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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

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

VSAP QUARTERLY REPORT- 4th QUARTER 2013

The following is the fourth quarterly update report of 2013, detailing VSAP activities and accomplishments during the period of September 1- November 30, 2013. These reports are provided to inform your Board and the public on the progress of the Voting Systems Assessment Project (VSAP). This series of quarterly reports is in response to the motion adopted by your Board on September 7, 2010.

During the reporting period, the VSAP continued to work on second-phase goals of the project. In this second phase, the project seeks to: 1) identify the voting system design model and technical requirements; 2) identify the procurement and development model that the Department will pursue, including funding for system development and implementation; and 3) engage voters and other stakeholders through the process. Activities during this quarter included:

- Advocating for the passage of legislation
- Developing a design concept
- Continuing stakeholder discussions

Legislation

The Department collaborated with CEO Governmental and Legislative Affairs and State Senator Alex Padilla for the passage of Senate Bill 360, legislation that supports the VSAP efforts. Senate Bill 360 was signed into law on October 5, 2013. The Bill strengthened the voting system approval and certification process by streamlining the process to the state and requiring that the state establish standards, which meet or exceed federal standards, for systems used in the state. Establishing these standards provides much needed clarity for the VSAP efforts to develop and implement a new voting system for the County. Furthermore, it provides the necessary framework for Los Angeles County to continue to develop a publicly owned system.

These efforts are aligned with the County's 2013-2014 State Legislative Agenda and a motion adopted by your Board on February 12, 2013.

Design Concept

In April 2013, the Department launched the initial design phase of the VSAP in partnership with the global design firm IDEO¹. IDEO was tasked with developing a voting system concept aimed at meeting the diverse needs of Los Angeles County voters. Using an iterative, human-centered design process, IDEO has led us through two system design phases which first translated public opinion data to three design concepts and then refined the three design options into one concept that best meets the needs of Los Angeles County voters.

In order to fully understand the needs of Los Angeles County voters, in the initial phase IDEO met with a diverse group of voters including voters with a various range of disabilities and/or special needs. IDEO also met with pollworkers, County staff, VSAP Advisory Committee members, VSAP Technical Advisory Committee members, and other stakeholders. Using the data gathered through these various interactions, in addition to the data VSAP gathered since the initiation of the project, IDEO produced a set of three draft voting system concepts². The three voting system concepts were distinct representations of an ideal voting system model which includes a ballot marking device, paper ballot, and expanded locations for voters to mark and cast a ballot.

In the second phase, IDEO continued to refine the voting system concepts by engaging voters, pollworkers, and other stakeholders to test the concepts. The concepts evolved based on user feedback and a second set of concept iterations emerged that was further tested with users³. From this user testing, an ideal voting system concept emerged⁴. This model was further tested and refined, concluding the phase with the development of a low-fidelity prototype of the concept. The system specifications and requirements for this concept now need to be detailed in order to produce a high-fidelity, fully functioning prototype for refinement and testing.

We are currently detailing the scope of work for the next phase of the project. In this process we will identify detailed requirements and specifications needed to enter and complete this next phase, the system engineering phase. The system engineering phase will include drafting software and hardware specifications, testing, and developing a high-fidelity, fully functioning prototype.

Once a proposed scope of work and a phase three project plan is completed, we will present these to your Board.

Stakeholder Discussions

The Department continues to meet with voters, regulators, experts, and other stakeholders with the intent of keeping them informed and engaged in the process as well as gathering data and information that is of benefit to the VSAP. During this period, the Department's project staff met with the Community Voter Outreach Committee, the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, members of United Cerebral Palsy Los Angeles, as well as Georgia Tech Research Institute and Clemson University staff.

1. Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI)- September 9, 2013
VSAP staff met with GTRI to provide a VSAP status update and to discuss how the projects align and may support each other.

¹ IDEO is an award-winning global design firm that takes a human-centered, design-based approach to helping organizations in the public and private sectors innovate and grow.

<http://www.ideo.com/>

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http://www.lavote.net/Voter/VSAP/PDFS/posters_for_one_simple_system_vote_your_way_three_easy_steps.pdf

³ http://www.lavote.net/Voter/VSAP/PDFS/cricket_tallboy_in_a_box.pdf

⁴ http://www.lavote.net/Voter/VSAP/PDFS/single_concept_phase_2_final.pdf

2. Community Voter Outreach Committee (CVOC)- October 2, 2013
VSAP staff met with the CVOC to provide an update on the VSAP and answer member questions.
3. Clemson University- October 15, 2013
VSAP staff met with Clemson University to update each other on the progress of their work around voting system design and development.
4. Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)- October 29, 2013
VSAP staff and IDEO project team met with the VAAC to provide an update on the VSAP and answer member questions.
5. United Cerebral Palsy Los Angeles (UCPLA)- November 7, 2013
VSAP staff and IDEO project team met with members of UCPLA to gather feedback on a preliminary voting system prototype. VSAP and IDEO staff gathered feedback regarding the needs and desires in a voting system from voters with a wide-range and degree of disabilities.

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/voter/vsap and on the project's 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 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 Monica Flores, VSAP Project Coordinator at (562) 345-8372 or via email at mflores@rcc.lacounty.gov.