



**King County**

**Metropolitan King County Council  
Government Accountability and Oversight Committee**

**REVISED STAFF REPORT**

<b>Agenda Item:</b>	5	<b>Name:</b>	Hiedi Popochock
<b>Proposed No.:</b>	2016-0227	<b>Date:</b>	April 26, 2016

***Revised staff report to: 1) correct the approval process of drop-off locations: “((~~Drop box~~) Regional voting center locations were not to be changed without prior approval of the Council by motion...”; and 2) correct the number of locations proposed and identified as geographic equity locations in the ‘scoring exceptions’ section.***

**SUBJECT**

Proposed Motion 2016-0227 would approve the Department of Elections’ Ballot Drop-Off Location Plan and authorize the installation of 37 new drop boxes in King County.

**SUMMARY**

Proposed Motion 2016-0227 would approve the Department of Elections’ (Elections) Ballot Drop-off Location Plan (“the Plan”) and would authorize the installation of 37 new drop boxes at locations approved by the Plan requested in Motion 14491, as prescribed in the 2015-2016 Biennial Budget Ordinance 18239, Section 16, Proviso P4. Motion 14491 requested the director of Elections to develop and transmit a plan by April 30, 2016 to improve access to and convenience of ballot drop-off locations in King County. Ordinance 18239 directed Elections to purchase 27 drop boxes for new drop box sites and to replace 10 drop boxes at current drop box locations. The ordinance also required the Plan requested by Motion 14491 to be approved by Council prior to installation of the new drop boxes.

Under the proposed Plan, Elections would install 33 drop boxes at new drop box sites and 7 drop boxes to replace those at existing drop box sites and extend the life of 3 drop boxes at current drop box locations for a total of 43 drop box sites (see Table 6 below).<sup>1</sup>

Elections proposes to install 19 drop boxes prior to the August 2016 Primary Election and an additional 14 drop boxes prior to the November 2016 General Election. Council staff have identified a number of policy issues relating to the number of drop box

<sup>1</sup> Elections purchased three drop boxes that are waiting to be installed, prior to the adoption of Ordinance 18239.

locations proposed, the scoring methodology utilized to evaluate the potential sites, the estimated costs to implement the Plan and the implementation timeline.

While the Plan includes the information requested by Council in Motion 14491, full implementation of the Plan as drafted would require an amendment to the budget proviso to reconcile the number of new ballot drop boxes for new sites and the number of new drop boxes for existing sites.

Elections staff reported that in order for the 19 new drop box locations to be available for the August 2016 Primary Election, Council must act by May 16th. Similarly, for the 14 new drop box locations to be available for the November 2016 General Election, Council must act by August 22.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Legislative History**

In 2005, the Washington State legislature amended Title 29A RCW to allow counties the option of conducting elections by mail. In response, the Council authorized transitioning King County to elections by mail, but imposed a number of requirements to be met prior that transition.

**Ordinance 15523: Requirements for vote-by-mail.** In June 2006, the Council passed Ordinance 15523, which authorized the County to conduct elections by mail beginning on a date established by the Director of Elections, possibly as early as 2007 or 2008,<sup>2</sup> provided that certain conditions were met:

- The Director of Elections<sup>3</sup> had been appointed and confirmed;
- The Director of Elections and staff had completed the cultural change and management training recommended by the Citizens' Elections Oversight Committee and the independent task force on elections;
- The Council had approved by motion a plan with cost estimates for regional voting centers and ballot drop boxes, as well as the estimated capital and operating costs of regional voting centers or accessible voting centers<sup>4</sup> and drop boxes, a map identifying their locations, and a description of the security

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<sup>2</sup> The first election conducted completely by mail was the special election in February 2009.

<sup>3</sup> In the time since Ordinance 15523 was adopted, the position of Director of Elections was changed from an appointed to an elected position via Initiative 25, which was approved by the voters in November 2008. Voters also approved a charter amendment allowing the Council to establish qualifications for office for the elected Director of Elections. Those qualifications were established through Ordinance 16302. Ordinance 16557 removed the requirement from Ordinance 15523 for the appointment and confirmation of a Director of Elections and a Superintendent of Elections. The first elected Director of Elections was elected in 2009 for a two-year term, and reelected in 2011 for a four-year term (King County Charter Section 647).

<sup>4</sup> Legislation adopted by the Council prior to the implementation of elections by mail refers to "regional voting centers." However, Elections now refers to these centers as "accessible voting centers" or "AVCs," so the terms regional voting centers and accessible voting centers will be used interchangeably throughout this report. These voting centers are regulated by RCW 29A.40.160.

measures that would be put in place in those locations (note that the Council addressed this requirement in several additional pieces of legislation, as described below); and

- An electronic tracking system had been established to track ballots so that voters could use the Internet to follow the movement of their ballots.<sup>5</sup>

**Ordinance 15652: Regional voting centers and ballot drop boxes.** In November 2006, the Council adopted a proviso to the 2007 budget ordinance<sup>6</sup> requesting a plan and schedule for the transition to vote-by-mail and information regarding regional voting centers and ballot drop boxes.

**Motion 12505: Consulting group recommendations for regional voting centers and ballot drop boxes.** In April 2007, through Motion 12505, the Council created a consulting group to propose locations for regional voting centers and ballot drop boxes by July 27, 2007. The group consisted of representatives from the following groups with geographical and political party diversity:

- King County Elections staff,
- Citizens' Elections Oversight Committee,
- Council staff,
- Elections Disability Advisory Committee, and
- Voting Rights Act Section 203 community coalition.

The consulting group recommended 17 regional voting centers located throughout the County, as well as locations for 36 ballot drop boxes.<sup>7</sup>

Because the consulting group's recommendations for regional voting centers and ballot drop boxes were submitted just as the economic downturn began, the Executive and Council examined options to provide voting alternatives at lower cost.

**Ordinance 15975: 2008 budget ordinance.** In November 2007, the Council appropriated \$813,931 in the 2008 budget ordinance<sup>8</sup> to establish 11 regional voting centers:

- One 20-day<sup>9</sup> regional voting center in District 5;
- Two four-day regional voting centers each in Districts 3 and 8; and
- One four-day regional voter center in each remaining District.

**Motion 12820: Plan for regional voting centers and ballot drop boxes.** In July 2008, the Council approved Motion 12820, which approved a plan for three regional voting centers and 39 ballot drop boxes. Regional voting centers were to be located in:

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<sup>5</sup> Addressed via Ordinance 15623 (October 2006), Motion 12564 (July 2007), and Motion 12658 (December 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Ordinance 15652

<sup>7</sup> Staff report on Proposed Motion 2008-0381 to Committee of the Whole, July 21, 2008, prepared by Mike Alvine

<sup>8</sup> Ordinance 15975

<sup>9</sup> A 20-day center would be open for 20 days including and prior to election day; a four-day center would be open for four days including and prior to election day.

- Elections headquarters in Renton (20-day);
- Union Station in downtown Seattle (four-day); and
- Bellevue City Hall (four-day).

Ballot drop boxes were to be located at 32 local libraries outside Seattle,<sup>10</sup> as well as at six city of Seattle Neighborhood Service Centers<sup>11</sup> and the King County Administration Building in downtown Seattle. Regional voting center locations were not to be changed without prior approval of the Council by motion, except in emergency situations, such as if a regional voting center host determined it could no longer host a center.

**Ballot drop-off locations following Motion 12820.** Although Motion 12820 authorized the number and location of ballot drop-off locations, the continued economic downturn affected the number of locations the County was actually able to implement. A description of major changes follows and summarized below in Table 1 of this staff report.

From August 2008 to December 2009, Elections operated 19 drop boxes. In December 2009, Elections reduced the number of ballot drop-off locations to two to cut costs in anticipation of the 2010 budget deficit.<sup>12</sup> Ordinance 16717, which adopted the 2010 annual budget, noted that no drop boxes would be funded during 2010, “unless the county receives additional funding options from the State Legislature.”<sup>13</sup>

During the middle of 2010, in response to voter concerns about the decrease in the number of drop boxes, Elections proposed a plan to deploy 11 drop boxes for the November 2010 general election.<sup>14</sup> Those drop boxes were to be located based on “data accumulated related to usability at former locations” and the “Regional Planning Council’s ‘urban centers’ designation”<sup>15</sup> and would be located at a mix of city halls, shopping centers and city and county properties.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Non-Seattle drop box locations approved by Motion 12820 were: Algona Pacific Library, Auburn Library, Black Diamond Library, Boulevard Park Library, Carnation Library, Covington Library, Des Moines Library, Duvall Library, Fairwood Library, Fall City Library, Federal Way 320<sup>th</sup> Library, Burien Library, Maple Valley Library, Bothell Library, Kingsgate Library, Lake Forest Park Library, Library Connection @ Crossroads Bellevue, Mercer Island Library, Muckleshoot Library, Newport Way Library, North Bend Library, Richmond Beach Library, Sammamish Library, Skykomish Library, Skyway Library, Valley View Library, White Center Library, Woodinville Library, Woodmont Library, Enumclaw Library, City of Kent library location TBD, City of Tukwila library location TBD. See Attachment 3 to this staff report.

