

# **ECA Newsletter**

## **October 2020**

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### Deadline for Requesting Mail-In Ballot for the Upcoming Election

The Montgomery County Board of Elections is encouraging all eligible voters to cast mail-in ballots during the upcoming Presidential Election. Voting by mail is a safe and secure way of voting. However, keep in mind:

- If you decide to vote by mail, you must request a mail-in ballot, and your request must reach the Board of Elections by October 20. To request a mail-in ballot, you can:
  1. Text the letters VBM to 77788. You'll receive a reply with a link to the site where you can make the request online; OR
  2. Go directly to the online request site [HERE](#) to complete an online application for a mail-in ballot. You must be registered to vote and have a valid Maryland Driver's License or Motor Vehicle Administration issued ID. If you are not yet registered to vote, or you need to update your registration (for example, if you've moved), go [HERE](#) instead. You'll still need a valid Maryland Driver's License or Motor Vehicle Administration issued ID; OR
  3. Complete the paper request for a mail-in ballot that was mailed to all registered voters who had not already requested a mail-in ballot last month. You can also download the paper request and print it at home [HERE](#). Mail the completed for to P.O. Box 10159, Rockville MD 20849-0159; or Fax it to 240-777-8560; or scan and email it to [absentee@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:absentee@montgomerycountymd.gov); OR
  4. Request a mail-in ballot in person at the Montgomery County Board of Elections – 18753 N. Frederick Avenue, Suite 210, Gaithersburg, MD 20879 – between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The October 20 deadline does not apply to in-person requests.
- If you use any of the first three methods to request a mail-in ballot, you should ask that the official mail-in ballot be sent to you in the mail. You are permitted

to ask for the ballot to be emailed to you, but that method is much more complicated and time-consuming for both you and the people who count the vote.

- Remember that you can choose to either vote by mail or vote in person. If you request a mail-in ballot, you must use the mail-in ballot and return it by mail, or at an official drop box (locations [HERE](#)). If you forget to send in your mail-in ballot and want to vote in person on Election Day, you must bring your mail-in ballot with you to the polls to prove that you have not already voted. Otherwise, if you try to vote at the polls after requesting a ballot by mail, you will be required to cast a provisional ballot, which adds time to your voting experience and will not be counted until after Election Day.

The Official Sample Ballot and Information Guide is currently being mailed to every registered voter in Montgomery County. You can also view the guide on the Board of Elections website [HERE](#). It contains extensive official information about how to vote this year, as well as the usual information about the candidates and issues of the election. Other helpful sources of information for voters about the candidates and issues are: the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County's Voters' Guide, which is available [HERE](#); and the Bethesda Beat Voter Guide, available [HERE](#).

For additional information and answers to frequently asked questions, visit the Montgomery County Board of Elections website [HERE](#) and the Maryland State Board of Elections website [HERE](#).

#### Last Chance to Respond to the 2020 Census

Monday, October 5, is the last day to respond to the 2020 census. If you have not responded to the census, please do it by Monday. You can respond online [HERE](#) or by phone at 844-330-2020. Non-English language options are available.

#### ECA Halloween Celebration

As noted by ECA Treasurer Jeffrey Drichta in his September 29 EC-Net message, the ECA Board reluctantly decided, based on holiday guidelines issues by the Centers for Disease Control, that we cannot hold the traditional ECA Halloween Party and Parade this year. But, that doesn't mean we can't have some Halloween fun. You can find Jeffrey's email on the EC-Net Google Group page [HERE](#) for information about how families with young children can participate in this year's scaled down observance, including Halloween Treat Deliveries! Many neighborhood families have already asked to be included. In order to participate, contact Jeffrey ([drichtaj@mac.com](mailto:drichtaj@mac.com)) by October 15.

#### ECA Helping to Combat Local Food Insecurity

Speaking of scaled-back ECA social events...

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely curtailed the ECA's ability to host social events this year. Consequently, the funds we usually use for these events is sitting in the bank, doing nothing for the community. At its September 22 ECA meeting, the ECA Board discussed alternative ways to make productive use of these funds. We concluded that the best thing we could do during the current circumstances would be to help address food insecurity in our community, which has been greatly exacerbated by the pandemic.

