

Sobyanin Closing In on Victory Without Need for 2nd Round

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Acting mayor Sergei Sobyanin is expected to regain his post without a second round of voting, despite earlier reports indicating that a strong performance by opposition candidate Alexei Navalny could have deprived the Kremlin favorite of the majority vote necessary to carry the election in one round.

With 99.17 percent of ballots counted, Sobyanin has 51.27 percent of the electorate, while Navalny has taken 27.3 percent, the Central Elections Commission said Monday morning.

Communist party candidate Ivan Melnikov is in third place with 10.72 percent, while the final three candidates have each garnered around 3 percent, Interfax reported.

Apparently wary of possible street demonstrations following the election, Sobyanin said that all candidates had had the opportunity to prove their worth at the voting stations.

"And if you weren't able to, you can certainly try to prove it with marches and mass demonstrations, but that's hardly constructive," he said.

Asked if he would meet Navalny, Sobyenin told journalists that he would certainly sit down with his main opponent. "It's very important that we don't divide the city into parts and set people against one another," the acting mayor said.

Sobyenin's election staff ascribe Navalny's success to poor overall voter turnout and active mobilization of opposition voters and alternative parties, an unidentified election campaigner close to Sobyenin's team told Interfax.

"Meanwhile the acting mayor decided not to actively participate in the political campaign, but to focus on the city's affairs," the campaigner said.

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