Work Session
Update on Planning for the 2020 City Election and Selection of Vendor

Recommended Council Action
Hear presentation, ask questions and provide feedback.

Context with Key Issues
In 2017, the City Council changed the date of City elections to coincide with presidential and gubernatorial general elections. In the interim, the current Mayor and City Council elected in 2017 are serving a three-year term. The next election is scheduled for November 3, 2020 when a Mayor and Council will be elected for a two-year term. Elections will be every two years thereafter.

The Takoma Park Board of Elections (BOE) and staff have been working with the Montgomery County Board of Elections to plan for co-location of the City election with the presidential election in the five precincts where Takoma Park residents vote on election day: Takoma Park Elementary School, Piney Branch Elementary School, Takoma Park Middle School, Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School, and the Takoma Park Recreation Center. Early voting will be available at the Silver Spring Civic Building and, as needed, at the Takoma Park Community Center.

When Takoma Park voters arrive at the polls they will check in and vote in the presidential election, then check in and vote in the Takoma Park election. In each facility, voting will take place in separate rooms. Where that is not possible, voting will be in separate areas of a gymnasium. City ballots will be collected in ballot boxes and returned to the Community Center for tabulation after the polls close on election day.

Absentee (vote by mail) ballots will be available to any registered voter upon request. Ballots must be received by 8:00 PM on November 3 in order to be counted.

We expect that early voting and some absentee ballots will be scanned (but not tabulated) on election day. The process will take place in a location where it can be viewed publicly.

In the event that Maryland conducts a vote by mail election for November 3, we recommend that the City do the same. In that case, we would contract with a mailing service to mail ballots to all voters, would co-locate with Montgomery County at the Silver Spring Civic Building for election day and, if applicable, early voting, and would also have ballot drop off at the Community Center.

The City Attorney and Board of Elections will be reviewing the Code and Charter to see if changes would be needed in the event Maryland calls a vote by mail election for November. Vote by mail would likely result in a delay in certification of the election and swearing in of the next Mayor and City Council.

Whether the election is conducted in person or by mail, the Board recommends contracting with a vendor to scan and tabulate ballots and to provide ballot marking devices for voters who need or wish to use them. Information on the cost and service to be provided by the recommended vendor is attached.

Prepared by: Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk   Posted 2020-06-05
Approved by: Suzanne R. Ludlow, City Manager

The City Clerk contacted vendors able to work with elections involving ranked choice voting to request a quote for services for the 2020 election. The Board of Elections reviewed quotes from MK Election Services, ES&S, and IVS, LLC.

MK Election Services	Quote for ballot programming, printing, central scanning, tabulation, and related services and support. Cost does not include an option for ballot marking devices to provide accessibility for voters who need them.	$17,700
ES&S	Quote for ballot programming, precinct scanners for voters to scan ballots, ballot marking devices, and related services and support.	$37,465 plus 0.29 per ballot
IVS, LLC	Quote for ballot programming, central scanning, tabulation, ballot marking devices, and related services and support. City is responsible for ballot printing. See available additional options on attached proposal.	$10,500

The recommended vendor is IVS, LLC. An ordinance approving the contract is tentatively scheduled for Council's consideration at the June 17 City Council meeting.

For check in of voters, the BOE proposes use of KnowInk Poll Pads. The Poll Pad units and programming will be provided for this election at no cost as a pilot project in Maryland.

Council Priority
Engaged, Responsive & Service-oriented Government

Environmental Considerations
Staff does not anticipate any significant environmental impact from the election.

Fiscal Considerations
The FY21 Budget includes $57,000 for the election. In the event that a vote by mail election is necessary, additional funding will be needed.

Racial Equity Considerations
A reason for the change in election date is to encourage more residents to vote in Takoma Park elections. It has been particularly difficult to draw in voters from Wards 4, 5, and 6, the wards with larger numbers of people of color and people who live in multifamily housing. We believe that people who are interested in voting in the presidential election will be more likely to use the opportunity to vote in the City election at the same time.

Attachments and Links
- 2020 Election Calendar
- Proposal for Election Services – IVS, LLC
- Election Budget

IVS LLC Proposal for Services

Accessible Voting at the Polling Sites and Central Tabulation

With this option, we will provide the following:

- Ballot programming for your six (6) Wards;

- PDF files from which you can print all of your blank ballots, including absentee ballots;

- Accessible ballot marking system for each polling location (plus 1 spare system);

- Preview and Practice service, which allows the voters to call a toll-free number to preview their ballots and practice using the audio ballot prior to Election Day;

- A vote tabulation system which includes two scanning stations directly connected together—in addition to doubling the speed of vote tabulation, the two-scanner setup also provides redundancy and prevents single-point of failure on Election Day; and

- Software modification to assure compliance with vote-counting rules of Takoma Park.

Item	Quantity	Unit Price	Subtotal
Ballot Marking Systems	6	$750	$4,500
2-Scanner Tabulation System	1	$3,000	$3,000
Software & Ballot Programming	1	$3,000	$3,000
			$10,500

Additional Options:

- **Accessible Absentee Voting** — $2,000. This option provides the City with the ability to issue accessible absentee ballots via the web. The procedure for the voters is as follows: (1) go to a website to access the ballot, (2) fill out the voter affidavit & make ballot selections on their computers, (3) print out both the voter affidavit & the voted ballots on their printers, and (4) return all documents to the City via postal mail service. An advantage of this option is that the software will be able to catch many common ballot errors such as over-votes or under-votes. Another benefit is that every oval on the ballot will be filled out perfectly. Most importantly, this option is accessible — a visually-

impaired person can use the screen readers on their computer to mark the absentee ballots independently.

- **Language Support for the Ballot Marking Device (beyond English and Spanish)** — $2,000 per language for the initial election, $500 per language for each subsequent election. This option assumes that for each additional language, the City will be able to provide a competent speaker who can translate the needed audio phrases and record the audio files using the software we provide.