

# **SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CLERK/ELECTIONS POLLING PLACE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

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## **Introduction**

Santa Cruz County is situated at the northern tip of Monterey Bay, 65 miles south of San Francisco, 35 miles north of Monterey, and 35 miles southwest of the Silicon Valley. Its natural beauty is present in the pristine beaches, lush redwood forests, and rich farmland. It has an ideal Mediterranean climate with low humidity and sunshine 300 days a year.

There are four incorporated cities within Santa Cruz County. According to the 2003 Census population estimates, the largest is the City of Santa Cruz, with a population of 54,262. Watsonville has a population of 46,159; Scotts Valley has 11,385, and Capitola has 10,033.

## **Census Data and Other Relevant Facts**

Based on the U.S. Census, the 2003 estimated population of Santa Cruz County is 251,584. The U.S. Census notes that there are 37,895 persons in Santa Cruz County age 5 or more who have a disability.

Santa Cruz County is 445 square miles with 574.1 persons per square mile.

The Santa Cruz County Clerk serves as the chief elections official for Santa Cruz County. In November 2010, of the 148,500 registered voters, 98,037 voted, or 66.02% turned out. Of those who voted, 50,401 (51.41%) voted by mail and 47,636 (48.59%) voted at one of the 143 polling place precincts at one of the 90 polling sites in the county. There were a total of 69,321 requests for vote-by-mail ballots of which 51,308 were signed up as permanent vote-by-mail voters who will vote by mail for all elections in which he or she is eligible to vote.

## **Polling Place Accessibility Plan Approach**

This plan utilizes a phased approach to accomplish the goal of a fully accessible voting program. This document, when taken in conjunction with the Voter Outreach Plan and our booklet Services for Voters with Specific Needs, creates a program that ensures that any voter who wishes to cast a ballot has the opportunity to do so.

The six phases of this plan, discussed in detail later in this document, provide a framework that is repeated over time to maintain the most accessible voting locations in Santa Cruz County.

- Phase 1 introduces the interested parties who will be involved in determining site accessibility and making recommendations regarding which sites should be used.
- Phase 2 establishes the order in which sites will be given priority.
- Phase 3 sets the minimum criteria for a facility to be considered useable as a polling site and the methods by which suitable facilities are approached.
- Phase 4 outlines how the surveying of the potential sites is conducted including “deal breaker” barriers, barriers that are of a high priority to avoid and barriers of a lesser priority to avoid. This phase also establishes the “rules” of surveying and the types of documentation that will be collected during the surveying process

such as the survey, photos, and the creation of a Standard Operating Procedure for each site that is specific to that site.

- Phase 5 details the way that sites will be compared and how the most accessible locations will be determined. The results of this phase will be utilized in conjunction with the Polling Place Selection Plan during the consolidation process.
- Phase 6 addresses the frequency of site reevaluation and the circumstances under which a total review of a precinct is triggered.

## **Phase 1: Engaging the Interested Parties**

### *Departmental Structure*

The County Clerk/Elections Department is under the direction of an elected County Clerk. There are 6 Program Coordinators in the areas of:

- Vote-By-Mail and Canvass Management
- Election Officers and Training
- Polling Places, Precinct Operations, Accessibility and Voting Equipment
- Voter Registration and Outreach
- Candidate and Campaign Finance Filing
- Mapping and Computers.

There is one Departmental Information Services Analyst who manages the department's computer systems and one Departmental Information Systems Specialist assists with the management of the department's warehouse, voting system maintenance, security, testing and deployment. In addition, there is a Senior Account Clerk who serves as the department's fiscal manager, as well as a Program Coordinator and a Legal Document Examiner who manage the Clerk Services offered at the office including: marriage licenses, fictitious business name statements, notary bond oaths, passports, etc.

### *Support Staff*

The County Clerk/Elections Department also has consulted with an Access Compliance Consultant to assist with the technical aspects of polling place assessment. The access consultant has trained staff and volunteers about access laws and how they pertain to polling places. The consultant also participated in selected site surveys as well as consulted on plans, policies, procedures and training materials and programs as they pertain to accessibility. Most recently, our access compliance consultant was Jonathan Adler of Access Compliance Services.

