



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 23, 2013

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: City Clerk's Office, Administrative Services Department

SUBJECT: Recommendation To Conduct Vote-By-Mail General Municipal Election

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council authorize the City Clerk to conduct the November 5, 2013 General Municipal Election as a Vote-By-Mail Election.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposal for the November 2013 Vote-By-Mail Election includes the following elements:

- Continuing to include return postage to make it easier for voters to return ballots;
- Designating four drop-off center locations to be open on Election Day; and
- Extending the days for the City Hall drop-off center location to be open the week prior to Election Day.

BACKGROUND:

The City has held three stand-alone elections: on November 6, 2007, November 3, 2009, and November 8, 2011. The voter turnout and the percentage of ballots returned by mail or in person for these elections are as follows:

| Election Date | Registered Voters | Ballots Cast | By Mail | In Person | Voter Turnout |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------|-----------|---------------|
| November 6, 2007 | 44,165 | 16,364 | 67% | 33% | 37.05% |
| November 3, 2009 | 46,718 | 23,167 | 78% | 22% | 49.59% |
| November 8, 2011 | 44,562 | 18,387 | 84% | 16% | 41.26% |

The November 6, 2007 Election, the City's first stand-alone election, was conducted as a traditional poll election to fill three Councilmember seats and decide one ballot measure. The City's final direct election cost totaled approximately \$280,000.

The City Council authorized the City Clerk's Office to conduct the November 3, 2009 Election as a vote-by-mail election. The election was conducted to fill the Mayor's seat and three Councilmember seats, and to decide four ballot measures. The City's final direct election cost totaled approximately \$240,000. The City provided voters with prepaid postage envelopes to return their ballots and voters had the option to vote in person at any of the seven designated drop-off centers and on the Saturday before Election Day.

The November 8, 2011 Election was also a vote-by-mail election conducted to fill three Councilmember seats with no ballot measures. The total direct cost for that election was approximately \$208,000. Similar to 2009, the City provided voters with prepaid postage envelopes to return their ballots and voters had the option to vote in person at any of the five designated drop-off centers. The centers were also open the Saturday before Election Day.

DISCUSSION:

Staff recommends that Council approve conducting the 2013 election as a vote-by-mail election, based on the high voter turnout and cost savings in both the 2009 and 2011 elections. The 2013 election will be conducted to fill the Mayor's seat and three Councilmember seats and potentially to decide one ballot measure. The plan includes a recommendation to designate four drop-off center locations and eliminate opening the drop-off centers on the Saturday before the election due to historically low voter turnout that day. The City Hall drop-off center location hours would be extended to be open the week prior to Election Day

Drop-Off Center Locations

During the 2011 election, City Hall received 1,454 ballots during the six days that it was open, including 1,337 ballots that were received on Election Day alone.

The Braille Institute received 598, Grace Lutheran Church received 560, Pilgrim Terrace received 245, and the Municipal Tennis Center received 158 during the two-day period (Saturday preceding the Election and Election Day).

For the 2013 election, staff recommends designating four locations as drop-off centers: City Hall, the Braille Institute, Grace Lutheran Church, and the Eastside Library. The locations were chosen because City Hall, the Braille Institute and Grace Lutheran Church have proven to be effective locations in past elections and the Eastside Library appears to be more accessible to voters in the surrounding community. The locations are evenly spaced throughout the City, and staff feels that their locations would provide

ample coverage for any residents who want to drop off their ballots in person on Election Day. The drop-off center hours would be 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

City Hall Drop-Off Center Extended Days

In 2011, additional poll workers were hired to work at the City Hall drop-off center from Wednesday, November 2, through Monday, November 7, in order to lessen the amount of foot traffic in the City Clerk's Office and increase accessibility to voters. This process was very successful. It allowed staff to manage the daily envelope processing in the Clerk's Office with fewer outside interruptions, while still maintaining accessibility to voters.

For 2013, staff recommends that this process be continued and that the City Hall drop-off center be opened:

- Tuesday, October 29 through Friday, November 1, during regular business hours;
- Monday, November 4, during regular business hours;
- Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday prior to Election Day

In 2011, the total number of ballots dropped off at the five drop-off centers on the Saturday preceding the election was extremely low (271 total). For that reason, we are not recommending that the drop-off centers be opened on the Saturday before Election Day. Not opening on Saturday will generate a savings of approximately \$4,000 for drop-off center worker salaries, City Clerk's Office staff overtime and consultant costs. Other benefits include:

1. Eliminating the necessity for drop-off center Inspectors to make an extra trip to pick up and drop off ballots and supplies for both Saturday and Tuesday;
2. Eliminating the need to reserve drop-off center locations on a Saturday and ensure there is staff on site that day; and
3. Eliminating the need for City Clerk's staff to work on a Saturday, which they would normally not work.
4. Having City Clerk staff available to do election catch-up work should conditions require it.

Next Steps

The election work plan calls for staff to return to Council in May, subject to the City Council's approval of the budget, with a recommendation to approve professional services agreements related to equipment rental and election supplies, and an on-site elections consultant.

The plan also calls for staff to return to Council in mid-June requesting Council to adopt the necessary resolutions to schedule the City's general municipal election:

- Calling for the election,
- Authorizing a Vote-By-Mail election (if approved),
- Adopting regulations pertaining to candidates' statements,
- Directing the City Attorney to prepare an impartial analysis of any ballot measures or Charter Amendments, and
- Setting priorities for filing a written argument regarding ballot measures or Charter Amendments.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The direct cost of a vote-by-mail election is approximately \$300,000. The cost of a traditional poll election is estimated at \$337,000. The Administrative Services Department Fiscal Year 2014 budget request includes \$300,000 from the General Fund for the 2013 General Municipal Election.

SUSTAINABILITY:

It is anticipated that a vote-by-mail election will reduce the number of potential vehicle trips made by voters and poll workers who would normally drive to the polls. This supports the City's sustainability goals to protect the environment.

PREPARED BY: Gwen Peirce, City Clerk Services Manager

SUBMITTED BY: Marcelo A. López, Assistant City Administrator

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



Recommendation to Conduct Vote-By-Mail Election



April 23, 2013



Background

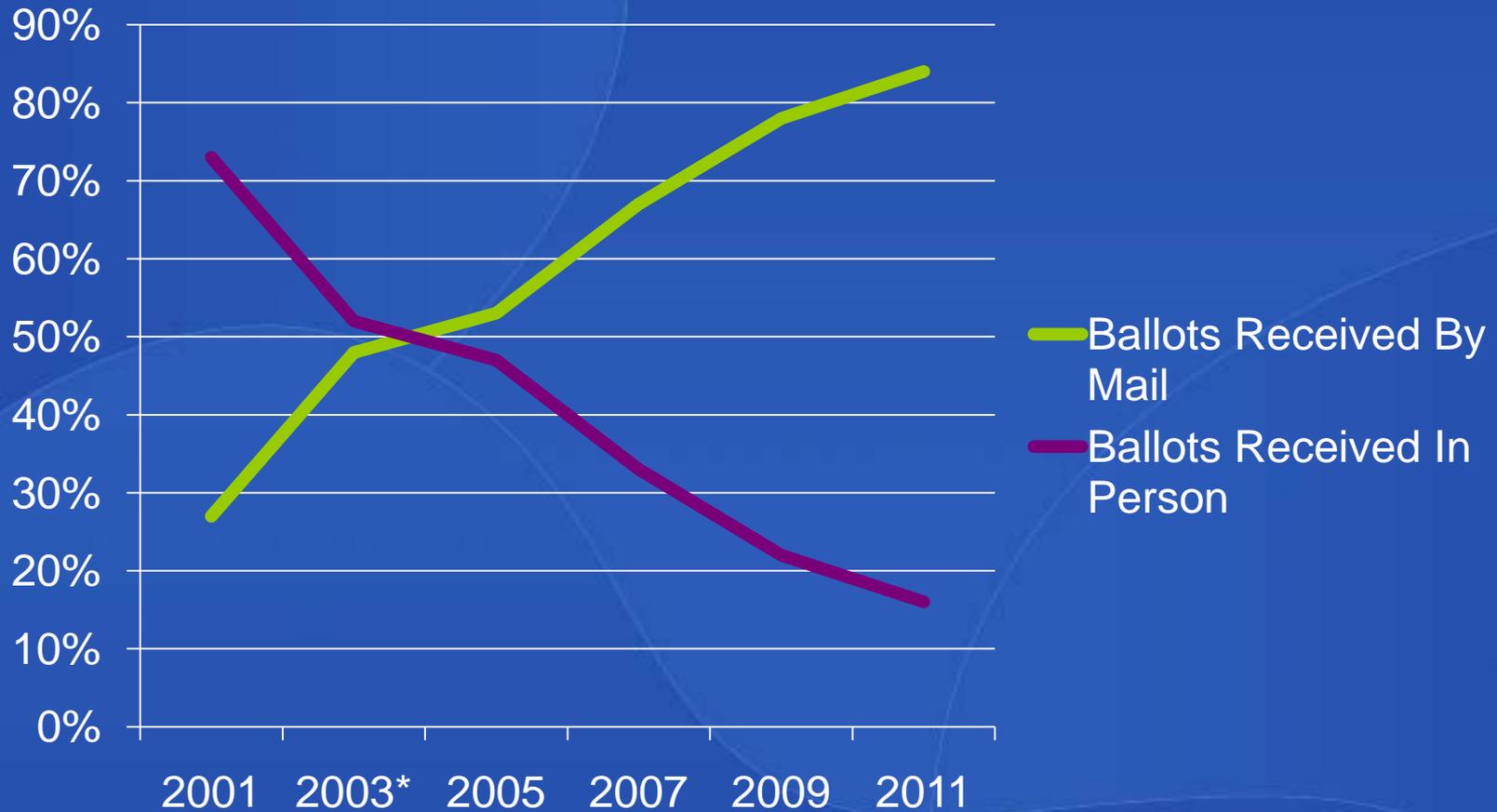
- ◆ November 6, 2007 – Traditional
 - 3 Councilmember seats, 1 ballot measure
 - Cost = \$280,000
- ◆ November 3, 2009 – Vote-By-Mail
 - Mayor and 3 Councilmember seats, 4 ballot measures
 - Cost = \$240,000
- ◆ November 8, 2011 – Vote-By-Mail
 - 3 Councilmember seats, no ballot measures
 - Cost = \$207,000

Background

Turnout Statistics for 2007, 2009, 2011

| Election Date | Registered Voters | Ballots Cast | By Mail | In Person | Voter Turnout |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------|-----------|---------------|
| November 6, 2007 | 44,165 | 16,364 | 67% | 33% | 37.05% |
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Ballots Received by Mail vs. In Person from 2001-11



*Legislation passed to allow for permanent absentee voting

November 5, 2013 Election Vote-By-Mail

- ◆ Budget: \$300,000
- ◆ Mayor and 3 Councilmember seats, 1 potential ballot measure re: a lot-line adjustment at MacKenzie Park
- ◆ Four Drop-Off Centers:
 - City Hall, Braille Institute, Grace Lutheran Church, & Eastside Library
- ◆ City Hall Drop-Off Center open Tues., October 29 – Fri., November 1, and Mon., November 4, during regular business hours
- ◆ All Drop-Off Centers to be open Election Day from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.



Next Steps

- ◆ May 2013: Approval of professional services
 - Martin & Chapman: Election services, equipment and supplies
 - Donna Grindey: Elections consultant
- ◆ June 2013: Adopt resolutions
 - Calling for the Election
 - Authorizing a Vote-By-Mail Election
 - Adopting candidate statement regulations
 - Directing City Attorney to prepare impartial analysis of ballot measure
 - Setting priorities for filing written arguments regarding proposed ballot measure

Questions?



