



# **BUNCOMBE COUNTY** ELECTION SERVICES

## BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

### **Board Meeting Agenda**

Tuesday July 21, 2020

5:00 pm

#### Welcome of Visitors

- I. Approval of Minutes
- II. Office Updates
- III. Review of Early Voting Plan for General Election 2020

## **Buncombe County Board of Elections**

### **Meeting Minutes**

July 21, 2020

#### **Opening**

The scheduled meeting of the Buncombe County Board of Elections was called to order at 5:00 pm July 21, 2020 at 77 McDowell Street, Asheville, NC 28801.

In response to the COVID-19 threat and NC Stay at Home Order, the board meeting was held with limited in-person Board members and staff. The Board members and staff, along with the public, were in attendance over a virtual public access site hosted through the Public Teams meeting app. Directions on how to attend this virtual meeting were provided to the public on the Buncombe BOE website.

#### **Present**

##### **Board Members-**

Jake Quinn, Chairman (in person)  
Linda Block (in person)  
Stephen G. Duncan (virtual)  
Elizabeth Newman (in person)  
Jay Watson (in person)

##### **BOE Staff-**

Corinne Duncan, Director (in person)  
Kaylea Noce (in person)  
Neggy Fox (in person)  
Joyce Kanavel (in person)  
Kevin Roberts (in person)  
Bobby Johnston (in person)  
Daphne Young (in person)  
Leslie Offill (in person)

##### **Visitors-**

40 virtual guests

#### **Welcome Visitors and Introduction of Remote Meeting Features**

Chairman Jake Quinn welcomed virtual guests.

#### **Item One – Review and Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Quinn presented minutes from six meetings. The minutes from July 16, 2020 will not be presented today. Minutes from June 23 and June 26, 2020 had two small changes. Chairman Quinn moved to approve the minutes from June 20<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> 9AM, and 6<sup>th</sup> 11AM Canvass, 2020. Member Watson seconded, and the Board unanimously approved said minutes.

#### **Item Two – Office Update**

Director Duncan gave the following updates:

- A few virtual visitors have had a problem hearing portions of the meeting, everyone is asked to try to project their voice more.
- Registration has been getting calls concerning updates and new registrations. By law, Pollbooks must remain closed during an election cycle. Books closed on February 7<sup>th</sup> for Primary and reopened after the July 6<sup>th</sup>

Second Primary Canvass. There are over eleven thousand registration forms in the system waiting to be processed. Two thousand five hundred registration cards were sent out to voters this week. Registration has hired more staff to help in the process and all registration cards should be mailed out by the end of August. Public is asked to submit only one registration form and their patience is appreciated.

- Absentee has received over 6200 absentee requests to date. In comparison, the total number absentee requests for the 2016 General Election were 6800. We are hiring staff to help with the increase in requests. Deadline for requests is October 27, 2020 but we encourage voters to submit requests now. Most common cause of incomplete request is from the voter not signing the form. Ballots will begin being mailed September 4, 2020.
  - Absentee would like the Board to add an Absentee Board meeting on Tuesday September 22, 2020. Member Block moved to add the additional Absentee meeting on September 22, 2020 5 pm. Chairman Quinn seconded the motion, the Board unanimously approved.

### **Item Three – Review of Early Voting Plan for General Election 2020**

Staff member Fox presented the proposed Early Voting Plan (see attached). The General Election Early Voting sites must include COVID-19 safety considerations and meet the conditions of the July 17, 2020 Emergency Order Numbered Memo 2020-14 (attached), in addition to normal factors (ADA, parking, voter convenience, public input, etc).

- Five regularly used Early Voting sites do not meet the needs for social distancing.
- Proposing:
  - 15 Early Voting sites (1 site for every 12,997 voters)
    - This exceeds the Emergency Order requirement of 1 site for every 20,000 voters
    - Fourteen sites and two potential sites (one in North and another South Asheville) which would bring the sites to sixteen total
    - Cutoff date for the Board to finalize the plan is July 28th
    - See attached for sites contacted in regards to potential additional North and South Asheville Early Voting sites.
  - Open seven days a week
    - Monday through Friday
      - 8:00 am to 7:30 pm (mandated by Emergency Order)
      - Two work shifts per day
    - All Saturdays and both Sundays 10 am-3 pm, last Saturday 8 am- 3 pm
      - Staff will work one long shift on a weekend day, allowing for one day off.
    - Last Saturday (October 31, 2020) will be open 8 am to 3 pm (State mandated time)
  - Site decisions were based on historic data from 2016 General Election average weekend turnout by hour
- Board members expressed appreciation for the proposed plan and the work that went into making it happen. The sites cover both the urban and rural areas. All the various variables have been taken into consideration, along with historical data.
  - Member Watson moved to adopt the proposed plan as presented by staff for the confirmed fourteen Early Voting sites open on week days along with Saturday and Sunday. Weekend hours are shorter with one work shift. Board will await the staff to locate and confirm a fifteenth site in South Asheville and sixteenth site in North Asheville. Member Duncan seconded the motion, the Board unanimously approved.



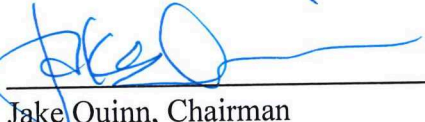
**Public Comments:**

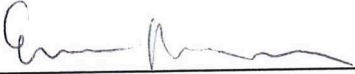
Public questions regarding COVID precautions and electioneering at voting locations were answered. Some discussion regarding how historical data influenced the location of Early Voting sites and how voting will be conducted at larger Early Voting locations.