The Board voted unanimously to donate the approximate amount of funds we expected to use for social events this year (\$2,500.00) to the Nourishing Bethesda Coalition. The Coalition is made up of St. John's Norwood Church, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad, the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, the Hyatt Regency Bethesda, and Nourish Now. They have been addressing food insecurity in our community by providing weekly drive-up food distributions every Friday since August at the BCC Rescue Squad. Although the ECA does not normally donate to charitable organizations, the Board believes that the work being done by the coalition is essential to the health and wellbeing of our community, and that this exception to our normal practice is warranted.

You can learn more about the work of the coalition in a Bethesda Magazine article [HERE](#). You can also read or listen to a National Public Radio story [HERE](#). Neighborhood residents who are interested in learning more about the Coalition or in making an additional contribution should go [HERE](#).

### Thrive Montgomery 2050

Montgomery County's General Plan is the blueprint and guiding policy document for the County's future growth and development. The Montgomery County Planning Department is currently updating the General Plan, which is called "Thrive Montgomery 2050." The updated plan will include recommendations and actions for land use, housing, transportation, environment, equity, design, arts and culture, parks and open spaces, and the economy for the next 30 years. The Thrive Montgomery 2050 Working Draft Plan is now available for public review and the Planning Board will be holding a public hearing on November 19. You can find complete information about the plan [HERE](#).

On September 19, I sent a letter to the County Council on behalf of the ECA requesting that the County delay consideration of Thrive Montgomery 2050 for at least a year due to the unprecedented economic and social disruptions and other effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HERE](#) is a link to a copy of the letter.

Residents who would like to submit comments on the Thrive Montgomery 2050 plan can do so by sending an email to [thrive2050@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:thrive2050@montgomeryplanning.org) or by calling and leaving a message at (240) 630-2526. There will also be an opportunity to provide written and video testimony by signing up to testify with the Planning Board [HERE](#) about 10 days before the November 19 hearing.

## Metro Seeks Public Comment on Upcoming Service Cuts

Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority is seeking public comments on proposed budget and service cuts for both Metrorail and Metrobus. Metro's Board of Directors is considering ways to cut more than \$200 million from the transit agency's annual operating budget, including a combination of service cuts, reduced hours, layoffs, furloughs and internal cost-cutting measures. The cuts will be necessary when CARES Act funding runs out at the end of this year. Details about the proposed cuts are available [HERE](#). Individuals interested in commenting on the proposals can provide written comments [HERE](#), or comment (via phone, audio recording, video recording, or Zoom video) for a public hearing to be held at 12:00 PM on October 13. For information about how to comment for the hearing, go [HERE](#).

## Resumption of Residential Parking Permit Enforcement

The Montgomery County Division of Parking Management has announced the resumption of enforcement within the Residential Parking Permit Areas on or about November 1st, 2020. Individuals with Residential Permits are being sent an email notification so that they will have time to make sure their permits are registered correctly and to purchase additional permits, if needed. To change your permits or buy new ones, go online [HERE](#). You can also phone the help line 24/7 at 855-510-3995. Finally, you can go in person to the parking sales store, which has limited hours (locations and hours [HERE](#)).

## Edgemoor Tip of the Month – Montgomery County Digital Library

The April 2019 ECA Newsletter included a tip about the [Maryland E-Library](#)—a great place to borrow many e-books, audio books, magazines and videos. In addition you may want to check out the expanded Montgomery County Digital Library [HERE](#). There, anyone with a library card can read magazines, get music or art instruction, watch movies and classic TV, watch concert films and music documentaries, watch British TV and films, take personal development classes, attend lectures (The Great Courses), and even take online ACT and SAT Test prep classes.

Do you have a tip you'd like to share with your neighbors? Please email me your suggestions [HERE](#).

*The ECA Newsletter is a compilation of information relevant to Edgemoor area residents. It is distributed on an occasional basis on the EC-Net email list.*