ElectionGuard in College Park City Elections in 2023: A report on the implementation and voter reactions

Center for Civic Design

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ElectionGuard in College Park City elections

In November 2023, the Center for Civic Design was part of the ElectionGuard team supporting a trial of the technology in the College Park, Maryland city elections.

This was a collaboration between the City of College Park and a technology development team including Hart InterCivic (the Verity voting system), developers and cryptographers from Inferno Red and Microsoft (ElectionGuard software), Enhanced Voting (the public confirmation site), and MITRE National Election Security Lab (an independent verifier).

ElectionGuard is open-source software that improves confidence and participation in elections. The software runs alongside the polling-place voting system. It creates a second, encrypted, copy of every vote that can be used to check the results of an election without revealing how anyone voted.

From the voter's perspective, ElectionGuard is largely invisible. Voters mark their ballots as they always have, either hand-marking a paper ballot or using a ballot marking device. As they cast their ballot at the scanner, ElectionGuard encrypts their ballots and gives the voter a confirmation code that they can use to see for themselves that their ballot is included in the final count.

Center for Civic Design's role was to work with the City of College Park on communications materials and conduct research into how ElectionGuard works in the context of a live election. This project repeated and updated work in a smaller-scale trial in Franklin County, Idaho's November 2022 election and included:

- Creating voter education materials including a postcard mailing, a small 'pocket guide' given to all voters at the polling places, and an FAQ about ElectionGuard, in Spanish and English.
- Supporting the College Park Board of Election Supervisors in making updates to the poll worker training.
- Conducting interviews with voters during in-person voting (2 days of early voting and Election Day).
- Running an online feedback survey that asked about College Park elections, including ElectionGuard (with researchers from the University of North Carolina, Charlotte).

Our goals in both elections were similar.

- Learn about the pain points and opportunities in introducing election innovations.

- Understand voters' mental models of their elections, what it means to introduce technology, and what they think the consequences of the new voting system are.
- Learn how voters in College Park react to ElectionGuard and changes in their voting experience.
- Compare the experience in College Park to that in Franklin County in 2022 to see if there were any differences between these two very different jurisdictions.

College Park's role in the trial of ElectionGuard

Regular College Park city elections for the mayor, city council, and (in some years) advisory ballot questions occur in odd-numbered years. They are run by the Board of Election Supervisors (BOES) and the City Clerk's office. Maryland state and county elections are run in even-numbered years. The City Election included voting by mail and three days of in-person voting: two early voting days (October 25 and November 2) and election day on November 5.

City elections in Maryland are run independently, though they use voter registration services from the State Board of Elections. College Park has used several different systems in recent elections, including hand-counting a special election for Mayor in May 2023.

ElectionGuard was just one innovation, part of a program to update election administration and increase turnout in city elections, that included:

- Electronic poll books from KnowInk.
- Sending ballots to everyone on the Maryland Permanent Vote By Mail List in addition to allowing voters to apply for a mail-in ballot.
- An accessible Hart Touch Writer ballot marking device for in-person voting.
- The Hart Intercivic Verity Scanners.

The BOES and City Clerk's office support of the introduction of ElectionGuard included:

- Preparing for the City Council meeting where the ElectionGuard system was presented.
- A public information session to introduce ElectionGuard and the Hart Verity voting system, held on September 27, 2023 (available on the College Park website).
- Reviewing the ElectionGuard Q&A and other voter information materials.
- Updating the poll worker training for the new systems and planning how poll workers would explain them to voters.

- Recruiting the Guardians – members of the community who run the procedures to set up the ElectionGuard encryption key to open the election and then run the ElectionGuard tally at the end of Election Day.

All of this made the election a significant effort, even with the support of the ElectionGuard team for the technical systems and information materials from Idaho as a starting point. The College Park team paid attention to each detail, ensuring that the implementation of ElectionGuard worked for their election and their city.

Comparing ElectionGuard in the Franklin County and College Park elections

In November 2022, ElectionGuard was used in a small trial in Franklin County, Idaho. This was a chance to see the technology used in a general election and learn how voters would react. The November 2023 trial in the City of College Park, Maryland, continued the process of learning what it takes to introduce a new election technology and to continue to learn how to implement it in the polling place and gain more insight into the voter experience.

The two trials of ElectionGuard in two different elections provided an opportunity to compare voters' reactions in different geographical and demographic settings. The two elections also differed in the type of election (national vs. city) and number of voters (100+ voters vs 900+ voters).

The basics of the ElectionGuard voting experience were similar: In both jurisdictions, voters cast a paper ballot using a Hart InterCivic scanner, reviewing their votes on the scanner screen, and taking the ElectionGuard Confirmation Code from a printer embedded in the scanner.

During exit interviews in both locations, voters expressed similar reactions to both ElectionGuard and their overall voting experience. (Read the full report from Idaho.)

- They had little or no trouble voting and did not see the experience as substantially different from other elections despite new procedures and equipment (including the review screen on the scanner).

- Both elections were relatively small, with no lines of more than a few people at any time during the day. There was no evidence that ElectionGuard or the new scanners added to how long it took to vote.

- Voters were positive about new technology as "keeping up with the times" and with the value of anything to help build trust, make elections more accurate, and

counter claims about fraud and election security. Like most voters in national surveys, voters in both places trusted their local elections and election officials, but worried about elections in other places.

- They were most positive about being able to review their votes and were observed reading the review screen before casting their ballot. They found this feature reassuring and useful.
- Most had little or no exposure to, or recognition of, the name ElectionGuard, although there was communication from the elections office and in local news. After voting, they were unclear what part of the voting system was "ElectionGuard" vs the Hart scanner.

The use of the Confirmation Code is an important part of the ElectionGuard activities that had different responses in the two jurisdictions. In both places, almost all kept the small voter guide handed out at the polling place and had the Confirmation Code to take home.

More voters in Franklin County (73%) than College Park (43%) said they planned to use their Confirmation Codes. However, in College Park, more voters actually went to the confirmation website.

The website for the College Park election shows that 52 people used a QR code to successfully look up their ballot - most on Election Night or the following day. Another 100-400 entered the Confirmation Code manually.

The site does not identify individual visitors, so we can only know how many times someone looked up a Confirmation Code, not how many different voters that represents. In addition, a single successful manual search might include several partial searches, adding to the difficulty in identifying how many people took advantage of the opportunity to confirm that their ballot was counted or to examine how a BallotCheck ballot was recorded.

About the jurisdictions

Franklin County, Idaho 2022	College Park, Maryland 2023
About the jurisdictions	
A western small, rural county	An eastern, dense, suburban city
14,600 total people 6,200 registered voters	34,600 total people 14,400 registered voters
An older population: 14.8% over 65	A younger population, including a major university: 6.4% over 65
Largely white, with just 7% Latino	More diverse: 49% White, 21% Black, 18% Latino
74% Republican	77% Democrat (Prince George's County) College Park elections are nonpartisan
About the elections	
National election	City election
ElectionGuard offered as an option in just one district on election day	ElectionGuard was used by all voters in the 3 in-person voting days
111 of **225** in-person voters in the district	**962** in-person voting of **1468** total voters
Voters hand-marked paper ballots.	Voters hand-marked paper ballots or Marked and printed their ballot with the Hart Verity Touch Writer ballot marking device
Voters had never used a scanner. Ballots ballots are counted at the Clerk's office	Voters have used precinct scanners in previous elections, including state elections
Voters never used a scanner with a review screen	Voters never used a scanner with a review screen

Insights from the College Park city election

What we learned about managing ElectionGuard in the polling place

In one of CCD's first research projects observing poll workers as they opened and closed the polls, one of our conclusions was that "deliberate work by the elections office to create strong support for poll workers [resulted in the] good practices we saw in their polling places."[1]

The way College Park trained poll workers to respond to any problems that might arise is a good example of this. They stressed the importance of maintaining calm: raising their hand if they needed help and not trying to shout across the room. As a result, when electricity went out in half of City Hall, they worked quietly and effectively to ensure that the lights stayed on and adjust procedures so voting continued without interruption.

A great election experience is one where things go smoothly

The work of the Board of Election Supervisors and City Clerk's office n setting up the election and training poll workers paid off in comments from voters in our election interviews. The first question we asked voters as they left the polling place was, "How was voting for you today?" Typical answers were "Fine," "Easy," or "Great."

When we asked for more details, they told us that a great election meant:

- There were no lines and everything went smoothly.
- The polling place was well-staffed.
- Poll workers were friendly and knew their jobs.
- They had no problems with the ballot or voting systems.

As one voter put it, "Simple, no issues. Rarely have issues. Nothing different." (F41)

Helping voters at the scanners while maintaining privacy

The College Park team wanted to be sure that no one was confused about the process for casting their ballot at the scanner. However, while providing step-by-step assistance, they did not want poll workers to be able to see the review screen showing the voter's choices.

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[1] *Poll workers and election integrity* - Center for Civic Design 2012-2014 https://civicdesign.org/topics/pollworkers-security/

They came up with a simple solution. The poll workers stood behind the scanner. In this position, they were facing the voter and could not see the screen without leaning over the back of the machine. There were enough audible cues for the poll worker to follow the process without seeing the screen.

- As the voter approached the scanner, the poll worker told them to insert the ballot and that it did not matter whether it was face-up or face-down. Many voters inserted it face-down so their choices would not be visible.
- As the scanner began printing the Confirmation Code, they told the voter to check their ballot on the screen.
- When the voter looked up from reading the screen, the poll worker told them to press the Cast Ballot button and take their Confirmation Code.

From the chief's table, a poll worker could help ensure that voters pressed the "Cast Ballot" button before leaving. The table was across the room, too far away to read the screen, but from it, they could see the flashing lights on the front edge of the scanner. These lights are green when waiting for a voter, then change to red when a ballot is inserted, and back to green when the ballot is cast, providing a visual signal when voters completed casting their ballot.

Voters had some comments about this part of the voting experience.

- One said, "It would be better if the paper [receipt] didn't come out until the button [to cast the ballot] was pressed." He explained that the paper emerged after scanning the ballot but before pressing the button. The poll worker had to tell him to wait to pick up the receipt until he cast his ballot. (L45)
- Several worried that someone behind them could read the review screen. One had the same concern about the position of the TouchWriter. "People might not like that how they voted is visible to other people." (L13)

Maintaining consistency in explanations to voters can be challenging

The whole team worked hard on the words used to describe the activities and materials that are part of the ElectionGuard. The College Park team also wanted poll workers at the ballot table to offer voters a hand-marked ballot or the ballot marking device as an equal choice. They adjusted the scripts between voting days, working to find the balance between making the text easy to say quickly and making it complete and accurate.

This is similar to what happened during Election Day in Franklin County, Idaho, where poll workers simplified the question and how much information they offered about ElectionGuard as they handed out the ballots.

What we learned from voters during exit interviews

We conducted in-person intercept interviews during 3 days of voting at 3 locations in College Park with a small team of 2-3 people from the Center for Civic Design. As voters left the polling place, we asked if they had a few minutes to talk. Interviews took 5-10 minutes, depending on how much the voters had to say.

We conducted **263** interviews with a total of **307** people (some were with people who had come to vote together and agreed to talk to us together.

We were able to talk to a reasonable sample of the voters.

- During the Early Voting days, we talked to just over a third (34% and 38%) of the voters.
- During the shorter 8-hour Election Day on Sunday, there were more voters than on either Early Voting day. With an average of 40 voters per hour, we had staff for just under 20%.

It's worth noting that voters were highly engaged—more knowledgeable, and more likely to agree to be interviewed.

- 189 voted in the Mayoral Special election
- 26 last voted in the general elections in 2020 - 2022
- 4 were first-time voters
- 44 did not answer this question

The purpose of this research was to gather immediate reactions to both the overall voting experience and the impact of ElectionGuard. We asked:

- What information they had about ElectionGuard before voting and what they learned about how it works during voting.
- How they reacted to ElectionGuard and what value they thought it had.
- Any additional insights about the process of introducing new technology innovations into elections.

One of the challenges of introducing new election technology is that a successful trial can be essentially boring as a context for voter research. When there are few problems, the overall sense was that everything was fine and that the election went as it was supposed to. That might be enough for the dutiful voters who turn out for a municipal election with little controversy.

Many voters didn't immediately realize that anything was new

Some people only realized that this election was different from previous years when we jogged their memory. It may be that because elections in College Park have changed frequently, there is no expectation that they will be consistent from year to year.

- "It's been new every time in College Park voting" (W4)

Most voters who used the TouchWriter had a positive experience. We heard this from talking to the poll worker stationed at the BMD but also from a few voters during the interviews.

- "The touch writer was easy" (S41)

Electronic pollbooks have been used in College Park city elections in the past, so this was not a new feature. However, that technology did have an impact. On the first early voting day, voters reviewing their addresses noticed that their zip code was wrong. The erroneous zip codes turned out to be a mistake in how the vendor loaded the data. The more important point, however, is that voters were able to accurately verify their addresses on the PollPad screen and noticed when something was incorrect.

The most visible - and positive - feature was the scanner review screen

The change voters most frequently mentioned was the review screen at the scanner. Voters found the ability to review their ballot before casting it reassuring, transparent, and useful.

Even though it was an extra step in the voting process, it confirmed that the voting system read their ballot as they intended. Voters mentioned this as both a personal benefit and as part of election integrity.

- "It confirmed my votes. Probably not important for a short ballot, but in bigger elections it is. It'll say if I skipped something." (S19)
- "It lets me know how I voted. It's a great idea. It's to prevent fraud. It promotes integrity." (S26)
- "Awesome, cool confirmation, I marked one bubble out of the line a little. I was worried about this, but the screen was a confirmation [that it read the ballot correctly]." (M2)
- "The screen is good. It's reassuring. Putting your ballot in the box can feel like it's going into a black hole." (S34)
- "It was nice. It showed that what I marked on paper was accurate in the computer. (S7)
- One voter said at first, "It's not necessary," then "Wait, let me think about that. No. It's positive. If I change my mind and I want to go back, I don't have to spoil my ballot." (W2)
- "Good, it let me see if I made a mistake. It's a last chance." (M57)

Most people hadn't heard of ElectionGuard before voting

People said they got information about the election in many different ways. They most frequently learned about the election from other people – notably candidates. Many said they knew the candidates or described them as neighbors.

Many mentioned several sources of information, including people who described themselves as "active" in the community or politics or as someone who stays informed.

- "I know things. I have friends, and I am politically active. My representatives send emails." (M28)
- "I pay attention to politics in general." (M66)
- "I absorb information through the neighborhood" (L18)
- "[I] didn't need to read [the pocket guide"]. Saw the demo online. I'm very involved in District and College Park. (W2)

The most common sources of information were:

- Other people, primarily candidates or neighbors
- Official College Park communications, including newsletters, meetings, web, social media, voter cards, and mail
- Email lists or social media, including the Mayor's emails, Facebook and other lists

Only a tiny number of people learned about the election in a newspaper.

Very few people recalled hearing about ElectionGuard at all. Of those that did, the public information meeting and the Council meeting when they voted on ElectionGuard were the most common sources.

Voters learned about ElectionGuard during the voting process

For most voters, their first exposure to ElectionGuard occurred when a poll worker at the entry to the polling place gave them the pocket guide handout. Although everyone received the pocket guide, lines were rarely long enough that voters had time to read it. When they left the polling place, they often still had it in their hand, with the Confirmation Code inserted in it.

Some voters did not separate the scanner and the ElectionGuard technology when talking about their election experience or when we asked about ElectionGuard directly. For them, the new feature was the Hart scanner and the printed receipt.

- "I didn't use it - just did an old-fashioned scan." (W8)

However, it was clear that poll workers had a clear script for how to talk to voters about ElectionGuard, both as they entered the polling place and especially at the scanner.

Many answers to questions about ElectionGuard and the purpose of the confirmation code mirrored the poll workers' words. This was a strong contrast to what we heard in Franklin County, Idaho where voters had to opt in to use ElectionGuard, so poll workers focused on that choice and spent less time explaining ElectionGuard and the purpose of the Confirmation Code.

In answer to questions about how ElectionGuard works or how they would tell a neighbor what it did, voters used terminology from the poll workers and the pocket guide:

- "You take the code that was printed and go online to check that your ballot was counted after the election." (F5)
- "You get a receipt and check to see if your ballot was counted." (M2)
- "....confirm your vote wasn't lost in the system." (T10)
- "each person will know their vote was counted." (F9)

Looking at specific words they used, they were most likely to say that ElectionGuard allowed them to "check," "verify," or "confirm" that their "vote" or "ballot" was "counted." But many said they didn't know or were not sure, and there is evidence of this in many of the answers, which simply said "check my ballot" without adding what they were checking for.

Longer comments show more nuance, both from voters who were generally positive about ElectionGuard and some who were more skeptical.

- "[I] would struggle to explain to older neighbors that may have trouble using the barcode and understanding the technology." (F1)
- "[It's a] physical ballot combined with digital 'assurity'" (T3)
- "A new mechanism for casting ballot more secure. Code can be used to double-check." (F8)
- "[It] verifies twice: once at the screen and once with the code." (S8)
- "Scan the QR code and will tell if vote counted. (F33)

Reactions to the new technology mainly were positive

Overall reactions to the voting process and technology in elections were overwhelmingly positive...but there were some concerns.

Those who accepted or welcomed new technology saw it as "keeping up with the times."

- "This [the Confirmation Code] makes me feel like my vote was counted." (T9)
- "It's great, adds more voter security." (M43)
- "It makes us progressive. It's not archaic anymore." (S18)
- "It's probably a good idea. We need to keep up with the times." (M45)
- "I love technology [it makes it] easy. Technology is great." (T1)
- "It's] good, need to keep up with new tech for election integrity." (F15)

One voter commented that having the Confirmation Code was an expected modern feature. “Every other place does this. Any other service, you get a receipt.” (M60)

But there were also concerns about the reliability of technology or what happens if there is a problem. This included one provisional voter who had wanted to try ElectionGuard and felt “left out.”

- “[Technology is] good as long as it works.“ (F5)
- “Don't know anything about technology. I trust the system, much better than other countries, but other people may not.” (L1)
- What is the appeals process? [if the ballot could not be found on the confirmation site].” (L17)
- “But what if it hasn't been counted? What do you do then? Have they thought through that?.” (T12)

There was some skepticism about whether something like ElectionGuard is needed. Comments about whether it is needed in College Park focused on it as a small city that can be trusted.

- “I won’t use [the Confirmation Code] because I trust elections in College Park.” (S25)
- “This is way too small a municipality to be using this.” (S3)
- “It’s a good thing. It’s better in a larger election.” (S27)
- “These elections [in College Park] aren't serious, so no fraud, but others…” (T6)

Others focused on general issues of trust in elections, security, and misinformation.

- “…helps build trust, especially in times of misinformation.” (F2)
- “It seems like it's good for integrity and faith in the system. It could stop misinformation.” (M44)
- “It ensures transparency. It's guarding the election. People complain about votes not counting. This should boost confidence.” (W4)

There were some voters who did not feel ElectionGuard was necessary for various reasons. Some didn’t think it added to the integrity of an election

- “I believe in the machines and voting. I'm not real skeptical [so am not sure] that it's necessary.” (W11)
- “[It’s an] unverifiable verification system after the fac.t” (F1)
- "[it’s a] false sense of security. Unless you have transparent boxes [like in France, where he is from], there's no guarantee against fraud.” (T6)
- “What about mail-in and absentee? How does that affect the perception of equity?” [Because those voters won't get a confirmation code] (L32)

Others worried about the cost for a small city. Voters who mentioned cost as a concern cited the number of staff in the polling place and the cost of new technology in general.

They also tended to be more active in the community or to have seen or heard about the City Council meetings.

Based on questions people asked our interviewers, they were confused about who was on staff or a poll worker in College Park and who was a member of the ElectionGuard team, despite large badges the ElectionGuard team wore.

- “Why are there so many people? Is everybody being paid? Seems excessive.” (S3)

What we learned in the post-election survey

The final research was a post-election feedback survey. It was available online from October 4 - November 30.

The survey included both questions about the voting experience and general questions about College Park elections. The survey questions about ElectionGuard were based on the 2022 survey used in Idaho. Other questions were based on questions asked in a 2022 College Park survey that collected input to help the City plan for the 2023 election.

In the days before Election Day, respondents who reported that they had not voted yet were shown information about how they could still vote but completed the general questions about elections in College Park. They were also invited to return later if they decided to vote, so there are likely some people who completed the survey twice.

Voters were notified about the survey in the polling place handout, with mail voting materials, in a postcard sent to voters in the City, on the College Park website, and in news articles and other announcements after the election. Although the survey was available in Spanish everyone used the English version.

The peak days for responses corresponded to key election dates. On November 5, anyone who declined to be interviewed was reminded about the survey and shown the link in the pocket guide handout. Over 80 people completed the survey on November 14, when final results were announced–over twice the number on any other day.

There were 230 responses from College Park residents. 180 of them reported having voted in the election, with 41 who said they did not vote. Unlike the interviews at the Early and Election Day polling places, the survey included both people who voted in person and with a mail ballot.

In both the survey and interviews people described themselves as avid voters–answering that “I vote in every election in which I am eligible” in the survey. It is likely that there was substantial overlap in the answers. In general, the two feedback mechanisms collected similar responses.

The reported ages and other demographics were also similar. In both, over half were 55 or older. Other demographics, including gender and race/ethnicity, were also similar.

Age range	Survey respondents	Interview participants
25 and younger	8.8%	8.7%
25-34 years	7.3%	13.4%

35-54 years	27.5%	31.3%
55-74 years	38.3%	44.2%
74 years or older	18.1%	6.9%

Sources of information had some differences as well as similarities. Candidates for office were a strong source in both, but in the survey, more respondents cited mail sent to their houses and the two newspapers (College Park Here and Now and Municipal Scene) than did in the interviews. The two research contexts (sitting in your own house vs standing outside a polling place) might explain the difference in what information sources people recalled.

There were no notable differences in how accurately people described how ElectionGuard works. In both, the most relevant difference in the accuracy of the responses is whether they said the ElectionGuard showed *that their vote was counted* or that it confirmed *how they voted.* This is a crucial difference but one that is easy to mix up in conversation.

In the survey, 13% of voters answered yes to the question:

> ElectionGuard allows you to run a test, called a "BallotCheck". It allows you to set aside a ballot to check that the system recorded it correctly. Did you do a BallotCheck?

However, only 4 people reported going to the website to complete the BallotCheck and see if their ballot selections were recorded correctly. Those people were likely the 4 who completed the portion of the BallotCheck process at the polling places by marking a ballot, scanning it, but then spoiling it before casting. It is likely that the other respondents misunderstood the question and conflated the scanner review screen with the ElectionGuard BallotCheck process.

Another notable question in the survey is the response to a question about what features of this election they thought were important to increasing transparency. All of the answers except “Voters cast a paper ballot” received strong responses that they were important.

The most important features of ElectionGuard were that “Each voter can confirm that their ballot was counted” (78%) and “Voters themselves can test that the system is recording votes accurately” (68%).

The complete survey results are in a separate report:

ElectionGuard in College Park City Elections in 2023:
A report on the voter experience and attitudes survey

Appendixes

Voter education information

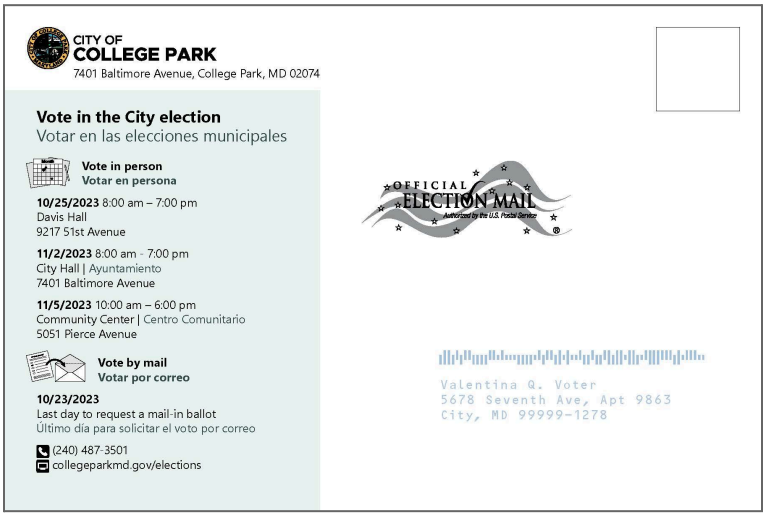
We created several pieces of communication about ElectionGuard. All materials were translated into Spanish.

- A postcard mailer about the election
- A small handout for voters at the polling place
- An updated FAQ about ElectionGuard

The postcard

The postcard was mailed to all residences in College Park at the end of September, timed to arrive around the time that mail-in ballots went out to voters. Our original goal was to promote the post-election survey.

But, in discussion with the Clerk and Board of Election Supervisors, we decided to combine information about what was new in the election and ways to vote with a link to the survey.

Postcard image	Contents
	Address side • Return address to the City of College Park • ElectionMail logo • How to vote in person • How to vote by mail Information in English and Spanish

Postcard image	Contents
	Message side • Drop box locations and a photo of the drop box • Voting with the Hart Verity Scanner and ElectionGuard and a photo of the scanner • QR code and link to the survey • English on right; Spanish on the left side of the card

The polling place handout

The handout repeated the small (4.25 x 5.5 inch) format pocket guide we designed for Franklin County, Idaho. It is a single piece of paper, assembled by hand into a quarter-page booklet with a pocket for the ticket with the Confirmation Code.

