

2020 City Election Specifics – with Mail-Out Ballots

4. Voting by Mail (formerly Absentee Voting)

The City of Cambridge is having a mail-out ballot election for the office of Mayor and all five (5) City Commission seats. Every registered City voter as of August 24, 2020 will receive a ballot at their registered address. The City has contracted with TrueBallot, Inc., an election services and solutions company based in Bethesda, Maryland, who will mail out the ballots in the later part of September. This will eliminate the need for anyone to have to request an absentee ballot, assign an agent to pick up a ballot for them, or attend the polls in person. Voters should complete the ballot and then send it in when they receive it. All ballots are to be mailed back through the postal service or dropped off at the downtown Cambridge Post Office, 301 High Street, Cambridge, Maryland. All postage is prepaid by the City.

The ballots will remain at the downtown Cambridge Post Office in locked containers until the date of the election, when they will be transported to the polling site for counting by volunteers and/or staff members designated by the Supervisor of Elections. A representative of any candidate may follow the designated volunteers and/or staff members to the Post Office and back.

All ballots must reach the city's election post office box by election day. This means a citizen should mail it in or drop it off to the post office at least one week prior to the election day to ensure it gets counted. Anyone wanting to submit his/her ballot on the date of the election may go to the polling place and deliver his/her ballot in person. Anyone concerned that his/her ballot was mailed in too late may vote in person at the polling place. If the election vendor finds that a voter has voted both by mail-in ballot and in person, the mail-in ballot will not count and only the in-person ballot will be counted.

No ballots will be accepted at City Hall. Any ballots left at City Hall will not be counted.

Any voter who does not receive a ballot by October 1, 2020 may call the City Hall election number identified on the city web site (www.choosecambridge.com) and Facebook page and request a replacement ballot. Ballots will only be sent to the voters registered address unless authorized by the Supervisor of Elections. Anyone who does not receive a ballot, forgets to send the ballot back in, or simply wants to vote in person may vote on **City Election Day, Saturday, October 17, 2020 between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. at Chesapeake College's Cambridge Center, 418 Race Street, in Downtown Cambridge.**

The last day to register to vote in the City election is Monday, September 28, 2020 by 4:00 p.m. Register to vote at the Dorchester County Board of Elections, 501 Court Lane, Cambridge, Maryland 21613 or call 410-228-2560 for more information.

~~Registered voters may request an absentee ballot if they choose to vote early. A registered voter may vote early through the absentee voting process even if (s)he is going to be in town on election day. In order to request an absentee ballot, the voter must either call the election volunteer or staff member designated by the Supervisor of Elections on the City's website~~

~~(www.choosecambridge.com) or on the City's Facebook page or stop by City Hall and speak with the designated election volunteer or staff member. In order to obtain an absentee ballot, a voter or his/her duly qualified agent must submit a fully completed absentee ballot request form verifying the voter's full name, date of birth, address, and telephone number. If the Supervisor of Elections chooses to mail out a ballot to every registered voter, the voter should utilize that ballot and only request one if they do not receive their ballot or their mailed ballot is lost, destroyed, or spoiled.~~

~~Requests for absentee ballots shall be made Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., except on City holidays. Absentee ballot requests for the October 17, 2020 general election will be accepted beginning September 2, 2020, and absentee ballot requests for the December 1, 2020 runoff election, if necessary, will be accepted beginning October 19, 2020. The voter need not have planned to be out of town on the date of the election to vote absentee. No voter will be provided more than one absentee ballot unless the Supervisor of Elections has reasonable grounds to believe that the absentee ballot previously provided has been lost, destroyed, or spoiled.~~

~~Voters who wish to designate an agent to return an absentee ballot application and pick up the voter's absentee ballot, deliver a completed absentee ballot, or assist the voter in casting an absentee ballot or completing an absentee ballot request form by reason of the voter's disability, inability to read or write, or inability to read the ballot may only do so by completing a designation of agent form provided by the Supervisor of Elections. Requests for designation of agent forms shall be made in the same manner as requests for absentee ballots as set forth above.~~

~~An individual must be at least 18 years of age and not a candidate on the ballot in order to qualify as an agent for purposes of returning a voter's absentee ballot application, assigning an address for the ballot to be mailed other than the address of the registered voter, and/or delivering the voter's completed absentee ballot. Additionally, the individual must attest in writing, under penalty of perjury, that he/she is acting as the voter's designated agent and will deliver the absentee ballot to the voter. If the voter requests that his/her agent return the completed absentee ballot, then the individual must also attest in writing, under penalty of perjury, that he/she is returning the absentee ballot as completed by the voter and that he/she has not altered the ballot in any way.~~

~~Voters who wish to designate an agent to assist him/her in completing his/her absentee ballot or absentee ballot request form by reason of the voter's disability, inability to read or write, or inability to read the ballot may only do so by completing the designation of agent form described above. An individual may not assist a voter with completing his/her absentee ballot if the individual is a candidate on the ballot, the voter's employer or an agent thereof, or an officer or agent of the voter's union. Additionally, the individual must attest in writing, under penalty of perjury, that he/she was duly authorized by the voter to assist him/her.~~

~~An individual may serve as an agent for more than one voter; however, a properly qualified agent will only be mailed one absentee ballot per voter. Under no circumstances will an individual be mailed an absentee ballot without having been properly qualified as an agent as set forth herein.~~

~~The volunteer or staff member designated by the Supervisor of Elections will determine if the individual requesting an absentee ballot is eligible to receive an absentee ballot. Additionally,~~

~~such volunteer or staff member shall determine whether an individual is eligible to serve as a voter's agent. For individuals who are deemed ineligible to receive an absentee ballot or serve as a voter's agent, the designated volunteer or staff member will write the contact information of the denied individual and explain the reason therefor. In the case of an individual deemed ineligible to serve as a voter's agent, both the voter and the denied individual shall be so notified. The individual deemed ineligible to receive an absentee ballot or serve as a voter's agent may request an appeal, in which case the designated volunteer or staff member will note the request for an appeal and turn the request over to the Supervisor of Elections to hear the appeal. The Supervisor of Elections may designate a panel of three election judges to consider the appeal and provide a recommendation prior to making his/her final determination. —~~

~~Unless a voter properly designates a qualified agent to return his/her completed absentee ballot, the volunteer or staff member designated by the Supervisor of Elections to accept requests for an absentee ballot will e-mail a request to the City's election vendor to have an absentee ballot sent to the registered address of the voter if he/she is determined eligible to receive an absentee ballot. The absentee ballot will be mailed by the City's election vendor to the registered address of the voter. The voter will be responsible for receiving, completing, and mailing in the absentee ballot. All absentee ballots will be kept at the U.S. Post Office at 301 High Street, Cambridge, Maryland until the October 17, 2020 general election or the December 1, 2020 runoff election, if necessary. Any absentee ballot received by the City after the closing of the polls of the general election or the runoff election, if necessary, will not be counted. It is the voter's responsibility to ensure that the City has received the voter's absentee ballot by the closing of the polls. If a voter who receives an absentee ballot is concerned (s)he will not have time to mail the ballot in. The voter may bring the ballot to the election poll site or vote in person on election day.~~