



Takoma Park City Council Meeting –September 21, 2022 Agenda Item 3

Voting Session

Ordinance Setting Forth the Details of the 2022 City Election

Recommended Council Action

Approve the ordinance at first reading.

Context with Key Issues

Before each City Election, the City Council adopts an ordinance to set forth certain details about the election that are not clearly set out in the Code and Charter, to approve certain recommendations from staff and the Board of Elections, and to consolidate in one document the basic details of the election.

This year's election will be conducted similarly to the 2020 election, which was conducted by mail due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A mail-in ballot was sent to every active registered voter. The election resulted in a substantial increase in voter turnout. The City's Board of Elections recommended that elections continue to be conducted by mail.

Key provisions of the ordinance include:

- The election will be conducted largely by mail. Ballots will be mailed to all qualified registered voters.
- The Community Center will be open on election day from 7:00 AM to 8:00 p.m. to allow voters to cast ballots in person if they so choose, and to serve voters not yet registered or who need other assistance with voting.
- Absentee and provisional voting will be available as needed.
- Members of the Board of Elections serve as election judges. The Board appoints election workers to assist with the election. Election judges and workers will be paid based on Montgomery County's election judge and worker rates.
- Election results will be certified by Wednesday, November 16.

Council Priority

Engaged, Responsive and Service-Oriented Government

Environmental Considerations

N/A

Fiscal Considerations

The FY23 Budget includes \$87,000 for the election.

Racial Equity Considerations

A reason for the change in election date to coincide with presidential and gubernatorial elections 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.

The change to vote by mail significantly increased turnout in all wards.

Attachments and Links

- Draft Election Ordinance
- Election Calendar

Introduced by:

First Reading:
Second Reading:
Effective Date:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

**ORDINANCE NO. 2022-
2022 Takoma Park City Election**

WHEREAS, Section 606(a) of the City Charter provides that an election shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of every even numbered year to elect six Councilmembers by ward and one Mayor elected at large; and

WHEREAS, Councilmembers and the Mayor are elected to two-year terms; and

WHEREAS, Section 301(a) of the City Charter provides pursuant to a pending amendment to the City Charter, the newly elected Councilmembers and the Mayor will take office on the second Monday following their election, which will fall on November 21 in 2022; and

WHEREAS, the City Charter, in Section 607, provides that the Council, by ordinance, shall provide for said election, designate a polling place, the manner of holding the election, and the voting system to be used.

WHEREAS, the election of November 3, 2020 was conducted mainly by mail due to the Covid-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the election was convenient for voters and resulted in a substantial increase in voter turnout; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park Board of Elections recommended that the Council continue to authorize elections to be conducted by mail.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND, THAT:

SECTION 1. The November 8, 2022 City Election shall be conducted by mail.

- A. The Mayor shall be elected at large and one Councilmember for each ward shall be elected by the voters of that ward only;
- B. A ranked choice voting system shall be used to allow voters to rank candidates in order of choice;
- C. Ballots will allow for up to one write-in vote per contest;

- D. A ballot will be mailed to every qualified registered voter of the City;
- E. To accommodate voters who cannot vote by mail, the Takoma Park Community Center will serve as a voting center from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on November 8;
- F. Absentee voting will be available to eligible voters as set forth in Section 608 of the City Charter; and
- G. If necessary, an individual shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot as set forth in Section 610 of the City Charter.

SECTION 3. The City Manager, in coordination with the City Clerk and Board of Elections, is authorized to select and contract with a vendor to print, insert, and mail the ballots to eligible City voters; and

SECTION 4. Section 609 of the City Charter provides that early voting locations, days, hours and mechanisms shall be established for all elections. Because this election will be conducted by mail, traditional early voting will not be conducted. The Takoma Park Board of Elections and City Clerk may arrange for and promote hours and locations for voters to seek assistance in marking and casting their ballots during the two weeks before the election.

SECTION 5. Names of qualified candidates for Mayor and Councilmember duly nominated at the Nominating Caucus on September 13, 2022 shall be listed on the ballot unless the candidate declines the nomination in writing by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 16, 2022. Such candidates shall meet all qualifications of the office sought.

SECTION 6. The City Clerk shall provide paper ballots for the City Election. Pursuant to Chapter 5.16, Section 5.16.020 of the City Code, the names of candidates for Mayor, arranged alphabetically, shall appear first on all ballots, followed by the names of candidates for Councilmember, arranged alphabetically, with each ward ballot displaying the names of candidates for that ward only.

SECTION 7. If any eligible person registers as a write-in candidate for Mayor or Councilmember in accordance with Section 605 of the City Charter, then the City Clerk shall arrange to have their name posted in any City voting location and on the City website for the purpose of identifying them as a candidate for office.

SECTION 8. The City Clerk shall include on all ballots any advisory referendum question so adopted by resolution passed by a majority of the Council pursuant to Section 612 of the City Charter. Any advisory referendum question shall appear last on all ballots, after the names of the candidates for Mayor and Councilmember.

- SECTION 9. A sample ballot, showing the arrangement of the candidates' names, offices, Councilmember wards, and any advisory referendum questions which will appear on the City Election ballot, shall be posted on the City website and at any voting location.
- SECTION 10. The City Clerk shall supply for the election voter lists bearing the names and addresses of all eligible voters as certified by the Montgomery County Board of Elections, and any supplemental list of voters prepared by the City Clerk.
- SECTION 11. Eligible Takoma Park residents may register up to and including the day of the election, pursuant to Section 603(c) of the City Charter.
- SECTION 12. Members of the Takoma Park Board of Elections shall serve as Judges of Election and may appoint Election Workers to assist with the election and with canvassing the ballots.
- SECTION 13. Election Judges and other Election Workers are eligible to receive payment equal to the schedule for Montgomery County Election Judges and Election Workers.
- SECTION 15. All Election Judges and Election Workers must participate in training arranged by the City Clerk and/or Board of Elections in order to receive payment for their service.
- SECTION 16. The Covid-19 vaccination mandate for employees and volunteers shall apply to Election Workers.
- SECTION 16. The Board of Elections shall ensure the secrecy of the ballot, correct counting of votes, the tabulating and recording of votes by ward for or against any candidate or question, and the prompt reporting of election returns.
- SECTION 17. The Board of Elections shall ensure that the canvass and tabulation of ballots is conducted in a transparent manner. Such accommodations may include, but are not limited to, video broadcasting of canvassing and tabulation, and permitting in-person viewing of the process according to rules developed by the Board.
- SECTION 18. In each contest, the candidate receiving a majority of votes shall be declared elected. If no candidate receives a majority of first choices, the Election Judges shall apply the ranked choice voting rules detailed in Section 606 of the City Charter.
- SECTION 19. The Board of Elections shall meet to determine and certify the results of the election and shall present the certification of results to the City Council at a special meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 16, 2022.
- SECTION 20. This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Adopted this _____ day of September, 2022 by roll-call vote as follows:

AYE:

NAY:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: