

**Greenbelt Youth Advisory Committee
Report to City Council**

Subject: Municipal voting age change

Discussion: After neighboring cities in Maryland lowered city voting ages, the committee evaluated how lowering the city voting age might work in Greenbelt. The committee outlined reasons why 16 years of age is ideal for beginning the voting process. In Maryland and specifically in Greenbelt at 16 years, youth are able to attain a driving permit, work with few restrictions, pay taxes, and are most likely taking the course "Local State and National Government."

The committee also believes that 16 is an ideal age for beginning the voting process because typically when one turns 18 there are big changes in lifestyle; whether that is moving out, working, and/or going to college. With dramatic changes, it can be difficult to tackle something new like voting, for all levels of government. The committee believes that voting before 18 is a stepping stone for future voting, which continues to have an absent youth influence. By lowering the city voting age, youth are more likely to get involved with government and politics.

In response to lowering the voting age, the committee hopes that the youth of Greenbelt are inspired to have a voice in local politics. The committee also believes that beginning this civic engagement is important for the future of Greenbelt. Finally, since many youth live in New Greenbelt, reducing the voting age will help increase voter participation in areas of Greenbelt currently underrepresented in local politics.

Recommendation: The Youth Advisory Committee recommends lowering the City of Greenbelt's voting age to 16.

Respectfully submitted,

Katia Cavigelli, Chair
Youth Advisory Committee

