

**TO:** San Jose Elections Commission

**FROM:** Lee Price, MMC

**SUBJECT:** Election Costs

**DATE:** August 11, 2009

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Elections Commission and the public with information about actual costs for conducting recent candidate elections in San Jose, and further, to estimate costs to ask voters to amend the City's Charter in a future election. The memorandum is divided into two parts. Part 1 provides historical information regarding actual costs to conduct candidate elections from 2005-2008. Part 2 of this memo provides an estimate of costs for placing on the ballot a citywide measure (or measures) that would amend the City's Charter, a prerequisite to changing the way San Jose conducts elections.

#### Part 1: History of Election Costs from 2005-2008:

Between 2005 and 2008, the City held several special elections to fill unanticipated vacancies on the City Council in addition to two regular election cycles. The chart on the following page contains information regarding the number of registered voters, the number of ballots casts, the voter turnout and the cost per voter per race. The chart does not provide cost information for ballot measures, including the most recall effort. It also does not include any other analysis, like how much each candidate-controlled committee solicited or spent, or a summary of independent expenditures made on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate.

It is important to note that actual costs to conduct a City election depend **when** the election is held. The least costly option is when the election is consolidated with other jurisdictions holding elections on the same date, such as the scheduled Statewide Gubernatorial Primary held in June of even years. The reason this is least costly is because the total election cost will be shared by federal, state, county and local jurisdictions. The second least costly option is to consolidate with the North County jurisdictions in a scheduled November Unified District Law Election (UDEL). The total cost is shared with all UDEL jurisdictions (for example: other Santa Clara County Cities, School Districts and other special districts). The most expensive option is the stand-alone election. An unscheduled election held on a date other than those referenced above are the most expensive to conduct because the City must absorb the full cost of the Special Election.

As noted on the attached chart, the City's costs to conduct regular elections on dates that coincide with the Statewide Gubernatorial Primary and the November UDEL

elections are indeed much less expensive to conduct than Special Elections held stand-alone. As you can see, Special Elections to fill unanticipated vacancies on the City Council have been very expensive, as compared to the costs associated with regular, scheduled elections.

ELECTION COST SUMMARY – Calendar Years 2005 through 2008:

Election Date	Year	Type	Other Issues on Ballot	Cost	Registered Voters	Ballots Cast	Voter Turnout	Average Cost per Reg Voter
7-Jun	2005	Special Election, District 7	None	<b>256,484</b>	29,069	7,937	27.3%	8.82
13-Sep	2005	Special Election, District 7 Runoff	None	<b>325,249</b>	29,415	9,020	30.7%	11.05
6-Jun	2006	Regular Election, Mayor, Districts 1, 3, 5, 7, 9	Federal, State and local primaries, City measure	<b>254,343</b>	M/ 372,197 1/ 35,127 3/ 26,938 5/ 24,504 7/ 28,593 9/ 45,782	135,892 13,234 9,242 7,627 8,892 18,748	36.5% 37.7% 34.3% 31.1% 31.1% 40.9%	48¢
7-Nov	2006	Runoff Mayor and District 3; Special District 6	State, County Special Districts, City measure	<b>466,435</b>	M/ 372,677 3/ 26,871 6/ 42,396	208,411 13,854 26,276	55.9% 51.6% 62.0%	1.05
6-Mar	2007	Special Election, District 4; Runoff District 6	None	<b>1,005,039</b>	4/ 35,019 6/ 38,107	9,601 12,115	27.4% 33.9%	13.74
5-Jun	2007	Special Election, District 4 Runoff	None	<b>534,463</b>	34,595	11,283	32.6%	15.45
3-Jun	2008	Regular Election, Districts 2, 4, 6, 8,10	Federal, State and local primaries, City measure	<b>398,914</b>	2/ 37,330 4/ 37,169 6/ 40,774 8/ 42,307 10/ 42,843	12,222 12,631 13,874 15,184 13,834	32.4% 33.9% 34.0% 35.9% 31.8%	1.99
4-Nov	2008	General Election, Runoff Districts 2 & 8	Presidential, State, County, Special Districts, City Measures	<b>39,571</b>	2/ 40,854 8/ 46,441	34,714 38,287	85.0% 82.4%	45¢

Part 2: Estimate of Costs to Place on the ballot a measure to change the City's Charter:

We typically budget for 3 citywide ballot measures each year. The Registrar of Voters charges a higher per voter cost for establishing the set-up of the first citywide ballot measure and an incremental cost for each subsequent measure. In 2008, the base charge was estimated at roughly \$1.25 per voter for the first measure and \$0.50 per voter for each subsequent measure. The actual costs for each measure (after initial set-up by the Registrar) is calculated largely on the actual costs to print the ballot and all the ballot materials sent with the Voter's Sample Ballot (the ballot question, the exact language of the charter amendment or ordinance), the City Attorney's Impartial Analysis, and any arguments for or against.

The average cost for each of the four measures on the November 4, 2008 ballot was \$254,677.25. Ballot materials went to all registered voters in the City of San Jose. This year, the County Board of Supervisors adopted new fees, as they do annually. Costs for conducting elections will increase approximately 20%. It is difficult to provide an exact estimate, as there are a number of factors to consider with each unique election (the date selected, how many registered voters there are, how many ballot measures, etc.) but for purposes of this memo it would be reasonable to estimate that a Charter Amendment for the purpose of adding IRV as an acceptable method of conducting an election could cost the City anywhere between \$3.4 million (if stand-alone) and \$305,000 (assuming other ballot measures and held in June of even-numbered year). *These estimates are, however, based upon current election methodology and technology used by the Registrar of Voters.*

Additionally, it is expected that there would be costs associated with public outreach and education. It is not clear at this time what those costs would be; however, it is likely that the City would partner with the County Registrar of Voters, who has already estimated those costs would be about \$100,000.