



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – July 24, 2024 Agenda Item 3

Voting Session

Ordinance Setting Forth the Details of the 2024 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 2022 vote-by-mail election. A mail-in ballot will be sent to every active registered voter. The elections of 2022 and 2020 saw a substantial increase in voter turnout.

Key provisions of the ordinance include:

- The Nominating Caucus will take place on September 10 at 7:30 PM. The order of nominations is identified in the ordinance.
- The election will be conducted largely by mail. Ballots will be mailed to all qualified registered voters.
- Voters who need assistance with their ballots can come to the City Clerk's Office for assistance.
- 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.
- Ballot processing, scanning, and tabulation will be done with transparency.
- Election results will be certified by Wednesday, November 13, and presented to the City Council at a meeting that evening.

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

Prepared by: Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk
Approved by: Robert DiSpirito, City Manager

Posted 7/19/2024

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

1 Introduced by:

First Reading:

2 Second Reading:

3 Effective Date:

4
5 **CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

6
7 **ORDINANCE NO. 2024-**

8
9 **2024 Takoma Park City Election**

10
11 **WHEREAS,** Section 606(a) of the City Charter provides that an election shall be held on the first
12 Tuesday after the first Monday in November of every even numbered year to elect
13 six Councilmembers by ward and one Mayor elected at large; and
14

15 **WHEREAS,** Section 604 of the City Charter sets forth the process for nomination of candidates
16 for Mayor and City Councilmember; and
17

18 **WHEREAS,** pursuant to Section 607(a) of the City Charter, the Council, by ordinance, shall
19 provide for said elections; shall designate in said ordinance a convenient polling
20 place or places; shall designate the manner of holding said election; shall designate
21 and provide the voting system to be used; and shall conduct said elections in
22 accordance with the provisions of the section; and
23

24 **WHEREAS,** Section 607(b) provides that elections shall be conducted by the Takoma Park Board
25 of Elections, members of which serve as judges of elections. Elections shall be held
26 at some convenient place or places to be designated by the Council. On election day,
27 the polls shall be opened at 7:00 a.m. and closed at 8:00 p.m.; and
28

29 **WHEREAS,** Section 301(a) of the City Charter provides that the newly elected Councilmembers
30 and the Mayor will take office on the second Monday following their election, which
31 will fall on November 18, 2024.
32

33 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA**
34 **PARK, MARYLAND, THAT:**
35

36 **SECTION 1.** The City Clerk shall convene the Nominating Caucus on Tuesday, September 10, at
37 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of nominating candidates for Mayor and City Council. The
38 meeting shall be held in the Community Center Auditorium. Accommodations will
39 be made to allow for remote participation for anyone unable to participate in person.
40 Nominations will be taken in the following order: Wards 5, 2, 3, 6, 1, 4. Nominations
41 for the office of Mayor will follow. The nominating process will follow rules set
42 forth in Section 604 of the City Charter.
43

44 **SECTION 2.** The November 5, 2024 City Election shall be conducted by mail.
45

- 46 A. The Mayor shall be elected at large and one Councilmember for each ward
47 shall be elected by the voters of that ward only;
48
- 49 B. A ranked-choice voting system shall be used to allow voters to rank candidates
50 in order of preference;
51
- 52 C. Ballots will allow for up to one write-in vote per contest;
53
- 54 D. A ballot will be mailed to every qualified registered voter of the City;
55
- 56 E. To accommodate voters who cannot vote by mail, the Takoma Park
57 Community Center will serve as a voting center from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on
58 Tuesday, November 5.
59
- 60 F. Absentee voting will be available to eligible voters as set forth in Section 608
61 of the City Charter; and
62
- 63 G. If necessary, an individual shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot as set
64 forth in Section 610 of the City Charter.
65
- 66 **SECTION 3.** The City Manager, in coordination with the City Clerk and Board of Elections, is
67 authorized to select and contract with one or more vendors to print, insert, and mail
68 the ballots to eligible City voters, to scan and tabulate the ballots according to the
69 rules set out in Section 606 of the City Charter, and to perform any other services
70 necessary to conduct the election.
71
- 72 **SECTION 4.** Section 609 of the City Charter provides that early voting locations, days, hours and
73 mechanisms shall be established for all elections. Because this election will be
74 conducted by mail, traditional early voting will not be conducted. The Takoma Park
75 Board of Elections and City Clerk shall arrange for and promote hours and locations
76 for voters to seek assistance in marking and casting their ballots during the two
77 weeks before the election.
78
- 79 **SECTION 5.** Names of qualified candidates for Mayor and Councilmember duly nominated at the
80 Nominating Caucus on September 10, 2024 shall be listed on the ballot unless the
81 candidate declines the nomination in writing by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 13,
82 2024. Such candidates shall meet all qualifications of the office sought.
83
- 84 **SECTION 6.** The City Clerk shall provide paper ballots for the City Election. Pursuant to Chapter
85 5.16, Section 5.16.020 of the City Code, the names of candidates for Mayor,
86 arranged alphabetically, shall appear first on all ballots, followed by the names of
87 candidates for Councilmember, arranged alphabetically, with each ward ballot
88 displaying the names of candidates for that ward only.
89
- 90 **SECTION 7.** If any eligible person registers as a write-in candidate for Mayor or Councilmember

