

## **ElectionGuard 2023 Trial in College Park, Maryland**

### **Survey Results**

Prepared by:  
Martha Kropf and Emily Mikkelsen  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte

### **Abstract**

In November 2023, the City of College Park, Maryland became the second site for a trial of ElectionGuard. About 230 College Park residents responded to the ElectionGuard/College Park survey to assess attitudes about ElectionGuard as well as election administration in College Park. Many respondents could give a reasonably accurate description of ElectionGuard. Nearly half (49%) of respondents reported an increase in confidence due to ElectionGuard (24% significantly, 25% somewhat) and 36% saying it neither increased nor decreased their confidence. As for election administration, the majority of respondents think elections are well-run and pollworkers are well-regarded. Ninety-one percent of respondents who voted are confident their votes in the College Park election counted. Respondents cited early voting as a major reason that they voted in this local election.

January 2024

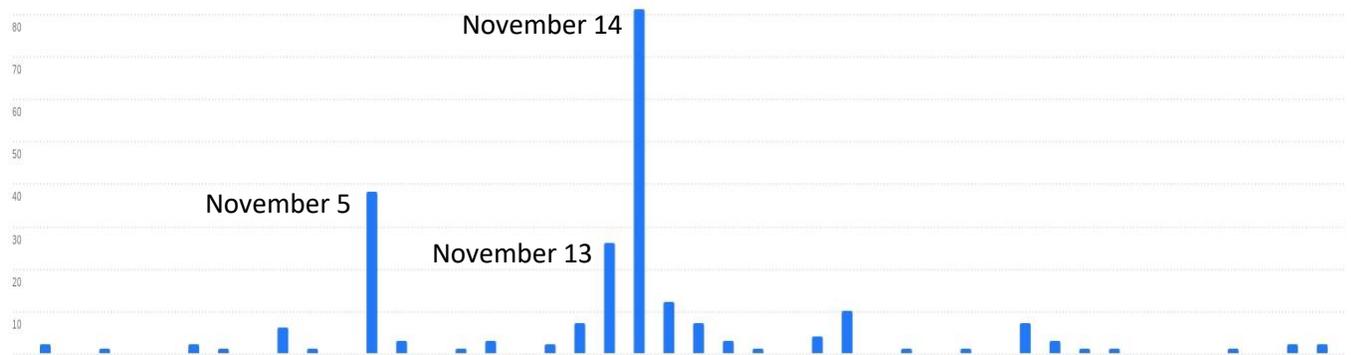
## Introduction and Methodology

In November 2023, the City of College Park, Maryland became the second site for a pilot study of the use of Election Guard in a real election. Part of the evaluation is a public opinion survey for both voters and non-voters from the city of College Park. The survey was “anonymous”.<sup>1</sup>

The survey went live on October 4, 2023 with the “before election” version of the survey. Immediately following the Election Day on Sunday, November 5, we switched the survey to the “after election” version. Two-hundred and thirty College Park residents responded to the survey. No respondents took the survey in Spanish.

Figure 1 shows the number of responses each day the survey was live. We labeled the days of major survey response spikes.

**Figure 1: The Full Range of Survey Administration with Responses per Day**



In total, 180 individuals reported that they voted in the election with 41 residents who answered they did not vote. Most residents voted in person (72%) and about 27 percent voted by ballot returned by mail or dropbox.<sup>2</sup> However, 90 percent of respondents reported that “I vote in every election in which I am eligible.”<sup>3</sup>

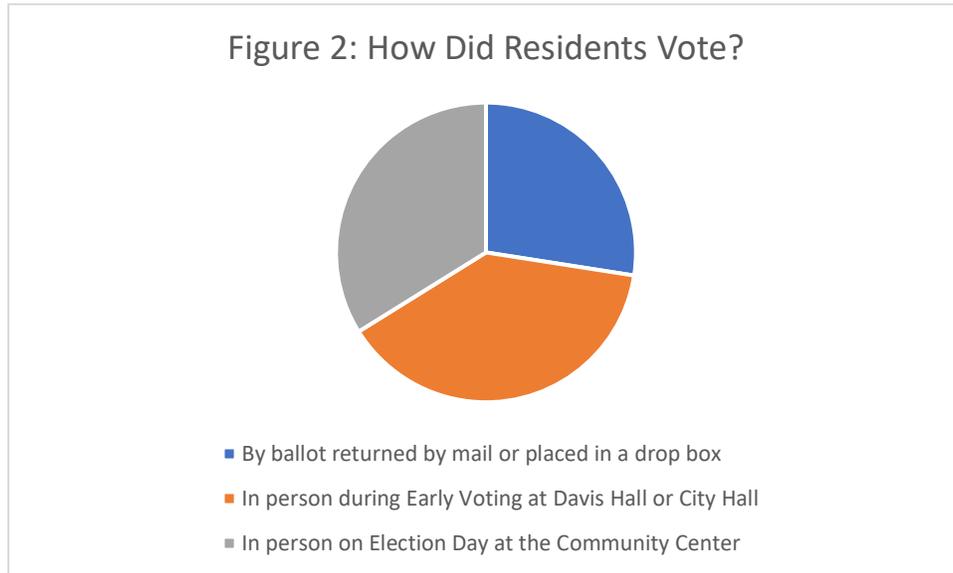
<sup>1</sup> As requested, we changed the survey starting November 14 to accommodate the visiting college students who might have suggestions for voting. However, the respondents on that date and after almost exclusively College Park residents.

<sup>2</sup> One person reported they voted “provisionally” reluctantly but did not specify where they voted, therefore they are not included in Figure 2. Two people reported they voted at City Hall, but not during Early Voting. These voters are not considered in Figure 2.

<sup>3</sup> We coded the “voted” variable so that an answer before the election that they had “not yet” voted is a report of not voting. However, the reader will note that six people who reported they voted in “every election in which I am eligible” took the survey before the election and reported they had “Not yet” voted (therefore, they are coded as non-voters). It is highly possible that these individuals voted later—they may have even completed the survey again. We do not have a way of knowing as we tried to maximize their anonymity for the purposes of this survey.

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of the location of the voting. Similar to a growing national trend in federal and state elections, most voters voted early. Thus, about 127 voters were eligible to provide input about ElectionGuard.

**Figure 2: How did Residents Vote**



A majority of respondents (53%) have lived in College Park for at least 20 years, and 81 percent own their homes. About 56 percent of respondents were 55 or older, while about nine percent were 25 or under.

