



STAFF REPORT SAN CLEMENTE PLANNING COMMISSION

Date: December 4, 2019

STAFF: Joanne Baade, City Clerk
Stephanie Roxas, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Installation of Three Ballot Drop Boxes in the City

BACKGROUND:

The California Voter's Choice Act (VCA), signed by Governor Brown in 2016, was enacted in an effort to modernize elections in California by allowing counties to conduct elections under a new Vote Center model. The purpose of the new voting model is to provide greater flexibility and convenience for voters. In February 2019, the Orange County Board of Supervisors approved Orange County's transition to Vote Center voting, effective in 2020.

DISCUSSION:

Commencing with the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election, all Orange County voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot. Voters can then choose to cast their ballot in one of three ways: 1) mail their vote-by-mail ballot to the Registrar of Voters (no postage required), 2) drop their vote-by-mail ballot in any of the approximately 110 ballot drop boxes throughout the County, or 3) vote in person or drop off their vote-by-mail ballot at any Vote Center throughout the County. A minimum of 32 Vote Centers will be open in Orange County 11 days prior to each election and a minimum of 161 Vote Centers will be open in Orange County 4 days prior to each election.

In San Clemente, the Community Center Fireside Room will serve as an 11-day Vote Center and the Aquatics Center Friends Room will serve as a 4-day Vote Center. Currently, the Orange County Registrar of Voters is continuing to seek three additional sites in San Clemente, including non City-owned locations, for 4-day Vote Centers.

Pursuant to the VCA, counties are required to provide at least one ballot drop box location for every 15,000 registered voters. Because San Clemente has 40,000 registered voters, the County of Orange is requesting authorization to install three ballot drop boxes in San Clemente. Voters will be able to deposit their ballots at any ballot drop box in Orange County starting 29 days before an election and until 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Ballot drop boxes will be open 24 hours a day during voting periods and will be closed and secured during non-voting periods. Attachment 1 to this report provides additional information on the ballot drop boxes, including dimensions, design, and frequently asked questions.

The VCA establishes requirements for the placement of ballot drop boxes. These regulations include, but are not limited to, proximity to public transportation hubs, parking

availability, accessibility to voters with disabilities, and proximity to population centers. Moreover, the California Secretary of State imposes further regulations for ballot drop boxes, such as language requirements, to match area demographics.

Potential Locations

The Registrar of Voters has identified four potential ballot drop box locations at the following sites:

- 1) San Clemente City Hall, 910 Calle Negocio, located at the rear building entrance.
- 2) San Geronio Community Park, 2916 Via San Geronio, located adjacent to the restroom building near the basketball courts.
- 3) Municipal Golf Course, 150 E Avenida Magdalena, located near the parking lot in the landscape parkway along Avenida Magdalena.
- 4) Forster Ranch Community Park, 3207 Camino Vera Cruz, located adjacent to the playground restroom building near the soccer fields.

These potential locations meet the criteria for placement of ballot drop boxes. An overview map illustrating each parcel is provided as Attachment 2 of this report. Attachment 3 to this report depicts the specific locations and proposed box placement at each site.

Staff recommends locations 1, 2, and 3 as collectively the ballot drop boxes would provide convenient and accessible locations equally dispersed throughout San Clemente. However, staff is concerned with the box placement at the Municipal Golf Course (location 3) as it is the most visible location and directly abuts the street. The County of Orange is open to feedback on the specific box placements. For example, the Planning Commission may suggest an alternate placement within the Municipal Golf Course that is less conspicuous from the right-of-way while still meeting the VCA's location requirements.

SUMMARY:

The County of Orange identified four potential locations that meet the VCA requirements for ballot drop boxes. Three ballot drop boxes will be installed in San Clemente in early 2020. Staff seeks Planning Commission direction on the preferred three locations, as well as input on the specific box placement within each site. The Planning Commission's recommended locations will be forwarded to the City Council in conjunction with the review of license agreements between the City of San Clemente and County of Orange.

Attachments:

1. Information on Ballot Drop Boxes
2. Overview Map of Four Potential Locations
3. Site-Specific Information



ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS BALLOT DROP BOXES

Thank you for your interest in hosting a Ballot Drop Box! Please review the information and specifications below. This will help you determine if your site is a good fit for a potential Ballot Drop Box location.