### *Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee*

The County Clerk/Elections Department meets quarterly with its Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC). Members of the committee include advocates from the disability community such as members of the County Commission on Disabilities, local disability service providers, social and legal advocates, language service advocates as

well as the Program Coordinator for Polling Places, Precinct Operations, Accessibility and Voting Equipment, the Program Coordinator for Election Officers and Training, the Program Coordinator for Voter Registration and Outreach; and Gail L. Pellerin, County Clerk.

The Committee was established in accordance with the Guidelines for Compliance with the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, Public Law 98-435, distributed by the Secretary of State's Office in 1985 and updated in 2001 and 2010. Specifically, the functions of the committee are:

- Assist and advise county elections officials in outreach programs for disabled and elderly individuals and organizations;
- Advise county election officials on the accessibility of registration and voting systems, barriers to participation by the elderly and disabled, and mechanisms to overcome and correct these barriers;
- Assist county election officials in surveying polling place accessibility in compliance with the guidelines;
- Evaluate an inaccessible polling place or polling places. Upon completion of this evaluation, the VAAC may:
  - Determine that an inaccessible polling place is usable by elderly and disabled voters
  - Determine that the polling place is not usable and cannot be made accessible
- Assist and advise county election officials in training precinct workers relative to accessibility and recruitment of elderly or disabled precinct officials;
- Assist in the recruitment of elderly or disabled precinct officials;
- Undertake other activities relating to the accessibility of the voting process.

#### *Polling Place Selection Advisory Committee*

In addition to the duties of the VAAC, VAAC members also serve as members to the Polling Place Selection Advisory Committee. The specific purpose of this committee is to involve members of the community in the selection and location of accessible polling places and to encourage them to make accessible modifications to their facilities so they may be used as polling sites. In addition to working to make public involvement in the selection of polling places more robust, the advisory committee shall institute a recognition program for polling places that provide accessible facilities or make improvements to their facilities. The specifics of this program will be established by the committee but may include the awarding of Certificates of Excellence in Public Service, public recognition in the media, posting of commendations on the department website, recognizing them before local business groups such as the Chambers of Commerce, etc. This project is slated for further work in 2011-2013.

### *Other Advisory Bodies*

Beyond the interested parties listed above, our office also consults with other relevant governmental agencies, committees, groups and organizations for input and assistance. Some common examples include the California Secretary of State, the State Department of Rehabilitation, Santa Cruz County Assessor/Recorder, Santa Cruz County Planning Department, Santa Cruz County Commission on Disabilities, and the Cities of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, Capitola and Watsonville.

### **Phase 2: Precinct Review**

On April 16, 2007, Santa Cruz County and the California Attorney General's Office entered into an enforceable settlement agreement and stipulation to improve the physical accessibility of Santa Cruz County's existing polling places. Per that agreement, the County will first review each of its existing polling places for accessibility concerns. The precincts containing sites identified in that agreement shall be reviewed first. Those sites that have been identified as having the highest number of high priority barriers (as described below) shall be given the next highest priority when setting the order in which sites will be reviewed.

Once the precincts listed above were reviewed, the remaining sites were also reviewed using Mr. Adler's analysis from the November 2006, June 2008, November 2008, June 2010 and November 2010 Elections again placing priority on those sites with the highest number of barriers.

### **Phase 3: Identifying Potential Sites and Making Contact**

To be considered a potential polling place, a site must have a reasonable level of utility. The minimum requirements for a single polling place are fairly standard, though they do vary based on the size of the precinct that is being housed within that site. For example, a precinct with 300 voters needs a slightly smaller space than a precinct with 1000 voters. The minimum requirements listed here are for the purposes of establishing a standard 1000 voter precinct. As such, a polling place should:

- Consist of an useable area of approximately 25 ft X 25 ft in roughly a square shape so that the ballot containers and voting booths are visible to the precinct board at all times. (Elections Code §14211 & 19362.) Each additional precinct located in a facility would need roughly the same amount of space (i.e. 25'X50' for a double, 50'X50' for a quadruple, etc).
- Conform to the Secretary of State's Polling Place Accessibility Guidelines. (Elections Code §12280.)
- Not be in a place where the primary purpose is the sale and dispensation of alcoholic beverages. May also not be connected by a door, window or other opening with any place where any alcoholic beverages are sold or dispensed while the polls are open. (Elections Code §12288.)
- Not be located in a candidate's residence for an election at which that candidate's name will appear on the ballot. (Elections Code §12287.)