**Table 1: Ages of Survey Respondents**

Most respondents are age 55 or older.	
<b>25 and Younger</b>	8.8%
<b>25-34</b>	7.3%
<b>35-54</b>	27.5%
<b>55-74</b>	38.3%
<b>74 or Older</b>	18.1%

Approximately 60 percent identified with she/her pronouns, compared to 34 percent that responded with he/him pronouns. Only one respondent noted they preferred they/them pronouns. About six percent answered “other”—three of these individuals were recoded to

“he/him” because they listed “Mr.” or “him”. In total, about 54 individuals declined to answer this question.<sup>4</sup>

Seventy-seven percent of respondents identify as White. About six percent identify as Asian, while 4% of respondents identify with each of the following respectively: Black/ African American, Latino/Latina/Latinx, and two or more races. The remaining 11 percent of respondents identify as other, some of which included a preference to not answer and others noting either Native American or South American heritage.

Ninety-seven percent prefer election information to be administered in English, while 1% prefer Spanish. Two percent answered “other”, with most comments voicing frustration with the question/ concept.

## **How Do People Feel About Elections in College Park?**

Ninety-one percent of respondents think that College Park elections are run very (72%) or somewhat (19%) well. Broadly, they appreciate the election workers, receive information from diverse sources, and are very confident that their vote counts.

Pollworkers are well-regarded: 89 percent of respondents rated their performance as excellent, 10 percent as good, and two percent as fair.<sup>5</sup> One respondent described the experience as “always well-run and welcoming”, a theme throughout many comments echoing positive feedback. Most critical feedback concerned election policy preferences, ranging from issue-specific concerns to preferences for additional voting or less crowding at the polling locations. A couple of respondents voiced concern that their identities were not verified at the polling location.

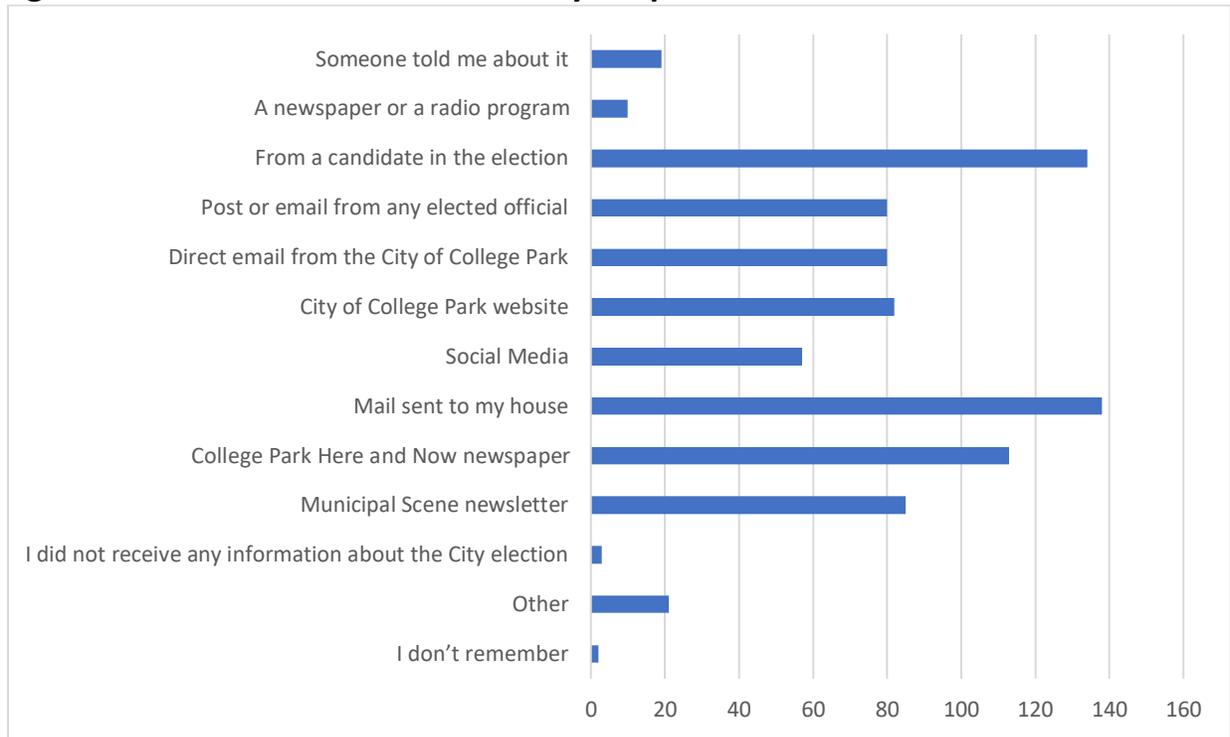
Information came from several sources: Most people reported getting information about the election, and the distribution of sources was diverse. Sixty-six percent reported receiving mail, while 54 percent included the College Park Here and Now newspaper.

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<sup>4</sup> We did not “require” any respondents to answer any questions, and it is normal for respondents to refuse to answer some questions. We note this because some of the “others” asked why we needed the answer to that question.

<sup>5</sup> The reader will note that these percentages do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

**Figure 3: Information Sources Used by Respondents**



The voting experience was largely seamless: 98% of voters reported no problems checking in at the poll and receiving their ballots.

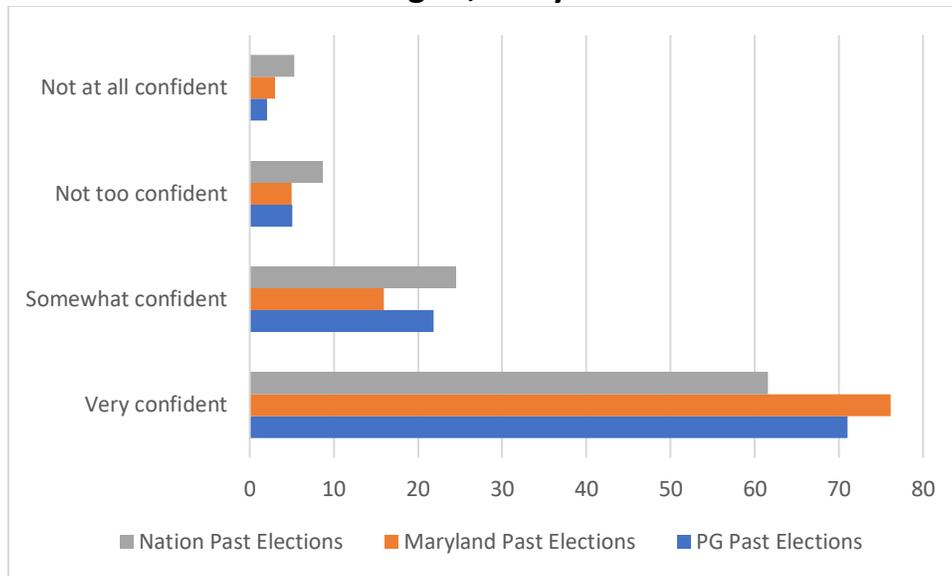
The timing of Election Day received feedback: When asked whether they had anything else to say about their voting experience, one person commented that concluding the election before Tuesday may have been confusing and hindered turnout. Another person said that City Hall was “a poor location for voting due to poor access for handicapped people” while another stated, “Keep it at City Hall.” Other responses are located in Appendix B. Note that we placed these responses in categories as well:

- Election Administration Policy Issues
- ElectionGuard Comments
- Concern about the Wording of the Ballot Question
- Issues with Candidates
- Compliments
- Miscellaneous Comments
- Survey Feedback

Voters are confident that their votes count: The vast majority (91%) of voters reported they were *very confident* that their own vote counted. Only one person reported they were “not too confident.”

We next asked about confidence in Prince George’s County elections, Maryland elections, and national elections. All respondents, whether they voted or not received these questions. While more respondents said they were “very confident” in Maryland elections than Prince George’s County’s, overall confidence is the same between the two elections (Very + Somewhat confident)—about 92 percent. Figure 4 shows that somewhat fewer are confident in national elections.

**Figure 4: Confidence in Prince George’s, Maryland and U.S. Elections**



## Voting by Mail

Most Voters Are Aware of the Maryland Permanent VBM List: As noted previously, about one-quarter of voters voted a ballot returned by mail or dropbox. Most (73.5%) reported they were on the Maryland Permanent VBM list and did not request a ballot. Eighteen percent (nine voters) reported they requested their ballot through the city clerk’s office. Only two voters reported they received a ballot without requesting it; another two said “other” but declined to specify how they requested their ballot.

To return the ballot, the majority of mail voters reported they “personally placed it in an official dropbox” (57.1%). About 39 percent mailed it and four percent (two respondents) let someone in their household take care of the ballot for them.

One-hundred percent of respondents thought it was easy (“very” or “somewhat”) “to follow all the instructions necessary to mark your ballot and return it to be counted.”

Almost every single mail voter declined to provide “anything else...about your experience voting by mail in this College Park city election”. There were only three comments:

1. The mail ballot dropboxes are very important because College Park mail service can be unreliable.
2. Yes bring it back to Davis Hall and not in Lakeland at community center
3. Sunday isn't the best day for people who are religious to vote, so I have to make sure to do the mail-in ballot or go to the early vote day

## How Did Voters React to Election Guard and Other Technical Elements of the Election?

As noted, about 127 respondents voted in person and were thus eligible to provide information about ElectionGuard. Most respondents (67%) reported they had not heard of ElectionGuard ahead of the election. Another six percent were unsure if they had. About 77 percent of voters reported the information provided about ElectionGuard at the polls was “very” or “somewhat useful” but about 13 percent reported they did not know if it was useful or did not even remember receiving the information.

Descriptions of ElectionGuard were broadly accurate: Most respondents articulated a reasonably accurate description of what ElectionGuard does, but there were several participants who indicated they were still unfamiliar with ElectionGuard and its purpose.

Some respondents voiced concerns with how ElectionGuard works: One comment raised concern that there was not meaningful proof that the verification process worked correctly. Another respondent was concerned that it would potentially share their voting decisions on the internet. We organized responses into five general categories (see Table X). The reader can find the full set of responses in Appendix A.

**Table 2: Based on what you heard, what do you think ElectionGuard does?**

Types of Answers	Number of These Responses	Examples
<b>Allows You to Check if Your Ballot Counted</b>	25	“Gives you a way to check if your ballot was counted”
<b>Allows You to Confirm Choice</b>	10	“Allows you to verify ballot cast was counted and review how ballot was cast”
<b>People Who Do Not Articulate that They Have to Take a Step Later to Check the Ballot (But not <i>Strictly</i> Wrong)</b>	24	“Confirmed that my vote was counted”

<b>Just Confidence</b>	3	“Bolsters voters’ confidence in the accuracy of the vote counting”
<b>Incorrect Answer</b>	15	“Possibly exposes my voting choices to the internet” <sup>6</sup>
<b>Simply Do Not Know</b>	14	“No clue.”

**Experience with election technology and ElectionGuard was mixed:**

*The scanner reviewing their votes:* 96 percent of voters reviewed their votes at the scanner and “did not see a problem”.

*The Confirmation Code:* Only 26 percent tried to confirm their ballot counted (32 voters). About 80 percent of those respondents (26 voters) were successful. Sixty-eight percent of all eligible respondents described it as very easy, but 16 percent said it was somewhat or very difficult.<sup>7</sup> Respondents provided both positive and negative responses to the question, “Do you have any comments about your experience using your Confirmation Code?” (see Appendix C).

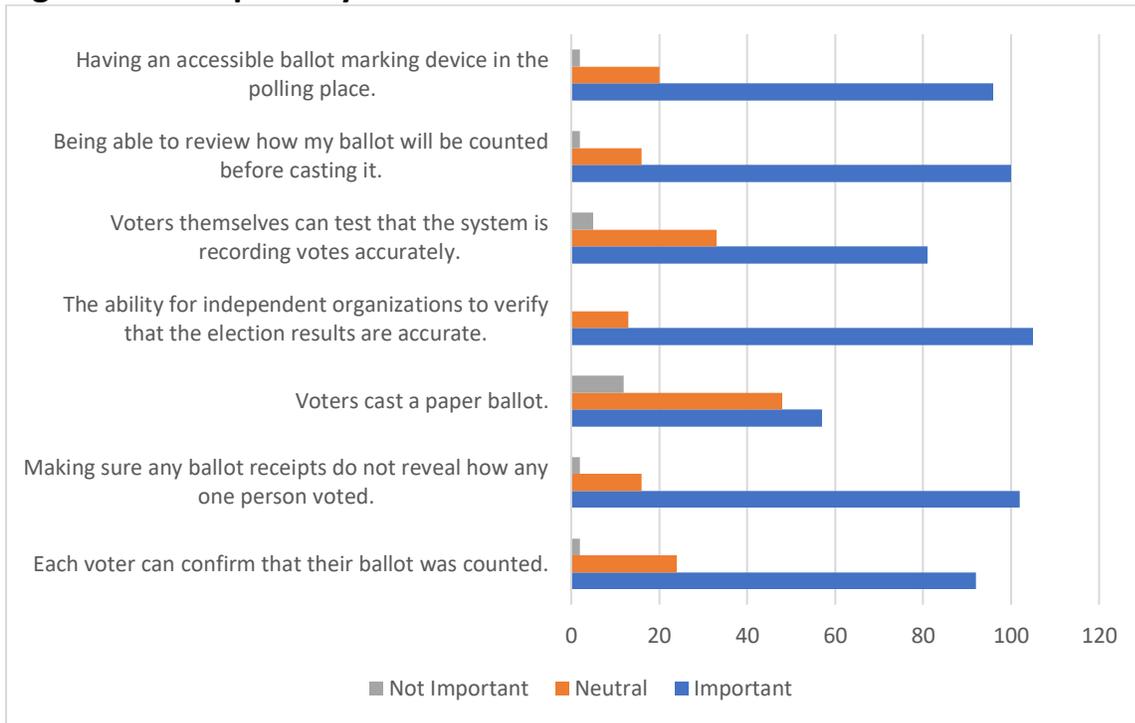
*Ballot Check:* Similarly, 13 percent of voters ran a BallotCheck, but only 27 percent (4 people) checked the website to see if their ballot was recorded correctly. In terms of “comments about [the] experiences with BallotCheck”, there were a couple of comments about privacy—that others could see their vote. Another person wanted more data so that they could “sit down with a few friends” whether their ballots counted. See Appendix D for a full list of comments.

