Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department

Supplemental Document to the Election Administration Plan

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Executive Summary

Santa Cruz County fully implemented the Voters Choice Act with the June 7, 2022 Statewide Primary Election.

Because of the shortened time for public discussion from when the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors approved the county's transition to a vote center model on March 22, 2022 and the adopted Election Administration Plan (EAP) on May 25, 2022, the Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department decided to keep all methods of public input available through the summer and create a supplemental document to be used in conjunction with the adopted EAP. This document is the result of the comments that were received and observations from the County Clerk/Elections staff from the June 7, 2022, election.

Unfortunately, illness again affected the Department from mid-July to mid-September often causing up to half the staff to be absent each day. With redistricting, preparation for the November election (candidate filing, ballot creation, voter guide preparation) staff were needed to complete those projects and the anticipated public meetings to discuss the supplemental document did not occur.

Because of that, public comment opportunities were provided through October 1, 2022 for people to comment on the June election, the Vote Center Model, the Adopted EAP, and more. Santa Cruz County received many phone calls on the comment line and several emails to the comment email that were not germane to the EAP. Only the comments made during the public hearings and afterwards that had to do with the EAP, vote centers and Santa Cruz County elections were considered in this document.

The Supplemental Document will work alongside the Adopted EAP and will provide further information and clarification. The Adopted EAP cannot be amended until after the November 2022 election pursuant to Elections Code 40059(H)(i) so changes listed in this Supplemental Document along with any other changes, clarifications and refinements will be made in 2023 following the process set out in the Elections Code.

Education and outreach about elections, voting, and the VCA model will also continue to occur throughout the county at various locations. To find information on upcoming events watch our website or email info@votescount.us with your name and email address to join our mailing list.

Tricia Webber
Santa Cruz County Clerk

Vote by Mail Ballots

(page 6 of the Adopted EAP)

Returned Mail Ballots

Over the past 5 years, voter behavior has shifted to return vote by mail ballots closer and closer

to Election Day. However, in the June 2022 election, voters waited until Election Day to return the ballots. The voting locations and drop boxes were very busy with returns and many voters mailed their ballots via the United States Postal Service (USPS).

The Elections Code allows for ballots that are postmarked on or before Election Day and received by the County Clerk/Elections Department to be considered timely. However, Santa Cruz County does not postmark mail at the main post office. Instead, all Santa Cruz County mail is trucked over to San Jose where it is postmarked. This can delay a postmark of one day or more for any mail depending on when that mailbox is picked up by USPS. Many voters are unaware of the USPS process/procedure in Santa Cruz County, and it caused many ballots to be challenged ballots because they were postmarked after Election Day even though the envelopes were deposited into mailboxes on June 7.

Our voting instructions, in various locations, recommend that voters not mail their ballots less than a week before an election. The Department recommends that a voter instead use a drop box or drop off location. If that is not possible, then a voter should go into a US Post Office and have the return envelope hand cancelled by a postal clerk to ensure a timely postmark.

For the November 8, 2022, election there will be a mailing specific to getting a postmark on the return envelope, along with a letter to the Editor, a press release, and a social media campaign.

Vote Center and Ballot Drop Box Locations

(page 8 of the Adopted EAP)

Vote Center Locations

One concern that was noted during the public input period in April/May 2022 was using the Community Room that is part of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff Complex. This location was chosen because the Simpkins Swim Center is under construction and would not be usable for the 2022 elections. Locations in this area were surveyed and looking at all the requirements in Elections Code 4005(a)(10)(b), the Santa Cruz County Voting Location Accessibility Plan that was approved by the California Department of Justice in early 2000 and is still being used, and other location citing tools, the Community Room was not only the most accessible location, but also the most accessible location available for 11 days of voting. Arrangements were made to minimize the amount of Sheriff “presence” in the building where the Community Room is located. Construction on Simpkins Swim Center should complete by the end of 2022 and will be the voting location for all future elections.

There will be two location changes for the November election. The Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds was not available for the June election, so Lakeview Middle School, which was not in session, was used. The room used at the school is used for classes, causing 3 days students would be displaced therefore not making the school an option for November. In downtown Santa Cruz, voting locations are regularly used at Depot Park and Kaiser Arena. Neither location was available for both June and November, so Kaiser Arena was used in June and Depot Park will be used in November. Both of these locations are 4-day locations and signage will be

posted to provide notification. Both changes are also noted in the voting instructions and the voting location postings.

