mayor and all trustees shall be four years, may, subject to permissive referendum, adopt a separate resolution or local law providing that general village elections shall be held biennially in the odd numbered years or in the even numbered years, as they shall determine,”

In terms of the legality of changing term lengths of village officials there is substantive legal justification again in the New York State Village Code.

Section 3-302 – Subpoint 5

“Four year terms for mayor and trustees. a. The board of trustees, by resolution or local law subject to permissive referendum, may extend to four years the term of office of mayor, the terms of office for all trustees, or the terms of office of mayor and all trustees.”

Three Examples

- Baltimore
 - Austin
 - Phoenix
- 

Source: <https://elections.maryland.gov/index.html>

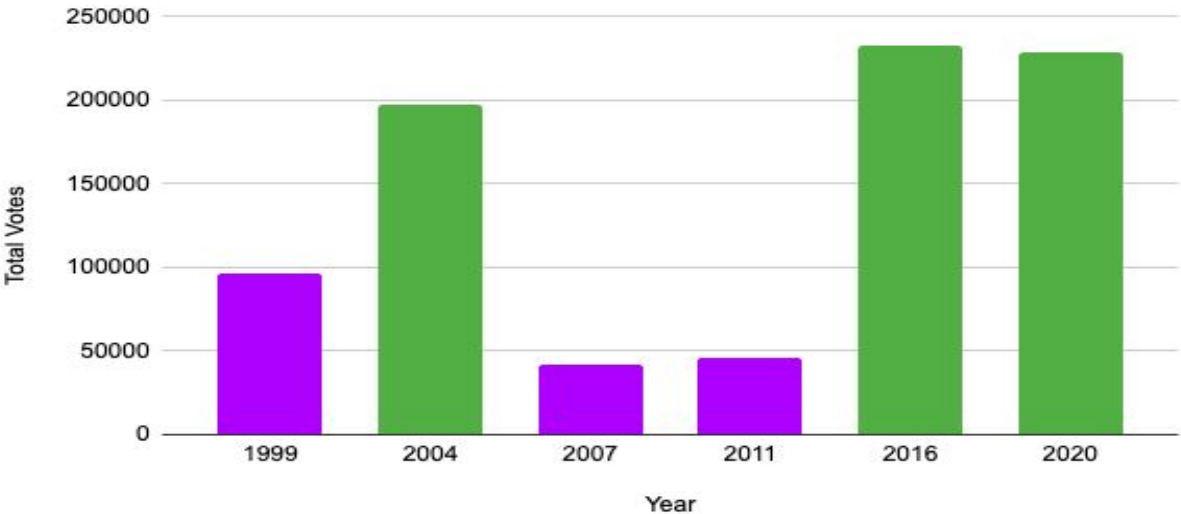
Example One: Baltimore

*Green is On Cycle, Purple is Off Cycle

- In 2016, Baltimore's municipal elections were aligned with the national general election.
- The 2003 election in September was postponed to November 2004 because of a clash between Maryland State Election Law and the Baltimore City Charter.

Baltimore Mayc	1999	2004	2007	2011	2016	2020
Total Votes	96814	197475	41865	46233	233035	228600

Baltimore Mayoral Elections, Total Voter Turnout, 1999-2020



**Turnout for elections in
ON CYCLE years was
3.02 times higher than
OFF CYCLE Elections**

Average Turnout in OFF CYCLE elections:

$$(96,814 + 41,865 + 46,233) = 184,912$$

$$184,912/3 = 61,637$$

Average Turnout in ON CYCLE elections:

$$(197,475 + 233,035 + 228,600) = 559,110$$

$$559,110/3 = 186,370$$

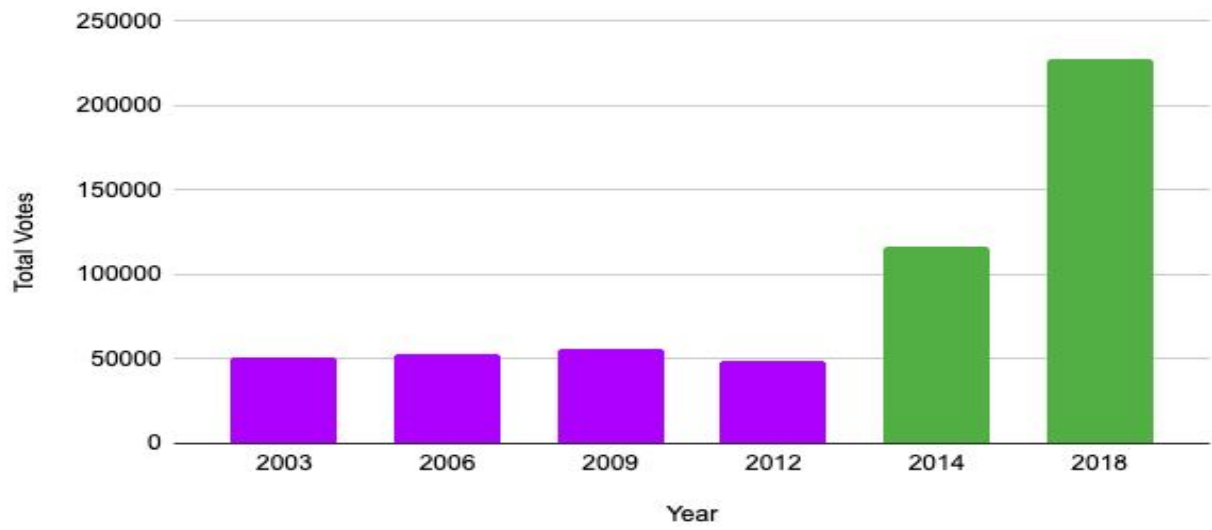
Example Two: Austin

*Green is On Cycle, Purple is Off Cycle

- In 2014, Austin’s municipal elections were aligned with the national midterm elections.
- The 2006 and 2012 mayoral elections cannot be evaluated as ON CYCLE elections because they took place in May

Austin Mayoral	2003	2006	2009	2012	2014	2018
Total Votes	51318	53151	55595	48882	116308	227308

Austin Mayoral Elections, Total Voter Turnout, 2003-2018



Turnout for elections in ON CYCLE years was 3.3 times higher than OFF CYCLE Elections

Average Turnout in OFF CYCLE elections:
 $(51,318 + 53,151 + 55,595 + 48,882) = 208,946$

$208,946 / 4 = 52,237$

Average Turnout in ON CYCLE elections:
 $(116,308 + 227,308) = 343,616$

$343,616 / 2 = 171,808$

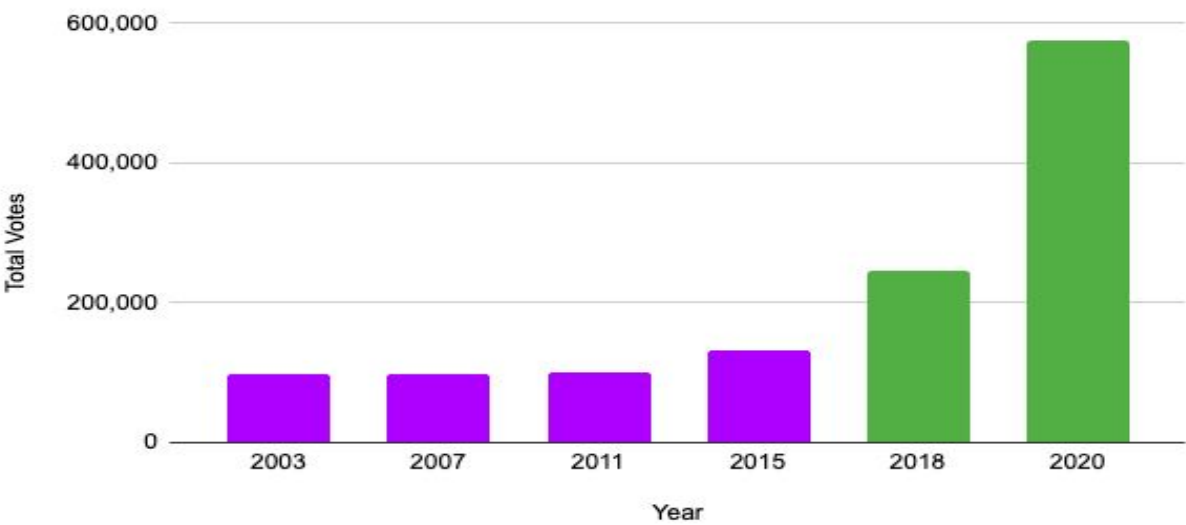
Example Three: Phoenix

*Green is On Cycle, Purple is Off Cycle

- In 2020, Phoenix’s municipal elections were aligned with the national midterm elections.
- The 2018 mayoral elections can be evaluated as an ON CYCLE elections because it was a special election held in November

