



VOTER'S CHOICE
Registrar of Voters
Santa Clara County

Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters
Election Administration Plan (EAP)
Accessibility Consultation Meeting Minutes

Santa Clara County Government Center
70 West Hedding Street, San Jose, CA
Room 157

Thursday, June 13, 2019
5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Attendees Present:

Three members of the public, one representative from Silicon Valley at Home, and one ASL interpreter

Staff Present:

Shannon Bushey, Vanessa Hamm, Andrea Solorio, Michael Borja, Magdalena Sta Maria, Priscilla Favela, Janora Davis, Allen Ocampo, Robert Weidlin, Linh Nguyen, Virginia Bloom, Michelle Tran, Christina Rivera, Adrian Garcia, Paulo Chang, Alfred Gonzales, Eric Kurhi, Jacob Salazar, Rachel Jung, Smita Shah, Liz Oviedo, Chipo Mulenga

Action Items:

- Email attendee a Polling Place list from November election
- Send a list of all managers' emails to attendee

I. Introductions

Welcoming attendees

II. Voter's Choice Act Overview

With the Voter's Choice Act (VCA), voters will now be able to choose how, when, and where they can vote. Voters can choose to vote by mail, drop off their ballot at a ballot drop-box, or have up to 11 days to vote in person at any Vote Center.

Presentation on VCA was shown.

III. Goal of the Election Administration Plan

The Election Administration Plan outlines how the Registrar of Voters (ROV) will implement the changes related to VCA and will be developed together with input from the community.

Overview of dates, resources, and goals

IV. Vote Center/Drop-box Selection

The ROV is seeking public input to assist the County with locating potential sites for Vote Centers and drop-box sites. Vote Centers need to be accessible and have enough space to properly service Santa Clara County voters.

Public Input/Questions:

1. ROV staff: Are there any areas with accessibility issues that anyone can recommend?

- a. Attendee: Representative from Silicon Valley at Home was directed by the City of San Jose's manager's office to reach out to the ROV in order to work on potential Vote Centers and drop-off sites; have reached out to housing developers to follow up to see if they have eligibility requirements. Inquired about one interested housing development. Might have to widen the scope from just the City of San Jose to North and South County. From their perspective, the ability to engage with residents in supportive housing and developments is important. He is still working on researching sites, potential gaps, and has an interest on the proximity of disadvantaged sites. For increasing voter turnout, maybe looking into specific precincts and zip codes with traditionally lower voter turnout. Visiting these areas and going into their communities and events may help with increasing voter engagement. Do you have a list or a comprehensive map/list of previous Polling Place locations?
- b. ROV Staff: Thanks for the great recommendations on Polling Places. We will email it to you.
2. Attendee: What are the criteria behind Mobile Vote Centers?
 - a. ROV Staff: Some counties use them, and some don't. Usually Mobile Vote Centers are used in counties with a lot of land, but not a lot of voters. It is, however, something for the ROV to consider. If needed, we'll take all the materials and set it up in a location where we are not able to provide a Vote Center.
3. Attendee: Read a study at Rutgers University in 2016: The majority of disabled people who get the ballot in the mail don't use it. There's a list of reasons why and it talked about the need of outreach to explain the ballot (using social media or other ways of educating). It was said that the ability to understand and to read the ballot helped boost turnout. There are two main things, one is getting people to vote, and the other is meeting the needs of the people who show up to vote. What are your priorities right now? Accessibility and making the vote larger?
 - a. ROV Staff: True, are you aware of the Remote Access Vote by Mail (RAVBM)? We have RAVBM that military, overseas, and disabled voters can use online. Voters can download their ballot from home from an emailed link, print the ballot, and send it back to the ROV in the mail. Instructions are provided on how to go about the RAVBM process. The ROV also will be providing accessible Ballot Marking Devices at every Vote Center.
 - b. ROV Staff: Voter turnout also relies on the education of the County. Part of the plan is increasing the outreach effort and finding partners, so we can educate the County with the Voter Education and Outreach Coalition (VEOC). Also, we have the "Training the Trainer" program, in which we will go out to the communities and teach members of the public or organizations on how to educate their fellow members on VCA.
 - c. Attendee: The study showed there's a giant population that despite these options provided, need input to understand and a lot of them would prefer going to the Polling Place to get help in person.
 - d. ROV Staff: Yes, I appreciate it. We have Vote Centers to visit and they will no longer be limited to only one Polling Place. We have Election Officers, and other staff that can help too. We are going to advertise and have the Remote Access Vote by Mail available as well. We will also have accessibility information provided by phone. Thank you so much for that! Do you have any ideas for locations or any certain areas that may have more disabled individuals that you think we need to focus on?

- e. Attendee: The disabled community is spread out amongst different living facilities and assistance centers, and you are aware of it, but we will continue looking into it too.
4. Attendee: How many Polling Places did we have last year? Are we increasing them?
- a. ROV Staff: We had 849 voting precincts last time but under the VCA, that number will be lower. We will have about 25 Vote Centers for 11 days (10 days before, plus Election Day), equating to one Vote Center for 50,000 voters, and add another 100 Vote Centers for 4 days (3 days before, plus Election Day), one Vote Center for 10,000 voters. We expect over one million voters next year, and we are aiming to provide more Vote Centers than required by law. Our GIS Mapping Division has been working on locating areas for our Vote Centers by breaking down the 14 criteria along with the number of registered voters. The number of Vote Centers being equal to Polling Places is not as important as we transition to VCA because you can vote anywhere you want or where it is most convenient for you. It is true that some people may have to travel farther to get to a Vote Center from their home, but they have the option now to have up to 11 days to go to a Vote Center on their lunch break, by their place of work, or next to their children's school, etc.
5. Attendee: Is there a difference between a Polling Place and a Vote Center?
- a. ROV Staff: Polling Places are being renamed Vote Centers, in addition to adding many services provided at each location. Each Vote Center will service a larger area as well.
 - b. Attendee: It wouldn't be in garage like before?
 - c. ROV Staff: Not anymore. The VCA has requirements for each Vote Center, including size, available parking, ADA compliance, and security. There will be 3-5 times more equipment and more people visiting each center. We are working with developers and cities to find adequate and accessible Vote Centers. We also have a list of over 500 potential centers that have been considered, but so far only a few have all the needs required for the VCA, in addition to the availability we need. We would love any suggestions so that the ROV may evaluate them as a potential Vote Center.
6. Attendee: So, the idea is one large Vote Center for every 10,000 voters?
- a. ROV Staff: Yes, but only beginning the Saturday before Election Day (approximately 100 4-day Vote Centers). From experience gathered from other counties, there will be almost no lines the first week, and attendance will grow beginning the weekend before Election Day. It will take some time for voters to get used to the change, but ideally, they will come to take advantage of the 11-day window of time to vote.
7. Attendee: Every election, three or four weeks ahead, the ROV sends out the sample ballot and directions of where we are supposed to go. Will there be a similar listing of all Vote Centers?
- a. ROV Staff: The County Voter Information Guide (CVIG) will now include a listing of all the Vote Centers, along with their respective hours. The Vote-by-Mail Ballot you receive in the mail will also have a listing of Vote Centers and their respective hours of operation. The same listing will be posted online as well.
8. Attendee: In terms of site location requirements such as proximity to public transportation, language minority communities, low income communities, etc., we're talking about equitable process of participating in the process, as well as working with low voter engagement with communities— I think it's a priority for us, when we look at housing measures, to focus on the areas that tend to vote against precincts that are more affluent, and reject housing developments. Therefore, we do have to advocate to the communities as such and make sure that these communities have easy access to

voting. I don't know if you have been able to reach out to some organizations such as in East San Jose, by Monterey Road. I would encourage you to reach out to them; organizations such as the Alum Rock Organization or Mayfair and see if the voters are willing to travel from one place to another. Also, to find out where will they be willing to go. The Neighborhood Association members would be able to provide information with where and how far they are willing to travel to vote. We are happy and willing to help start or organize these conversations and events and invite the ROV.

9. Attendee: We have a sister organization called The Nonprofit Housing Association of Northern California with a model called "Resident Engagement" which trains the trainers to work with developers on-site regarding voter registration education at development sites. Even if we are not able to have a Vote Center in a particular development, we could have the ROV come to do a presentation/information session for the residents to educate them and allow them to be aware of all the changes coming. Many voters prefer to be educated with a non-partisan lens, rather than coming from candidates looking for election. We would be happy to coordinate this type of event with the ROV as well.
 - a. ROV Staff: Yes, and were you interested in the Voter Education and Outreach Coalition? We can come out to your organizations to educate the public. We have opportunities for a resident engagement to "train the trainers". We can connect with the developers and invite the ROV to do presentations.
10. Attendee: Silicon Valley Counsel of Nonprofits is an organization that conducts a lot of services. I encourage the ROV to work with the Silicon Valley Counsel of Nonprofits because of their broad reach in the community and take advantage of the service delivery framework.

V. Language Accessibility

The ROV is seeking public input to assist the County with various means of providing language accessibility so that all eligible voters can understand the voting process and have equal access to the ballot. Examples include suggestions for historically underserved language communities and bilingual election officer recruitment.

Public Input/Questions:

1. ROV Staff: Previously we targeted language communities based on precincts and registered voters' designated language preferences. Our goal for VCA, if possible, is to provide language assistance for each of the eight supported languages in every Vote Center. Is there any feedback regarding language assistance or language communities we should be aware of?
 - a. Attendee: Will there be a minimum of one of each language in every Vote Center? Such as 120 Vietnamese speaking staff, providing one for each Vote Center?
 - b. ROV Staff: At a minimum, we would like to have one staff member of each language in every Vote Center. The challenge is to recruit staff that is available to work for 4 to 11 days, along with assuring language certification. We need to hire more than the minimum in case of last-minute scheduling conflicts or cancellations as well. It is also a challenge to hire for the languages that happen to have smaller communities in the County of Santa Clara. Some staff may not be able to work all 4 or 11 days, so in reality we will be hiring much more than the minimum requirements. Staff hired for Vote Centers will receive the same training, meaning there will be no interpreters, but bilingual staff members.
 - c. Attendee: There's a service that's not expensive where you can call in on a cellphone where you can select a language and get a phone call.

- d. ROV Staff: We do have an over the phone translation service in place already to call if we cannot provide language support in person.

VI. Voting Accessibility

The ROV is seeking public input to assist the County with various means of providing accessibility for senior voters and voters with disabilities so that all eligible voters can understand the voting process and have equal access to the ballot.

1. ROV Staff: will be advertising the accessibility of the VCA and the Vote Centers. Accessible devices for independent and private voting will be available at each Vote Center as well. Is there any input to regarding accessibility?
 - a. Attendee: There are two things: There's the letter of the law and ADA compliance, such as how large doorways need to be. There is also the way the ADA enacted in spirit, a little more esoteric, but it's in the way people are kind and ready for a lot of different disabilities. When people show up, staff should make sure their needs are met. In a previous meeting, it was mentioned that there would be greeters who are welcoming voters and they need to be ready to help people who are deaf or hard of hearing or anticipate someone who is visually impaired. My relative spends months getting ready for the election. His friends call wanting his help. Anticipation of all types of voters is key. Every year in July is National Disability Voter Registration Week (NDVRW), maybe you should go to other City Council meetings and give public comments and promote awareness. The number of people feeling like their voting needs will not be met is 35 million or 1 in 6 people with some type or form of disability. For example, how do you help people with dyslexia? Just something to keep in mind.
2. Attendee: I believe there are a number of organizations that work with monolingual speakers and aim to provide feedback on accessibility. Such as how were their previous experiences with voting and how changes have affected them in the past. The ROV could potentially use some of that feedback. I've always noticed staff with different language capabilities at your Polling Places, which is phenomenal. The challenge will have the consistency with the extended amount of days Vote Centers will be open. It will be a challenge coordinating and creating schedules for folks.
 - a. ROV Staff: We are definitely aware of the challenge presented and have been trying to acquire software and other organizational tools to help in the coordinating of hiring and scheduling Vote Center staff. Our Outreach Team has been reaching out to organizations, and even though we have not had a large response yet, we will continue to initiate contact with different communities. We also have a representative from Disability Rights of California who is also on the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), as well as a representative from the Silicon Valley Independent Living Center who were not able to make it tonight.

VII. Outreach Opportunities

The ROV is seeking public input to identify different venues and methods of outreach so as to best reach the County's voters and educate them on the elections changes that will come with VCA.

1. ROV Staff: We discussed earlier about educating the public on accessibility programs for voting, such as RAVBM, and educating the public about the change to VCA voting model. We are also creating a Voter Education and Outreach Coalition (VEOC) which will help educate community-based organizations (CBOs) as well as members of the public. We will also be doing a "train the trainer" program so that we can teach members of the public or CBOs about how to conduct presentations educating their peers about VCA.