The goal is to provide voters with basic information in an easy-to-read format, a place to put the Confirmation Code to take home, and an explanation of how to use it, in a simply unintimidating format, small enough to fit in a pocket.

A poll worker handed it out to voters as they entered the polling place.

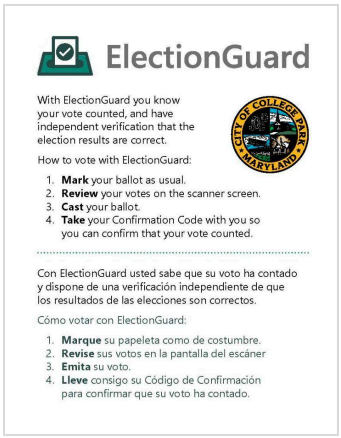
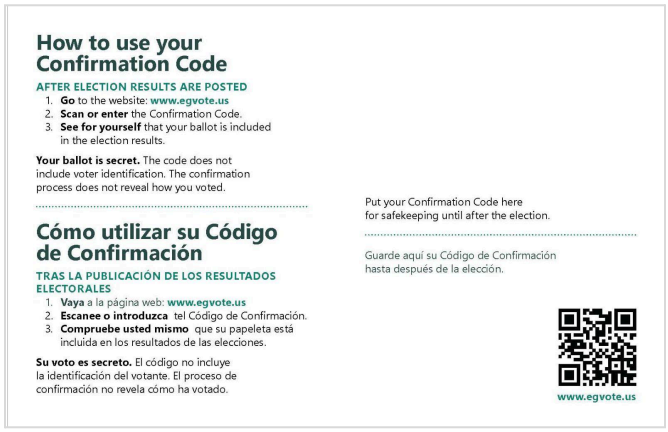
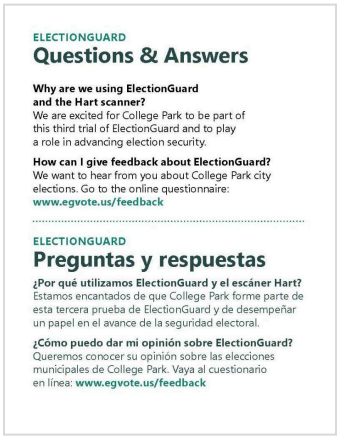
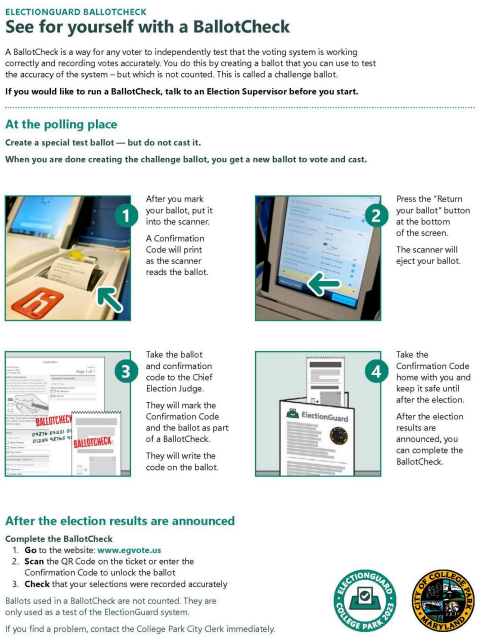
Image	Contents
	Front cover • Introduces ElectionGuard • Explains how to vote with ElectionGuard in four short steps • Has English on the top of each page and Spanish on the bottom

Image	Contents
	Inside pages ● How to use your Confirmation Code ● Reassurances that your ballot is secret, the code does not identify a voter, or reveal how you voted ● Pocket to hold the ticket with the code ● QR code to the post-election confirmation site
	Back cover Questions and answers: • Why are we using ElectionGuard and the Hart scanner? • How can I give feedback about ElectionGuard?

The BallotCheck Instructions

The instructions for completing a BallotCheck were available in the polling place in laminated cards with English on one side and Spanish on the back.

Image	Contents
	**Headline:** • See for yourself with a BallotCheck • Description of a BallotCheck **At the polling place:** Instructions with illustrations • Confirmation Code prints at the scanner • Press Return • Take the ballot to the Supervisor to have it marked as a BallotCheck • Take the Confirmation Code home **After the election results are announced:** • How to complete the BallotCheck

The ElectionGuard Q&A

This short document provides answers to questions about what ElectionGuard is and who is behind it:

- About ElectionGuard
- About ElectionGuard and the College Park City Election
- About the ElectionGuard technology
- About ElectionGuard independent verification
- Who are the partners in ElectionGuard

It is posted on the College Park website: ElectionGuard Q&A and ElectionGuard Q&A (Spanish) along with the link to the public information meeting.

Interview questions

Answers were recorded in a structured note-taking sheet that included a few follow-up prompts if needed

Voting Today

- A1. How was voting for you today? Did you notice anything different from when you last voted?
- A2. When was the last time you voted
- A3. Did you vote with: ▢ Hand-marked ballot ▢ Used the Touch Writer
- A4. When you put your ballot in the scanner, there was a screen where you could see how you voted. What did you think about that?
- A5. Can you tell me what the [this…confirmation code] is for? What are you going to do with it?
- A6. How would you explain [this/point to CCode] to someone like your neighbor in your own words?
- A7. What do you think of College Park using this new election technology? What do you think about tech in voting? Specifically [the Confirmation Code/ElectionGuard]?
- A8. I'm curious about how you got information about this election, Did you see or read any of these? (hand them the sheet with the 4 information pieces on it)
- A9. There is an extra check you could do called a BallotCheck? Did you happen to do a BallotCheck?
- A10. Anything else you'd like to add?

