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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

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FROM: Dean C. Logan,  Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

VSAP Quarterly Report – 2nd Quarter, 2015

The following is the second quarterly update of 2015, detailing project activities and accomplishments during the period of March 1, 2015 - May 31, 2015. These reports are provided to inform your Board and the public on the progress of the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP). This quarterly report is prepared in response to the motion adopted by your Board on September 7, 2010.

During this reporting period, the Department continued to refine the design towards a final concept by engaging voters, subject matter experts and other key stakeholders. As the system continues to be refined, we have initiated the documentation of draft design and engineering specifications. These specifications are critical and necessary for the next phase of the project, the manufacturing and certification of the final system design.

Engineering System Development Update

IDEO, our partner in our System Engineering Phase, continues to gather feedback on the proposed ballot marking device and supporting systems/processes. This feedback is used to refine the concepts to better meet the needs of all users with specific emphasis on suability for voters and election workers. Feedback is gathered through user testing where voters interact directly with early generation system prototypes as well as through discussion with subject matter experts and community advocates who are a part of the VSAP Advisory Committee and the VSAP Technical Advisory Committee.

User Testing

We, in conjunction with IDEO have conducted a series of user testing sessions to test various features and function of the latest iteration of the ballot marking device. During these user testing sessions, voters were asked to simulate the marking and casting of a ballot using a system prototype. Participants were observed during the process and were asked to provide feedback during a short interview. This qualitative research allowed us to learn more about how individuals interact with proposed system features and functions and how users feel about the general experience.

During this reporting period, there were eleven user testing sessions conducted. Sessions took place throughout Los Angeles County and in the San Francisco/Palo Alto area where IDEO offices are located. The sessions focused on the following features of the prototypes: a touchscreen interface, audio user interface, sample keypads, voting in a language other than English, switching between languages during the voting process, privacy and security of the voting booth, storage, transportation, set up and break down of the voting booth, and various other features/functions. A variety of participants were engaged in each user testing session. These participants consisted of, but were not limited to: people from a variety of age groups, people whose primary language is Spanish and/or Korean, persons with physical and/or cognitive disabilities, and military veterans.



VSAP Advisory and Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

In order to further assist with refining the prototype system components, IDEO and the Department met with the VSAP Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee in April. Advisory Committee members provided feedback on the latest iteration of the ballot marking device and provided recommendations for further testing and refinement of the system. The Technical Advisory Committee meeting involved detailed discussions of technical and feasibility issues, and identified where research was still needed. Topics such as ballot size, paper type, and printing method were examined at length and many recommendations were received.

Funding

The Department submitted a request to the Voting Modernization Board (VMB) for approval of the use of Voting Modernization Bond Act (Prop 41) monies to fund the continued development of the ballot marking device and supporting systems. On June 2, 2015, the VMB approved the request and

authorized \$11,085,765 for the completion of the current system design and engineering phase¹. The funds are distributed as a 3:1 match and take into consideration previous VSAP expenditures for the matching ratio. After disbursement of these funds, the Department will have a remaining balance of approximately \$37.9 million in Voting Modernization Bond Funds available for the continued development and manufacturing of the system.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

During this period, the Department continued to meet with the public and stakeholders via engaging the VSAP Technical Advisory Committee, VSAP Advisory Committee, and hosting user testing with participants from a variety of backgrounds.

March 3, 2015 – IDEO Visits Polling Locations

Several polling locations were visited in Santa Clarita, Lancaster, and Palmdale to continue to learn about voter and pollworker processes and procedures during Election Day. Opening and closing procedures as well as voters checking in and casting ballots were observed.

March 9, 2015 – User Testing Sessions for Seniors and Spanish-speakers

We engaged 57 participants using three voting systems, two experimental prototypes, and one comparison system (InkaVote). Participants included a range of individuals varying in age, ethnicity, and language capabilities with a focus on senior citizens and voters whose primary language was Spanish. A full report of research findings is available on our website.²

March 26, 2015 – IDEO Inspiration Research: visually-impaired

We engaged 5 participants with varying degrees of visual impairments (from low vision to completely blind) and varying levels of proficiency with technology to further refine and expand on usability and accessibility of the device. Participants engaged with an early prototype of the audio user interface and various tactile key pads. A full report of research findings is available on our website.³

April 14, 2015 – VSAP Advisory Committee Meeting

VSAP team members, IDEO, and the VSAP Advisory Committee met for a half-day to discuss the latest ballot marking device prototype and reviewed further refinements for the next iteration of concepts. Members were presented the concepts and information on how the concepts were derived. A copy of the presentation discussed during this meeting is available on our website⁴.