*The Touchwriter:* Finally, 21 percent of in-person voters used the TouchWriter device to mark their ballots, with another 10 percent unsure if they had. Of those who used TouchWriter, 58 percent reported it was very easy to use; another 23 percent said it was somewhat easy.

Transparency in Elections in College Park: We asked respondents what features of this election they thought were important to increasing transparency. Figure 5 illustrates the highest percentage of respondents reported rated “The ability for independent organizations to verify that the election results are accurate” (89%) and none said independent organization review was not important. Eighty-five percent of respondents reported it was important to make “sure any ballot receipts do not reveal how any one person voted” and want to be able “review how my ballot will be counted before casting it.” Two key ElectionGuard features are important, but not as important as the ones already mentioned: “Each voter can confirm that their ballot was counted” (78%) and “Voters themselves can test that the system is recording votes accurately” (68%).

<sup>6</sup> Comment is edited here, but not in the appendix.  
<sup>7</sup> The reader is cautioned that we are talking about only 31 voters.

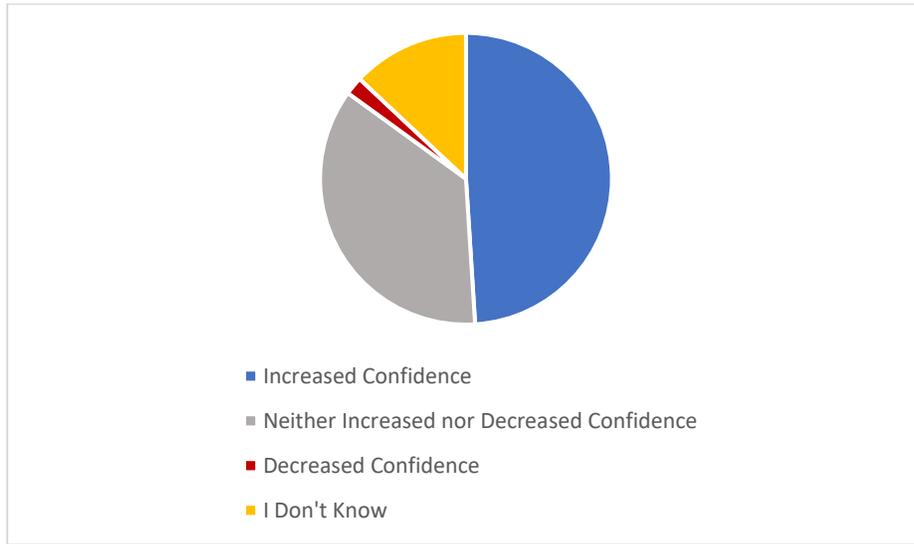
**Figure 5: Transparency Features**



ElectionGuard’s reception was largely positive or neutral: We asked all respondents (voters or not) whether ElectionGuard influenced their level of confidence in College Park City elections.<sup>8</sup> Nearly half (49%) of respondents reported an increase in confidence (24% significantly, 25% somewhat) and 36% saying it neither increased nor decreased their confidence.

<sup>8</sup> Nearly all respondents (about 88 percent) gave a response to this question.

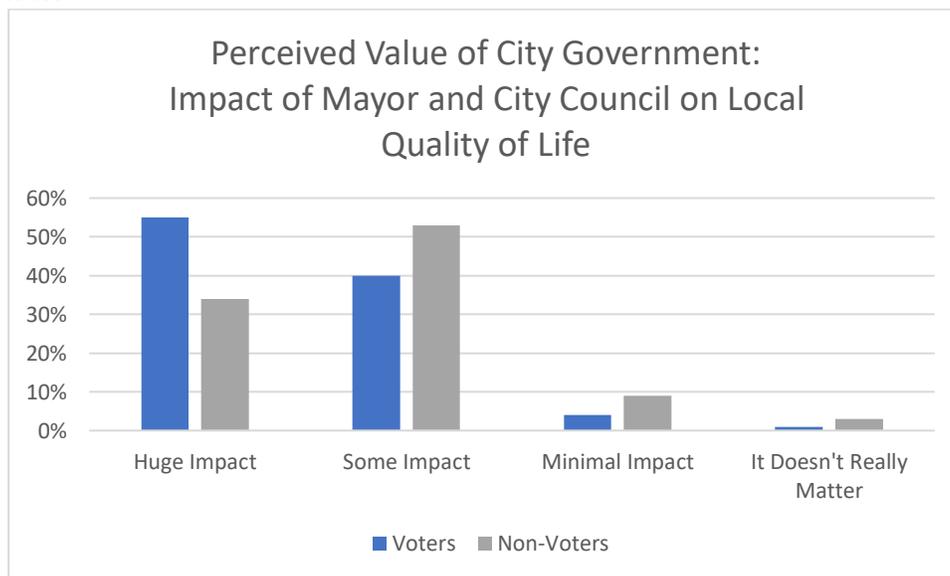
**Figure 6: How does ElectionGuard influence voter confidence?**