About You

- B1. How long lived in CP
- B2. How old are you?
- B3. Do you own or rent where you live? ▢ Own ▢ Rent
- B4. Are you: ▢ Male ▢ Female ▢ Other
- B5. What is your race/ethnicity?
- B6. Do you speak any languages other than English?
- B7. Are you a student ▢ No ▢ UMD ▢ Other college ▢ High school
- B8. Do you have a disability that affects your ability to vote that you would like to us about? ▢ Observed ▢ Mobility ▢ Vision
- B9. Other notes

Survey questions

The survey was hosted by Qualtrics in both Spanish and English.

Questions were derived from several sources:

- A survey in College Park collecting input on voting and city government
- National surveys from Pew and SPAE
- The survey used in Franklin County

Most responses were selected from a closed answer list, but there were opportunities for open answers in a text entry box in several places.

There was branching in the survey to adjust for conditions including whether voting was over. Only the main branch is included in this summary of the questions.

The survey remained open for several weeks after the election both to give residents an opportunity to respond and as part of a student voting conference at the end of November, where it was part of a conference activity.

1 Opening

1A. We are collecting feedback from people in College Park about voting in the 2023 City election. The information we collect will be used to help improve elections in College Park.

This questionnaire should take less than 10 minutes to complete. You do not have to answer any question you don't want to. Your feedback is anonymous. If you do not want to continue, just close this browser window. You can return at any time.

If you have questions, please contact the College Park City Clerk's office.

To give your feedback in Spanish, please use the button in the top right corner of the screen**.**

1B. Do you live in College Park
If NO go to exit page and end.

2. Voting Status

2A Which of the following best describes you

- ☐ 1. I thought about voting in the College Park City Election this November but didn't
- ☐ 2. I usually vote, but didn't this time
- ☐ 3. I tried to vote, but was not allowed to when I tried
- ☐ 4. I tried to vote, but it ended up being too much trouble

☐ 5. I definitely voted in the College Park City Election

For any answer other than 5-Definitely voted go to 2D
For Definitely voted go to 2E

2D We are interested in why people don't vote. Are any of the following statements part of the reason you did not vote in the College Park City election?

☐ The polling place locations were inconvenient
☐ I didn't know where or how to vote
☐ I am not registered to vote in College Park
☐ I had transportation problems
☐ I think it is too difficult or takes too long to vote
☐ I think there are too many contests with only one candidate
☐ I'm not interested in City government
☐ Other: _____

3. Attitudes and Information Sources

3A What best describes your voting habits?

☐ I vote in every election in which I am eligible.
☐ I vote in state and county elections, but not in City elections.
☐ I only vote in presidential elections.
☐ I only vote when I am interested in something on the ballot
☐ I rarely vote
☐ I never vote
☐ I am not eligible to vote in City elections

3B How did you get information about this year's election? Check all that apply.

☐ I did not receive any information about the City election
☐ Municipal Scene newsletter
☐ College Park Here and Now newspaper
☐ Mail sent to my house
☐ Social Media
☐ City of College Park website
☐ Direct email from the City of College Park
☐ Post or email from any elected official
☐ From a candidate in the election
☐ A newspaper or a radio program
☐ Someone told me about it
☐ I don't remember
☐ Other: _____

3C Do you think that elections in College Park are run and administered….

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Somewhat well
- ☐ Not too well
- ☐ Not at all well

3D (a series of questions with answer from not confident at all to very confident)

- Think about your vote in the College Park City election. How confident are you that **your** vote in the City Election was counted as you intended?
- Think about vote counting throughout Prince George's County in the past election. How confident are you that votes in Prince George's County were counted as voters intended?
- Now, think about vote counting throughout Maryland in the past election. How confident are you that votes in Maryland were counted as voters intended?
- Finally, think about vote counting throughout the country in the past election. How confident are you that votes nationwide were counted as voters intended?

3E Which statement do you agree with most?

- ☐ The people who serve as Mayor and on City Council have a huge impact on the quality of life in College Park.
- ☐ The people who serve as Mayor and on City Council have some impact on the quality of life in College Park.
- ☐ The people who serve as Mayor and on City Council have minimal impact on the quality of life in College Park.
- ☐ It really doesn't matter who serves as Mayor and on City Council.
- ☐ None of the above

4. If the respondent VOTED BY MAIL

4A How did you request your ballot to vote by mail?

- ☐ I requested my mail ballot through City Clerk's office
- ☐ I am on the Maryland Permanent VBM list–I did not have to request a ballot
- ☐ I received a ballot without requesting it
- ☐ Other _____

4B How did you return your ballot?

- ☐ I personally mailed it back in.
- ☐ Someone else in my household mailed it or dropped it off for me.
- ☐ I personally placed it in an official ballot dropbox.
- ☐ I personally returned the ballot to a polling place.
- ☐ I don't remember

4C. Overall, how easy was it to follow all the instructions necessary to mark your ballot and return it to be counted?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ I don't remember

4D. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience voting by mail in this College Park city election

5. If the respondent VOTED IN PERSON

5A. Did you have a problem checking in at the polling place and getting a ballot?

