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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

PRESS RELEASE



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LA COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICIAL RELEASES “GENERAL VOTING SYSTEM PRINCIPLES”

Most Significant Overhaul of County Voting Systems Since 1968

Today, the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) moved one step closer to improving voting systems in Los Angeles County. The RR/CC released a set of General Voting System Principles as part of its work through the Voting System Assessment Project (VSAP). The project, and release of these principles, mark an unprecedented shift in voting systems acquisition to a more transparent and customer-oriented process with strong citizen participation. “These principles will help guide the County to select and implement a voting system that voters trust is accessible, accurate and secure and that will help provide the highest level of customer service,” said Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Dean Logan.

The fourteen principles establish and communicate a set of core values that reflect the diverse needs and preferences of Los Angeles County voters. The principles were informed by voters and stakeholders through data collected from a countywide survey and a series of focus groups. Based on that data, the principles were drafted in collaboration with an advisory committee comprised of experts and advocates from the elections, voting integrity and civil rights communities. The principles address important values critical to a fair, accessible, and transparent electoral process. These include: transparency, flexibility, integrity and ease of use.

“The committee worked closely with RR/CC leadership in crafting these principles and ensuring that voter needs were reflected,” said Virginia Mosqueda, Director of Civic Engagement of the California Community Foundation and Chair of the VSAP Advisory Committee. “The richness of Los Angeles County comes from its breadth in diversity and size, the varied perspectives and experiences that the committee brings to the table helped shape a set of principles that could better guide Los Angeles County in meeting the diverse needs of its current and future voters,” added Mosqueda.

(MORE)

“The release of the General Voting System Principles marks an important milestone in the County’s efforts to acquire a new voting system for Los Angeles County,” said Logan. “The principles will guide our efforts to prepare a recommendation regarding the type of voting system and an associated acquisition strategy.”

The County’s voting system has been in use since 1968, undergoing modernization upgrades to replace aging technology and comply with new regulations over the years. The VSAP - a multi-year project - is the most significant effort to overhaul the County’s aging voting technology since 1968.

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Persons requiring multilingual assistance in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog/Filipino or Vietnamese can call (800) 481-8683.

About the Voting System Assessment Project (VSAP)

The vision of the VSAP is to identify and implement a new voting system in a transparent and participatory manner that takes into account the needs and expectations of current and future Los Angeles County voters.

About the VSAP Advisory Committee

The 16 member VSAP Advisory Committee was established in response to a motion adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in September 2010, establishing a more participatory approach to the acquisition and implementation of a new county voting system.

Members include: Evan Bacalao: National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials; Jane Barnett: Republican Party of Los Angeles County; Eric Bauman: Los Angeles County Democratic Party; Kathay Feng: California Common Cause; Carolyn Fowler: Election Protection Board; Ron Hasson: Beverly Hills/Hollywood NAACP; Jaclyn Tilley Hill: Quality and Productivity Commission, Los Angeles County; Mimi Kennedy: Progressive Democrats of America; June Lagmay: City of Los Angeles; Juana Laur: City Clerks Association of California; Eugene Lee: Asian Pacific American Legal Center; Justin Levitt: Loyola Law School; Nancy Mahr: League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County; Virginia Mosqueda: California Community Foundation; Hillary Sklar: Disability Rights California; and Bryce Yokomizo: California State College Northridge.

ABOUT THE REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

The mission of the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk is to serve Los Angeles County by providing essential records management and election services in a fair, accessible and transparent manner.

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TOWARDS A VOTER-ORIENTED VOTING SYSTEM

General Voting System Principles for Los Angeles County



DEAN C. LOGAN
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK



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Message from the Registrar of Voters



September 30, 2011

Dear Voter,

This document provides you with a set General Voting System Principles that were developed from conversations we had with voters and in collaboration with our Voting Systems Assessment Project Advisory Committee comprised of experts and advocates from the elections, voting integrity and civil rights communities in Los Angeles County. These principles will help guide the County in the selection of a new voting system that voters trust is accessible, accurate and secure – and that will provide the highest level of customer service.

Los Angeles County is the nation's largest and most diverse election jurisdiction, serving nearly five million registered voters – more voters than in 38 of the 50 states. Our electorate represents multiple races/ethnicities, national origins, age groups and populations of varying socio-economic status. Within the County, the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk discharges the duties of Registrar of Voters, responsible for voter registration and the administration of accessible, secure, and transparent elections for county, state, and federal contests.

In 2009, the Department launched the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) with the vision of identifying and implementing a new voting system in a transparent and participatory manner; taking into account the needs and expectations of current and future Los Angeles County voters. Traditionally and, more so, in recent years the evaluation and procurement of voting systems has focused disproportionately on technical requirements and hardware. Very little focus was placed on considering the “people” element in the process. While integrity and security of voting system hardware, software, and programming are all extremely important, we strongly believe that voter satisfaction and ease of use are also extremely important.

The release of the General Voting System Principles marks an important milestone in the County's efforts to procure a new voting system for Los Angeles County.

Sincerely,

Dean C. Logan

Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk



Introduction



To ensure that a new voting system for Los Angeles County meets the diverse needs of current and future Los Angeles County voters, the Voting Systems Assessment Project Advisory Committee (herein VSAP Advisory Committee) established a set of principles to help guide the acquisition and implementation of the new system. The VSAP Advisory Committee is part of the broader Voting Systems Assessment Project initiative that seeks to establish a more collaborative, participatory, and transparent framework for the procurement and implementation of a new voting system for Los Angeles County.

The specific goal of these principles is to articulate the importance of:

- voter access to and interface with the voting system
- voting system security and auditability
- operational requirements for transporting, setting up, and operating the voting system

For the purposes of this document, a voting system is defined as the mechanics, materials, technology and process needed to cast and count votes.

This includes:

- the ballot and its layout
- testing system logic and accuracy
- counting voted ballots
- reporting results
- the instructions and device for voters to mark, cast, and confirm the ballot



Project Background

The Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) was launched in 2009 by the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) in response to the growing voting system needs and the unique challenges the County faces due to its size and complexity.

The vision of the VSAP is to identify and implement a new voting system in a transparent and participatory manner that takes into account the needs and expectations of current and future Los Angeles County voters.

The current *InkaVote Plus* and *Microcomputer Tally Systems* have served the voters of Los Angeles County with accuracy and integrity, but, the design of these systems and the age of their technology do not offer the technical and functional elasticity necessary to continue to accommodate the growing demands of the electorate, its diversity, and complexity. This has limited innovation that could help improve the accessibility and efficiency of elections.

With a population of more than 10 million residents spread across 4,000 square miles and over 500 political districts, Los Angeles is the most populated and geographically expansive county and the most complex election jurisdiction in the nation.

The County's population and size provide a depth and breadth of diversity that is also unmatched. These attributes, along with the County's aging voting system, make the delivery of a fair, accessible, and transparent voting process a significant challenge.



“The vision of the VSAP is to identify and implement a new voting system in a transparent and participatory manner...”



VSAP Advisory Committee

The VSAP Advisory Committee was established in response to a motion adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in September 2010, establishing a more participatory approach to the acquisition and implementation of a new county voting system. The Committee provides a formal platform for continued citizen participation and transparency.

The purpose of the Committee is to help analyze and comment on the project's initial research findings and to provide the RR/CC input and guidance for the establishment of principles and general requirements of a voting system; and for the development or acquisition models the County intends to employ.

The Committee is composed of a group of sixteen members representing experts, stakeholders, and community leaders from critical constituency groups and communities of interest, including voters with disabilities, language minority groups and ethnic minorities. Also represented are critical stakeholders such as local election officials, political parties, and academic institutions.

The VSAP Advisory Committee provides valuable insight and expertise that will help inform the acquisition, development, and implementation of the County's new voting system. It also enables the RR/CC to continue to incorporate public input into the procurement of a new voting system in accordance with one of the goals of the VSAP.

