



Voter's Choice Act

Clerk-Recorder-Assessor- Registrar of Voters

March 16, 2021

Background

- Senate Bill 450 (2016)
- New model for conducting elections
- 5 counties implemented pilots in 2018
- 10 additional counties implemented in 2020
 - Majority of California voters now vote under this model
- More counties implementing for 2022 election cycle



Traditional Polling Place Model

- Only certain voters mailed a ballot
 - Those signed up to permanently vote by mail
 - Those requesting a vote by mail ballot for that election only
 - Those in mailed ballot precincts
- Assigned polling places (175-200 for county-wide election)
 - Not necessarily closest/most convenient location
 - Polling places only have one ballot type
 - No guarantee of voting all races to which you are entitled if you go to another location
 - Hard to find enough bilingual poll workers for all locations
 - Paper rosters printed two weeks in advance
- Minimal requirements/resources for additional outreach



Voter's Choice Act Model

- All active, registered voters are sent a ballot in the mail
- 1 secure ballot drop box for every 15,000 voters
- 1 vote center per 50,000 voters (11 days)
- 1 vote center per 10,000 voters (4 days)
- Voters can go to any vote center in the County to cast their vote
- Election Administration Plan with public input
- Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC)
- Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)
- Increased public outreach and communication



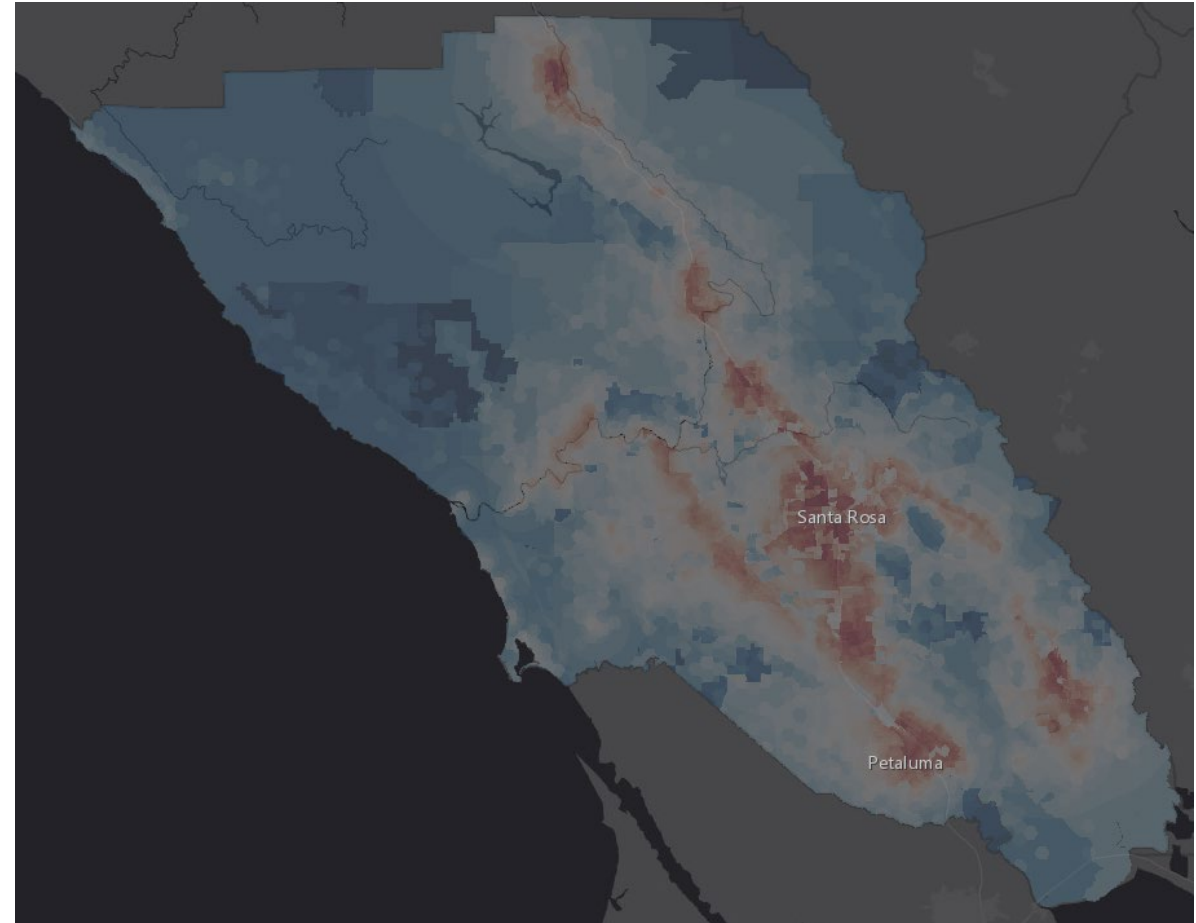
Voter's Choice Act Model for Sonoma County