<sup>11</sup> Seattle Neighborhood Service Center drop box locations approved by Motion 12820 were: North/Lake City, Delridge/West Seattle, Central, Ballard, Southeast, Northeast/University District. Ordinance 16216 authorized the Executive to enter into an interlocal agreement with the City of Seattle for the placement of these drop boxes and payment to the city of Seattle for their operations.

<sup>12</sup> Elections--Ballot drop box redeployment in selected areas of the county (2010-RPT0197)

<sup>13</sup> Ordinance 16717

<sup>14</sup> Elections--Ballot drop box redeployment in selected areas of the county (2010-RPT0197)

<sup>15</sup> Elections--Ballot drop box redeployment in selected areas of the county (2010-RPT0197)

<sup>16</sup> Drop boxes for the November 2010 general election were located at: Lake Forest Park City Hall, University Heights Community Center, Issaquah City Hall, Redmond City Hall, Earlington Building (Renton), Crossroads Shopping Center (Bellevue), Federal Way City Hall, Elections Office (temporary location in Tukwila), King County Administration Building

Ordinance 16984, which adopted the 2011 annual budget, included two provisos requiring Elections to provide reports on the number of ballots deposited in each ballot drop box during:

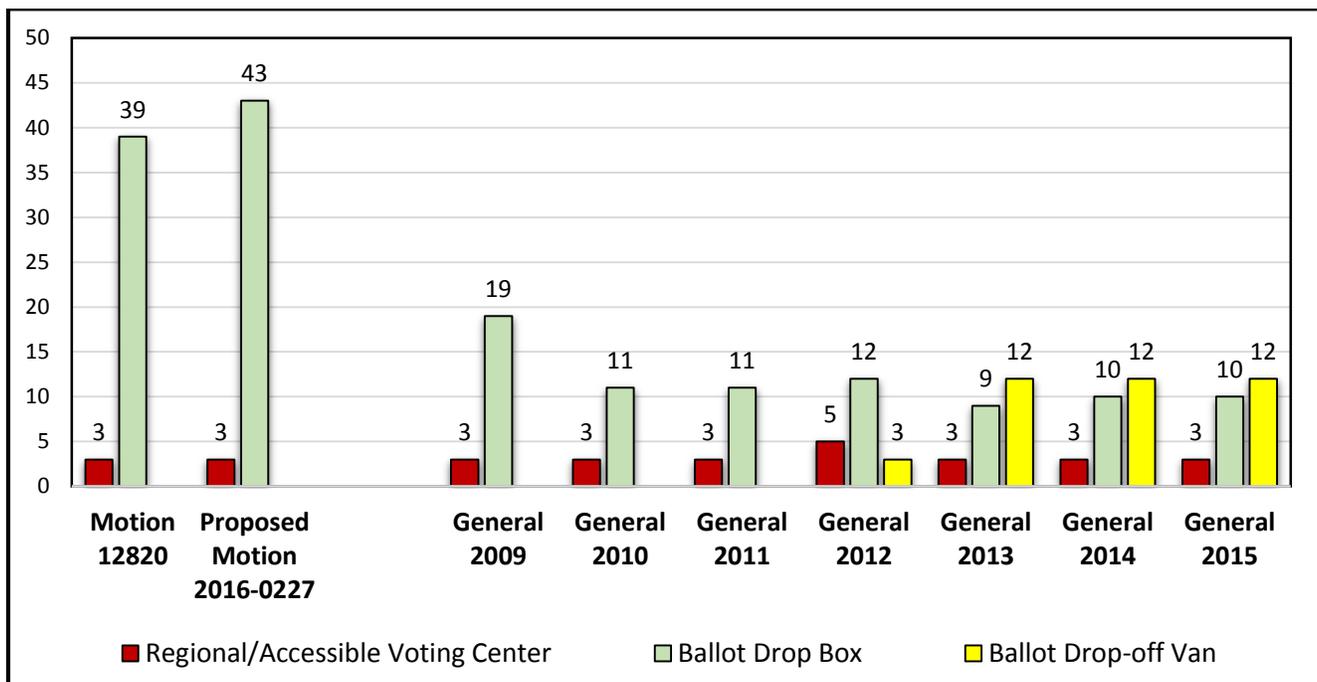
- The 2010 general election, any special elections in 2011, and the primary election (due by September 14, 2011);<sup>17</sup> and
- The 2011 general election (due by December 13, 2011).<sup>18</sup>

**Addition of ballot drop-off vans.** During 2012, in preparation for the Presidential Election, Elections increased the number and type of ballot drop-off locations and added a new drop-off option: staffed drop-off vans that were available at three locations (Kirkland City Hall, the University of Washington Seattle campus, and West Seattle Stadium) during business hours during the four days prior to the election and from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. on election day.

Table 1 illustrates the number of ballot drop-off locations that were deployed in past General Elections including regional/accessible voting centers. In addition, the table shows the number of locations approved by Council in Motion 12820 and the number of drop box locations proposed in Proposed Motion 2016-0227. **Attachment 3** to this staff report provides a list of the locations that served as a ballot drop-off location during the 2009-2015 General Elections.

Elections has continued to use drop-off vans since 2012, and has increased the number of drop-off van locations from three to 12 locations in 2013 due to positive response from voters.

**Table 1: Historical Number of Ballot Drop-off Locations**



<sup>17</sup> Response provided via 2011-RPT0150

<sup>18</sup> Response provided via 2011-RPT0205

**Motion 14491: Ballot drop-off location plan.** In December 2015, Council approved Motion 14491 that requested the director of Elections to develop and transmit a plan by April 30, 2016 to improve access to and convenience of ballot drop-off locations in King County.

Motion 14491 reads:

- A. *“The director of elections is requested to develop and transmit to the council a plan to improve access to and convenience of ballot drop-off locations throughout King County, including:*
- 1. A proposed number of additional drop-off locations to ensure geographic equity;*
  - 2. Proposed sites for the drop-off locations;*
  - 3. Estimated costs; and*
  - 4. An implementation timeline.*
- B. *The plan should include an analysis of the feasibility and desirability of using all public library locations in King County, including Seattle Public Libraries and the King County Library System, as a means to ensure geographic equity and convenience for voters.*
- C. *The plan should include an option for deployment of the expanded drop boxes for the November 2016 general election.*
- D. *The director should transmit the plan by April 30, 2016...”*

**Ordinance 18239: 2015-2016 Supplemental Budget proviso requiring location plan for ballot drop boxes.** In February 2016, Council approved Elections’ supplemental budget request of \$351,000 to purchase 37 new ballot drop boxes.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Council included a proviso stipulating the new drop boxes shall not be installed until the director of Elections transmits a ballot drop box location plan as requested in Motion 14491 and is approved by motion by the Council.

The 2015-2016 Biennial Budget Ordinance 18239, Section 16, Proviso P4 reads:

*“Of this appropriation, \$351,000 shall be expended or encumbered solely for the one-time provision of new ballot drop boxes, including twenty-seven for new sites and ten to replace existing boxes, and associated costs including installation and communication to voters and provided further that, of these funds, no funds shall be expended or encumbered to install ballot drop boxes until the director of elections transmits by April 30, 2016, the plan requested by Motion 14491 and a motion that approves the plan and the motion is passed by the council.”*

**Current ballot drop-off locations.** In the November 2015 General Election, Elections had ten locations with 24-hour drop boxes and 12 locations with ballot drop-off vans.

Table 2 provides a list of the 22 ballot drop-off locations utilized in the 2015 General Election.

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<sup>19</sup> Ordinance 18239

**Table 2: November 2015 General Election Ballot Drop-Off Locations**

<b>24-hour Drop Boxes</b>	<b>Drop-off Vans</b>
Ballard Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )	Auburn City Hall
Burien City Hall	Kirkland City Hall
Crossroads Shopping Center ( <i>Bellevue</i> )	Magnuson Park ( <i>Seattle</i> )
Federal Way City Hall	Rainier Community Center ( <i>Seattle</i> )
Issaquah City Hall	Sammamish City Hall
King County Administration Building ( <i>Seattle</i> )	SeaTac City Hall
King County Elections ( <i>Renton</i> )	Shoreline-Aurora Square Shopping Center
Lake Forest Park City Hall	Tahoma School District Building ( <i>Maple Valley</i> )
Redmond City Hall	University of Washington Campus ( <i>Seattle</i> )
Regional Justice Center ( <i>Kent</i> )	West Seattle Stadium
	White Center at Greenbridge Library
	Woodinville City Hall