- Not be located in a single family residence where a registered sex offender resides as listed on the Megan's Law webpage (Elections Code §12287.5.)
- Preferably be located within the consolidated precinct boundaries. However, if no suitable polling place can be established within the precincts, then a polling place may be established in any contiguous precinct. (Elections Code §§12241 & 12327.)
- Have electrical power available.
- Have a hospitable environment for the season in which voting is occurring (i.e. warm and dry in the winter).
- Be shielded from natural elements as the voting systems are sensitive electronic devices.
- Provide a secure facility where the voting equipment can be observed at all times.

Other conditions make a polling site preferable such as its proximity to parking, public transportation, major population areas, etc. Additionally, some types of facilities are made available for use pursuant to law. These facilities include:

- Property exempt from taxation pursuant to Section 214 of the Revenue and Taxation Code shall be made available free of charge pursuant to Section 213.5 of the Revenue and Taxation Code. (Elections Code §12282.)
- State-owned buildings, parking lots, and other facilities shall be made available free of charge for use as polling places, except that the Department of General Services may exclude from use as polling places state facilities at which access to confidential materials cannot be reasonably safeguarded, which are inaccessible to the public, the use of which would disrupt state business, or which are otherwise impractical for use as polling places (Elections Code §12284.)
- Upon specific request, the governing board of a school shall make the requested school building available to the County or City Elections Official so long as the request includes the list of schools from which the use of a building is needed and the request is made in sufficient time in advance of the school year for the governing board to determine if they shall be closing the school for that day. The school administrator, upon receiving authorization from the governing board, shall make reasonable effort to ensure that site is accessible to the disabled. (Elections Code §12283.)
- Mobilehomes may be used as polling places if the Elections Official determines that no other facilities are available for the convenient exercise of voting rights by mobilehome park residents. (Elections Code §12285.)

The consolidation of precincts is further discussed in the Polling Place Selection Plan. For the purpose of this plan, potential sites will be facilities that meet the above criteria per the Elections Code and are made available to our department by the owner/facility manager.



To identify sites that meet the above criteria, our office performed a “windshield” survey of the buildings in a given area. A windshield survey is a drive by assessment for potential size and utility. Single family homes generally do not provide adequate utility for a polling site, nor are they generally accessible. As such, single family homes will not be surveyed as potential facilities. Multiple family dwellings that do not have a common-use area will also be excluded for similar reasons. Additionally, non-residential buildings that were constructed prior to July 1, 1982, the effective date of Title 24, California Code of Regulations, or last substantially modified prior to that date, are not required to be considered per the terms of the stipulated agreement.

Once a list has been compiled, our office will aggressively contact the owner and/or entity that control access to the potential facilities to inquire about using their facilities as a polling place. First contact will be made by telephone. If the controlling party is unreachable by telephone, then a personal visit may follow. Finally, if an owner/facility manager is not reachable by telephone nor with an on site visit, then a letter may be sent. All attempted and actual contact will be documented using the attached form in Appendix 3. Multiple attempts of each kind may be made to reach the controlling parties.

If an owner/facility manager is unwilling or unable to offer their facility for use as a polling place, the building will not be considered as part of the pool of potential sites. Any facility that is so deemed will be re-contacted in the summer before the gubernatorial primary (once every four years) to determine if the site may be made available.

If an owner/facility manager agrees to allow their facility to be considered for use as a polling place, then a site visit will be scheduled for surveying.

We may ask a series of questions to determine that the facility meets our minimum needs prior to arranging for a site visit. The outline of the questions is attached in Appendix 3. Should a site fail to meet the minimum needs, the information will be documented and no further action will be taken. Should the site appear to meet standards based on the basic questions, a site visit will be scheduled for a physical survey. Surveys shall be conducted on a reasonable representative sample of the sites available or until such a time as a fully compliant site is located. The method of surveying shall be discussed further in Phase 4. Should no fully compliant site be located, sites will be “graded” and selected as discussed in Phase 5. Sites that fail to comply based on the basic questions shall be reviewed per the schedule in Phase 6.