Our office will assess the requirements of the Voter's Choice Act to see if your site fulfills criteria including parking, proximity to public transportation, community access, and access to voters with disabilities.

Once a site is selected, a formalized agreement will be provided specifying obligations of the County of Orange, outlining easement and/or planning requirements and defining the commitment to participation.

March 3, 2020 Primary Election

Permanent Drop Box Locations Open
Monday, February 3 to Tuesday, March 3

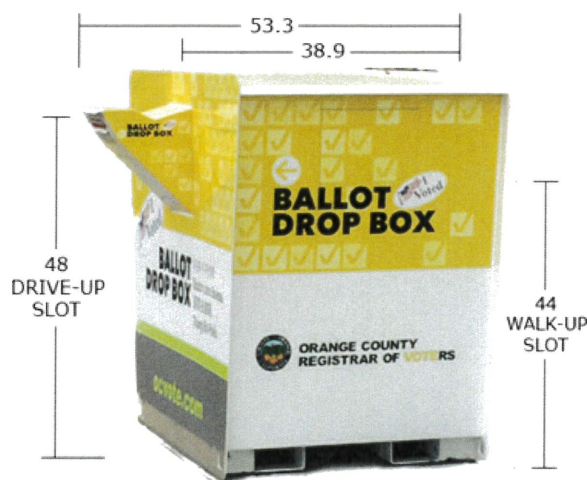
- Permanent installation, year-round (Pursuant to the license agreement)
- Metal construction, weight 1,000 lbs.
- Placement visible to the public
- Accessible 24/7
- County of Orange incurs cost of installation, maintenance and upkeep
- Location covered by security cameras highly desired

30 Days of Voting with Ballot Drop Boxes

29 days before Election: drop-off boxes open for vote-by-mail ballots

3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Election Day: All drop-off boxes and Vote Centers are open for voting!



*Measurements in inches

Please call our Vote Center staff at 714-954-1901 for more information or questions.





ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

BALLOT DROP BOXES

What to Expect - Next Steps

- A site visit will be completed to determine the best location for Ballot Drop Box placement, as well as the completion of an accessibility assessment.
- Once it is determined that the site meets the requirements, an agreement will be executed between the proposed entity and the County of Orange.
- All required insurance, permits, and agreements will be approved by the County of Orange and City agencies, if necessary.
- A parcel check will be completed to ensure there are no obstructions with utilities or any liens or easements exist on the specified location.
- Ballot Drop Box delivery and installation date will be confirmed directly with the location's contact.
- Installation is ready to begin as early as August 2019.
- A regular maintenance schedule will be kept, ensuring the Ballot Drop Box is clean, in working order and has not been vandalized or tampered with.
- 29 days prior to an election, the Ballot Drop Box mail slots will be opened by County of Orange employees.
- On Election Night, at 8pm the Ballot Drop Box will be locked by County of Orange employees.
- Extensive marketing will be sent to all Orange County voters notifying them of the Ballot Drop Off locations that will include the facility name and address. This will include targeted mailings, social media, print and television ads, and the Voter Information Guide.

Please call our Vote Center staff at 714-954-1901 for more information or questions.



ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS





ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

BALLOT DROP BOXES

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Ballot Drop Box?

A Ballot Drop Box is a secure and locked receptacle where a voter can drop off their vote-by-mail ballot in the same manner they would at a mailbox. Ballots will only be picked up by election officials from the Registrar of Voters.

Why are Ballot Drop Boxes being installed?

In 2016, California legislation passed SB 450 also known as the Voter's Choice Act. This allows counties in California to provide voters more options on how, when, and where they cast their ballots during an election. In February 2019, the County Board of Supervisors voted to enact the Voter's Choice Act in Orange County. Starting in 2020, all voters in Orange County will receive a vote-by-mail ballot. Voters will be able to mail in their ballot (no postage necessary), drop it off at any Vote Center located within the County, or place it inside a secure Ballot Drop Box. These options offer more flexibility, access, and convenience when casting their vote.

How are Ballot Drop Box locations determined?

Locations are determined by election officials. Along with public input, locations must also consider the required criteria outlined in the Voter's Choice Act. Examples of these criteria include proximity to public transportation hubs, communities with historically low vote-by-mail usage, proximity to population centers, proximity to voters with disabilities, proximity to communities with low vehicle ownership, proximity to low-income communities, and traffic patterns.

How big is the Ballot Drop Box?

The box measures 53.5" Height x 38.9" Depth x 65" Width. It is made of 3/16" steel and weighs 1000 lbs.

Who will be conducting the installation?

Delivery, installation and all expenses will be handled completely by the County of Orange.

When will the Ballot Drop Box be installed? And how long will it take?

Ballot Drop Boxes will begin to be installed throughout the County beginning in August 2019. Installation will take approximately 3 hours to complete.

What responsibility does the host location have after the Ballot Drop Box is installed?

The Ballot Drop Box installation, upkeep and maintenance will be the sole responsibility of the County of Orange. Any questions can be directed to Espie Martinez, Vote Center Support Lead, at Espie.Martinez@rov.ocgov.com or (714) 567-7575.

Please call our Vote Center staff at 714-954-1901 for more information or questions.



ORANGE COUNTY
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ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

BALLOT DROP BOXES

Frequently Asked Questions, Continued

When will the Ballot Drop Box be opened and closed?

The Ballot Drop Box will be opened 29 days before an election and will remain open for 24 hours every day until it is closed at 8:00 PM on election night.

Who is responsible for opening and closing the Ballot Drop Box?

An election official from County of Orange will be responsible for the opening and closing of the Ballot Drop Box.

When will ballots be picked up?

Collection of ballots will occur every 4 days from the opening of the Ballot Drop Box, and the frequency of pick-ups will increase as Election Day approaches.

What do we do if there is vandalism or issues reported with the Ballot Drop Box?

Please call the Registrar of Voters at 714-954-1901 immediately. An election official will conduct a site visit and inspection and will handle any reported issues.

What if someone drops something other than a ballot in the Ballot Drop Box?

The slot used to return ballots is ½" Height by 7" Width - making it difficult to insert anything other than an envelope into the slot. Any mail incorrectly placed in the Ballot Drop Box will be forwarded to the USPS. Any items meant to be delivered to the host location will be given directly to that location.

Please call our Vote Center staff at 714-954-1901 for more information or questions.



ORANGE COUNTY
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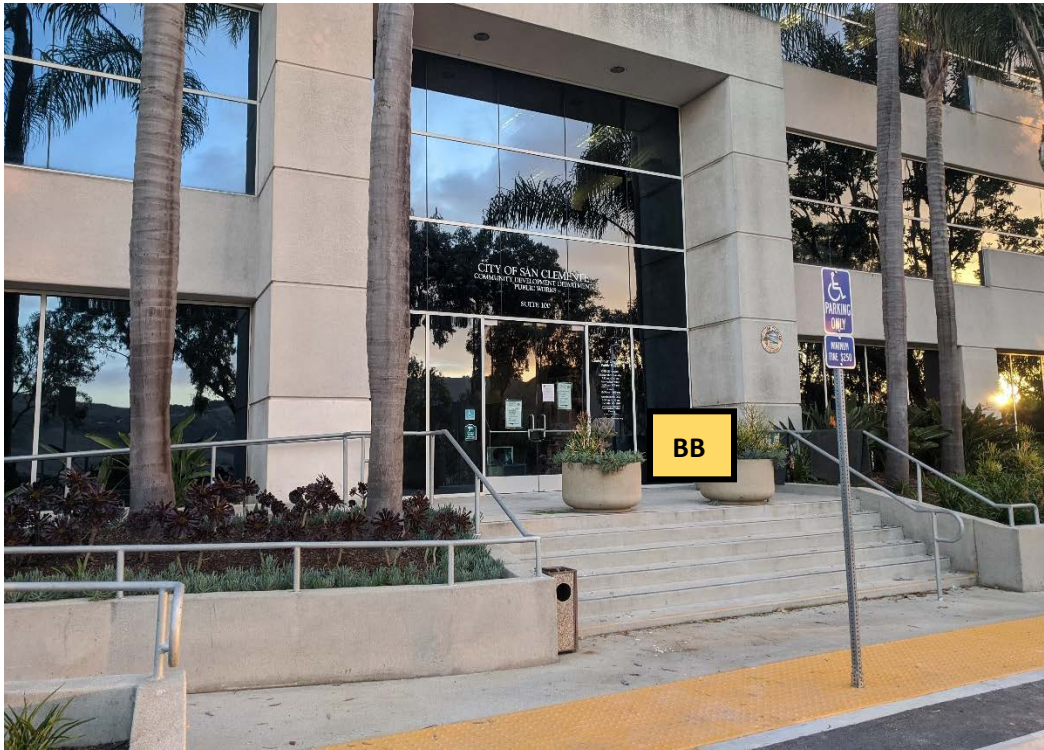