“The VSAP Advisory Committee provides valuable insight and expertise that will help inform the acquisition, development, and implementation of the County’s new voting system.”





VSAP Advisory Committee Members

CHAIR:

Virginia Mosqueda, Director of Civic Engagement, California Community Foundation
Ms. Mosqueda plans, implements and monitors Civic Engagement activities for the foundation, which promotes collaboration and advocacy across the nonprofit, public and private sectors to address community problems. She has more than a decade combined experience in the public and nonprofit sectors.

Evan Bacalao, Senior Director of Engagement, NALEO Educational Fund
Mr. Bacalao leads the Civic Engagement program at the NALEO Educational Fund, the leading nonprofit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. The Civic Engagement program includes all of the organization's community-focused efforts, including those to inform and mobilize the Latino electorate.

Jane Barnett, Chair, Republican Party of Los Angeles County
Ms. Barnett oversees an area with 26 Assembly Districts and dozens of other local offices for the Republican Party of Los Angeles County. The party organizes voter registration, disseminates voter information, and recruits appealing candidates.

Eric Bauman, Chair, Los Angeles County Democratic Party
Mr. Bauman is the Vice Chair of the California Democratic Party in addition to serving his sixth term as Chair of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party, the largest local Democratic Party organization in the nation. He is the Senior Advisor to California Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez and the Director of the Speaker's Office of Member Services – Los Angeles (SOMS-LA).

Kathay Feng, Executive Director, Common Cause
Ms. Feng has led California Common Cause to a leadership role in election and redistricting reform, government sunshine and accountability laws, campaign finance reform, media access, and championing the voting rights of traditionally disenfranchised communities. She has served on the California Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Help America Vote Act, the California Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Voter Participation and Outreach, LA County's Community Voter Outreach Committee (founder), and the LA County Human Relations Commission.



VSAP Advisory Committee Members

Carolyn Fowler, Co-Chair, Election Protection Board

Ms. Fowler is Los Angeles County Democratic Party Election Protection Board Co-Chair, a founding member of California Election Protection Network, past President of New Frontier Democratic Club, and LACDP 51st Assembly District elected delegate. Ms. Fowler is also Chief Operating Officer for The Smiley Group, Inc., a communications corporation established in support of human rights and related empowerment issues. Ms. Fowler has provided consulting, training, meeting facilitation, focus groups, speaking and organizational development services to nonprofits, corporations and public sector entities.

Ron Hasson, President, Beverly Hills/Hollywood NAACP

Mr. Hasson leads the Beverly Hills/Hollywood branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the nation's largest and oldest civil right's organization.

Jaclyn Tilley Hill, Chair Emeritus, Quality and Productivity Commission, Los Angeles County

Ms. Hill joined Los Angeles County in 1993. She was the first woman to Chair the Economy and Efficiency Commission and the Quality and Productivity Commission. She chaired the Countywide Communications Team and Productivity Investment Board. She currently serves on the Board of Governors of Long Beach City College Foundation. Ms. Hill has extensive experience in local elections serving as a voting inspector in Whittier and Long Beach.

Mimi Kennedy, Board Chair, Progressive Democrats of America

Ms. Kennedy is Founding National Advisory Board Chair of Progressive Democrats of America. In addition to her role as an activist where has worked on human rights, environmental and labour issues, she is also an actress and author.

June Lagmay, City Clerk, City of Los Angeles

Ms. Lagmay possesses nearly 30 years experience with the City of Los Angeles. For 15 of those years she worked on the staffs of three consecutive L.A. Mayors. She also has legislative expertise having worked in an Assembly office, four years in a Council office and six years in the City Clerk's Office.

Juana Laur, Southern Division Chair, City Clerks Association of California

Ms. Laur is the Deputy City Clerk for the City of Laguna Niguel in Orange County California. She is also Chair of the Southern Division of the City Clerks Association of California, an organization with the objective of promoting the city clerk profession throughout the state of California.