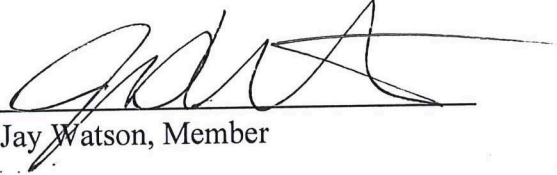
The meeting adjourned at 6:08 pm. The next meeting will be 5:00 pm on September 22, 2020, at 77 McDowell Street, Asheville, NC 28801.

Minutes submitted by: Mary Harrill

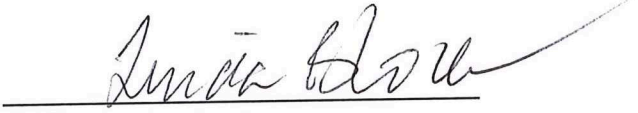
Approved by:

  
Jake Quinn, Chairman

  
Elizabeth Newman, Secretary

  
Jay Watson, Member

  
Stephen G. Duncan, Member

  
Linda Block, Member





# Early Voting Proposal

*Presented by*

**Neggy Fox**

Election Services



**BUNCOMBE COUNTY**



# Meeting Goals

- Number of Early Voting sites
- Weekend hours of operation
- Decision must be unanimous to pass
- Plan submission deadline of August 7<sup>th</sup>



# Plan Considerations

## Data

Number of sites  
Number of registered voters  
Historical data  
County comparison

## Suitability

ADA compliant  
Parking  
Convenience to voters  
Square footage  
Budget

## Other Factors

Public input  
Capacity of staff and facilities  
Current laws  
Emergency order



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# COVID-19 Considerations

- Adhere to mandated safeguards
- Larger spaces to accommodate social distancing requirements
- Longer ballot increases time spent at sites
- Hiring additional staff to sanitize sites daily



# COVID-19 Considerations

These sites are **too small** for proper social distancing:

1. North Asheville Library
2. Fairview Library
3. Leicester Library
4. West Asheville Library
5. Election Services Warehouse



# Proposed Plan

- 15 Early Voting sites
- Open all Saturdays
- Open both Sundays
- Specific weekend hours = one shift





# Comparison: Site to Voter Ratio

## Buncombe County

- Proposed Sites = 15
- Registered voters = 194,961\*
- Site to voter ratio = 1:12,997

## Forsyth County

- Proposed sites = 17
- Registered voters = 259,629\*
- Site to voter ratio = 1:15,272

## Mecklenburg County

- Proposed sites = up to 30
- Registered voters = 758,015\*
- Site to voter ratio = 1:25,267

## Wake County

- Proposed sites = 20
- Registered voters = 763,873\*
- Site to voter ratio = 1:38,196

\*As of 7/11/2020 – Source SBOE website, voter registration statistics.



**BUNCOMBE COUNTY**



# Comparison: Hours 2016 vs 2020

2 • Hours of operation  
0 determined by Board

1 • 16 sites opened first,  
6 4 additional sites  
opened the last week

• Cumulative hours = 2100

• Average voters per  
hour/per site = 39.24

2 • Mandated weekday hours  
0 8:00am to 7:30pm

2 • If one sites opens, all sites  
0 must open, includes  
weekdays and weekends

• Cumulative hours = 2475

• Increased hours by 375

• Increase of 18% over 2016



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# Proposed Sites

1. Wesley Grant Southside Center  
(in lieu of BOE)
2. Harrah's Cherokee Center –  
Asheville (Civic Center)
3. Asheville Mall
4. Weaverville Town Hall
5. Enka-Candler Library
6. South Buncombe Library
7. Black Mountain Library
8. UNC-Asheville
9. West Asheville Community Center
10. Leicester Community Center
11. Fairview Community Center
12. Asheville Outlets
13. Bee Tree Fire Department
14. Land of Sky Regional Council
15. *Turtle Creek Shopping Center\**
16. *2<sup>nd</sup> North Asheville location\**



BUNCOMBE COUNTY





## **\*If Possible...**

- Secondary locations if sites can be secured:
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> South Asheville location – Turtle Creek Shopping Ctr
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> North Asheville location – Reynolds Village
- Significant effort has been made toward site research.
- We recommend a cut-off date of July 28<sup>th</sup> to allow for recruitment and advertisement to begin.



# Sites Contacted

## Not Available:

1. Warren Wilson College
2. Red Cross Building (N. Asheville)
3. Old Rite Aid Retail Space (N. Asheville)
4. Asheville Country Club (N. Asheville)
5. The Carolina Movie Theater (S. Asheville)