#### **Phase 4: Initial Surveys of Potential Sites and Documentation**

Appointments shall be made with property owners/facility managers to evaluate potential polling places. The Polling Place Coordinator and a surveyor or two surveyors will visit the site and perform the initial survey. Our Access Compliance Consultant may also accompany a surveyor or team of surveyors should the need arise. All surveys will be conducted using the most current version of the Secretary of State’s Polling Place Accessibility Survey or a survey that incorporates all the features listed therein. Additional materials may be reviewed such as the US DOJ’s Americans with Disabilities Act ADA Checklist for Polling Places, materials provided from the Secretary of State’s

office, the Department of Rehabilitation, our Access Compliance Consultant, or any other relevant source.

If a facility is found to have barriers that are unduly difficult to mitigate or if the site does not have adequate space (i.e. the room is not large enough), the site will not require additional surveying and the findings shall be documented.

In general, such barriers, as confirmed by our Access Compliance Consultant, include:

- Parking space surface that is not firm, stable and slip resistant, such as gravel or dirt.
- Slope of the route from the parking to the polling place is in excess of the legal maximum of 8.33% slope that cannot be rerouted to avoid that slope.
- Route from parking ground surface that is not firm, stable and slip resistant.
- Route from parking or from the streets/sidewalk in which a portion of the route is narrower than 36" except that a section may be as narrow as 32" if it is not longer than 24" in length.
- A route that has two or more successive steps.
- Entry Ramp Slope in excess of the legal maximum slope of 8.3% and an accessible alternate route is not available and cannot be provided without significant difficulty or expense.
- Insufficient number or incorrect placement of ramp landings.
- Door Width narrower than 32" where no alternative entrance is available.

If the facility looks promising (i.e. no barriers that are unduly difficult to mitigate are observed), it will be inspected. Photographs and/or video of the facility will be taken, and in particular of any barrier, and all data that is acquired will be brought back to the office for analysis. If further information is needed, a second visit may be made to verify or clarify data. Any supplemental information gathered will be documented.

All the data concerning barriers collected for sites that are chosen as polling places (the process for which is detailed in Phase 5), shall be compiled. An easy to follow checklist known as the Standard Operating Procedure Binder shall be created for each polling site. The Standard Operating Procedure will also have site specific photos of how the site should be set up including sign and cone placements and room layouts, if necessary. All survey data and photos of sites not selected or not available will be kept in a file for the facility. Survey results will be shared with the facility owners/managers of all sites surveyed. A sample facility notification is attached in Appendix 3.

## **Phase 5: Prioritizing Barriers and Selecting Sites**

Once all of the necessary survey data is returned to the office for analysis, the Polling Place Coordinator shall work with the Accessibility Consultant or the VAAC to "grade" sites. When implementing the County's Polling Place Selection Plan, the polling places with the best "grade" will be evaluated first. More information on the "grading" process is set forth later in this section.

### *High, Standard and Low-Priority Barriers*

A system of high, standard, and low priority barriers shall be used when evaluating the accessibility of a polling site.

Features are considered High-Priority barriers when they do not comply with the following requirements.

The following types of barriers are considered “high priority”:

- Slope of the route from the parking to the polling place (maximum 8.33% slope with anything over 5% slope required to be treated as a ramp)
- Slope of the route from the public arrival points to the polling place (maximum 8.33% slope with anything over 5% slope required to be treated as a ramp)
- Route from parking ground surface
- Route from public arrival points ground surface
- Route from parking width (minimum 48")
- Route from public arrival points width (minimum 48")
- Route from parking abrupt level changes > 1/4" (may reach up to 1/2" if beveled above 1/4")
- Route from public arrival points abrupt level changes > 1/4" (may reach up to 1/2" if beveled above 1/4")
- Stairs are the only way into the building
- Entry Ramp Slope (maximum slope is 8.3%)
- Curb Ramp Slope (maximum slope is 8.3%)
- Entry Ramp Width (minimum 48")
- Entry Ramp Edge Protection
- Curb Ramp Flared Sides
- Entry Ramp Slip Resistance
- Entry Ramp Handrails
- Entry Ramp Top Landing
- Door Width (minimum 32" clear space)
- Door Threshold (may reach up to 1/2" if beveled above 1/4")

