

County of Santa Clara

Registrar of Voters

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DATE: March 4, 2022

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

FROM: Shannon Bushey, Registrar of Voters *SB*

SUBJECT: Under advisement from the January 20, 2022 FGOC Meeting (Agenda Item No. 6): Off-Agenda Report Regarding Ranked Choice Voting Research and Timelines

At the January 20, 2022 meeting of the Finance and Government Operations Committee (FGOC), the Committee heard a report from the Citizens Advisory Commission on Elections (CACE) requesting the Board to consider enacting Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for all County offices beginning in the 2024 Election cycle. The Committee Chair requested that Administration prepare an off-agenda report regarding the research and time needed to consider the various impacts of implementing RCV, and then report back to FGOC in August. County Counsel was directed to provide input as needed, as there may be legal issues to address.

The topic of RCV has long been a subject of interest of the County's CACE Commission. The matter was discussed by the Commission during the 2021 cycle of CACE regular meetings.

The ROV initiated its research into the various changes that RCV would trigger on the design and layout of the ballot, as well as what modifications to the voting system would be required to tabulate RCV ballots. The ROV was asked by CACE to reach out to San Francisco and Alameda Counties, both of which utilize RCV for a few of their cities. Mock ballots were created and presented by ROV to CACE, which then prompted the Commission's request to FGOC for consideration of RCV for all County offices. The ROV has also created an internal Cross-Functional Team (CFT) to further analyze the operational impacts of RCV.

To date, the ROV has determined that the voting system would require the purchase and installation of the RCV software module from the voting systems vendor; the Election Night Reporting (ENR) software would need to be updated to accommodate RCV; the size of the ballot would increase, in terms of the number of cards, dependent on the number of jurisdictions that chose to utilize the RCV ballot type (two cities have also inquired as to the options for RCV); Memoranda of Understanding would need to be created with County Counsel's assistance for those jurisdictions that choose to implement RCV; election materials, such as envelopes, ballot instructions, and the County Voter Information Guides, would need to be redesigned; additional space would be needed for operations and storage throughout the various stages of the election operations, for both equipment and staff; training of vote center workers would need to be expanded to incorporate the RCV education components to be shared with voters at the vote

centers; and a large, comprehensive voter education campaign would need to be developed and disseminated on an ongoing basis.

The ROV anticipates that it would need 12-16 months minimum to complete all necessary due diligence and develop and execute an implementation plan. Any decision to move forward with RCV would need to be made by the Board of Supervisors before the end of calendar year 2022 for implementation for the 2024 Primary election cycle. The ROV will further refine this timeline for presentation at the August FGOC meeting.

cc: Chief Board Aides
Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer
James R. Williams, County Counsel
Tiffany Lennear, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
John P. Mills, Deputy County Executive/Director, Employee Services Agency