



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: May 19, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: City Clerk Division, Administrative Services Department

SUBJECT: Vote-By-Mail General Municipal Election, Agreement For Election Services And Direction Regarding Potential Ballot Measures

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Authorize the City Clerk to conduct the November 3, 2015 General Municipal Election as a Vote-By-Mail Election;
- B. Authorize the Administrative Services Director to execute a \$135,000 professional services agreement with Martin & Chapman Company for election services necessary concerning the City's November 2015 General Election, and to approve expenditures of up to \$20,250 for extra services that may result from necessary changes in the scope of work;
- C. Direct staff and the City Attorney to return to Council to discuss other potential matters to be placed on the November ballot.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposal for the November 3, 2015 Vote-By-Mail Election includes the following elements:

- Continuing to include return postage to make it easier for voters to return ballots;
- Designating five drop-off center (DOC) locations to be open on Election Day to be located within the three Council districts on the ballot, at City Hall, and in the Upper State/San Roque area in the event of a citywide ballot measure; and
- Extending the days for the City Hall DOC location to be open the week prior to Election Day, including the Saturday before Election Day.

BACKGROUND:

The City has held four stand-alone elections: on November 6, 2007, November 3, 2009, November 8, 2011, and November 5, 2013. The voter turnout, the percentage of ballots returned by mail or in person, and the overall cost for these elections are as follows:

Election Date	Registered Voters	Ballots Cast	By Mail	In Person	Voter Turnout	Cost
November 6, 2007	44,165	16,364	67%	33%	37.05%	\$280,000
November 3, 2009	46,718	23,167	78%	22%	49.59%	\$240,000
November 8, 2011	44,562	18,387	84%	16%	41.26%	\$208,000
November 5, 2013	46,106	17,659	75%	25%	38.30%	\$200,400

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. The November 5, 2013 Election was a vote-by-mail election conducted to fill the Mayor's seat and three Councilmember seats, and to decide one ballot measure. The City provided voters with prepaid postage return envelopes and voters had the option to vote in person at any of the four designated drop-off center. The City Hall drop-off center was also open the week prior to Election Day, including Saturday. The total direct cost for that election was \$200,400.

The November 3, 2015 General Municipal Election will be conducted as a by-district election to fill three Councilmember District seats and potentially to decide ballot measures. For informational purposes, attached to this report are the district boundary map that was approved by the City Council on March 30, as well as the legal description of the district boundaries.

DISCUSSION:

Staff recommends that Council approve conducting the 2015 election as a vote-by-mail election, based on the high voter turnout and cost savings in the previous three elections. The plan includes a recommendation to designate five drop-off center locations: one in each of the three Council districts that are on the ballot, one at City Hall, and one at Grace Lutheran Church on upper State Street in the event that there will be ballot measures on the ballot. The City Hall drop-off center location hours would be extended to be open the week prior to Election Day, including Saturday, October 31.

Drop-Off Center Locations

During the 2013 election, the City Hall DOC location received 2,293 ballots during the eight days that it was open, including 1,405 ballots that were received on Election Day alone. This was an increased amount from the 2011 election – in 2011, the City Hall DOC had received 1,454 total and 1,337 on Election Day. Part of this increase might be attributed to the fact that the City Hall DOC was open two additional days in 2013. In 2013, Grace Lutheran Church received 1,032 ballots, Calvary Baptist Church received 493 ballots, and Franklin Neighborhood Center received 478 ballots on Election Day.

For the 2015 election, staff is recommending that three of the drop-off centers be located within the Districts that will be determined to be on the ballot. Pursuant to the Settlement Agreement for *Banales, et al. v. City of Santa Barbara*, Districts 1 and 3 will be two of the districts on the November 2015 ballot. The City Council will be deciding on the third district in June. Staff is recommending that the Franklin Neighborhood Center be designated as the District 1 DOC location and Calvary Baptist Church be designated as the District 3 DOC location. The third location will be determined once the district will be determined, and City Hall will be the fourth location. The abovementioned three locations were all used successfully in the City's 2013 Election.