- ☐ No problem. Poll workers found my name easily
- ☐ Poll workers had initial problems but found my name eventually
- ☐ Poll workers had to look me up in the state voter registration database
- ☐ I had to vote on a provisional ballot.
- ☐ I was not allowed to vote
- ☐ Other _____

5B/C Did you use the TouchWriter accessible ballot marking device?
If Yes: Was the TouchWriter:

- ☐ Very difficult to use
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Neither easy nor difficult
- ☐ Somewhat easy
- ☐ Very easy to use

5D The voting system at the polling places included a ballot scanner with a review screen and a trial of a new feature called ElectionGuard. Did you hear about ElectionGuard before you arrived at the polling place?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Other: _____

5E Poll workers gave out information about ElectionGuard at the polling place. How useful was the information?

- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful

- ☐ Not very useful
- ☐ Not at all useful
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ I do not remember receiving information

5F Based on what you heard, what do you think ElectionGuard does?

5G To cast your ballot, you put it into a scanner that had a screen where you could review your votes. Did you:

- ☐ I reviewed my votes and did not see a problem
- ☐ I reviewed my votes and found a problem that I was able to fix
- ☐ I did not review my votes.
- ☐ I did not realize I could review my votes
- ☐ Other_____

5H/I When you cast your ballot, you may have received a Confirmation Code to take home with you. Did you use the Confirmation Code to check to see if your ballot was counted?

If YES: How easy or difficult was it to see for yourself whether your ballot counted?

Do you have any comments about your experience using your Confirmation Code?

5K-M ElectionGuard allows you to run a test, called a "BallotCheck". It allows you to set aside a ballot to check that the system recorded it correctly. Did you do a BallotCheck?

If YES: After the election, did you go to the website to check if your ballot was recorded correctly?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ I wanted to, but did not have the BallotCheck Confirmation Code
- ☐ I haven't yet, but still plan to
- ☐ No

Do you have any comments about your experience using your Confirmation Code?

5N Which of the following features of ElectionGuard do you think are important to increasing transparency in elections?

Answer set for each: Important | Neutral | Not important

- ☐ Each voter can confirm that their ballot was counted.
- ☐ Making sure any ballot receipts do not reveal how any one person voted.
- ☐ Voters cast a paper ballot.
- ☐ The ability for independent organizations to verify that the election results are accurate.

- ☐ Voters themselves can test that the system is recording votes accurately.
- ☐ Being able to review how my ballot will be counted before casting it
- ☐ Having an accessible ballot marking device in the polling place

5O Please rate the job performance of the poll workers at the polling place where you voted.

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor
- ☐ I don't know

If POOR or FAIR: What happened that made you rate the poll workers that way?

5P Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience voting in person in this College Park City election?

6. If voted OTHER

6A Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience voting in this College Park City election?

7. Final questions

7A The College Park City election included several features this year. How much of a reason were each of the following for whether you voted or not?

Answer set: major reason, minor reason, not a reason, I was not aware of this change

- ☐ Being able to register to vote until two weeks before the City election
- ☐ Using the Maryland Vote By Mail permanent mail ballot list
- ☐ Having secure ballot drop boxes
- ☐ Having early voting
- ☐ Having more early voting locations
- ☐ Having two possible days to vote early
- ☐ Being able to review my vote at the scanner
- ☐ Having more options to confirm that my ballot counted
- ☐ Having Election Day on a Sunday

7B ElectionGuard, used in the College Park election this year, gives voters the option to confirm that their ballot was counted and test the accuracy of the system. How does the use of ElectionGuard influence your confidence in College Park City elections?

- ☐ It increases my confidence significantly
- ☐ It increases my confidence somewhat
- ☐ It neither increases nor decreases my confidence

- ☐ It decreases my confidence somewhat
- ☐ It decreases my confidence significantly
- ☐ I don't know

7C Do you have any suggestions for improving participation in College Park city elections?

7D Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your overall experience in the 2023 College Park election?

8 Demographics

8A Are you a college or university student?

- ☐ Yes, I'm a full-time student
- ☐ Yes, I'm a part-time student
- ☐ No, I am not a student

8B Approximately how many years have you lived in College Park?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ 20+ years

8C Do you own or rent your home?

- ☐ Own
- ☐ Rent
- ☐ Other or N/A

8D How old are you?

- ☐ 25 or under
- ☐ 26-34
- ☐ 35-54
- ☐ 55-74
- ☐ 75+

8E What are your preferred pronouns?

- ☐ He/him
- ☐ She/her
- ☐ They/them
- ☐ Other: _____

8F Which race or ethnicity most closely matches the one with which you identify?

- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black/African-American
- ☐ Latino/Latina/Latinx
- ☐ Two or more races
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other:

8G In what language would you prefer to receive information about voting in City of College Park elections?

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Arabic
- ☐ Bengali
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ French
- ☐ Hindi
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Portuguese
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Tagalog
- ☐ Other _____

Final screen

> Thank you for your interest in the City of College Park election and for taking the time to complete this survey.
>
> For more information, please visit the College Park website at https://www.collegeparkmd.gov/