Comments made by voters in our more rural areas about not having a voting location were also noted. These comments did not come during the public input period but were voiced after the June election. Working with our County Information Services Department (ISD), AT&T and Verizon, we were able to locate areas in Davenport and Loma Prieta where we could have "pop-up" Election Day vote centers. Previously we had the VoteMobile in these areas for 6 hours, but there was an accident on Highway 1 (the only way to get to Davenport) on June 7, and we were unable to get the VoteMobile in place. By utilizing "pop-ups" we will be able to provide a better voting experience for these voters and free up the VoteMobile to respond to other areas needing assistance.

Drop Box Locations

There were no additional drop boxes installed between June and November, so there remains 17 permanent 24/7 drop boxes, 6 drop off locations, and drop off locations at senior living facilities (for resident use only – not open to public). All drop boxes and drop off locations were available for 29 days.

Vote Center Statistics from the June 7, 2022 Election

Below is a list detailing the use of the Vote Centers and drop box/drop off locations:

Vote Center Name	**Number of voters**	**Number of days open**
Bonny Doon Elementary School	92	4
Boulder Creek Fire Station	301	4
City of Scotts Valley Community Center	417	11
County Elections Office	544	29
Episcopal Church of St John	282	4
Kaiser Permanente Arena	260	4
La Selva Beach Clubhouse	186	4
Lakeview Middle School	137	4
Live Oak Sheriff's Service Center (Community Room)	346	11
Masonic Center	249	4
New Brighton Middle School	172	4
Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust	104	4
Scotts Valley High School	126	4
Soquel High School	175	4
Temple Beth El Jewish	276	11

Community Center		
UCSC Stevenson Event Center	57	4
VoteMobile	87	29
Watsonville City Community Room	233	29
Zayante Fire Protection District	284	4

Drop Box/Drop Off Location	**Number of Returns**	**Type**
County Government Center	11,889	Drop Box
Boulder Creek Community Church	286	Drop Box
Cabrillo College	654	Drop Box
Capitola City Hall	2,359	Drop Box
Capitola Library	1,140	Drop Box
Capitola Mall	1,714	Drop Box
Corralitos Community Center	908	Drop Box
Felton Covered Bridge Park	1,638	Drop Box
County Health Center – Freedom Blvd	1,178	Drop Box
Highlands Park	834	Drop Box
Polo Grounds	672	Drop Box
Resurrection Church	1,398	Drop Box
Santa Cruz Library	2,163	Drop Box
Summit Store	449	Drop Box
Scotts Valley City Hall	2,301	Drop Box
UCSC	350	Drop Box
Rodriguez St Parking Lot #14	1,011	Drop Box
Brookdale Scotts Valley	36	Drop Off
Capitola City Clerk	11	Drop Off
Dominican Oaks	76	Drop Off
Santa Cruz City Clerk	174	Drop Off
Valley Heights	23	Drop Off
County Elections Office	810	Vote Center
Boulder Creek Fire Station	807	Vote Center
Bonny Doon Elementary School	244	Vote Center
Kaiser Permanente Arena	481	Vote Center
Lakeview Middle School	219	Vote Center
La Selva Beach Clubhouse	349	Vote Center
Masonic Center	363	Vote Center

New Brighton Middle School	263	Vote Center
Pajaro Valley Comm. Trust	325	Vote Center
Live Oak Sheriff's Service Center (Community Room)	955	Vote Center
Soquel High School	324	Vote Center
Episcopal Church of St. John	476	Vote Center
City of Scotts Valley Community Center	933	Vote Center
Scotts Valley High School	176	Vote Center
Temple Beth El Jewish Community Center	698	Vote Center
UCSC Stevenson Event Center	65	Vote Center
VoteMobile	198	Vote Center
Watsonville City Community Room	1,332	Vote Center
Zayante Fire Protection District	344	Vote Center

Voting Security

(page 26 of the Adopted EAP)

The County Clerk/Elections office aggressively pursues security measures to protect the integrity of our elections by paying attention to issues related to ballot integrity and voter registration systems. Although threats are constantly changing and incidents are unique, there are best practices and strict protocols in place to prepare for threats and incidents.

The County Clerk/Elections office continues to improve our current systems through hardware and software lifecycle management practices. The Registrar's office has implemented physical and cybersecurity controls while incorporating training for employees.

There are strict access controls in place securing the room where the voting system resides. The County Clerk/Elections office has ceiling mounted cameras in all rooms where the ballots are processed and tabulated. The cameras are also directed at entry and exit areas for additional security precautions.

Safety and Security of Election Staff

The County Clerk/Elections Department takes the safety and security of staff very seriously in the current climate surrounding elections. The Department has trained staff at all voting locations on the election process, security protocol, as well as de-escalation techniques. The Department has worked with the groups that are planning on observing in the voting locations

what observer protocol is, and at the County Clerk/Elections office, there have been areas set up where observers can stand to view the various activities and monitors have been placed in the hallway so observers can watch the tabulation and adjudication process.