Additionally, in the event that a citywide ballot measure or measures are placed on the November ballot, staff is recommending a fifth DOC location be added to the list of drop-off centers in order to accommodate voters in the Upper State/San Roque area. The proposed location would be at Grace Lutheran Church, which also served as a successful location in the City's previous elections. If there are no ballot measures placed on the ballot, then this location would not be necessary.

The drop-off center hours for all DOC locations would be 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

City Hall Drop-Off Center Extended Days

In 2011 and 2013, additional poll workers were hired to work at the City Hall drop-off center several days prior to the election 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 2015, staff recommends that this process be continued and that the City Hall drop-off center be opened:

- Tuesday, October 27 through Friday, October 30, during regular business hours;
- Saturday, October 31, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Monday, November 2, during regular business hours;
- Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Election Consultant

Martin & Chapman Company and specializes in and have provided comprehensive election services to local municipalities, including the City of Santa Barbara. Martin & Chapman Company, located in Anaheim, California, was established in 1956 and provides election supplies, services and consultation to over 400 cities, counties and associations in the states of California and Nevada. Martin & Chapman satisfactorily provided stand-alone election services to the City in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013. Additionally, the Company has provided limited consultant services to the City of Santa Barbara related to ballot measures, initiatives and elections for the past 20 years. Martin & Chapman serves as the primary election consultant for cities in the California counties of Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial, and has extensive experience in assisting cities that conduct by-district elections.

Martin & Chapman will provide the following supplies and services to the City:

- Nomination, mail ballot and precinct supplies;
- Voter identification reports;
- Vote by mail tracking program;
- Sample ballot/voter information pamphlets;
- Official ballots and supplies;
- Ballot counting, including equipment, and election night supplies;
- Translation services; and
- Qualified staff member availability by telephone or in person.

In addition to the abovementioned agreement with Martin & Chapman Co., the City Clerk's office is anticipating incurring approximately \$34,000 in costs in order to contract with Donna M. Grindey, who will be providing on-site professional services for the election. Ms. Grindey has satisfactorily previously provided stand-alone election consultant services to the City of Santa Barbara in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013.

Next Steps

The election work plan 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 budgeted to be between \$200,000 - 300,000. The cost of a traditional poll election is estimated at \$337,000. The Administrative Services Department Fiscal Year 2016 budget request includes \$300,000 from the General Fund for the 2015 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: Kristine Schmidt, Administrative Services Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



Recommendation to Conduct Vote-By-Mail Election



May 19, 2015

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
- ◆ November 5, 2013 – Vote-By-Mail
 - Mayor and 3 Councilmember seats, 1 ballot measure
 - Cost = \$200,400
- ◆ November 3, 2015 – Budget = \$300,000

Background

Turnout Statistics for 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013

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%
November 5, 2013	46,106	17,659	75%	25%	38.03%

November 3, 2015 Election Vote-By-Mail and By-District

- ◆ 3 Councilmember seats: Districts 1, 3 and 2(?)
- ◆ Potential Ballot Measures
- ◆ Five Drop-Off Centers (DOC's)
 - Franklin Neighborhood Center (Dist. 1), Holy Cross Church (Dist. 2), Calvary Baptist Church (Dist. 3), City Hall, Grace Lutheran Church (if there are ballot measures)
- ◆ City Hall Drop-Off Center open
 - 7 days leading up to Election, during normal business hours;
 - Saturday, October 31, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and
 - All Drop-Off Centers open Election Day 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- ◆ Enhanced Voter Outreach
 - Media, social media, outreach to community groups, etc.

Next Steps

- ◆ June 2015: 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 and/or Charter Amendment
 - Setting priorities for filing written arguments regarding proposed ballot measure and/or Charter Amendment

Recommendations

- A. Authorize the November 3, 2015 Vote-By-Mail Election;
- B. Authorize \$135,000 professional services with Martin & Chapman Company with up to \$20,250 for extra services;
- C. Provide direction to staff to return to discuss potential ballot measures.

