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Examining San Mateo County's Adoption of the California Voter's Choice Act: 2018 Election Cycle



OFFICE OF MARK CHURCH
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COUNTY OF SAN MATEO



This research was commissioned by the San Mateo County Elections Office and was independently conducted by the California Civic Engagement Project.

About the California Civic Engagement Project (CCEP)

The California Civic Engagement Project (CCEP) is part of the University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy in Sacramento. The CCEP conducts research to inform policy and on-the-ground efforts for a more engaged and representative democracy, improving the social and economic quality of life in communities. The CCEP is engaging in pioneering research to identify disparities in civic participation across place and population. Its research informs and empowers a wide range of policy and organizing efforts aimed at reducing disparities in state and regional patterns of well-being and opportunity. Key audiences include public officials, advocacy groups, media and communities themselves. To learn about the CCEP's research, or review the extensive coverage of the CCEP's work in the national and California media, visit our website at <https://ccep.usc.edu>

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction	6
About the Study	6
The Voter's Choice Act	6
About the San Mateo County 2018 Election Cycle	7
1. What method of voting did San Mateo County voters use to cast their ballots in the 2018 Election Cycle?	14
2018 Primary and General San Mateo County Analysis	15
Defining Vote Methods	16
Vote Center and Ballot Drop-Off Use by Day and Location	16
Individual Ballot Drop Box Location Activity	21
Method of Voting by Race and Ethnicity	23
Method of Voting by Age	24
Method of Voting by Gender	24
Method of Voting by Nativity	25
Method of Voting by Party Affiliation	25
Method of Voting by Previous Polling Place Voters	26
Method of Voting by New Voters	27
Mail Use Rates by Voting Precinct	28
In-Person Vote Center Use Rates by Voting Precinct	30
Voter Distance to Vote Center	32
2. What were 2018 voter turnout rates in San Mateo County, and how did they vary by demographic group?	36
2018 Primary Election Voter Turnout: VCA and Non-VCA Counties Total Population	36
2018 General Election Voter Turnout: VCA and Non-VCA Counties Total Population	36
2018 Primary and General Elections Registered Voter Turnout: VCA Counties by Race and Ethnicity	37
2018 Primary and General Elections Eligible Voter Turnout: VCA Counties by Race and Ethnicity	38
Voter Representation of Latinos and Asian Americans	39
2018 Primary and General Elections Registered Voter Turnout: VCA Counties for Youth	39
2018 Primary and General Elections Eligible Voter Turnout: VCA Counties for Youth	40
Voter Representation of Youth	41
2018 Detailed Turnout Analysis: Introduction	41
Registered Voter Turnout by Age	42
Registered Voter Turnout by Gender	42
Registered Voter Turnout by Race and Ethnicity	43
Registered Voter Turnout by Nativity	43
Registered Voter Turnout by Party Affiliation	44
Registered Voter Turnout by Previous Polling Place Voters	44
Registered Voter Turnout by New Voters	45
Registered Voter Turnout by Previous Polling Place Voters	52
Eligible Voter Turnout by Race and Ethnicity	54
Eligible Voter Turnout by Age	54
Eligible Voter Turnout by Census Tract of Residence	55
Change in Registered Voter Turnout: 2014 Compared to 2018	61
3. What were the Vote-by-Mail rejection rates in the 2018 Election Cycle, and what were the reasons for these ballot rejections?	63
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Vote Method	64
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Reason Rejected	64
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Race and Ethnicity	65
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Age	65
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Party Affiliation	66
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Nativity	66
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Gender	66
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Precinct of Residence	67
VBM Ballot Rejection Rate Hot Spots	69
4. What were San Mateo County voters' experiences when using Vote Centers?	71
Vote Center Experience	71
Vote Center Location and Distance	73
Perspectives on the Vote Center Model	74
5. What were the costs of San Mateo County's 2018 Elections under the VCA?	75
2018 Primary and General Election Costs	75
2018 Primary and General Election Outreach Costs	75
Conclusion	76
Available VCA Resources:	78
Notes	79

Executive Summary

The 2018 Election Cycle saw the first statewide elections held under the California Voter’s Choice Act (VCA). Under the VCA, counties are directed to mail every registered voter a Vote-by-Mail (VBM) ballot (Los Angeles County will not automatically send all registered voters VBM ballots until 2024), which the voter can mail in, drop off at a secure Ballot Drop Box Location, or drop off at any newly established Vote Center in their county. At Vote Centers, which replace traditional neighborhood polling places, voters can cast their ballots in person, drop off their completed VBM ballots, access conditional voter registration (CVR), receive replacement ballots, and access additional resources, such as language assistance and accessible voting machines. The new voting model aims to make the voting process more convenient for voters while possibly reducing the cost of conducting elections and increasing voter turnout. Of the 14 California counties eligible to adopt the model in 2018, San Mateo County was among the five that chose to do so.

This report provides an analysis of the impact of the VCA on San Mateo County voters in the 2018 Primary and General Elections. The goal of this research is to generate insights to help San Mateo County election officials and community groups, as well as those in other California counties, understand the challenges and opportunities introduced by this new voting model, informing its effective implementation.

Key Findings from San Mateo’s VCA Implementation in the 2018 Election Cycle

Voters widely used Vote-by-Mail ballots and relied on Vote Center services

- San Mateo County voters overwhelmingly cast their ballots using VBM ballots—93% in the Primary and 88% in the General.
- Voters used San Mateo County Vote Centers for services including voting in person, dropping off VBM ballots, receiving language assistance, replacing damaged or lost ballots or envelopes, and, if not yet registered, conditionally registering to vote and casting a ballot.
- Under the VCA, Vote Centers and ballot drop off locations are open up to ten days prior to Election Day. In San Mateo County, voter participation was low at Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Boxes during the initial days of early voting, but increased sharply two to three days prior to Election Day and on Election Day. Voters who cast ballots in person did so primarily on Election Day itself.

Vote Center use varied by group

- A greater share of Latino and youth voters used Vote Centers to vote in person or drop off their VBM ballots than did Asian Americans or those age 65 or older (see table).
- Conversely, while the majority of voters in each demographic group mailed in their VBM ballot, Latinos and youth mailed in their VBM ballots at lower rates.
- Voters who previously used polling places were more likely to vote in person or drop off their ballot at a Vote Center than voters who had previously voted by mail.

Percent of voters who used Vote Centers to vote in person or drop off ballots		
	Primary Election	General Election
All voters	21.2%	24.7%
Youth (ages 18-24)	27.5%	29.5%
Voters age 65+	15.0%	15.7%
Latino voters	29.8%	35.7%
Asian-American voters	17.7%	22.3%
Voters who previously used polling places	38.4%	47.4%

Data Source: San Mateo County Voter File, Political Data, Inc.

Patterns identified for the method of voting in the 2018 Primary and General Elections, including how early ballots are cast, could change in future elections as more voters become aware of and familiar with the new options available to them.

Voter turnout increased, including among underrepresented groups

Deriving a causal connection between the VCA and voter turnout calls for caution, as we have only one election cycle to examine.

- Overall, San Mateo County voter turnout was historically high in the 2018 Primary and General Elections. Latinos, Asian Americans and youth (age 18-24) saw significant increases in turnout over previous midterm elections, although these increases cannot be causally attributed to the VCA after only one election cycle.
- The share of Asian-American and youth voters among all voters increased in 2018 over the 2010 Primary and General Elections. However, the share of Latinos among all voters slightly decreased in the same period. Underrepresentation remains a challenge: Latinos, Asian Americans and youth continued to experience much lower voter turnout than the general population in San Mateo County (as is also the case at the state and national levels).
- Voters who previously voted by mail had a much higher turnout rate than voters who previously used a polling place. New registrants also turned out at lower rates than the general registrant population. These data suggest that additional outreach is needed to help increase the turnout of previous polling place voters and potential voters under the new model.

Mailed VBM ballots were more often rejected

Voters had multiple options for casting VBM ballots, including mailing them, or dropping them off at a Ballot Drop Box or Vote Center. These voting methods corresponded to differences in the likelihood of rejection.

- The majority of rejected VBM ballots were sent through the mail, while very small numbers of VBM ballots dropped off at a Ballot Drop Box Location or Vote Center were rejected.
- Late ballots continue to be the most common reason that VBM ballots are not counted in San Mateo County. The vast majority of rejected VBM ballots were rejected because they arrived more than 3 days after Election Day (the statutory limit when postmarked by Election Day). The next most common reasons for ballot rejection were lack of a signature and non-matching signatures.
- Disparate rates of VBM ballot rejection by demographic group (including age and race) continue under the VCA model. These disparities, along with lower turnout of new registrants and voters who previously used a polling place, demonstrate that challenges remain with regard to seeing a fully representative electorate in San Mateo County. Understanding how different voter groups cast their ballots and engage with the new voting model will inform efforts to increase their likelihood of voting in San Mateo County and other counties that adopt the VCA.

Most Vote Center users had positive experiences

An exit survey of Vote Center visitors shed light on how voters experienced the new Vote Centers throughout San Mateo County. Note that the survey did not capture experiences of voters who did not access Vote Centers (including any who found them difficult to access).

- Vote Center users were very positive about the county's decision to use the new voting model.
- Overall satisfaction with Vote Centers was high. Most visitors reported liking the location, hours, availability of parking and staff assistance. Over 90% were satisfied with the process of casting their ballot.
- 81% of visitors traveled to a Vote Center by car from their home and, for nearly 60%, their trip was less than 5 minutes.
- A majority of Vote Center users in the 2018 General Election were not aware of the new voting model. Greater percentages of Asian Americans (58.2%) and youth (64.5%) who used Vote Centers had not heard of the new model.
- Overall, the most common dislikes were the waiting time (17.8%) and lack of available parking (12.2%). Some voters were also dissatisfied with the voting process they experienced (8.4%). Election Day Vote Center visitors registered more concerns about these elements than pre-Election Day visitors.

Conclusion

After only one election cycle, we have gained insights into how voters are initially experiencing Vote Centers throughout San Mateo County. Going forward, significant challenges remain for voter outreach efforts in San Mateo County. Voter education should account for groups' differing experiences under the VCA. Strategies to help voters take greater advantage of early voting opportunities, with particular attention and outreach to groups with lower turnout, are some of the future voter-centric adjustments that will aid San Mateo County in its ongoing VCA implementation. Continued efforts to understand how voters experience and engage with the VCA (and how voters' reactions may change over time) by the county elections office and community groups can guide their work toward the shared goal of a fully participating electorate.

Introduction

The 2018 Election Cycle saw the first elections held under the new California Voter's Choice Act (VCA).¹ Counties choosing to adopt the VCA are required to mail Vote-by-Mail (VBM) ballots to all registered voters (Los Angeles County will not automatically send all registered voters VBM ballots until 2024). Under the VCA, polling places are replaced with Vote Centers, distributed throughout the county and available to all voters up to ten days prior to Election Day. Vote Centers offer a range of voter services including in-person voting, accessible voting options, VBM ballot drop-off and conditional voter registration (CVR). Of the 14 California counties eligible to adopt the model in 2018, 5 counties, including San Mateo County, chose to do so.

For many of its proponents, the goal of the new voting model was to make the voting process more convenient, reduce the cost of elections and possibly increase voter turnout. This report provides a quantitative analysis of the impact of the VCA on San Mateo County voters and the County's election process. We address five main research questions:

1. What method of voting did San Mateo County voters use to cast their ballots in the 2018 Election Cycle?
2. What were 2018 voter turnout rates in San Mateo County, and how did they vary by demographic group?
3. What were the Vote-by-Mail ballot rejection rates in the 2018 Election Cycle, and what were the reasons for these ballot rejections?
4. What were San Mateo County voters' experiences when using Vote Centers?
5. What were the costs of San Mateo County's 2018 elections under the VCA?

About the Study

The goals of this research include generating critical insight on how these challenges and opportunities vary across primary and general elections and to inform the effective implementation of the VCA in other California counties. The study's findings will also aid California counties adopting the VCA model to implement effective voter education efforts in future elections in order to achieve greater and more demographically-representative engagement in California's electoral process.

Data collection for the study includes analysis of voter registration files, county election budgets, and Vote Center exit surveys from the 2018 Primary and General Elections. The 2018 Primary and General voter data used in this analysis is the San Mateo County voter registration database, commonly referred to as the "voter file" from two sources: San Mateo County and Political Data, Inc. (PDI). San Mateo County provided extracts of its voter registration file from the Primary and General Elections. Political Data, Inc. provided voter registration files from July 2018 and February 2019 with additional attributes identified, including race and ethnicity, age, gender, nativity and party affiliation of the registrant.

A Vote Center exit survey was conducted with a random sample of voters using randomly selected San Mateo County Vote Centers in the 2018 General Election. Data were weighted to ensure a representative sample by race/ethnicity and age with a total sample size of 1,316 voters. Finally, the San Mateo County Elections Office provided cost data for the Primary and General Elections.

The Voter's Choice Act

In 2016, Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 450, which allows California counties to choose to adopt a new voting model. Known as the Voter's Choice Act (VCA), this law directs participating counties to mail every registered voter a VBM ballot, which the voter can mail in, drop off at a secure Ballot Drop Box Location, or drop off at any newly established Vote Center.

The VCA builds on a handful of existing election reforms in California and introduces additional options for voters. When the VCA became law, VBM was already a frequently chosen method of voting for Californians. The use of VBM ballots in the state has steadily increased since 2001, when Californians were given the ability to register as permanent VBM voters. By 2016, nearly 58% of ballots cast in the general election were VBM ballots, up from 27% in 2002.²

The VCA provides the pathway for California to expand VBM further, while still preserving in-person voting options. Under the VCA, traditional polling places are replaced with Vote Centers that provide more services to voters. At a Vote Center, voters can now cast their ballots in person, drop off their VBM ballots, conditionally register and vote after the 15-day registration deadline, request replacement ballots, use an accessible voting machine, and receive language assistance. While there are fewer Vote Centers than polling places by design, Vote Centers are open to voters for up to ten days prior to Election Day and available for all voters to utilize countywide.

In addition to San Mateo County, four other counties adopted the VCA in 2018: Madera, Napa, Nevada and Sacramento. All other California counties are currently eligible to adopt the model for 2020. Los Angeles county is an exception, and is not required to mail every registered voters VBM ballots until 2024. In addition to Los Angeles County, the following counties have publicly announced that they will adopt the VCA for the 2020 Election Cycle: Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne (see Figure 1). In total, fifteen California counties will be conducting elections under the VCA in 2020—containing approximately half the state’s current registered voter population.

About the San Mateo County 2018 Election Cycle

FIGURE 1



Following the requirements of the VCA, 39 Vote Centers were located throughout San Mateo County in the Primary and General Elections, with at least one Vote Center in each municipality. Five Vote Centers were open 10 days prior to the election and 30 Vote Centers were added three days prior to Election Day.

The San Mateo County Elections Office opted to open four locations to serve as Vote Centers about a month prior to Election Day (30 days for the Primary and 29 days for the General). The elections office also opted to use two Roving Vote Centers on Election Day in rural areas of the county. A Mobile Vote Center was also available for voters by appointment throughout the early voting period and on Election Day.

During the early voting period of both the Primary and General Elections, Vote Centers were open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Vote Centers were open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. 3 days prior to Election Day, and from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day itself. Twenty-seven Ballot Drop Box Locations (term used by the county for internally and externally placed drop boxes) were also distributed throughout the county. Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the locations of Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box Locations in San Mateo County for both elections. Figure 4 identifies the geographic and low-income distribution of the population in the county during the 2018 Election Cycle.

In addition, as mandated by the VCA, the San Mateo County Elections Office created an Election Administration Plan (EAP) for the 2018 Primary and General. Developed through a process of public input and public hearings, the EAP is required to describe how the county will administer elections under the VCA. San Mateo County also established the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) and Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) to advise the VCA implementation process as required by the VCA. At the request of community members, San Mateo County also established the Voter Education and Outreach Advisory Committee (VEOAC). All three of these committees worked with the county elections office to determine the locations of Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box Locations as part of the creation of the county’s Election Administration Plan (EAP).

The VCA also requires each adopting county to develop a Voter Education and Outreach Plan (part of the County’s EAP) that informs voters about the services provided by the VCA. Stakeholders involved during the plan’s development include community-based organizations, local elected officials and interested individuals. Outreach and education events for the Primary and General Elections were planned and advertised through an extensive media campaign that included direct postcard mailings, brochures, flyers and posters printed in English, Spanish and Chinese. For the Primary, targeted advertisements were purchased in the Bay Area, including six radio stations, six television stations, eleven local newspapers and one local magazine. San Mateo County voters were digitally targeted through six websites (YouTube, Facebook, KTVU, KCBS, Univision, and MercuryNews.com), one hundred thousand emails, and 517,192 mobile phone advertisements. Outreach activities expanded for the General Election, targeted advertisements purchased included eight radio stations, eleven television stations, and nineteen

local newspapers. San Mateo County voters were digitally targeted through seven websites (YouTube, Facebook, KTVU, KCBS, Univision, and MercuryNews.com), one hundred thousand emails, and 1,000,000-plus mobile phone advertisements.

In addition, the VEOAC and its members conducted an extensive outreach campaign to reach San Mateo County voters, especially those from electorally underrepresented communities. Many of these efforts were unfunded, conducted by VEOAC members using resources donated by individuals and the organizations they represented.

San Mateo County Voter Education and Outreach Advisory Committee

At the request of community members, the San Mateo County Chief Elections Office established the Voter Education and Outreach Advisory Committee (VEOAC). The VEOAC is co-chaired by Thrive Alliance and S F Peninsula People Power and consists of twenty to thirty members. The mission of the San Mateo County VEOAC is to advise and assist the Chief Elections Officer on the matters relating to voter education and outreach and to enhance outreach opportunities and compliance with all federal, state and local laws.

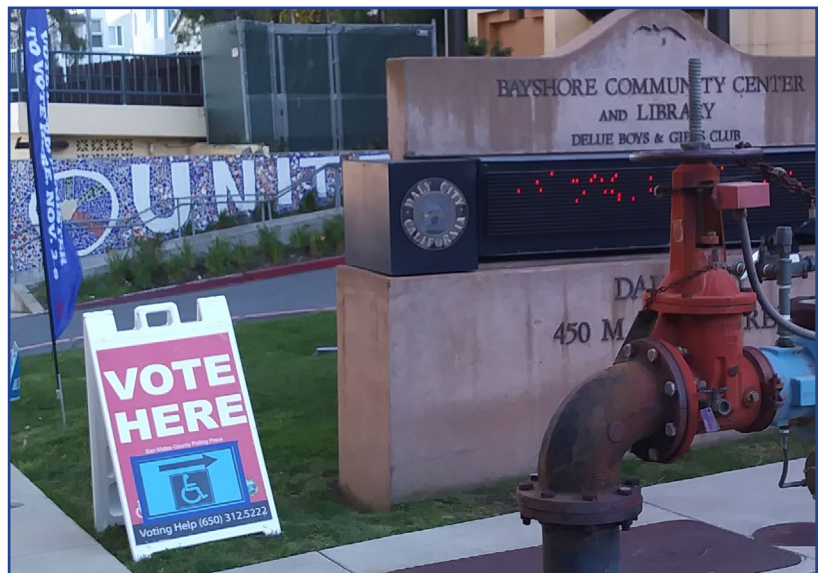


FIGURE 2A

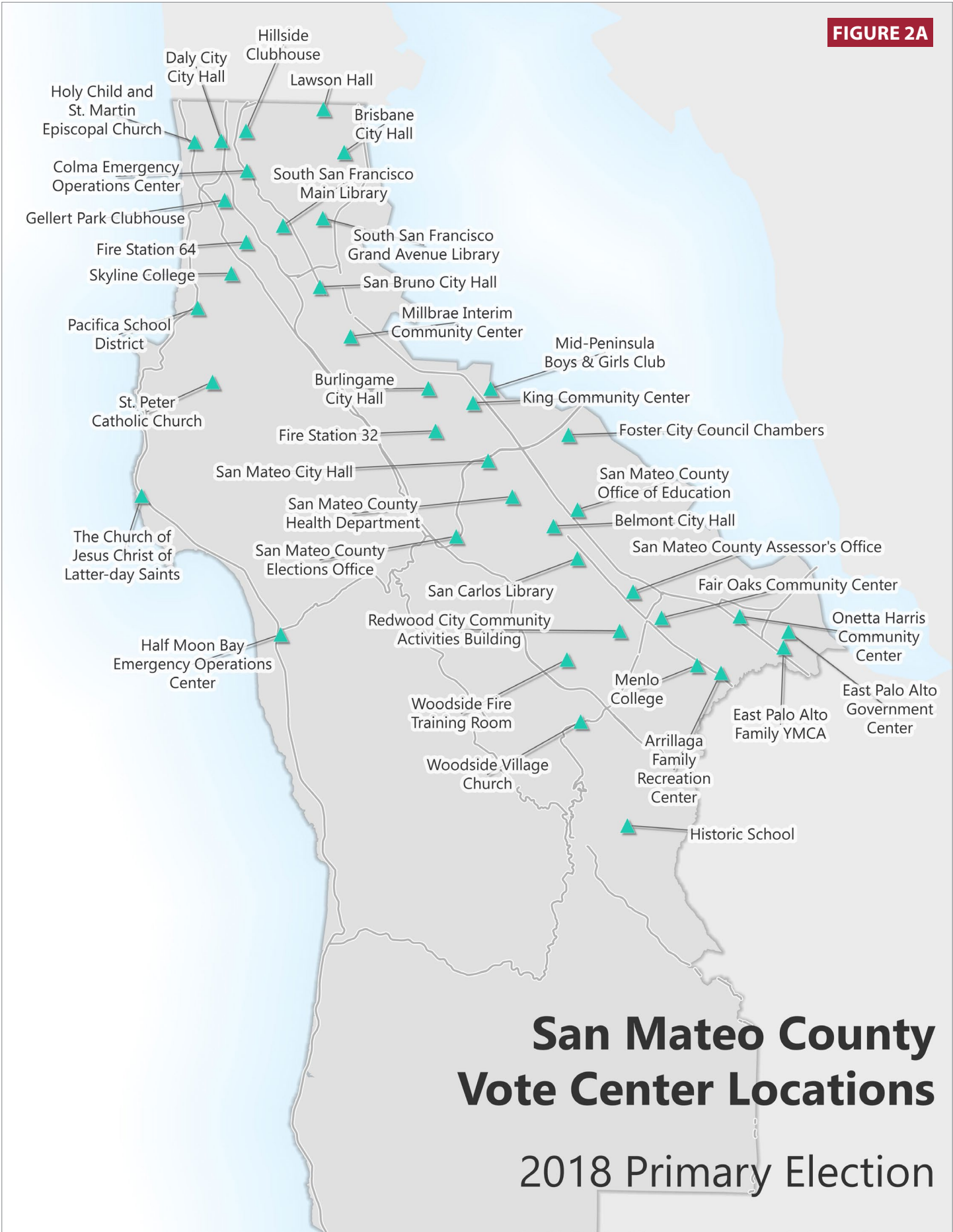


FIGURE 2B

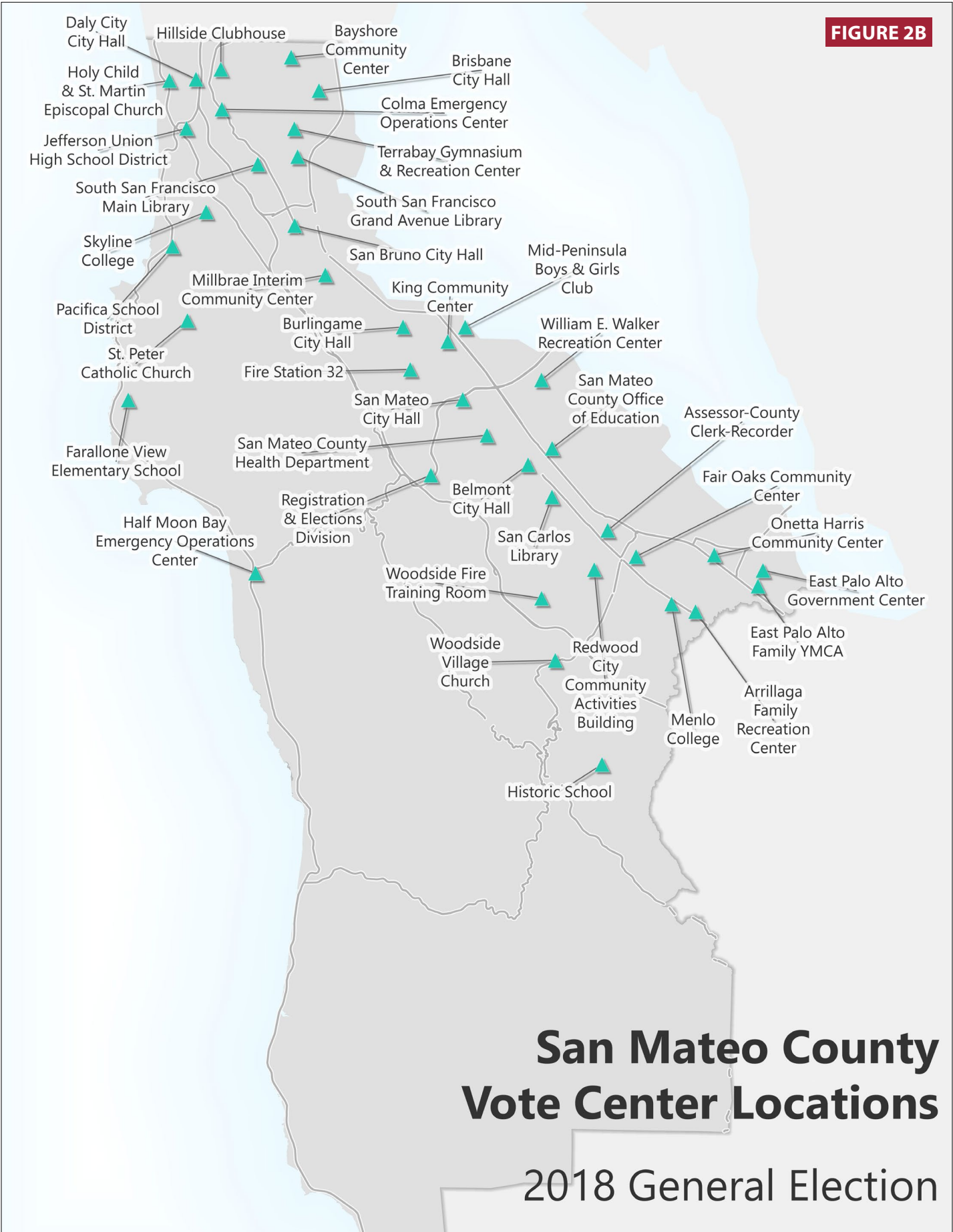
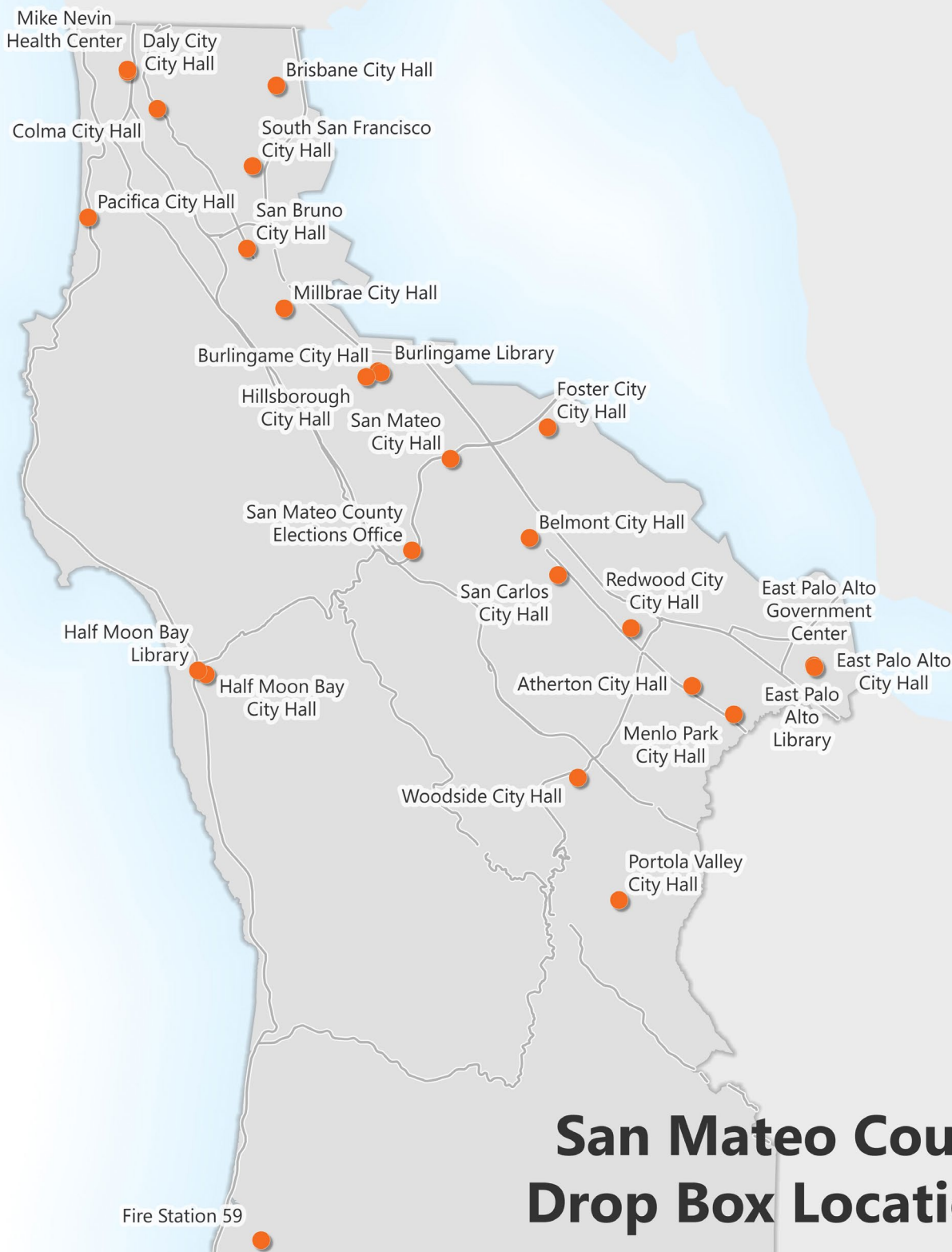


FIGURE 3A



**San Mateo County
Drop Box Locations**
2018 Primary Election

FIGURE 3B

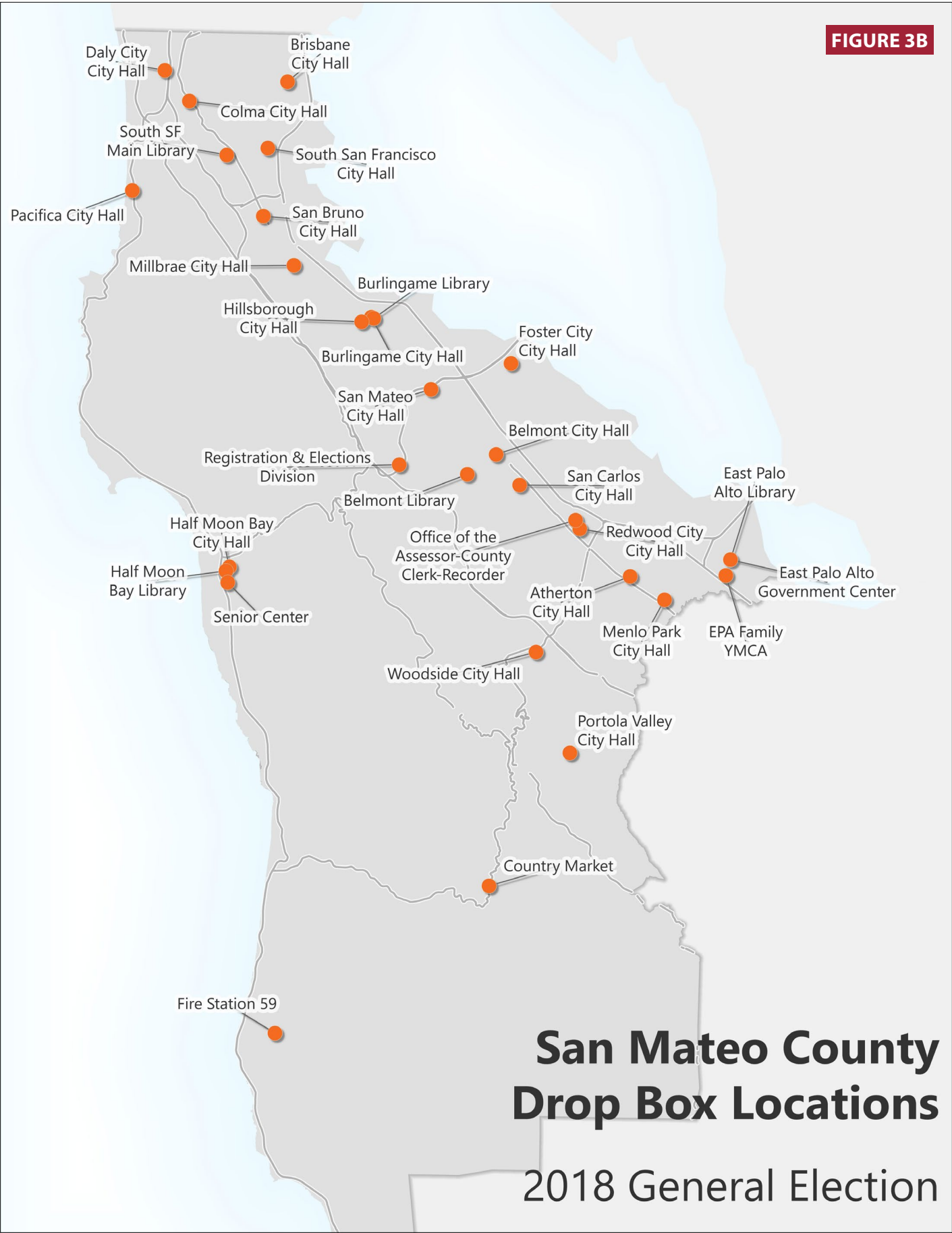


FIGURE 4

San Mateo County Income and Population Density

2018 Election Cycle

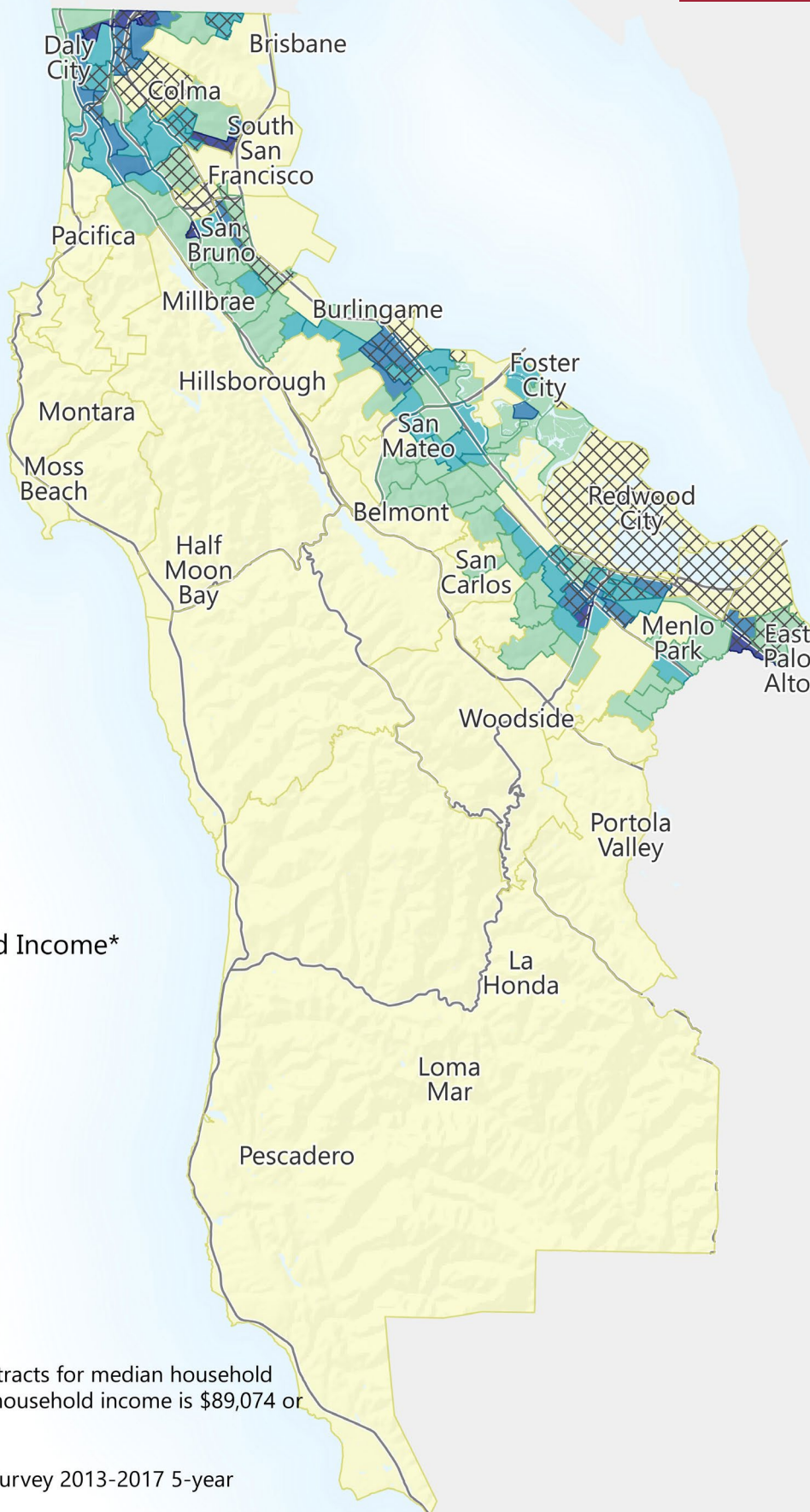
⊞ Lower Median Household Income*

Population Density (people per square mile)

21 - 3,441
3,442 - 8,291
8,292 - 13,815
13,816 - 20,401
20,402 - 32,764

* The lowest quartile (25%) of census tracts for median household income (census tracts where median household income is \$89,074 or less).

Data Sources: American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year Estimates.



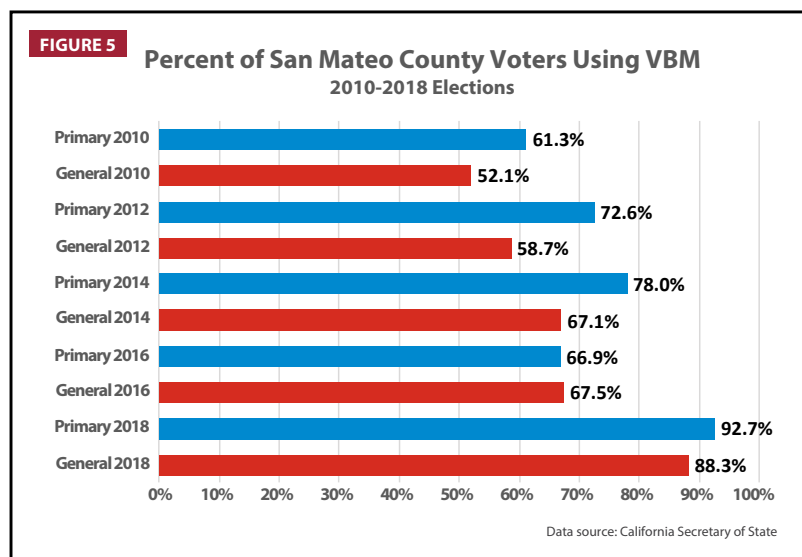
1. What method of voting did San Mateo County voters use to cast their ballots in the 2018 Election Cycle?

In the 2018 Primary and General, voters had four main ways they could cast their ballot: by sending in their VBM ballot through the mail, dropping their VBM ballot off at a Ballot Drop Box Location, dropping their VBM ballot off at a Vote Center, or voting in person at a Vote Center. In addition, the VCA requires counties to offer the option of Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM). With this option, voters with disabilities can request a ballot to be sent electronically to them that they can download, read and mark on their computer using their own accessible technology. Voters using RAVBM are then able to print and mail in their ballot.³ The San Mateo County Elections Office provided postage-paid ballot return envelopes for voters to use when mailing in their VBM ballots.

Vote Centers were utilized by voters during the early voting period and on Election Day for a range of services such as dropping off VBM ballots, receiving language assistance, replacing spoiled ballots (ballots upon which the voter made a mistake and wants a replacement) or lost ballots or envelopes. If voters were not already registered, or needed to update their voter registration, they were able to conditionally register to vote and cast a ballot.

Prior to adopting the VCA, San Mateo County voters were already using VBM ballots at rates above the state's average. As with other counties in California, VBM use is higher in primary elections than in general elections, but VBM use in San Mateo County (and the state, as a whole) has been steadily increasing in both types of elections. In addition, San Mateo County conducted a Local Consolidated Municipal, School and Special District Election, in an all VBM format. This was a pilot project, done under the authorization of Assembly Bill No. 2028.⁴

In the 2016 Primary and General Elections, just over two-thirds of ballots cast and counted in San Mateo County were VBM (mailed and dropped off combined). After the implementation of the VCA, in the 2018 Primary Election 93% of all counted votes in San Mateo County were cast with VBM ballots. This percentage decreased to just over 88% for the 2018 General Election.

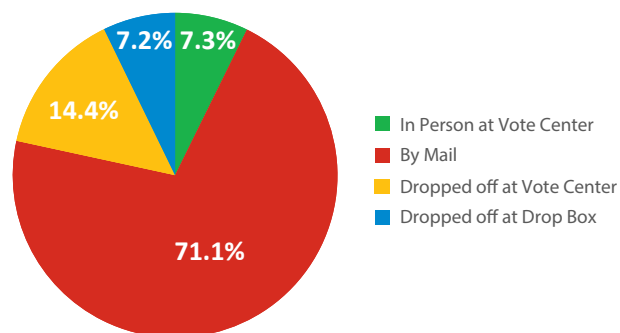


According to the official San Mateo County results for the 2018 Primary Election, just over 7% (12,637) of the total ballots cast and counted (172,168) were in person at Vote Centers, while another 14.4% (24,709) were VBM ballots dropped off at Vote Centers. This means that over 21% of Primary voters cast their ballots at Vote Centers. About 7% (12,379) were VBM ballots dropped off at a county Ballot Drop Box Location and 71.1% (122,443) were VBM ballots cast by mail (Figure 6A). Of the 159,531 VBM ballots counted, 44.0% (70,134) were received on Election Day and the following three days (the statutory limit when postmarked by Election Day).⁵ There were 887 counted CVR ballots (out of 916 cast) and 173 counted regular provisional ballots (out of 247 cast). The county also saw a total of 41 RAVBM ballots cast in the Primary Election.

For the 2018 General Election, the official certified San Mateo County results show just under 12% (34,005) of the total ballots cast and counted (290,058) were at Vote Centers, while 61.0% (176,832) were VBM ballots cast by mail, 13.4% (38,506) were VBM ballots dropped off at Vote Centers and 14.0% (40,715) were VBM ballots dropped off at a county Ballot Drop Box. In total, a quarter of General Election voters cast their ballots at Vote Centers (either in person or by drop off). Of the 256,053 VBM ballots counted in the General Election, 57.3% (146,798) were received on Election Day and the following three days. There were 4,962 counted CVR ballots (out of 5,022 cast) and zero counted regular provisional ballots (out of 297 cast). All uncounted provisional voters were unregistered and declined to register when casting their provisional ballot (see [Appendix A](#) online for 2018 General Election provisional and CVR ballot counts for all California Counties). A total of 102 RAVBM ballots were cast in the General Election. Of course, how voters cast their ballots (method of voting) could change over the course of future elections as more become aware of and familiar with the new options available to them.

FIGURE 6A

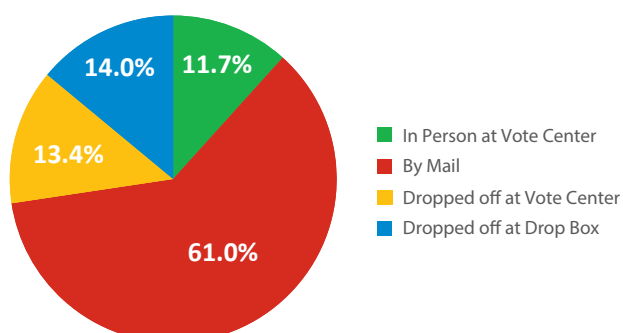
Voting Method in the 2018 Primary



Data source: San Mateo County Voter File

FIGURE 6B

Voting Method in the 2018 General



Data source: San Mateo County Voter File

Table 1. San Mateo County 2018 Primary and General Election Overview

	Eligible Voters	Registered Voters	In-person Ballots	VBM Ballots	Total Ballots Cast
2018 Primary	506,481	388,298	12,637	159,531	172,168
2018 General	507,576	399,351	34,005	256,053	290,058

Table 2A. San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election VBM Ballots Counted

	Returned to Vote Center	Returned to Drop-off Box	Received in Mail	Total VBM Ballots Cast
Before Election Day	4,387	4,168	80,842	89,397
Election Day + 3 days After	20,322	8,211	41,601	70,134
Total VBM Ballots	24,709	12,379	122,443	159,531

Table 2B. San Mateo County 2018 General Election VBM Ballots Counted

	Returned to Vote Center	Returned to Drop-off Box	Received in Mail	Total VBM Ballots Cast
Before Election Day	8,253	31,448	69,554	109,255
Election Day + 3 days After	30,253	9,267	107,278	146,798
Total VBM Ballots	38,506	40,715	176,832	256,053

2018 Primary and General San Mateo County Analysis

In the next sections, we examine which San Mateo County voters are using each of the four methods for voting under the VCA and where these registrants live. As discussed earlier in this report, data for this analysis, as well as the subsequent sections of the report, are from the San Mateo County voter registration files provided by the San Mateo County Elections Office and Political Data, Inc. (PDI). For research purposes, PDI data by race and ethnicity are limited to Latinos and Asian Americans (identification of whites and African Americans is not available due to data restrictions).⁶ Voter registration files are live databases, and thus registrant totals fluctuate in each extract of the voter registration file. Data sets were merged together, and non-matching records were excluded to maintain a consistent and comparable registrant sample for each demographic analysis. The resulting datasets for the Primary and General Elections vary slightly from the official San Mateo County election records,

and thus also result in some small differences in our findings for the total population compared with the County's reported results. It should be noted that we are not able to reliably examine the preferred language of voters in San Mateo County for this study. Information on language is limited in the voter registration file to a registered voter's requested language for ballot materials. If a voter does not select a language with their elections office, then they are defaulted into receiving election materials in English. However, a voter may want language assistance even if they did not select a language preference for their ballot materials. A voter may not be aware the option to select a preferred language for their voting materials is available from their elections office. In San Mateo County, only 9,304 (2.4%) of registered voters requested their election materials in a non-English language at the beginning of the 2018 Election Cycle.

Defining Vote Methods

The VCA established new ways for voters to cast their ballots. The following section provides an analysis of the ways in which people voted during the San Mateo County 2018 Primary and General. In this report, we refer to those options as vote methods. Table 3 provides a definition of each vote method:

Table 3. Definition of Voting Methods Used in the San Mateo County 2018 Election Cycle	
Vote Method	Description
Mail	A Vote-by-Mail ballot that was returned using the mail.
Drop Box Location	A Vote-by-Mail ballot that was returned by dropping the ballot off at a Drop Box Location (internally and externally placed).
Vote Center	A ballot that was cast in-person at a Vote Center.
Vote Center Ballot Drop Off	A Vote-by-Mail ballot that was returned by dropping the ballot off at a Vote Center.

Vote Center and Ballot Drop-Off Use by Day and Location

Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box Locations in every VCA county saw low numbers for in-person voting and voters dropping off VBM ballots during the initial phase of early voting prior to Election Day, with a sharp increase in participation during the final two to three days prior to Election Day and on Election Day.

In both the 2018 Primary and General Elections, voters who mailed in their VBM ballots used the option of early voting at greater rates than voters who used other methods. In-person voters were most likely to vote on Election Day itself. Voters who dropped off their VBM ballot were also more likely to do so on Election Day. Figure 7A shows that 41.3% (50,056) of all mailed-in VBM ballots were received between June 2nd and June 5th of the Primary Election, with an additional 5,968 ballots arriving in the mail on June 6th (5% of all mailed-in VBM ballots). During this same time period, 96.6% (11,047) of in-person ballots were cast at a Vote Center; the majority of which (10,167, or 88.9% of the total) were cast on Election Day.

Similarly, between June 2nd and June 5th, 10,428 VBM ballots were dropped off at a Ballot Drop Box Location (83.6% of all ballots from Ballot Drop Box Locations), the majority of which were dropped off on Election Day itself (7,666, or 61.5% of the total). The majority of VBM ballots (23,917, or 96.7% of the total) that were dropped off at a Vote Center were received between June 2nd and June 5th, again, with the bulk of ballots being dropped off at a Vote Center on Election Day (20,737 ballots, or 83.8% of the total).

During the General Election, 41.7% (72,560) of all mailed-in VBM ballots were received between November 3rd and November 6th (see Figure 7B). During this same time period, 94.2% (26,583) of in-person ballots were cast at a Vote Center; the majority of which (22,856, or 81.0% of the total) were cast on Election Day.

Similarly, between November 3rd and November 6th, 31,837 VBM ballots were dropped off at a Ballot Drop Box Location (82.1% of all ballots from Ballot Drop Box Locations), the majority of which were dropped off on Election Day (25,683, or 66.2% of the total). The majority (35,030, or 95.0% of the total) of VBM ballots that were dropped off at a Vote Center were received between November 3rd and November 6th. As with the Primary Election, the bulk of ballots were dropped off by voters at a Vote Center on Election Day (27,182 ballots, or 73.7% of the total).

FIGURE 7A

San Mateo County 2018 General Election: Total Ballots By Day

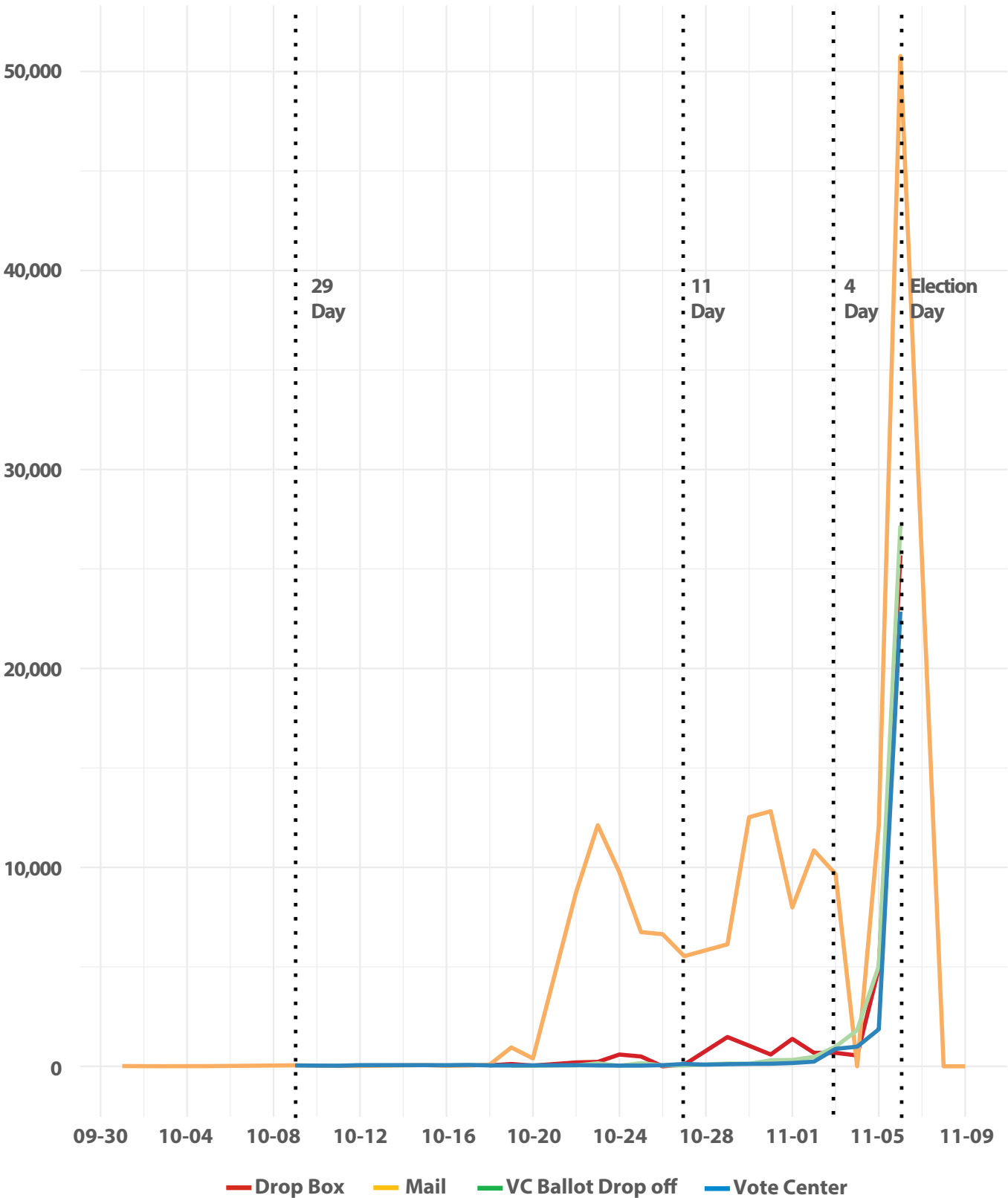


FIGURE 7B

San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election: Total Ballots By Day

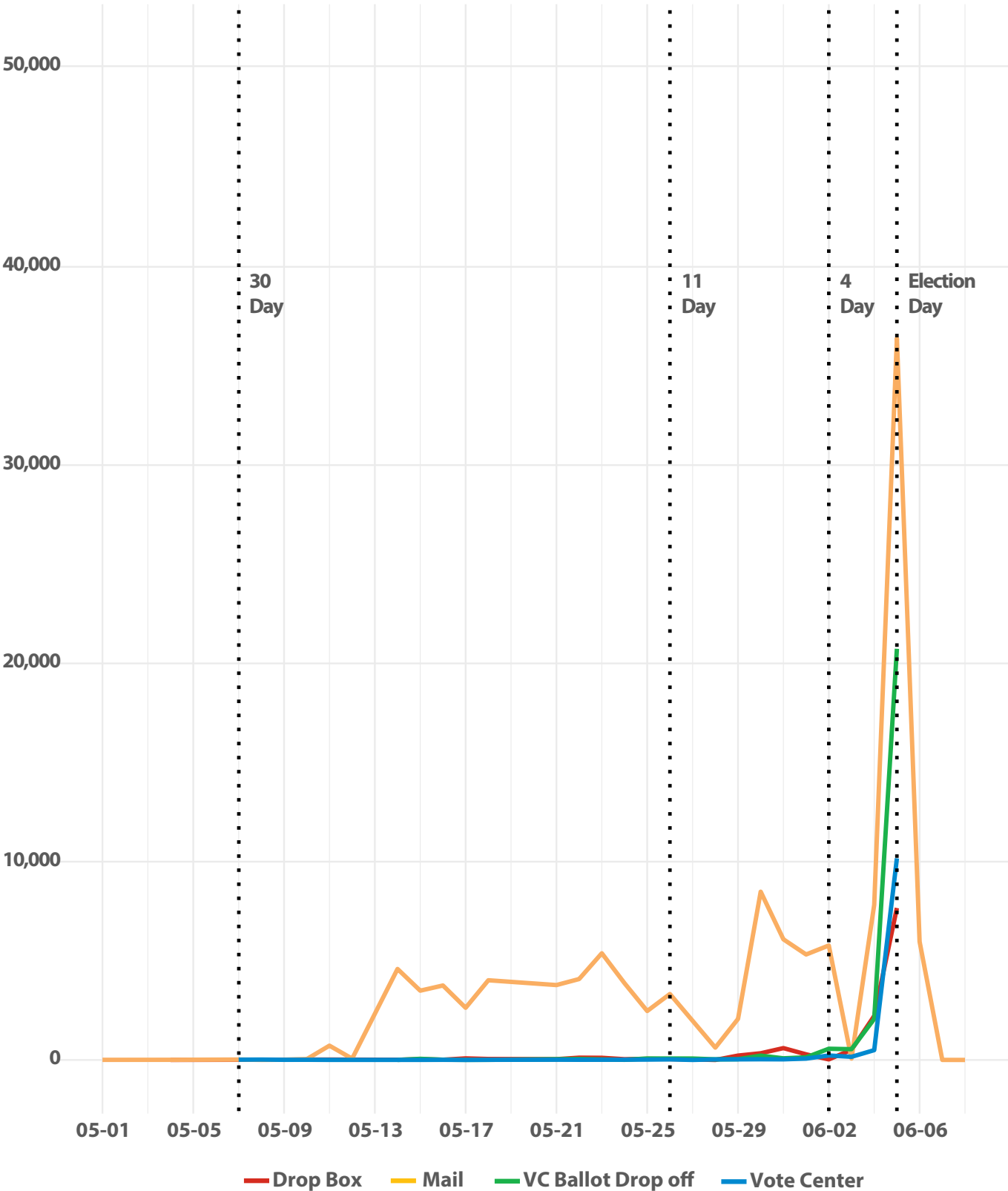
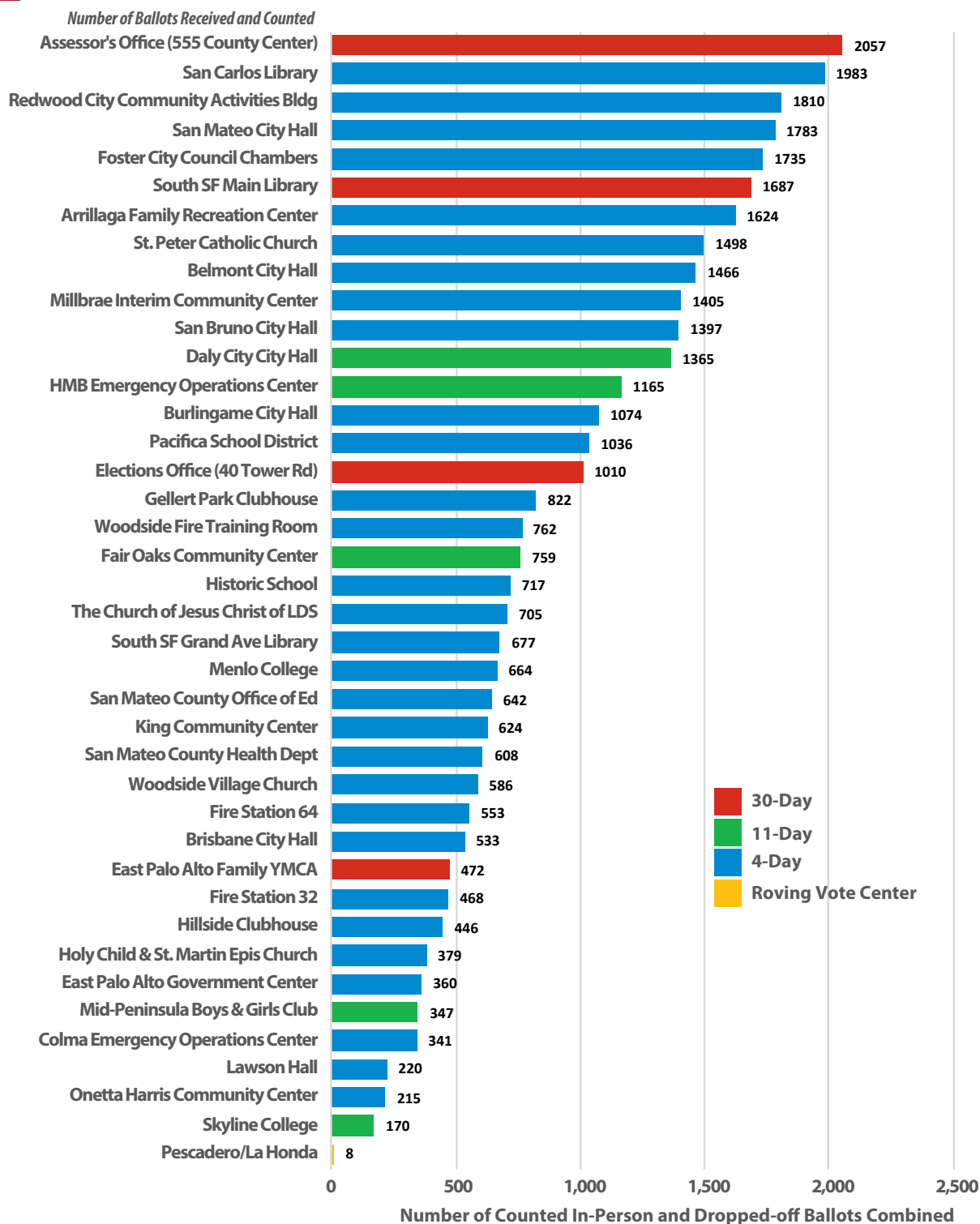


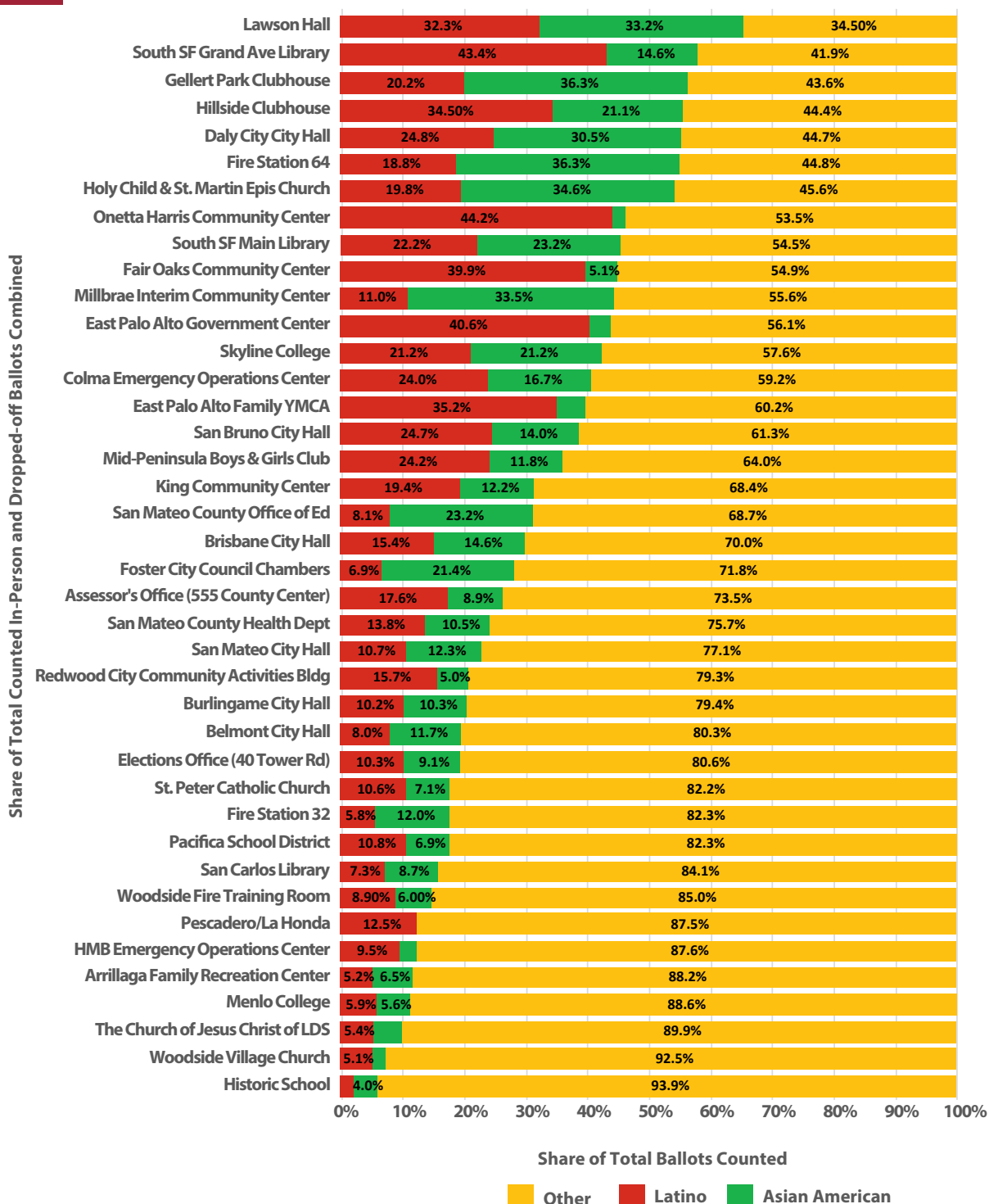
FIGURE 8**San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election: Total Vote Center Ballots**

Between in-person voters and VBM ballot drop offs, San Mateo County Vote Centers received and counted 36,173 ballots in the Primary Election. Figure 8 shows that the amount of activity at each Vote Center varied considerably—some Vote Centers, such as the San Carlos Library, receiving nearly 2,000 ballots, and others, such as Skyline College, receiving 170 ballots. We note here that some voter records have missing data for the specific Vote Center that was used, and so the count of ballots in Figure 8 is somewhat smaller than the total number of Vote Center users reported by the San Mateo County Elections Office (page 15).

Note: Vote Center location data for individual voters is unavailable for the 2018 General Election due to changes in the data collection methods of the San Mateo County Elections Office from the Primary to the General Election. This change limited our ability to conduct analysis of voters' use of specific Vote Center and Drop Box locations.

FIGURE 9

San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election: Vote Center Ballots Share by Race and Ethnicity



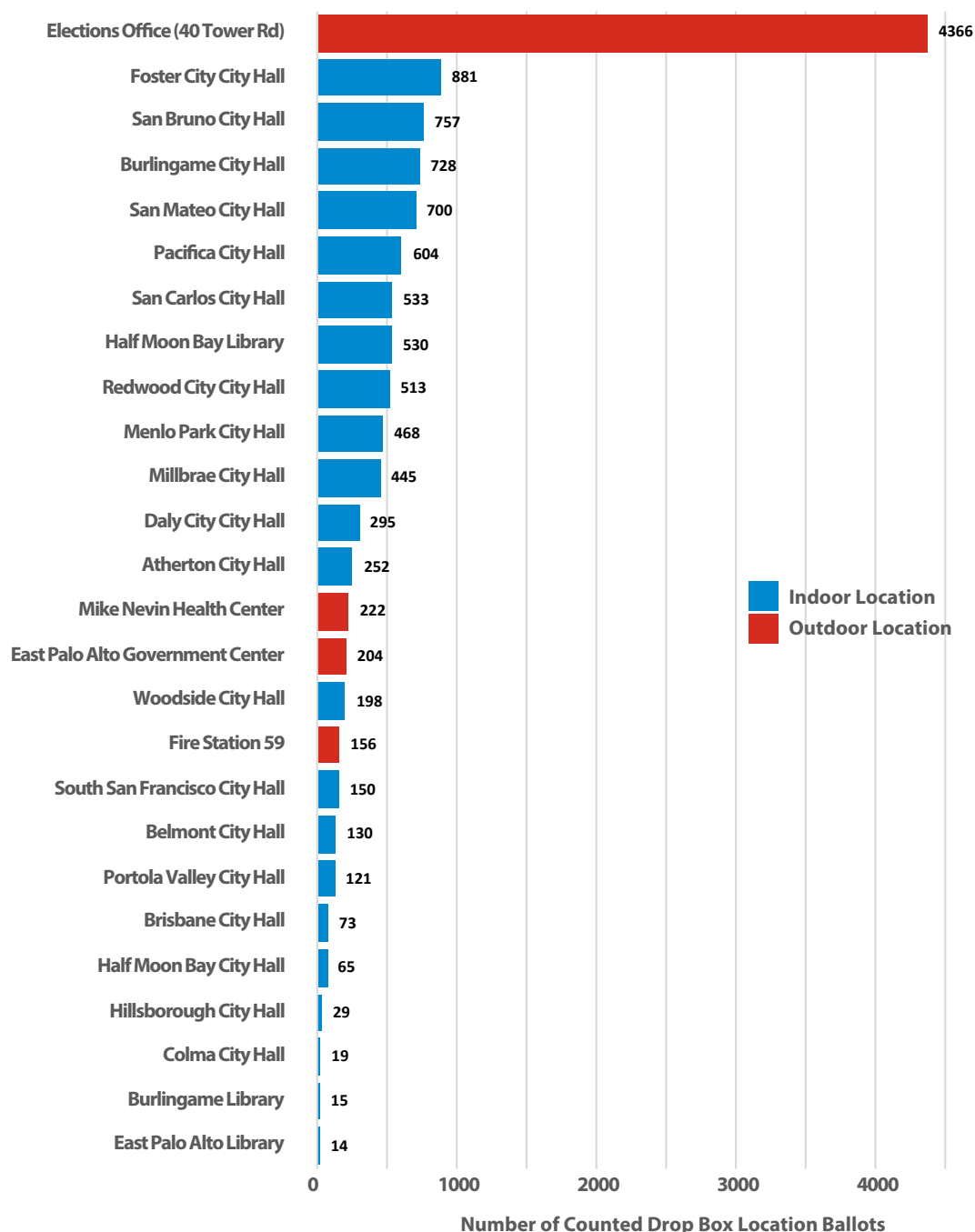
There was also considerable variation in the race or ethnicity of voters using each Vote Center in the Primary Election. For example, 44.2% of all voters who used the Onetta Harris Community Center Vote Center were Latino, 2.3% were Asian American, and 53.5% were neither Latino nor Asian American. The Fire Station 64 Vote Center saw the greatest share of voting activity from Asian-American voters—36.3% of all voters at the Vote Center were Asian American, compared to 18.8% who were Latino and 44.8% who were neither Latino nor Asian American. At seven Vote Centers during the 2018 Primary, the majority share of voting activity came from Latino or Asian-American voters (where Latino and Asian-American vote shares combined exceeded 50%). Pescadero/La Honda was the only Vote Center to not receive ballots from Asian-American voters.

Note: Vote Center location data by race and ethnicity is unavailable for the 2018 General Election due to changes in the data collection methods of the San Mateo County Elections Office from the Primary to the General Election.

Individual Ballot Drop Box Location Activity

San Mateo County Ballot Drop Box Locations received and counted 12,468 ballots in the Primary. Figure 10 shows that the amount of activity at each location varied considerably, for example, the Foster City City Hall location received 881 ballots, while the East Palo Alto Library location received 14 ballots.

FIGURE 10 San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election: Total Drop Box Ballots
All Drop Box Activity in San Mateo County (2018 Primary)



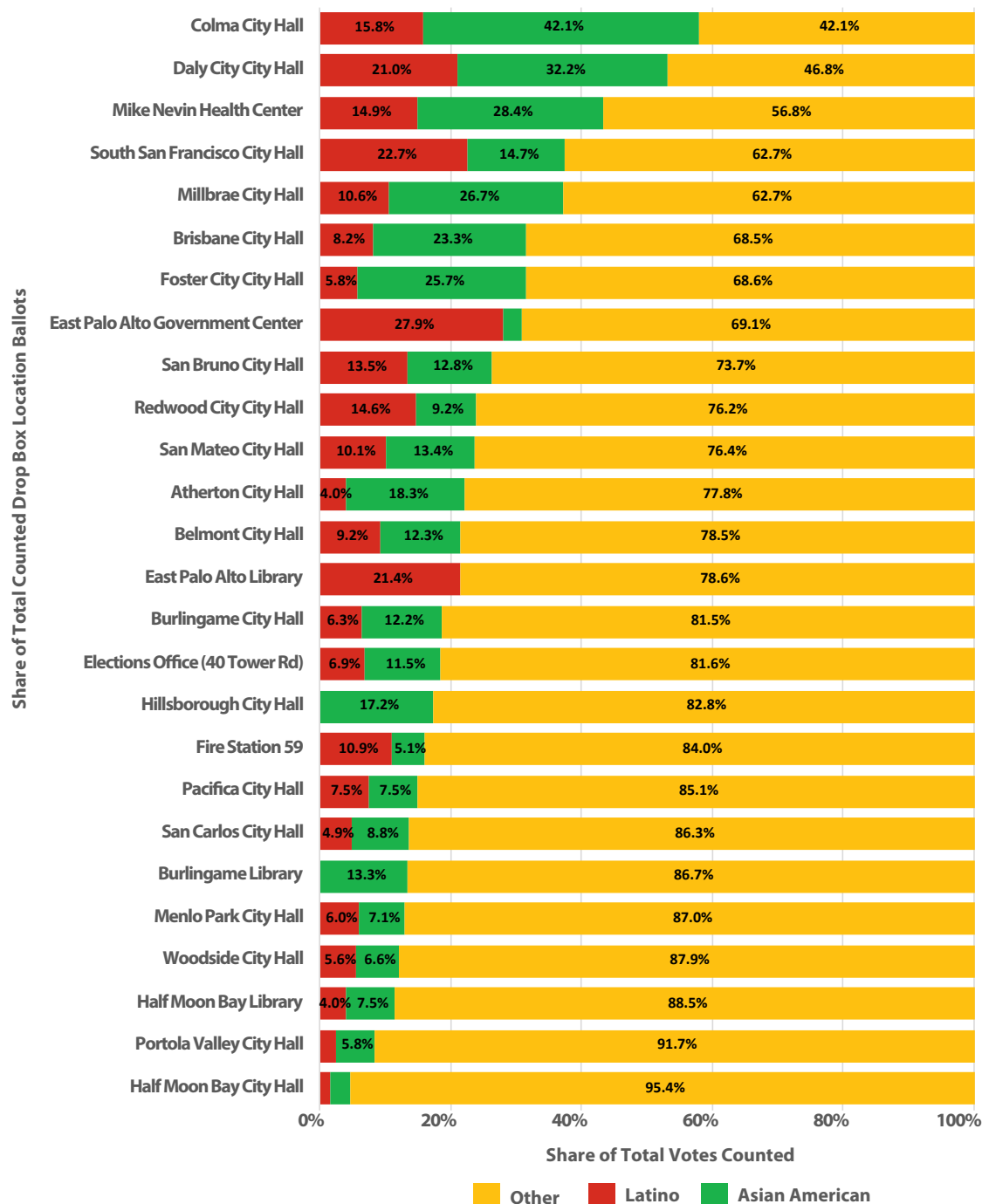
There are several limitations of these data that should be noted. First, as in Figure 8, some voter records have missing data for the Ballot Drop Box Location used, and so the count of ballots in Figure 10 may not match other location counts. Second, San Mateo County reported an error in the coding of ballots, wherein ballots were mistakenly labeled as having been dropped off at the San Mateo County Elections Office (40 Tower Rd). We do not know how many of the 4,366 ballots reported to have been received at this location were actually received at other Ballot Drop Box Locations. Last, the East Palo Alto City Hall Ballot Drop Box Location was not included in the San Mateo County voter registration file, therefore, there are only 26 Ballot Drop Box Locations included in Figure 10. This may have been an error in the coding of the data, rather than 0 ballots having been dropped off at that location.

Note: Drop Box location data for individual voters is unavailable for the 2018 General Election due to changes in the data collection methods of the San Mateo County Elections Office from the Primary to the General Election.

Overall, Ballot Drop Box Locations were utilized more frequently by voters who were neither Latino nor Asian American in the Primary. Figure 11 shows the variation in the race or ethnicity of voters using each Ballot Drop Box Location. For example, 42.1% of voters who dropped their ballots off at the Colma City Hall location were Asian American, 15.8% were Latino and 42.1% were neither Latino nor Asian American. At the Half Moon Bay City Hall location, on the other hand, 95.4% of voters who dropped their ballots off were neither Latino nor Asian American, while just 1.5% and 3.1% were Latino and Asian American, respectively. During the 2018 Primary, there were two Ballot Drop Box Locations where the majority share of ballots dropped off came from Latino or Asian-American voters (Colma City Hall and Daly City City Hall, where Latino and Asian-American vote shares combined exceeded 50%). East Palo Alto Library was the only Drop Box to not receive ballots from Asian-American voters. Hillsborough City Hall and Burlingame Library were the only Drop Boxes to not receive ballots from Latino voters.

FIGURE 11

San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election: Drop Box Ballots Share by Race and Ethnicity



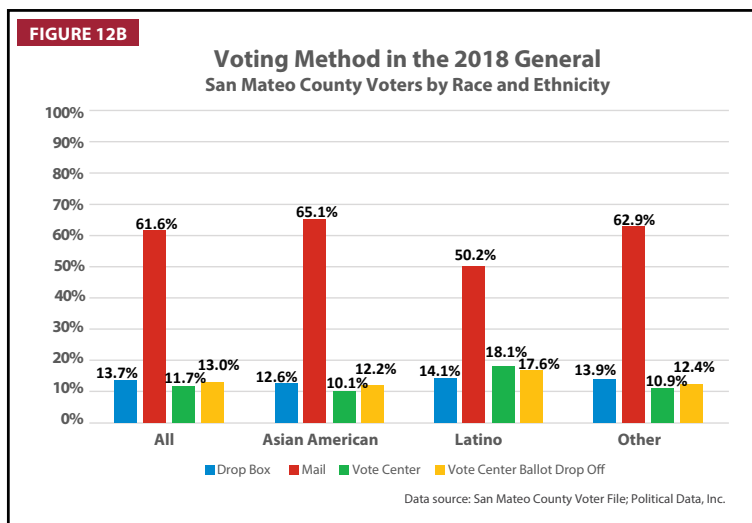
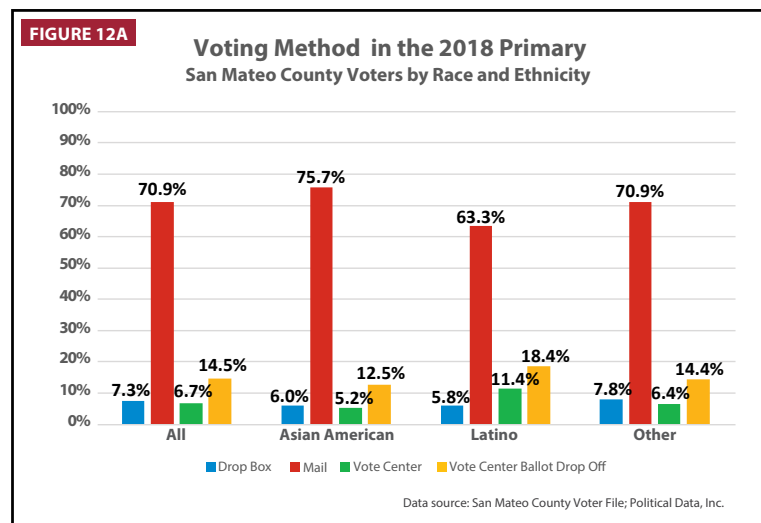
Again, we note that the East Palo Alto City Hall Ballot Drop Box Location was not included in the San Mateo County voter registration file, therefore there are only 26 Ballot Drop Box Locations included in Figure 11. This may have been an error by the San Mateo County Elections office in the coding of the data.

Note: Drop Box location data by race and ethnicity is unavailable for the 2018 General Election due to changes in the data collection methods of the San Mateo County Elections Office from the Primary to the General Election.

Conditional Voter Registration (CVR) by Voter Group

CVR was disproportionately used by Latinos, Asian Americans and youth (age 18-24) in both the San Mateo County Primary and General Elections. Combined, Asian Americans and Latinos comprised 34.4% of those who used CVR and voted in the Primary. In the General, the combined number was 41.6%. Youth were 15.2% and 17.4% of CVR users in the Primary and General Elections, respectively (see [Appendix A](#) for a breakdown of CVR counts by demographic group). Overall, a large proportion of youth who voted in person at Vote Centers used CVR, 17.9% in the Primary and 30.5% in the General.

Method of Voting by Race and Ethnicity



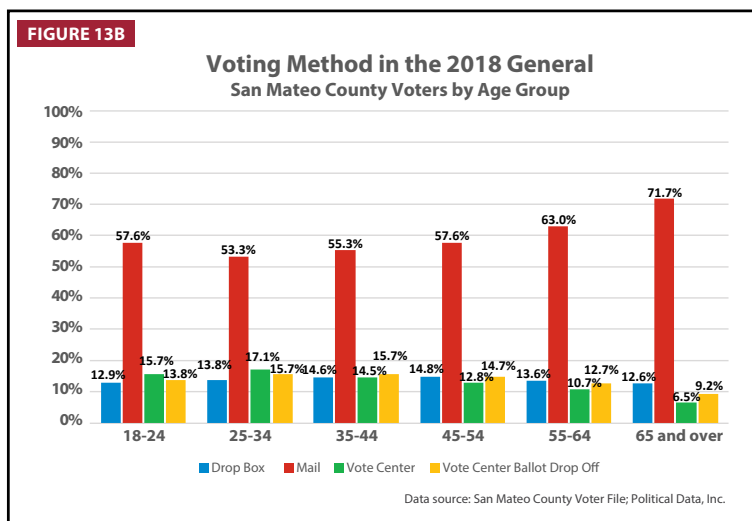
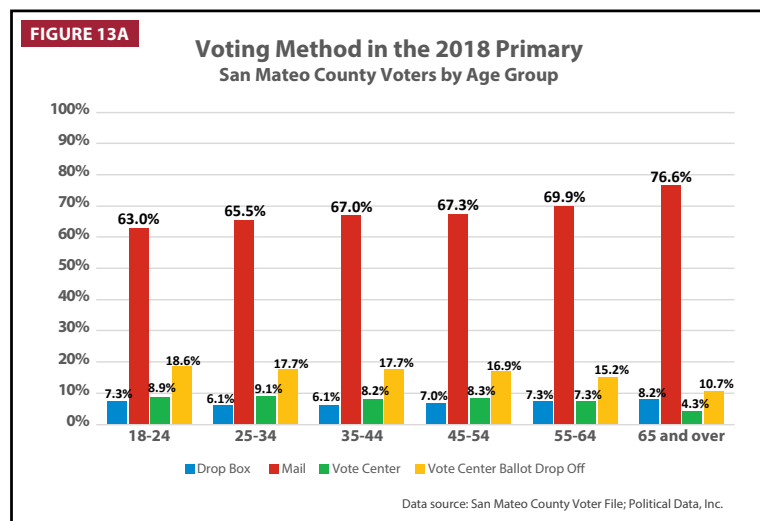
The majority of voters in each race or ethnic group we examined mailed in their VBM ballot in both the Primary and General Elections. However, considerable differences are seen in the type of method by which racial and ethnic groups in San Mateo County used to vote. In the Primary Election, Latino voters mailed in their VBM ballots at a lower rate—63.3%, compared to 75.7% of Asian-American voters and 70.9% of the general voter population (see Figure 12A). In the General Election, a smaller percentage of all voter groups mailed in their VBM ballots. However, Latino voters, again, saw a lower rate—50.2%, compared to 65.1% of Asian Americans and 61.6% of the general voter population (see Figure 12B).

It should be noted that these findings are consistent with previous research by the CCEP that identified a historical pattern of lower VBM use by Latinos in San Mateo County and the state, as a whole.⁷

Conversely, a greater share of Latino voters cast their ballots in person at a Vote Center in 2018 than any other group examined by this study. In the Primary Election, 11.4% of Latino voters cast their ballots in person, compared to 5.2% of Asian-American voters and 6.7% of the general voter population (see Figure 12A). In the General Election, 18.1% of Latino voters cast their ballots in person, compared to 10.1% of Asian-American voters and 11.7% of the general voter population (see Figure 12B).

Latinos also dropped their VBM ballots off at a Vote Center at a higher rate than other groups examined in the study; 18.4%, in the Primary, compared to 12.5% of Asian-American voters and 14.5% of the general voter population. However, a smaller proportion of all voters dropped their VBM ballots off at a Vote Center in the General; 17.6% of Latino voters, compared to 12.2% of Asian-American voters and 13.0% of the general voter population.