Some barriers can be corrected with standard materials already supplied to the polling places such as signage, voting booths and cone placement. These barriers will be labeled as low priority barriers as they are correctable with increased training. Inspector training classes are currently being revised to include a more extensive training on improving accessibility at the polls and these barriers in particular will be addressed at length in that training. Inspectors are responsible for setting up and maintaining the

polling place on Election Day. Inspectors are also responsible for providing Clerks with sensitivity training and giving them direction on site-specific mitigations the precinct board is responsible for implementing. A video has been created to help teach Inspectors the principles of site set up. Another video is currently in production to train all the Election Officers on sensitivity matters. This video will be used for the first time in 2012.

For purposes of this plan, the following types of barriers are considered low priority barriers, and we will be training Election Officers how to mitigate them on Election Day:

- Van-Accessible parking space width
- Signage from Alternative Route from parking
- Signage from Alternative Route from public arrival points
- Signage on the Alternative Accessible Entrance
- Door Landings
- Door Strike-Edge Clearance

For the purposes of this plan, public arrival points shall be:

- Off-street parking lots serving the polling place.
- Sidewalks, or in the absence of sidewalks the street will be substituted.
- Fixed-route transportation stops (e.g. bus stops) that are located not further than 200 ft of pedestrian travel distance from a normal pedestrian route onto the site. The “route onto the site”, from which the 200-ft distance is measured, would typically be the point where a walkway from the building meets the public sidewalk, or where a driveway meets the street in cases where such walkways do not exist and the driveway is how a pedestrian would access the facility.

All the remaining items on the Secretary of State’s survey shall be treated as standard barriers.

“De minimus departure” determinations shall be made on a case-by-case basis for barriers that are slightly out of technical compliance. These conditions shall also be considered when “grading” sites. De minimus departures used in the County of Santa Cruz in the past have included (though they may not apply in all cases):

- Up to 3% slope for landings, parking spaces and aisles or anywhere else where a “level” surface is required.
- Up to 3% cross slope.
- Up to 9% slope for a ramp.
- Short sections of path of travel that exceed 5% slope yet have no handrails (typically shorter than 4 feet in duration)
- Handrails or grab bars mounted less than 1” too high or too low.
- Handrails mounted less than ½” too close to the wall or too far from the wall.

- Ramps that are up to 4" too narrow
- Landings that are slightly too short or too narrow (typically less than 6" deficient)
- Door pressure that is slightly too high (up to 7 lbf)
- Doors that are slightly too narrow if a double door exists and the single, too narrow door is left open.
- Thresholds that require ramps (therefore treat the door as a passage way and require the door to be left open).

### *Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee*

In consultation with our Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, the criteria the members have used in determining what is "usable" although not fully compliant was based on the following:

1. the cumulative effect of barriers (how the combination of barriers may reduce the usability of a site)
2. the severity of the barriers
3. the overall number of barriers (the number of non-mitigable barriers over an entire site)

When assessing the "grade" of a polling place, these factors will also be considered. For example, a site with two high-priority barriers such as a ramp with non-compliant handrails, could be graded higher than another site that had only one barrier, but a more serious one such as two steps up to the entrance.

### *Request for Secretary of State Determination of Most Accessible Available Facility*

The Secretary of State's Accessibility Guidelines (2001 version) references the Federal Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 which states:

(a) Accessibility to all polling places as responsibility of each political subdivision

Within each State, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, each political subdivision responsible for conducting elections shall assure that all polling places for Federal elections are accessible to handicapped and elderly voters.

(b) Exception

Subsection (a) of this section shall not apply to a polling place—

(1) in the case of an emergency, as determined by the chief election officer of the State; or

(2) if the chief election officer of the State—

(A) determines that all potential polling places have been surveyed and no such accessible place is available, nor is the political subdivision able to make one temporarily accessible, in the area involved; and

(B) assures that any handicapped or elderly voter assigned to an inaccessible polling place, upon advance request of such voter (pursuant to procedures established by the chief election officer of the State)—

- (i) will be assigned to an accessible polling place, or
- (ii) will be provided with an alternative means for casting a ballot on the day of the election.