91 in accordance with Section 605 of the City Charter, then the City Clerk shall arrange
92 to have their name posted in any City voting location and on the City website for the
93 purpose of identifying them as a candidate for office.
94

95 **SECTION 8.** The City Clerk shall include on all ballots any advisory referendum question so
96 adopted by resolution passed by a majority of the Council pursuant to Section 612
97 of the City Charter. Any advisory referendum question shall appear last on all
98 ballots, after the names of the candidates for Mayor and Councilmember.
99

100 **SECTION 9.** A sample ballot, showing the arrangement of the candidates' names, offices, and any
101 advisory referendum questions which will appear on the City Election ballot, shall
102 be posted on the City website and at any voting location.
103

104 **SECTION 10.** The City Clerk shall supply for the election voter lists bearing the names and
105 addresses of all eligible voters as certified by the Montgomery County Board of
106 Elections, and any supplemental list of voters prepared by the City Clerk.
107

108 **SECTION 11.** Eligible Takoma Park residents may register up to and including the day of the
109 election, pursuant to Section 603(c) of the City Charter.
110

111 **SECTION 12.** Members of the Takoma Park Board of Elections shall serve as Judges of Election
112 and may appoint Election Workers to assist with the election and with canvassing
113 the ballots.
114

115 **SECTION 13.** Election Judges and other Election Workers are eligible to receive payment equal to
116 the schedule for Montgomery County Election Judges and Election Workers.
117

118 **SECTION 14.** All Election Judges and Election Workers must participate in training arranged by
119 the City Clerk and/or Board of Elections in order to receive payment for their service.
120

121 **SECTION 15.** The Board of Elections shall ensure the secrecy of the ballot, correct counting of
122 votes, the tabulating and recording of votes by ward for or against any candidate or
123 question, and the prompt reporting of election returns.
124

125 **SECTION 16.** The Board of Elections shall ensure that the canvass and tabulation of ballots is
126 conducted in a transparent manner. Such accommodations may include, but are not
127 limited to, video streaming of canvassing and tabulation, and permitting in-person
128 viewing of the process according to rules developed by the Board.
129

130 **SECTION 17.** In each contest, the candidate receiving a majority of votes shall be declared elected.
131 If no candidate receives a majority of first choices, the Election Judges shall apply
132 the ranked choice voting rules detailed in Section 606 of the City Charter.
133

134 **SECTION 18.** The Board of Elections shall meet to determine and certify the results of the election
135 and shall present the certification of results to the City Council at a special meeting

136 at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

137

138 **SECTION 19.** This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

139

140 Adopted this _____ day of July, 2024 by roll-call vote as follows:

141

142 AYE:

143 NAY:

144 ABSTAIN:

145 ABSENT:

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
2024 ELECTION CALENDAR**

Updated 6/27/2024

Date	Time	Event/Description	Computation	Legal Authority
Monday January 31, 2024	4:00 PM	Campaign Finance Annual Report on the retention or disposition of surplus campaign funds	No later than January 31 of each year	City Code 5.12.022(B)(4) City Code 5.12.030(E)
Monday June 10, 2024		First day to register as a candidate or political committee for the City election.	Second Monday in June of an election year.	City Code 5.10.020
Wednesday August 7, 2024		Apartment building access through November 7 for registered City Election candidates.	During the 90-day period preceding the next election.	City Code 6.04.040
Tuesday September 10, 2024	7:30 PM	Nominating Caucus for City election.	Second Tuesday after Labor Day of an election year.	Charter Sec. 604(a)
Friday September 13, 2024	5:00 PM	Deadline for City candidates nominated at Caucus to withdraw. Declination must be filed in writing with the City Clerk's office.	Candidates shall be placed upon the official ballot unless the nominated person files a declination with the City Clerk within 3 days after the nomination	Charter 604(b)
Friday September 13, 2024	5:00 PM	If not already registered, nominated City candidates must complete Candidate Finance Registration by this time.	Within 3 days of nomination.	City Code 5.10.020(C)
Monday September 16, 2024	5:00 PM	City candidates' Financial Disclosure Statements due to City Clerk (if not already filed).	On or before the Monday following the candidate's nomination.	City Code 3.04.080(D) City Code 5.12.040
Monday September 16, 2024	12:00 PM	Deadline to provide City candidate's statement and photo to the City Clerk (via e-mail) for publication in the Takoma Park Newsletter	TBD depending upon schedule for Takoma Park Newsletter.	
Monday September 16, 2024		Any eligible person may preregister as a write-in candidate beginning on September 16 and ending November 1. Such write-in candidate must file a Financial Disclosure Statement and Campaign Finance Registration to complete the preregistration.	Monday after the Nomination Meeting through the Friday before Election Day.	Charter 605 City Code 3.04.080(D)(6)
Monday September 23, 2024	4:00 PM	First Campaign Finance Report Due (post-nomination report)	Second Monday after the Nominating Caucus.	City Code 5.12.022(B)(1)
Wednesday October 2, 2024		Rosh Hashanah (begins at sunset)		