Method of Voting by Age

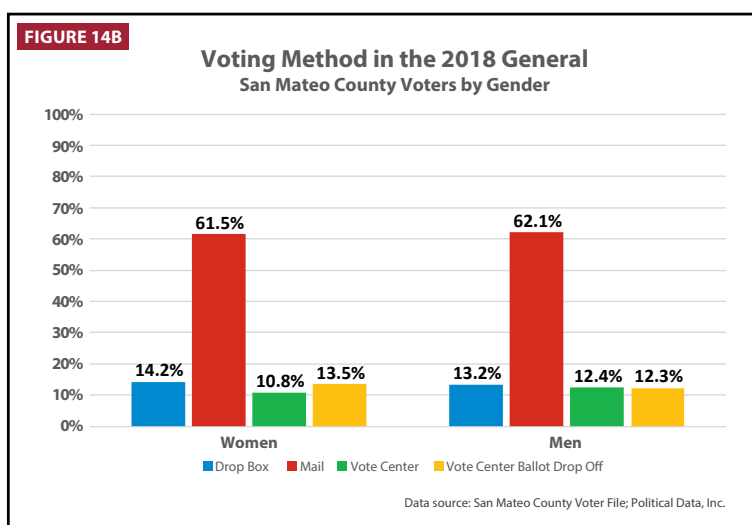
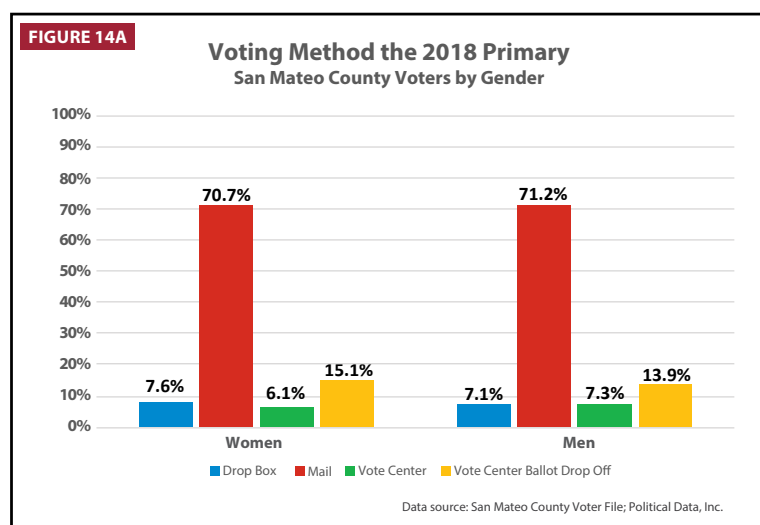


In both the Primary and General Elections, older voters in San Mateo County mailed their VBM ballots at higher rates than younger voters, and younger voters dropped off their ballots at Vote Centers at higher rates than older voters. Voting in person at a Vote Center among voters under the age of 55 was nearly double those over 65. For instance, in the Primary, 9.1% of voters age 25-34 (the age group with the highest rate) voted in person, compared to 4.3% for those 65 and over (see Figure 13A). In the General, 17.1% of those age 25-34 voted in person, compared to 6.5% of those 65 and over (see Figure 13B).

Variation in the use of Ballot Drop Box Locations also occurred across age groups. In the Primary, 6.1% to 8.2% of voters in each age group elected to drop their ballot off at a Ballot Drop Box Location. In the General, 12.6% to 14.8% of voters in each age group elected to drop their ballot off at a Ballot Drop Box Location.

Note: Age is identified by voters' birthdates. San Mateo County voter records with unreliable data for age were excluded. This includes records where the voter is categorized as being under 18 years of age or older than 100 years of age (1,780 records total for the Primary and 169 records total for the General).

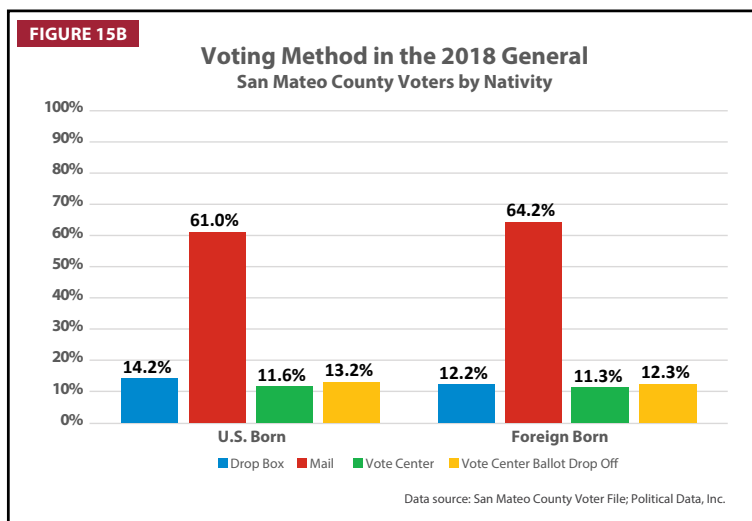
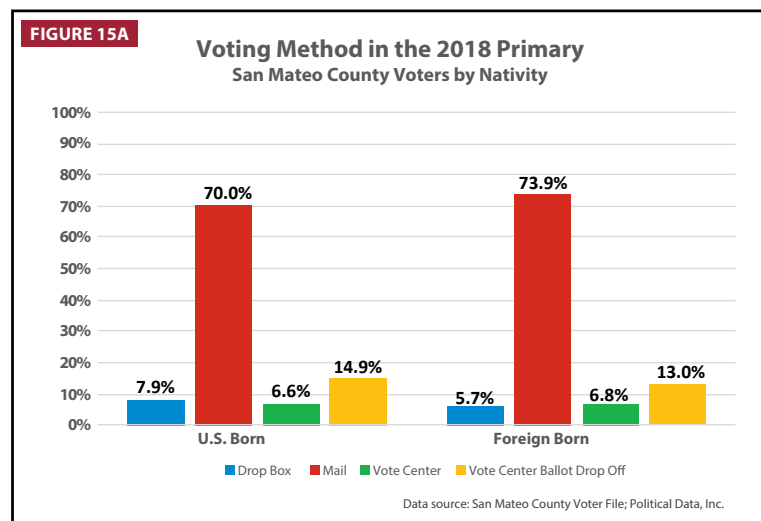
Method of Voting by Gender



Overall, somewhat similar shares of men and women voters used each voting method in 2018, however, a slightly higher percentage of women dropped their ballot off at a Vote Center than men. In the Primary, 15.1% and 13.9%, respectively, and in the General, 13.5% and 12.3%, respectively. Also, a slightly higher percentage of men cast their ballot in person than women. In the Primary, 7.3% and 6.1%, respectively, and in the General, 12.4% and 10.8%, respectively.

Note: For 8.3% of 2018 Primary voters there is no data available on gender (14,080 records out of 170,639) and 9.5% of 2018 General voters (26,894 records out of 283,153).⁸

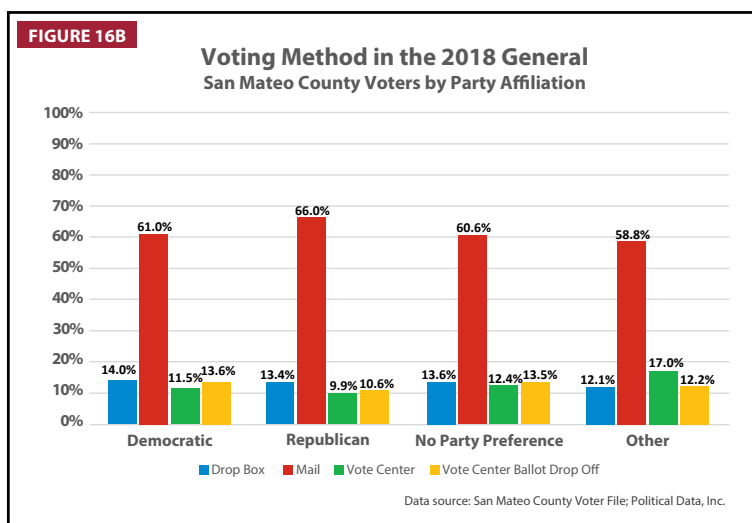
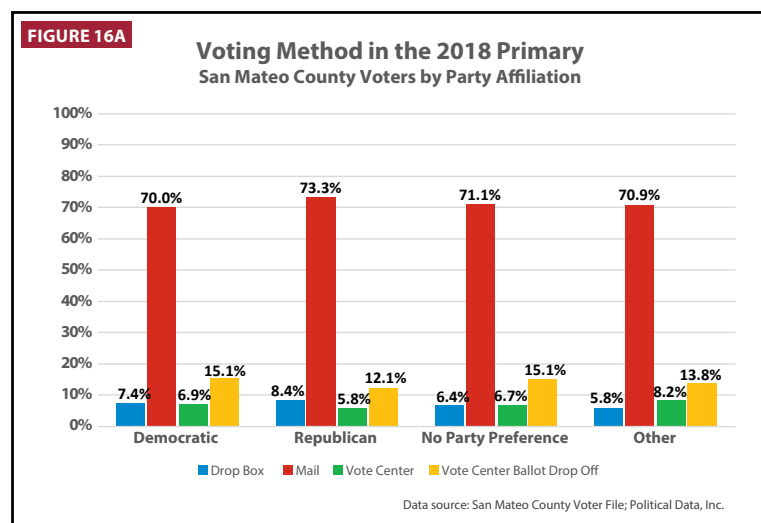
Method of Voting by Nativity



A higher percentage of U.S.-born voters dropped their ballot off at a Vote Center than did foreign-born voters. In the Primary, 14.9% and 13.0%, respectively, and in the General, 13.2% and 12.3%, respectively. A higher percentage of foreign-born voters mailed their VBM ballot than U.S.-born voters. In the Primary, 73.9% and 70.0%, respectively, and in the General, 64.2% and 61.0%, respectively.

Note: For about 3.5% of all voters in the 2018 Primary there is no data available on nativity (5,964 records out of 170,639) and 6.0% of all voters in the 2018 General (16,858 records out of 283,153).⁹

Method of Voting by Party Affiliation

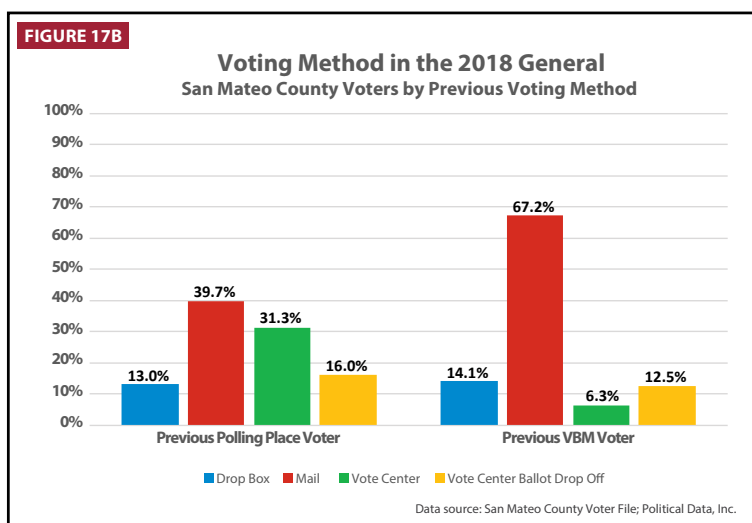
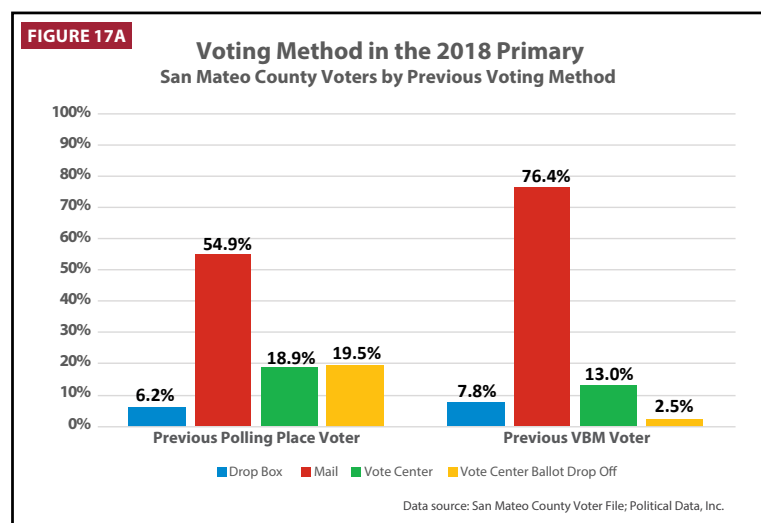


At the close of the official 15-day registration deadline in San Mateo County, prior to the Primary, 51.2% of registered voters were registered as Democratic, 16.2% were registered as Republican and 28.8% were registered as No Party Preference (NPP).¹⁰ Just prior to the General, 50.3% of registered voters in the County were registered as Democratic, 15.2% were registered as Republican and 30.7% were registered as No Party Preference (NPP).¹¹

In the 2018 Primary Election, there was just over a one percentage point difference in the major party affiliation of voters who cast their ballot at a Vote Center—6.9% of voters registered as Democratic compared to 5.8% of voters registered as Republican (see Figure 16A). Just over 8% of voters registered with third parties (seen in Figure 16A consolidated as the “other” category) cast ballots at Vote Centers, while 6.7% of those voters registered as No Party Preference (NPP) also cast ballots at a Vote Center. However, there was a higher percentage of Republican voters who returned their VBM ballot through the mail (73.3%) than Democratic voters (70.0%), and a higher percentage of Democratic voters (15.1%) who dropped their VBM ballot off at a Vote Center than Republican voters (12.1%).

In the 2018 General Election, 11.5% of voters registered as Democratic compared to 9.9% of voters registered as Republican (see Figure 16B) cast their ballot at a Vote Center. Seventeen percent of voters registered with third parties (seen in Figure 16B consolidated as the “other” category) cast ballots at Vote Centers, while 12.4% of those voters registered as No Party Preference (NPP) also cast ballots at a Vote Center. As in the Primary, there was a higher percentage of Republican voters who returned their VBM ballot through the mail (66.0%) than Democratic voters (61.0%), and a higher percentage of Democratic voters (13.6%) who dropped their VBM ballot off at a Vote Center than Republican voters (10.6%).

Method of Voting by Previous Polling Place Voters



With the adoption of the VCA, now every San Mateo County registered voter automatically receives a VBM ballot prior to an election and has multiple ways they can cast their ballot. To better understand how the new voting options under the VCA might have possibly changed voters' voting methods in 2018, we isolated the voting methods of previous polling place voters from previous VBM voters.

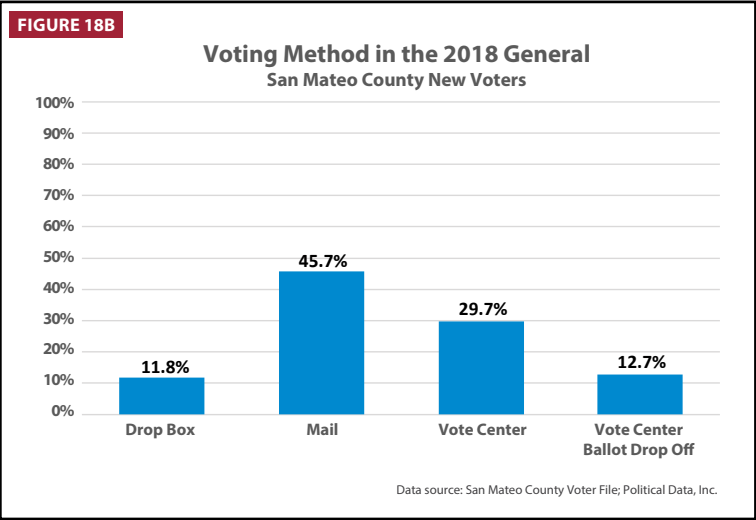
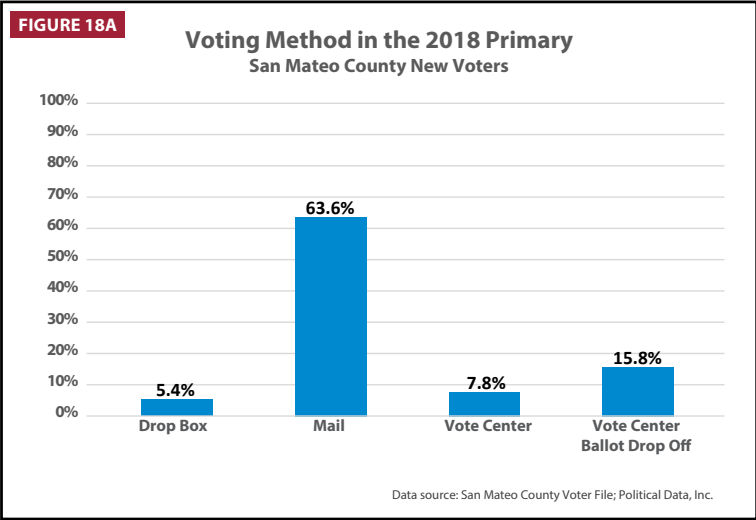
A previous polling place voter is defined as a registrant who voted at a polling place in the last election in which they voted. Similarly, a previous VBM voter is defined as a registrant who voted by mail in their last election experience. We applied these terms to voters whose most recent voting experience was in any election from 2010 to 2016.

Note: A voter who did not vote between 2010 and 2016, but who may have voted before 2010, was excluded from this analysis as voting methods from these elections may less reliably indicate future voter use.

In the 2018 Primary Election, nearly 55% of previous polling place voters returned their ballot through the mail, compared to 76.4% of previous VBM voters (see Figure 17A). While 18.9% of previous polling place voters voted in person at a Vote Center, 13.0% of previous VBM voters did so in the 2018 Primary. Similarly, a larger share of previous polling place voters (19.5%) dropped their ballot off at a Vote Center than previous VBM voters (2.5%)—a difference of 17 percentage points.

2018 General Election voters used voting methods at different rates than Primary voters. Nearly 40% of previous polling place voters returned their ballot through the mail in the 2018 General, compared to 67.2% of previous VBM voters (see Figure 17B). While 31.3% of previous polling place voters voted in person at a Vote Center, 6.3% of previous VBM voters did so in the 2018 General. Similarly, a larger share of previous polling place voters (16.0%) dropped their ballot off at a Vote Center than previous VBM voters (12.5%)—a difference of 3.5 percentage points. These data suggest that in both the Primary and General voters who voted at a polling place in the previous election continue to cast or return their ballot in person in greater rates than do those voters who previously voted with a VBM ballot. Notably, this rate is even stronger in the General Election.

Method of Voting by New Voters



We also seek to understand how those newly registered to vote, those who have never cast a ballot (by any voting method), are using the voting options under the VCA. For Figure 18A, we defined new voters as those who registered to vote for the first time after the 2016 General Election and who voted in the 2018 Primary Election. A total of 20,715 new registrants were identified in the voter file, 6,790 of whom were first-time voters in the 2018 Primary. For Figure 18B, we defined new voters as those who registered to vote for the first time after the 2018 Primary Election and who voted in the 2018 General Election. A total of 24,894 new registrants were identified, 16,547 of whom were first-time voters in the 2018 General.

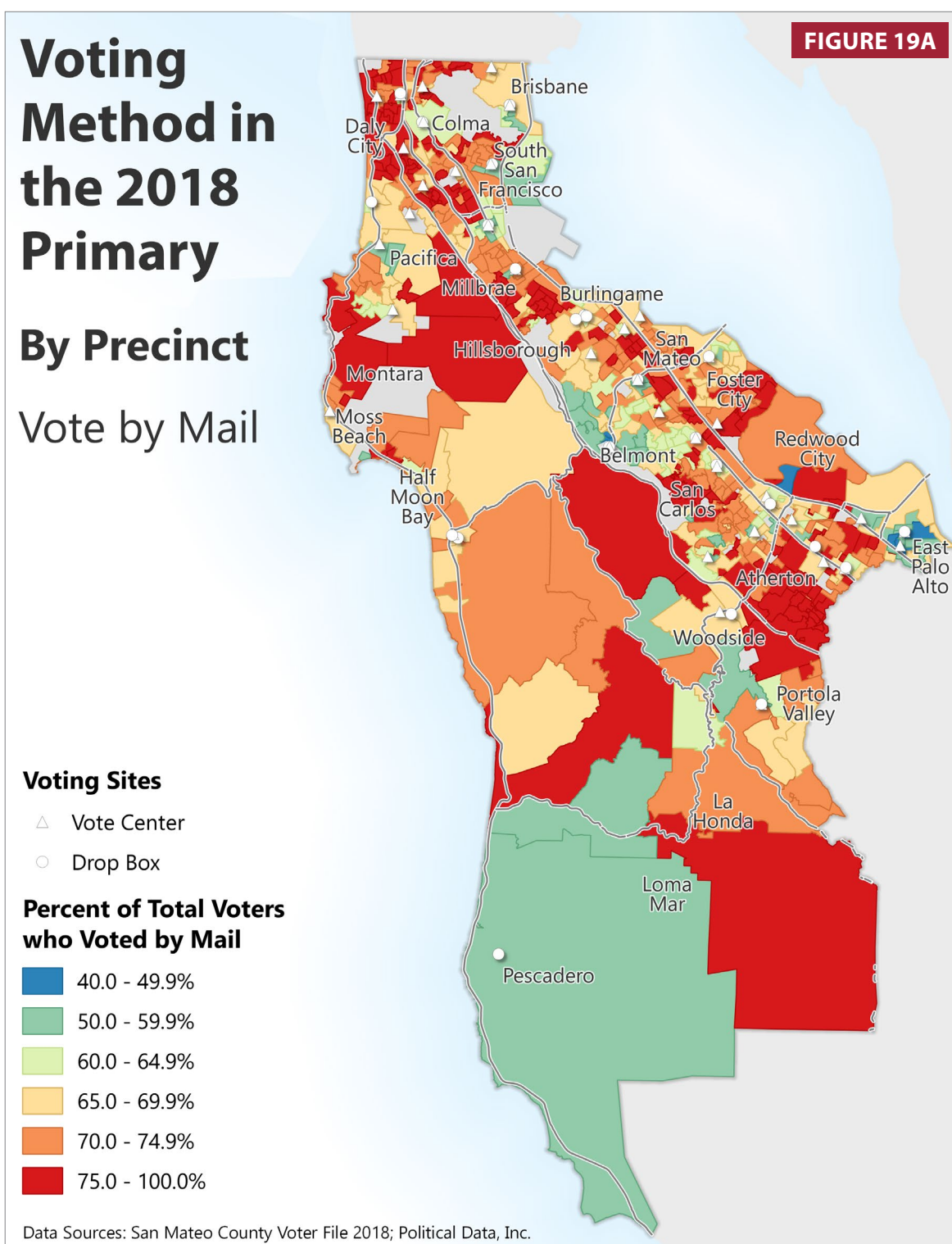
In the Primary, a majority (63.6%) of new voters mailed their VBM ballot (see Figure 18A). Nearly 16% dropped their ballot off at a Vote Center, and nearly 8% voted in person at a Vote Center. Just over 5% of new voters dropped their ballot off at a Ballot Drop Box Location. In the General, 45.7% of new voters mailed their VBM ballot (see Figure 18B). Nearly 13% dropped their ballot off at a Vote Center, and nearly 30% voted in person at a Vote Center. Almost 12% of new voters dropped their ballot off at a Ballot Drop Box Location.

Note: In the Primary and General, for about 7% of identified new voters there was no data available on vote method.



Mail Use Rates by Voting Precinct

During the Primary, at least 50% of voters in every city in San Mateo County returned their VBM ballots through the mail, although there was substantial variation in rates across cities. For instance, in both Daly City and Atherton a high percentage of voters mailed in their VBM ballots (around 76% for both cities), while 55% of voters in East Palo Alto and 57% of voters in Pescadero—the cities with the lowest mail use rates—returned their VBM ballots through the mail. When the mail rate for VBM ballots is examined by precinct of voter residence (see Figure 19A), it is apparent that there is much greater variation across the county. There are precincts with particularly low mail use rates in East Palo Alto and around the College of San Mateo campus, and clusters of precincts with very high mail use rates in Redwood City, Atherton, Daly City and Burlingame (see [Appendix A](#) for a list of all VBM precincts).



In contrast to the Primary, not every San Mateo County city saw at least a 50% VBM ballots mail rate (four cities in total). However, like the Primary, there was substantial variation in rates across cities although with a wider range of low to high use than in the Primary. For instance, in both Atherton, Portola Valley and Hillsborough, a high percentage of voters mailed in their VBM ballots (69.0%, 67.2% and 65.9%, respectively), while 33.6% of voters in Pescadero and 43.7% in East Palo—the cities with some of the lowest mail use rates—returned their VBM ballots through the mail. When the mail rate for VBM ballots is examined by precinct of voter residence (see Figure 19B), much greater variation can be seen across the county. There are precincts with particularly low mail use rates in East Palo Alto and in between the cities of Belmont/San Carlos. Clusters of precincts with very high mail use rates in Woodside, Atherton, Daly City and Burlingame (see Figure 4 for income distribution across San Mateo County).

Voting Method in the 2018 General

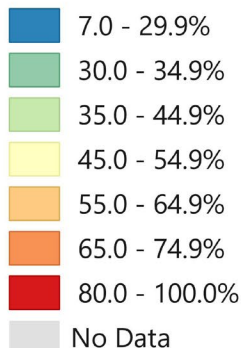
By Precinct Vote by Mail

FIGURE 19B

Voting Sites

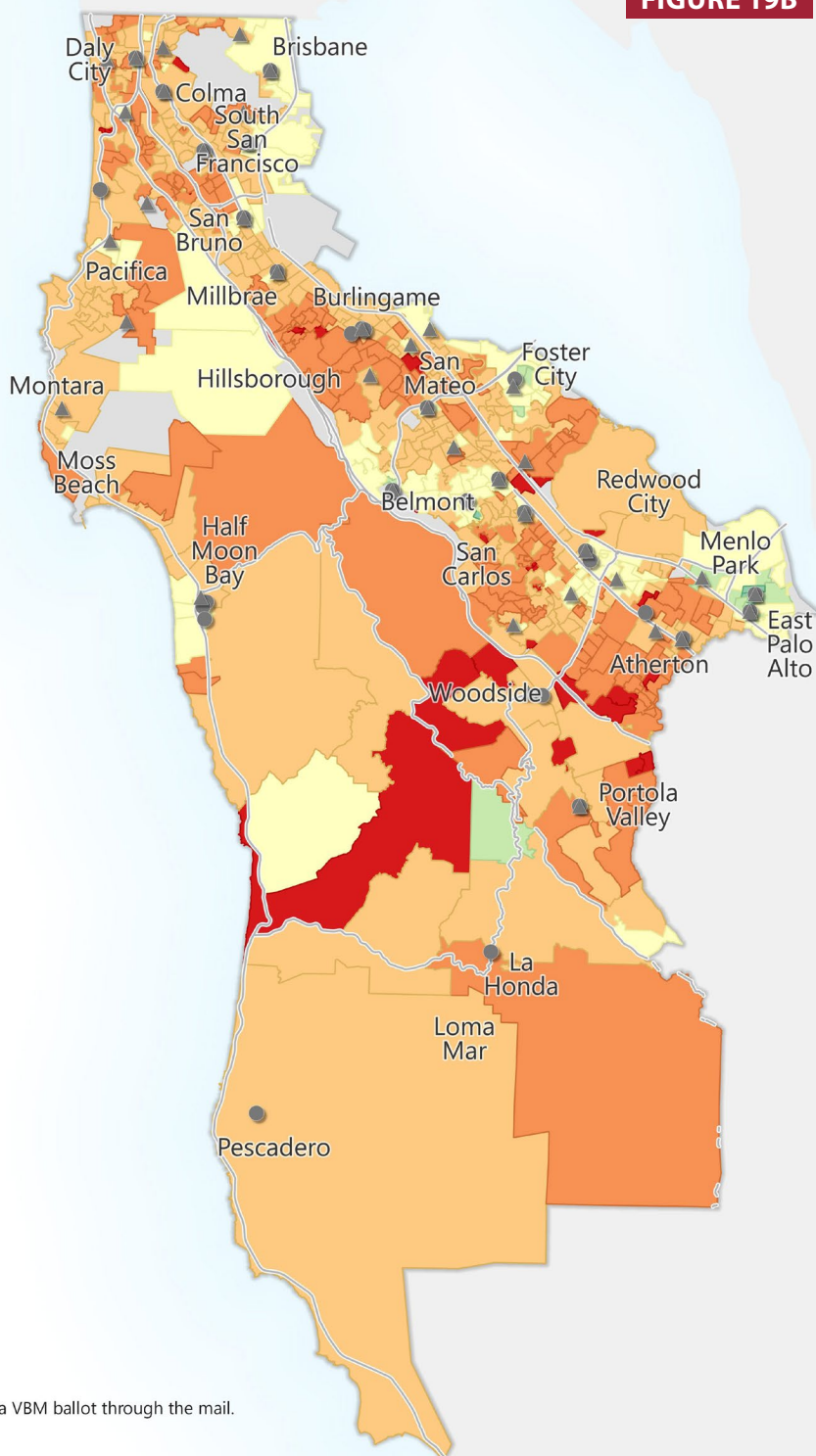
- ▲ Vote Center
- Drop Box

Percent of Total Voters who Voted by Mail



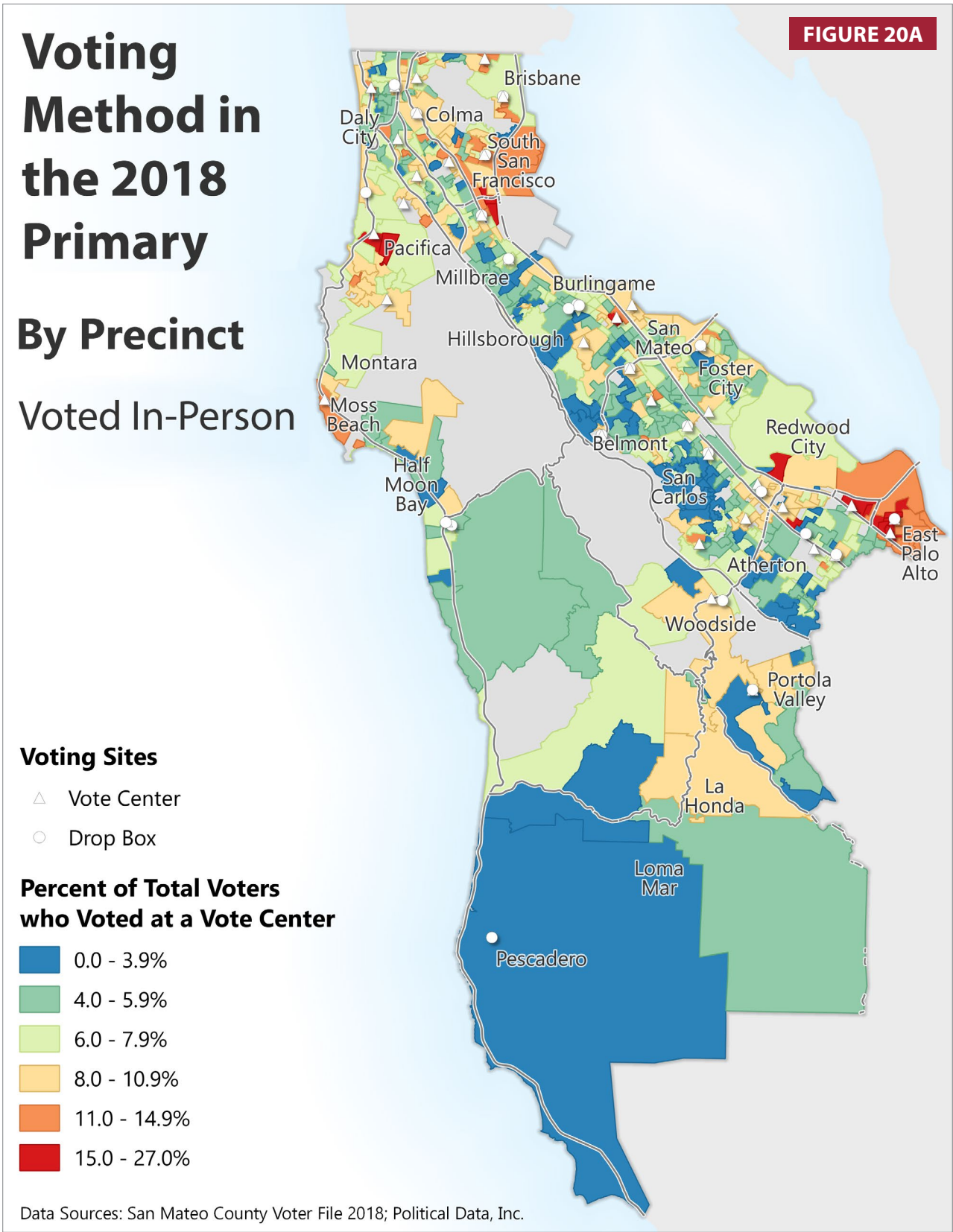
* Voting by mail is defined as sending in a VBM ballot through the mail.

Data source: San Mateo County Voter File 2018, Political Data, Inc.

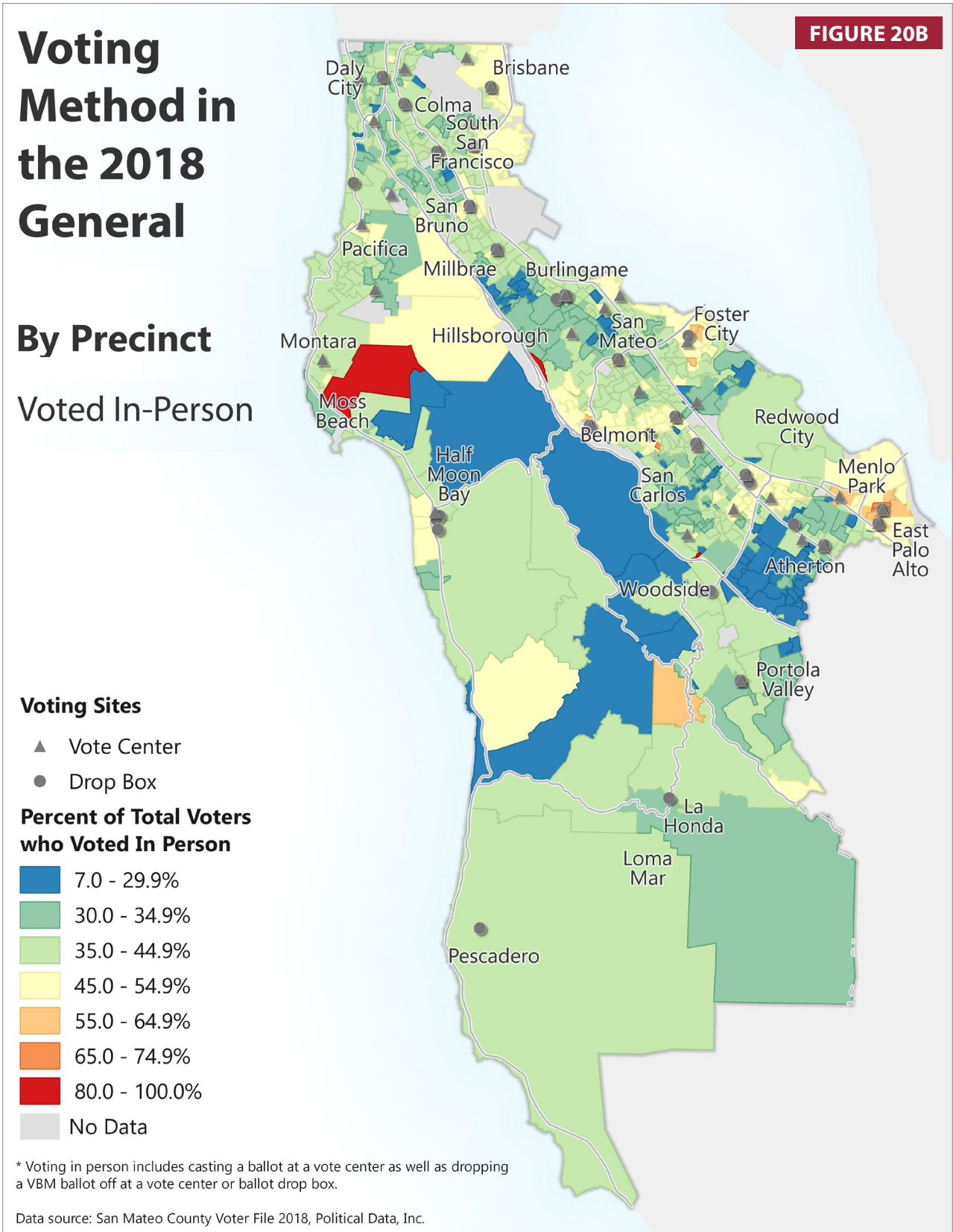


In-Person Vote Center Use Rates by Voting Precinct

In the Primary, precincts with relatively high in-person voting were clustered around East Palo Alto, South San Francisco, and Moss Beach. Precincts within these communities have the highest percentage of voters in San Mateo County who voted in person.



In the General, precincts with relatively high in-person voting were clustered around East Palo Alto, Foster City, and Moss Beach. Precincts within these communities have the highest percentage of voters in San Mateo County who voted in person.



Voter Distance to Vote Center

A key consideration of county elections offices in the implementation of the VCA is how to select the locations for Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box Locations in order to ensure they are geographically accessible to voters. Because the VCA allows voters to use any Vote Center in their county (to vote in person or drop off their VBM ballot), a 2018 Primary voter may have traveled to the Vote Center they used directly from home, or they may have selected a Vote Center close to their place of employment, shopping or other point of interest. However, data identifying each voter's travel patterns to a Vote Center are not available in the county voter registration file, and, thus, for this report, we limited our analysis to whether San Mateo County voters used a Vote Center close to their residence in the 2018 Primary. Specifically, we calculated the Euclidean (straight-line) distance from the voter's residence to the Vote Center they used. This included voters who voted in person at a Vote Center and voters who dropped their ballot off at a Vote Center. The distance was calculated only for voters for whom location of residence could be determined, as well as the Vote Center used. 2018 Primary Election data included 646 voter records in the county where there was no information for the voter location of residence and/or the Vote Center used. These records were excluded from this portion of the analysis.

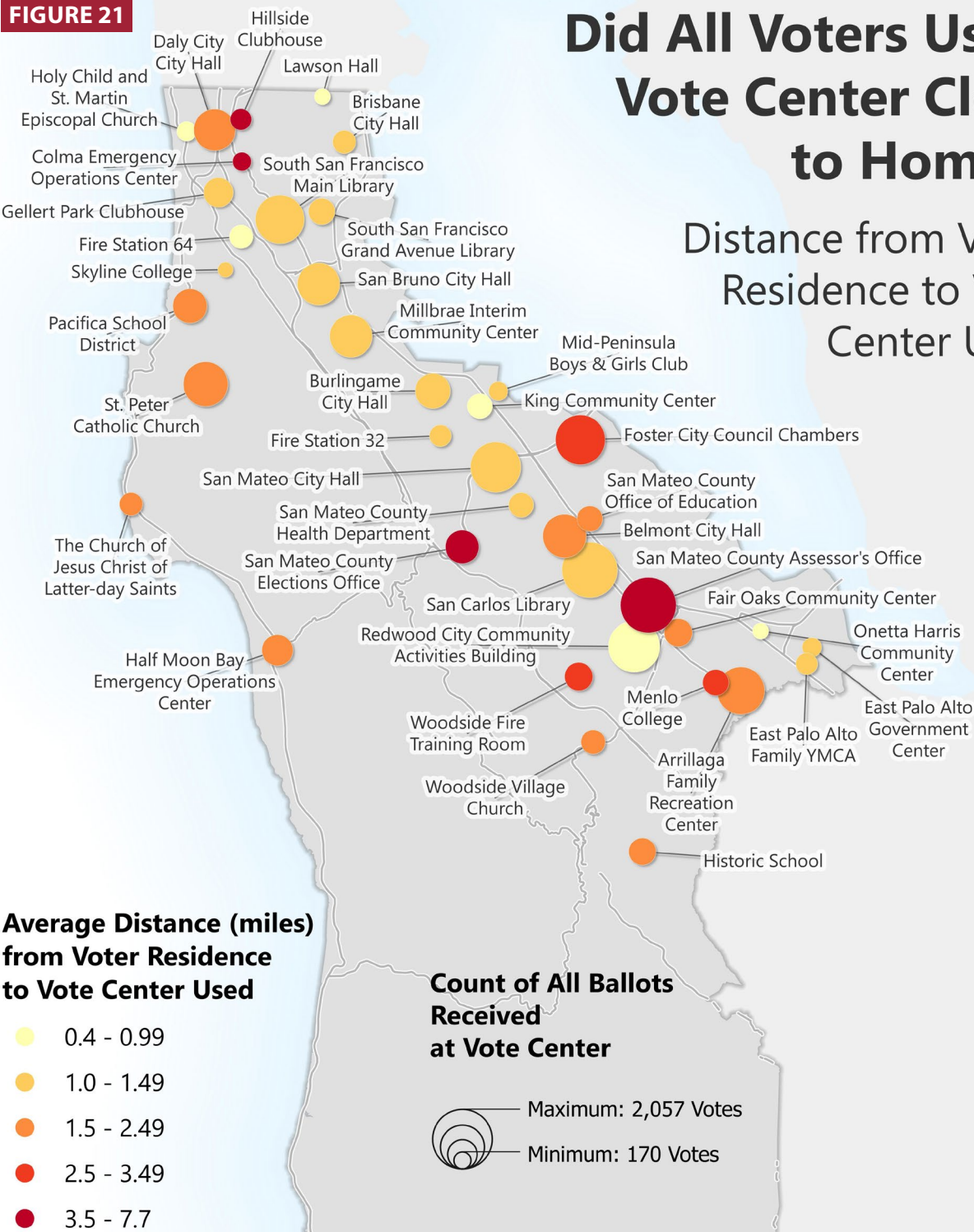
Note: As stated earlier, data on the Vote Center location used by voters was unavailable for the General Election due to changes in the data collection method of the San Mateo County Elections Office from the Primary to the General Election.



FIGURE 21

Did All Voters Use a Vote Center Close to Home?*

Distance from Voter
Residence to Vote
Center Used



* In this phase of the analysis we used the Euclidean (straight-line) distance from a voter's residence to the vote center used as a rough estimate of the distance a voter may have traveled. A voter may not have traveled to the vote center directly from home, or may have selected a vote center close to their place of employment, etc., but those data are not available.

Data Sources: San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

In the Primary, we found that the average distance from a voter's residence to the Vote Center that they used (in-person voting and dropping off a VBM ballot) was 1.8 miles. The average distance for each individual Vote Center varied (see Figure 21), for example, voters who used the Lawson Hall Vote Center lived, on average, 0.6 miles from the Vote Center, while voters who used the Hillside Clubhouse Vote Center lived an average of 5.1 miles from the Vote Center.

FIGURE 22

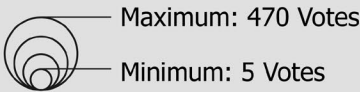
Did Asian-American Voters Use a Vote Center Close to Home?*

Distance from Voter Residence to Vote Center Used

Average Distance (miles) from Asian-American Voter Residence to Vote Center Used

- 0.4 - 0.99
- 1.0 - 1.49
- 1.5 - 2.49
- 2.5 - 3.49
- 3.5 - 7.7

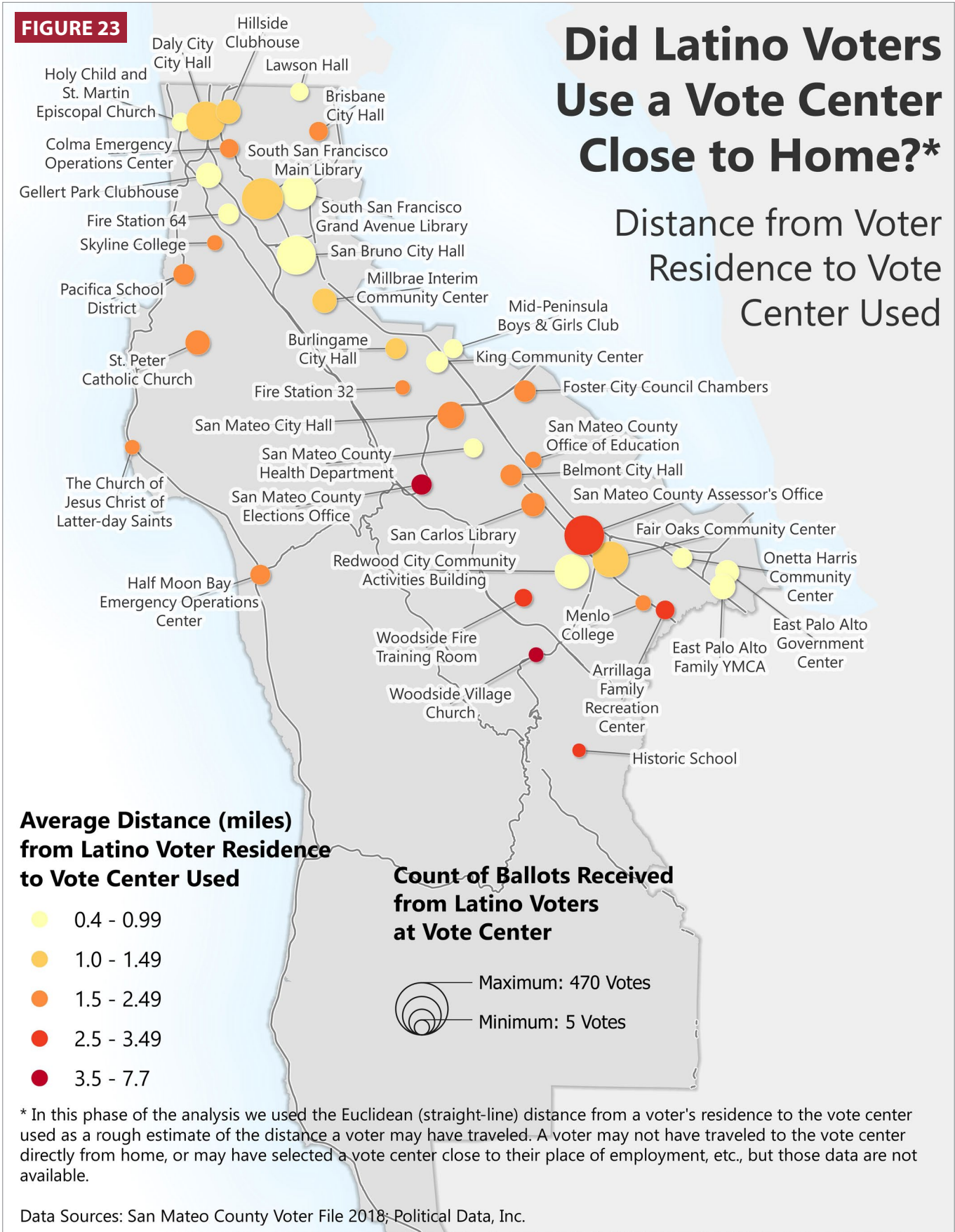
Count of Ballots Received from Asian-American Voters at Vote Center



* In this phase of the analysis we used the Euclidean (straight-line) distance from a voter's residence to the vote center used as a rough estimate of the distance a voter may have traveled. A voter may not have traveled to the vote center directly from home, or may have selected a vote center close to their place of employment, etc., but those data are not available.

Data Sources: San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

Similarly, in the Primary, we found that the average distance from an Asian-American voter's residence to the Vote Center that they used was 1.8 miles, but there was greater variation by individual Vote Center (see Figure 22). Asian-American voters who used the Fire Station 64 Vote Center lived an average of 0.5 miles from that Vote Center, while Asian-American voters who used the East Palo Alto Government Center Vote Center lived an average of 7.7 miles from that Vote Center.



In the Primary, Latino Vote Center voters, on the other hand, on average lived 1.5 miles from the Vote Center they used (see Figure 23). Latino voters who used the Lawson Hall Vote Center lived an average of 0.5 miles from that Vote Center, while Latino voters who used the San Mateo County Elections Office Vote Center lived an average of 5.5 miles from that Vote Center.

2. What were 2018 voter turnout rates in San Mateo County, and how did they vary by demographic group?

From a research standpoint, studying a causal connection between the VCA and voter turnout calls for caution, as we have only one election cycle, thus far, to examine. First, turnout is a difficult outcome to model because it is potentially influenced by a number of additional factors, including the competitiveness of individual races, characteristics of candidates, as well as the greater electoral context.¹² California saw an open contested race in 2018 for Governor and a contested U.S. Senate seat, and San Mateo County experienced a number of races in local jurisdictions that were highly contested.

Second, the VCA was implemented during the very same election cycle in which several other state election reforms came into effect. These included, most notably, California's version of automatic voter registration (California Assembly Bill 1461), which was implemented a month and a half before the June 5, 2018 Election, as well as voter pre-registration of 16 and 17 year-olds (California Senate Bill 113), which was implemented at the beginning of 2018.¹³

Additionally, turnout can be influenced by other factors specific to a county or other jurisdiction's electorate such as demographic and political composition and historical turnout trends, making it difficult to assess the specific impact of an individual election reform. However, while acknowledging the above constraints, we are still able to provide an important and useful first descriptive look at turnout in the inaugural election under the VCA.

2018 Primary Election Voter Turnout: VCA and Non-VCA Counties Total Population

Table 4A. Primary Midterm Election Voter Turnout: VCA and Non-VCA Counties									
	2010 Registered Turnout	2014 Registered Turnout	2018 Registered Turnout	2010 Eligible Turnout	2014 Eligible Turnout	2018 Eligible Turnout	2018 Registered Voters	2018 Eligible Voters	2018 Actual Voters
San Mateo County	38.4%	27.5%	44.3%	26.8%	20.0%	34.0%	388,456	506,481	172,168
Sacramento County	37.5%	29.6%	41.9%	26.6%	21.3%	30.8%	741,260	1,009,125	310,881
Nevada County	51.1%	44.7%	56.9%	42.2%	36.0%	49.5%	68,126	78,420	38,792
Napa County	44.6%	39.6%	49.2%	33.6%	30.8%	40.6%	76,211	92,519	37,525
Madera County	45.6%	36.4%	44.1%	29.4%	22.4%	27.0%	54,848	89,532	24,211
VCA Counties Combined	39.2%	30.6%	43.9%	27.9%	22.1%	32.9%	1,328,901	1,776,077	583,577
Non-VCA Counties Combined	32.9%	24.8%	37.1%	23.8%	18.2%	28.1%	17,694,516	23,343,161	6,558,410
State Total	33.3%	25.2%	37.5%	24.1%	18.4%	28.4%	19,023,417	25,119,238	7,141,987

Data Source: California Secretary of State Statement of the Vote

In both the 2018 Primary and General Elections, California experienced historically high turnout. For the Primary, the state saw the highest registered voter turnout (37.5%) and eligible (adult citizens) voter turnout (28.4%), for a midterm primary since 1998. Additionally, San Mateo County (along with all VCA adopting counties) experienced a significant increase in voter turnout over the previous midterm primary election. According to the San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election results certified by the California Secretary of State's office, the county's registered voter turnout, at 44.3%, was the largest percentage point increase (16.8 percentage points) over the 2014 Primary's registered turnout rate (a record low year for turnout) of any VCA county in the state, and fourth highest percentage point increase of any California county, overall. San Mateo County's registered turnout was also the highest for a midterm primary in the county's history since 1998.¹⁴

Because the 2014 Primary was a record low turnout for any statewide election in California, it is also useful to compare the results of the 2018 Primary to those of the 2010 Primary, as 2010 also saw a competitive open governor's race, as well as an open U.S. Senate seat. Primary registered turnout for the state in 2010 was strong at 33.3%, but 4.2 percentage points lower than in 2018. San Mateo County 2018 Primary registered turnout was also higher than its 2010 turnout—44.3% compared to 38.4%.

2018 General Election Voter Turnout: VCA and Non-VCA Counties Total Population

In the November 2018 General, California experienced an increase in turnout, marking the highest registered voter turnout (64.5%) and eligible voter turnout (50.4%), for a midterm general election since 1982. Additionally, San Mateo County (along with all VCA adopting counties) experienced a significant increase in voter turnout over the previous midterm general election. According to the San Mateo County 2018 General Election results certified by the California Secretary of State's office, at 72.6%, the county's registered voter turnout was the largest percentage point increase (26.4 percentage points) over the 2014 General's

registered turnout rate of any VCA county in the state. It was the twentieth highest registered voter turnout rate of any California county. San Mateo County's registered turnout was the highest for a midterm general in the county's history since 1998.¹⁵

Table 4B. General Midterm Election Voter Turnout: VCA and Non-VCA Counties

	2010 Registered Turnout	2014 Registered Turnout	2018 Registered Turnout	2010 Eligible Turnout	2014 Eligible Turnout	2018 Eligible Turnout	2018 Registered Voters	2018 Eligible Voters	2018 Actual Voters
San Mateo County	65.3%	46.2%	72.6%	46.3%	33.5%	57.1%	346,516	507,576	290,058
Sacramento County	63.1%	48.4%	68.2%	45.5%	34.4%	51.6%	678,923	1,013,368	522,652
Nevada County	80.8%	64.2%	79.8%	66.9%	51.6%	70.0%	61,411	78,603	54,996
Napa County	68.4%	55.0%	73.1%	51.5%	42.4%	61.9%	69,872	92,369	57,132
Madera County	63.8%	52.1%	67.9%	41.3%	31.8%	43.4%	54,817	89,818	38,968
VCA Counties Combined	65.0%	49.1%	70.4%	46.8%	35.2%	54.1%	1,211,539	1,781,734	963,806
Non-VCA Counties Combined	59.2%	41.7%	64.1%	43.5%	30.6%	50.2%	16,074,344	23,418,717	11,748,736
State Total	59.6%	42.2%	64.5%	43.7%	30.9%	50.4%	17,285,883	25,200,451	12,712,542

Data Source: California Secretary of State Statement of the Vote

Since the 2014 General was a record low turnout for a statewide general election in California, we also compared the results of the 2018 General to those of the 2010 General. General registered turnout for the state in 2010 was high at 59.6% (compared to other California midterm general elections), but 4.9 percentage points lower than in 2018. San Mateo County 2018 General registered turnout was also higher than the County's 2010 turnout—72.6% compared to 65.3%.

2018 Primary and General Elections Registered Voter Turnout: VCA Counties by Race and Ethnicity

The race and ethnicity of every voter is not available from county voter registration files. In order to examine the change in voter turnout of racial and ethnic groups in the 2018 Primary and General compared with 2010 and 2014 elections, we used data provided by the Statewide Database (the redistricting database for the state of California) at UC Berkeley. Data by race and ethnicity from the Statewide Database is limited to Latinos and Asian Americans (data for whites and African Americans are not provided by the Statewide Database due to data limitations).¹⁶ We note here that due to the live nature of county voter registration files, the voter counts for the total population available from the Statewide Database varies slightly from the official certified San Mateo County election results. When comparing across voter sub-groups and over time, the same data source with a consistently applied methodology should be employed.

Data from the Statewide Database show that 30.9% of registered Latinos and 37.0% of registered Asian Americans voted in San Mateo County in the 2018 Primary, compared to 43.9% of all registered voters (see Table 5A). This was a 10.2 percentage point increase in the registered turnout rate for Latinos and a 10.2 percentage point increase for Asian Americans over the 2014 Primary Election.

Table 5A. 2010-2018 Primary Election Registered Voter Turnout: VCA Counties by Race and Ethnicity

	2010 All	2010 Asian American	2010 Latino	2014 All	2014 Asian American	2014 Latino	2018 All	2018 Asian American	2018 Latino
San Mateo County	38.0%	27.1%	23.4%	29.1%	26.8%	20.7%	43.9%	37.0%	30.9%
Sacramento County	37.5%	31.1%	25.9%	29.6%	25.7%	19.0%	41.6%	34.7%	31.5%
Nevada County	50.0%	44.3%	36.2%	44.4%	40.6%	31.7%	55.5%	51.4%	42.7%
Napa County	44.4%	34.0%	23.4%	39.3%	29.9%	20.2%	48.5%	37.2%	28.2%
Madera County	44.3%	40.5%	22.5%	36.3%	35.0%	17.5%	43.1%	34.1%	25.1%
VCA Counties Combined	39.0%	29.5%	24.7%	31.1%	26.5%	19.6%	43.5%	35.9%	30.7%
Non-VCA Counties Combined	32.5%	25.1%	18.3%	24.5%	22.0%	13.0%	36.5%	32.2%	23.6%
State Total	32.9%	25.4%	18.6%	24.9%	22.3%	13.2%	37.0%	32.5%	23.9%

Data Source: Statewide Database

In the 2018 General Election, 60.3% of registered Latinos and 64.5% of registered Asian Americans voted in San Mateo County, compared to 70.9% of all registered voters (see Table 5B). This was a 29.2 percentage point increase in the registered turnout rate for Latinos and a 29.0 percentage point increase for Asian Americans over the 2014 General Election. These registered turnout rates were the highest midterm rates for Latinos and Asian Americans in San Mateo County (and in California as a whole) since at least 2002 (the latest data available for these groups at the county level). However, even with these historically high rates, significant registered turnout gaps remain between these groups.

Table 5B: 2010-2018 General Election Registered Voter Turnout: VCA Counties by Race and Ethnicity

	2010 All	2010 Asian American	2010 Latino	2014 All	2014 Asian American	2014 Latino	2018 All	2018 Asian American	2018 Latino
San Mateo County	64.8%	54.6%	53.0%	46.0%	35.5%	31.1%	70.9%	64.5%	60.3%
Sacramento County	62.4%	55.2%	53.5%	48.0%	42.1%	36.4%	66.4%	58.8%	58.8%
Nevada County	74.4%	70.3%	63.6%	63.3%	59.8%	50.2%	76.7%	75.3%	66.5%
Napa County	67.8%	57.6%	51.3%	54.5%	42.1%	35.1%	71.7%	63.4%	58.2%
Madera County	63.0%	56.3%	44.7%	51.6%	44.6%	32.1%	65.7%	57.9%	51.4%
VCA Counties Combined	64.0%	55.1%	52.5%	48.7%	39.2%	34.4%	68.5%	61.7%	58.6%
Non-VCA Counties Combined	57.5%	48.3%	45.3%	41.3%	36.1%	27.2%	62.0%	56.8%	51.0%
State Total	58.0%	48.8%	45.6%	41.8%	36.3%	27.5%	62.4%	57.2%	51.3%

Data Source: Statewide Database

2018 Primary and General Elections Eligible Voter Turnout: VCA Counties by Race and Ethnicity

Due to disparities by race and ethnicity that are continually present in voter registration rates in California and the U.S., it is important to examine voter turnout rates for those who are eligible to vote (adult citizens) whether registered or not.¹⁷ Tables 6A and 6B show the eligible voter turnout (primary and general elections) for Latinos, Asian Americans and the general population in all VCA counties since 2010. When examining turnout for the eligible Latino and Asian-American voter population we see patterns of disparate participation in all counties, including in San Mateo County (see [Appendix A](#) for 2018 registration rates and eligible voter turnout rates for Latinos and Asian Americans in all California counties).

In San Mateo County's 2018 Primary Election, 21.4% of eligible Latinos voted and 18.5% of eligible Asian Americans voted, compared to 35.7% of all eligible voters. Latinos and Asian Americans experienced an 11.4 percentage point increase and a 10.4 percentage point increase, respectively, over their eligible turnout rates in the 2014 Primary Election.

Table 6A. 2010-2018 Primary Election Eligible Voter Turnout: VCA Counties by Race and Ethnicity

	2010 All	2010 Asian American	2010 Latino	2014 All	2014 Asian American	2014 Latino	2018 All	2018 Asian American	2018 Latino
San Mateo County	28.1%	10.4%	15.5%	20.3%	8.1%	10.0%	35.7%	18.5%	21.4%
Sacramento County	26.4%	12.5%	14.7%	20.7%	11.1%	10.7%	30.0%	17.5%	19.2%
Nevada County	40.0%	29.7%	18.1%	34.8%	21.6%	14.7%	46.3%	23.4%	20.6%
Napa County	34.7%	13.7%	13.5%	30.6%	13.1%	12.2%	39.5%	18.6%	18.8%
Madera County	27.9%	32.1%	11.2%	21.2%	31.5%	8.1%	23.4%	29.6%	11.5%
VCA Counties Combined	28.1%	11.7%	14.5%	21.8%	9.9%	10.4%	32.4%	18.1%	18.9%
Non-VCA Counties Combined	23.9%	12.4%	11.1%	17.9%	11.2%	8.0%	27.5%	17.6%	15.3%
State Total	24.2%	12.3%	11.3%	18.1%	11.1%	8.1%	27.8%	17.6%	15.4%

Data Source: Statewide Database

In the 2018 General Election, 42.3% of eligible Latinos in San Mateo County voted and 33.7% of eligible Asian Americans voted, compared to 58.6% of all eligible voters. Latinos and Asian Americans experienced a 22.3 percentage point increase and a 18.8 percentage point increase, respectively, over their eligible turnout in the 2014 General Election.

Table 6B: 2010-2018 General Election Eligible Voter Turnout: VCA Counties by Race and Ethnicity

	2010 All	2010 Asian American	2010 Latino	2014 All	2014 Asian American	2014 Latino	2018 All	2018 Asian American	2018 Latino
San Mateo County	49.3%	21.8%	36.5%	34.5%	14.9%	20.0%	58.6%	33.7%	42.3%
Sacramento County	45.6%	23.4%	32.1%	33.2%	18.2%	20.4%	48.9%	31.0%	36.9%
Nevada County	57.9%	45.1%	31.3%	49.4%	31.8%	23.3%	64.3%	35.4%	33.0%
Napa County	53.5%	23.8%	30.6%	42.1%	18.5%	21.2%	59.4%	32.8%	39.9%
Madera County	40.4%	47.4%	22.9%	29.9%	40.9%	14.8%	37.0%	53.4%	25.0%
VCA Counties Combined	47.4%	22.8%	32.2%	34.6%	16.8%	19.8%	52.1%	32.4%	37.1%
Non-VCA Counties Combined	43.5%	24.5%	28.5%	30.6%	18.5%	17.2%	48.3%	32.6%	34.7%
State Total	43.7%	24.4%	28.7%	30.9%	18.4%	17.3%	48.6%	32.6%	34.8%

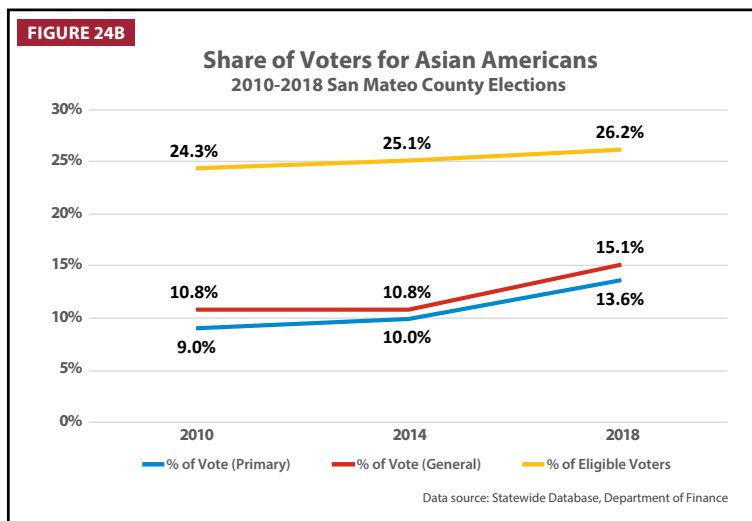
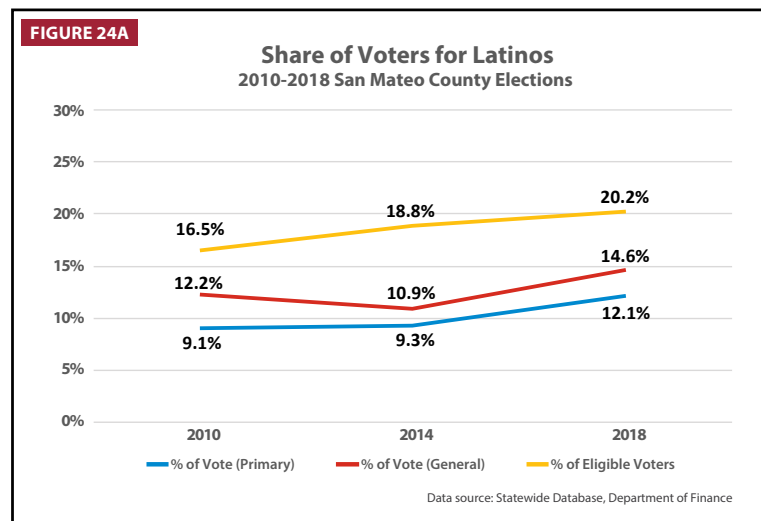
Data Source: Statewide Database

In both the 2018 Primary and General Elections, eligible turnout rates were the highest for Latinos and Asian Americans in San Mateo County (and California, as a whole) since at least 2010 (comparable eligible turnout data is not available prior to 2010).

Voter Representation of Latinos and Asian Americans

The share of Latino and Asian-American voters has also increased in each midterm Primary and General Election since 2010. In the 2018 Primary, the Latino share of voters grew to 12.1% from 9.1% in the 2010 Primary, while the Asian-American share of voters increased from 9.0% to 13.6% for the same elections (see Figures 24A and 24B). During the general elections, the Latino share of voters grew from 12.2% in 2010 to 14.6% in 2018, while the Asian-American share of voters increased from 10.8% to 15.1% for the same elections.

Note: Examining a causal connection between the VCA and the degree of voter representation (a group's share of election voters compared to its share of eligible adult citizen voters) requires caution, as we have data from only one election cycle (see detailed explanation of data limits on page 36). However, it is important to take a descriptive look at the level of voter representation in San Mateo County under the VCA in 2018 and track these data going forward in future elections.



Not only did the Latino and Asian-American share of voters increase, the degree to which each group of voters is underrepresented among San Mateo County voters compared to their share of the eligible voter population (the difference in these percentages) changed as well. Asian-American underrepresentation decreased from 2010 to 2018, while Latino underrepresentation increased slightly during this time period.

In the 2010 Primary, Asian Americans represented 24.3% of the eligible voter population, but only represented 9.0% of actual voters (those casting a ballot), a gap of 15.3 percentage points. This gap decreased to 12.6 percentage points in the 2018 Primary. In the 2010 General, Asian Americans were 24.3% of the eligible voter population, but only 10.8% of actual voters, a gap of 13.5 percentage points. This gap decreased to 11.1 percentage points in the 2018 General. This means that Asian Americans were somewhat more represented in the county electorate from 2010 to 2018.

On the other hand, Latino representation among San Mateo County's voters decreased slightly between the 2010 and 2018 elections. In the 2010 Primary Election, Latinos represented 16.5% of the county's eligible voter population and made up 9.1% of actual voters, a gap of 7.4 percentage points. In the 2018 Primary Election, this gap increased to 8.1 percentage points. In the 2010 General Election, Latinos represented 16.5% of the county's eligible voter population and made up 12.2% of voters, a gap of 4.3 percentage points. In the 2018 General Election, this gap increased to 5.6 percentage points (although the Latino representation gap did decrease from 2014).

2018 Primary and General Elections Registered Voter Turnout: VCA Counties for Youth

Data on the age of voters is available from the 2018 San Mateo County voter registration file but was not available (in the form of a voter registration file) for previous elections. In order to examine the change that occurred in the voter turnout of youth (those age 18-24) in the 2018 General Elections over the 2014 and 2010 General Elections, we used data provided by the Statewide Database at UC Berkeley (age identified by voters' birthdates).¹⁸ We note that due to the live nature of county voter registration files, the voter counts available from the Statewide Database varies slightly from the official certified San Mateo County results.

Data show that 23.5% of registered youth voted in San Mateo County in the 2018 Primary, compared to 43.9% of all registered voters (see Table 7A). This was a 13.2 percentage point increase in the registered turnout rate for youth over the 2014 Primary Election. In the 2018 General Election, 53.1% of registered youth voted in San Mateo County, compared to 70.9% of all registered voters (see Table 7B). This was a 35.1 percentage point increase in the registered turnout rate for youth over the 2014 General Election. These registered turnout rates were the highest (primary and general) for youth in San Mateo County (and in California as a whole) since at least 2002 (the latest data available for these groups at the county level).

Table 7A: 2010-2018 Primary Election Registered Voter Turnout: VCA Counties for Youth

	2010 All	2010 Youth	2014 All	2014 Youth	2018 All	2018 Youth
San Mateo County	38.0%	13.4%	29.1%	10.3%	43.9%	23.5%
Sacramento County	37.5%	11.5%	29.6%	8.1%	41.6%	19.8%
Nevada County	50.0%	16.7%	44.4%	12.3%	55.5%	26.9%
Napa County	44.4%	15.4%	39.3%	14.8%	48.5%	21.2%
Madera County	44.3%	15.5%	36.3%	10.6%	43.1%	14.9%
VCA Counties Combined	39.0%	12.5%	31.1%	9.2%	43.5%	20.8%
Non-VCA Counties Combined	32.5%	10.3%	24.6%	6.8%	36.5%	15.4%
State Total	32.9%	10.4%	25.0%	6.9%	37.0%	15.7%

Data Source: Statewide Database

Table 7B: 2010-2018 General Election Registered Voter Turnout: VCA Counties for Youth

	2010 All	2010 Youth	2014 All	2014 Youth	2018 All	2018 Youth
San Mateo County	64.8%	35.2%	46.0%	18.0%	70.9%	53.1%
Sacramento County	62.4%	31.3%	48.0%	16.8%	66.4%	46.5%
Nevada County	74.4%	37.1%	63.3%	22.1%	76.7%	51.1%
Napa County	67.8%	38.6%	54.5%	23.2%	71.7%	50.5%
Madera County	63.0%	34.2%	51.6%	18.9%	65.7%	37.1%
VCA Counties Combined	64.0%	32.9%	48.7%	17.7%	68.5%	48.1%
Non-VCA Counties Combined	57.5%	32.4%	41.3%	15.6%	62.0%	42.8%
State Total	58.0%	32.5%	41.8%	15.7%	62.4%	43.2%

Data Source: Statewide Database

2018 Primary and General Elections Eligible Voter Turnout: VCA Counties for Youth

It is important to examine voter turnout rates for those who are eligible to vote (adult citizens), whether registered or not, due to disparities that are continually present in voter registration rates by age. Tables 8A and 8B show that youth eligible voter (citizens age 18-24) turnout is consistently lower compared to the general population in all counties, including San Mateo County (see [Appendix A](#) for 2018 registration rates and eligible turnout rates for all California counties).

In San Mateo County's 2018 Primary Election, 13.9% of eligible youth voted, compared to 35.7% of all eligible voters (see Table 8A). Youth experienced a 9.2 percentage point increase over their eligible turnout rate in the 2014 Primary and a 6.0 percentage point increase over their eligible turnout rate in the 2010 Primary.

Table 8A: 2010-2018 Primary Election Eligible Voter Turnout: VCA Counties for Youth

	2010 All	2010 Youth	2014 All	2014 Youth	2018 All	2018 Youth
San Mateo County	28.1%	7.9%	20.3%	4.7%	35.7%	13.9%
Sacramento County	26.4%	6.4%	20.7%	4.2%	30.0%	10.6%
Nevada County	40.0%	10.3%	34.8%	5.8%	46.3%	13.2%
Napa County	34.7%	8.5%	30.6%	7.5%	39.5%	12.5%
Madera County	27.9%	7.2%	21.2%	4.5%	23.4%	6.9%
VCA Counties Combined	28.1%	7.0%	21.8%	4.6%	32.4%	11.3%
Non-VCA Counties Combined	23.9%	5.4%	18.2%	3.5%	27.7%	8.6%
State Total	24.2%	5.5%	18.4%	3.6%	27.8%	8.7%

Data Source: Statewide Database

In the General Election, San Mateo County youth saw a 33.8% eligible turnout rate, compared to 58.6% of all eligible voters. Youth experienced a 24.1 percentage point increase over their eligible turnout rate in the 2014 General Election, while they experienced an 11 percentage point increase over their eligible turnout rate in the 2010 General Election. The eligible voter turnout rate was the highest for San Mateo County youth (and California as a whole) in 2018, both Primary and General, since at least 2010 (comparable turnout data is not available prior to 2010).

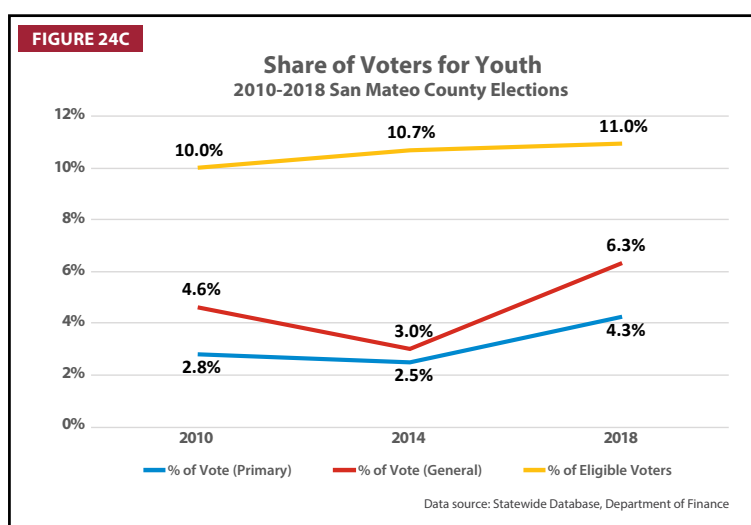
Table 8B: 2010-2018 General Election Eligible Voter Turnout: VCA Counties for Youth						
	2010 All	2010 Youth	2014 All	2014 Youth	2018 All	2018 Youth
San Mateo County	49.3%	22.8%	34.5%	9.7%	58.6%	33.8%
Sacramento County	45.6%	19.5%	33.2%	8.1%	48.9%	26.4%
Nevada County	57.9%	21.6%	49.4%	10.1%	64.3%	26.4%
Napa County	53.5%	22.6%	42.1%	11.2%	59.4%	31.7%
Madera County	40.4%	17.0%	29.9%	7.9%	37.0%	18.8%
VCA Counties Combined	47.4%	20.3%	34.6%	8.7%	52.1%	28.0%
Non-VCA Counties Combined	43.5%	18.1%	30.6%	8.0%	48.3%	25.7%
State Total	43.7%	18.3%	30.9%	8.1%	48.6%	25.8%

Data Source: Statewide Database

Voter Representation of Youth

The share of youth voters has increased in each midterm Primary and General Election since 2010. In the 2018 Primary, the youth (age 18-24) share of voters grew to 4.3% from 2.8% in the 2010 Primary (see Figure 24C). In the 2018 General, the youth share of voters grew from 4.6% in 2010 to 6.3% in 2018.

The degree to which youth voters are underrepresented among San Mateo County voters compared to their share of the eligible voter population has also changed (the difference in these percentages). In the 2010 Primary, youth represented 10.0% of the eligible voter population, but represented only 2.8% of voters in that election, a gap of 7.2 percentage points. This gap decreased to 6.7 percentage points in the 2018 Primary. In the 2010 General, youth represented 10.0% of the eligible voter population, but only represented 4.6% of voters in that election, a gap of 5.4 percentage points. This gap decreased to 4.7 percentage points in the 2018 General, meaning that youth voter representation in San Mateo County improved in both Primary and General Elections from 2010 to 2018.

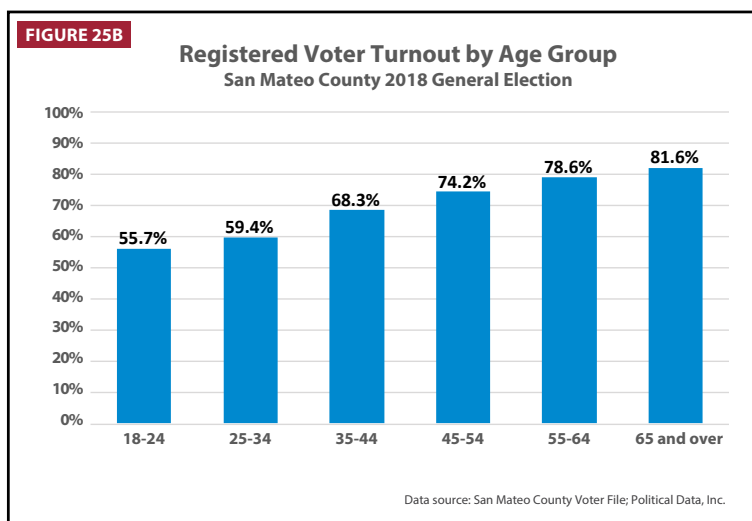
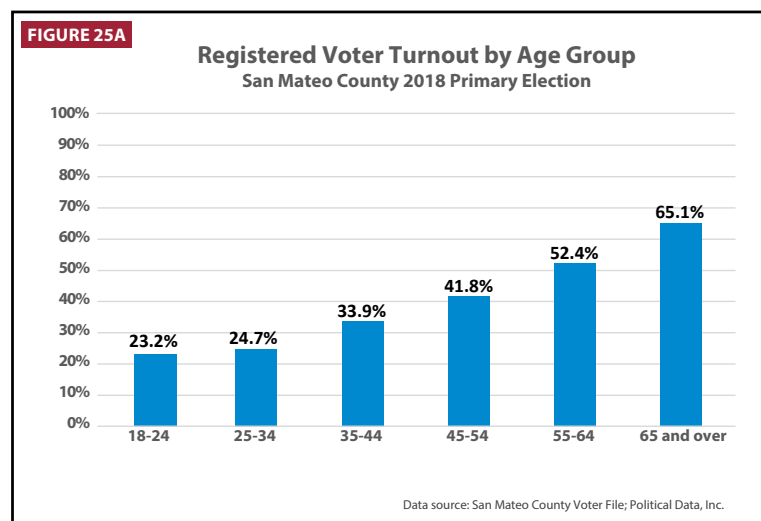


2018 Detailed Turnout Analysis: Introduction

In the remainder of this report, we provide a detailed examination of San Mateo County's 2018 Primary and General voter turnout, both registered and eligible, under the VCA. Data for this 2018 detailed analysis of voter turnout, as well as the subsequent sections of the report, is derived from the official San Mateo County voter registration files provided by the San Mateo County Elections Office and Political Data, Inc. (PDI).¹⁹ Voter registration files are live databases and, thus, registrant totals fluctuate in each extracted voter file. Data sets were merged together, and non-matching records were excluded to maintain a consistent and comparable registrant sample for each demographic analysis. The resulting Primary and General Election datasets

vary slightly from official certified San Mateo County election records at 388,863 registrant records in the Primary and 393,635 registrant records in the General, thus, also resulting in some small differences in percentages compared with the certified results.

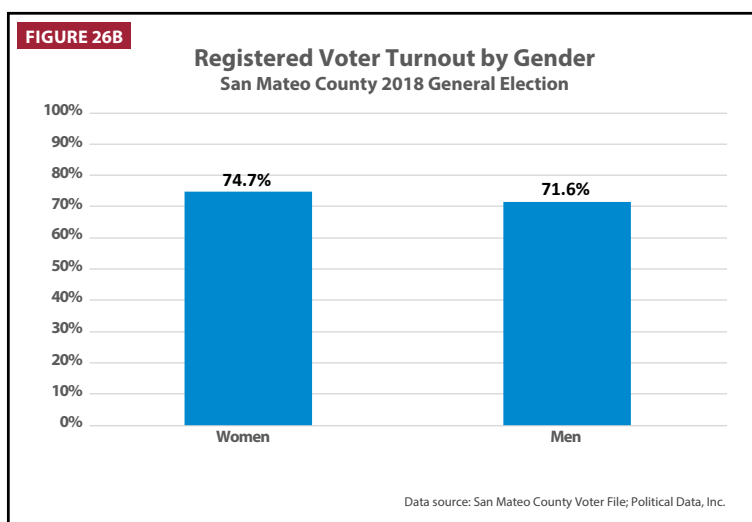
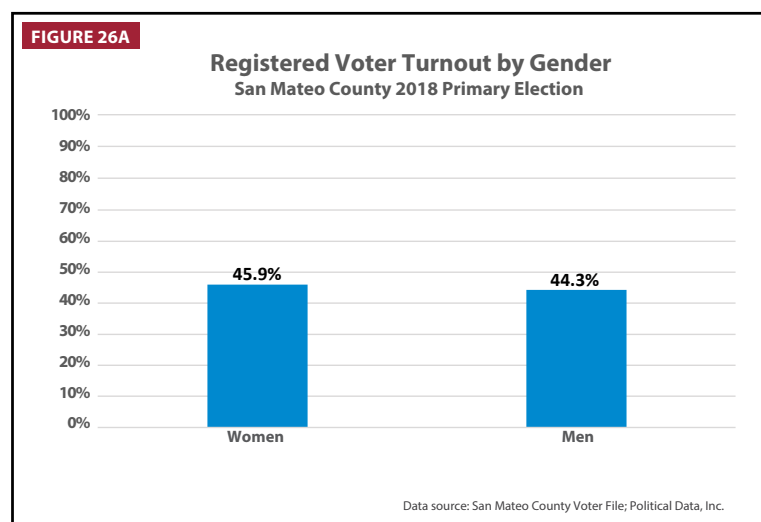
Registered Voter Turnout by Age



In the Primary, registered voter turnout was considerably higher for older voters than for younger voters: 65.1% of registrants age 65 years and older voted, compared to 23.2% of registrants 18-24 years who voted. In the General, registered voter turnout was, again, higher for older voters than for younger voters, although the gap was much smaller: 81.6% of registrants 65 years and older voted, compared to 55.7% of registrants 18-24 years who voted.

Note: Age is identified by voters' birth dates. San Mateo County voter records with unreliable data for age were excluded. This includes records where the voter is categorized as being under 18 years of age or older than 100 years of age (3,214 records total for the Primary and 337 records total for the General).

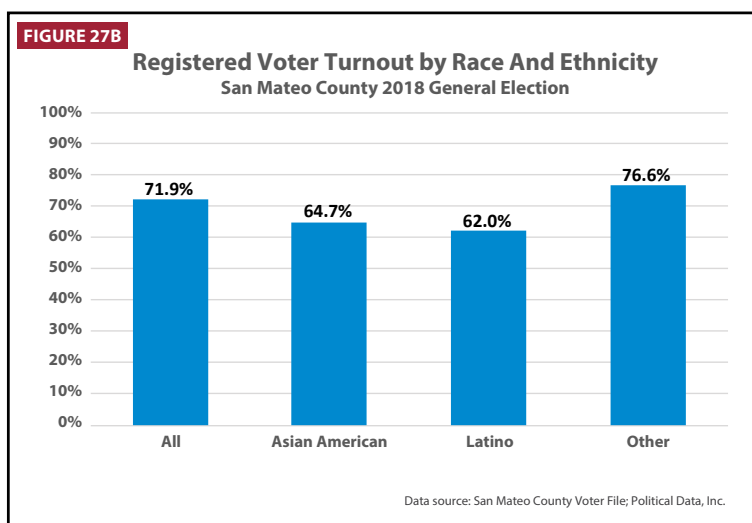
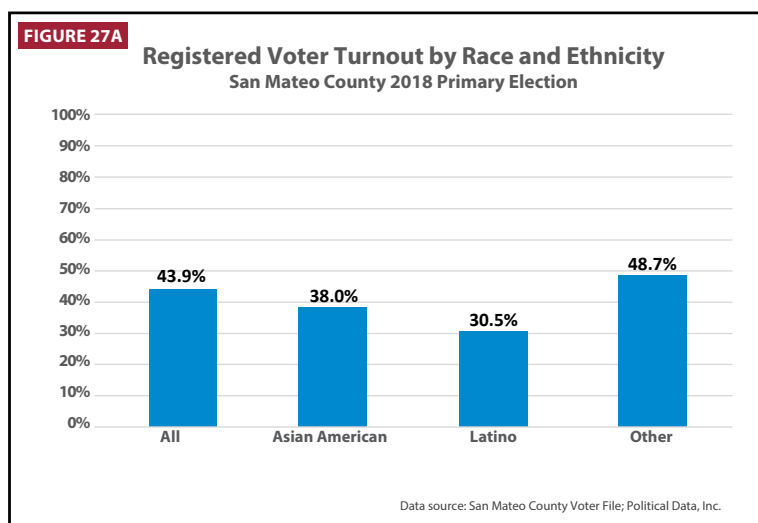
Registered Voter Turnout by Gender



In the Primary, the gap in registered voter turnout between women voters and men voters was less than 2 percentage points: 45.9% of registrants who are women voted, compared to 44.3% of registrants who are men. In the General, the gap in registered voter turnout between women voters and men voters was just over 3 percentage points: 74.7% of women registrants voted, compared to 71.6% of registrants who are men.

Note: In the Primary and General, data identifying gender was not available for 10.8% Primary and 11.1% General of all registrants in San Mateo County (42,056 out of 388,863 records in the Primary and 43,616 out of 393,635 in the General).²⁰

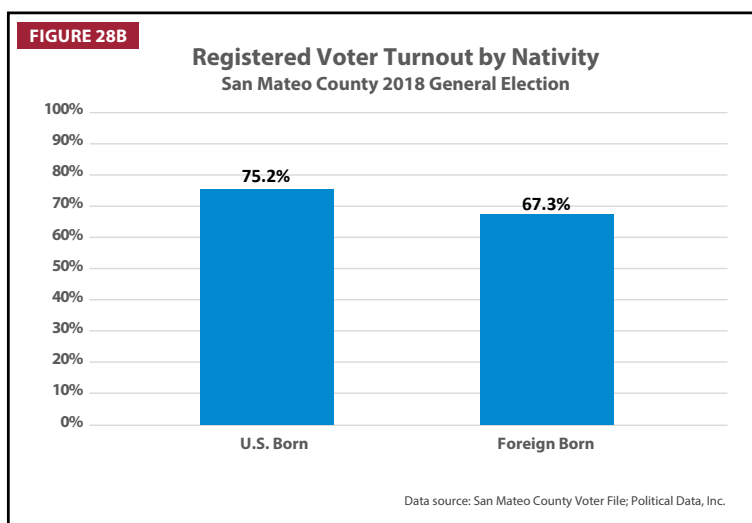
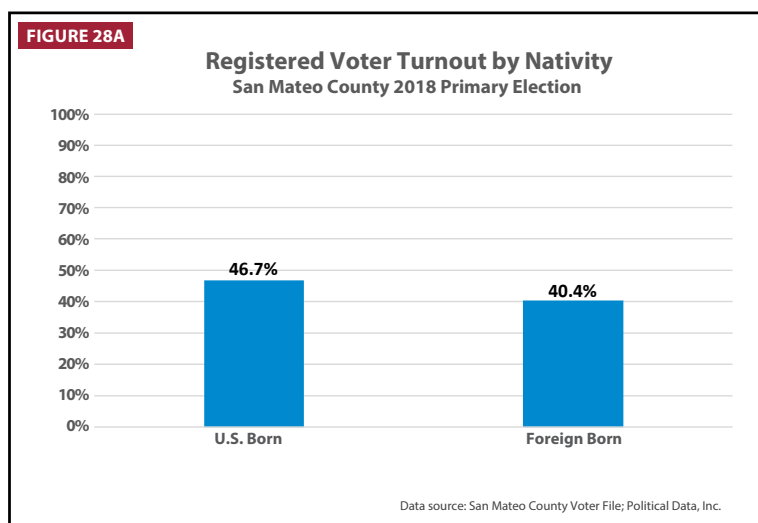
Registered Voter Turnout by Race and Ethnicity



In the 2018 Primary, just over 30% of registered Latinos and 38.0% of registered Asian Americans voted in San Mateo County, compared to 43.9% of all registered voters. The registered voter turnout for all voters who are not Latino or Asian American was 48.7%.

Just under 72% of all San Mateo County registrants voted in the General, compared to 62.0% of registered Latinos and 64.7% of registered Asian Americans. The registered voter turnout for all voters who are not Latino or Asian American was 76.6%.

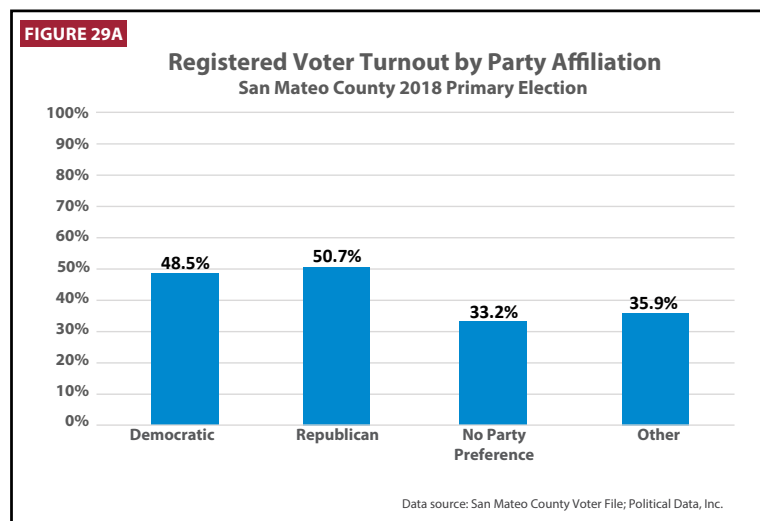
Registered Voter Turnout by Nativity



In the 2018 Primary, registered voter turnout of U.S.-born citizens was 6.3 percentage points higher than the registered voter turnout of foreign-born citizens (46.7% and 40.4%, respectively). In the General, registered voter turnout of U.S.-born citizens (75.2%) was 7.9 percentage points higher than the registered voter turnout of foreign-born citizens (67.3%).

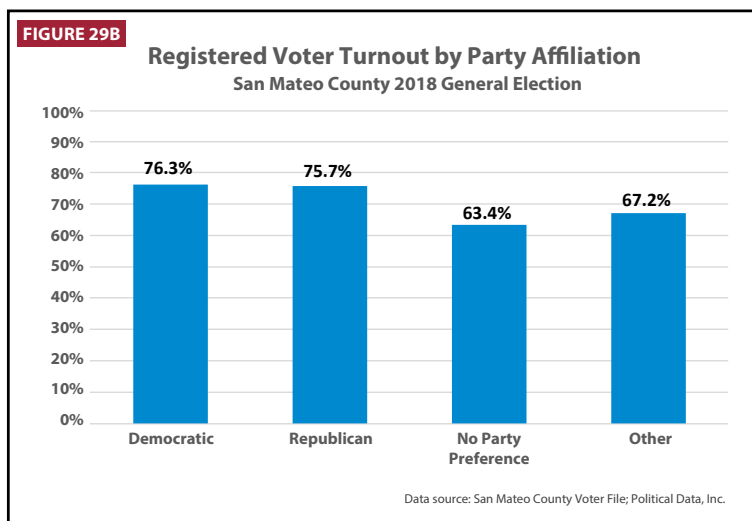
Note: In the Primary, data identifying nativity was not available for 6.1% of all county registrants (23,609 out of 388,863 records). In the General, data identifying nativity was not available for 7.6% of all county registrants (29,897 out of 393,635 records).²¹

Registered Voter Turnout by Party Affiliation

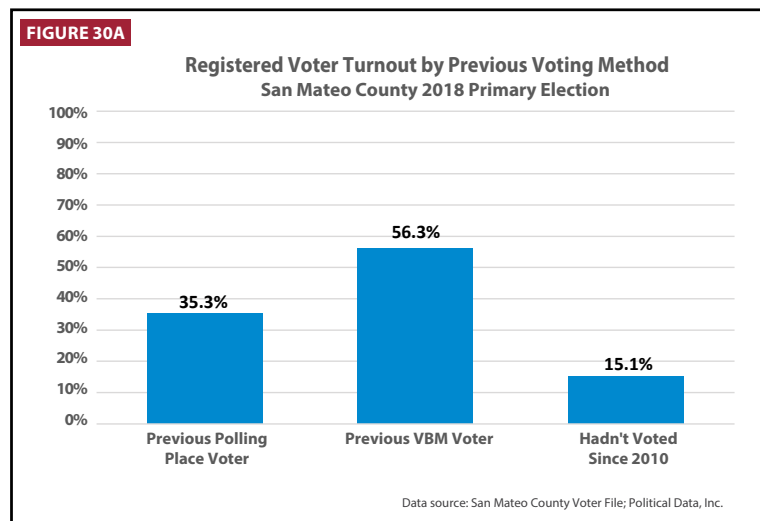


In the Primary, the registered voter turnout of those who registered as Republican was 2.2 percentage points higher than the registered voter turnout of those registered as Democratic (50.7% and 48.5%, respectively). Just over 33% of registrants with No Party Preference (NPP) turned out to vote in the 2018 Primary Election.

In the General, the registered voter turnout of those who registered as Republican was nearly the same as that of registered Democrats – just 0.6 percentage points lower (75.7% and 76.3%, respectively). Turnout of voters registered with No Party Preference (NPP) was 63.4% in the 2018 General Election.



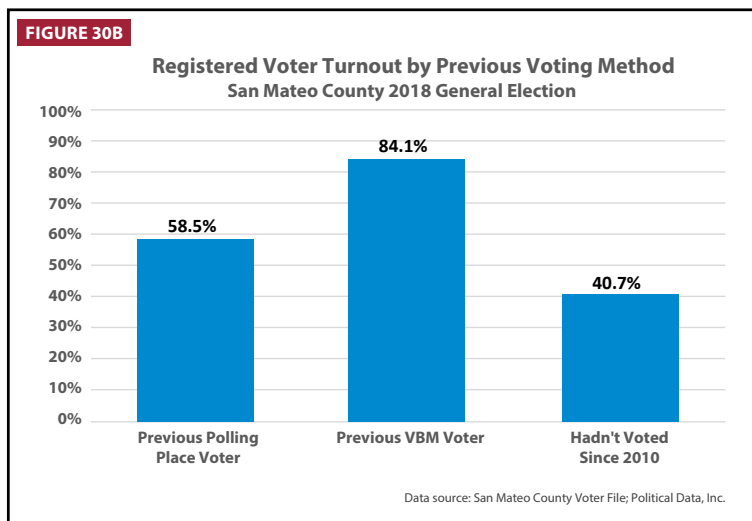
Registered Voter Turnout by Previous Polling Place Voters



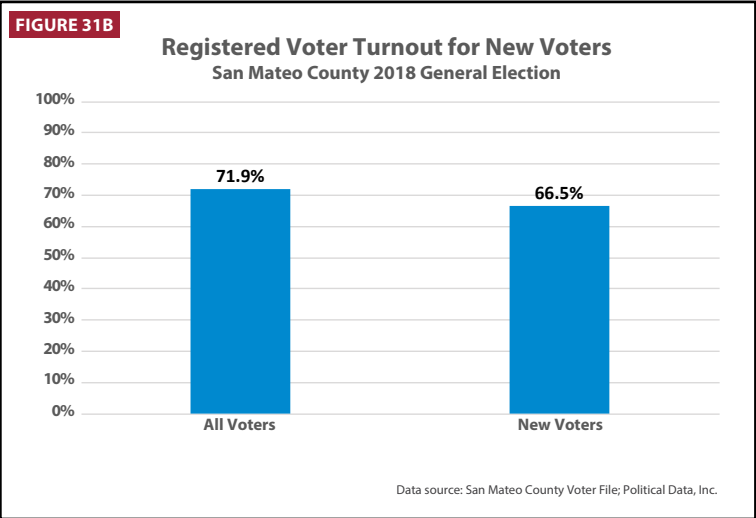
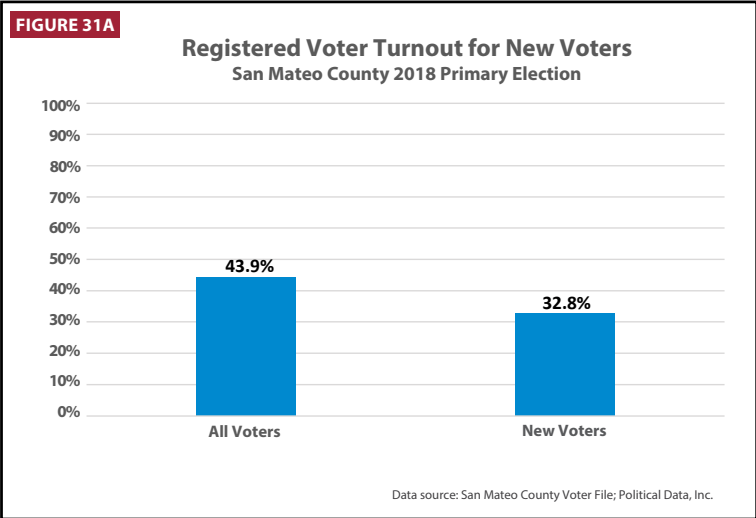
As discussed earlier in this report, a previous polling place voter is defined as a registrant who voted at a polling place in the last election in which they voted. Similarly, a previous VBM voter is defined as a registrant who voted by mail in their last election experience (see methodology note on page 26).

Previous VBM voters had a much higher turnout rate in the Primary Election than polling place voters. Just over 56% of registrants who voted by mail in their last election experience voted in the 2018 Primary, compared to 35.3% of polling place voters—a turnout gap of 21 percentage points (see Figure 30A). Additionally, we see that 15.1% of voters who hadn't voted since 2010 (regardless of previous voting method) turned out to vote in the 2018 Primary Election.

In the General Election, turnout for both voter groups was higher. Just over 84% of registrants who voted by mail in their last election experience voted in the 2018 General, compared to 58.5% of polling place voters—a larger turnout gap of 25.6 percentage points (see Figure 30B) than seen in the Primary. Additionally, we see that 40.7% of voters who hadn't voted since 2010 (regardless of previous voting method) turned out to vote in the 2018 General Election.



Registered Voter Turnout by New Voters



As discussed earlier in this report, we define “New Voters” as those who registered to vote for the first time after the last election - the 2016 General (when examining the 2018 Primary) or the 2018 Primary (when examining the 2018 General). Nearly 33% of new registrants voted in the 2018 Primary Election (see Figure 31A). The turnout gap between the general registrant population (43.9%) and the new registrant population was 11.1 percentage points. For the 2018 General Election, 66.5% of new registrants voted (see Figure 31B), producing a turnout gap between the general registrant population (71.9%) and the new registrant population of 5.4 percentage points.



Registered Voter Turnout by Precinct of Residence

There is a high degree of variation in the 2018 Primary registered voter turnout of the total population across San Mateo County precincts. While the overall San Mateo County registered turnout was 43.9% in the Primary, turnout by registrants' precinct of residence ranged from 6% to nearly 100%. Figure 32A shows that there are precincts with higher turnout clustered around Pacifica, Foster City, Atherton, Belmont, Brisbane and Portola Valley. We see lower turnout rates in precincts around East Palo Alto, South San Francisco and Daly City (see Figure 4 for income distribution across San Mateo County).

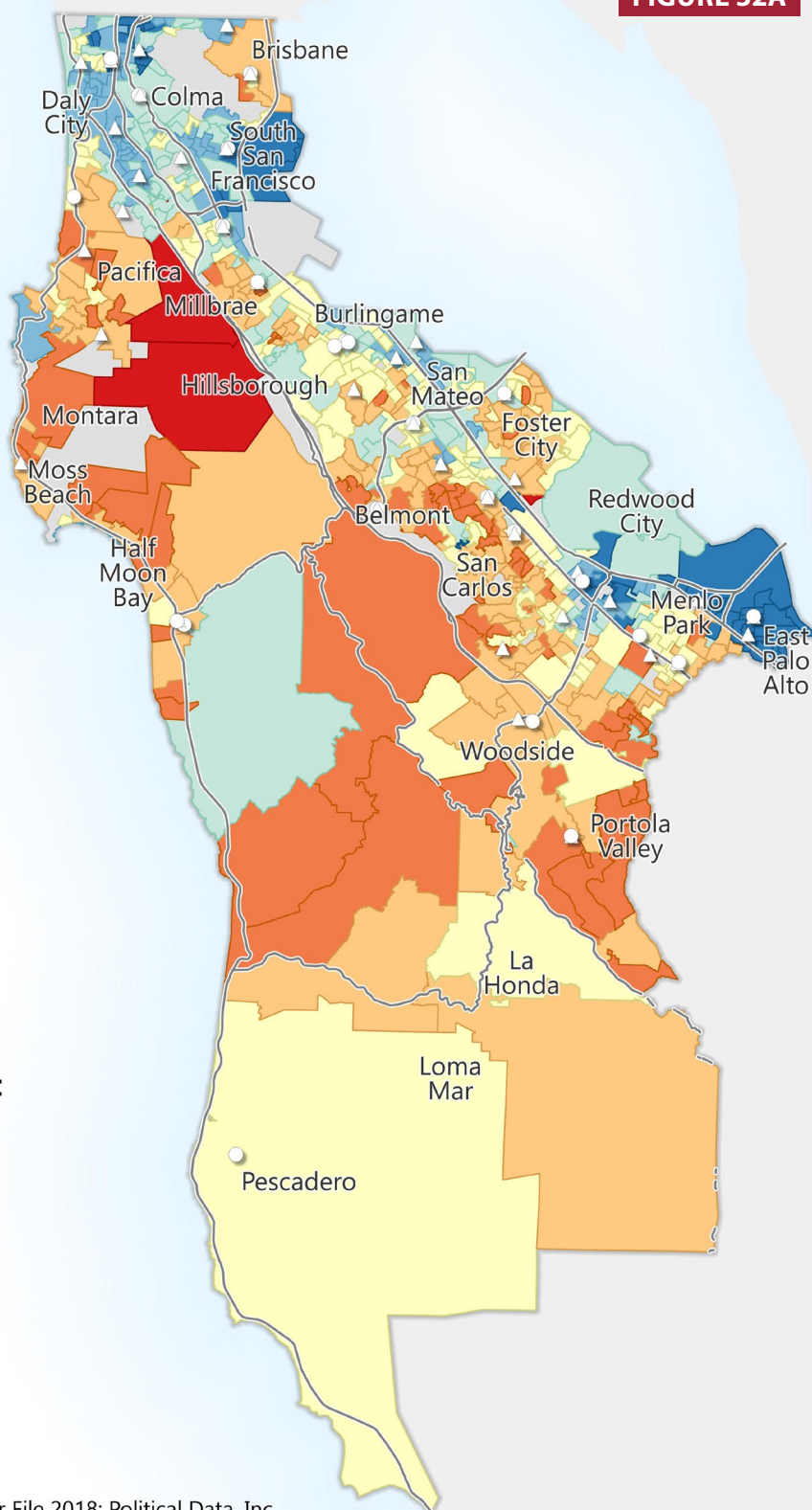
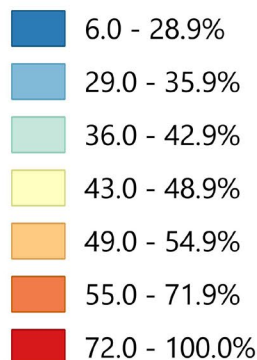
Registered Voter Turnout 2018 Primary By Precinct of Residence Total Population

FIGURE 32A

Voting Sites

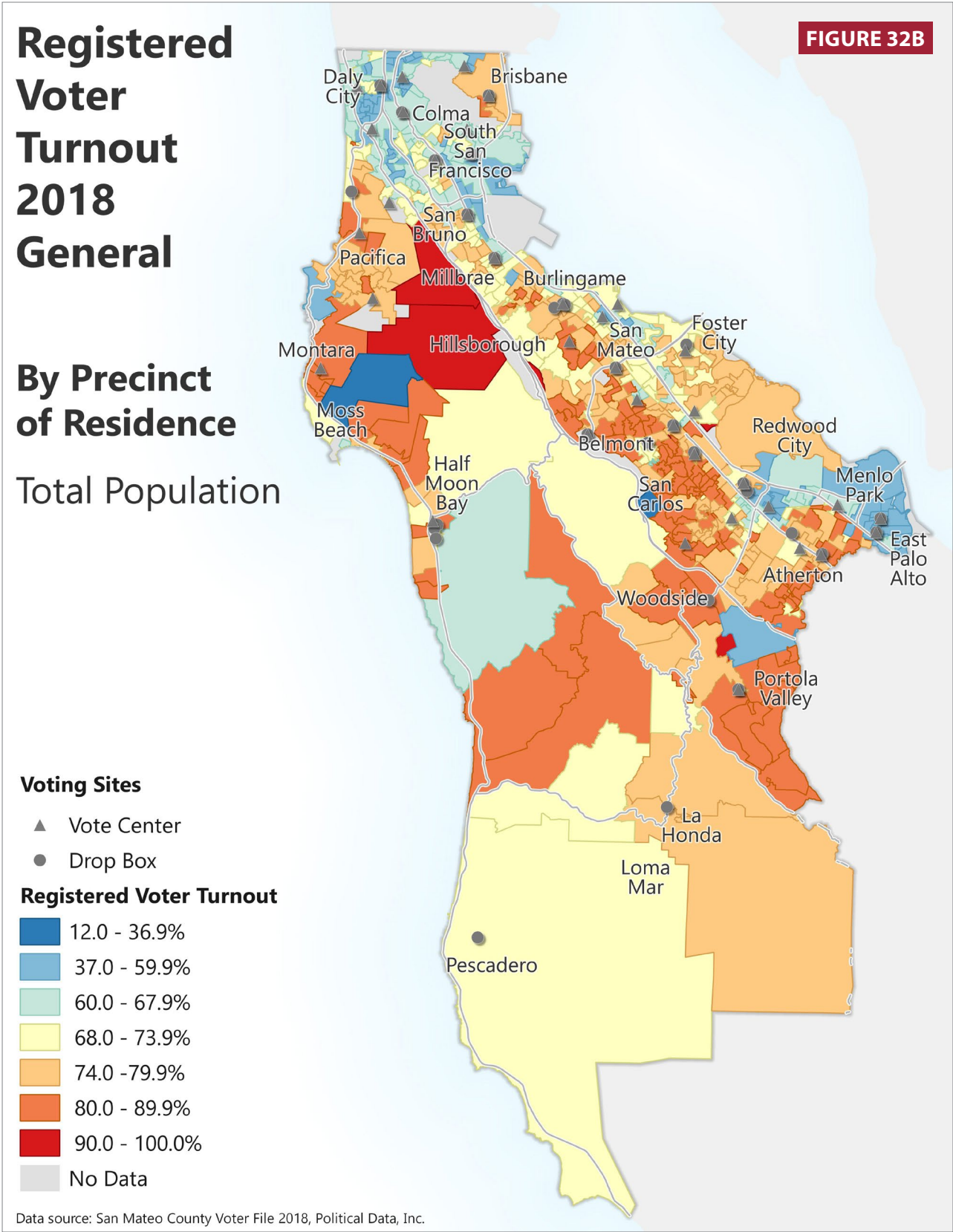
- △ Vote Center
- Drop Box

Registered Voter Turnout



Data Sources: San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

In the General, the voter turnout of the total registered population in San Mateo County was 71.9%. Looking at turnout by the registrant’s precinct of residence for the total population, Figure 32B shows similar turnout patterns compared to the 2018 Primary. Precincts with higher registered turnout in the General are clustered around Pacifica, Atherton, Belmont, Brisbane and Portola Valley. Lower turnout rates are seen in precincts around East Palo Alto, South San Francisco and Daly City.



Countywide, registered voter turnout for Asian Americans was 38.0% in the Primary. When Asian-American turnout is examined by precinct, we see clusters of precincts with generally high turnout around Pacifica, Half Moon Bay and San Carlos. Precincts with lower registered voter turnout for Asian Americans are clustered in the northernmost region of the county—in particular around Daly City, South San Francisco and East Palo Alto.

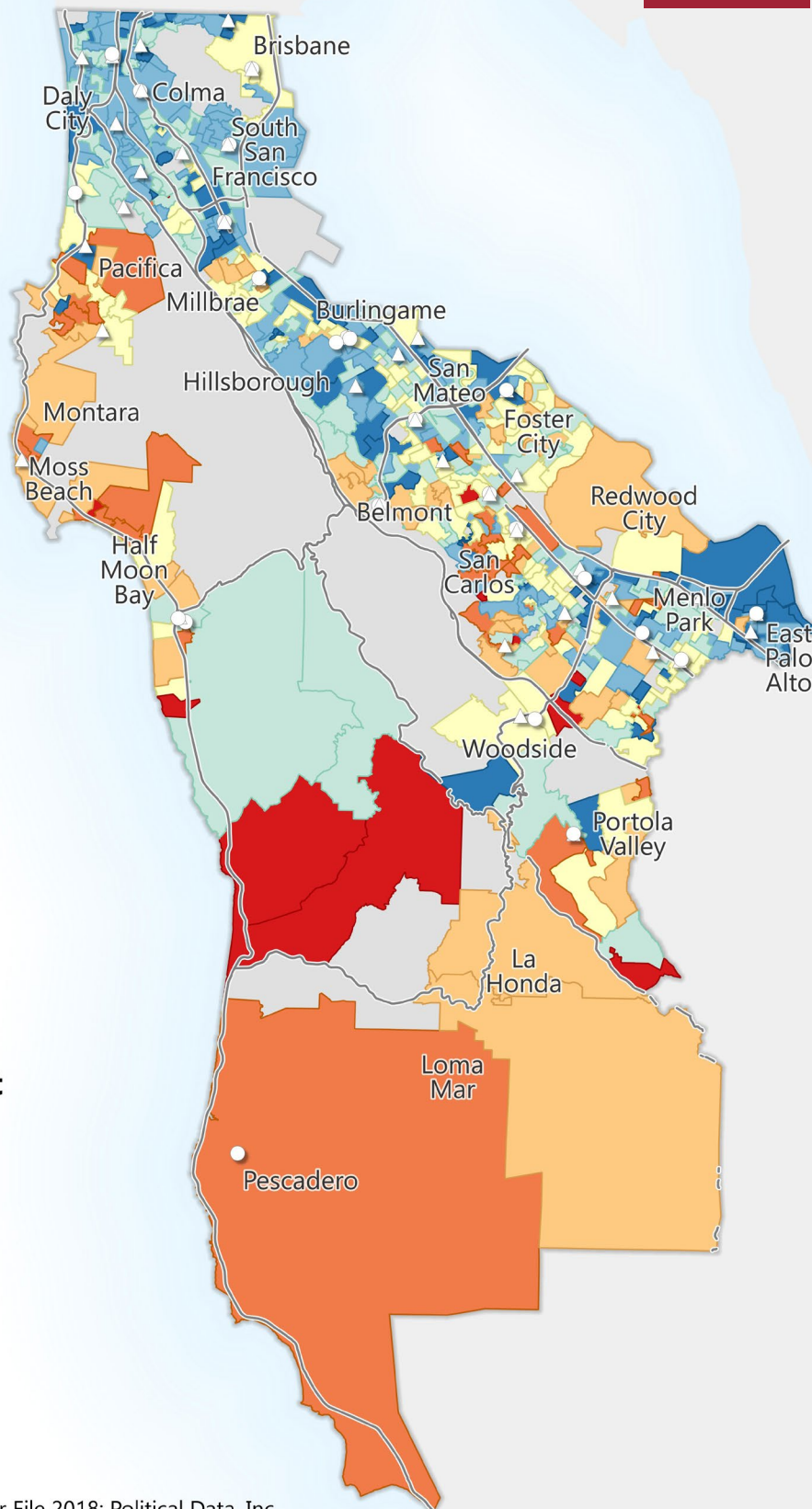
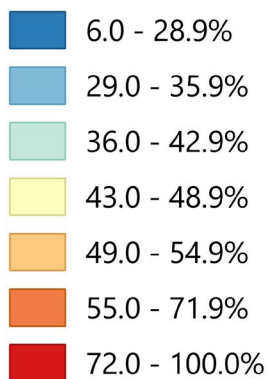
Registered Voter Turnout 2018 Primary By Precinct of Residence Asian American

FIGURE 33A

Voting Sites

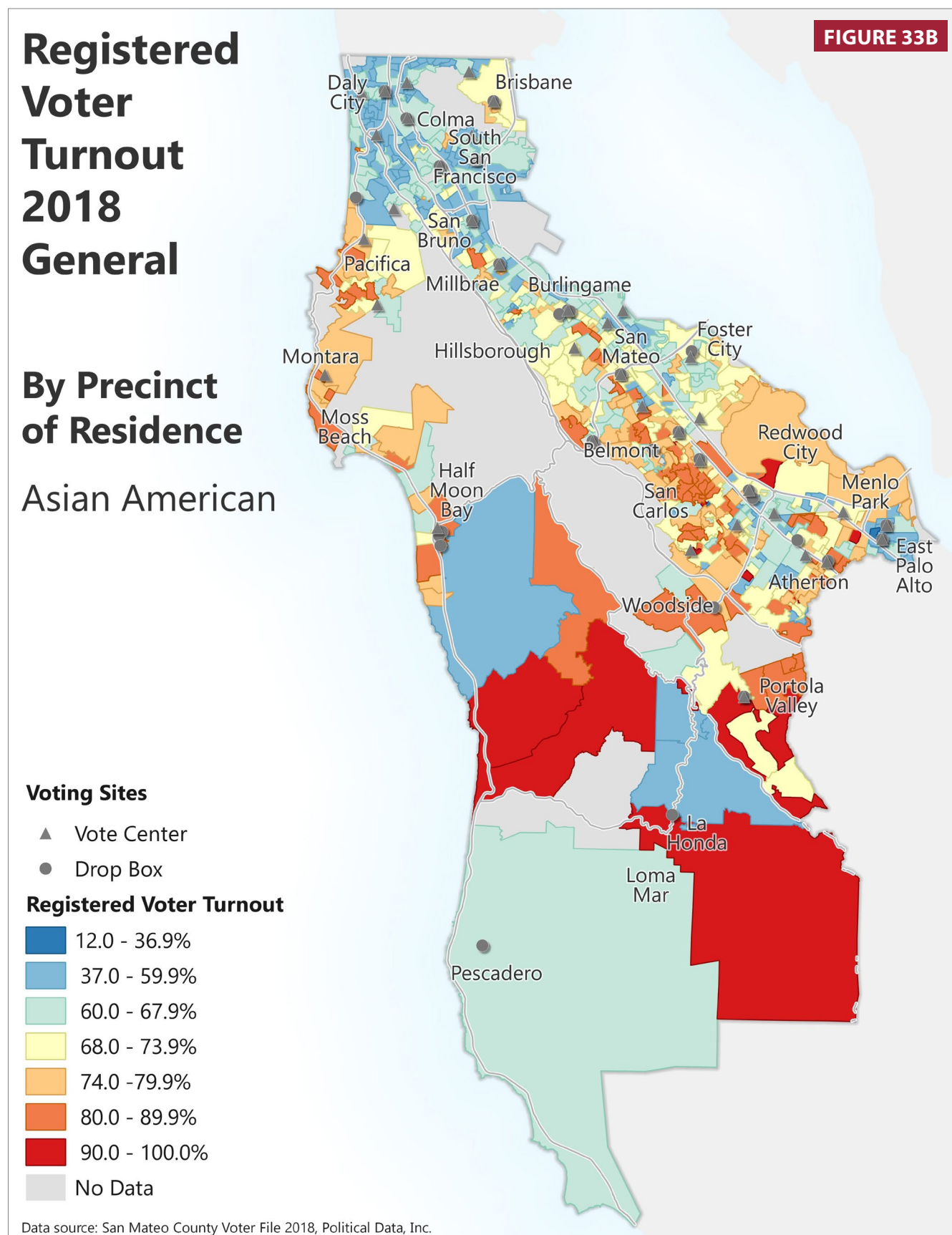
- △ Vote Center
- Drop Box

Registered Voter Turnout



Data Sources: San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

In the 2018 General, registered voter turnout for Asian Americans was 64.7%. From Figure 33B, we see clusters of precincts with generally high turnout, similar to the Primary, around Pacifica, Half Moon Bay and San Carlos. Precincts with lower registered voter turnout for Asian Americans are clustered in the northernmost region of the county—in particular around Daly City, South San Francisco and East Palo Alto.



The countywide registered voter turnout rate for Latinos was 30.5% in the Primary. Precincts with higher registered voter turnout for Latinos are clustered in Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Belmont. There are clusters of precincts with lower Latino registered voter turnout around East Palo Alto, Redwood City, San Mateo and South San Francisco.

Registered Voter Turnout 2018 Primary

By Precinct of Residence Latino

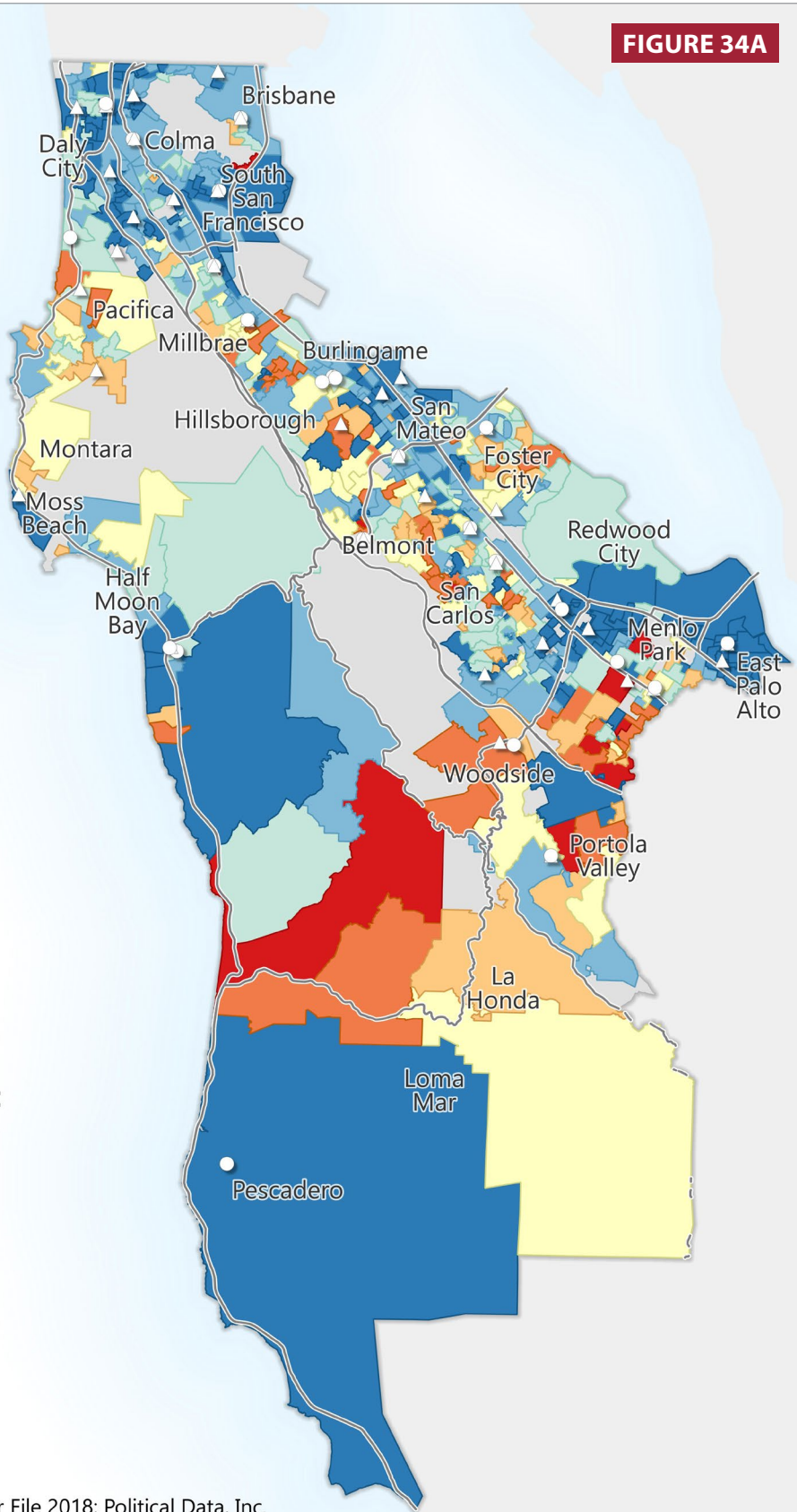
FIGURE 34A

Voting Sites

- △ Vote Center
- Drop Box

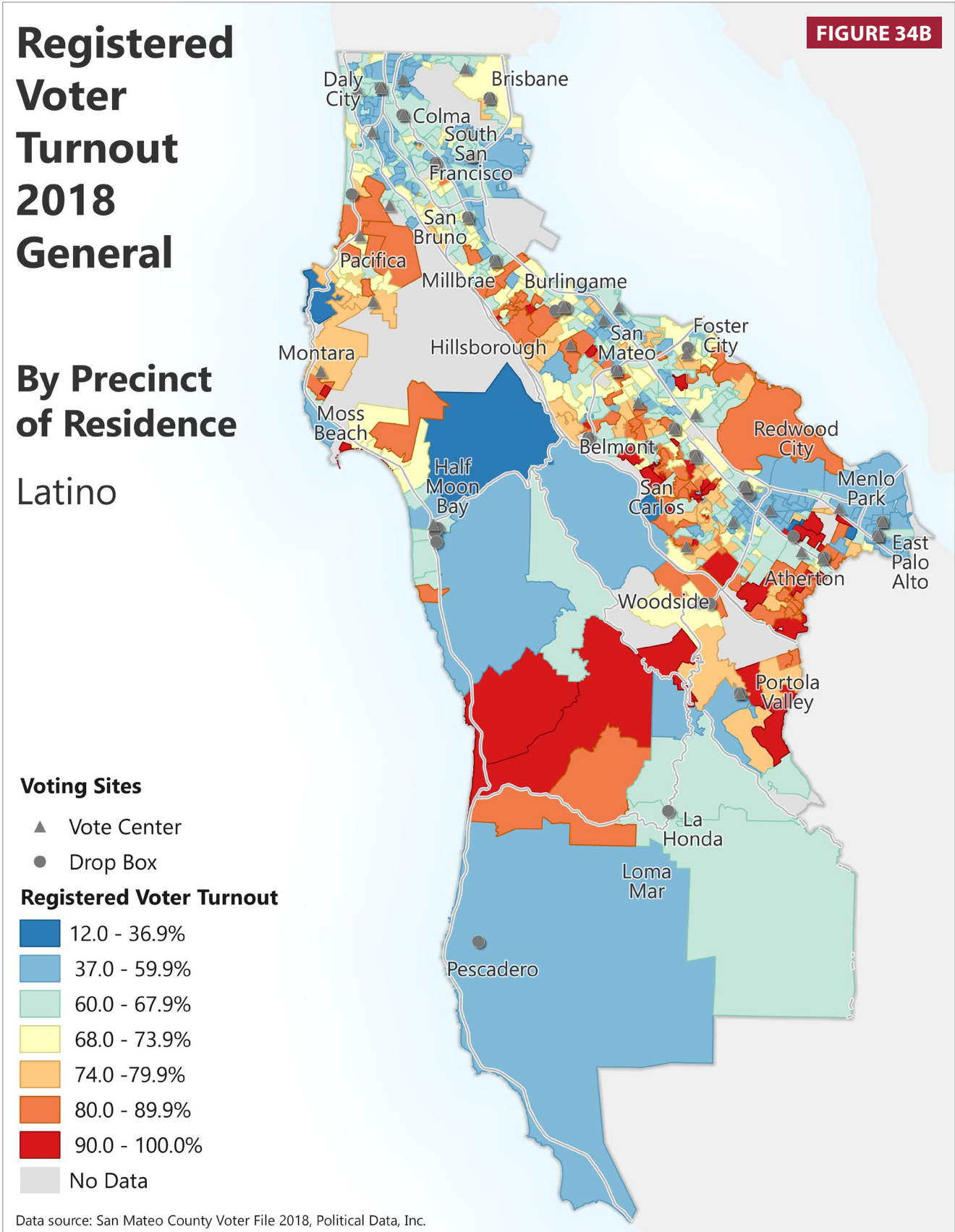
Registered Voter Turnout

- 6.0 - 28.9%
- 29.0 - 35.9%
- 36.0 - 42.9%
- 43.0 - 48.9%
- 49.0 - 54.9%
- 55.0 - 71.9%
- 72.0 - 100.0%



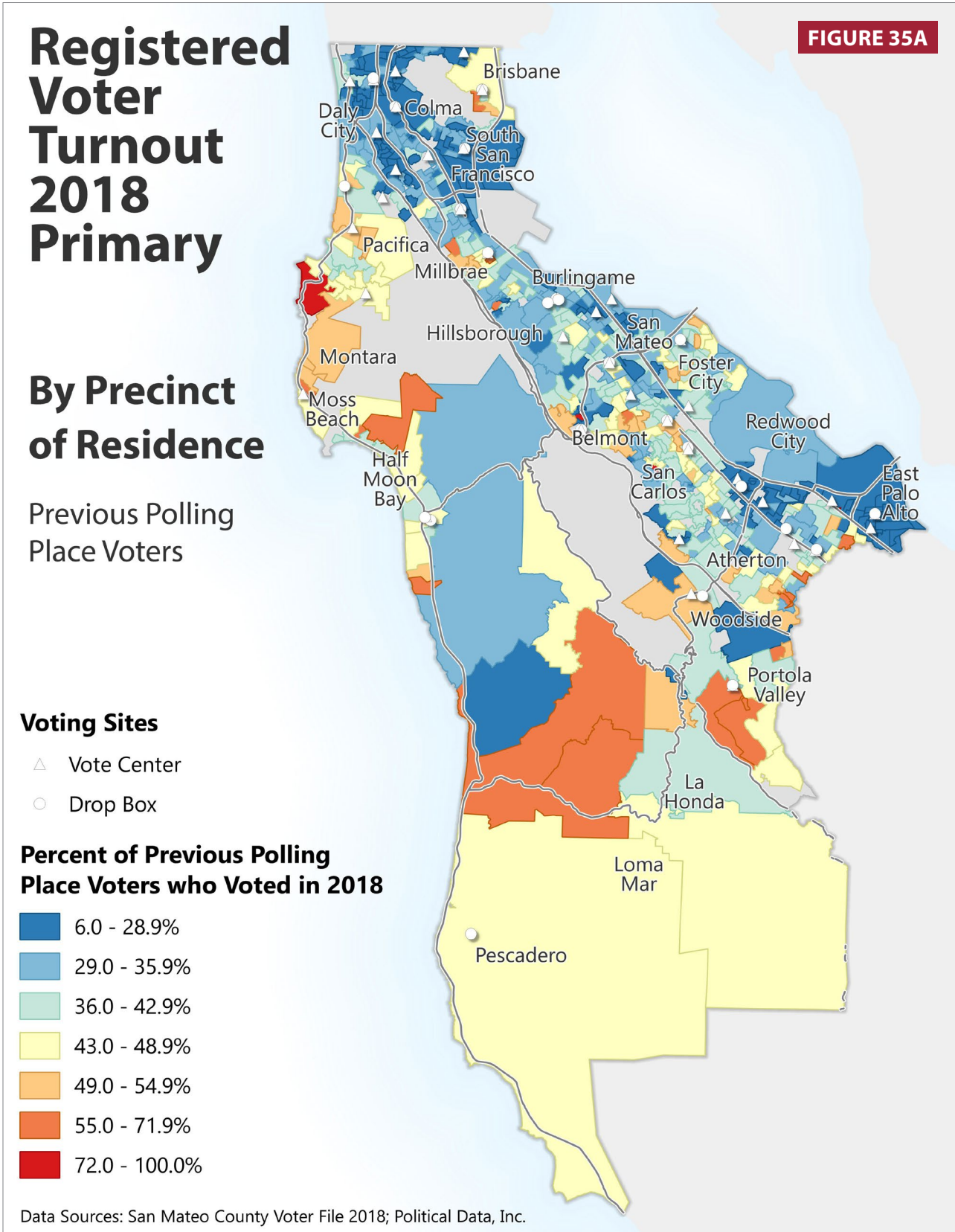
Data Sources: San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

In the 2018 General, countywide Latino registered voter turnout was 62.0%. Similar to the Primary, Figure 34B shows us that precincts with higher registered voter turnout for Latinos are clustered in Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Belmont. There are clusters of precincts with lower Latino registered voter turnout around East Palo Alto, Redwood City, San Mateo and South San Francisco.

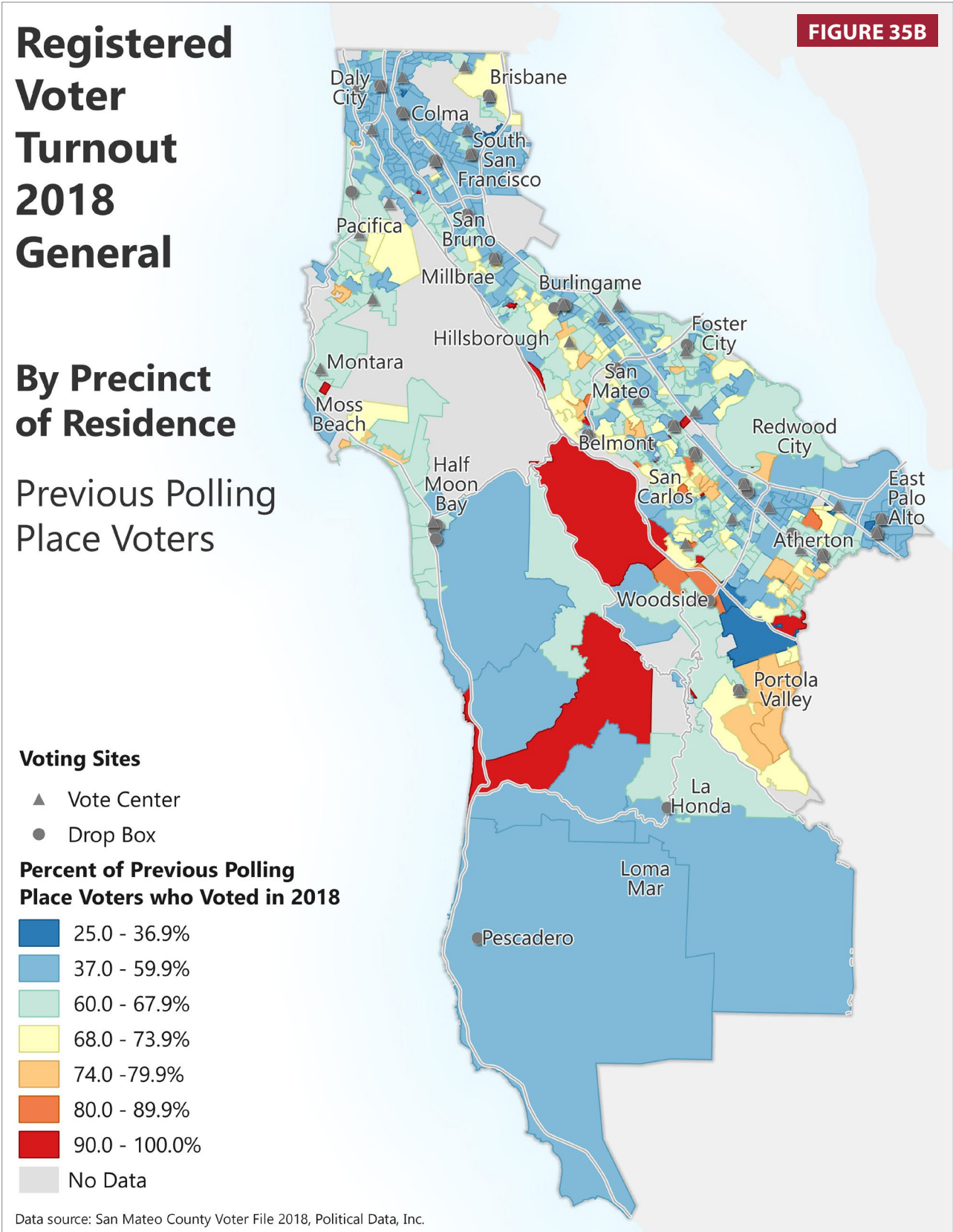


Registered Voter Turnout by Previous Polling Place Voters

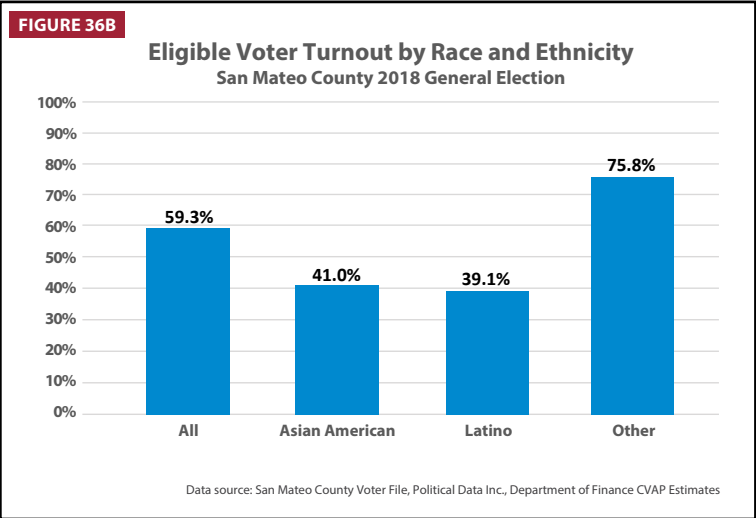
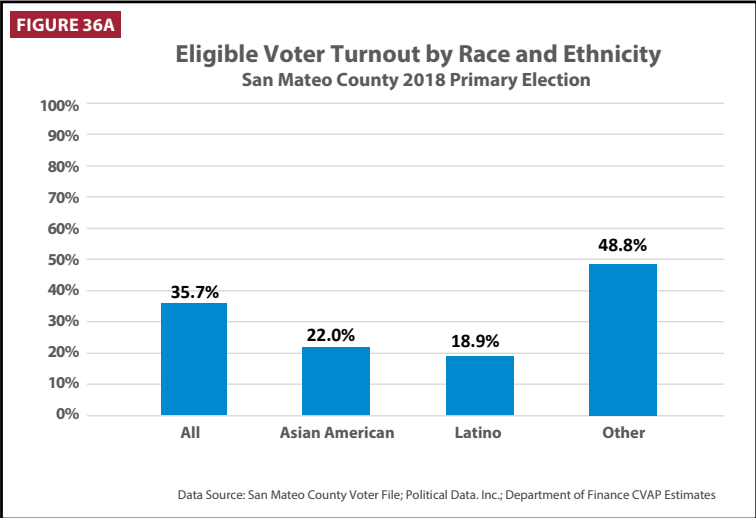
In San Mateo County, the 2018 Primary turnout of previous polling place voters was 35.3%, but turnout varied by precinct. The registered turnout of previous polling place voters was relatively high in precincts along the coast around Linda Mar, in the southern region of the county, and around Millbrae and Belmont. Low turnout of previous polling place voters was concentrated in precincts around Daly City, South San Francisco, San Mateo and East Palo Alto.



In San Mateo County, the 2018 General turnout of previous polling place voters was 58.5%, with turnout, again, varying by precinct. The registered turnout of previous polling place voters was comparatively high in precincts along the coast around Linda Mar, the southern region of the county, and around Millbrae, Belmont and Portola Valley. Low turnout of previous polling place voters was concentrated in precincts around Daly City, South San Francisco, San Mateo and East Palo Alto.



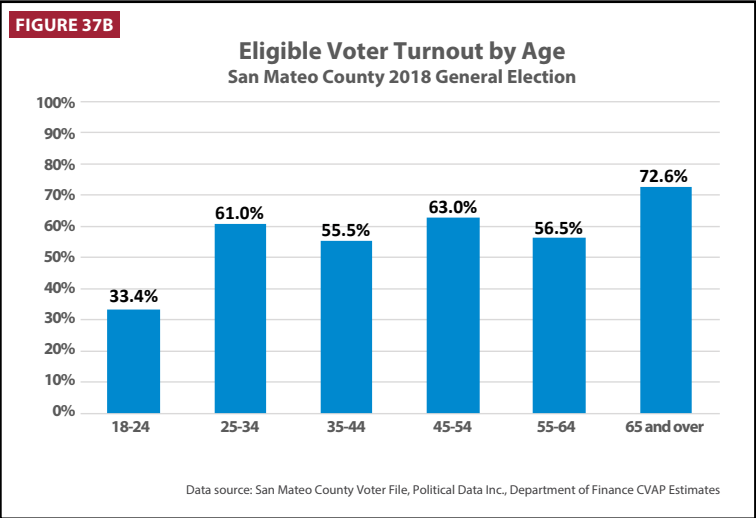
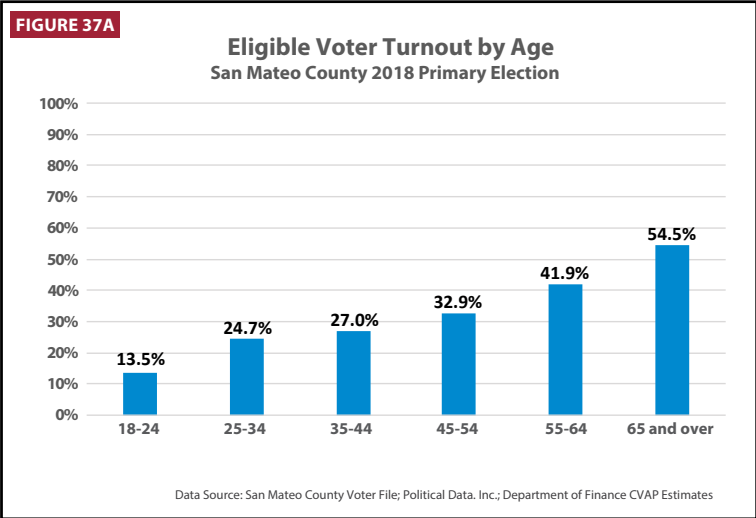
Eligible Voter Turnout by Race and Ethnicity



Disparities in voter participation are much larger when looking at eligible voter turnout rates (turnout of adult citizens) compared with registered voter turnout. This is due to disparities in existing voter registration rates (percent of adult citizens who are registered) in San Mateo County (see [Appendix A](#) for 2018 registration rates).

Nearly 36% of all eligible voters (adult citizens whether registered or not) in San Mateo County voted in the 2018 Primary. In contrast, only 18.9% of eligible Latinos voted and 22.0% of eligible Asian Americans voted in the Primary. In the 2018 General, over 59% of all eligible voters (adult citizens whether registered or not) in San Mateo County voted. In contrast, only 39.1% of eligible Latinos voted and 41.0% of eligible Asian Americans voted in the General. In both elections, the voter participation gap is even greater when comparing Latino and Asian American eligible turnout to the eligible turnout of those voters (as a group) who are non-Latino and non-Asian American.

Eligible Voter Turnout by Age



Eligible voter turnout was higher for older voters than for younger voters. In the Primary, 54.5% of eligible voters 65 years and older voted, compared to 13.5% of eligible voters 18-24 years old voted. This 40 percentage point gap is similar in the General with 72.6% of eligible voters 65 years and older who voted and 33.4% of eligible voters 18-24 years old who voted.

Eligible Voter Turnout by Census Tract of Residence

In order to examine the geographic variation of eligible voter turnout in San Mateo County, we calculated eligible voter turnout at the census tract level. We used American Community Service 5-Year Estimates (2012-2016) for the citizen voting-age population (CVAP), and assigned voters to census tracts using the geographic coordinates of their home address.

In the Primary, comparably higher eligible voter turnout for the total population occurred in areas around Portola Valley, Atherton and San Carlos, and lower eligible voter turnout in East Palo Alto, Daly City and South San Francisco.

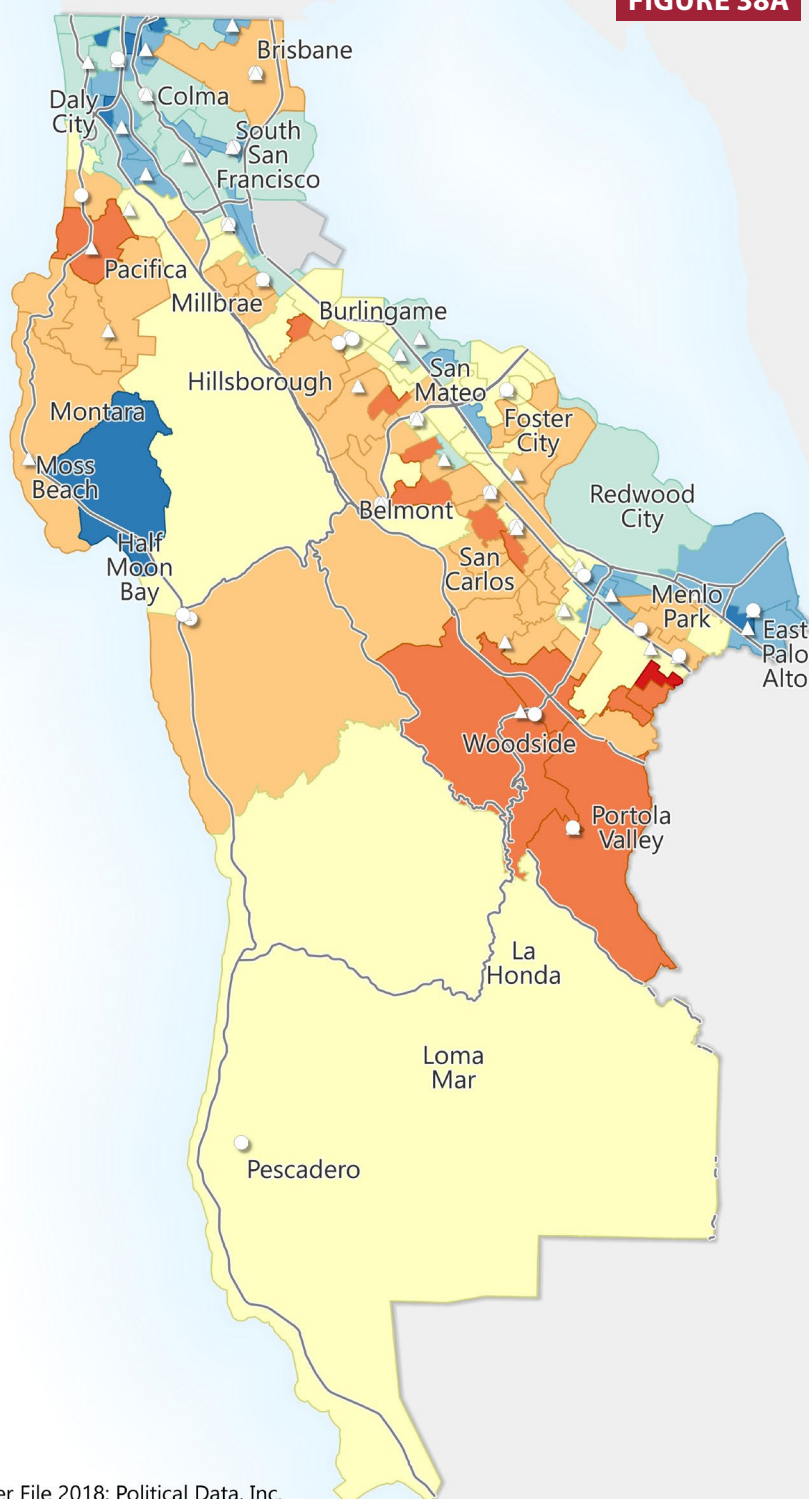
Eligible Voter Turnout 2018 Primary By Census Tract of Residence Total Population

FIGURE 38A

Voting Sites

- △ Vote Center
- Drop Box

Eligible Voter Turnout



Data Sources: San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

In the General, higher eligible voter turnout for the total population also occurred in areas around Portola Valley, Atherton and San Carlos, and lower eligible voter turnout in East Palo Alto, Daly City and South San Francisco.

Eligible Voter Turnout 2018 General

FIGURE 38B

By Census Tract of Residence

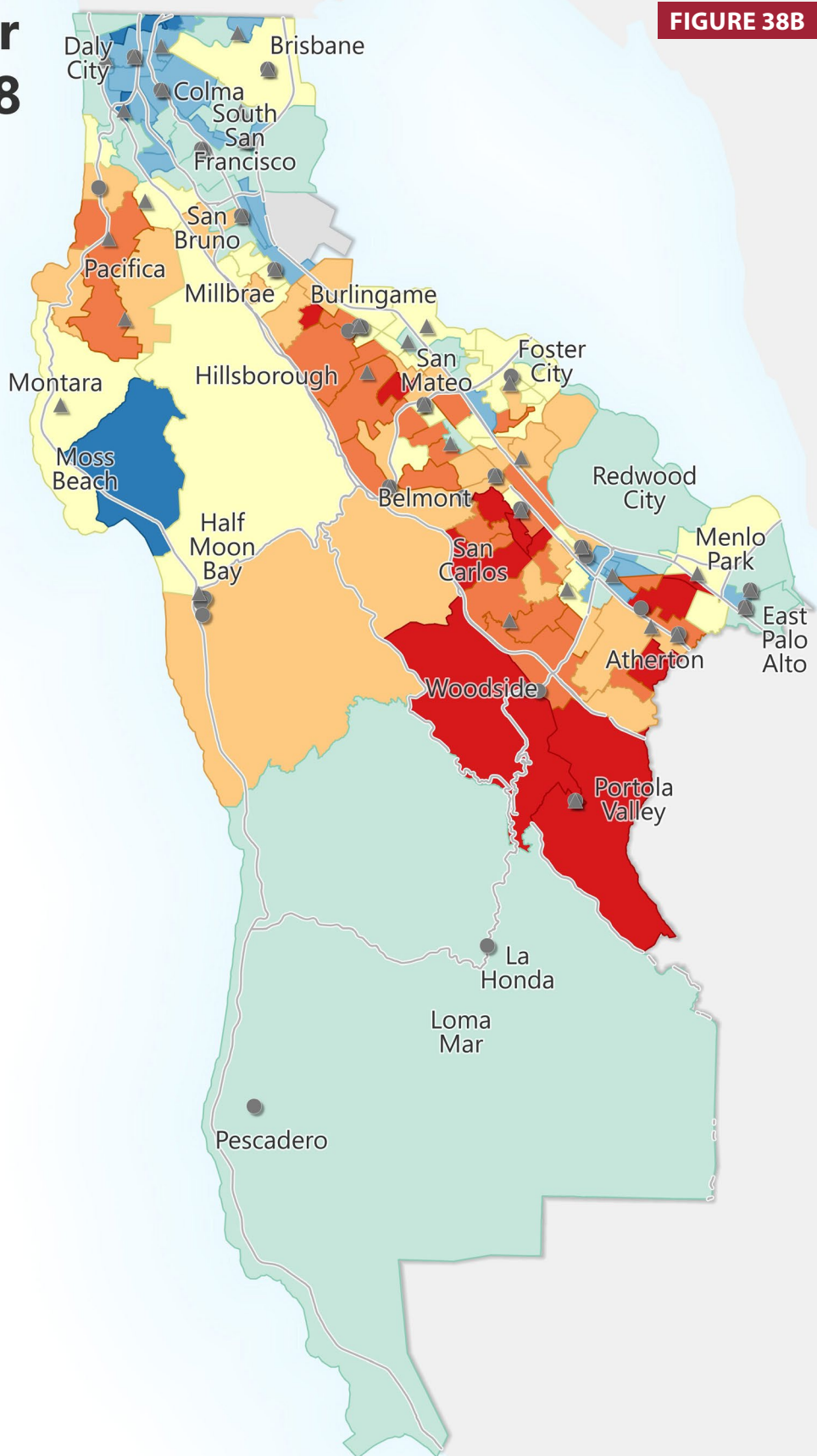
Total Population

Voting Sites

- ▲ Vote Center
- Drop Box

Eligible Voter Turnout

- 4.0 - 29.9%
- 30.0 - 42.9%
- 43.0 - 51.9%
- 52.0 - 60.9%
- 61.0 - 68.9%
- 69.0 - 76.9%
- 77.0 - 95.9%
- No Data



Data source: American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-Year CVAP Estimates; San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

Looking at eligible voter turnout for Asian Americans in the 2018 Primary, we see census tracts with higher turnout around Woodside and Menlo Park, and tracts with lower turnout around Daly City, Colma and South San Francisco.

FIGURE 39A

Eligible Voter Turnout 2018 Primary

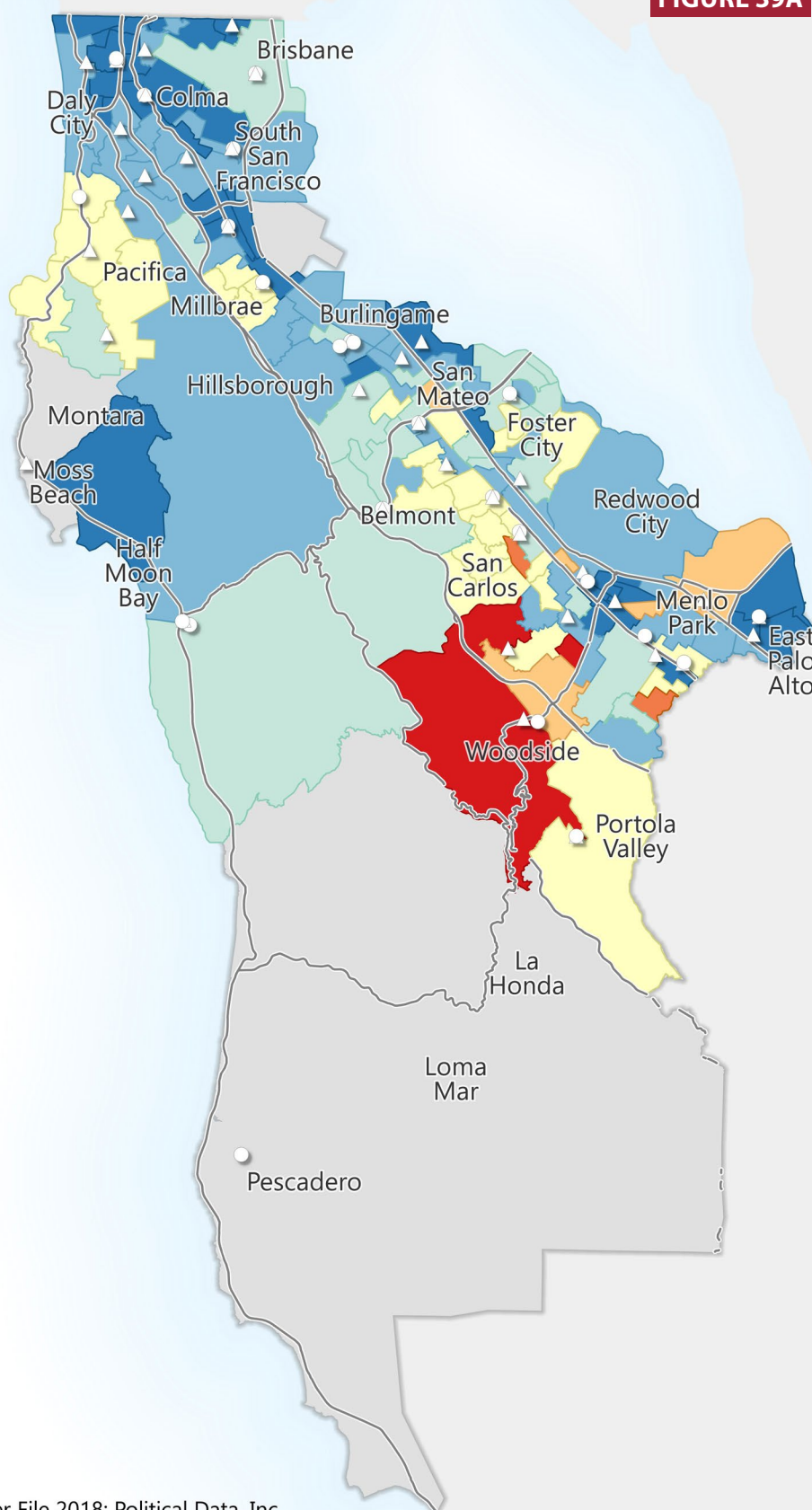
By Census Tract of Residence

Asian American

Voting Sites

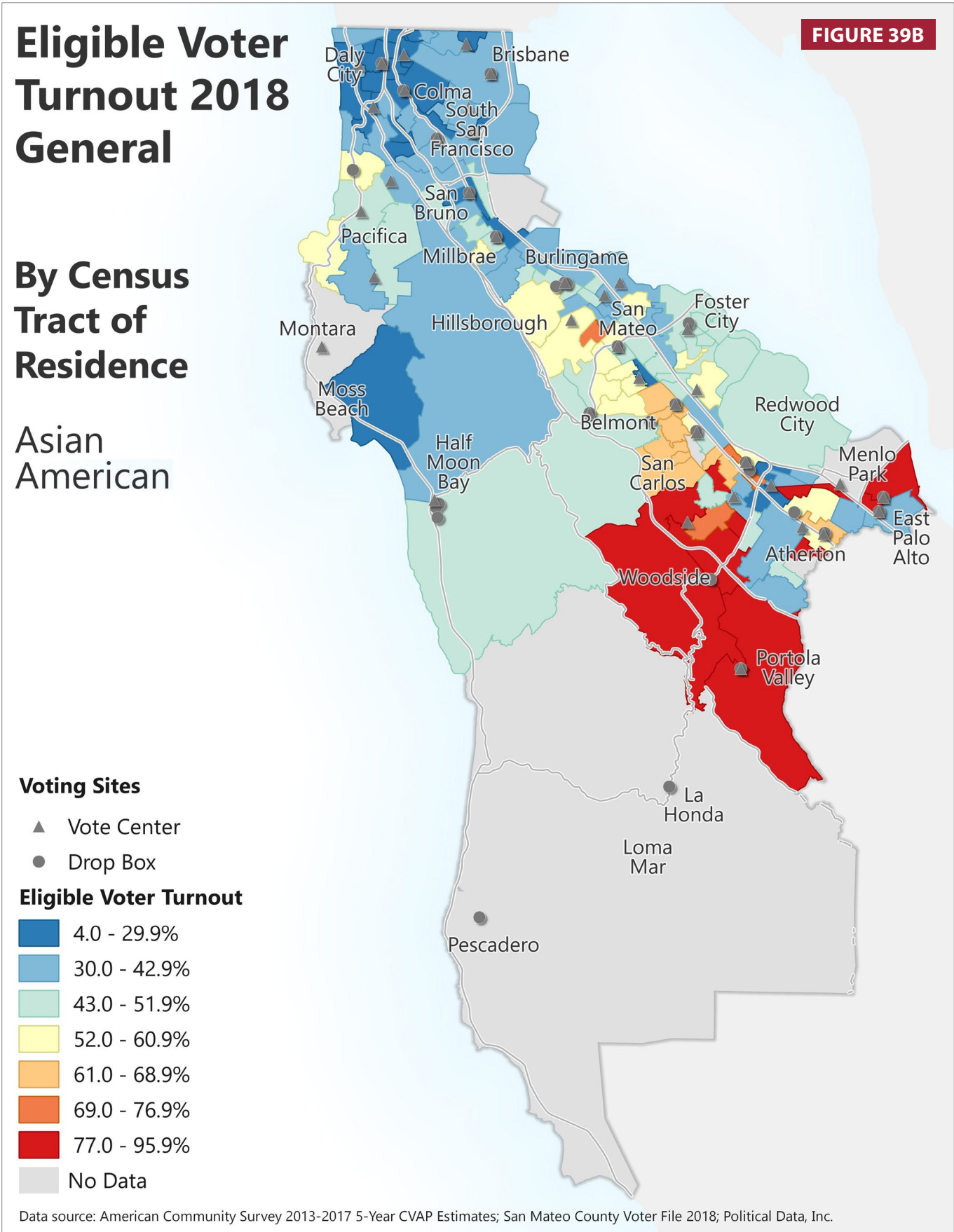
- △ Vote Center
- Drop Box

Eligible Voter Turnout



Data Sources: San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

In the 2018 General, higher eligible voter turnout for Asian Americans, like with the Primary, was clustered around Woodside and Menlo Park (although data was not available for one Menlo Park census tract), and tracts with lower turnout were also around Daly City, Colma and South San Francisco.



Eligible voter turnout for Latinos in the 2018 Primary was relatively higher in the southern region of San Mateo County; there were also clusters of census tracts around Foster City and San Carlos with higher eligible voter turnout. Census tracts with lower eligible voter turnout were found around East Palo Alto, Redwood City and Daly City.

Eligible Voter Turnout 2018 Primary By Census Tract of Residence Latino

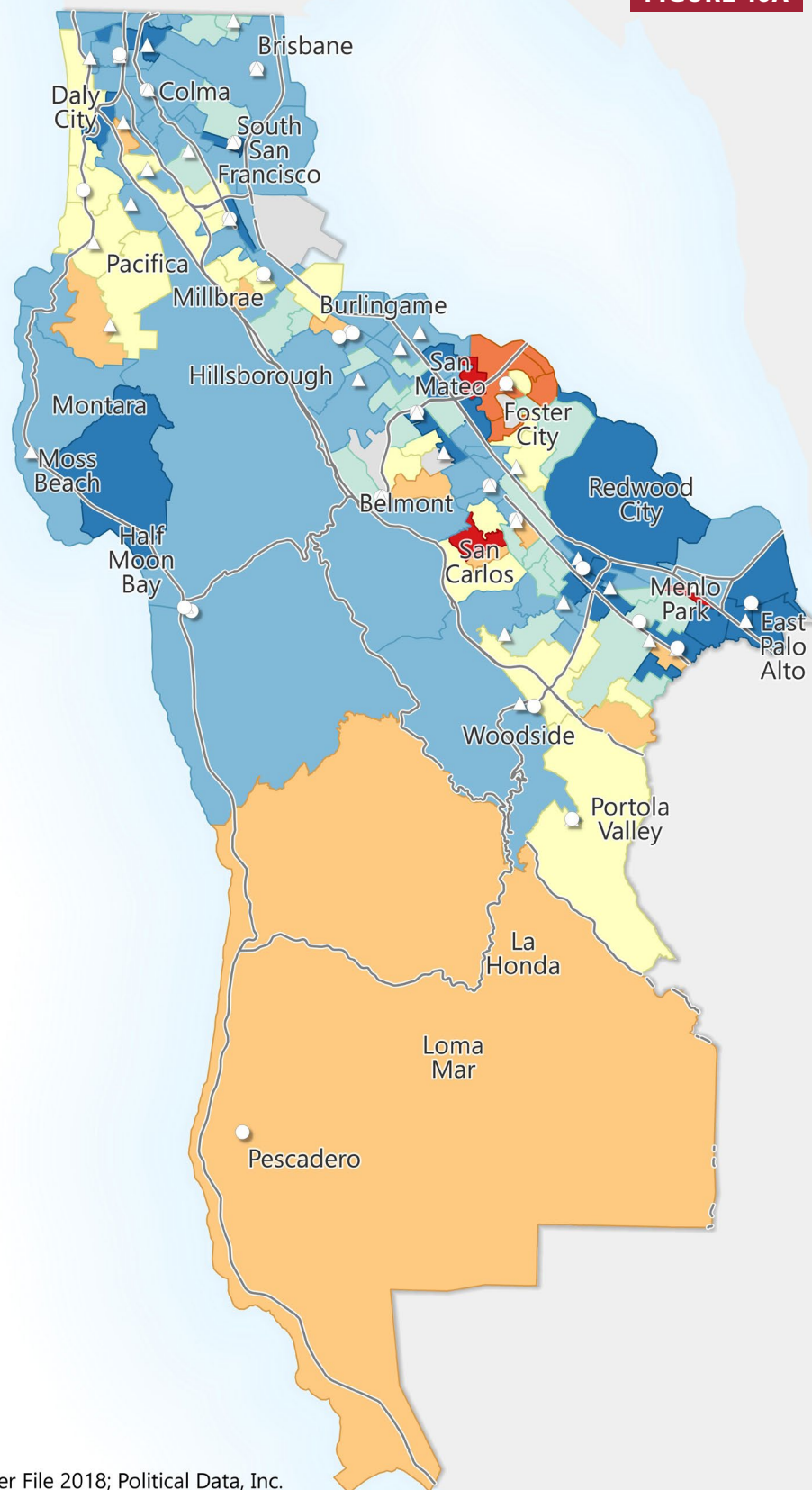
FIGURE 40A

Voting Sites

- △ Vote Center
- Drop Box

Eligible Voter Turnout

- 3.00 - 16.99%
- 17.00 - 24.99%
- 25.00 - 29.99%
- 30.00 - 39.99%
- 40.00 - 49.99%
- 50.00 - 59.99%
- 60.00 - 76.00%



Data Sources: San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

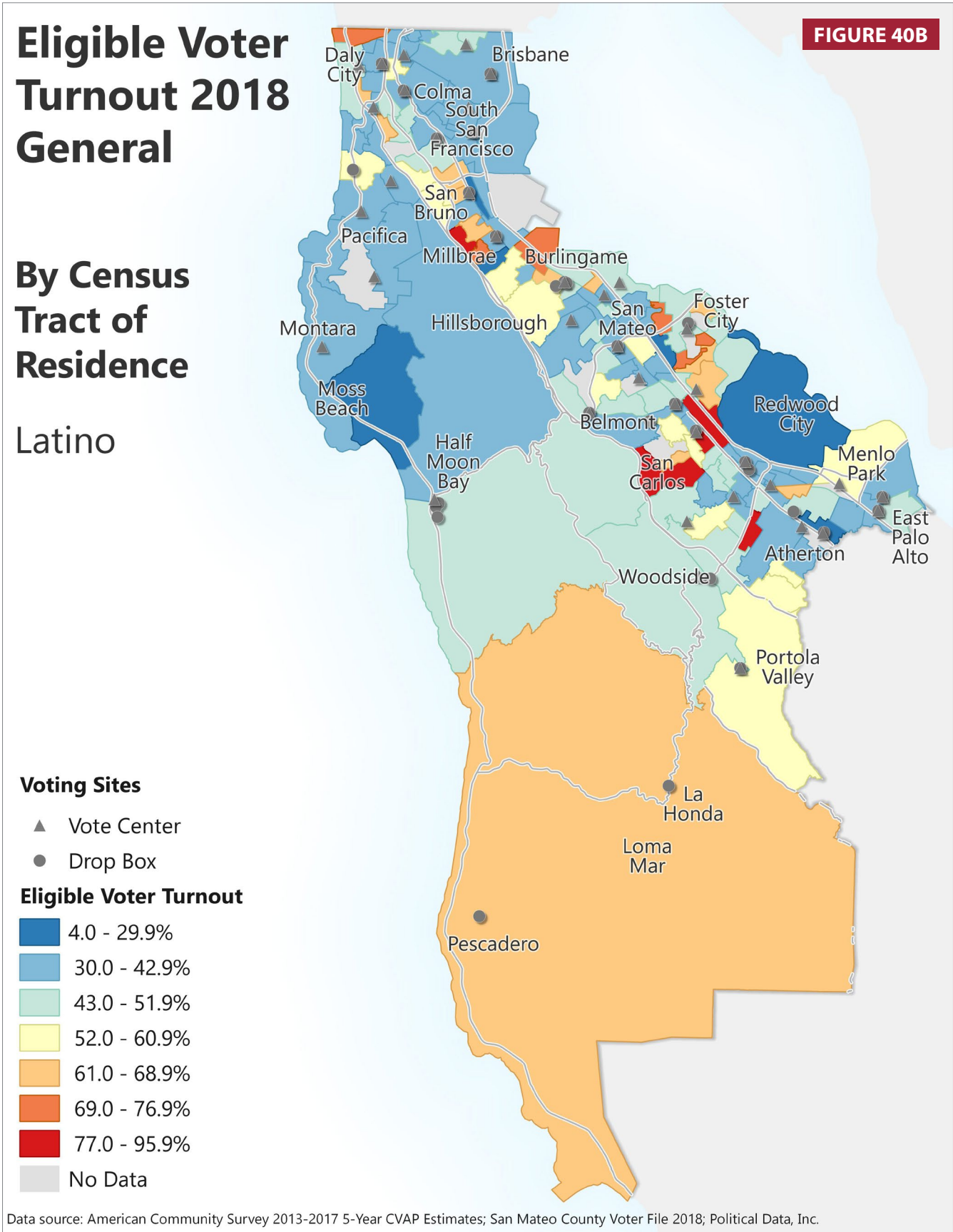
In the 2018 General, eligible voter turnout for Latinos was also relatively higher in the southern region of the county. There were also clusters of census tracts around Foster City and San Carlos with higher eligible voter turnout and census tracts with lower eligible voter turnout were found around East Palo Alto, Redwood City and Daly City.

Eligible Voter Turnout 2018 General

By Census Tract of Residence

Latino

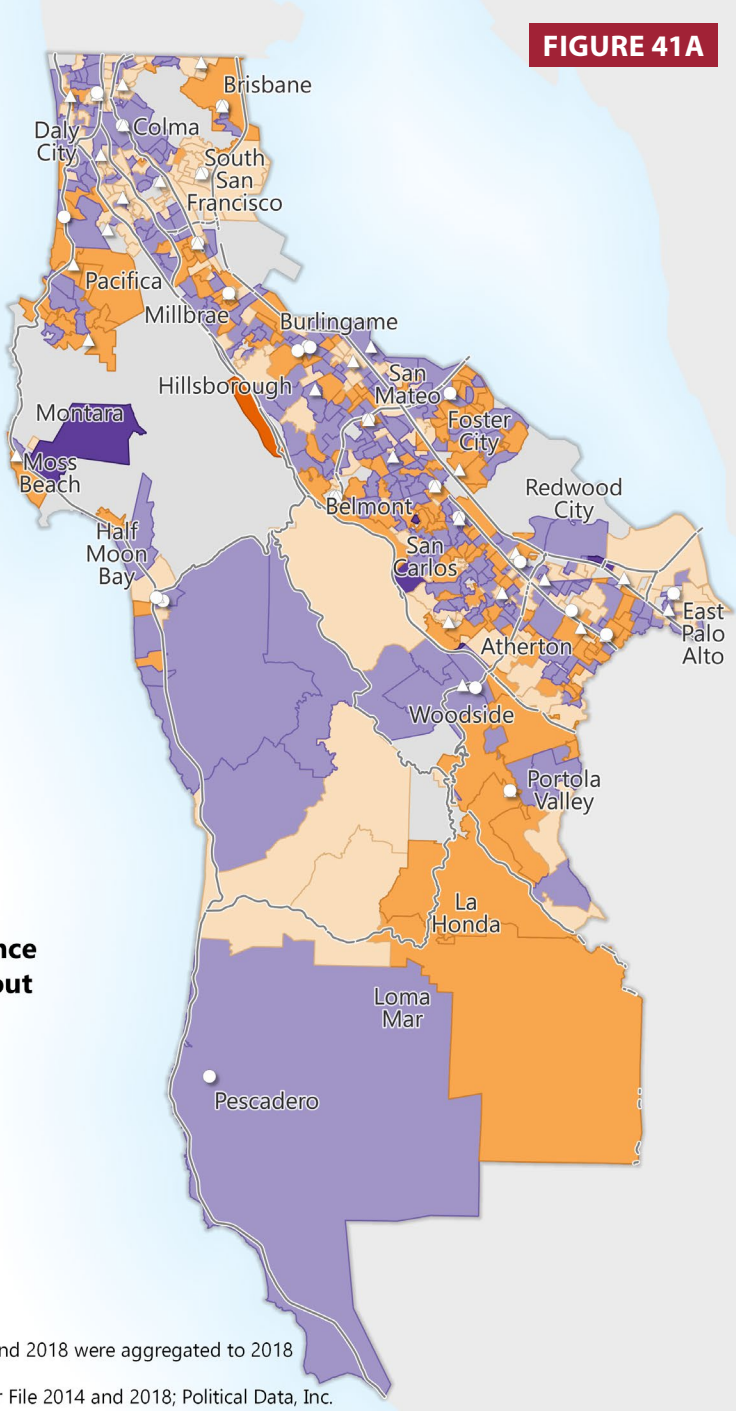
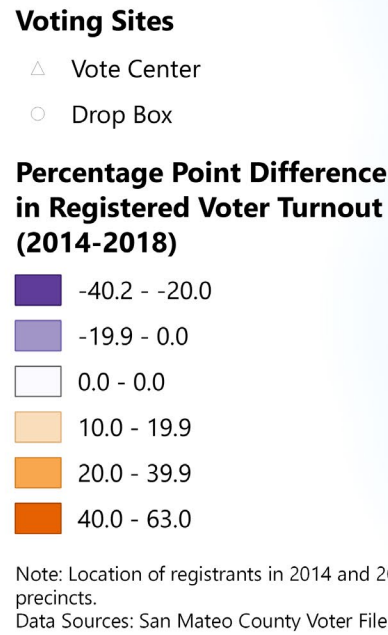
FIGURE 40B



Data source: American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-Year CVAP Estimates; San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.

Change in Registered Voter Turnout: 2014 Compared to 2018

Change in Registered Voter Turnout from 2014 to 2018 Primary By Precinct of Residence



As stated previously in this report, the registered voter turnout of San Mateo County in the 2014 Primary Election (the most recent midterm primary election) was 27.5%, nearly 17 percentage points lower than the registered voter turnout of the 2018 Primary Election (44.3%). While 2018 turnout in both California and San Mateo County was the highest since 1998 for a midterm primary, within San Mateo County, the degree to which turnout increased varied by community. In this section, we examine the variation in the change in registered voter turnout across San Mateo County from the 2014 Primary Election.

We calculated the registered voter turnout in 2014 and 2018 by precinct, using the 2018 precinct boundaries in San Mateo County. Because precinct boundaries frequently change from year to year, we used the coordinates of the registrant’s home address to assign the location of the registrant in 2014 to boundaries of 2018 precincts, so that we could compare precinct turnout across years.

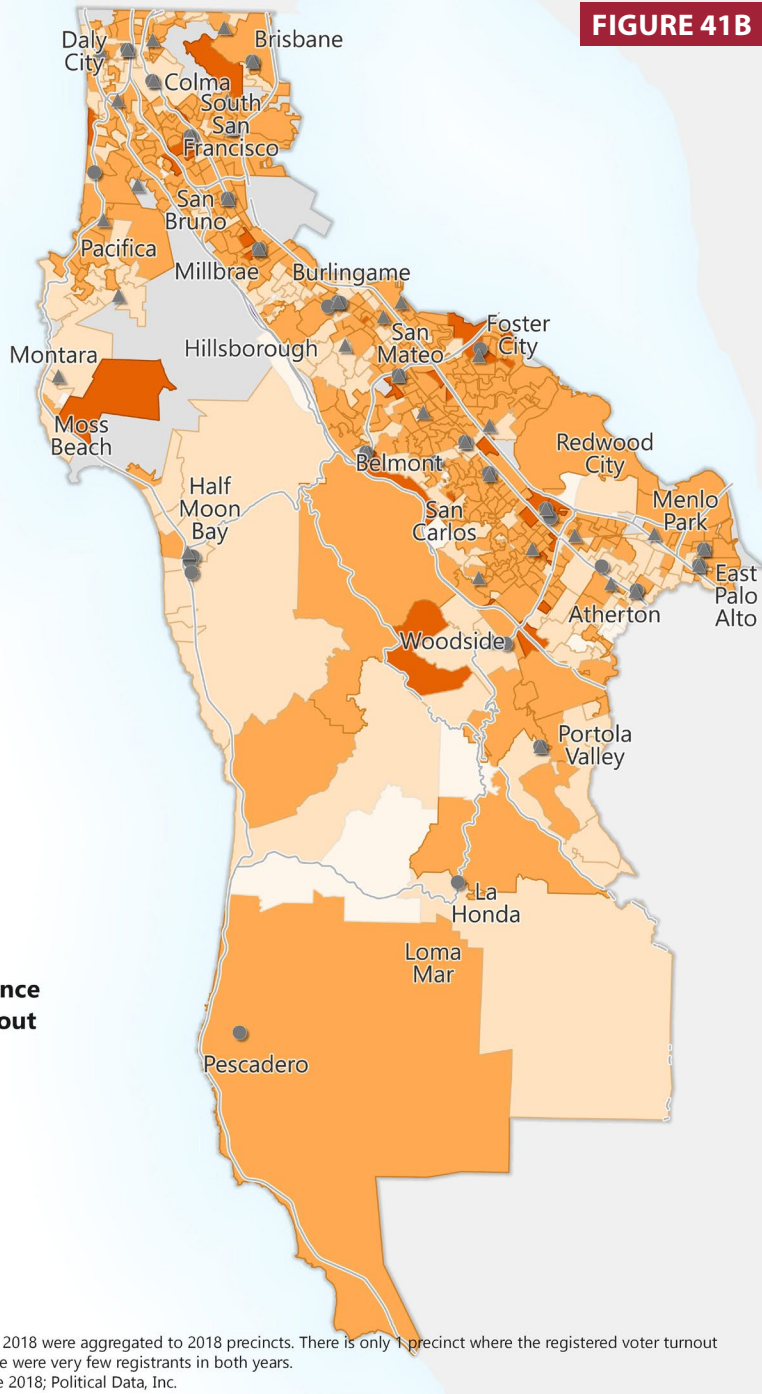
Figure 41A shows that while overall turnout for the county increased nearly 17 percentage points from 2014 to 2018, there were many precincts in which turnout decreased substantially. Figure 41A also shows that there

were many precincts in which turnout increased by more than 20 percentage points, higher than the increase of the overall county.

Note: There are several precincts that are outliers in the Primary data. Some precincts experienced substantial residential development from 2014 to 2018, and so the dramatic increase in turnout—while accurate according to the data—is coming from a very different baseline of voters. In this analysis, geocoding errors for voter residences are also a possibility, potentially assigning voters to neighboring tracts incorrectly. This could cause the appearance of a loss or gain in voters and/or voter turnout.

Change in Registered Voter Turnout from 2014 to 2018 General By Precinct of Residence

FIGURE 41B

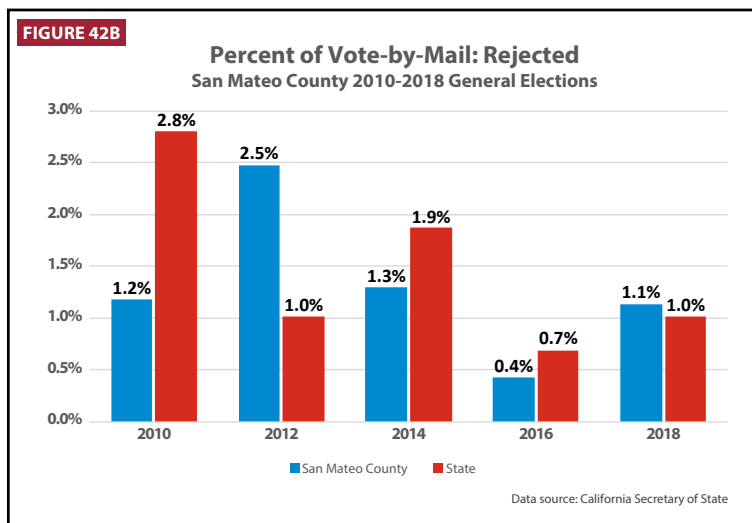
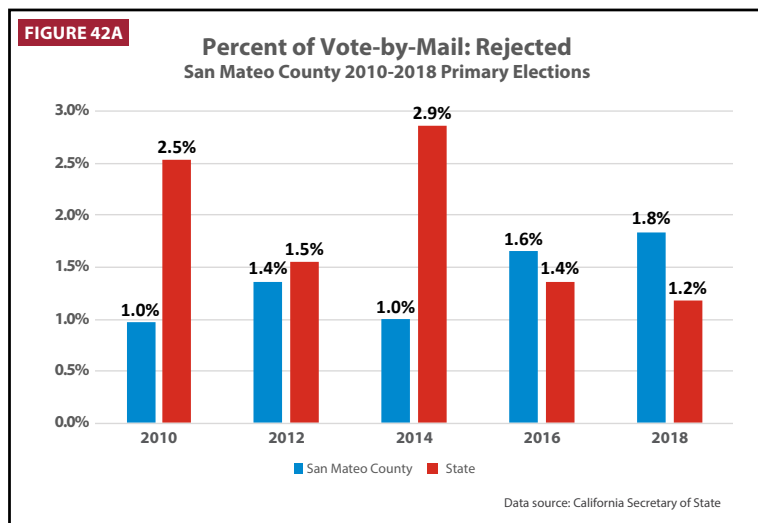


The overall registered turnout for San Mateo County increased over 26 percentage points from 2014 to 2018 General Elections. Figure 41B shows that there were many precincts in which turnout increased by more than 25 percentage points, higher than the increase of the overall county. At the same time, we also see that there were a few precincts in which turnout decreased.

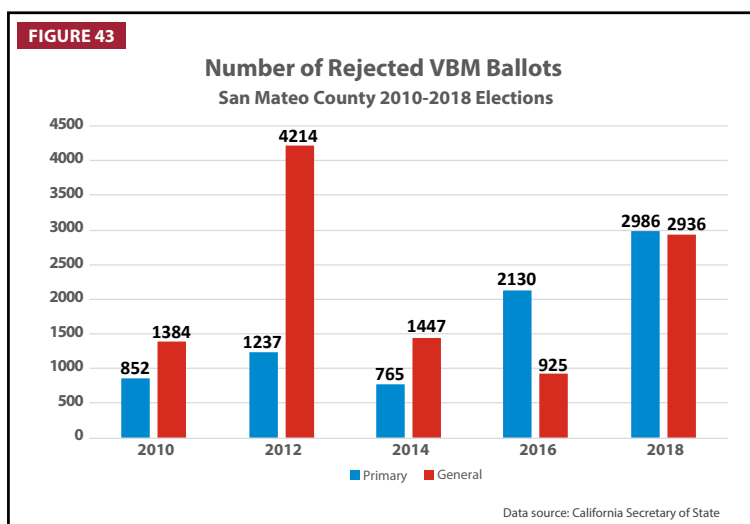
Note: As with the Primary, there are several precincts that are outliers in the General Election data. Some precincts experienced substantial residential development from 2014 to 2018, and so the dramatic increase in turnout—while accurate according to the data—is coming from a very different baseline of voters. In this analysis, geocoding errors for voter residences are also a possibility, potentially assigning voters to neighboring tracts incorrectly. This could cause the appearance of a loss or gain in voters and/or voter turnout.

3. What were the Vote-by-Mail rejection rates in the 2018 Election Cycle, and what were the reasons for these ballot rejections?

In this section, we examine the VBM ballot rejection rates (percent of cast VBM ballots that were rejected and uncounted) for the 2018 Primary and General Elections in San Mateo County. This includes all VBM ballots that were returned through the mail, dropped off at a Ballot Drop Box Location or dropped off at a Vote Center. According to the California Secretary of State's office, San Mateo County's VBM rejection rate in the 2018 Primary was 1.8% compared to the state's overall rejection rate of 1.2% (see Figure 42A). In the 2018 General Election, San Mateo County's reported rejection rate was 1.1% versus 1.0% for the state, respectively (see Figure 42B). Historically, San Mateo County has experienced lower rejection rates than the state in primary and general elections.

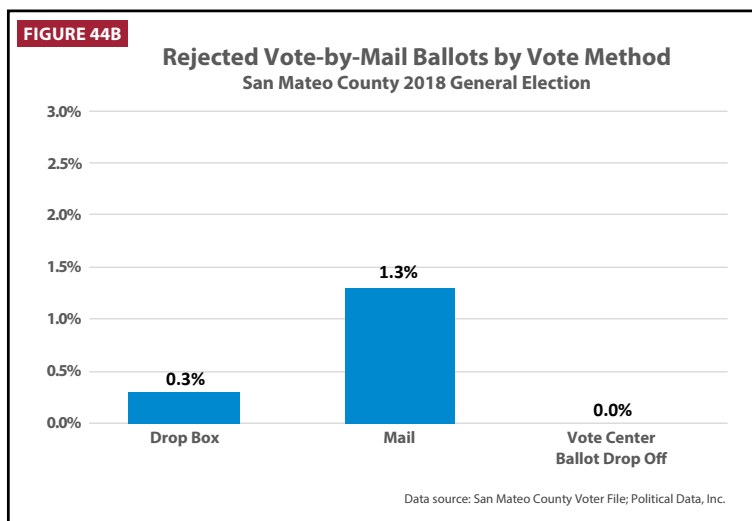
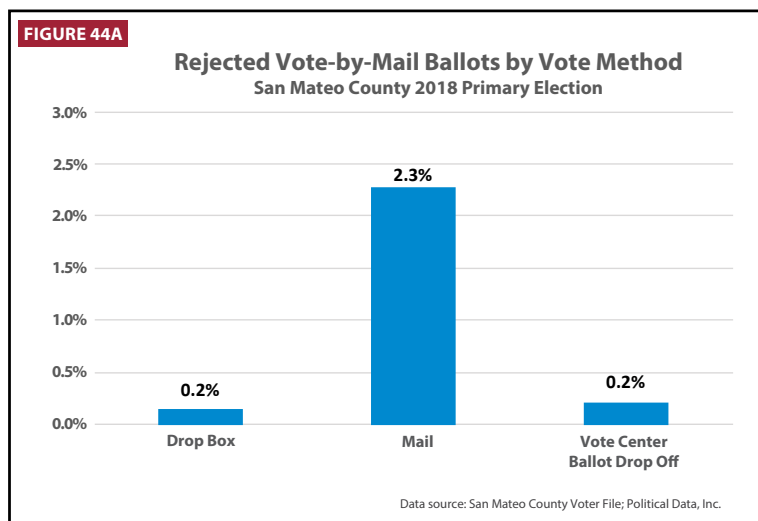


San Mateo County's VBM rejection rates in both the 2018 Primary and General Elections did not vary greatly from recent elections. However, the actual number of rejected ballots was considerably higher in the 2018 Primary and General Elections than all other elections over the last decade (2010 is the earliest election where reliable data is available), with the exception of the 2012 General Election (see [Appendix A](#) online for rejection rates by county). This is due to the larger number of VBM ballots cast in the 2018 Election Cycle.²² San Mateo County's rejected ballots in the 2018 Primary rose by 40% from the 2016 Primary. In the 2018 General, the increase in rejected ballots was 217% over the 2016 General (see Figure 43).



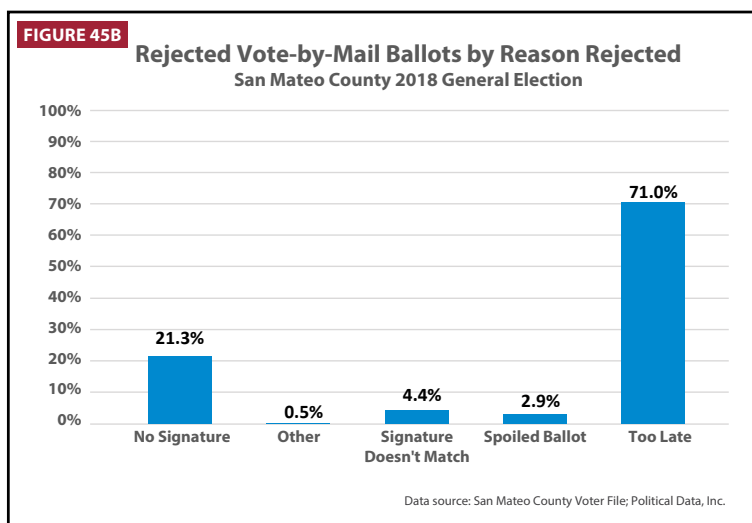
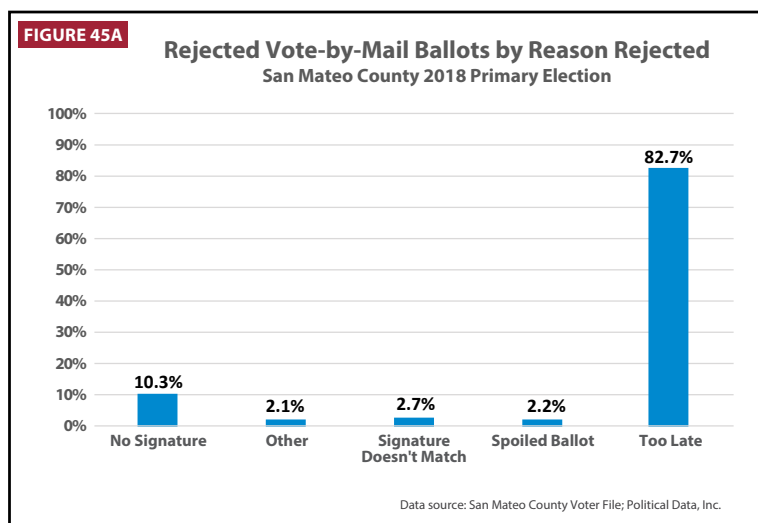
In the following section, we break down the county's VBM rejection rate by voter demographic group to identify the variation in the likelihood of ballot rejection. Due to the difference in data sources, rejection rates we report for the County's total voter population in the 2018 General Election vary slightly (0.2 percentage point) from those reported by the California Secretary of State's office.

VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Vote Method



Our analysis found that 1.8% of all VBM ballots were rejected in the San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election and 0.9% of all VBM ballots in the San Mateo County 2018 General were rejected. Breaking out the analysis by voting method, we see substantial differences in the likelihood of rejection. In both the Primary and General, less than one percent of VBM ballots dropped off at a Ballot Drop Box Location or Vote Center were rejected compared to 2.3% and 1.3% of all VBM ballots returned through the mail rejected in the Primary and General, respectively. Note: In November, only one VBM ballot dropped off at a Vote Center was rejected. This low number may be due, in part, to actions taken by the county. In November, the county elections office added curbside ballot drop-off at Vote Centers and trained staff to ask voters if they signed their VBM envelopes.

VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Reason Rejected



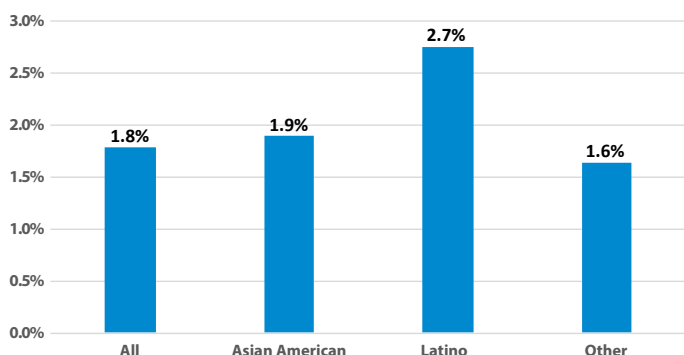
In the Primary, out of all 2,883 rejected VBM ballots (whether mailed, dropped off at a Ballot Drop Box Location or Vote Center) we included in our analysis, 82.7% (2,383 ballots) were rejected because they were received too late—arriving more than three days after the election (the statutory limit when postmarked by Election Day). Just over 10% (298) of rejected VBM ballots did not have a signature, and 2.7% (78) were rejected due to non-matching signatures. Of the 1,353 ballots challenged for reasons that could be cured (no signature, non-matching signature, soiled and ID required), 805 had their challenges resolved by voters and counted in the official Primary Election results.

In the General, out of all 2,615 rejected VBM ballots we included in our analysis, 71.0% (1,856 ballots) were rejected because they were cast too late (arriving more than 3 days after Election Day). Just over 21% (556) of rejected VBM ballots did not have a signature, and 4.4% (114) were rejected due to non-matching signatures. Of the 2,411 ballots challenged for reasons that could be cured (no signature, non-matching signature, soiled and ID required), 1,603 of those ballots were corrected by voters and counted in the official General Election results (see [Appendix A](#) online for detailed rejection reasons by voter group for the Primary and General Elections).

VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Race and Ethnicity

FIGURE 46A

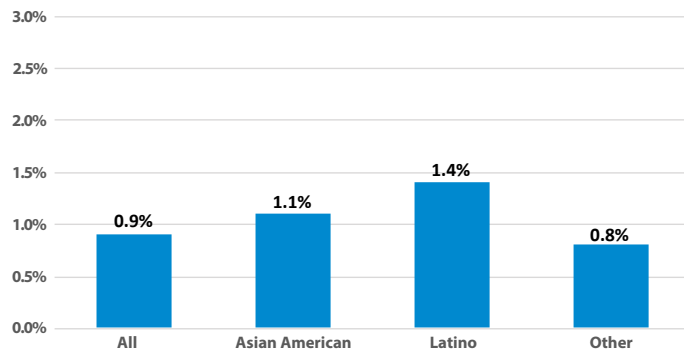
Rejected Vote-by-Mail Ballots by Race and Ethnicity of Voter
San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election



Data source: San Mateo County Voter File; Political Data, Inc.

FIGURE 46B

Rejected Vote-by-Mail Ballots by Race and Ethnicity of Voter
San Mateo County 2018 General Election



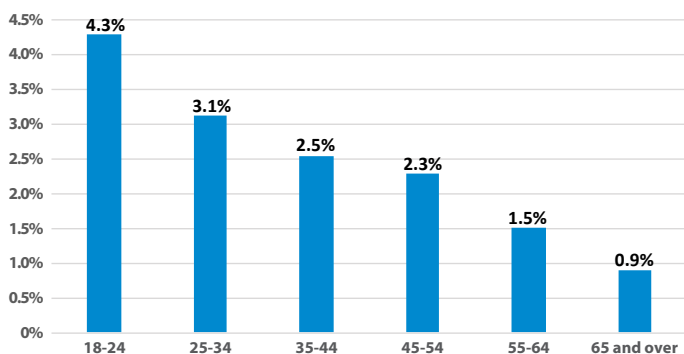
Data source: San Mateo County Voter File; Political Data, Inc.

Latino VBM voters experienced the highest VBM ballot rejection rate of the racial or ethnic groups examined. In the Primary, 2.7% of Latino VBM ballots were rejected (see Figure 46A) and in the General, 1.4% of Latino VBM ballots were rejected (see Figure 46B). These rejection rates for Latinos are higher than the overall VBM rejection rates for the general voter population in the Primary and the General Elections (see methodology for merged voter file described earlier). Asian Americans also experienced a slightly higher VBM rejection rate than the general voter population at 1.9% in the Primary and 1.1% in the General.²³

VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Age

FIGURE 47A

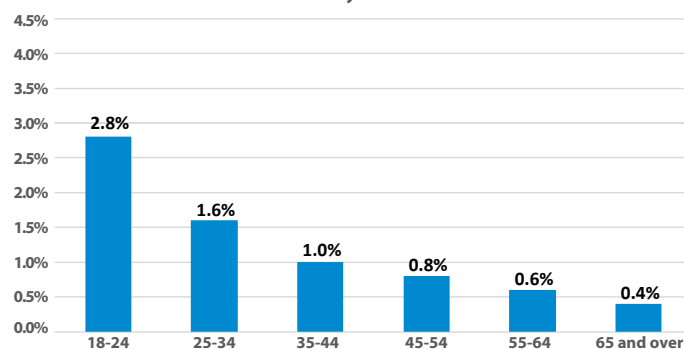
Rejected Vote-by-Mail Ballots by Age of Voter
San Mateo County 2018 Primary Election



Data source: San Mateo County Voter File; Political Data, Inc.

FIGURE 47B

Rejected Vote-by-Mail Ballots by Age of Voter
San Mateo County 2018 General Election

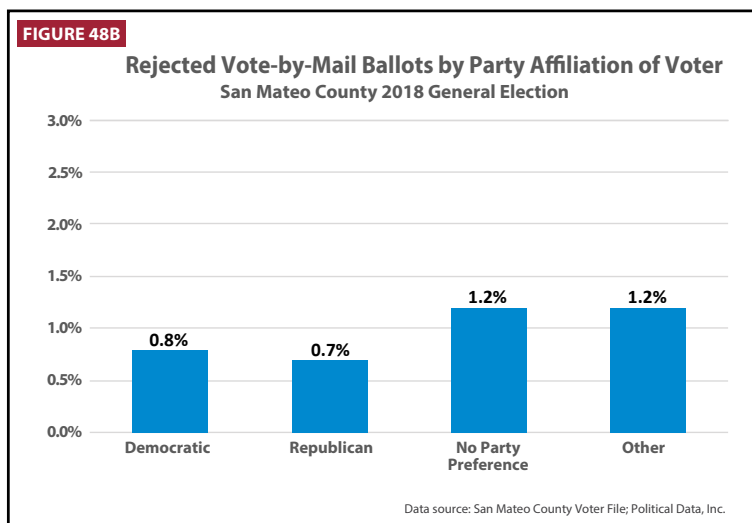
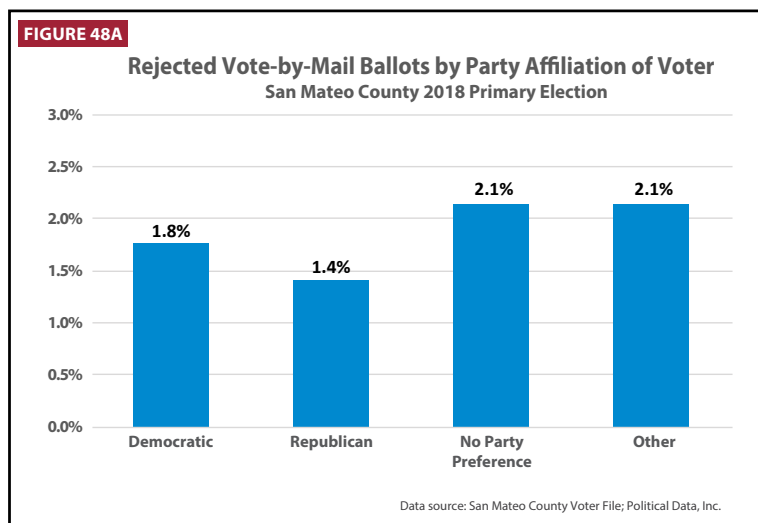


Data source: San Mateo County Voter File; Political Data, Inc.

Overall, VBM rejection rates were higher in the Primary than they were in the General Election. However, in both elections, VBM ballot rejection rates were lower for older voters and relatively higher for younger voters. Youth VBM voters aged 18-24 years experienced the highest VBM rejection rates. In the Primary, 4.3% of youth experienced VBM rejection, 2.5 percentage points higher than the VBM ballot rejection rate of the general population. In the General, 2.8% of youth experience VBM rejection, 1.9 percentage points higher than the VBM ballot rejection rate of the general population. Voters age 65 years and over had the lowest VBM ballot rejection rate of 0.9% in the Primary and 0.4% in the General.

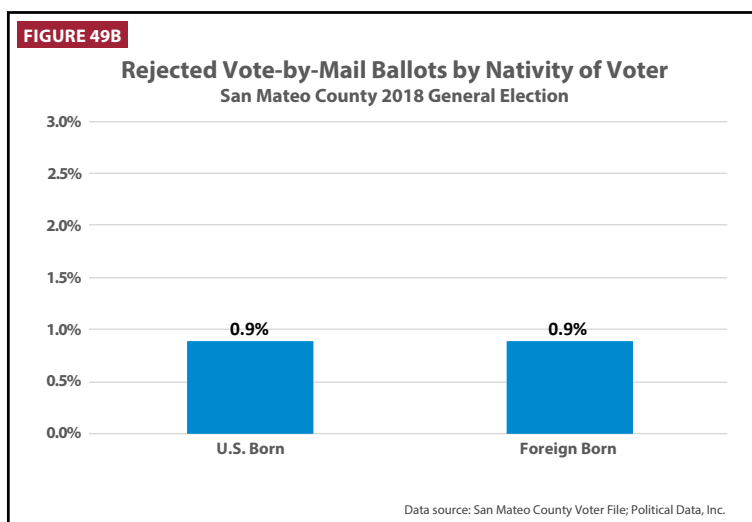
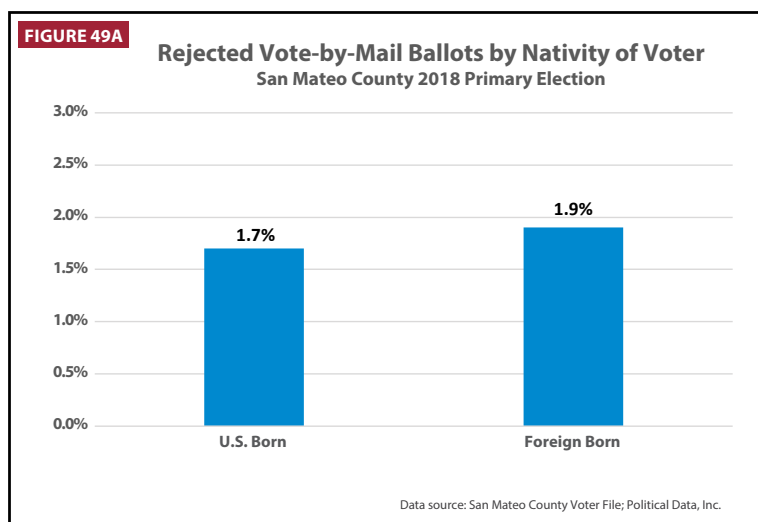
Note: Age is identified by voters' birthdates. San Mateo County voter records with unreliable data for age were excluded. This includes records where the voter is categorized as being under 18 years of age or older than 100 years of age (1,746 records total for the Primary and 172 records total for the General). The VBM ballot rejection rates for these voters was 0.7% in the Primary and 1.7% in the General.

VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Party Affiliation



The VBM ballot rejection rate of VBM voters registered as Democratic matched the rejection rate of the general population in the Primary and was 0.1% lower than the general population in the General. Republican VBM voters had a slightly lower ballot rejection rate of 1.4% in the Primary and 0.7% in the General. VBM voters with No Party Preference (NPP) experienced higher VBM ballot rejection rates than Democratic or Republican VBM voters at 2.1% in the Primary and 1.2% in the General.

VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Nativity



In the Primary, U.S.-born and foreign-born VBM voters had similar VBM ballot rejection rates of 1.7% and 1.9%, respectively. In the General, U.S.-born and foreign-born VBM voters experienced lower and equivalent VBM ballot rejection rates of 0.9%.

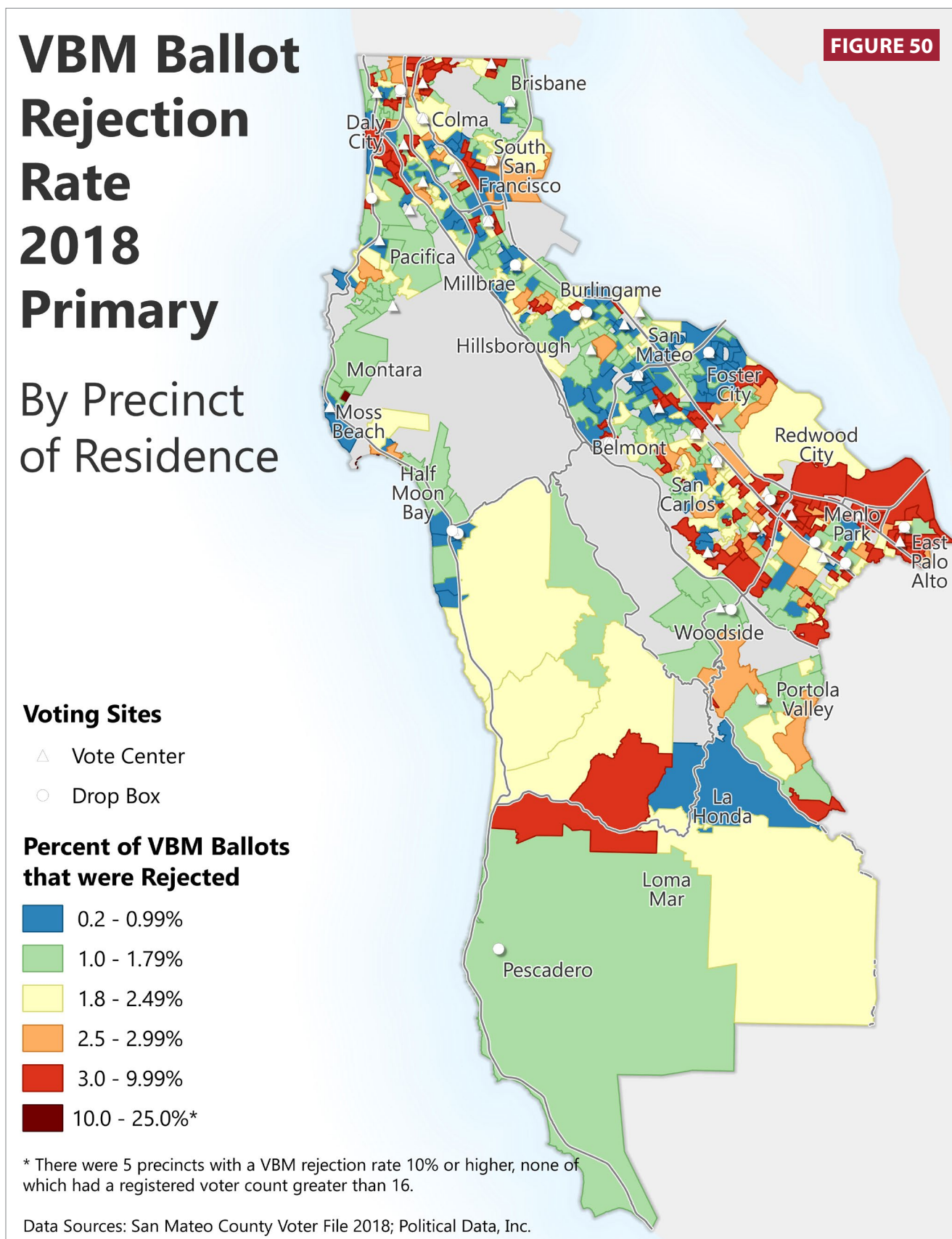
Note: In the Primary, approximately 3.5% of VBM voter records had no identified nativity status (5,573 voters out of 161,069) and, in the General, approximately 6.0% of VBM voter records had no identified nativity status (17,081 voters out of 285,703). The VBM ballot rejection rates for these voters was 2.7% in the Primary and 1.4% in the General.²⁴

VBM Ballot Rejection Rate by Gender

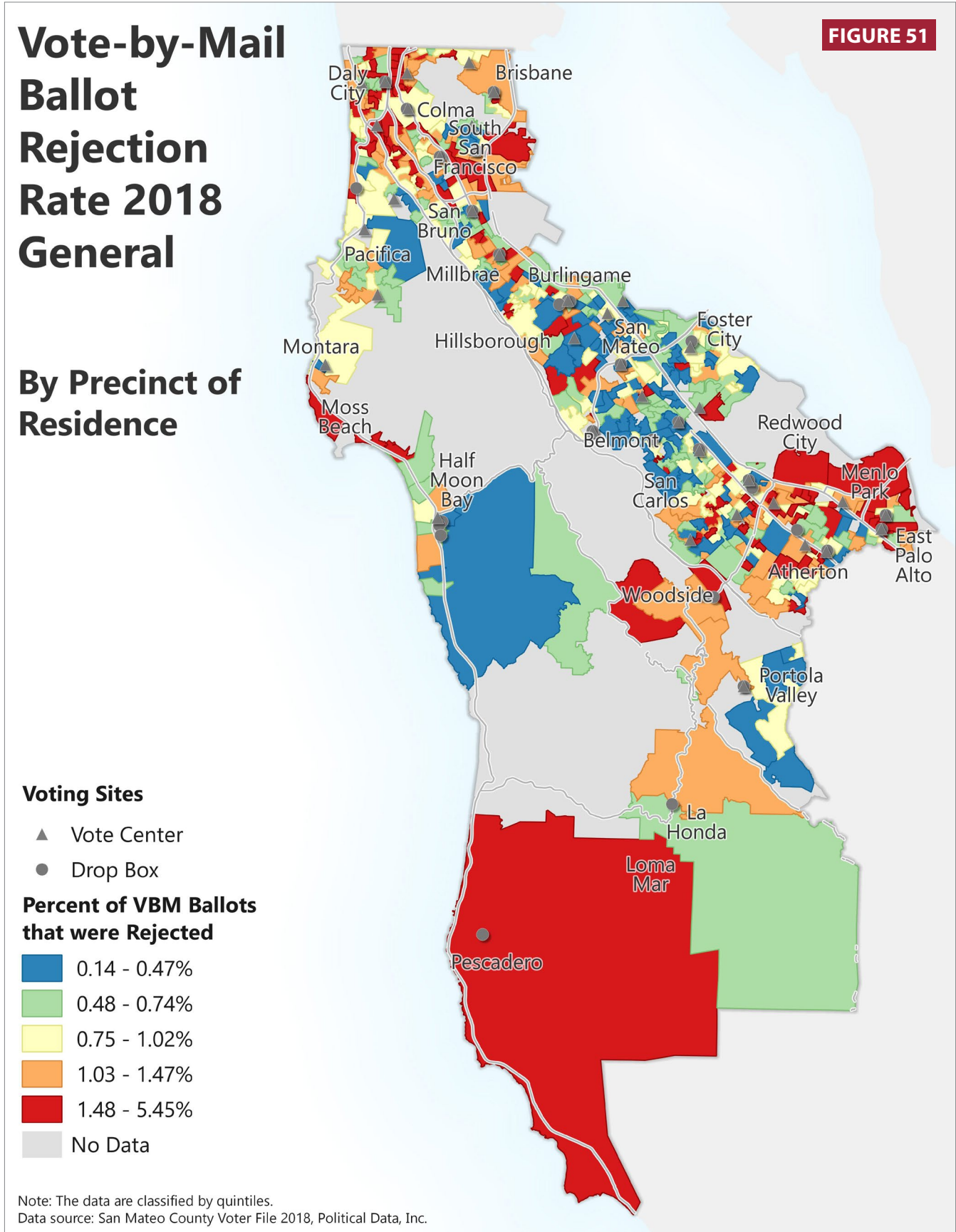
In the Primary, women and men experienced nearly equivalent VBM ballot rejection rates at 1.7% and 1.8%, respectively, while their rejection rates in the General were both 0.9%.

Note: In the Primary, about 8% of all VBM voter records have no identified gender in the data (13,243 voters out of 161,069) and, in the General, approximately 9.5% of VBM voter records have no identified gender (27,208 voters out of 285,703). The VBM ballot rejection rate for these voters was 2.3% in the Primary and 1.2% in the General.²⁵

In the 2018 Primary Election when examining the VBM ballot rejection rate by precinct of voter residence, we see that there are clusters of precincts with rejection rates higher than the county rate (1.8%) around East Palo Alto, Redwood City and Daly City. We also see precincts with rejection rates lower than the county rate clustered around San Mateo, Millbrae and Hillsborough.



When examining the 2018 General Election VBM ballot rejection rate by precinct of voter residence, as with the Primary Election, we see that there are clusters of precincts with rejection rates higher than the county (1.1%) rate around East Palo Alto, Redwood City and Daly City. We also see precincts with rejection rates lower than the county rate clustered around San Mateo, Millbrae and Hillsborough.



VBM Ballot Rejection Rate Hot Spots

In a hot spot analysis of the VBM rejection rates in the Primary, we see statistically significant clusters of high VBM rejection rates in East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Belmont, San Carlos and Daly City. We also see statistically significant clusters of low VBM rejection rates in San Bruno, Millbrae, San Mateo and Foster City.

Note: The method used in this analysis is the Getis-Ord G_i^* statistic, with a fixed distance band of 1 mile.²⁶

VBM Ballot Rejection Hot Spots 2018 Primary

By Precinct of Residence

FIGURE 52

Voting Sites

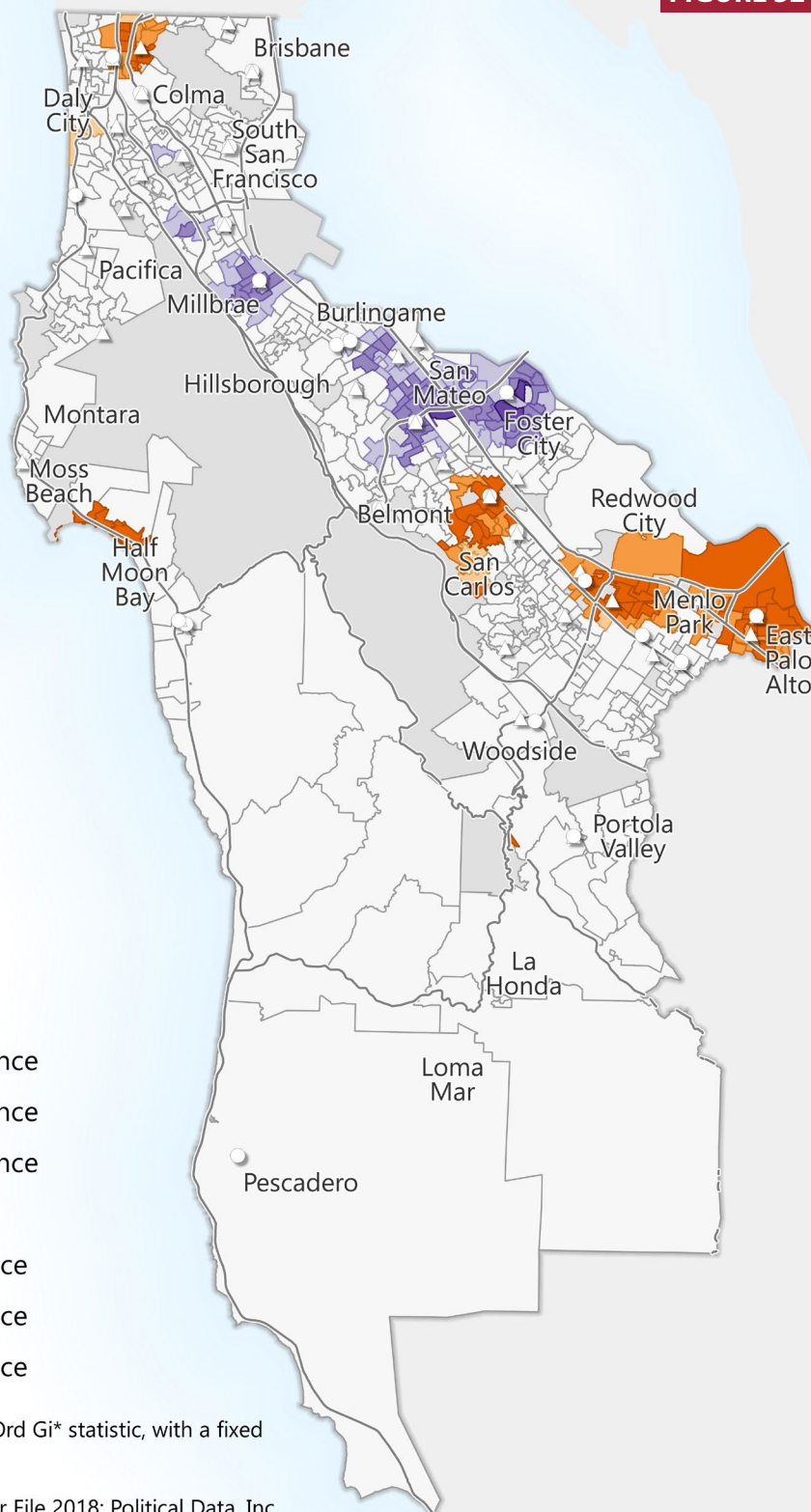
- △ Vote Center
- Drop Box

Precinct Hot Spots for Rejected VBM Ballots

- Cold Spot - 99% Confidence
- Cold Spot - 95% Confidence
- Cold Spot - 90% Confidence
- Not Significant
- Hot Spot - 90% Confidence
- Hot Spot - 95% Confidence
- Hot Spot - 99% Confidence

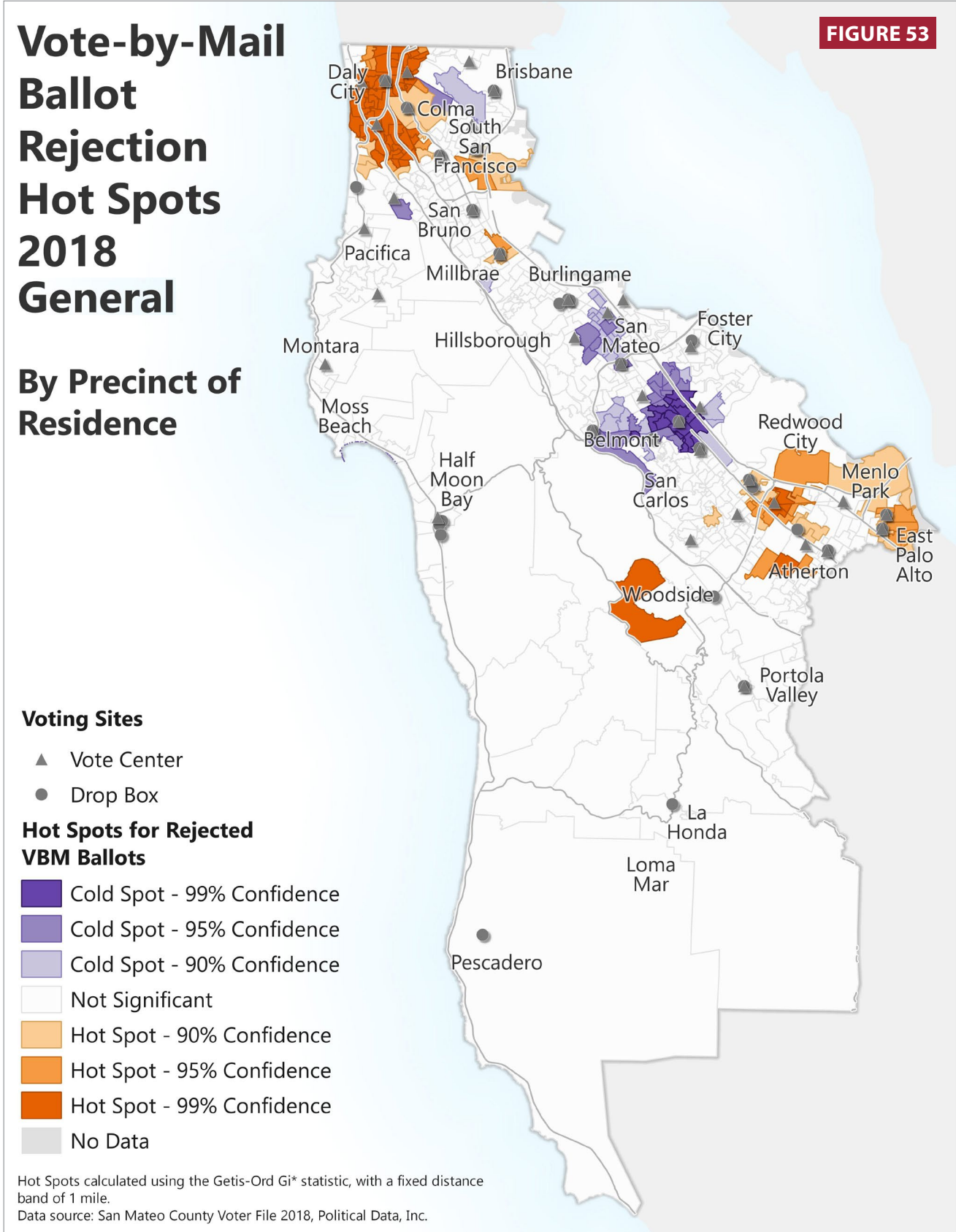
Hot spots calculated using the Getis-Ord G_i^* statistic, with a fixed distance band of 1 mile.

Data Sources: San Mateo County Voter File 2018; Political Data, Inc.



We also conducted a hot spot analysis of the VBM rejection rates for the General. Figure 53 shows that, like the Primary, statistically significant clusters of high VBM rejection rates are in East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Belmont, San Carlos and Daly City. Statistically significant clusters of low VBM rejection rates are also seen in San Bruno, Millbrae, San Mateo and Foster City.

Note: The method used in this analysis is the Getis-Ord Gi* statistic, with a fixed distance band of 1 mile.²⁷

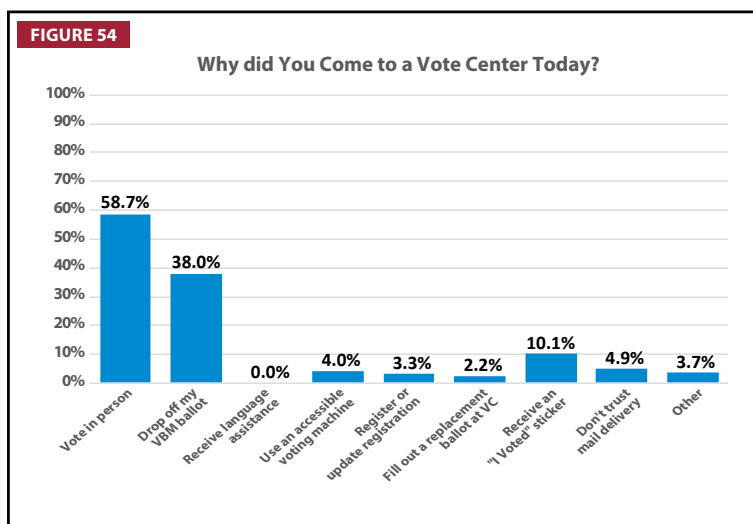


4. What were San Mateo County voters' experiences when using Vote Centers?

We conducted an exit survey with voters using San Mateo County Vote Centers in the 2018 General Election. The goal of the survey was to understand the experiences voters had at Vote Centers, their perspectives on these experiences (e.g. their perceptions of the voting process, the atmosphere and convenience of the location), and their opinions of the new Vote Center Model. We also identified the factors involved in voters' choices of specific Vote Center sites. The exit survey was offered in English and Spanish (see [Appendix B](#) online for survey instrument), and conducted on a random sample of voters, using randomly selected Vote Centers on Election Day and three days prior. Surveys were self administered and participation was anonymous. Racial and ethnic minorities were oversampled to ensure a valid sample size of each group, with a total number of 1,316 surveys. Exit survey results broken out by demographic group are available in [Appendix C](#) online.

A pilot exit survey was conducted with San Mateo County voters in the 2018 Primary Election. The results of this survey informed the design and methodology of the General Election exit survey. It is important to note that the findings of the General Election survey cannot be applied to the experiences of voters who did not use Vote Centers (including any voters who found them difficult to access). A quarter of 2018 General Election voters cast their ballots at Vote Centers. Nearly half of these votes (34,005) were cast in person and the remainder (38,506) were VBM ballots dropped off.

Vote Center Experience



Vote Center users taking the survey were asked why they chose to visit a Vote Center that day. Respondents could choose multiple answers that apply to them. Figure 54 shows that a majority (58.7%) indicated they visited to vote in person. Another 38% came to a Vote Center to drop off their VBM ballot, with 10.1% visiting to receive an "I Voted" sticker. Another nearly 5% of respondents said they were using a Vote Center because they didn't trust mail delivery. It is noteworthy that among only those respondents who visited a Vote Center on Election Day, 65.7% did so to vote in person.

Some respondents visited a Vote Center for resources that are provided there (through the VCA) with the intention of serving specific populations. Four percent indicated they visited to use an accessible voting machine and another 3.3% intended to update their registration or register to vote (using conditional voter registration).

It is important to note that respondents' answers indicated their intentions for their visit. It is entirely possible that some respondents either were not able to fulfill these intentions during their visit and/or, by the end of their visit, they had conducted other business at a Vote Center than they initially had planned. Some respondents might also not be fully aware of the available resources at Vote Centers. This could be the case for voters who might have received language assistance at a Vote Center. There were only three respondents to the survey who indicated they chose to go to a Vote Center in order to receive language assistance. However, many more may have received language assistance during their actual visit.

FIGURE 55

What Aspect of Voting did You Like at the Vote Center, If Any?

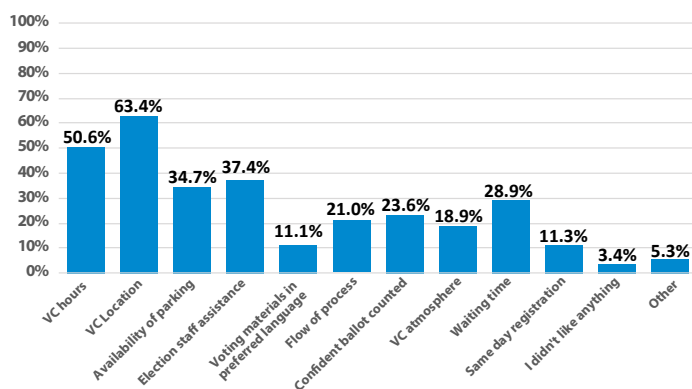
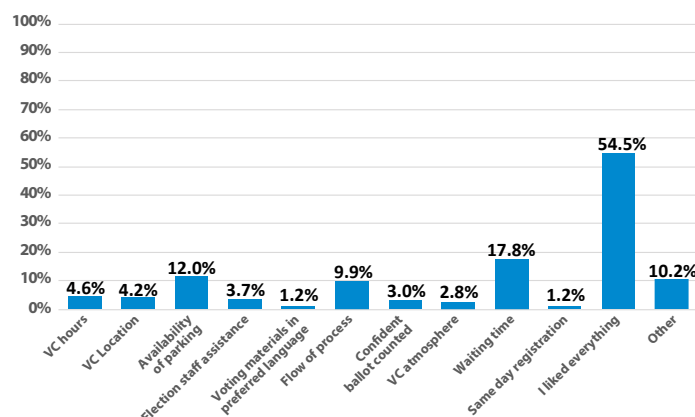


FIGURE 56

What Aspect of Voting did you Not Like at the Vote Center, If Any?



We also asked respondents which aspects of a Vote Center did they like, if any, (whether or not they initially intended to experience these) on their visit. Respondents could choose multiple answers that apply (see [Appendix C](#) online for detailed survey findings by voter demographic group). The location (63.4%), hours of operation (50.6%), election staff assistance (37.4%) and availability of parking (34.7%) were frequently cited by respondents (Figure 55). Only 3.4% of respondents said they did not like any aspect of a Vote Center.

We then asked all respondents what aspects of a Vote Center did they not like, if any. Respondents could choose multiple answers that applied to them. The most cited dislikes of respondents were their waiting time (17.8%), flow of the voting process (9.9%), and availability of parking (12.0%). Just over 54% reported they liked everything at a Vote Center (Figure 56). However, there was greater dissatisfaction among only those who visited a Vote Center on Election Day. Over 25% did not like their waiting time, 13.2% did not like the flow of the voting process, and nearly 16% expressed a dislike for the availability of parking. We also found variation on this question by voter demographic group (see [Appendix C](#) online).

FIGURE 57

How Satisfied Were You With the Process of Casting Your Ballot Today?

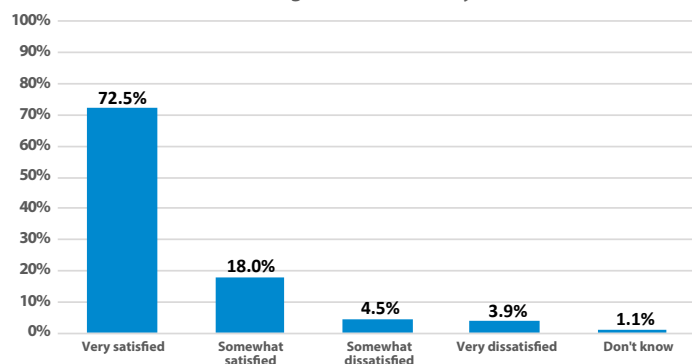
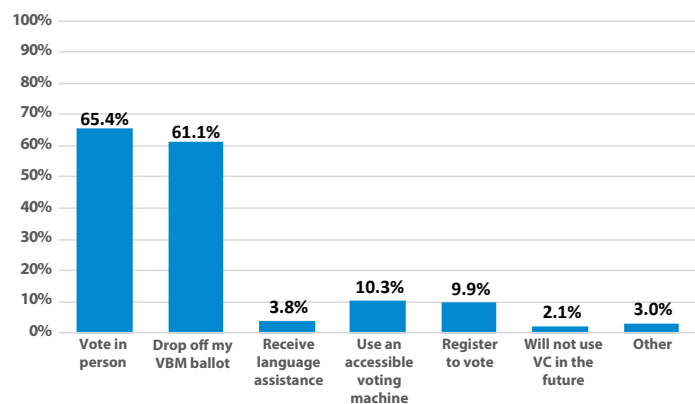


FIGURE 58

What Features Would You Likely Use at a Vote Center?



Overall, 72.5% of respondents were very satisfied with the voting process at Vote Centers and 18.0% were somewhat satisfied, while 8.4% expressed dissatisfaction (Figure 57). However, somewhat higher levels of dissatisfaction (10.5%) were reported by previous polling place voters (see [Appendix C](#) online).

For future elections, Figure 58 shows that voters indicated they would likely use a Vote Center for the following purposes: voting in person (65.4%) or dropping off their VBM ballot (61.1%), using an accessible voting machine (10.3%) and registering to vote (9.9%). Another 3.8% reported they would likely use a Vote Center in the future to receive language assistance. Respondents could choose multiple answers that applied to them.

Vote Center Location and Distance

FIGURE 59

How did You Get to This Vote Center Today?

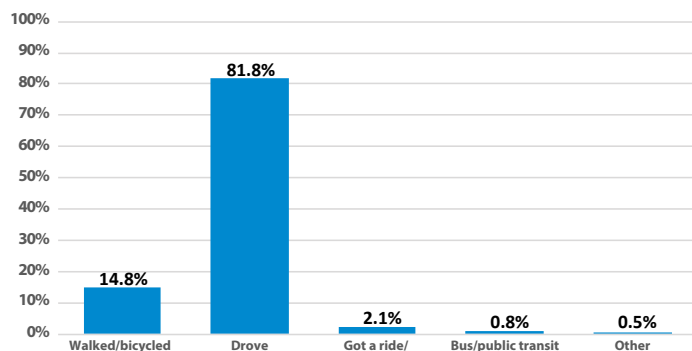
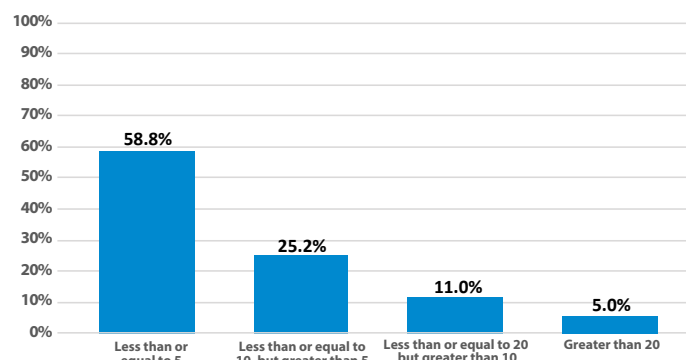


FIGURE 60

About How Many Minutes did You Travel to Use This Vote Center?



Vote Center users taking the survey were asked why they chose the specific Vote Center they visited and how far they traveled. Figure 59 shows that the majority of respondents said they traveled to the Vote Center by car (81.8%), with 14.8% of voters walking or bicycling. Over half the voters (58.8%) arrived within five minutes, with 25.2% arriving after five minutes but within ten, and 16.0% traveled for more than ten minutes (Figure 60). A notable exception to the findings was found for those age 18-24. A greater percentage (21.4%) of young voters traveled more than 10 minutes to use a Vote Center, while a smaller percentage of youth (75%) drove to their location (see [Appendix C](#) online).

We should note that the San Mateo County Elections Office reported some issues regarding in-person voting at Vote Centers that, along with the high turnout of voters, produced long lines in some Vote Centers on Election Day. These include: connectivity issues, slower than expected On-Demand Ballot printers, slow VoteCal communication, and staffing challenges. Another reason for the presence of some long lines were those voters who intended to drop off completed VBM ballots and entered the in-person voting line rather than using the on-site drop box.

FIGURE 61

Why did You Choose to Use This Specific Vote Center Location?

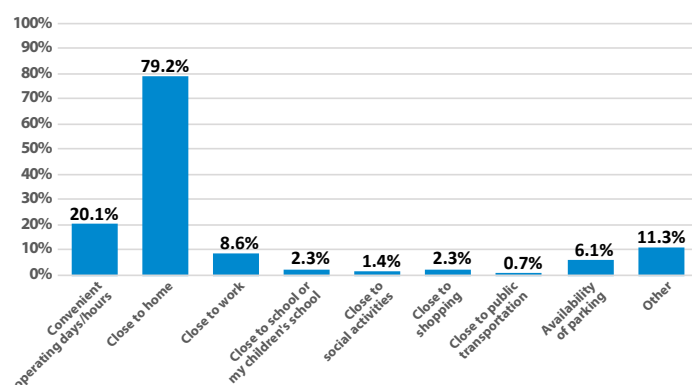


FIGURE 62

How did You Learn About the Location of Your Vote Center?

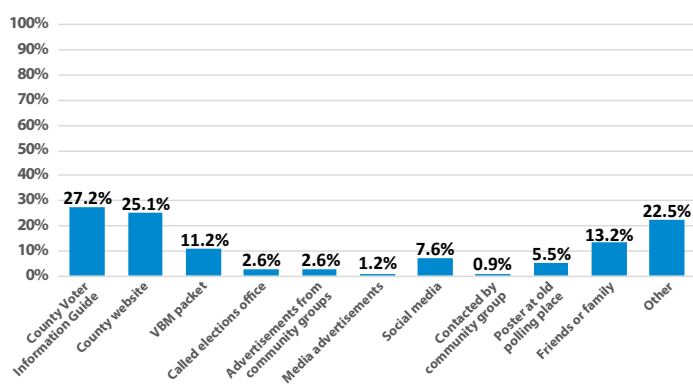


Figure 61 shows respondents' answers to why they choose to use a specific Vote Center. Respondents could indicate multiple answers that applied. Voters overwhelmingly chose their specific Vote Center due to its close proximity to their homes (79.2%) compared to choosing based on its close proximity to their work (8.6%), with 20.1% of voters choosing a Vote Center because of convenient operating days and hours.

Figure 62 shows us the many ways that voters learned of Vote Center locations. Respondents could choose multiple answers that applied to them. The County Voter Information Guide served as the most common way (27.2%) voters learned about locations, followed by their county website (25.1%) or the VBM packet mailed to them (11.2%). Over 13% heard from friends or family and 7.6% through social media. Here, again, we note that different patterns emerged when examining the data by age. A smaller

percentage of youth learned of their Vote Center location from the voter information guide (13.2%) or their VBM packet (4.1%), while a much larger percentage of youth learned from social media (18.2%) and family and friends (27.3%).

Combined, 52.5% of all Vote Center users learned about their location directly from at least one material produced by their county elections office. This demonstrates the continued influence of county-produced voter education materials and, thus, the importance of ensuring these materials are accessible, clear and in plain language for all voters.

Perspectives on the Vote Center Model

FIGURE 63

Had You Heard About the New Vote Center Elections Model in San Mateo County?

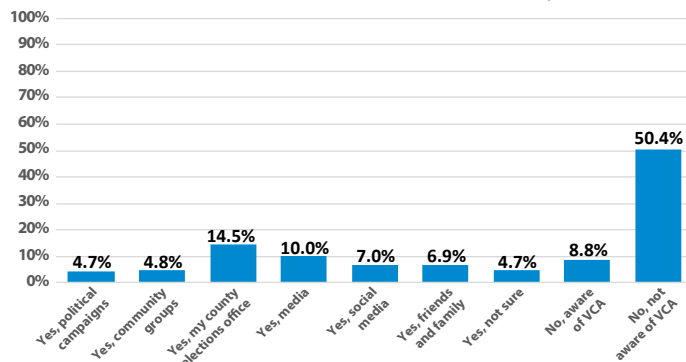
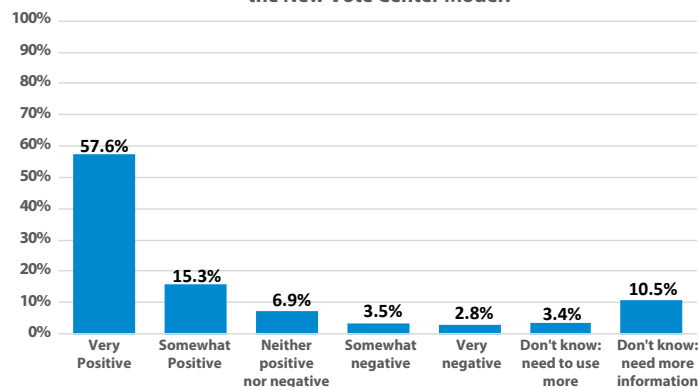


FIGURE 64

What do You Think About San Mateo County's Decision to Use the New Vote Center Model?

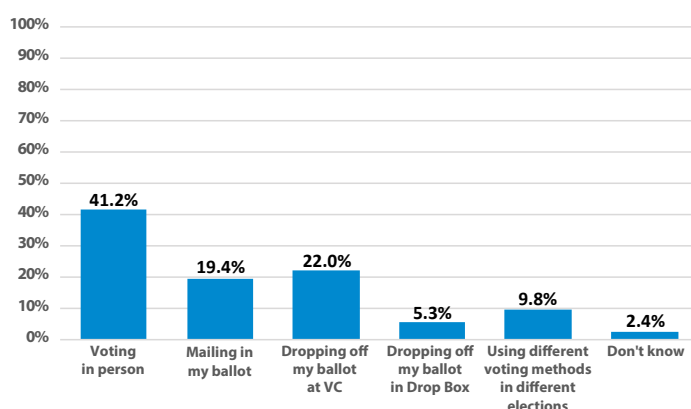


Just over 14% of Vote Center users heard of the Vote Center model from their county elections office, 10.0% from media, and nearly 7% learned from friends and family. Only 4.7% of survey respondents heard about the new model from a political campaign. However, over 50% of survey respondents had not heard of, nor were aware of the new Vote Center model prior to using a Vote Center. These percentages were much greater for Asian Americans (58.2%) and youth (64.5%) who used Vote Centers (see [Appendix C](#) online). For this question, respondents could choose multiple answers that applied to them. Respondents were provided with a brief description of the model (see [Appendix C](#) online).

Over half (57.6%) of voters reported feeling “very positive” about San Mateo County’s decision to use the new model after using the Vote Center, with 15.3% “somewhat positive” and 10.5% indicated they did not know and required more information. However, differences were seen by whether a voter was a VBM or polling place voter in the most recent election. Previous VBM voters were more positive about the county’s decision to use the new model, while previous polling place voters were somewhat less positive (see [Appendix C](#)).

FIGURE 65

What Would Be Your Preferred Way to Cast a Ballot in San Mateo County?



We also asked respondents what would be their preferred way to cast a ballot in San Mateo County. Overall, 41.2% of survey respondents indicated they preferred to vote in person in San Mateo County, compared to 19.4% who preferred to mail in their ballot instead. Another 27.3% of voters preferred to drop off their ballot, with 5.3% of those voters preferring to use Drop Boxes over Vote Center drop off. Another 9.8% preferred to use different voting methods in different elections.

Vote Center Exit Survey Summary

A key element of a successful implementation of the VCA in San Mateo County is how voters experienced newly established Vote Centers. While the overwhelming majority of visitors who went to a Vote Center did so to vote in person or drop off their ballot, Vote Centers in San Mateo County were also utilized for a variety of reasons and services, including using an accessible voting machine and to register to vote or update one's registration.

Over 81% of visitors traveled to a Vote Center by car from their home and, for nearly 60%, their trip was less than 5 minutes. Survey results tell us that most people liked the location, hours, availability of parking and staff assistance. We also know that over half of visitors learned about the location of the Vote Center they used from the county elections office, but half hadn't heard of the new voting model itself prior to using a Vote Center.

Overall, an overwhelmingly majority of voters visiting a Vote Center were satisfied with the process of casting their ballot. Vote Center users were also very positive about the County's decision to use the new Vote Center model. However, at the same time, there were voters who didn't like, among other things, the waiting time and lack of availability of parking and who were not satisfied with the voting process they experienced. In particular, Election Day Vote Center visitors registered more concerns about these elements than pre-Election day visitors.



5. What were the costs of San Mateo County's 2018 Elections under the VCA?

2018 Primary and General Election Costs

Table 9. San Mateo County 2018 Election Cycle Cost Estimates										
	Sample Ballot Printing Postage	Official Ballot Printing	VBM Ballot Printing Post Supp	Vote Center Supplies Services	Computer Charges	Voting Equipment	Other Charges	Labor	Admin Overhead	Total Cost
2018 Primary	\$521,971.80	\$21,185.41	\$971,594.49	\$73,562.17	\$115,146.13	\$298,025.20	\$69,356.12	\$1,717,091.15	\$771,841.42	\$4,559,773.89
2018 General	\$713,833.78	\$14,064.02	\$1,151,376.44	\$162,109.93	\$238,784.23	\$618,029.50	\$33,299.00	\$2,305,182.26	\$1,025,114.74	\$6,261,793.91

According to the San Mateo County Elections Office, the total cost for the 2018 Primary Election was \$4,559,773.89 while the total cost for the 2018 General Election was \$6,261,793.91 (Table 9). The 2018 Primary Election had a net cost of \$3,859,703.62 after accounting for reimbursable costs of \$700,070.27 from participating jurisdictions.²⁸ The 2018 General Election had a net cost of \$3,317,247.19 after accounting for reimbursable costs of \$3,895,990.22 from participating jurisdictions. According to the County Elections Office, it is difficult to isolate election costs specifically generated by the adoption of the VCA. This challenge was greatly impacted by the simultaneous implementation of multiple new election reforms for the first time in the 2018 Primary Election.

2018 Primary and General Election Outreach Costs

Table 10. San Mateo County 2018 Election Cycle Cost Estimates: Outreach Only						
	Advertising	Printing	Postage	Translations	Other	Total Cost
2018 Primary	\$233,974.43	\$85,511.41	\$93,201.23	\$32,091.05	\$4,489.66	\$449,267.78
2018 General	\$217,448.02	\$92,390.87	\$91,006.87	\$1,290.00	\$960.33	\$403,096.09

San Mateo County's reported costs for the Primary Election do not include costs for voter outreach. A total of \$500,000 was allocated for the Voter Education and Outreach Program during the FY 2017-18. According to the San Mateo County Elections Office, final outreach costs were \$449,267.78 (Table 10). Under Senate Bill 117, the Secretary of State will reimburse the county \$58,000 for the program's services. Additionally, under Section 251 of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the Secretary of State's Office will reimburse \$20,000 for activities related to administration.

Reported costs for the General Election also do not include costs for voter outreach. A total of \$450,000 was allocated for the Voter Education and Outreach Program during the FY 2018-2019. According to the San Mateo County Elections Office, final outreach costs were \$403,096.09. Reimbursement amounts by the California Secretary of State's office are not yet known for the 2018 General Election.

The actual to estimated cost differential is due to a combination of several factors that occurred during the Primary and General Elections, including new election laws and statutory requirements, new technology requirements, the establishment of Vote Centers (with more voting days) and the now longer VBM (with much greater numbers of VBM ballots) processing that occurs under the VCA.

The extensive outreach conducted by the San Mateo County Elections Office was greatly aided by the efforts of the VEOAC. VEOAC members conducted a substantial outreach and education campaign throughout the 2018 Election Cycle in partnership with community groups and committed individuals.

In the 2020 Election Cycle, VCA county elections offices will have outreach-related funding available to them from two external sources:

Help America Votes Act (HAVA) funds provided by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) for various purposes, including county efforts to implement the Voter's Choice Act (VCA). These funds may be used by counties for voter outreach efforts and the purchase of voting equipment.

California Bill 74 (budget bill) provides \$3 million (\$1.5 million for the next two years) to counties as reimbursements specifically for voter outreach purposes.

Conclusion

During the 2018 Election Cycle, San Mateo County Vote Centers were utilized by voters for a range of services including: voting in person, dropping off VBM ballots, receiving language assistance, replacing spoiled or lost ballots or envelopes, and, if they were not already registered or needed to update their voter registration, conditionally register to vote and cast a ballot.

San Mateo County voters overwhelmingly cast their ballots using VBM ballots – 93% in the Primary and 88% in the General. While much smaller percentages voted in person at Vote Centers in the Primary, a total of 21% of voters used a Vote Center to cast their vote when including those who dropped off their ballot at a Vote Center. This number increased to almost a quarter in the General and was almost 30% for youth (age 18-24) in both elections. For Latinos, the combined percentage of voters casting a ballot in person and dropping off their VBM ballot at Vote Centers was over 30% in both elections. It was even higher for voters who previously used polling places.

During the initial phase of early voting in both elections, low numbers of San Mateo County voters used Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box Locations, but participation increased sharply during the final two to three days prior to Election Day and on Election Day for the both Primary and General Elections. In-person voters were most likely to vote on Election Day itself. Voters who dropped off their VBM ballot were also more likely to do so on Election Day.

The ways in which San Mateo County voters used Vote Centers varied by demographic group. A greater share of Latino and youth voters cast their ballots in person at a Vote Center than did Asian Americans or those age 65 or older. Latinos and young people were also more likely to drop off their VBM ballots at a Vote Center than Asian-American voters or older voters. Conversely, while the majority of voters in each race or ethnic group included in the study mailed in their VBM ballot, Latinos and youth mailed in their VBM ballots at lower rates. As more voters and potential voters become aware of the VCA, including the early voting period, voting methods could change.

San Mateo County voter turnout was historically high in both 2018 Primary and General Elections while Latinos, Asian Americans and youth (age 18-24) also saw significant increases in their turnout over previous midterm elections. These increases in turnout resulted in an increase in the share of voters for each group. The degree to which Latino, Asian-American and youth voters are underrepresented among all San Mateo County voters, compared to their share of the county's total eligible voter population (adult citizens), changed in 2018: Asian-American and youth underrepresentation decreased from 2010 to 2018, in both the Primary and General Elections, while Latino underrepresentation increased slightly in 2018 from 2010.

While voter turnout among Latinos, Asian Americans and youth increased in the 2018 Election Cycle, these groups continued to experience much lower voter turnout than the general population in San Mateo County (as is also the case at the state and national level). Further, disparate rates of VBM ballot rejection by demographic group (e.g. age and race) continue under the VCA model. These disparities, along with lower turnout of new registrants and voters who previously used a polling place, demonstrate that challenges remain with regard to seeing a fully representative electorate.

After one election cycle, we have also learned how voters are initially experiencing Vote Centers throughout San Mateo County. Just over 90% of voters visiting a Vote Center reported being satisfied with the process of casting their ballot and most county voters liked the location of the Vote Center they used. Vote Center users were also very positive about the County's decision to use the new Vote Center model. However, at that same time, there were voters who didn't like, among other things, the waiting time and lack of available parking and who were not satisfied with the voting process they experienced. Election Day Vote Center visitors registered more concerns about these elements than pre-Election Day visitors. Given that the findings of the General Election survey cannot be applied to the experiences of voters who did not use Vote Centers (including any voters who found them difficult to access), additional research should be conducted that examines the experiences of voters who voted by mail. Further research is also necessary to identify the overall long-term impacts of the VCA.

Looking Forward to Future Elections

Understanding the differing ways that voter groups cast their ballots and engage in the new voting model (in early VCA elections and beyond) will be critical for efforts aimed at expanding the voting electorate in San Mateo County, and in other counties that adopt the VCA model.

A majority of San Mateo County voters using Vote Centers in the 2018 General Election were not aware of the new voting model and many voters who did not use Vote Centers may also be unaware of all the options for casting their ballot available to them under the VCA. These findings underscore the high level of education needed that voter outreach efforts could face in 2020.

Going forward, significant challenges remain for voter outreach efforts in San Mateo County. Voter education should account for groups' differing experiences under the VCA. To accomplish this, the San Mateo County Elections Office and voter education groups will need to continue to seek ways to expand the reach of their outreach efforts to more communities and an ever more diverse array of voter demographic groups. These efforts should include targeted education on the availability of RAVBM ballots so that the use of RAVBM for voters with disabilities might increase in future elections. At the same time, it should be recognized that resources (from non-governmental sources) are currently very limited for the 2020 Election Cycle resulting in the likelihood that at least some of the future VCA work planned by community and non-profit groups will go unfunded.

This study's findings provide insight into the early engagement of San Mateo County voters with the VCA and can help inform voter-focused efforts in its on-going implementation. A shared understanding of how voters are now experiencing the VCA (and how these reactions might later change) by both the county elections office and community groups should be integrated into their work toward the shared goal of a fully participating electorate.



Available VCA Resources:

California Voter's Choice Act Implementation Study - The Voter's Choice Act Implementation Study was designed to provide a better understanding of how the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) was implemented in California during the 2018 Primary and General Elections. The study examines the five counties that adopted the VCA in 2018.

California Secretary of State: VCA Quick Start Guide - This quick start guide is designed to be a supplement to the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) Starter Kit developed by the Secretary of State's Voter's Choice Act Team. This quick starter kit is intended to be used as a starting point for county elections administrators that are considering adopting the Voter's Choice Act model for election administration in their county.

California Secretary of State: VCA Starter Kit - This Starter Kit to the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) is designed as a collection of resources and in-depth references. These materials and documents were developed by many of the stakeholders (county, state, and NGO) that participated in the implementation and planning process for the first Voter's Choice election in 2018.

League of Women Voters of California VCA Toolkit for Community Organizers - The Voter's Choice Act Toolkit is a compilation of resources and strategies to help community organizations promote public understanding and drive successful implementation of the Voter's Choice Act.

Voter's Choice California: Strategies for Voter Education and Outreach Under the Voter's Choice Act - This report is a summary of the lessons discussed at the Redwood City convening on July 17, 2018 as well as insights from Future of California Elections' experience in managing our statewide Voter's Choice California project.

Voter's Choice California - Voter's Choice Act Implementation: Building a VCA Coalition - This report highlights best practices for building a local VCA coalition, including recommendations for coordinating partners and working with local election officials.

Voter's Choice California: Education Tools and Resources - Voter's Choice California seeks to support communities transitioning to the Voter's Choice Act. The VCC is comprised of a diverse Statewide Coalition and several Local Hubs that focus on participating counties. It is supported by Future of California Elections staff and a small Steering Committee.

The New Electorate Study: How Did the Voter's Choice Act Affect Turnout in 2018? - Funded by the University of California's Office of the President, this project brings together faculty members, graduate students and undergraduates at five UC campuses with collaborators at USC and the Public Policy Institute of California.

Other CCEP Vote Center Research - To better understand the experiences that California voters have with the different available methods for casting ballots, the CCEP conducted a multi-method research study (statewide survey and focus groups) entitled The California Voter Experience Study.

CCEP Vote Center Siting Tool - Developed by the California Civic Engagement Project (CCEP), this mapping tool is designed to provide assistance to California county elections offices seeking to implement the Voter's Choice Act in future elections. The goal of this tool is to help election officials identify optimal sites for potential Vote Center and Vote-by-Mail drop boxes.



Notes

1. For more information on the California Voter's Choice Act, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB450
2. California Assembly Bill 1520 (2001) gave Californians the ability to register as a permanent Vote-by-Mail voters. Registered voters with this status receive a VBM ballot in every election without needing an excuse or having to request such a ballot. See the California Secretary of State's 2016 general election voter participation report: <http://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/sov/2016-general/sov/03-voter-participation-stats-by-county.pdf>
3. The Voter's Choice Act requires counties to offer the option of Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM). Voters with disabilities are sent a ballot electronically that they can download. They then can read and mark the ballot on their computer using their own accessible technology. They then print and mail in the ballot. For more information see California Senate Bill 450: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB450
4. See the San Mateo County Election Office report on the 2015 pilot: https://www.smcacre.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ab2028_report.pdf
5. According to California law, Vote-by-Mail ballots that are returned by mail must be postmarked on or before Election Day, and received by county elections officials no later than three days after the election. See Senate Bill 29: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB29
6. Political Data, Inc. provided the San Mateo County voter registration file extracts from July 2018 and February 2019 with the following additional voter attributes identified: race and ethnicity, age, gender and nativity. These data are the actual registration records and not representative samples. Because of this, the level of confidence in the data is not susceptible to estimates as are survey or exit poll results. Latinos and Asians are distinguished in the registration data from the general population primarily by using Spanish and Asian surname lists which identify registrants with commonly occurring Spanish and Asian surnames. The Passel-Word Spanish surname list, published by the U.S. Census Bureau, was utilized to identify Latinos. For Asians, the U.S. Census Bureau's surname lists for six major Asian American ethnic groups were utilized: Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Asian Indian, and Vietnamese. In addition, ballot language designation and birthplace also inform the identification race and ethnicity. Surname matching for research purposes is not reliable for white, non-Hispanic, and African-American populations, and thus, registration data is not examined by this study for these groups. Whites and African Americans are 45.2% and 3.6% of the San Mateo County eligible (adult citizen) voter population, respectively. Note: Some additional Latinos and Asians may be registered to vote and not flagged by the surname databases.
7. See: California Civic Engagement Project: Disparities in California's Vote-by-Mail Use, Changing Demographic Composition: 2002-2012 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57b8c7ce15d5dbf599fb46ab/t/58e58499e4fcb5fc935614c6/1491436758841/VBM+Issue+Brief+Revised.pdf>
8. Gender is identified by Political Data, Inc. in the voter registration file by using gender name lists provided by the U.S. Census.
9. Nativity is identified by Political Data, Inc. in the voter registration file by a registrant's report of birthplace in their voter registration application.
10. See the California Secretary of State's Report of Registration as of May 21, 2018: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ror/15day-stwddirprim-2018/county.pdf>
11. See the California Secretary of State's Report of Registration as of October 22, 2018: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ror/15day-gen-2018/county.pdf>
12. See: Rosenstone, Steven, and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: MacMillan.
13. For more information on California Assembly Bill 1461, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1461
14. For more information on California Senate Bill 113, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1461
15. See the California Secretary of State's Voter Participation Statistics by County: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/statistics/voter-participation-stats-county/>
16. See the California Secretary of State's Voter Participation Statistics by County: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/statistics/voter-participation-stats-county/>
17. Voter data by demographic breakdown were acquired from the Statewide Database. These data are actual voter records and not representative samples. Due to differences in data collection methods, caution should be utilized when directly comparing California Secretary of State voter data publications with SWDB data. Latinos and Asians are distinguished in the statewide database voter data from the general population by the use of Spanish and Asian surname lists which identify registrants with commonly occurring Spanish and Asian surnames. Surname matching is not reliable for white, non-Hispanic, and African-American populations, and thus, voter data is not available for these groups. For more information on methodology and limitations, please see: <http://swdb.berkeley.edu/d10/Creating%20CA%20Official%20Redistricting%20Database.pdf>
18. We define eligible voters as those who are adult citizens (whether registered to vote or not). These data were provided by the California Department of Finance.
19. Voter data by demographic breakdown were acquired from the Statewide Database. These data are actual voter records and not representative samples. Due to differences in data collection methods, caution should be utilized when directly comparing California Secretary of State voter data publications with SWDB data. Latinos and Asians are distinguished in the statewide database voter data from the general population by the use of Spanish and Asian surname lists which identify registrants with commonly occurring Spanish and Asian surnames. Surname matching is not reliable for white, non-Hispanic, and African-American populations, and thus, voter data is not available for these groups. For more information on methodology and limitations, please see: <http://swdb.berkeley.edu/d10/Creating%20CA%20Official%20Redistricting%20Database.pdf>
20. Latinos and Asian Americans are distinguished by Political Data, Inc. in the registration data from the general population primarily by using Spanish and Asian surname lists which identify registrants with commonly occurring Spanish and Asian surnames. In addition, ballot language designation and birthplace also inform the identification race and ethnicity. Surname matching for research purposes is not reliable for white, non-Hispanic, and African-American populations, and thus, registration data is not examined by this study for these groups. Note: Some additional Latinos and Asians may be registered to vote and not flagged by the surname databases.
21. Gender is identified by Political Data, Inc. in the voter registration file by using gender name lists provided by the U.S. Census.
22. Nativity is identified by Political Data, Inc. in the voter registration file by a registrant's report of birthplace in their voter registration application.
23. See: California Secretary of State. 2016. "Historical Vote-By-Mail (Absentee) Ballot." <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/historical-absentee/>
24. Latinos and Asian Americans are distinguished by Political Data, Inc. in the registration data from the general population primarily by using Spanish and Asian surname lists which identify registrants with commonly occurring Spanish and Asian surnames. In addition, ballot language designation and birthplace also inform the identification race and ethnicity. Surname matching for research purposes is not reliable for white, non-Hispanic, and African-American populations, and thus, registration data is not examined by this study for these groups. Note: Some additional Latinos and Asians may be registered to vote and not flagged by the surname databases.
25. Nativity is identified by Political Data, Inc. in the voter registration file by a registrant's report of birthplace in their voter registration application.
26. Gender is identified by Political Data, Inc. in the voter registration file by using gender name lists provided by the U.S. Census.
27. For more information on this methodology, see ESRI Resources: http://resources.esri.com/help/9.3/arcgisengine/java/gp_toolref/spatial_statistics_tools/how_hot_spot_analysis_colon_getis_ord_gi_star_spatial_statistics_works.htm
28. For more information on this methodology, see ESRI Resources: http://resources.esri.com/help/9.3/arcgisengine/java/gp_toolref/spatial_statistics_tools/how_hot_spot_analysis_colon_getis_ord_gi_star_spatial_statistics_works.htm
29. See the June 5, 2018 Statewide Direct Primary Election overview report to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. Data provided by the San Mateo County Elections Office.



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