(US Code Title 42 Chapter 20 Subchapter I-F § 1973ee-1)

Should no polling place be located that is fully accessible in all respects, then a Determination of Most Accessible Available Facility form shall be completed and available for assessment by Secretary of State's Office. The form shall document the efforts undertaken to locate an accessible facility, the results of those efforts, the recommendation from the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee and the site selected by the County. A sample request letter is shown in Appendix 3.

Forms shall be completed as early as possible prior to a given election, taking into account staffing, budgetary and time constraints.

Should the Secretary of State's Office choose to examine and contest the findings of the County Clerk, the County will reconsider whether the site at issue is the most accessible site and determine whether it is feasible to use another site with an equal amount of accessibility. Should the County, upon reconsideration, determine that the site at issue is the most accessible site available, it will use that site notwithstanding the Secretary of State's challenge, until a point in time that a more accessible site becomes available.

Polling places shall be periodically re-evaluated according to Phase 6 of this document.

## **Phase 6: List Maintenance**

Polling places must be evaluated periodically to ensure that no new barriers to accessibility have developed since they were last surveyed and to make sure that they comply with current standards laid out in the approved survey tools in effect at the time.

All polling places will be surveyed prior to their first use.

Polling places will be resurveyed within one year of a substantive survey revision or once every four years (no later than the summer prior to the gubernatorial primary) if minor or no revisions have occurred.

### ***Re-Evaluation of Polling Sites Found to Have Barriers***

Polling places that were found to contain any barriers will be contacted by telephone and/or letter once every year to inquire if the listed barrier(s) has been removed since the last survey. These polling sites will also be reviewed once every four years no later than the summer prior to the gubernatorial primary. All such contact and further review shall be documented. Budget and staffing restraints may restrict these contact calls to once every two years.

### *Re-Investigation of Facilities Previously Disqualified as Potential Polling Places*

As discussed in Phase 3, facilities where the owner/facility manager was unwilling or unable to offer their facility for use as a polling place will be contacted again in the summer before the gubernatorial primary (once every four years) to determine if the site may be used as a polling place. This contact shall be documented. Facilities that did not meet the basic needs of a polling place shall be reviewed on the same schedule assuming the deficiencies are likely to be overcome in that time frame such as the completion of a major construction project, the cessation of the sale of alcohol, etc.

Should a new facility be constructed, a previously unavailable facility become available or should a facility improve its accessibility through barrier removals, then the potential polling place shall be reevaluated according to Phase 5 of this document.

## **Appendix 1: List of Common Mitigations and Accessibility Aids for Use at the Polls, Services for Voters, and Programs for Voters with Specific Needs**

### *List of Common Mitigations for Use at the Polls:*

- ☐ Cones to extend the width of parking spaces, accessible aisles, block protruding hazards, etc.
- ☐ Duct Tape or Spray Chalk to extend the length of parking spaces or affix loose hazards
- ☐ Signs to identify accessible parking, paths of travel and alternative entrances
- ☐ Rubber Mats to cover grates that have openings too large or in the wrong direction
- ☐ Temporary Sidewalks to mitigate some inaccessible walkways
- ☐ Temporary Ramps to mitigate curbs or single steps
- ☐ Temporary Thresholds to enter and exit rooms
- ☐ Door stops to prop open doors, in order to mitigate insufficient door landings, sloped door landings, inaccessible door hardware, excessive pressure to open a door, etc.
- ☐ Voting Booth Leg Extenders/Lower Booths for wheelchair or seated access
- ☐ Clipboards for lap voting if preferred by voter
- ☐ Magnifying Glasses available
- ☐ Pencil Adapters available
- ☐ Chairs available
- ☐ Lights for low lit rooms
- ☐ Restroom Closure Signs at all polling places.

### *Accessibility Aids for Use at the Polls:*

- ☐ Standard Operating Procedures for Each Precinct

Each polling place shall have a binder prepared to illustrate both in words and with pictures or videos the steps that must be taken to make each site accessible or more accessible on Election Day. The binder shall also contain checklists to be completed by staff prior to opening the polling place and during the day to ensure that temporary mitigations are still in place and have not been altered either by the weather or human interactions.

