



## Memorandum

**To:** Elections Commission  
**From:** John Arntz, Director  
**Date:** May 12, 2023  
**RE:** Director's Report: May 17, 2023, 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 April 19, 2023.

**I. The Department has been monitoring public feedback for its new *sfgov.org* website, launched on April 21.**

- A. Since its launch, the Department's new homepage has had 3,754 views and 1,049 unique visitors. Any visitor can submit feedback from any page via the "Was this page helpful?" or the "Report something wrong with this page" buttons. So far, the Department has only received one comment, which was about access to elections results.
  - i. In response to this feedback, the Department fast tracked the task of moving all past election results to the new elections results template wrapper on *sfelections.org*. As of this writing, approximately two-thirds of past results pages, which cover elections from November 1995 through November 2022, have been migrated to *sfelections.org*.
  - ii. Once Department personnel have completed migrating all English elections results for this time period, they will migrate all translated elections results for the same time period.
- B. The Department continues the archiving of its legacy website, with ease of use and retention laws in mind.
  - i. Prior to the launch of new site, Digital Services archived the Department's legacy website using Archive-It. However, Digital Services has since indicated they are aware of certain challenges with Archive-It and are in the process of developing a more effective archiving solution at some point.
  - ii. Consequently, with the goal of soon providing a more user-friendly archive while complying with all legally-mandated retention rules, the Department is currently exploring alternatives to Archive-It. One option that the Department is considering would be to make the un-editable version of the legacy site live on the web again, with search engine results directed to the new site.
- C. The Department continues to work on refreshing its eData tool that provides access to information such as voter registration, ballot return statistics, operations (e.g., polling place and poll worker recruitment), along with the ability to download various datasets in several formats.
  - i. In the current phase of this project, the Department is moving the eData tool to a new template wrapper and improving the clarity and comprehensiveness of several user interface displays. Subsequent phases of this project will focus on further enhancing related data displays with a particular emphasis on providing clear and engaging information for website users.

## II. The Department continues to provide voter outreach and education to communities across the City.

- A. In recent weeks, the Department's Outreach Team has participated in a number of neighborhood events, hosting resource tables, and distributing outreach materials about voting and registration options. These events were co-hosted with the Bayview Hunters Point Mobilization for Adolescent Growth in our Communities (BMAGIC), a network of local nonprofit organizations whose mission is to facilitate, coordinate and develop community resources and opportunities that support service providers and community members in Bayview Hunters Point; Project Homeless Connect 78th Community Day of Service, which helps housing-insecure individuals to access resources and services under one roof from over 40+ providers; Glide Memorial Church, which provides meals and services to homeless and housing insecure individuals and their families; Heart of the City Farmer's Market in United Nations Plaza, which is frequented by many local residents; Latino Task Force - Mission Hub, which serves Latino populations who are experiencing challenging times; and the 16th Annual Youth Summit, which provides resources to youth of Asian Pacific Islander community.
- B. The Department's Outreach Team wrapped up its activities for this spring's High School Voter Education Weeks on April 28. Through this High School Student Ambassador Program, which ran from April 17 through April 28, the Department engaged 20 high school students representing 13 local schools. As a result of this program, student ambassadors pre-registered 350 individuals aged 16-17, registered 380 individuals aged 18-24, and gained valuable experience while making a difference in our community. Over the course of the program, the Department supported all program participants, helping students create a video that encouraged other students to pre-register to vote and various social media posts about the benefits of registering to vote and voting in general. Student ambassadors also collaborated with various school clubs and sports teams, including the dragon boat team, acapella group, and afternoon tutoring program, as well as baseball and soccer teams.
- C. On Friday, April 21, the Department launched its Go Green! outreach campaign, aimed at encouraging voters to stop postal delivery of their Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP) and choose to read it online instead.

- i. The first phase of this campaign, which ran from April 21 through May 8, focused on environmentally friendly messaging that urged voters to reduce paper consumption by switching to the digital VIP. During this first phase, the Department's Social Media Team shared Go Green! campaign messaging on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Nextdoor. These social media posts achieved a total of 21,621 impressions to date.

The day before Earth Day, on April 21, the Department sent an email to over 200,000 voters, highlighting the benefits of reading the VIP online.

On Earth Day, April 22, the Department's Outreach Division staffed two community events at Golden Gate Park, including Earth Day San Francisco at the County Fairgrounds.

For a two-week period beginning on Earth Day, the Department displayed Go Green! messaging on digital billboards and out-of-home media screens across the City, generating more than 225,000 impressions. During this time, the Department also ran online digital advertisement banners that produced over 400,000 impressions.

During the week of April 24, the Department added temporary Go Green! signage to all 34 ballot drop boxes. The new signage includes information on how to opt-out in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino and features a QR code that links to the Voter Portal, where voters can make a switch.

- ii. On Wednesday, May 3, the Department's Social Media Team conducted an Instagram poll, asking users how they prefer to read their VIP. The results of this poll indicated that 43% of users prefer to read their Pamphlet online, while 57% prefer to read a paper copy.