## Awaiting response:

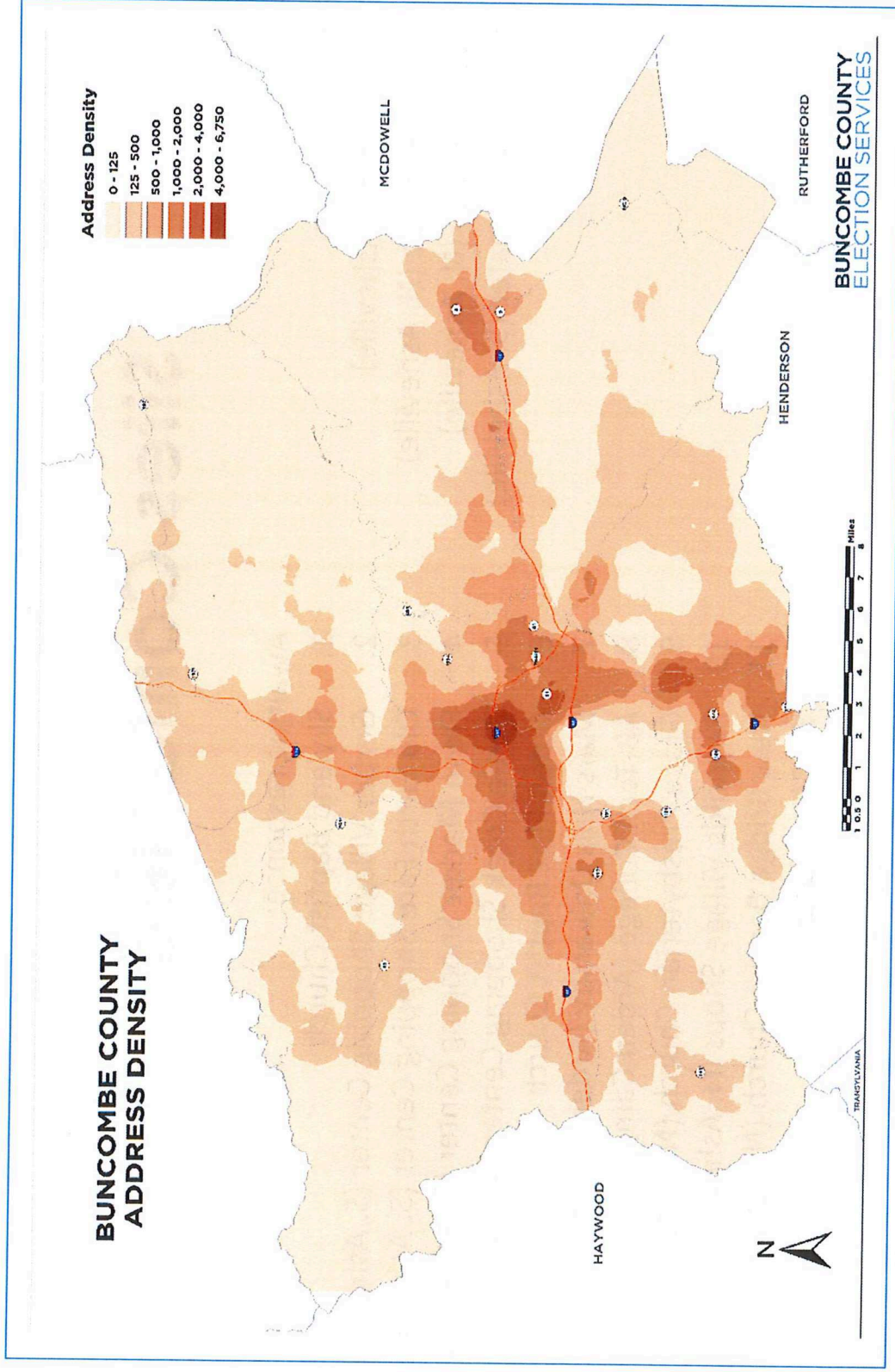
1. Skyland Baptist Church
2. Gerber Village Shopping Center (S. Asheville)
3. Old Earth Fare Shopping Center (S. Asheville)
4. Fresh Market Shopping Center (S. Asheville)
5. Turtle Creek Shopping Center (S. Asheville)\*
6. Arden First Baptist Church
7. Mars Hills University (Arden Campus)\*
8. AB-Tech College (Arden Campus)
9. Grace Presbyterian Church (N. Asheville)\*
10. Reynolds Village Shops (N. Asheville)\*
11. New Bridge Baptist Church (N. Asheville)
12. YMCA – Woodfin\*