Date	Time	Event/Description	Computation	Legal Authority
Sunday October 6, 2024		First day that mail-in voting ballots may be sent.	Mail-in ballots for an election must be mailed or distributed no more than 30 days and no less than 15 days prior to the election to which they apply.	City Code 5.18.050(A)
Once ballots begin to be received by voters, daily drop box pickups begin and continue until 8:00 p.m. on November 5. Post office box pickup begins and continues until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 12 (for ballots arriving by mail only).				
Friday, October 11		Yom Kippur begins at sunset.		
Monday October 14, 2024		Columbus Day (Indigenous Peoples Day) – City facilities open. MCBOE is NOT open.		
Monday October 14, 2022	4:00 PM	Second Campaign Finance Report Due (pre-election report).	No later than 4:00 p.m. on the fourth Monday preceding election day.	City Code 5.12.022(B)(2)
Monday October 21, 2024		Last day that mail-in voting ballots may be sent.	Mail-in ballots for an election must be mailed or distributed no more than 30 days and no less than 15 days prior to the election to which they apply.	City Code 5.18.05(A)
Tuesday October 29, 2024	4:00 PM	Last day to request that a City election absentee ballot be mailed.	4:00 PM on the 7th calendar day before the election.	City Code 5.20.020(B)
Thursday October 31, 2024		Last day to mail a requested absentee ballot (local only).		5.20.040(B)(2)
Friday November 1, 2024		Last day for any eligible person to preregister as a write-in candidate beginning on September 16 and ending November 1. Such write-in candidate must file a Financial Disclosure Statement and Campaign Finance Registration to complete the preregistration.	Wednesday after the Nomination Meeting through the Friday before Election Day.	Charter 605 City Code 3.04.080(D)(6)

Date	Time	Event/Description	Computation	Legal Authority
Tuesday November 5, 2024	7:00 AM – 8:00 PM	Takoma Park Election Day The Community Center will be open for voting in the City Election only, from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM.	First Tuesday after the first Monday in even-numbered years. At least one voting center shall be open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM on Election Day.	Charter Sec. 606(a) City Code 5.18.010(C)
Tuesday November 5, 2024	7:00 AM – 8:00 PM	Presidential Election Day. To vote in the presidential general election, voters who have not voted early or by mail should go to their voting precinct to vote in person.	Tuesday after the first Monday in November.	MD Const. Art. XV, § 7; EL § 10-301
Tuesday November 5, 2024	8:00 PM	All Ballot Drop Boxes are closed and sealed at 8:00 PM.		City Code 5.16.050
Wednesday November 6, 2024 – Wednesday November 13, 2024		Canvass and counting of votes.	Between the closing of the polls on election day and end of the day on the second Wednesday after the election, the judges of the election shall canvass . . . , and count any paper ballots, regular and absentee, to determine the vote cast for each candidate or any questions on the ballot.	Charter Sec. 613(a)
Monday November 11, 2024		Veterans Day. City Holiday and Federal Holiday. City Offices Closed.		
Tuesday, November 12, 2024	4:00 PM	Any anonymous contributions received are to be contributed to the City general fund by this date.	No later than 4:00 p.m. of the Monday following the election. Because Monday is a holiday, the deadline is Tuesday.	City Code 5.12.020(D)
Tuesday, November 12, 2024	5:00 PM	Deadline for receipt of ballots arriving by U.S. mail. Ballots must be postmarked on or before election day.	5:00 PM on the 4 th business day after the election.	City Code 5.18.090(B) City Code 5.20.060(B)
Wednesday November 13, 2024	TBD	Board of Elections certification meeting	Second Wednesday after the election.	Charter Section 613(b)

Date	Time	Event/Description	Computation	Legal Authority
Wednesday November 13, 2024	7:30 PM	Special meeting of the City Council to receive the certification of the election results.	Second Wednesday after the election.	Charter Sec. 613(b)
Friday November 15, 2024		Deadline for filing City election challenge or appeal.	Two days after certified results presented to Council.	City Code 5.16.070(A)
Monday November 18, 2024	7:30 PM	Swearing-In of the Mayor and Councilmembers	Newly elected Councilmembers and the Mayor take office on the second Monday following their election, but if this day conflicts with Veterans Day or a Council-recognized religious holiday, they shall take office on the next day, Tuesday.	Charter Section 301
Monday November 25, 2024	4:00 PM	Third City Campaign Finance Report (post-election report) due to City Clerk.	No later than 4:00 p.m. on the third Monday following the election.	City Code 5.12.022(B)(3)
Thursday November 28, 2024		Thanksgiving Day. City offices and facilities are closed Thursday, November 28 through Sunday, December 1.		
Friday January 31, 2025	4:00 PM	Annual report on retention or disposition of surplus campaign funds.	No later than January 31	City Code 5.12.022(B)(4) City Code 5.12.030(E)
Wednesday February 5, 2025		Minimum retention for voted paper ballots and printed or electronic voting machine records, and mail in and absentee ballot envelopes.		City Code 5.16.060(D) City Code 5.18.090(E) City Code 5.20.060(E)