



## Memorandum

**To:** Elections Commission  
**From:** John Arntz, Director  
**Date:** November 10, 2021  
**RE:** Director's Report: November 17, 2021, Elections Commission Meeting

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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 October 20, 2021.

### **I. The Department continues to facilitate candidate and measure filings for the February 15, 2022 election.**

- A. The nomination period is now open for candidates for the Assessor-Recorder office. During this period, candidates may obtain and file nomination documents. Candidates must submit all nomination documents, signatures, and fees to the Department no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, November 19 to appear on the ballot.
- B. The San Francisco Municipal Code, §110 defines local recall elections as ballot “measures”, requiring the Department to organize Ballot Simplification Committee meetings and facilitate the intake of paid ballot arguments for and against the recall measures appearing on the ballot.
  - i. On Friday, November 19 and Monday, November 22, the Department will facilitate meetings of the Ballot Simplification Committee, which will work to prepare a fair and impartial summary of each ballot measure for the February 15 election. These summaries will be printed in the Voter Information Pamphlet, which is mailed by the Department to most registered voters before the election and available on the Department’s website.
  - ii. On Monday, November 22, at 11 a.m., the Department will select and assign a letter to identify each ballot measure that will appear on the ballot for the February 15 election. The selection of letters will occur at the Department’s office in City Hall, Room 48. The Department will also stream the selection of letters and post a recording of the process on its website.
  - iii. 12 p.m. on Monday, November 29 is the deadline for the submission of paid arguments in favor of or against ballot measures to be voted on in the February 15 election. All paid ballot arguments must be submitted to the Department in person, with original signatures. All paid ballot arguments are subject to a 10-day public examination period. The 10-day public examination period for paid arguments runs from 12 p.m. on Tuesday, November 30 until 12 p.m. on Friday, December 10.

### **II. The Department has been engaged in planning and executing the many operations required to conduct 2022 elections.**

- A. For the February 15 election, the Department will operate 314 polling places rather than 588 sites provided in recent elections, as permitted by state law. California Elections Code (CAEC) §12241 allows an elections official to combine precincts in any local, special, consolidated, or statewide election other than a direct primary, presidential primary, or general election. Any possible new configuration is permitted provided 1) no consolidated precinct consists of more than six original precincts, 2) all consolidated precincts fall within the boundaries of its original set of precincts, and 3) no part of a consolidated precinct falls outside the original boundary lines of “any supervisorial

district, congressional district, senatorial district, Assembly district, board of equalization district, judicial district, incorporated city, ward, or city council district.”

- i. In consolidating precincts, the Department went beyond legal requirements in an effort to ensure these newly consolidated precincts were equitably distributed across the City and to afford maximally convenient service options to all voters who prefer to use in-person services. To achieve this overarching goal, the Department incorporated several sub-goals, including 1) a less than 50% total reduction of polling places in the City, 2) no consolidation in low vote-by-mail turnout or high language minority communities, 3) no consolidation in areas with major thoroughfares or other geographical barriers, 4) no elimination of voting sites in prominent or high-visibility facilities, and 5) maintenance of a minimum facility size of 300 square feet.
  - ii. The Department set out to secure as many former polling places as possible by mailing 314 availability surveys to the hosts of former sites in November. Following compilation of all received responses, the Department will begin working to find substitute facilities to whatever extent necessary to make up any deficiencies in the tentative list of consolidated polling places. As in other recent elections, the Department will work diligently to identify all polling place locations in advance of the publication of the Voter Information Pamphlet, which provides the address of a polling place for the voter to whom the pamphlet is addressed.
- B. The Department initiated a poll worker recruitment by mailing poll worker availability survey packets to former poll workers in November. Each availability survey packet included a letter describing the City's vaccination policy and explaining how to submit proof of vaccination, a survey designed to gather information about former poll worker availability for the upcoming election, and a postage-paid envelope to make the submission of proof of vaccination as easy as possible.
- i. In compliance with the Department of Human Resources' COVID-19 vaccination policy, individuals who wish to serve as poll workers in City elections must provide proof of full vaccination. The Department has taken several steps to comply with this policy, including the development of internal procedures through which the more than 1,500 prospective poll workers for the upcoming election can submit their proof of vaccination by mail, online, or in-person.
- C. The Department has developed official ballot and Voter Information Pamphlet production plans and timelines and met with its translation, print and assembly vendors to ensure they are able to meet both internal operational deadlines set by the Department as well as statutory deadlines associated with the upcoming election.
- i. The Department is required to transmit ballots to approximately 10,000 voters serving in the military or residing overseas on January 1, 2022 and to over 500,000 local voters by January 17, 2022. January 17 is also the deadline to mail the Voter Information Pamphlet and to open the accessible vote-by-mail system with screen readable ballots to locally registered voters.
- D. The Department has been working on implementing provisions of Assembly Bill (AB) 37 that require counties to provide ballot drop boxes. At the direction of the Board of Supervisors, the Department went beyond legal requirements that mandate the Department to maintain a minimum of 17 ballot drop boxes and will provide 34 ballot boxes instead. All 34 ballot drop boxes will be open 24 hours a day starting January 18 through 8 p.m. on Election Day in neighborhoods across the City.
- i. To date, the Department has identified the vendor that can provide legally compliant ballot drop boxes that meet security and accessibility requirements of the Secretary of State's regulations as well as potential

locations throughout the City at which boxes could be installed. In the next several weeks, the Department will focus on developing the ballot box installation timeline and securing installation services as well as developing legally compliant citywide ballot collection schedules and chain of custody plans.

