



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: December 11, 2020
RE: Director's Report: December 16, 2020, 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 report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on November 18, 2020.

I. The Department concluded the Official Canvas and certified the November 3, 2020, Consolidated General Election.

- A. On December 1, 2020, the Department certified the November 3, 2020, Consolidated General Election. The final turnout is 86.33%, representing votes cast by 449,866 of San Francisco's 521,099 registered voters. This is the highest number of voters to participate in an election in the City's history and the largest number of voters registered for an election.
- B. The Statement of the Results along with other detailed reports of final election results (i.e., ranked-choice voting reports, Cast Vote Record data), images of all voted ballot cards cast in the election, and voting equipment transaction logs have been posted on the Department's website.
- C. In response to the challenge posed by the pandemic of providing public access to preliminary election results announcements that in previous elections took place in City Hall, the Department held press conferences outside the building where members of the public and the media could safely ask questions and view the reports. The Department also posted a recording of each such press conference on its website.
- D. The Department issued 16 preliminary election results reports, all of which have been posted on the Department's website along with accompanying press releases. During the post-election processing and counting of ballots, the Department developed mechanisms allowing members of the public to safely observe election operations from a distance onsite and remotely via livestream to accommodate preferences.
- E. Upon certification of election results, Department staff began securing and storing ballots and other election materials in the warehouse for the retention period required under state law.

II. The Department is working on closing the many fiscal, personnel, and other transactions associated with the November 3 election.

- A. To seek reimbursements to recoup the costs for administering the San Francisco Unified School District, the Community College District, and the Bay Area Rapid Transit District elections, the Department is working on compiling the costs incurred according to the amount of space these contests took up on the November 3 election ballots.
- B. The Department compiled costs associated with planning and operationalizing safe and secure administration of the November 3 election and received the approval of the Board of Supervisors to retroactively accept and expend grant funds received from the Center for Tech and Civic Life to recoup such costs.

- C. The Department has been working on closing purchase orders associated with procuring supplies and services for the November 3 election and has been coordinating the submission of invoices and the issuance of payments with the vendors and the City's General Services Agency, respectively.
- D. The Department has been processing separation paperwork for seasonal employees who worked in the Department during the November 3 election cycle and responding to requests for information submitted by the Employment Development Department and resulting from claims for unemployment benefits filed by separated employees.
- E. The Department removed all vote-by-mail ballot processing equipment, computer workstations, and supplies and furniture from the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium and organized their storage at City Hall and the warehouse, and returned the space to the current lessee of the Auditorium.

III. The Department continues to provide information to the general public and to undertake the many activities associated with the maintenance of the voter roll.

- A. In consideration of the latest Shelter-in-Place Order issued by the San Francisco Health Officer, the Department transitioned most of its year-round employees to telecommuting. In the near future, most employees will continue to work primarily from home, with 2 employees now at City Hall every weekday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., as well as between 4-6 additional staff at City Hall and between 1-3 additional staff at the warehouse working on an as-needed basis on weekdays.
 - i. With access to City Hall limited, the Department has been conducting in-person transactions in its office, by appointment.
 - ii. The Department continues to respond to public inquiries received via email and phone on a daily basis, and fulfil requests for registration forms and other voter materials.
 - iii. The Department continues to process statewide ballot initiative petitions.
 - iv. The Department continues the many activities associated with the maintenance of the voter roll remotely.
- B. Departmental personnel are engaged in reviewing their divisional procedures, materials, and supporting applications to inform and improve the processes in future election cycles.
- C. To continuously improve the clarity and relevance of the information provided to the public, the Department has begun developing a timeline for enhancing its website to achieve near-term updates, such as revising election-specific content, and longer-term updates associated with the usability of voter self-help online tools, individual sections, and the site as a whole.
- D. The Department completed the activities and ballot tabulation associated with the 2020 Fisherman's Wharf Portside Community Benefit District election. Results have been posted at <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/2020-fishermans-wharf-portside-community-benefit-district-election>

IV. The Department has been engaged in assisting the City with future elections planning.

- A. The Department is in the final stages of preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) with the goal of selecting the contractor in providing services to support the expected redrawing of district boundaries associated with the offices for the Board of Supervisors in the City and County of San Francisco.
 - i. The Department intends to issue the RFP in December 2020.
- B. The Department has been assessing the potential implementation of the Voter's Choice Act in San Francisco, as required by the [Ordinance No. 200400](#) enacted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors earlier this year. The ordinance directs the Department to submit a written report to the Board of Supervisors as well as to the Elections

Commission, "regarding the potential implementation of the Voter's Choice Act in San Francisco for elections to be held in 2021 and thereafter" by February 28, 2021.

- i. The Department therefore has been working on the report to 1) provide an overview of the Voter's Choice Act, with a focus on requirements related to vote centers, 2) describe recent trends in local voting behavior, 3) address the potential impact of the adoption of an all-mail election model on a) voter outreach, education, and services; b) staffing and staff training; c) voting equipment and capacity; d) ballot collection and processing; and e) location and operation of potential vote centers; and 3) highlight several critical budgetary and timing issues.
- C. The Department has been preparing its Racial Equity Action Plan. Guided by the citywide Racial Equity Framework released by the City's Office of Racial Equity, this Plan is to provide a blueprint for advancing racial equity in all aspects of the Department's work over the next three years.
- i. The Department's Racial Equity Action Plan sets goals and associated implementation steps as well as indicators to measure the outcomes resulting from implementation of set goals. Phase 1 of the Department's Racial Equity Action Plan centers on internal programs and policies, and overarching practices regarding Department workforce. Phase 2 of the Plan will focus on external equity indicators, including delivering equitable services and programs to all San Francisco residents.
 - ii. The Department established a Racial Equity Team, comprised of senior management and direct service employees who share decision-making authority and/or knowledge in service, human resources, and budget areas, and who are committed to advancing racial equity across all levels of the Department.
 - iii. The Department has been participating in meetings with the Office of Racial Equity as well as representatives from other City Agencies to learn about citywide efforts towards advancing equity.
 - iv. The Department conducted an anonymous employee survey, focusing on several key area including recognizing interpersonal and institutional racism in the workplace, safety and inclusion, access to training opportunities and advancement, and strategies to advance racial equity going forward; results of the survey are included in the Department's draft Racial Equity Action Plan.
- D. The Department has been working on preparing requests for funding necessary to support fixed and variable operating expenses for services and programs associated with the two elections scheduled during the FY2021-2022 and FY2022-23 budget period: June 7, 2022, Statewide Direct Primary Election and November 8, 2022, Consolidated General Election. On December 16, Department fiscal staff will be attending a meeting organized by the Mayor's Office of Public Policy and Finance to provide an overview of the Mayor's budget instructions and priorities.