The Department will be deploying lights to the exterior drop boxes for the Election Night 8pm pickups along with security if requested by the drop box retrieval teams. We will also have lights and security in the parking lot of the main office to assist with receiving of the voted ballots from the Vote Centers. Security will be provided by the alarm company that the County employs and will not be armed law enforcement.

De-escalation techniques along with observer training has been emphasized in poll worker training and for staff working at the County Clerk/Elections office. The Department has also coordinated with the County Safety Officer and local law enforcement to alert them to where the voting and drop box locations along with the dates and hours of operation for their awareness and there will be periodic visits for safety purposes.

Voter Education and Outreach Plan

(page 30 of the Adopted EAP)

Additional Outreach Specific to November 2022 Election

The June 2022 election exhibited a new voter behavior of mailing ballot envelopes on Election Day. Outreach will be directed to all voters to remind them of their return options including dropping off at a vote center, any drop box or drop off location, other county if out of town, postmark codes, and the mail process.

This outreach will use a combination of medias including a direct mailing, media releases, social media, handouts for our partners like Grey Bears and the Second Harvest Food Bank, as well as send electronic bulletins to include in newsletters for organizations.

Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department has joined with other counties in the Bay Area to create “The Bay Area Coalition” to provide common messaging across the Bay Area counties regarding education on the various facets of an election. The Coalition has created press releases, media campaigns, videos, flyers and more that speak to elections and can be used in all counties and across all media streams. This has been beneficial to Santa Cruz County because we are in a shared media location where our news stations all are located outside of Santa Cruz County. By coming up with shared media, voters are getting a common message instead of hearing about the process in a neighboring county and assuming it is the same in Santa Cruz County. A common message about the “basics” allows for Santa Cruz County to enhance the message rather than have to figure out how to convince these out of county media outlets to focus on something they do not experience in their home county.

Summary of Goals

- Voter education workshops/demonstrations

- Vote Center community presentations
- Community engagement events
- Partnerships with colleges and universities
- Partnerships with high schools
- 2 – 4 direct voter contacts
- Robust multilingual, targeted media campaign
- Increased social media presence
- Educate voters on the transition to the vote center model and voting options
- Provide information and allow opportunity for individuals to register to vote
- Network and pursue collaborative opportunities

Community Partners

If you or your organization would like to partner with the Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department on vote center outreach and educations, please email us at info info@votescount.us.

- University of California Santa Cruz
- Cabrillo College
- Disability Rights California
- In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Advisory Committee
- Vista Center for the Blind
- California Grey Bears
- Community Bridges
- Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
- Department of Rehabilitation
- NAMI
- Davenport Resource Service Center
- Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities
- Central Coast Center for Independent Living
- Hope Services
- Imagine
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center
- Shared Adventures
- Community Connections
- Easter Seals Central California
- SPIN
- Community Life Services
- San Andreas Regional Center
- Goodwill Industries
- Santa Cruz County Veterans Center

- Senior Living Communities (Aegis Assisted Living, Brookdale Oak Tree Villa, Dominican Oaks, Elizabeth Oakes Housing, Garfield Park Village, La Posada Retirement Community, St. Stephens Senior Housing, Sunshine Villa, Valley Heights)
- City Clerks
- Election Integrity Project (EIP)
- Indivisible Santa Cruz
- League of Women Voters
- Central Committees
- Autism Family Network

Budget for Voter Outreach

(page 39 of the Adopted EAP)

Below is a chart comparing Voter Outreach and Education over the past elections along with a projection for the November 2022 election. The County Clerk/Elections budget does not have line items specific to outreach and education. A review of all the expenditures for each past election was done and what is listed below represents the actuals as best determined. The department will work with the County Budget Manager to create line items specific to outreach/education for future budgets beginning with the 2023/2024 fiscal year.

Activity	**FY 19/20 Presidential Primary**	**FY 20/21 Presidential General**	**FY 21/22 Gubernatorial Recall**	**FY 21/22 Gubernatorial Primary**	**FY 22/23 Gubernatorial General**
Advertising (social media, print, video, radio)	$3,243	$21,258	$1,500	$2,145	$3,500
Direct Mailers	$458,593	$496,325	$328,055	$698,570	$750,000
Voter Outreach/Education (program & staffing)	$33,505	$115,663	$17,369	$22,385	$40,000
	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Budgeted
Additional Funding					
CA Secretary of State	-	-	-	$36,000	$36,000
Total Budget	$495,341	$633,246	$346,924	$759,100	$829,500