**Proposed Ballot Drop-Off Location Plan**

Proposed Motion 2016-0227 would approve Elections’ Ballot Drop-Off Location Plan (“the Plan”) and would authorize the installation of 37 new drop boxes at locations approved in the Plan requested by Motion 14491, as required by Ordinance 18239. In result, a total of 43 sites in King County would have a drop box. Thirty-three of these would be at new locations, 7 would replace old drop boxes, and 3 would be unchanged.

Plan Overview

The Plan proposes to increase voter access and convenience by adding 33 new 24-hour drop box locations. The Plan would result in 24-hour drop boxes at 43 locations by the end of 2016. Elections staff report that 91.5% of residents will live within 3 miles of a proposed drop box. The plan proposes to deploy the new drop box locations in two phases, with all drop boxes available to King County voters by the November 2016 General Election (see below for implementation details). Elections also identified four additional locations<sup>20</sup> that they would re-evaluate as 24-hour drop box locations in 2017.

**Attachment 4** to this staff report provides a summary of the current and proposed drop box locations. A complete list of all sites evaluated for 2016 is provided in **Attachment 5** to this staff report.

The Plan estimates the cost of 37 new ballot drop boxes at \$240,000, including \$46,000 for installation and vinyl wrapping.

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<sup>20</sup> Locations to be considered in 2017 - Boulevard Park Library, Douglass Truth Library, Foster Library and Newcastle Library.

Recommendations for 2016 locations include the following (some proposed drop box locations are included in more than one recommendation):

- Locating 24 drop boxes at public libraries;
- Locating six drop boxes in unincorporated King County;
- Providing drop boxes to geographically isolated communities on Vashon Island, SE King County and East King County;
- Providing drop boxes in culturally distinct communities in the International District of Seattle and the Muckleshoot reservation;
- Providing drop boxes to 26 locations in areas that score highest in equity demographic characteristics defined by the plan.

### Plan Methodology

Elections indicated that they compiled a list of over 100 sites to be evaluated from various sources including Motion 14491, which requested consideration of public libraries, current ballot drop-off locations, suggestions from local jurisdictions and community partners, suggestions from the voting public and suggestions from the King County Council and the Executive's Office.

Evaluation Methodology. The plan states that Elections completed the following seven step process to identify the proposed locations:

1. Identify sites for evaluation
2. Establish rating criteria
3. Conduct site visits
4. Score and rank sites
5. Adjust for geographic equity
6. Establish feasibility
7. Propose location

Location Criteria. Elections staff considered input from key stakeholders<sup>21</sup> to develop the following criteria to score the list of sites that were identified to be evaluated.

- Alignment with Department and County Goals
- Operational Effectiveness
- Accessibility
- Continuity of Service

Scoring of evaluated sites for drop-off locations. The Plan notes that a team of three Elections staff experienced with the ballot drop box program scored the locations against the four criteria. The maximum score for a potential location is 100 points. The point value of each criterion is listed below.

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<sup>21</sup> Key stakeholders included: King County Council members and staff, Citizens' Elections Oversight Committee, King County Office of Equity and Social Justice, Seattle Public Library, King County Library System and residents representing limited English speaking communities.

1. Alignment with Department and County Goals
  - a. Serving isolated communities – 10 points
  - b. Providing equitable services – 10 points
  - c. Disparities in voter participation – 8 points
  - d. Responsible growth – 2 points
2. Operational Effectiveness
  - a. Ballot pick-up/box closing – 10 points
  - b. Site owner input – 5 points
  - c. Drive-up option – 5 points
  - d. End-of-line – 5 points
3. Accessibility
  - a. Visibility – 10 points
  - b. Access to public transit – 5 points
  - c. Parking – 5 points
  - d. ADA factors – 5 points
4. Continuity of Service
  - a. Location history – 20 points

Scoring exceptions. The Plan includes a number of exceptions to the baseline scoring system.