Phoenix Mayor:	2003	2007	2011	2015	2018	2020
Total Votes	99,224	97,973	100,557	131,103	246,447	574,411

Phoenix Mayoral Elections, Total Voter Turnout, 2003-2020



Turnout for elections in ON CYCLE years was 3.83 times higher than OFF CYCLE Elections

Average Turnout in OFF CYCLE elections:
 $(99,224 + 97,973 + 100,557 + 131,100) =$
428,854

$428,854 / 4 = 107,214$

Average Turnout in ON CYCLE elections:
 $(246,447 + 574,411) =$
820,858

$820,858 / 2 = 410,429$

Supporting Research

- 70% of voters nationwide favor moving local elections to line up with larger ones.
- A study from California shows that turnout is 25-36% higher in municipal elections held concurrently with statewide races.
- In the last 5 years, California, Kansas, and Michigan have taken steps to line up elections
- An additional 5 states, Arkansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, Oregon and Rhode Island already hold municipal elections in November of even numbered years.
- Off-cycle elections typically have lower turnout for minority voters, while over-representing more affluent, white voters

Source: https://www.ncsl.org/Documents/Elections/The_Canvass_April_2016.pdf

Additional Benefit: Reduced Expenditures

- Off-cycle elections pose additional costs not just for the the administration, but for the voters themselves.
- Additional savings exist for the election administrators, as the cost of running one election vs two is cheaper, saves Board of Elections expenditure AND candidates' time and money
- Melissa Marschall, a Professor who leads the Local Elections in America Project at Rice University, has indicated that costs would be lower for municipalities who hold elections concurrently.

Sources: https://www.ncsl.org/Documents/Elections/The_Canvass_April_2016.pdf

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326133664_Turnout_in_Local_Elections_Is_Timing_Really_Everything

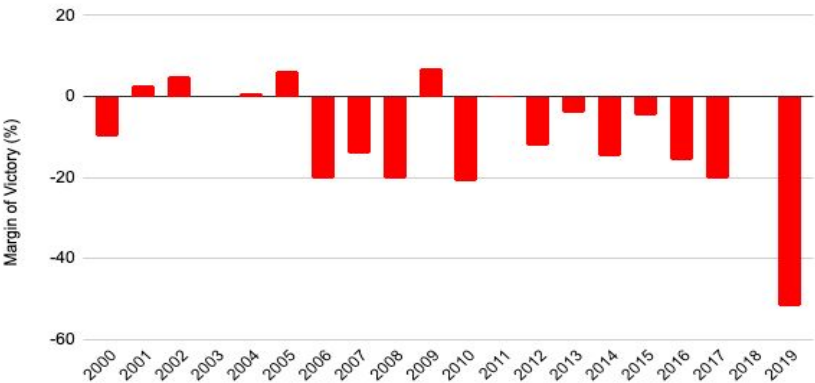
<https://www.governing.com/topics/elections/qov-moving-municipal-elections-concurrent.html>

Analysis of Potential Concerns

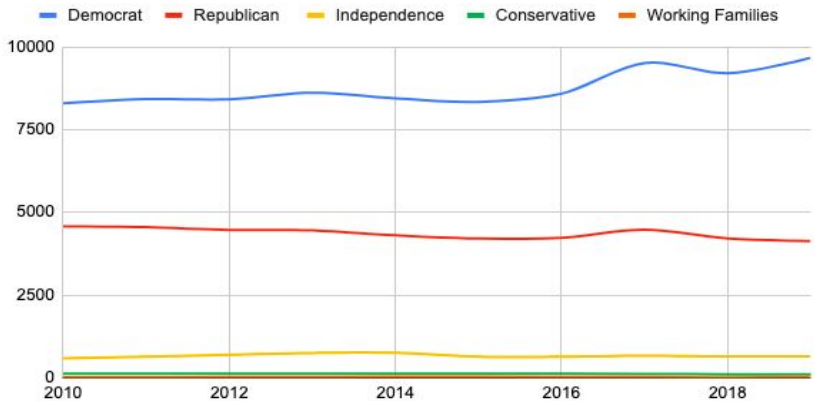
- Will This Hurt the Minority Party?
 - Does Voting In Federal Elections Decrease Down Ballot?
 - Will This Increase Purely Partisan Voting?
 - Will Candidates Run for 4 Year Terms?
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Concern 1: Will This Hurt the Minority Party?

