

November 3, 2020  
Presidential General Election

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

CLERK-RECORDER-ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT

DEBI COOPER, COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER-REGISTRAR

JUNE 23, 2020

# What We Know

- ▶ COVID will still be here
- ▶ Every active voter will be sent a Vote-by-Mail (VBM) ballot (apx. 700,000)
- ▶ More than 550,000 voters will vote (over 500,000 by mail)
- ▶ Postage paid returned ballots
- ▶ July direct mailing to non-VBM voters
- ▶ We have technologies, capacity, and experience to handle VBM volume
- ▶ We will have:
  - ▶ 45 drop boxes, 36 available 24 hours/day
  - ▶ drive-through, drop-off locations
  - ▶ in-person voter assistance sites throughout the County (4 days), including Election Day
  - ▶ USPS has 349 Collection boxes and 23 local Post Offices throughout the County
- ▶ We will use BallotTrax software for voters to track their ballots

# What is Unknown

- ▶ How many in-person assistance sites (by choice or mandate)
  - ▶ Executive Orders
  - ▶ Legislation (AB860 passes, SB423 in amendment process now)
  - ▶ Litigation
- ▶ Commitment and availability of voting locations and workers
- ▶ The COVID restrictions in October/November 2020 (could be in mid-surge)
- ▶ Physical social distancing requirements and PPE at voter assistance sites
- ▶ COVID protocols for sanitizing voter assistance sites
- ▶ Risk of social unrest and response procedures
- ▶ Possible funding (Federal CARES Act, State grants/reimbursements)

# Assumptions

- ▶ Turnout will increase for November
  - ▶ VBM returns were 77% in 2012 – Presidential elections always the highest
  - ▶ VBM turnout is historically higher than in-person turnout
  - ▶ This will be a controversial and highly scrutinized election
- ▶ COVID will still be driving social distancing and PPE requirements
- ▶ We will be counting more nearly 3 million ballot cards
- ▶ Predominantly in-person voter areas may need more in-person locations than Vote-by-Mail areas
- ▶ Sufficient in-person locations and willing workers can be found

# Planning Challenges

- ▶ Cyber threats and foreign interference
- ▶ Wildfires
- ▶ Public Safety Power Shutoffs
- ▶ COVID, social distancing, and sanitation protocols
- ▶ Social Unrest
- ▶ Unwilling voting locations and poll worker volunteers

And possibly to come this fall...

- ▶ Shelter-in-Place 2.0

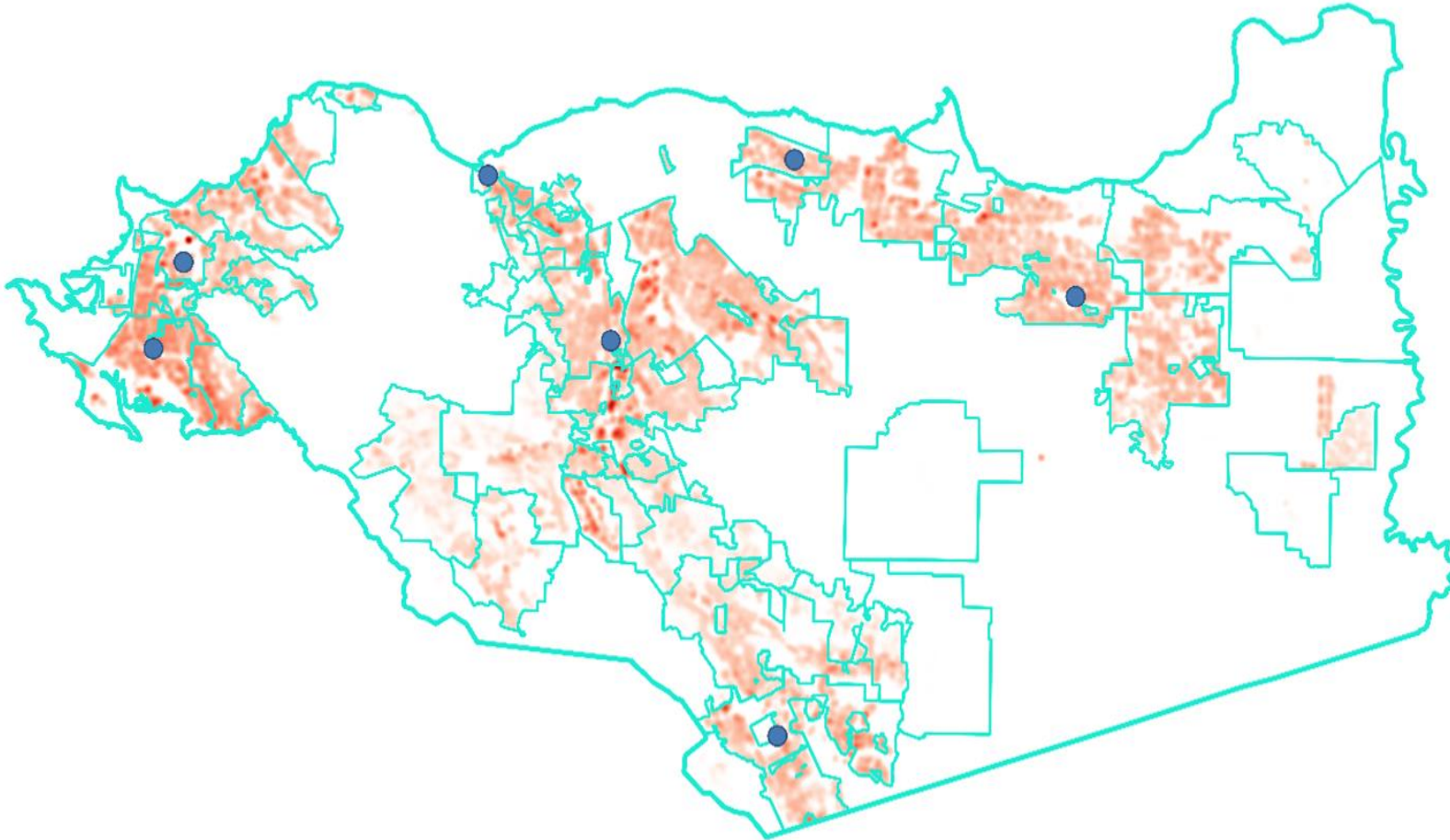
# Strategies

- ▶ Outreach Focus:
  - ▶ Every voter will receive a ballot – return postage paid!
  - ▶ Voting by mail is the easiest way to vote and keep everyone safe
  - ▶ If a voter doesn't receive their ballot within a week of mailing, to contact us early so we can remedy the situation
  - ▶ Send or drop off your ballot early
  - ▶ The many ways to return a ballot (mail, drop box, drive thru, in-person locations)
- ▶ Expand outreach activities, particularly to historically in-person voters
- ▶ Assistance from community and special interest organizations with outreach to groups that may be challenging to reach