\* Site is considering our request



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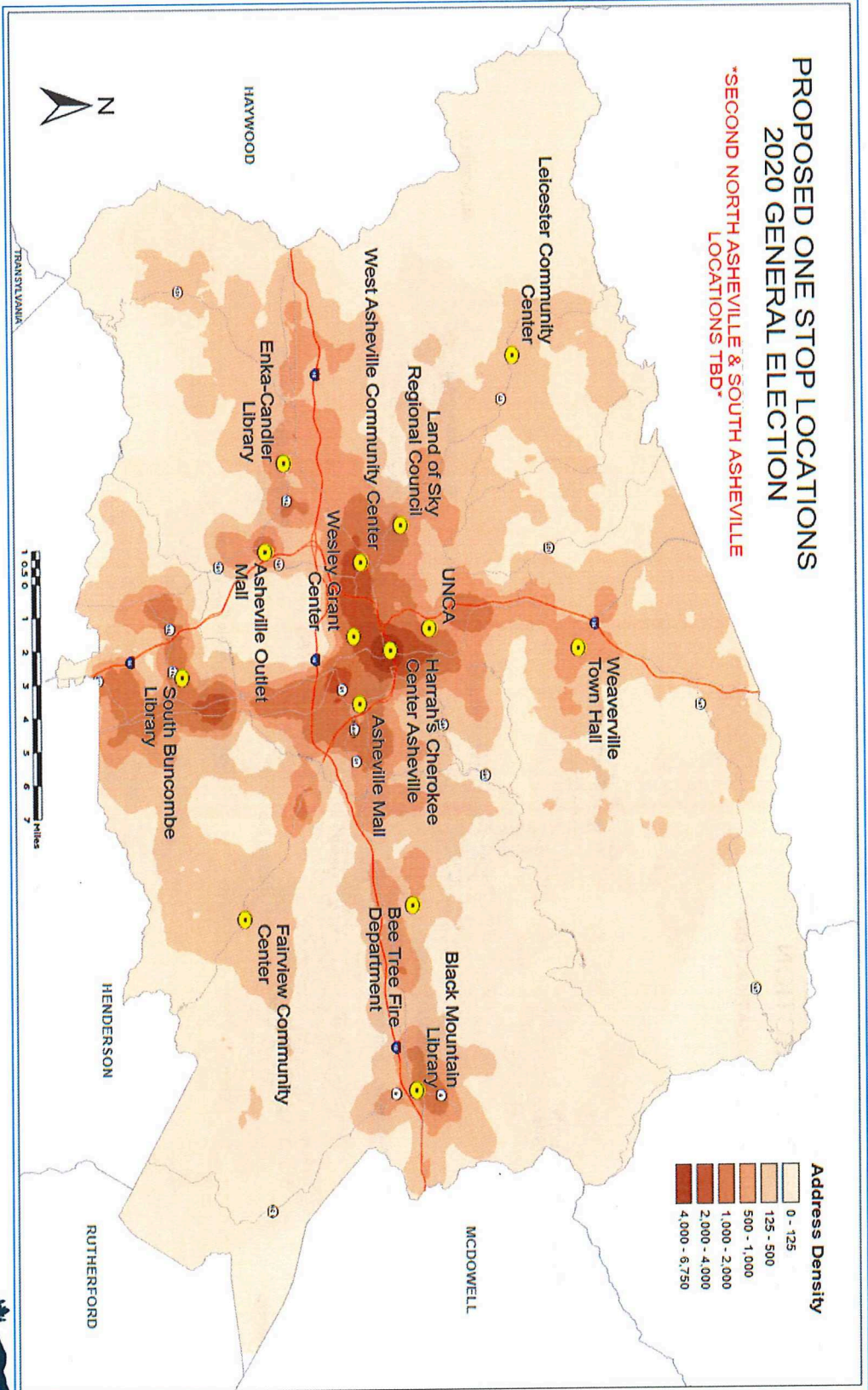
**BUNCOMBE COUNTY**





# PROPOSED ONE STOP LOCATIONS 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

\*SECOND NORTH ASHEVILLE & SOUTH ASHEVILLE  
LOCATIONS TBD\*

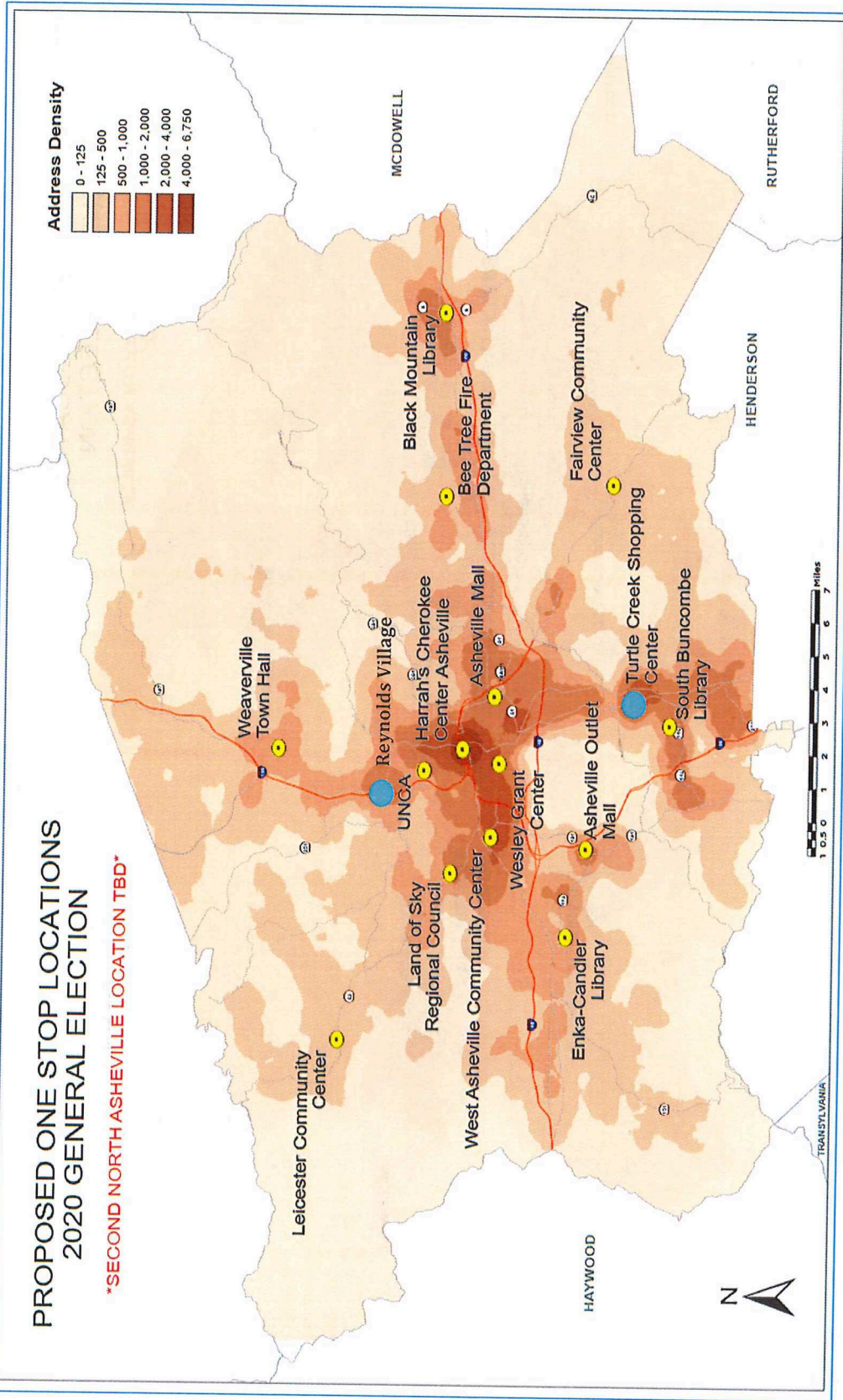
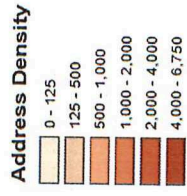