### **Why Don't People Vote and How Might We Get More People to Vote?**

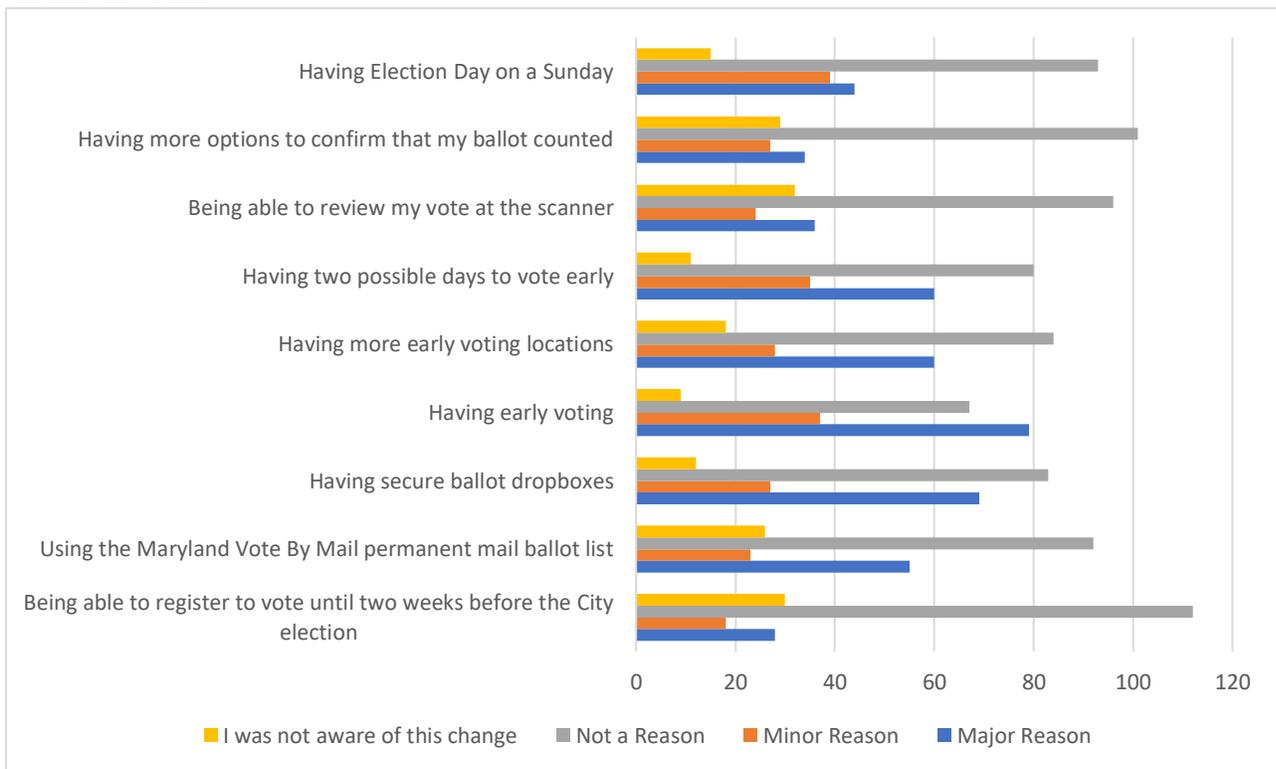
Value of City Government: Most College Park residents agree that elected local officials have at least some impact on the quality of life. However, most people who voted in the 2023 election reported this impact as “huge”, while a majority of non-voters said that the College Park Mayor and City Council members have “some” impact. Importantly, approximately 85 percent of respondents who answered this question did vote.

**Figure 7: Comparing Voters and Non-Voters Concerning Perceived Value of City Government**



**Reasons for Voting:** The most reported “major reason[s] for voting” had to do with pre-Election Day convenience voting. Forty-one percent of respondents noted that “[h]aving early voting” was a major reason, closely followed by “[s]ecure dropboxes” (36%). In terms of “not aware of that change,” respondents reported no awareness of being able to review one’s vote at the scanner (17%), the Maryland Permanent VBM List (16%), and more options to confirm ballot (15%).

**Figure 8: How much of a reason were each of the following in whether you voted or not?**



**Suggestions for Improving Turnout:** A little more than 60 respondents gave suggestions for improving turnout. About one-third of responses revolved around the competitiveness of the election or candidate communication. About ten percent did not see low turnout as a problem. Several individuals made various comments on what day should be election day (Sunday or Tuesday), and others just asked for more information (e.g., they said they could not find a sample ballot on the city website). Of course, there were a variety of policy issues among the suggestions: consolidating elections with federal/state elections, immigrant voting, sending absentee ballots to all, and same-day voter registration. See Appendix E for the full set of responses.

**Table 3: Respondent Suggestions for Improving Turnout**

Answer Categories	Number of These Responses	Examples
Voter Engagement	6	“You can’t wait until Election Day to get people to the polls. You need to find ways to engage residents in community activities all year long so that they will have interest in voting when the time comes.”
Consolidate Elections	2	“Have the elections with the federal state and county elections”
Scheduling Day Suggestions	10	“Keep the Sundays on for final election day!”  “Make it on the same Tuesday that elections are normally held and make the early voting options be on Sunday or whatever”
Competitive Elections/Different Candidates	12	“Difficult to have high turnout if there are few or no contests. Hard to understand the importance of voting.”
Candidates Need to Communicate	8	“Have candidates & their helpers do door-to-door campaigns, so we know what the issues are and where the candidate stands on each issue.”
Election Administrators Need to Communicate	10	“Actual election workers door to door & in Spanish. Encourage voting. More signage for election instructions should appear prior to candidate’s signage.”
Locational Issues	5	“More early voting locations. Getting to City Hall is nightmare and there is no

		parking or working metro/bus connection that would make it easy for D1 to come vote at City Hall.”
Miscellaneous-Substantive	10	“Passing non-citizen voting for City elections”  “Send everyone a mail-in ballot”
Miscellaneous	6	“People will show up if they are concerned about an issue.”