# #1 Limited Voter Assistance Sites

7

**Satellite Offices  
6 Locations**



45 Drop Boxes

1 In-person Central Office 29 days

6 In-person Satellite Offices 4 days

Minimal COVID Exposure 35 staff

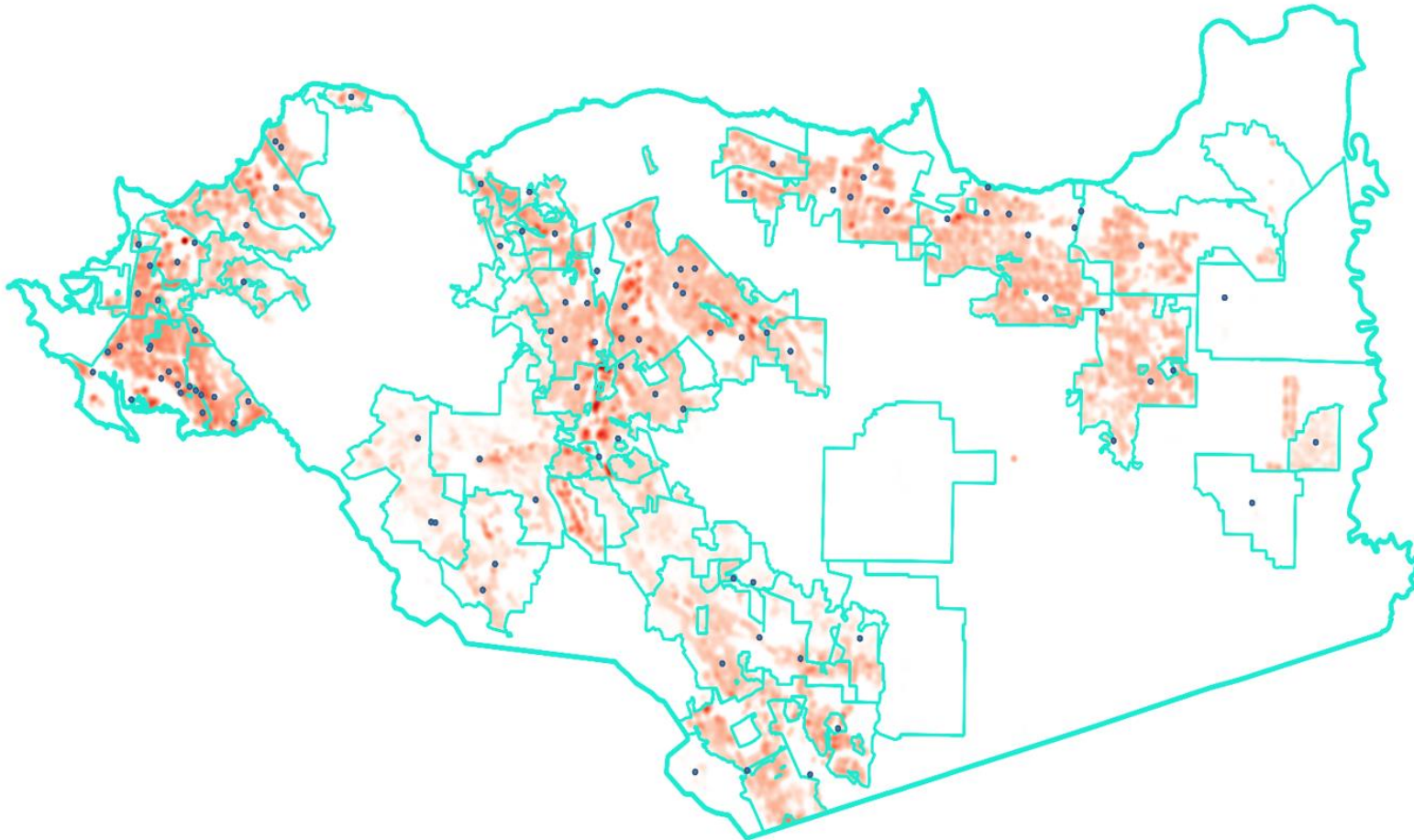
Minimal PPE/Cleaning 7 sites

Requires new technology no

Net cost increase minimal

# #2 Polling Places

**Confirmed Polling Places  
100 Locations**

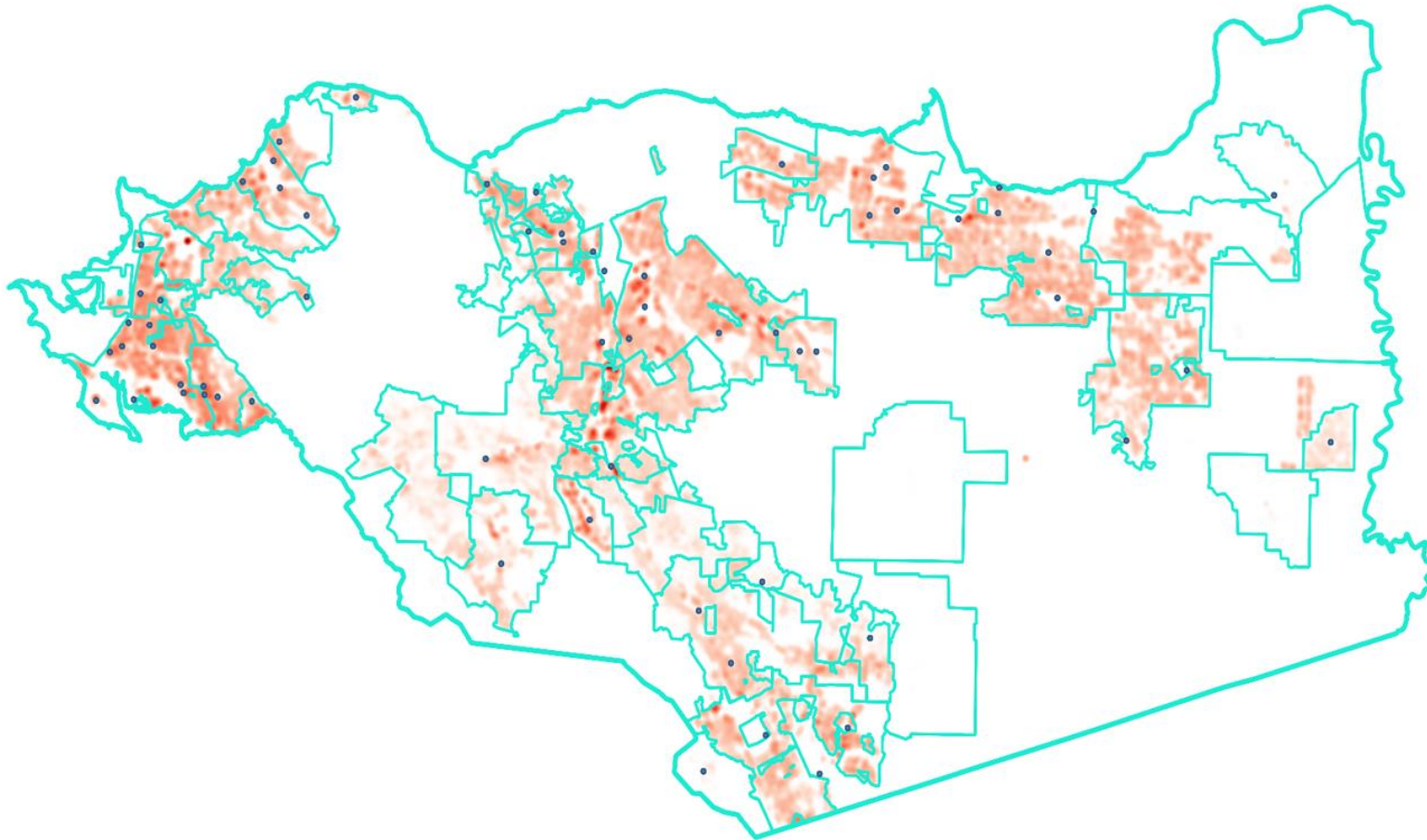


- 45 Drop Boxes
- 1 In-person Central Office 29 days
- 3 In-person Satellite Offices 4 days
- 100 Polling Places 1 day
- Maximum COVID Exposure 820 staff
- Maximum PPE/Cleaning 104 sites
- Requires new technology yes
- Net cost increase \$1,000,000



# #3 Maximum Voter Assistance Sites

**Available Polling Places  
65 Locations**



45 Drop Boxes

1 In-person Central Office 29 days

70 In-person Satellite Offices 4 days

~~100 Polling Places 1 day~~

Maximum COVID Exposure 1,685 staff

Maximum PPE/Cleaning 71 sites

Requires new technology yes

Highest net cost increase \$2,500,000

# Summary

- ▶ We are confident in our plans and preparations for handling VBM ballots
  - ▶ Over 90% of the ballots cast will be VBM
- ▶ Locations for in-person voting will be fluid and dynamic for a time
- ▶ We are making plans for option #2 for in-person voter assistance
  - ▶ Election Day only (similar to the March Primary)
  - ▶ Enormous health risks
  - ▶ Requires significant resources
  - ▶ Locations may not be able to be retrofitted for safety
  - ▶ Creates \$1-2 million shortfall
- ▶ We can switch to option #1
  - ▶ Pending outcome of legislation, court decision
  - ▶ Will be required if Shelter in Place 2.0 is ordered
  - ▶ Safest for staff, volunteers, and the community
  - ▶ Cost neutral
- ▶ The final in-person voting model may end up somewhere between #1- #2

## Beat COVID-19 this fall:

- ✓ Stay 6 feet apart
- ✓ Wash your hands
- ✓ Wear a mask
- ✓ **Vote by Mail !**

Questions?