April 17, 2015 – VSAP Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

VSAP team members, IDEO, and VSAP Technical Advisory Committee members met at IDEO offices in Palo Alto to discuss the latest design directions. Members were presented with system prototypes and engaged in a discussion to provide feedback. A copy of the presentation discussed during this meeting is available on our website⁵.

April 29, 2015 – User Testing Session for Election Staff

We conducted three user testing sessions. One session with each of the following groups: Los

¹ http://lavote.net/Documents/vsap/press_room/06102015_Authorization%20of%20Funding%20Award%20Package.pdf

² <http://www.lavote.net/Documents/vsap/Research%20Report%20March%202015%20V1.5.pdf>

³ <http://www.lavote.net/Documents/vsap/Audio%20Inspiration%20Report%20V1.5.pdf>

⁴ http://lavote.net/Documents/vsap/VSAP_AC_VotingExp_VSAP_FINAL_03.pdf

⁵ http://lavote.net/Documents/vsap/VSAP_TAC-update_2015-04-21_v02_small.pdf

Angeles County poll workers, poll worker trainers, and election operations staff. The feedback received was used to further refine the design of the system. These sessions focused on the storage, transportation, set up and break down of the devices. Once finalized, a full report of research findings will be posted on the Department website.

May 6, 2015 – Meeting with Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

VSAP team members met with Supervisor Sheila Kuehl to provide an executive overview of the VSAP and demonstrate an early generation prototype of the ballot marking device.

May 7, 2015 – Meeting with Supervisor Hilda Solis

VSAP team members met with Supervisor Hilda Solis to provide an executive overview of the VSAP and demonstrate an early generation prototype of the ballot marking device.

May 26, 2015 –User Testing Session for Seniors

We engaged 27 voters from Los Angeles County at the Altadena Senior Center to test the latest version of the ballot marking device. During this session, participants provided feedback on the system's usability, accessibility, privacy and overall experience.

May 28, 2015 –User Testing Session for Military Veterans and Individuals with Disabilities

We engaged 40 veterans and individuals with disabilities at the Bob Hope Patriotic Hall in downtown Los Angeles. During this session, participants provided feedback on the system's accessibility features and overall usability and privacy of the experience.

May 28, 2015 –User Testing Session for Spanish-speakers

We met with 39 voters in Huntington Park at the Old Timers Foundation to test the latest prototype iteration with a focus on individuals whose primary language is Spanish. During this session, participants provided feedback on the system's Spanish language user interface and audio ballot as well as general system usability, accessibility, and privacy.

May 30, 2015 –User Testing Session for Korean-speakers and Young Voters

We met with 35 voters at the Korean Resource Center in downtown Los Angeles. Focus for this session included young voters and voters whose primary language is Korean. Voters provided feedback on the systems Korean language user interface and audio ballot as well as general system usability, accessibility, and privacy.

May 30, 2015 –User Testing Session for a Mixed Demographic

We met with 39 voters of varying demographics at the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's office in Norwalk. Users in this session included a diverse group of individuals representing various age groups, literacy levels, cognitive disabilities and ethnic groups. During this session, participants provided feedback on the system's usability, accessibility, privacy and overall experience.

About the VSAP

Launched in September 2009, the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP) was developed by the Department in response to the growing voting system needs and challenges faced by the County. While the County's current voting system has served the voters of Los Angeles County with accuracy and integrity, 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 and increasingly diverse electorate.

The size and diversity of Los Angeles County and the limited voting systems market, however, make it almost impossible to reasonably consider a commercial off-the-shelf voting system solution. Any voting system solution will entail a significant development or customization process in order to satisfy the County's needs, General Voting System Principles and technical requirements.

In response to these needs and challenges, the VSAP takes an unprecedented and comprehensive approach at modernizing the County's voting system. The vision of the project is to implement a voting system through a transparent process that takes into account the needs and expectations of current and future Los Angeles County voters. The VSAP aims at achieving three goals in this process: 1) give current and future Los Angeles County voters an unprecedented opportunity to participate in the assessment and development process; 2) increase voter confidence in the electoral process through the participatory structure of the project; 3) synthesize public input and research to acquire or develop a new voting system for the County.

Stay Connected

More information regarding the Voting System Assessment Project (VSAP) is available to the public online at www.lavote.net/vsap. The pages on our website are frequently updated with news and information and are a great way to stay connected with the progress of the project between quarterly reports. We strongly encourage public input throughout the process and look forward to continuing to work with your Board on this critical project. If you have any questions please contact me directly or your staff may contact Jeramy Gray, Assistant Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk at (562) 462-2714 or via email at jgray@rrcc.lacounty.gov.