We are also targeting different types of media advertising, from radio to television to newspapers. Do you know any events or facilities that would be interested in the ROV to come and educate about voting? Are there any T.V. stations and advertising opportunities that you know of?

- a. Attendee: Abilities Expo. It is recommended to not go; it's become too commercialized.
 - b. Attendee: Radio is great for people who cannot see.
 - c. ROV Staff: That's a good suggestion. We'd also like feedback if you have any contacts in which we can share our logo and some other informational documents to provide to their peers or organizations.
 - d. Attendee: Can you give information to the candidates themselves?
 - e. ROV Staff: Candidates receive a candidate guide which instructs on how to run and what the ROV will need from the candidate themselves. This year the guide will include information about the move to the VCA voting model, as well as relay the importance of educating our voters on the change. We hope the candidates will want to help us get the word out since they are directly affected.
 - f. Attendee: Make sure candidates give the right information to the voters. In terms of outreach for monolingual, some outlets have informational segments where you can talk about immigration, like radio outlets, relating to immigration.
 - g. Attendee: We know there is a state VAAC and we found out about the ROV VAAC through the state VAAC. My relative had an idea to go to other counties and speak with the VAAC committees; and he will report back to the ROV. People have to know about the change first and then to the individual needs of various voters.
2. Attendee: Have other states in the country done this other than California?
- a. ROV Staff: Colorado has already initiated all-mailed ballot elections.
 - b. Attendee: Are we able to speak with other states to see what worked and did not work?
 - c. ROV Staff: Sure, we can reach out to them. We are also in constant contact with the Secretary of State's office and have a monthly phone call which includes all the counties who have or are about to implement VCA. These calls are for the conversation of how different counties began their own VCA, what worked, what hasn't worked, and suggestions moving forward.
 - d. Attendee: We know there is a state VAAC and we found out about the ROV VAAC through the state VAAC. I had an idea to go to other counties and speak with the VAAC committees and report back to the ROV. People have to know about the change first and then to the individual needs of various voters.
 - e. ROV Staff: We could definitely work on that, sounds great.
3. Is there any messaging we should focus on, such as when we send out notices on social media?
- a. Attendee: People should know in an easy way that a change is coming. That's the first message that should go out because people need to be aware that this is all new. Let them know: "Here's what it means to you, and if you are disabled, we are ready for you!"
 - b. Attendee: In terms of outreach, many radio outlets – in particular, the Spanish ones – have informational segments to talk about changes in the community. Someone could go to UNIVISION or Telemundo and participate in an informational segment with them. There is also an organization called the National Association of Latino Election Officials who work with local non-profits within the state, voter engagement, and Census work. They have a lot of language information that is specific in terms of messaging and framing, which may possibly be able amplify the

message at the local level. Information segments, radio, TV, advertising, OP ED, letter to the editor, etc., about the changes that are coming up because of the Voter's Choice Act. Identify committee surrogates that can relay the message on behalf of ROV. Monolingual communities of color usually have a disconnect with the government. They are more connected with nonprofit community leaders and the people are more willing to listen to it, instead of blanket advertisement on the VTA or on TV/radio. Those information components will really inform people. The message also needs to be repeated often. Many campaigns run under the model that you must repeat a message seven times, maybe the ROV could adopt a similar model leading up to the election. Starting early would be beneficial. Holidays will also be a challenge. Voter engagement and beginning this process early would help everyone. Also, National Voter Registration Day is coming up on September 24, which is an opportunity to tap into the younger crowd of potential voters.

- c. Attendee: National Disability Voter Registration Week, July 15th to 19th that's not much time but something to consider. I will volunteer to reach out and see if there is something in their toolkit we can take advantage of.
- d. ROV Staff: Earlier, the Mayfair Community Center was mentioned, we are having an EAP Consultation Meeting there on June 24th.
- e. Attendee: I would encourage continuing to reach out to those type of organizations, such as Guadalupe, the Neighborhood Association, and also possibly reaching out to Councilwoman Magdalena Carrasco's office, as I'm sure she would be willing to come out to speak to residents. Also, speak to the local PTAs to help start spreading the message and work towards increasing attendance.