BUNCOMBE COUNTY



# PROPOSED ONE STOP LOCATIONS 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

\*SECOND NORTH ASHEVILLE LOCATION TBD\*





# Hours of Operation

Current mandate :

- If one site opens, all sites must open with same hours
- Weekdays – 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- Last Saturday (October 31<sup>st</sup>) – 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Weekend hours determined by County Board

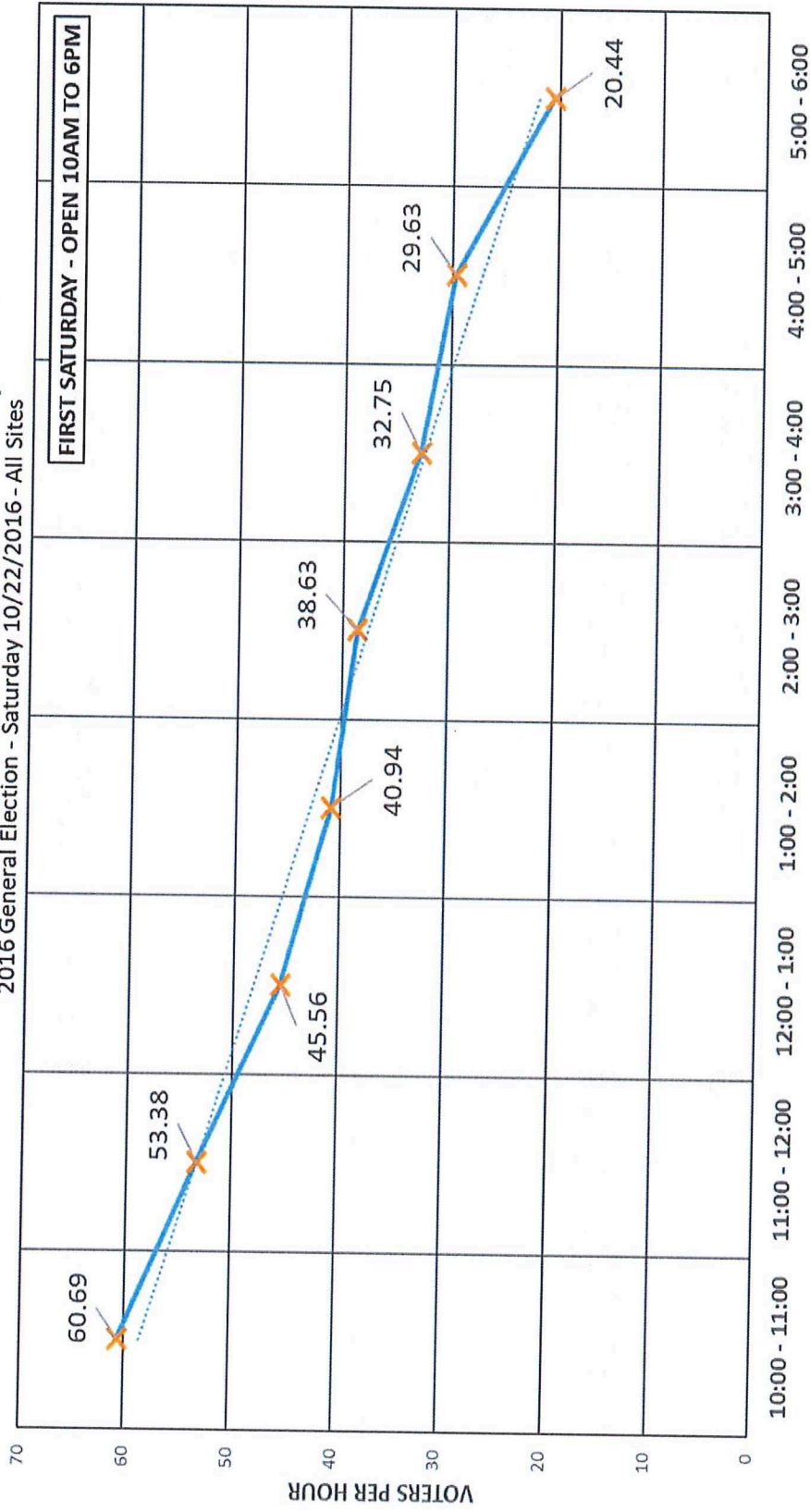


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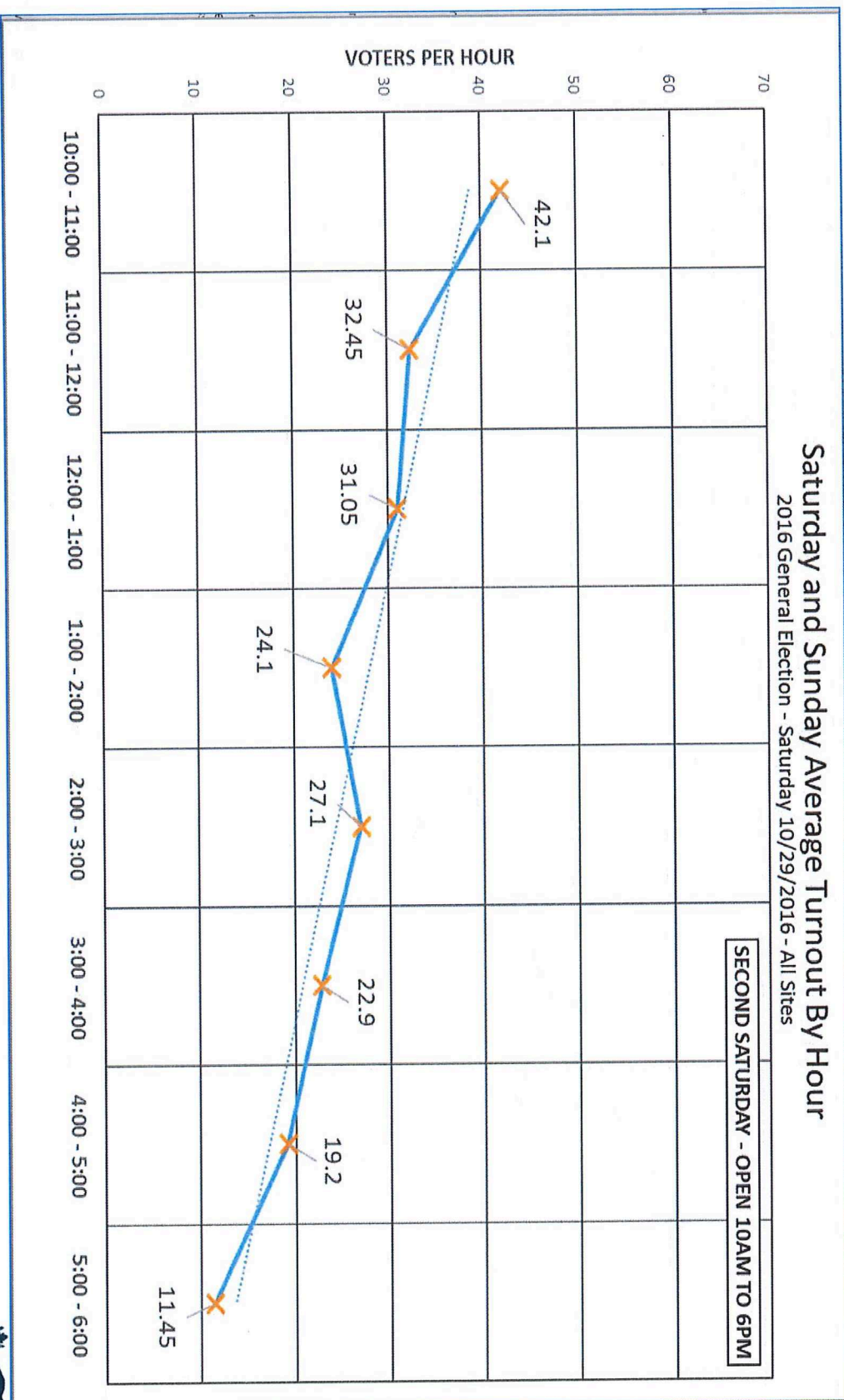
# Saturday and Sunday Average Turnout By Hour 2016 General Election - Saturday 10/22/2016 - All Sites