- ☐ Curbside Voting

Should a voter find it necessary to vote from their vehicle or some other location at a polling site, a poll worker will bring the *Curbside Voting Roster* for the voter to sign to obtain his/her ballot, a ballot, and pen to the voter, assist the voter if necessary, and scan the voter's ballot into the box.



#### ☐ Touchscreen Voting

Touchscreen Voting is available at all polling places and early voting locations. Touchscreens allow voters with visual impairments and manual dexterity limitations to vote privately and independently. Specifically, touchscreens allow voters to vote using an audio feed through headphones and a hand held pad to cast their votes. The pad may also be used with sip/puff devices. The screen also allows for large fonts. In addition, Spanish language ballots are provided on the touchscreen.

#### *Services for Voters:*

##### ☐ Path of Travel Mitigation Transportation Plan

At polling places where the path of travel from the arrival points other than the parking lot is non-compliant, voters will have the ability, when requested in advance, to receive transportation assistance in reaching the accessible path of travel to the polling place. This program is detailed in the Path of Travel Mitigation Transportation Plan.

##### ☐ Ballot pick up/delivery

Ballots can be delivered to the home or office of a person with a specific need. Upon request, ballots will also be picked up prior to Election Day. On Election Day, two people are available for ballot delivery and pick up as time permits.

##### ☐ Ballot assistance at home or at polls

Upon request, voters may receive assistance from an election official or not more than two persons selected by the voter (other than the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of the union of which the voter is a member) either at home or at the polling place. Assistance may include reading and/or marking a ballot.

##### ☐ Residential Care Facility/Inmate/Hospital Outreach

Specific programs are in place to provide extra service to convalescent and residential care facilities, detention facilities, and hospitals for residents that are temporarily or newly away from their homes. These programs include voter registration, vote-by-mail ballot sign up, ballot pick up and/or delivery, assistance marking ballots and other services as pertinent.

#### *Programs for Voters with Specific Needs:*

##### ☐ Audio Materials

Sample Ballot and State Ballot Pamphlet materials are available prior to each election in an audio format. Santa Cruz County also provides local election information via podcast for easy access.

##### ☐ Permanent Vote-By-Mail Voting

State law provides that any voter may apply for permanent vote-by-mail voter

status. As a permanent vote-by-mail voter, a voter will no longer have to apply for future elections. A ballot will automatically be mailed to voters for each election in which they are eligible to vote.

☐ Early Period Voting

Early period voting is available in countywide elections at two locations, one in Santa Cruz and one in Watsonville, beginning 29 days prior to each election. Voters may vote either a paper ballot or a touchscreen ballot during regular business hours. Touchscreens are not available until the weekend prior to the election.

☐ Weekend Voting

Both early voting locations are open the weekend prior to a countywide election from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday for early voting.

☐ Bilingual Materials

As many materials as possible are translated into Spanish to better serve voters with limited English proficiency.

## **Appendix 2: Useful website links**

Americans with Disabilities Act ADA Checklist for Polling Places (Produced by the USDOJ)

<http://www.ada.gov/votingck.htm>

Project Civic Access

<http://www.ada.gov/civicac.htm>

California Secretary of State Polling Place Accessibility Checklist

<http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place-accessibility/checklist/entire-checklist-final-march-2010.pdf>

Other Accessibility Related Sites:

<http://www.electioncenter.org/electionresources/documents/booklet%203%20Polling%20Place%20Preparations.pdf>

<http://vote.nist.gov/end-to-end-accessibility.pdf>

[http://www.ilru.org/html/training/webcasts/handouts/2004/08-26-Anthony/five\\_considerations.htm](http://www.ilru.org/html/training/webcasts/handouts/2004/08-26-Anthony/five_considerations.htm)

### **Appendix 3: Sample Forms, Requests, & Other Data Collecting/Reporting Sheets**

Samples are attached of the following forms of documentation:

- A. Facility Contact Tracking Sheet
- B. Contact Questions Outline
- C. Facility Notification of Barriers Identified
- D. Determination of Most Accessible Available Facility
- E. Current Version of the Secretary of State's Polling Place Accessibility Checklist

*Attachment A: Facility Contact Tracking Sheet*  
(also used as Exhibit A for Determination of Most Accessible Available Site)