- E. The Department has been preparing voting materials to administer non-citizen registration and voting ("EDU") in School Board recall contests and developing outreach strategies to inform eligible EDU registrants about their voting options. As has been the case in all School Board elections held since 2016, the Department will offer the same voting options to EDU voters as it offers to all other voters: voting by mail, voting in-person at the City Hall Voting Center during the early voting period, and voting at the polls on Election Day.
  - i. To date, the Department updated its page [sfelections.org/noncitizen/voting](https://sfelections.org/noncitizen/voting), which provides information on EDU registration and voting topics; produced a pre-addressed, postage paid Voter Registration Application in multiple languages as well as a Vote-by-Mail Ballot Pick-up Authorization form and a Voter Notification Card; set up its supplementary Election Information Management System (EIMS), through which all records for EDU voters are maintained; and met with the representatives of the Immigrant Parent Voting Coalition, which has been and will continue to be one of the main EDU outreach partners.
- F. The Department completed its review of the petition for the recall of San Francisco's District Attorney received on October 22, 2021.
  - i. On November 9, 2021, the Department completed the petition signature verification process and found the petition sufficient. The Department also set June 7, 2022, as the date for the special municipal election to be consolidated with the scheduled Statewide Gubernatorial Primary Election for voters to determine whether to recall the District Attorney.

### **III. The Department continues to provide information to the public and undertake other routine activities.**

- A. The Department continues to conduct in-person public transactions at its City Hall office and respond to public inquiries received through email and its main phone line.
- B. During the week of December 13, the Department will mail a multilingual notice (printed in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino) to approximately 380,000 San Francisco households, alerting both registered voters and eligible City residents to the upcoming election and explaining their voting options. This notice will also provide key information and pertinent dates related to each method of voting, advise registered voters to double-check the information in their voter records, and inform those who are not yet registered about available registration options, and feature a message about EDU registration and voting. To reach as many people as possible as early as possible, Department will send digital versions of this notice to the nearly 250,000 voters who provided email addresses as part of their registration records.
- C. The Department continues to maintain data in San Francisco's voter roll, processing registration affidavits, updating voter records based on official third-party notifications, and conducting other ongoing activities that ensure the continual accuracy of the voter roll in accordance with relevant laws.
- D. The Department continues to support the Redistricting Task Force by fulfilling its translation requests and distributing print and digital information on opportunities to participate in San Francisco's redistricting process.

### **IV. The Department's update on the City's efforts to develop the Identity and Access Management project and pilot program using an open source voting system.**

- A. **Identity and Access Management Project.** Based on the requests from the Mayor's Office on Disability and the City's Disability Council, the City has received funding from Homeland Security for a project to develop a prototype of a tool that provides people with disabilities with a secure and independent method for authenticating identity, which could then also possibly be adapted to their voting-by-mail and using remote accessible voting programs.

The project is primarily funded by Homeland Security's Urban Areas Security Initiative Program (UASI). The City's Department of Emergency Management (DEM) received grants from UASI totaling \$1,550,625. Of the total grant funds, \$550,000 is allocated for planning and \$1,00,625 for equipment (hardware, licenses, multi-factor authentication, and training on the equipment).

DEM received the grants as the eligible agency in the City to obtain such funding from UASI. The project is not specific to San Francisco, since UASI funds are intended to support regional projects. The City will collaborate with 14 Bay Area counties in relation to development. DT is the City's agency involved in the Bay Area Management Team that will study the project, develop any prototype, and will consider various products and technologies. Currently, only preliminary work has occurred such as issuing a request for proposals for a consultant. The consultant will lead efforts amongst stakeholders to consider the options for the project. Currently, no technologies have been decided upon and there is no research occurring regarding blockchain.

Before the pandemic, when the Mayor's Office of Disability and the Disability Council first sought the City's support, the Department of Elections (Department) provided information to DT regarding how people vote-by-mail or utilize a remote accessible voting program. The Department was not involved in applying for grants, providing a scope of work for the grant application, or determining any technologies or methods to consider. The Department is not a member of the Bay Area Management Team. However, members of the Department's Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee have provided their contact information to be part of any group that advises in the development of any prototype.

The City has allocated \$50,000 of funds originally provided for open source projects towards this identity authentication project. The reason is one of the goals of the identity authentication project is to utilize open source software as much as possible.

- B. **Pilot Program.** The Department provided a contract template to the vendor, VotingWorks, to begin preparing an agreement in relation to conducting a pilot program during the November 2022 election. The Department also provided links to information regarding the City processes associated with becoming a vendor that is qualified to do business in the City. VotingWorks provided an estimated list of items and costs associated with a pilot program involving a ballot marking device located in the City Hall Voting Center. VotingWorks also provided information on preparing ballot content in its system and independent from requiring the export of content from the City's leased Dominion Voting System's ballot preparation program.