## **Appendix A:**

### **Full Set of Responses to “Based on what you heard, what do you think ElectionGuard does?”**

**\*Please note that we did not edit these responses in any way. They are entered here as the respondents typed them into the survey.**

#### **Allows You to Check if Your Ballot Counted**

- It uses homomorphic cryptography to check that the final result included your vote. But in the end all it does is show you a webpage that says "your vote totally counted", which didn't have to be generated in any provable cryptographic way (e.g. why do I trust the webpage even if I trust the math?)
- allows me to check that my ballot was counted after leaving the polling place
- I can use it to check my vote has been counted.
- Verify whether my vote was counted/registered.
- Allows voters to verify their vote was cast as intended.
- ElectionGuard allows you to track your vote, to ensure it is counted
- heard after voting. At a later date, let's me check that my vote was counted
- Allows you to check if your vote was counted
- will show that my vote was counted
- Shows that your vote was counted.
- Allows you to confirm that your ballot was counted.
- enables me to check to see that my vote was officially counted
- Allows assurance that vote was cast
- Provides a way to verify that my ballot was counted.
- allows you to confirm your vote was counted after the election
- provides a way for you to confirm that your vote was counted
- Lets you know if your vote was counted after the votes are counted
- Enables me to make sure my vote was counted.
- Allows you to verify that your vote counted
- allows you to confirm that your vote was counted
- Gives you a way to check if your ballot was counted
- Shows voters to see if their votes were counted
- Make sure my vote was recorded
- Allows me to ensure my vote was counted
- Let's you check to make sure your vote was counted

#### **Allows You to Confirm Choices**

- I was told that it will allow me to verify that my ballot was counted properly
- Provides a way to verify that your vote is counted as you cast it

- Ensure ballot is read as intended and it allows voters to confirm that their vote was counted
- Provides a resource to check your vote(s) post election
- provides you with a way to check your votes
- Provides extra election security, and a way to verify your vote after the election if you want,
- Let's you double check it counted your vote accurately
- Allows me to verify my vote is registered accurately and determine status after counting
- Allows you to verify ballot cast was counted and review how ballot was cast
- It enables voters to verify that/how my ballot was cast while maintaining the principle of individual voter privacy in the election.

### **People Who Don't Articulate They Have to Take a Step Later**

- Provides assurance that my vote was counted as cast.
- Ensures your vote was counted.
- Verify vote is counted
- Verifies that my vote was counted.
- Assures via tracking that your ballot is counted.
- Ensures your vote is counted as intended
- Ensures my vote was counted
- Helps people know their votes were counted.
- Confirmed that my vote was counted
- assure me my vote was counted
- Tells me that my vote was counted. But doesn't tell me it was counted properly.
- Verifies to voters their votes were counted while keeping the voters' identity anonymous
- Confirms ballot cast
- Lets you know if your ballot was counted.
- Lets voters know their ballot has been counted
- Confirm that ballot was counted
- Ensures that votes are counted as intended
- verifies that what you picked is what was entered into the system
- Helps ensure voting privacy and vote counting
- Maintains election integrity. Making sure vote is cast and tabulated properly. It has checks and balances
- Attempts to confirm votes were counted as they were cast by voters.
- Double checks that my vote was counted how i filled it out
- Provides proof that your ballot was correctly tallied

### **Just Confidence**

- Improves confidence in voting.
- Proof filor those who might mistrust election results

- Bolsters voters' confidence in the accuracy of the vote counting

### **Incorrect Answers**

- I think it was the device that showed my choices so I was reassured of my vote.
- Ensures election results are secure
- Verifies your vote before submitting it
- Counts our votes
- Provides a safe electronic method for vote casting and counting to ensure election integrity
- Makes it easier to record your vote.
- ELECTRONICALLY CASTS THE VOTES
- Nothing of much value.
- Wonderful
- Good feature
- Keeps ballots safe.
- provides a secure way to tabulate ballots
- Possibly exposes my voting choices to the internet
- gives extra tracking/accountability for voters; hopefully helps streamline process for poll workers as well
- Tracks the recording of my individual vote just like the Domino's app tracks my individual pizza order

### **Simply Don't Know**

- No idea
- Not sure
- I don't remember
- No idea. Should be promoted more prior to election
- don't know
- not sure
- not really sure
- I do not know
- No clue.
- No idea, they did not check my Identification, nobody did for that matter.
- Don't know
- Don't know enough about it yet.
- I'm not sure
- I didn't hear about it.

## Appendix B:

### Full Set of Responses to “Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience voting in this College Park City Election?”

\*Please note that we did not edit these responses in any way. They are entered here as the respondents typed them into the survey.

#### Election Administration Policy Issues

- Very concerned about students registering to vote in Prince George's County without actually being residents of the county. If someone wants to vote here, they should also have a local driver's license, local registration for their car, and pay Maryland taxes where appropriate.
- I wanted to vote, but did not have enough time. I also find the mail- in ballot process to be too complicated as it requires a request for a ballot before actually receiving it. Just mail us ballots.
- It is uncategorically evil to have elections end BEFORE the first Tuesday in november, the day people have been trained their whole lives to expect elections to happen. It is a guarantee that people on Tuesday will finally go to figure out voting, only to have missed it.
- Make sure address of polling locations is available online. Make sure SAMPLE BALLOT is available online.
- Keep it at City Hall.
- Better than previous elections; Sunday voting at the community center with 2 days of early voting at two different locations is the right balance of accessibility without going overboard; *city hall a poor location for voting due to poor access for handicapped people [italics added]*
- Missed voting since it wasn't on the designated voting day
- Vote on Tuesday not Sunday.
- My expectations were dashed when I showed up as a registered voter for PGC but this minor district would not allow me to vote.
- Been voting in College Park for over 40 years. Never had a problem with the old systems.
- The voting by mail/dropbox is fantastic. I didn't know this existed until this election.
- I wish I had been able to vote but with exams and projects, I did not have time to leave campus
- I welcome these and other improvements taking place in College Park!

#### ElectionGuard

- ElectionGuard seemed like an unnecessary change

#### The Ballot Question

- You should not have combined the question of staggering and a four year term into one. That will provide misleading information to the Council when they consider these options.

- Did not like the question about staggering and 4 years. Should have been 2 separate questions.
- Figure out way to write advisory questions in a way that is very clear. This one was NOT.

### Issues with Candidates

- Better candidates and having them vetted.
- I did not vote in this election because all 3 candidates i could vote for were running unopposed.
- more information regarding candidates earlier
- We need more candidates.
- No, but I can tell you that I know so many that have not voted due to disliking the entire crop of candidates this year.
- Canidates are not visible, do not campaign. in the neighborhood.
- I appreciate that the mayor and my council members do door to door canvassing. It provides a time to talk with them about upcoming issues.

### Miscellaneous

- I meant to mail in my ballot but I lost it. I didn't have time to go in-person to vote. It seemed like an automatic win, so I didn't feel too urgent to vote.
- It is discouraging that less than 2000 people vote in our elections.
- Same day voting with id!

