



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: March 18, 2019
RE: Director's Report: March 20, 2019, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief listing of the work and related information in which the Department of Elections (Department) has been engaged since the previous Elections Commission meeting on February 20, 2019.

- I. **Update on the City's efforts to develop a highly accessible, open source voting system, and other voting system-related matters.**
 - A. In Attachment 1, Linda Gerull, Director, Department of Technology (DT), provides an update regarding the City's efforts to develop an open source voting system. Director Gerull's update indicates that a Community Engagement meeting is scheduled for April 26, at 3 p.m., and that the Department of Defense's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has begun developing hardware that is secure from possible cyber-attacks and DARPA will provide the specifications of this hardware for others to utilize, including voting system vendors.
 - B. DARPA has already provided \$15.5 million to eight grantees to develop the voting system hardware, and an additional \$4.5 million to Galois to test the hardware against attacks. An initial version of the equipment will be presented in August, and an updated version will be presented in August 2020, at the Def Con hacking conferences in Las Vegas.
 - C. The Board of Supervisors approved the contract to lease a new voting system from Dominion Voting Systems and the Department and Dominion have begun the initial steps to implement the system for the upcoming November 5, 2019 election.
 - D. Department personnel have visited counties using the same Dominion system to observe these counties' processes during elections, gather documentation such as procedures, and to inquire about counties' experiences when implementing the system.
 - E. Utilizing practices from other counties, Department personnel are reviewing the Department's existing processes to identify the modifications necessary to implement the new system in areas such as ballot processing, adjudication of mismatched ballots rather than duplication, centralized review of write-in votes, the Official Canvass, and poll worker training.
- II. **To provide voters with information on the new voting system and the new ballot format for ranked-choice voting elections, the Department developed and posted new content on its website.**
 - A. The Department developed a new page on its website with information about the new voting system (see Attachment 2) and introduces voters to the new ballot format, including an animated ranked-choice voting (RCV) ballot demonstration.
 - B. The homepage of *sfelections.org* features an announcement regarding the new voting system, and the dropdown navigation, "Voting," at the top of the homepage provides navigation paths to information about the new voting system.
 - C. Near term, the Department will engage the public to review the Department's website regarding the information on the new voting system. For instance, the Department will contact nearly 200 community organizations and provide a link to the new page and invite the organizations to share this link in their materials, feature a poster in the Department's front office announcing the new voting system, and encourage visitors to "Ask us for more information or visit *sfelections.org*"; display a slideshow on a large monitor located in the front office that provides information

on the new voting system and provides illustrations of the expanded rankings in RCV contests, as well as developing and posting information on the Department's social media accounts with a link to the website

III. The Department posted updated content on its website on the new 10-ranking RCV ballot format, continued to develop an interactive, online RCV Practice Ballot in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino, as well as develop an RCV demonstration ballot to use during voter outreach opportunities.

- A. The Department's website dedicated to RCV now features updated instructions for marking an RCV contest, key points to remember, FAQs, and more (see Attachment 3).
- B. The page provides graphics and explanations showing how to mark the ballot correctly using the new RCV grid layout and common errors to avoid as well as information and graphics illustrating the process of counting ballots in RCV contests.
- D. The Department intends to feature a link to the practice ballot on the homepage and the sidebar of all landing pages so that voters can practice marking a ranked-choice ballot from any page on the website.
- E. The RCV interactive ballot will allow voters to rank up to 10 candidates and will immediately inform users if rankings are left unmarked and if there are overvotes and undervotes, and provide the opportunity to remark the ballot.
- F. The Department will widely use the RCV demonstration during outreach events to provide people with the opportunity to practice marking ballots, and to ask questions to and receive feedback from Department personnel.
- G. The ballot layout and instructions for both the actual RCV ballot content and the demonstration ballot will also incorporate best practices for RCV developed by the Center for Civic Design and FairVote.org.
- H. The demonstration ballot will also include contests besides RCV contests so that members of the public will see how actual ballots will be formatted for an election. The instructions for these contests and the ballot layout will also incorporate suggestions from the Center for Civic Design.

IV. To engage the public with information on the new system and RCV ballot format, the Department developed a draft Outreach Plan that is posted on the Department's website for public review and input

- A. Members of the public can review the Draft Outreach Plan using the "TOPICS IN FOCUS" section of the Department's homepage, *sfelections.org*, visitors will also find an invitation to comment on the plan, and a feedback form.
- B. A copy of the Draft Outreach Plan with the initial list of specific planned outreach activities, approximate timelines, and outreach partners as well as a feedback form are included in Attachment 4.
- C. This month, the Department will invite community stakeholders, including the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC), the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), local organizations, and members of the general public, to provide feedback on its Draft Outreach Plan. Interested stakeholders will be encouraged to suggest additional outreach strategies and partnerships and to share any comments or questions for outreach on the new voting system and the expanded rankings in RCV contests.
- D. Following a period of public review and feedback, the Department will begin the outreach program in April.