Eugene Lee, Director of Voting Rights, Asian Pacific American Legal Center

Mr. Lee leads the Voting Rights Project Director at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) in Los Angeles. He directs APALC's work on voter protection, Voting Rights Act compliance and ballot access policy and is currently working to strengthen the voice of AAPI communities during the 2011 redistricting process.



VSAP Advisory Committee Members

Justin Levitt, Associate Professor, Loyola Law School

Prof. Levitt, is a national expert in election law. He has testified before committees of the U.S. Senate and state legislative bodies, and his published and peer-reviewed research has been cited in the media and the courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court. Prof. Levitt has also served several presidential campaigns, including as the National Voter Protection Counsel in 2008, helping to ensure that millions of citizens could vote and have those votes counted.

Nancy Mahr, President, League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County

Ms. Mahr is president of both the Palos Verdes and Los Angeles County League of Women Voters. She also serves on the Legislative Committee for AAUW California. She is in her second term as an elected member of the Board of Trustees of the Palos Verdes Library District.

Hillary Sklar, Attorney, Disability Rights California

Ms. Sklar is an Attorney in the Los Angeles Regional Office of Disability Rights California. Her areas of expertise include voting rights and government benefits. Ms. Sklar is a member of the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's Community Voter Outreach Committee (CVOC), the community chair of the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder's Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), and is also a member of the Orange County and San Diego VAACs.

Bryce Yokomizo, Adjunct Faculty, School of Public Administration, California State University, Northridge

Prof. Yokomizo formerly served as Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services, managing public welfare services with a budget of \$3 billion, and staff of over 14,000. He also served as Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Los Angeles County, and has served on Governing Boards of numerous management and non-profit human services organizations.

Alternates

Judy Alter, Director, Protect California Ballots

Theresa Devoy, City Clerk, City of Norwalk

Maria de la Luz Garcia, Senior Project Coordinator, City of Los Angeles

Rosalind Gold, Senior Director of Policy, Research and Advocacy, NALEO Educational Fund

Richard Hunter, Legal Committee, Republican Party of Los Angeles County

Clark Lee, Political Director, Los Angeles County Democratic Party

Margo Reeg, 1st Vice-President for Voter Services, League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County

Ruth Wong, Executive Director, Quality and Productivity Commission



Developing Voting System Principles



“The need for clearly defined principles to guide the acquisition/development of a new system is imperative if the system is going to meet the needs of such a large and diverse electorate.”

The voting system principles were developed over a series of four meetings. Through group exercises and discussions among the Committee and with RR/CC staff, a set of fourteen principles were adopted by consensus.

These principles will guide the acquisition and development of a new voting system for the County as technical requirements for a new system are developed. In these principles, Committee members established and communicated a set of core values that will help the County establish a voting system that promotes fairness, accessibility and transparency.

To develop these principles, VSAP Advisory Committee members reviewed and considered the data gathered during VSAP’s initial research phase which compiled extensive public opinion data regarding voter needs and preferences.

During this research phase, the RR/CC, in conjunction with MIT and CalTech’s Voting Technology Project (VTP) and the Irvine Foundation, conducted a series of research activities including surveys and focus groups.

Over 1,200 voters, and approximately 1,200 election workers and local election officials participated in these activities which took place in the spring of 2010. The RR/CC released a report in July 2010 presenting the findings of this research.

Through this initial research, it became evident that while there are certain voting system attributes that all voters value, there is also some disparity in how different groups prioritize these attributes. As such, the need for clearly defined principles to guide the acquisition/development of a new system is imperative if the system is going to meet the needs of such a large and diverse electorate.

The VSAP Advisory Committee was tasked with identifying and defining these principles.



Developing Voting System Principles

Research conducted during the initial phase of VSAP and discussions between the VSAP Advisory Committee and election staff revealed some core themes surrounding voter needs and preferences for voting system use and operation.

The following themes were discussed to identify and develop the voting system principles.