- Four locations (Highline College, Kent East Hill, Renton Highlands and the Hobart location (TBD) were identified as geographic equity locations. Three of the locations were proposed as drop box locations even though the locations received a relatively low baseline score.
- A number of higher scoring locations were not proposed due to the following factors, as explained in the Plan:
  - Construction
  - Leased property
  - Limited access
  - Not operationally feasible
  - No site agreement
  - No viable box option
  - Population served
  - Proximity to high scoring location

The Plan includes a complete list of the baseline scores of all drop-off locations with each locations' feasibility, scoring exceptions and the current and proposed drop box locations in **Attachment 5** to this staff report.

### Implementation Timeline

The Plan proposes to deploy the 33 new drop box locations in two phases in 2016, with all 33 deployed by the November 2016 General Election. A summary of the two phases is described below.

Phase One: Nineteen new drop boxes would be installed prior to the August 2016 Primary Election. Five of the 12 current drop-off van locations would receive a drop box. According to the Plan, the boxes would be installed by June in order to be available for the Primary Election. The Primary Election voting begins on July 14.

Table 3 illustrates the 19 locations where a new drop box would be installed in the first phase.

**Table 3: Phase One  
New Drop Box Installation Locations**

<b>New Drop Box Locations for August Primary Election</b>	
Algona-Pacific Library ( <i>Pacific</i> )	New Holly Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )
Auburn Library	Sammamish City Hall
Bellevue Regional Library	Shoreline Library
Broadview Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )	Skyway Library
Enumclaw Library	Tahoma School District Building ( <i>Maple Valley</i> )
Fairwood Library ( <i>Renton</i> )	University of Washington Campus ( <i>Seattle</i> )
Green Lake Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )	Valley View Library ( <i>SeaTac</i> )
High Point Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )	White Center Library
Kirkland City Hall	Woodinville Library
Lake City Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )	

Phase Two: Fourteen additional new drop boxes would be installed in time for the November 2016 General Election. The Plan notes that the boxes would be installed by September in order to be available for the General Election. The General Election voting begins on October 20.

Table 4 illustrates the 14 locations where a new drop box would be installed.

**Table 4: Phase Two  
New Drop Box Installation Locations**

<b>New Drop Box Locations for November General Election</b>	
Beacon Hill Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )	Kingsgate Library ( <i>Kirkland</i> )
Bothell Regional Library	Muckleshoot Library ( <i>Auburn</i> )
Capitol Hill (TBD)	Rainier Community Center (TBD) ( <i>Seattle</i> )
Chinatown/International District (TBD)	Renton Highlands (TBD)
Covington Library	Snoqualmie Library
Highline College (TBD) ( <i>Des Moines</i> )	South Park Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )
Kent East Hill (TBD)	Vashon Library

The Plan also provides a list of major milestones for the recommended proposal illustrated below in Table 5.

**Table 5: Proposal Major Milestones in 2016**

<b>Date (2016)</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
April 14	Elections submits Ballot Drop-off Location plan to Council
April 14 – May 14	Council review and consideration of the Plan
June*	Proposed Phase I drop boxes installed
July 14	Primary Election voting begins (29 ballot drop boxes open)
September*	Proposed Phase II drop boxes installed
October 20	General Election voting begins (43 drop boxes open)

\* Specific date not shown in the Plan

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Policy Issues**

Council staff has also identified a number of policy issues that the Committee may wish to consider described below.

**Number of drop box locations proposed.** As discussed previously in this staff report, Ordinance 18239, the 2015-2016 supplemental budget ordinance, approved funding for Elections to purchase 37 drop boxes: 27 for new sites and ten to replace current drop box sites. Elections indicated that they currently have three drop boxes that are waiting to be installed. By adding these three drop boxes and extending the life of three additional drop boxes,<sup>22</sup> Elections identified 43 drop box locations in the Plan instead of 40. See Table 6 below for a comparison of the Ordinance language and Elections' Plan.

**Table 6. Drop Box Changes: Ordinance 18239 compared to the Plan**

<b>Drop Box Changes</b>	<b>Ordinance 18239</b>	<b>Elections' Plan</b>	<b>Variance</b>
New 24-hour drop-off sites	27	33	6*
Replacements at existing 24-hour drop-off sites	10	7	(3)
<b>Subtotal New Drop Boxes</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>3</b>
No replacements at existing 24-hour drop-off sites	<b>0</b>	<b>3**</b>	
<b>TOTAL DROP BOXES</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>6</b>

\* Difference between the 33 and the 27: 3 pre-purchased drop boxes plus the decision not to replace 3 existing drop boxes, provided 3 drop boxes for new sites

\*\* Elections proposes to extend the life of these drop boxes

Full implementation of the Plan as drafted would require an amendment to the budget proviso to reconcile the number of new ballot drop box locations by authorizing

<sup>22</sup> Elections indicated that they would extend the life of three current ballot drop boxes located at the King County Administration Building, Issaquah City Hall and Crossroads Shopping Center. Elections states that these drop boxes have been installed under cover for their entire lifespan and are in significantly better condition than the seven drop boxes that have been exposed to the elements. Elections also states that the useful lifespan of these three boxes appears to be much greater than the estimated 6-8 years. Elections proposes to install the three new drop boxes at new drop box locations instead of the aforementioned locations.

