



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – July 31, 2024 Agenda Item 3

Voting Session

Second Reading Ordinance Setting Forth the Details of the 2024 City Election

Recommended Council Action

Approve the ordinance at second 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 and 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.
- Residents who register after September 27 may not receive a vote by mail ballot but they can request one by submitting a form provided by the City Clerk. *(This information was added to the ordinance in Section 2E after first reading in response to questions from the City Council.)*
- 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 FY25 Budget includes \$100,000 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

1 Introduced by: Councilmember Dyballa

First Reading: July 24, 2024

2 Second Reading:

3 Effective Date:

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

6
7 **ORDINANCE NO. 2024-26**

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. Residents who register after September 27 may not receive a vote by mail
57 ballot but they can request one by submitting a form provided by the City Clerk.
58
- 59 F. To accommodate residents who cannot vote by mail or who are not yet
60 registered, the Takoma Park Community Center will serve as a voting center from
61 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 5.
62
- 63 G. Absentee voting will be available to eligible voters as set forth in Section 608
64 of the City Charter; and
65
- 66 H. If necessary, an individual shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot as set
67 forth in Section 610 of the City Charter.
68
- 69 **SECTION 3.** The City Manager, in coordination with the City Clerk and Board of Elections, is
70 authorized to select and contract with one or more vendors to print, insert, and mail
71 the ballots to eligible City voters, to scan and tabulate the ballots according to the
72 rules set out in Section 606 of the City Charter, and to perform any other services
73 necessary to conduct the election.
74
- 75 **SECTION 4.** Section 609 of the City Charter provides that early voting locations, days, hours and
76 mechanisms shall be established for all elections. Because this election will be
77 conducted by mail, traditional early voting will not be conducted. The Takoma Park
78 Board of Elections and City Clerk shall arrange for and promote hours and locations
79 for voters to seek assistance in marking and casting their ballots during the two
80 weeks before the election.
81
- 82 **SECTION 5.** Names of qualified candidates for Mayor and Councilmember duly nominated at the
83 Nominating Caucus on September 10, 2024 shall be listed on the ballot unless the
84 candidate declines the nomination in writing by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 13,
85 2024. Such candidates shall meet all qualifications of the office sought.
86
- 87 **SECTION 6.** The City Clerk shall provide paper ballots for the City Election. Pursuant to Chapter
88 5.16, Section 5.16.020 of the City Code, the names of candidates for Mayor,
89 arranged alphabetically, shall appear first on all ballots, followed by the names of
90 candidates for Councilmember, arranged alphabetically, with each ward ballot

91 displaying the names of candidates for that ward only.
92

93 **SECTION 7.** If any eligible person registers as a write-in candidate for Mayor or Councilmember
94 in accordance with Section 605 of the City Charter, then the City Clerk shall arrange
95 to have their name posted in any City voting location and on the City website for the
96 purpose of identifying them as a candidate for office.
97

98 **SECTION 8.** The City Clerk shall include on all ballots any advisory referendum question so
99 adopted by resolution passed by a majority of the Council pursuant to Section 612
100 of the City Charter. Any advisory referendum question shall appear last on all
101 ballots, after the names of the candidates for Mayor and Councilmember.
102

103 **SECTION 9.** A sample ballot, showing the arrangement of the candidates' names, offices, and any
104 advisory referendum questions which will appear on the City Election ballot, shall
105 be posted on the City website and at any voting location.
106

107 **SECTION 10.** The City Clerk shall supply for the election voter lists bearing the names and
108 addresses of all eligible voters as certified by the Montgomery County Board of
109 Elections, and any supplemental list of voters prepared by the City Clerk.
110

111 **SECTION 11.** Eligible Takoma Park residents may register up to and including the day of the
112 election, pursuant to Section 603(c) of the City Charter.
113

114 **SECTION 12.** Members of the Takoma Park Board of Elections shall serve as Judges of Election
115 and may appoint Election Workers to assist with the election and with canvassing
116 the ballots.
117

118 **SECTION 13.** Election Judges and other Election Workers are eligible to receive payment equal to
119 the schedule for Montgomery County Election Judges and Election Workers.
120

121 **SECTION 14.** All Election Judges and Election Workers must participate in training arranged by
122 the City Clerk and/or Board of Elections in order to receive payment for their service.
123

124 **SECTION 15.** The Board of Elections shall ensure the secrecy of the ballot, correct counting of
125 votes, the tabulating and recording of votes by ward for or against any candidate or
126 question, and the prompt reporting of election returns.
127

128 **SECTION 16.** The Board of Elections shall ensure that the canvass and tabulation of ballots is
129 conducted in a transparent manner. Such accommodations may include, but are not
130 limited to, video streaming of canvassing and tabulation, and permitting in-person
131 viewing of the process according to rules developed by the Board.
132

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

136
137 **SECTION 18.** The Board of Elections shall meet to determine and certify the results of the election
138 and shall present the certification of results to the City Council at a special meeting
139 at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

140
141 **SECTION 19.** This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

142
143 Adopted this _____ day of July, 2024 by roll-call vote as follows:

144
145 AYE:

146 NAY:

147 ABSTAIN:

148 ABSENT:

149

150

151 Additions made to the ordinance after first reading are shown by underlining.

152 Deletions are shown by striking through text.