### Compliments

- It was great!
- Thank you to the city employees!
- It was great. Just wish more people voted.
- Y'all did a very good job.
- Thank you to the volunteers!
- Great experience!
- Our election workers rock - as usual 😊
- The volunteers were helpful and pleasant.
- I think the City of College Park should not do more to then they did this year. I think it was done perfectly.
- It was easy and convenient for me. Thank you.
- I feel very lucky and grateful about how easy voting is.
- It was excellent! Looove all the voting options. I love the ritual of voting in person, but having drop box options, weekend voting, and multiple voting days was great!
- Great work as always!
- Painless

## **Survey Feedback**

- your survey is too long
- I don't feel valued or counted. We are too woke
- This survey is too long!!!

## **Appendix C:**

### **Full Set of Responses to “Do you have any comments about your experience using the Confirmation Code?”**

**\*Please note that we did not edit these responses in any way. They are entered here as the respondents typed them into the survey.**

**\*\*These responses are not categorized.**

- Easy peasy! Very high tech and fun!
- Generally I prefer to do things on the computer over my smartphone, but the confirmation code was too long and difficult to type. I had to switch to using my smartphone.
- It was too early to check it
- My receipt jammed in the printer, and even though they gave it to me, it was too crumpled for me to be able to scan it. They should have offered to reprint it for me, if that is an option.
- Requires cell phone (QR scan). Code keyin not practical. Does not show ballot choices. Should allow download of complete text file of codes and ballot selections. Codes would ensure anonymity. Voters could independently verify results.
- great experience!
- It didn't work
- waste of money
- No, very easy and reassuring
- Mentioned earlier. You have to trust that the math is actually being done and the webpage isn't lying to you. Really there need to be several trusted third parties that all do the math independently that I can check with individually. Then if they all agree I could have some confidence.
- QR code didn't work

## Appendix D:

### Full Set of Responses to “Do you have any comments about your experience with BallotCheck (both at the polling place and checking your ballot after the election)?”

**\*Please note that we did not edit these responses in any way. They are entered here as the respondents typed them into the survey.**

**\*\*These responses are not categorized.**

- All good
- This does not check who is counting the ballots. Background checks and transparency as to counters and election judges.
- I haven't checked it yet (I just left the polling place). But I will. I think it's a neat feature, especially for those who vote absentee.
- Neato!
- Voting was fairly easy. I liked Election Guard as it gives the voter a way to check if their vote was counted. I haven't done wso yet but intend to access it soon.
- I think this survey should not be accessible until it is possible to check one's vote status because of the questions related to the vote status. I am unable to check mine as the election has yet to conclude.
- I didn't know about it.
- This is a solution looking for a problem. 5 out of the 9 of the seats were uncontested, so integrity isn't a problem as a single vote by the candidates themselves for themselves would win the election for them. If anything, this system makes me feel less secure about my vote and that possibly my voting choices are now apparently plastered somewhere on the internet.
- The people worried about integrity in voting systems are self important dipshits who aren't going to be swayed by any new system you roll out, especially one accessible by the internet
- I don't need Ballot Check, the real focus of this survey (I used to write them). I trust my elected and selected officials.
- After voting in person I didn't really view using this tool as necessary (it isn't like I was worried my ballot hadn't been received / was lost in the mail).
- I trust our poll workers and election officials to do their jobs responsibly and carefully, but it doesn't hurt to have a system like Election Gard to help ensure that no one has messed with the ballots. There are other places in this country that really need it - more than College Park!
- Very well run.
- Very smoothly run. Very friendly staff.
- it felt like a lot of moving parts -- and it was unclear what was the "official" process and what was an added optional piece
- I think it is wholly unnecessary for city elections.
- As far as I know everything went as planned.
- Because I had confidence in the process, I didn't check my ballot. However, for those who may be more skeptical, it can be a potentially useful tool to reassure them their vote was counted.

- All I see is an assertion: "Your ballot was counted." The system should allow downloading of a text file including all codes and associated ballot choices. That way I could sit down with a few friends and we could all verify that our ballots were included in the file and that the choices recorded for those ballots are correct. Then we could run a few simple scripts on the file and verify that the published election results are correct. Anonymity would be preserved since nobody knows anybody else's code. Also, it's not practical to use BallotCheck without a cell phone because it's not practical to key in that confirmation code (CC). The CC could be much shorter and still preserve anonymity, security, uniqueness.
- all went smoothly. New technology a little confusing.
- great experience
- I felt everyone in the room could see my votes. The small desk used to set-up device was so open anyone could see what I was doing. My husband felt the same way for regular voting.
- This may not be par of BallotCheck but I think it's VERY important for next election set-up.
- There were also a large number of people in the room. They were walking around "checking" and could easily see everyone votes cast. This past the voting area was clear of people. . Please review and correct these issue. Thank you.
- This is a very important a valuable service. Keep it up!
- Very positive and easy. I hope it was the same for all the workers
- I understand the process, understand that NOTHING devised by man is perfect, but have never believed that election people purposely void MY vote. Accordingly, I am not inclined to use this system.
- No, it should be used for all future elections
- it was very easy to use and was nice to double check

## Appendix E:

### Full Set of Responses to “Do you have any suggestions for improvement turnout (participation in) College Park City elections?”

\*Please note that we did not edit these responses in any way. They are entered here as the respondents typed them into the survey.

#### Voter Engagement

- You can't wait until Election Day to get people to the polls. You need to find ways to engage residents in community activities all year long so that they will have interest in voting when the time comes.
- Engage with the community more.
- We need more community events and opportunities for neighbors to gather and meet each other. We also need better outreach from the City.
- Participatory budgeting process for those who are dissatisfied with city spending (see Raleigh, NC)
- When I first moved to the city (late 1999-early 2000s), I was very impressed that the current mayor (Fellows) went door to door handing out flyers and he even mentioned my name without me having to tell him what it was. It was a short and casual conversation, but it was memorable. I realize this is time-consuming. Perhaps Mayor Kabir and district leaders will consider strolling through the neighborhoods in the spring and summer to just say "hello," especially during non-election years. Consider doing a post-pandemic city survey ask us what our personal pressing household issues and concerns are. Has household income changed? Has responsibilities for love ones increased? If so, how? Are your basic needs being met? If not, what's changed (e.g., especially around food insecurity, utilities, access to basic healthcare issues and inflation). Also, does the City have a YouTube channel? If so, are we using it for outreach? Maybe for the holiday season film all of the homes that have entered the holiday lighting contest and post them on YouTube. See if the entrants are willing to talk about what inspired them to enter, how long it takes to decorate the house, etc. Find or create other occasions where residents can participate. Do a city-wide contest on the theme of "What's Great About Living in College Park?" Entries can be an essay, a poem, a piece of art, a song, a dance, etc. Give prizes for various age categories (from schoolchildren to our city's seniors). On Take Your Child to Work Day, consider having school children interview the mayor and councilmembers about their jobs. I think overall if we were to focus more on increasing community engagement creatively voter turnout has the potential to increase.
- Demonstrating to students how important the city of college park is in quality of life on and off campus

## **Consolidate Local Elections With Federal and State**

- Have the elections with the federal state and county elections
- If the elections were held in years with national elections instead of the off years, you'd get a much larger turnout.