Elections to install three of the new drop boxes intended for current drop box locations to three new drop box locations.

**Number of additional drop-off locations to ensure geographic equity.** Elections proposed four locations (Highline College, Kent East Hill, Renton Highlands and the Hobart location (TBD)) in the Plan as geographic equity locations as requested in Motion 14491. Elections explained the adjustment process utilized for ensuring geographic equity as follows: if two locations scored high but were adjacent to one another, they only selected one location instead of both locations since they wanted only one of the two locations to serve that geographic area. The definition of geographic equity and the rationale behind the selection of the four additional locations remains unclear.

Council staff analysis is ongoing.

**Scoring of Location History criterion.** This criterion was intended to serve the objective of continuity of service. Sites that previously housed a 24-hour drop box received 20 points, and those that were served by a ballot drop-off van would receive ten points. However, 11 evaluated sites received ten points for meeting this criterion even though the location did not currently have a 24-hour drop box or a ballot drop-off van but would serve as a permanent replacement for a current van location. Many other evaluated sites received zero points for this criterion. Elections staff explained that they defined this criterion in terms of continuity of service to a community, not just a specific location. Elections staff stated that they wanted to ensure that they weren't taking service away from a community.

Council staff analyzed the impact of this potential anomaly by reducing the scores of the location history criterion of the eleven sites by ten points. **Attachment 6** to this staff report illustrates the scoring changes, which would have impacts as follows:

#### *District One*

1. The Northgate Library would receive a higher score than the Lake City Library. The Northgate Library was not proposed in the Plan due to its proximity to the high scoring location- Lake City Library, prior to the revision of the score.
2. Woodinville City Hall (a current drop-off van location) would receive a higher score than the Woodinville Library in Council district three. Woodinville City Hall was not proposed in the Plan due to its proximity to the high scoring location- Woodinville Library, prior to the revision of the score.

#### *District Three*

1. The Woodinville Library would receive a lower score than Woodinville City Hall in Council district one.

#### *District Five*

1. SeaTac City Hall (a current drop-off van location) would receive a higher score than the Valley View Library. SeaTac City Hall was not proposed in the Plan due to Valley View Library being a better location for a 24-hour drop box, according to

Elections. SeaTac City Hall had a higher score than the Valley View Library, prior to the revision of the score.

**Scoring exception: Proximity to high scoring location.** As noted in the Background section above, the Plan includes a number of exceptions to the baseline scoring system. The exception with the greatest impact was “proximity to a high scoring location,” which excluded 19 potential sites being proposed as drop box locations. Table 7 below lists the 19 sites. The basis for this exception is unclear, as illustrated by the following examples:

Example One: According to the Plan, the Newport Way Library in Bellevue, which scored 60 points, would not be proposed as a 24-hour drop box location due to the proximity of a high scoring location- the Crossroads Shopping Center (71.5 points). However, the Bellevue Regional Library was proposed as a drop box location in the Plan, which scored 54 points. In Council staff’s analysis, it was determined that the Newport Way Library is 4.0 miles away by car from the Crossroads Shopping Center and the Bellevue Regional Library is 3.2 miles away by car. The Bellevue Regional Library received a lower score than the Newport Way Library and is closer to the Crossroads Shopping Center.

Example Two: The Plan proposes the Valley View Library as a drop box location, which had a score of 68 points. Elections did not propose the SeaTac City Hall location (a current drop-off van location) which scored 75.5 points, due to its proximity to a high scoring location- the Valley View Library even though the Valley View Library did not receive a higher score than SeaTac City Hall in the Plan.

Elections staff indicated that the Valley View Library would be a better drop box site. Elections staff explained that if two potential locations would serve the same region, Elections would recommend the higher scoring location. Elections staff also explained that some of the relatively high scoring locations weren’t recommended because they were very close to other locations that Elections thought would be a better location for a 24-hour drop box. The basis for this judgement is unclear.