Average Margin of Victory, By Percentage, for Republicans from 2000-2019 for VoM

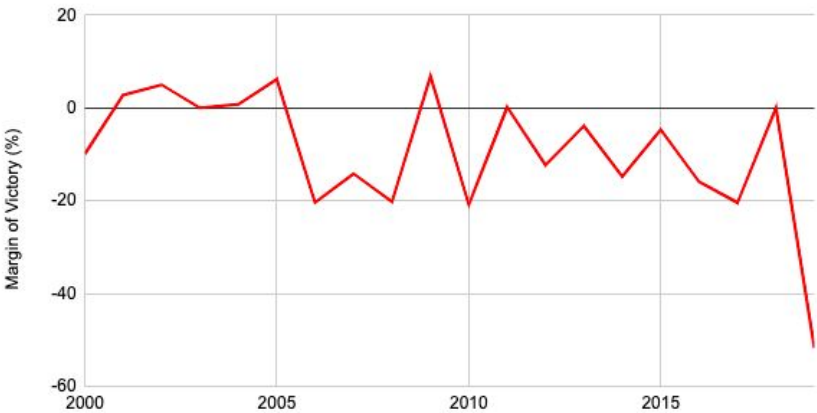


Active Registration in VoM, 2010 - 2019



On the left is the margin of victory from 2000-2019 in Village of Mamaroneck trustee elections, by percentage, for Republicans. Negative values indicate a loss. 2018 and 2003 were input as zero values because they were uncontested elections. This claim is exaggerated because Republicans only suffer a -3% change compared to the off-cycle elections. Not to mention that Republicans have half as many registered voters in the Village of Mamaroneck as the Democrats do. Also, voter registration is fluid, and voters don't always vote on party lines.

Average Margin of Victory, By Percentage, for Republicans from 2000-2019 for VoM



Concern 2: Electoral “Fall off”?

Federal Turnout Vs. Local Votes Cast

A common concern is that our data is misleading regarding the amount of local and federal votes being concurrent. The following analysis shows that a large margin of votes cast in a presidential election are votes in local races in ON CYCLE election years.

Presidential Turnout in Village Mamaroneck:

2012 Election: **7474**, 2016 Election: **8267**

Average Presidential Turnout in VoM:

$$(7474+8267)/2 = \mathbf{7871}$$

Average Local Turnout in VoM in These Years:

2012 Election: **6562**, 2016 Election: **7184**

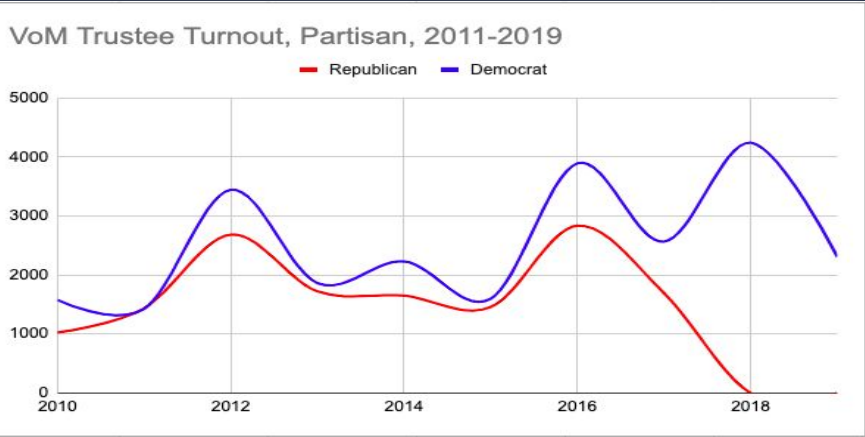
Average Local Turnout in VoM in These Years:

$$(6562+7184)/2 = \mathbf{6873}$$

Percentage of Federal Votes Netted:

$$6873/7871 = \mathbf{87.3\%}$$

Concern 3: Will this Increase Purely Partisan Voting?