### *Attachment B: Contact Questions Outline*

When making first contact with property owners/facility controllers, the Polling Place Coordinator will pitch the program to entice the facility to open their doors as a polling place. After the property owner/facility controllers are firmly on board, and depending on the type of property, the Coordinator may ask a number of questions including:

1. Does the property contain a building with a useable space of 25'X25' (or equivalent) in roughly a rectangular shape?
2. Is the property equipped with electricity?
3. Are there steps required to enter the building? If so, is there an alternative way to enter such as a ramp, lift or elevator? If not, is there more than a step or two?
4. Is there a paved walk or driveway that connects from the street or sidewalk to the building?
5. Is the space available for drop off on the Friday or Monday prior to Election Day?
6. Can the supplies be stored securely?
7. Is the space available for set up on the Monday afternoon prior to Election Day?
8. Is the space reserved solely for election use during the hours of 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Election Day?
9. Pick up of supplies will be on Wednesday (and in rare cases Thursday) after the Election. Is this acceptable?
10. Is it possible that the Inspector can get a key and any applicable codes to enter and lock up the facility? If not, can we get contact and emergency contact numbers for the people who can let us into the facility?
11. Is there a phone available during opening, polling, and closing hours for the poll workers to reach our office and for us to return phone calls to?
12. Are there tables and chairs available?
13. During periods near time changes, have the timers on outdoor lights been changed so that the lights come on when it gets dark?
14. (In select locations with off-street parking lots), can we mark off at minimum one parking space for persons with disabilities and possibly more if there are periods where all the parking fills during peak times?

## Attachment C: Facility Notification of Barriers Identified

On County Letterhead

<Date>

<Facility Name>

c/o <Facility Controller/Owner Name>

<Address>

<City>, <State> <Zip>

Dear <Name of Facility Controller/Owner>,

On behalf of the Santa Cruz County Clerk and Elections Department I would like to thank you for your support of the democratic process in Santa Cruz County. The neighborhood polling place is a vital part of the election experience and your participation as a polling place helps connect and strengthen our local community. Without people and organizations such as yours, we would be unable to carry out the important duties with which we are charged.

As you may know, our office was sued by the California Attorney General's Office in 2005. The Attorney General asserted that the polling places of Santa Cruz County failed to meet the legal accessibility requirements. Santa Cruz County denied that claim, but is committed to making improvements. The case has been settled, and we at the Elections Department have continued our efforts to find polling places of the highest accessibility for our voters.

During our visit to your facility we identified some features of the landscape or architecture that may give a person with a disability a challenge in utilizing your (and our) services. We know how committed you are to the local community and are bringing these features to your attention in hopes that you will make permanent modifications to improve accessibility year round at your site.

Our data is collected by office staff trained by our Accessibility Consultant. Our surveyors are not experts and we urge you to have your own evaluation completed. The surveys that we conduct are by no means comprehensive of the California Building Code requirements nor the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requirements. The survey is the standard that we are held to for polling places. There are many more requirements for facilities than what we are held to for Election Day.

At your facility we found:

- 1.
- 2.
3. <list whatever barriers were found>

A copy of our survey is attached.

We request that you review these issues with your own staff and determine whether it is in your and the community's best interest to make changes to address these accessibility issues. In addition, we would greatly appreciate it if you would keep us apprised of any plans to improve access at your facility, as well as any completed improvements. In the meantime, our office will continue to mitigate barriers found at your facility with temporary one-day solutions.

There are tax incentives available to help make permanent changes to some types of facilities. Established under Section 44 of the Internal Revenue Code, a tax credit is available up to \$5,000.00. Under Section 190, a tax deduction is available up to a maximum of \$15,000.00. These incentives can be combined. Please consult your tax advisor on whether the available incentives apply to you.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I am available at your convenience to discuss this matter further. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

<Name >

Polling Place Establishment/Operations

<Telephone number>

Attachments



*Attachment D: Determination of Most Accessible Available Facility*  
(also uses Attachment A as Exhibit A for this form)

*Attachment E: Current version of the Secretary of State's Polling Place  
Accessibility Checklist*

**ATTACH COPY IF DISTRIBUTING**