**Table 7: Locations Excluded due to Proximity to a High Scoring Location**

Auburn City Hall	Newport Way Library ( <i>Bellevue</i> )
Delridge Public Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )	Northgate Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )
Fall City Library	Rainier Beach Library ( <i>Seattle</i> )
Federal Way Community Center	Redmond Regional Library
Federal Way Regional Library	Renton Main Library
Federal Way Library	SeaTac City Hall
Issaquah Library	Shoreline City Hall
Kent Regional Library	West Seattle Stadium
Library – Crossroads ( <i>Bellevue</i> )	Woodinville City Hall
Maple Valley City Hall	

Council staff analysis is ongoing.

**Estimated costs.** Elections estimated the cost to purchase 37 new ballot drop boxes at \$194,000. The Plan also includes the costs to install and to wrap the boxes with vinyl at \$46,000. The total cost for the new ballot drop boxes is approximately \$240,000. The 2016 supplemental budget request approved for the 37 drop boxes in Ordinance 18239 is \$351,000. The Plan does not state if the remaining \$111,000 of appropriation will be required, although Ordinance 18239 specifically states that:

*“...\$351,000 shall be expended or encumbered solely for the one-time provision of new ballot drop boxes, including twenty-seven for new sites and ten to replace existing boxes, and associated costs including installation and communication to voters...”*

The Plan does not provide the ongoing costs associated with hiring additional temporary staff to perform the ballot closing process required by the State<sup>23</sup> for the 33 new drop boxes on Election night nor does it include the ongoing costs associated with the new ballot drop boxes that would be deployed in 2016 and beyond.

Elections staff estimates the ongoing costs for the 43 proposed drop boxes at \$99,000. Elections states that the approximately \$70,000 in savings from discontinuing the 12 drop-off vans (if the Plan is approved) would allow them to absorb the \$78,000 needed to operate the additional 33 drop boxes.

Election costs are approximately 50% revenue-backed by participating jurisdictions and 50% funded by the General Fund.

A summary of the current drop box expenses and estimated costs of the proposal is found in **Attachment 7** to this staff report.

**Implementation timeline.** Elections indicated that in order to deploy the first phase of the ballot drop boxes in time for the August 2016 Primary Election, a Council decision must be made by May 16<sup>th</sup> to include the new drop-off locations in the voter materials.

- If the Plan is approved or forwarded without a recommendation by the Committee on April 26<sup>th</sup>, legislation could be expedited to the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting or could follow the regular schedule for the May 9<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, which could provide for additional Council discussion prior to the May 16<sup>th</sup> deadline.
- If the Plan is approved or forwarded without a recommendation by the Committee on May 10<sup>th</sup>, legislation could be expedited to the May 16<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, but Council would need to act on that day to meet Elections' timeline.

Elections proposes to submit an addendum to the Plan that contains the final list of phase two proposed drop box locations by July 1. In order to deploy the second phase of the drop boxes in time for the November 2016 General Election, a Council decision must be made by August 22. Given Council's traditional August recess, this would

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<sup>23</sup> WAC 434-250-100

require Committee action on July 26th for Council consideration on August 22nd at the latest.

## **Plan Improvements**

Although Elections included all the items requested in Motion 14491, Council staff identified areas in the Plan for improvement.

The Plan does not reference but could include the following information:

1. The three Accessible Voting Centers that are currently drop-off locations and will continue to be drop-off locations in 2016;
2. Ordinance 18239 – the ordinance that provided supplemental funding for an additional 37 drop boxes;
3. Provide a definition for the following terms: improving voting access and convenience, all the scoring exceptions and geographic equity; and
4. The performance measures Elections would utilize to determine if access to and the convenience of voting has been improved.

These modifications could be incorporated through an amendment to the proposed motion.

Council staff analysis is ongoing.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Motion 2016-0227 and its attachment-Elections' Ballot Drop-Off Plan
2. Transmittal Letter
3. Historical Ballot Drop-Off Locations List
4. List of Current and Proposed Ballot Drop-Off Locations
5. Scoring List of All Drop-Off Locations Evaluated and Proposed
6. Scoring List of All Drop-Locations with Location History Score Adjustment
7. Current Expenses and Proposed Estimated Expenses of Drop Boxes

## **INVITED**

1. Julie Wise, Director, Department of Elections
2. Nathan Valderas, Administrative Services Manager, Department of Elections