BALLOT DROP BOXES - ALL PROPOSED LOCATIONS



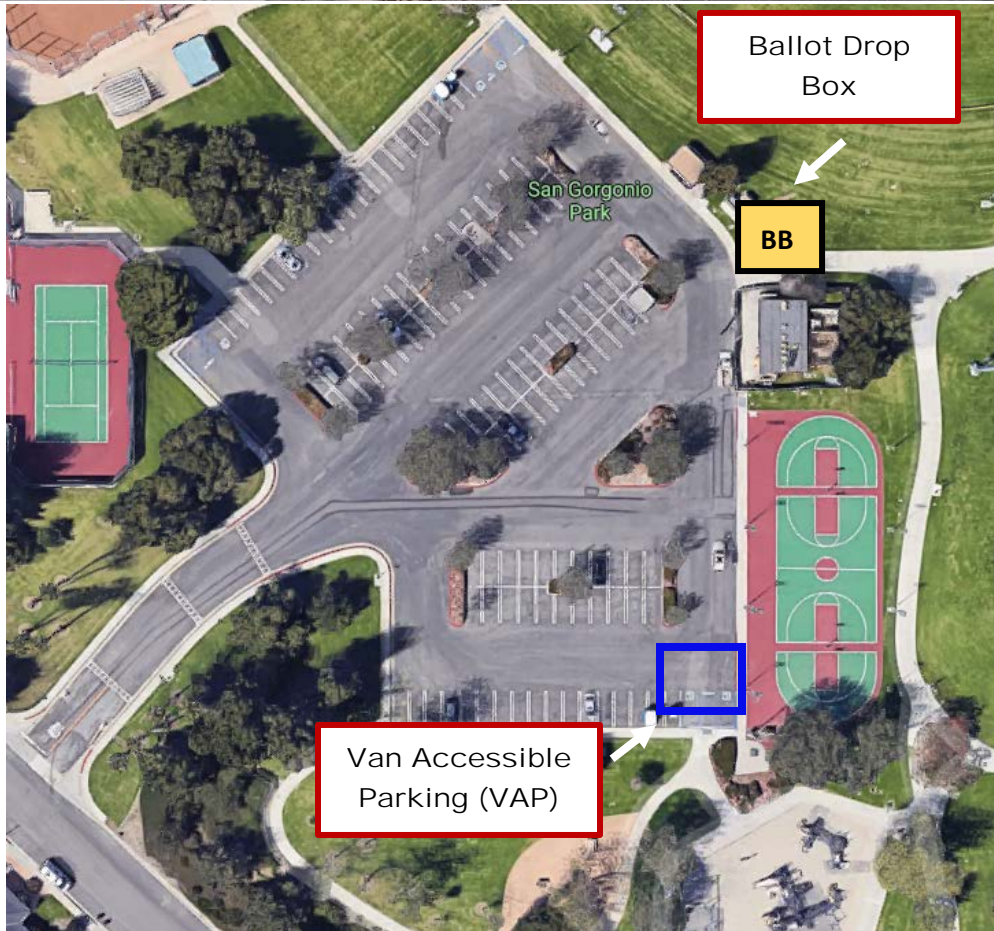
Location 1 – San Clemente City Hall

910 Calle Negocio, San Clemente, CA 92673



Location 2 – San Geronio Park

2916 Via San Geronio, San Clemente, CA 92672



Location 3 – Municipal Golf Course

150 E Avenida Magdalena, San Clemente, CA 92672



Location 4 – Forster Ranch Community Park
3207 Camino Vera Cruz, San Clemente 92673