Countwide and City of Santa Barbara Election Turnout
1992 - 2012

| Election Date | Voter Registration | Ballots Cast | Overall Voter Turnout | Poll | | Absentee | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| | | | | Ballots Cast | % cast at polls | Ballots Cast | % cast absentee |
| June 2, 1992 | 186,047 | 101,833 | 54.74% | 81,575 | 80.11% | 20,258 | 19.89% |
| November 3, 1992 | 209,998 | 164,705 | 78.43% | 128,139 | 77.80% | 36,566 | 22.20% |
| November 2, 1993 | 51,450 | 21,735 | 42.24% | 16,197 | 74.50% | 5,538 | 25.50% |
| June 7, 1994 | 204,378 | 82,168 | 40.20% | 64,953 | 79.05% | 17,215 | 20.95% |
| November 8, 1994 | 218,859 | 134,195 | 61.32% | 103,912 | 77.43% | 30,283 | 22.57% |
| November 7, 1995 | 54,058 | 16,456 | 30.44% | 12,292 | 74.70% | 4,164 | 25.30% |
| March 26, 1996 | 221,942 | 95,159 | 42.88% | 71,882 | 75.54% | 23,277 | 24.46% |
| November 5, 1996 | 237,211 | 152,313 | 64.21% | 116,950 | 76.78% | 35,363 | 23.22% |
| November 4, 1997 | 58,515 | 18,608 | 31.80% | 13,794 | 74.10% | 4,814 | 25.90% |
| June 7, 1998 | 217,259 | 91,839 | 42.27% | 59,885 | 65.21% | 31,954 | 34.79% |
| November 3, 1998 | 224,325 | 125,168 | 55.80% | 81,512 | 65.12% | 43,656 | 34.88% |
| November 2, 1999 | 49,259 | 22,844 | 46.38% | 14,144 | 61.90% | 8,700 | 38.10% |
| March 7, 2000 | 203,582 | 116,322 | 57.14% | 81,787 | 70.31% | 34,535 | 29.69% |
| November 1, 2000 | 220,274 | 156,130 | 70.88% | 105,529 | 67.59% | 50,601 | 32.41% |
| November 6, 2001 | 50,953 | 17,998 | 35.32% | 13,071 | 72.60% | 4,927 | 27.40% |
| March 5, 2002 | 208,551 | 74,165 | 35.56% | 51,396 | 69.30% | 22,769 | 30.70% |
| November 5, 2002 | 194,672 | 117,417 | 60.32% | 64,637 | 55.05% | 52,780 | 44.95% |
| October 7, 2003 | 193,458 | 127,402 | 65.86% | 75,046 | 58.90% | 52,356 | 41.10% |
| November 4, 2003 | 44,885 | 18,545 | 41.32% | 9,720 | 52.40% | 8,825 | 47.60% |
| March 2, 2004 | 188,432 | 103,646 | 55.00% | 56,477 | 54.49% | 47,169 | 45.51% |
| November 2, 2004 | 213,194 | 171,564 | 80.47% | 99,343 | 57.90% | 72,221 | 42.10% |
| November 8, 2005 | 44,870 | 25,909 | 58.00% | 12,112 | 46.70% | 13,797 | 53.30% |
| November 8, 2005 | 185,557 | 111,200 | 59.93% | 51,948 | 46.72% | 59,252 | 53.28% |
| June 6, 2006 | 182,129 | 90,382 | 49.63% | 36,071 | 39.91% | 54,311 | 60.09% |
| November 7, 2006 | 183,890 | 125,428 | 68.21% | 55,904 | 44.57% | 69,524 | 55.43% |
| November 6, 2007 | 44,165 | 16,364 | 37.05% | 5,474 | 33.50% | 10,890 | 66.50% |
| February 5, 2008 | 183,099 | 121,664 | 66.45% | 52,789 | 43.39% | 68,875 | 56.61% |
| June 3, 2008 | 188,277 | 73,810 | 39.20% | 22,021 | 29.83% | 51,789 | 70.17% |
| November 3, 2008 | 204,440 | 176,562 | 86.36% | 80,123 | 45.38% | 96,439 | 54.62% |
| May 19, 2009 | 199,372 | 71,032 | 35.63% | 22,269 | 31.35% | 48,763 | 68.65% |
| November 3, 2009 | 46,718 | 23,167 | 49.59% | 0 | 0.00% | 23,167 | 100.00% |
| June 8, 2010 | 192,127 | 85,107 | 44.30% | 29,496 | 34.66% | 55,611 | 65.34% |
| June 22, 2010 Special SD Primary | 41,036 | 13,296 | 32.40% | 3,481 | 26.18% | 9,815 | 73.82% |
| July 13, 2010 Special Fire Prot. | 5,885 | 2,186 | 37.15% | 0 | 0.00% | 2,186 | 100.00% |
| August 17, 2010 Special SD | 41,185 | 15,004 | 36.43% | 3,895 | 25.96% | 11,109 | 74.04% |
| November 2, 2010 | 198,457 | 134,430 | 67.74% | 57,025 | 42.42% | 77,405 | 57.58% |
| November 8, 2011 | 44,562 | 18,387 | 41.26% | 0 | 0.00% | 18,387 | 100.00% |
| June 5, 2012 | 191,061 | 85,435 | 44.72% | 25,836 | 30.24% | 59,599 | 69.76% |
| June 5, 2012 | 44,044 | 20,025 | 58.00% | 5,853 | 46.70% | 14,243 | 53.30% |
| November 5, 2012 | 203,994 | 164,977 | 80.87% | 67,792 | 41.09% | 97,185 | 58.91% |

- City Elections Consolidated with the County
- County Statewide Elections - Countywide Results
- Special Statewide Election - City of Santa Barbara Results
- First UDEL with Spanish ballots and Permanent Absentee Voting
UDEL : Uniform District Election
- First City Stand-Alone Election - Traditional Election
- City Vote by Mail Stand-Alone Election