## **Scheduling Election Day Suggestions**

- Make it on the same Tuesday that elections are normally held and make the early voting options be on Sunday or whatever
- By not scheduling it on a Sunday. How stupid.
- Also having voting open on Tuesday (“Election Day”)
- Not hold it on a Sunday
- move Election Day back to Tuesday - we heard from some folks who tried to vote on Tuesday because they thought College Park Election Day was the same as elsewhere
- Hold elections on designated election day (1st Tuesday of Nov instead of a different day)
- Keep last day to vote on Tuesday.
- While voting on a Sunday sounds more convenient, my family often travels on weekends so it actually made it more difficult to vote. Further, it is hard to vote as a parent to multiple small children. I don't feel as if deadlines and dates were communicated well for this election so, by the time deadlines passed I was too late.
- Keep the Sundays on for final election day!
- multiple early voting days, having a Sunday vote, engaging local groups (student groups, churches/faith communities)

## **Competitive Elections/Different Candidates**

- Greater competition in elections I think would be likely to increase turnout. For some districts all of the candidates were running unopposed.
- Allow for write in ballots to let the voters show their dislike for the unopposed candidates.
- Make half the seats on the council at large districts that would have some god damn competition and reason to vote. If it isn't a competitive race, why bother to vote?
- If the elections were competitive. There were only two districts where there were multiple candidates running for a seat (I live in neither district). I was not aware there was also a general election advisory question. I went onto College Park's election page to prepare/inform myself for voting. It was mentioned on the page, but I was not aware that it would be on the ballot. When I clicked on the link for more information about it,

it does not open. In the future it would be great to have a sample ballot feature on the site to know what I will be voting on when I arrive at the polling location.

- Have more than one mayoral candidate. Bigger candidate pool in general. Maybe some signage around town advertising the dates and locations of polling.
- Have candidates that are for the citizens of College Park and not for businesses and the University of Maryland.
- Yes. the mayor and council needs to shadow other progressive Towns and their Election process
- Difficult to have high turnout if there are few or no contests. Hard to understand the importance of voting.
- I think the city, and our elected officials, always do a great job of encouraging participation and providing as many options to vote as possible. But, it is discouraging that more people do not turnout, particularly because of how easy it is, with mail in voting, two early voting days, numerous voting locations, and moving Election Day to a weekend. More contested races will help. If the Council moves to four year staggered terms, as the referendum encouraged them to do, that might encourage more people to run and/or participate in elections given that they will have to wait four years to vote again, if they don't like the results.
- Not really. The candidates are all very poor leaders and only care about their tax base.
- Better candidates to many catering to the university
- People support their subcultures in College Park. The candidates with the most influence or friends in their subcultures are elected. Issues are not as important.

### **Candidates Need to Communicate**

- Candidate forums were late in the season and not accessible widely (ie, published online) until even later, after early voting had begun. I know the City doesn't sponsor these, but we might as a community think about how to make these forums more effective in their timing, length (90 minutes isn't enough for a 5-candidate forum), and scheduling.
- Have candidates & their helpers do door-to-door campaigns, so we know what the issues are and where the candidate stands on each issue.
- Have candidates make known what they have actually done for College Park
- More candidate events and good old fashioned meet and greets; pizza and other foods. Go old school.
- Voters are more likely to turn out if they have an issue of concern and know which candidate supports it. Not sure how many other ways the matters can be publicized. Perhaps forums in which issues of concern are discussed.
- We need \*high\* impact policies that stop wasting money. Giving back taxes (to the wealthy, whose houses are &lt;= 500k) for political favor while children in our city are

hungry and poorly educated is morally bankrupt. Stop buying votes. START EARNING VOTES.

- more information regarding candidates earlier / repeat any recorded debates or discussions or make access on demand
- This is difficult, only a small fraction of eligible voters voted. Maybe more public engagement by the mayor and council member

### **Election Administrators needs to Communicate**

- Bilingual materials for 18 or over.
- A more accessible location; better visibility for candidate information (ie. Not just yard signs), town hall meetings with the candidates
- Early and accessible voting is key; and publicizing when, where and what is on the ballot well in advance
- Better communication and clarity on when, where, etc. and clarify how to get absentee ballots by mail.
- Better outreach to new residents
- Allow voters to opt in to a nag list. Send emails to the list as significant dates approach (registration deadline, mail-in ballot applicaiton deadline, early voting day, etc.). Send email notice when ballot is received and nags if final vote deadline approaches w/o ballot having been received.
- Include the address of the polling places on communications sent about registration; send a separate election guide to city residents in advance.
- Actual election workers door to door & in Spanish. Encourage voting. More signage for election instructions should appear prior to candidate's signage.
- Better publicity. I had to go to City website early to find information. I suggest signage or mailer to every resident. I felt this election in particular was simply did not raise public awareness.
- Would like to see more outreach to students who are eligible to vote.

### **Locational Issues/Polling Places**

- More early voting locations. Getting to City Hall is nightmare and there is no parking or working metro/bus connection that would make it easy for D1 to come vote at City Hall.
- Add Davis Hall as a polling site. I didn't vote in the interim election because Rt 1 is a mess.
- get voting back to Davis Hall
- Add polling places on Election Day so more people without vehicles can get to the locations
- Ensure parking is available.

### **Miscellaneous-Substance**

- Offer carpools to drive people to polls if you dint already!
- perhaps some people need a ride
- Make it a city holiday
- Send everyone a mail-in ballot
- More non-binding questions
- Teach civics and democratic principles and responsibilities is schools and continue to reinforce it.
- If there's online voting, that'll be great.
- make registering easier for out of state students
- Passing non-citizen voting for City elections
- Same Day Registration

### **Miscellaneous**

- People will show up if they are concerned about an issue.
- No. I think the City has done everything possible. You cannot stop apathy and shouldn't worry about it. If people wanted to vote they were given every opportunity.
- I don't think turn-out alone is particularly important
- Keep up the good work
- I think CP is doing everything right--and a lot--to try to encourage people to vote