Using the calculation to the right, we applied this to the Presidential Election of 2016

2016:
2016 VoM Democratic Votes for President: **5142**
2016 VoM Democratic Votes for Trustee: **3892**
 $5142(.87) = 4474$
 $3892/4474 = .867$ $1-.867 = .133$

That means **13.3%** of the Democrats voting in the 2016 presidential election switched tickets in the local election

This concern is qualitative in nature, but we did our best to prove some degree of split ticket voting in ON CYCLE elections.

Congressional Example

2012 VoM Democratic Votes for Congress' 16th: **3692**
2012 VoM Democratic Votes for Trustee: **3445**

2012 VoM Republican Votes for Congress' 16th: **2438**
2012 VoM Republican Votes for Trustee: **2685**

Republicans gained **247 votes** in the local election compared to the congressional election

Democrats lost **247 votes** in the local election compared to the congressional election

That means **6.7%** of the Democrats voting in the 2012 congressional election switched tickets in the local election, demonstrating some degree of engagement, We'll call this **Partisan Variation**

Concern 3: Will this Increase Purely Partisan Voting?

2012 Election Analysis

2020 cannot be used in this context because there were no Republican/opposition challengers

2012

2012 VoM Democratic Votes for President: **4725**

2012 VoM Democratic Votes for Trustee: **3445**

$4725(.87) = 4111$

$3445/4111 = .84$ $1-.84 = .16 \rightarrow$ **16%**

That means **16%** of the Democrats voting in the 2012 presidential election switched tickets in the local election

This proves that there is consistently some degree of differentiation between local and national races when voters make their decision.

Voters are voting differently between national and local races

Concern 4: Will People Run for 4 Year Terms?

List of all VoM Trustees who won, 2000-2020

Pete McConnell	Elected 2000	
Guy Zerega	Elected 2000, 2004	
Kathy Savolt	Elected 2000, ran in 2002	
William J Paone	Elected 2001, 2003, 2005	
Joseph Angiletta	Elected 2002, ran 2004, 2006	
Christie Derrico	Elected 2002, ran 2004	
Antonio Vozza	Elected 2002, 2004	
Tom Murphy	Elected 2004, 2006, 2008	
Toni Pergola Rya	Elected 2006	
Randi Robinowitz	Elected 2007, ran 2009	
Antoinette P. Rya	Elected 2008, 2010	
John M Hofstetter	Elected 2006, 2008, 2010	
Sid Albert	Elected 2010	
Louis Santoro	Elected 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015	
Andres Ez-Halst	Elected 2012	
Ilissa Miller	Elected 2012, 2014	
Leon A. Potok	Elected 2012, 2014, 2016	
Dave Finch	Elected 2014	
Victor Tafur	Elected 2016, 2018, 2020	
Keith Waitt	Elected 2016, 2018	
Nora Lucas	Elected 2017, 2019, 2021	
Dan Natchez	Elected 2018, 2020	
Kelly Wenstrup	Elected 2020	

A common concern is that new candidates will be deterred from running for village trustee or mayor due to 4 year terms.

Our analysis shows that a large proportion of village trustees in the past have sought 4 years as a trustee even with 2 year term lengths.

23 Village Trustees have won at least one 2 year term from 2000-2020

17 of those Village Trustees have run for a second 2 year term (Two were not given opportunity to run again, Andres Ez-Halst and Dave Finch, didn't decide on own to not run)

17/23 = 73.9%

73.9% of past VoM Village Trustees have run for another term after their first two year term.

This indicates that 4 year commitments are commonly sought after by Village Trustees

Benefits of 4 year terms

"You learn what the areas of expertise are for your other board members and you work to complement each other. When making decisions you can figure out what is going to be important to each board member and are able to make any necessary trade-offs earlier in the process without as many surprises...Things take a long time to get done in the government world. With a 4-year term you can advocate for projects and are there to steer them through to completion."

-Abby Katz (Town of Mamaroneck Trustee)

Conclusion



Implications

Our initiative has the following important implications

1. Increases Government Accountability
2. Makes County Election Administration More Efficient
3. Boosts the Effectiveness and Expertise of Village Officials
4. Makes Voting in Village Elections Easier

Our Timeline for Action