- Transparency
- Scalability
- Flexibility
- Ability to Instill Public Trust
- Integrity
- Ability to Offer Variety of Options to Cast a Vote
- Guarantee of a Private and Independent Voting Experience
- Ease of Use for the County's Diverse Electorate
- Ease of Use for Pollworkers
- Portability
- Allowance for Safe and Secure Storage
- Minimal and/or Flexible Power Connectivity Requirements
- Minimal Requirements for System Boot/Programming
- Cost-Effectiveness



General Voting System Principles

The following principles were adopted by the VSAP Advisory Committee on August 24, 2011.

1. The voting system must provide for transparency.

The processes and transactions associated with how the system is set up, run, and stored should be easy for the public to understand and verify. This should include making hardware components available for inspection, and source code to the extent that the manner of doing so would not jeopardize system security or availability.

2. The voting system must be scalable.

The system must provide sufficient technical and physical capacity to accommodate large and complex ballot styles, growing language needs, extremely large numbers of precincts and consolidation of elections with local districts and municipalities.

3. The voting system must be flexible.

It must provide the ability to adapt to different election types, environments, and changing regulatory requirements, without the need to replace the entire system or to undertake costly system modifications that potentially compromise security.

4. The voting system must instill public trust by having the ability to produce a physical and tangible record of a voter's ballot to verify the ballot was marked as intended before it is cast and to ensure auditability of the system.

It must demonstrate to voters, candidates, and the general public that all votes are counted as cast.

5. The voting system must have integrity and be accountable to voters and follow existing regulations.

System features must protect against fraud and tampering. It should also be easy to audit and produce useful, accessible data to verify vote counts and monitor system performance.

6. The voting system must offer a variety of options to cast a vote to ensure that a single/fixed method of voting does not prove to be a barrier and source of disenfranchisement for any group of voters.

The system should allow for variety in the location, time, and equipment used to cast a ballot.



General Voting System Principles

7. The voting system must guarantee a private and independent voting experience for all voters, including voters with a full range of types of disabilities and voters with limited English proficiency.
Voting system features must allow the voter to select the language, adjust display features, alternate ballot formats (e.g. Audio Ballot), and method of controlling the marking tool, allowing voters to cast a ballot independently.
8. The voting system must be easy for all voters to use, in particular, for voters with a full range of types of disabilities and voters with limited English proficiency.
The system must support plain language and be intuitive, user-friendly, and accessible to all, in order to minimize and easily identify voter errors. It should also provide all voters the ability to easily correct any errors that appear on their ballot prior to casting their ballot.
9. The voting system should be easy and reliable for election workers to use, set-up, breakdown, and explain.
10. The voting system must be portable.
It should be lightweight and compact enough for transportation, set up, and efficient storage. A portable system could include features such as hand grips, handles, straps, and wheels that make transporting and maneuvering the voting system easy.
11. The voting system must include features for safe and secure storage.
It should include features such as locks and security seals to protect the integrity of the machine while in the custody of election workers or in storage with election officials.
12. The voting system must have minimal and/or flexible power and connectivity requirements.
It should not require such an extensive amount of power and connectivity that it limits locations where the voting system can be deployed.
13. The voting system must have minimal requirements for system boot/programming at polling sites and/or vote centers.
It must also provide intuitive and quick fix troubleshooting solutions to empower election workers on Election Day. It should be easy to set up for operation by election workers at polling sites and/or vote centers.
14. The voting system must be cost-effective.
Costs considered should include procurement, operating, and maintenance costs as well as consideration of expected system/equipment lifespan.



Stay Connected

For more information regarding the Voting Systems Assessment Project please contact:

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More information regarding the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) and the VSAP Advisory Committee is available to the public online at:



www.lavote.net/voter/vsap



Voting Systems Assessment Project Facebook Page

The pages on our website and on Facebook are frequently updated with news and information and are a great way to stay connected with the progress of the project. We strongly encourage public input throughout the process.