

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 13, 2023
TO: City Council, City of Greenbelt
Josue Salmeron, City Manager
FROM: Board of Elections
RE: Election Year Update
CC: Greenbelt *News Review*

Because of changes being made in mail-in, early voting, and Election Day voting this election year, the Board of Elections wishes to provide Council, City officials, and the *News Review* a brief informational memorandum. We will also address below questions raised at the most recent Council meeting.

This week our election vendor is mailing to all registered voters an application for a mail-in ballot. Applications will have instructions, in English and Spanish, explaining how and by what time they should be submitted to the Clerk so that mail-in applicants can receive, mark, and submit ballots in time for them to be counted.

We believe that this election vendor will perform its work in a timely manner and avoid the mail-in issues created by the vendor used in the 2021 election. That election year involved our initial effort to offer new mail-in (as opposed to “absentee”) procedures for voters, and we trust the kinks in procedures will not recur.

Early voting this year will be held on the weekend before Election Day, November 4th and 5th. Three polling places will be open, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; voters may use any open polling place; and procedures like those on Election Day will be followed.

This year voters on Election Day will not use voting machines. Voters will mark the same paper ballot, whether they vote by mail-in, by early voting, or on Election Day. Voters on Election Day will be able to vote at any of the five polling places – Schrom Hills, Greenbriar, Springhill Lake, the Police Station, or the Community Center – regardless of their residence address.

The Board of Elections is also aware of inquiries before Council at its 11 September meeting about the referendum on voting by noncitizen residents. Concerns were expressed that the term “resident” is not defined in the resolution authorizing the referendum question.

Council should recognize that this referendum is advisory only, not legally binding. It will not by itself change or authorize anything, as to noncitizen voting in City elections. If City voters this November approve the proposal, it will be up to Council, by appropriate legislation, to implement the advice of the voters.

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At that time, when Council approves legislation, noncitizen voting procedures will be established. Among the questions for Council to then consider are: (a) how long a noncitizen must lawfully reside in Greenbelt, to qualify as a resident for voting purposes; (b) how noncitizen residents prove to the City that they have met the time requirement; (c) how often noncitizens must renew their registrations, to show that they continue to be eligible to vote; and (d) how otherwise noncitizen registration and voting will be administered.