- Approximately 303,000 registered voters
- Traditional Polling Place Model
 - 84% permanent vote by mail voters
 - 175 – 200 polling places
 - 900 – 1,200 poll workers
- Voter's Choice Act Model
 - 16% increase in ballots mailed
 - 7 locations open for 11 days
 - 31 locations open for 4 days
 - 21 ballot drop boxes
 - 250 – 400 poll workers



Voting and Drop Box Locations

- Considerations to determine locations
- 15 criteria
 - Population Centers
 - Language Minority Communities
 - Low-income Communities
 - Public Transportation
 - Communities with Low Vote by Mail Usage
 - Voters with Disabilities
 - Free Parking
 - Colleges & Universities
 - Traffic Patterns
 - Low Household Ownership
 - Eligible Un-registered Voters
 - Geographically Isolated Populations
 - Time & Distance for Voters
 - Alternate Methods of Voting Available
 - Need for Mobile Vote Centers



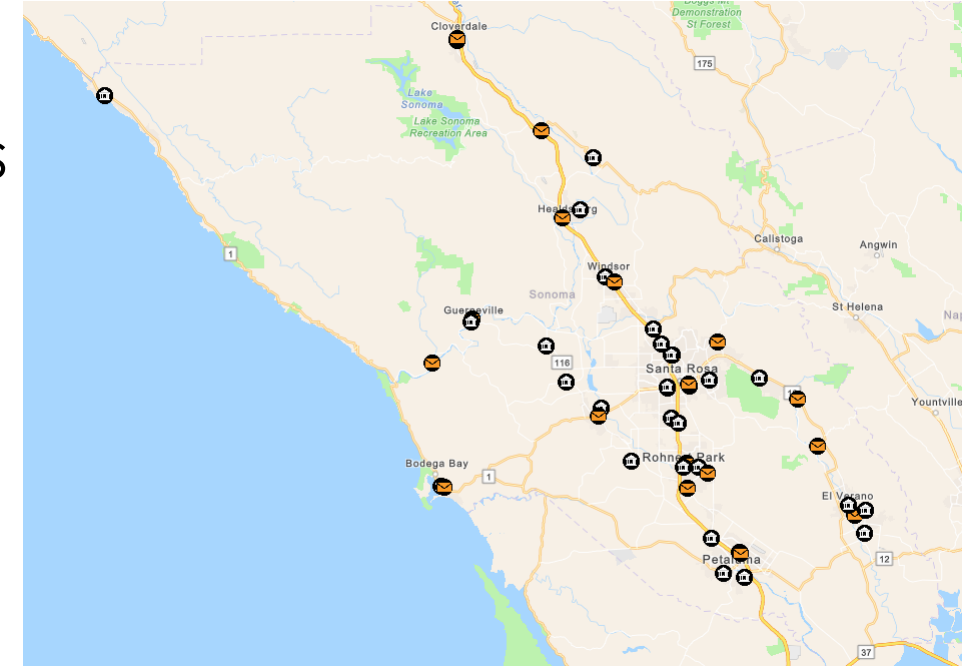
November 2020 Election

- Unable to conduct traditional polling place election due to COVID-19
- Able to implement a VCA-similar model
 - No Elections Administration Plan
 - No 11 day vote centers
 - No additional direct mailings
- Used grant funding from CARES Act and Center for Tech and Civic Life
 - Mobile Ballot Printers
 - Secure, encrypted wireless access point devices
 - Secure ballot drop boxes
 - Laptops, label printers, mice, cables



November 2020 Election (Continued)

- Secured 29 locations for 4 days of voting
- Installed 17 new ballot drop boxes
- Mailed ballots to all active, registered voters
- Worked with CAO Communications team for enhanced outreach and voter education
- Configured and deployed new hardware and software
- Trained poll workers on new model



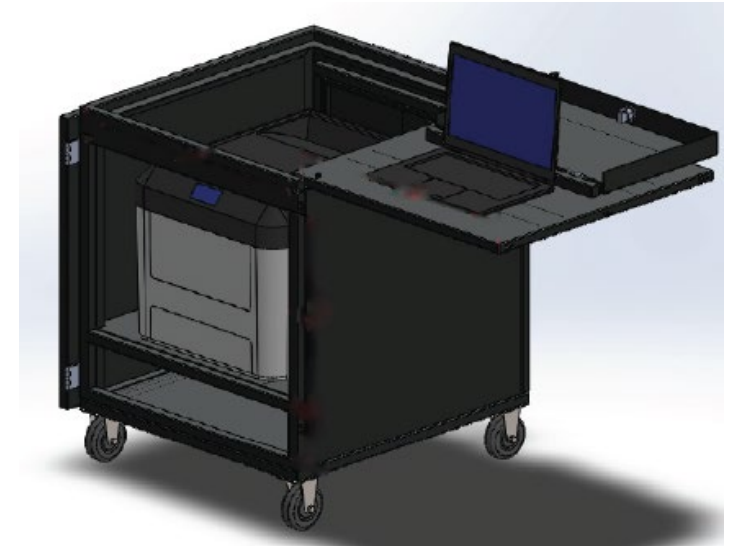
November 2020 Election Results

- Highest turnout in California
- Positive feedback from voters, staff and poll workers
- Voter usage
 - Ballot Drop Boxes – 43%
 - Mail – 36%
 - Drop off at Voting Location – 8%
 - Drop off at ROV Counter – 7%
 - In-Person – 6%



