

King County Successfully Pilots Pre-paid Postage: Voter Turnout Exceeds Projections

February 24, 2017

Summary

King County Elections will certify the results of the special election in Maple Valley and the Shoreline School District on February 24; overall voter turnout was larger than expected. Elections had tested pre-paid postage on ballot return envelopes for this election.

Story

Today King County Elections will certify the results of the February 14 special election in the City of Maple Valley and the Shoreline School District. The department tested pre-paid postage for this election. Voters in each jurisdiction received ballot packets that included a return envelope with the postage already paid.

One objective of the pre-paid postage test was to see if more voters returned their ballots than in previous special elections. King County Elections projected 30 percent voter turnout based on previous turnout. However, actual turnout was significantly higher, at 37 percent in Maple Valley, and 40 percent in the Shoreline School District.

"I'm excited to see increased participation," said Julie Wise, King County Elections Director. "When I was elected, one of my commitments was to remove barriers to voting. As we increase access with pre-paid postage and ballot drop boxes, we're beginning to see a real impact."

The pre-paid postage pilot also confirmed King County Elections' understanding of the U.S. Postal Service processes. About 70 percent of ballots returned by mail were received within two days of being postmarked.

"Director Wise is leading the charge to make King County the national leader in low-barrier voting, all while ensuring our election system is accurate and secure," said King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski. "The pre-paid postage test is another important step in the right direction. Combined with an increased number of ballot boxes and election materials in multiple languages, King County citizens can more easily and effectively exercise their right to vote."

The pre-paid postage test cost King County Elections \$10,140.

Maple Valley voters rejected a general obligation bond for park and recreation facility improvements. Voters in the Shoreline School District, which includes Lake Forest Park, approved a school construction bond.

Election results are available on the King County Elections website.

Quotes

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Julie Wise, Director of King County Elections

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King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski

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