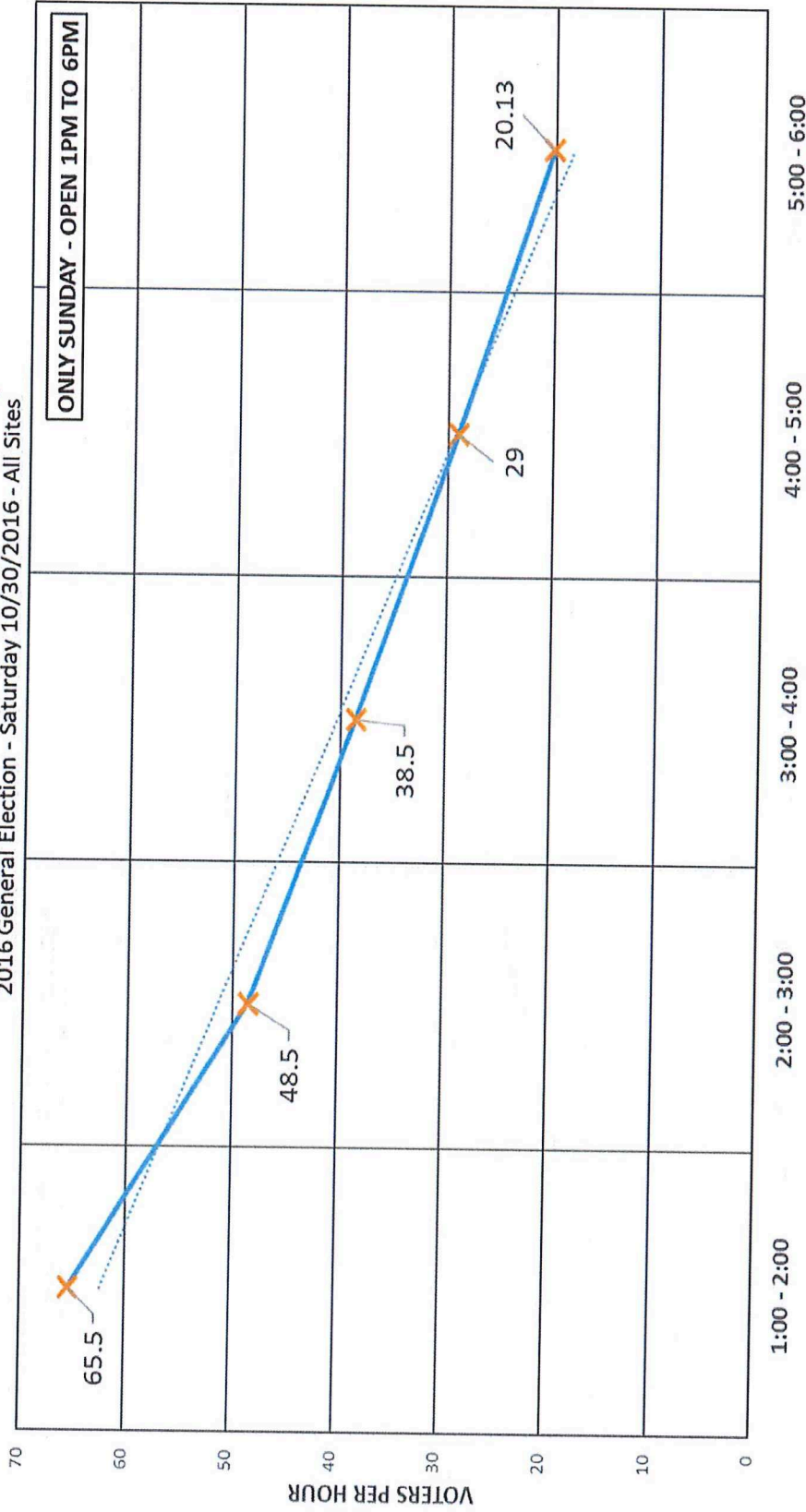
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# Saturday and Sunday Average Turnout By Hour 2016 General Election - Saturday 10/29/2016 - All Sites



# Saturday and Sunday Average Turnout By Hour 2016 General Election - Saturday 10/30/2016 - All Sites



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# **Proposed Weekend Hours**

**Saturday 10/17 and 10/24**

**10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Sunday 10/18 and 10/25**

**10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**



**BUNCOMBE COUNTY**



# Proposed Plan Overview

## 15 Early Voting Sites

October 15 – October 30

Monday – Friday

8:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Saturday (October 31 - Last Day)