Voter's Choice Act Model Costs

- Already Purchased via Grant Funding
 - \$612,000 - 70 Mobile Ballot Printer Units (secure cart, laptop, printer, toner)
 - \$85,000 – 32 CradlePoint secure, encrypted routers
 - \$72,000 – 19 drop boxes (signage & fire suppression)
 - \$48,000 – 32 laptops, 75 label printers, mice, cables
 - \$12,000 – 6 Generators for PSPS events



Voter's Choice Act Model Costs (Continued)

- Ongoing Costs
 - \$45,000 for 0.25 Department Information Systems Specialist
 - Addresses increase in IT support work for each election
 - Programming secure routers for each location
 - Site coordination and visits for testing and set up
 - Programming 60+ Mobile Ballot Printers/Laptops
 - Programming 90+ laptops
 - Maintaining and upgrading equipment when not in election cycle
- One Time Costs
 - \$78,000 for additional laptops
 - Utilized Assessor replacement laptops for November election



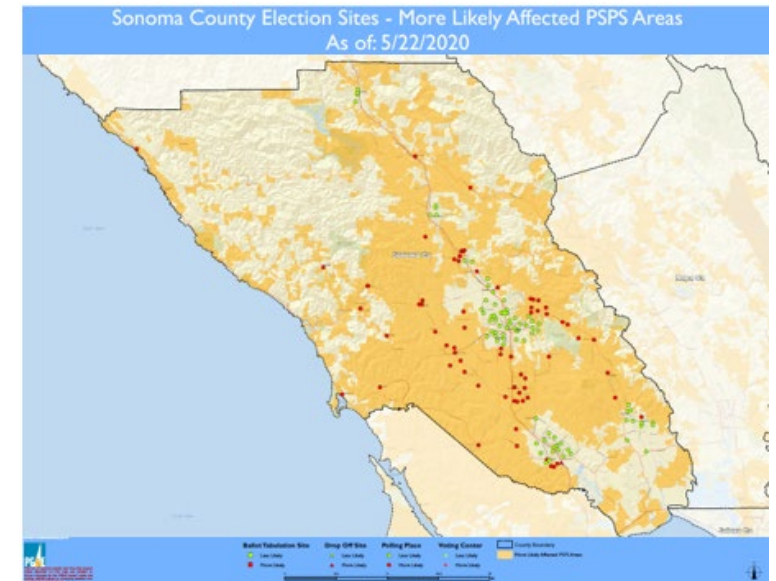
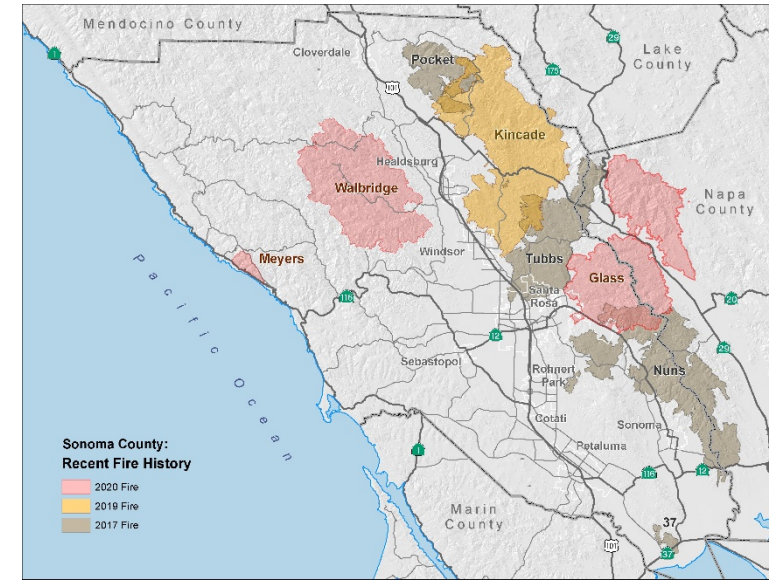
Voter's Choice Act Model Costs (Continued)

- Per Election Cost Increases (Estimated for County-wide elections)
 - \$28,000 for Voting Locations
 - \$25,000 for Sonoma County Veterans Buildings for 11 days
 - \$120,000 Community Outreach
 - \$90,000 for 2 separate postcard mailings, as required
 - \$30,000 for Public Service Announcements and media advertisements
 - \$40,000 for Poll Worker pay
 - \$15,000 in postage savings
- \$173,000 Total, 10-20% increase overall
- \$96,000 to \$131,000 (55% to 75%) County costs, based on election



Why Change?

- Disaster Resiliency
- Enhanced Fraud Protection and Security
- Voter Choice & Convenience
- More Public Input to Elections Administration Plan
- More Voter Outreach / Communications
- More Bilingual Access
- Reduces Voter Challenges
- Operational Efficiency



Questions?