Since the launch of the Go Green! campaign, the Department's Outreach team has conducted more than 15 tabling events across the City. From conversations with voters, Outreach staff has learned that voters most likely to switch to the digital VIP are those that live in multi-voter households.

The feedback received from Outreach events is in line with feedback received via the Department's social media accounts, suggesting that many San Franciscans prefer to have access to a paper VIP, but would consider receiving only one paper copy for their household to share.

- iii. Starting in May, the Department intends to launch phase two of this campaign, which will target multi-voter households by encouraging them to share one paper VIP per household. This campaign will consist mainly of messaging to promote the benefits of sharing the VIP and reducing clutter.

To assist with phase two's targeted messaging, the Department will utilize data from its election management system to determine the number of households with multiple active voters receiving multiple paper VIPs. The data shows that there are over 100,000 such households in San Francisco. This data will enable the Department to prioritize campaign messaging in ZIP codes with high numbers of multi-voter households, in order to effectively reach the target audience.

- iv. Since the launch of the Go Green! campaign on April 22, approximately 1,020 voters stopped postal delivery of their VIP.

### III. The Department continues to work on numerous short, mid, and long-term administrative projects.

- A. The Department has been facilitating the filing of Declarations of Candidacy and related nomination documents to people planning to run for Mayor or the Board of Supervisors in the November 2024 election. The current list of local candidates is available at [sf.gov/reports/november-2024/candidates-november-5-2024-consolidated-general-election](https://sf.gov/reports/november-2024/candidates-november-5-2024-consolidated-general-election).
- B. The Department submitted its 2022 Racial Equity Progress Report to the Office of Racial Equity and posted it at [sf.gov/our-racial-equity-action-plan](https://sf.gov/our-racial-equity-action-plan).
- C. The Department is now negotiating agreements with the *2023 Vote Restoration Request for Proposals* grantees who will provide outreach to actively and formerly justice-involved individuals starting June 1, 2023 through November 1, 2023. In the first week of June, Department staff will begin grantee training, which will focus on reviewing official outreach messages and voter registration rules.
- D. The Department began reviewing and redesigning its collection of polling place signs with several goals in mind: 1) to increase the visibility of key voting information, including the availability of accessible and language resources, 2) to consolidate and streamline content to the extent allowable by law (which sets requirements for polling place signage), and 3) to make the process of setting up and taking down signs easier for poll workers.
- E. The Department continues to collaborate with the Mayor's Budget Office and the Board of Supervisors' Budget and Legislative Analyst's Office on its budget proposals for the next two fiscal years:

- i. Last month, the Mayor's Budget Office indicated the City's financial outlook had worsened and that all budget proposals submitted earlier this year must include reductions of at least 5% more for both fiscal years. For the Department, 5% reduction equates to approximately \$1.2 mil and \$1.4 mil in FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25, respectively.
  - ii. Despite the fact that all reductions to the Department's budget proposals have the potential to adversely impact elections operations and services, the Department has been working with the Mayor's Budget Office to identify the requested cuts.
  - iii. The Department's initial proposed budget cuts (for staff overtime, staff training costs, printing, postage, and hardware) totaled \$659,000 and \$646,000 in FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25, respectively. To meet its reduction target, the Mayor's Budget Office proposed additional cuts (for staff salaries, ballot printing, and outreach grant funding).
  - iv. The Department is still collaborating with the Mayor's Budget Office to finalize reductions to its submitted FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 budget proposals. The Mayor's Budget office will complete and release the Mayor's proposed budget by June 1, 2023, which will then be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors.
  - v. Every budget cycle, the Legislative Analyst's Office of the Board of Supervisors' Budget (BLA) conducts a thorough review of the Mayor's proposed budget with the goal of identifying and recommending additional savings. The Department is therefore currently compiling data in response to a recent request for information from the BLA.
- F. The Department has been working with the San Francisco Health Services System (SFHSS) to highlight and adopt programs that support healthy choices and the emotional well-being of all of Department employees. These include:
- i. The transformation of personal protective equipment and disinfecting stations (PPEDs) in all divisional areas. Now, in addition to masks, gloves, sanitizer, and wipes, these stations will house small exercise equipment like weights and stretch bands as well as brochures about exercise and a Jenga set. Department staff can also check out coloring books, healthy recipes, and cards with short, positive affirmations.
  - ii. The creation of a new snack station featuring healthy snacks like fresh fruit provided monthly by SFHSS.
  - iii. The implementation of regular email reminders to encourage employees to check information on free City classes about well-being and exercise. These include, for example, Pilates, meditation, personal development, emotional awareness, gender-affirming care, and stress reduction.
- G. The Department continues to carry out voter file maintenance, including the processing of online and paper affidavits of registration and the sending of notices on a weekly basis to voters who have recently registered or re-registered.
- H. The Department continues to provide routine services to members of the public who visit the Department's office in person as well as those who contact the Department via email or phone.

**IV. Responses to the Commission's request for information to be included in the Director's monthly report.**

- A. There are no new items to report under this section.