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

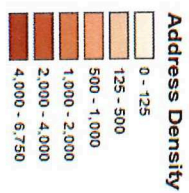
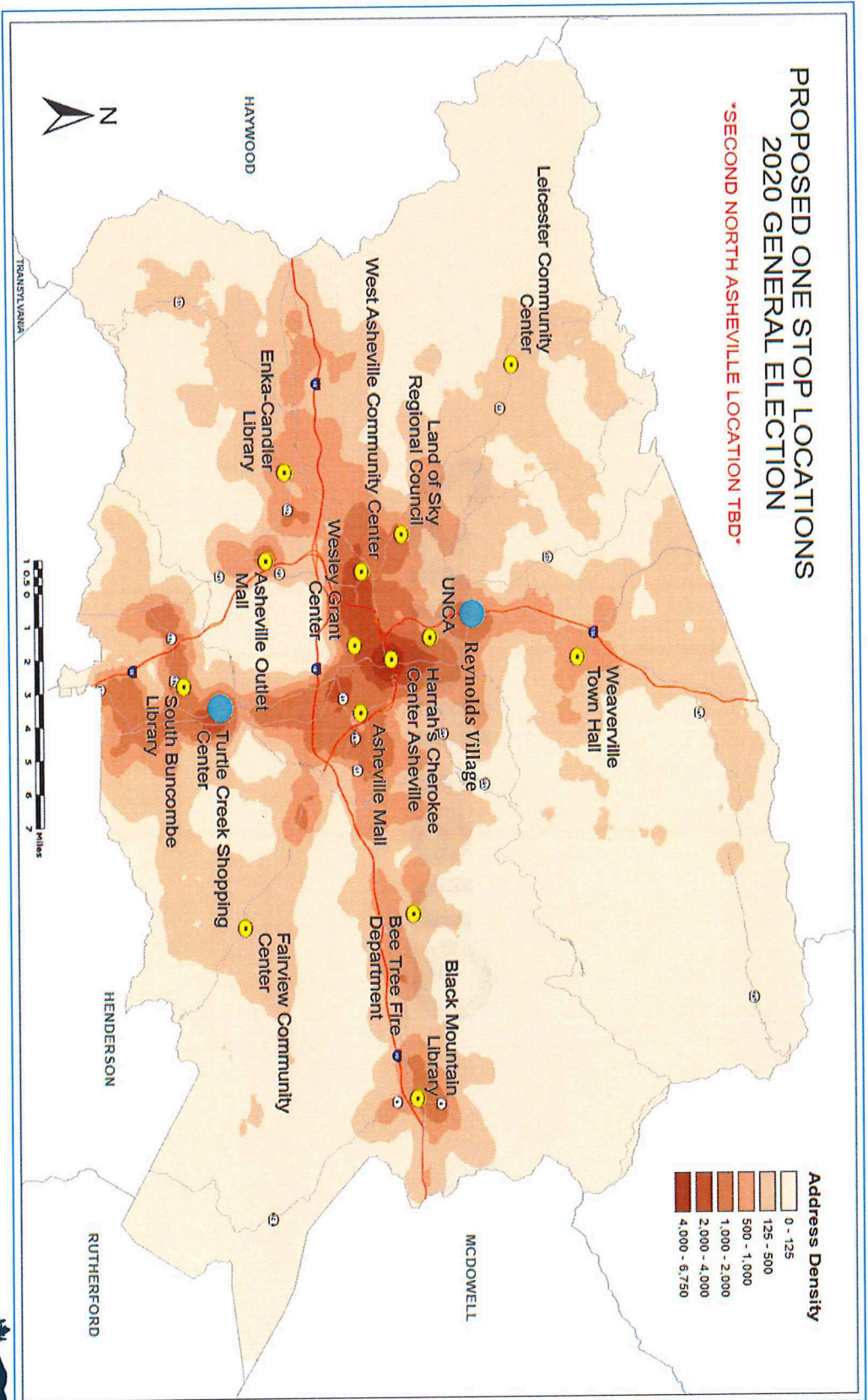


BUNCOMBE COUNTY



# PROPOSED ONE STOP LOCATIONS 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

\*SECOND NORTH ASHEVILLE LOCATION TBD\*



BUNCOMBE COUNTY





# Questions?



**BUNCOMBE COUNTY**





# NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

*Mailing Address:*  
P.O. Box 27255  
Raleigh, NC 27611

(919) 814-0700 or  
(866) 522-4723

*Fax:* (919) 715-0135

## Numbered Memo 2020-14

**TO:** County Boards of Elections  
**FROM:** Karen Brinson Bell, Executive Director  
**RE:** Emergency Order of July 17, 2020  
**DATE:** July 23, 2020

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### Emergency Order

Last week I issued an Emergency Order pursuant to my authority under G.S. § 163-27.1 and 08 NCAC 01.0106, which authorize me to exercise emergency powers to conduct an election where the normal schedule is disrupted by a catastrophe arising from natural causes that has resulted in a disaster declaration by the President of the United States or the Governor, while avoiding unnecessary conflict with the laws of North Carolina. The emergency measures are calculated to offset the nature and scope of the disruption from the COVID-19 disaster.

The order directs that county boards of elections comply with the following requirements:

1. All county boards of elections shall open each one-stop early voting site in their county for a minimum of ten hours total for each of the first and second weekends of the 17-day early voting period. A county-board office or in-lieu-of site (as defined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-227.6) that is open only during regular business hours shall be excluded from the requirement in this paragraph, provided that there is at least one other one-stop site in the county.
2. Each county board of elections shall open at least one one-stop early voting site per 20,000 registered voters in the county, as reflected in the voter registration records as of July 11, 2020. A county board of elections may apply to the Executive Director for a waiver of the requirement in this paragraph if its proposed plan is sufficient to serve the voting population, maintain social distancing and reduce the likelihood of long lines.
3. Any county board of elections that only has only one one-stop early voting site shall arrange for a backup site and backup staff in the event that its site must be shut down or in the event that there is a lack of sufficient staffing due to COVID-19.

4. Any county board of elections may open its sites earlier than 8:00 a.m. and/or may stay open later than 7:30 p.m., provided that the sites (other than the county-board office or in-lieu-of site, if only open regular business hours) are all open at the same time.
5. All county boards of elections shall post visible signage outside each one-stop site to inform voters of the location and hours of all one-stop sites in the county so voters can assess, while abiding by social distancing guidelines outside the polling location, whether to go to a different location.
6. If a county board of elections learns that one of its polling places for a precinct is inaccessible because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the county board of elections may request a transfer of some voters to an adjacent precinct. The request is subject to approval by the Executive Director and shall explain why the partial transfer is necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how the proposal is consistent with the criteria in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-130.2(3)-(7). The request must be received at least 45 days prior to the election. No later than 30 days prior to the election, the county board of elections shall mail a notice of precinct change to each registered voter who, as a result of the change, will be assigned to a different voting place.
7. All county boards shall:
  - a. Provide for social distancing at voting sites, including by applying appropriate markings and providing appropriate barriers, including barriers between elections officials and voters at check-in;
  - b. Provide for frequent sanitation of common surfaces, hand-sanitizer, and single-use ballot-marking devices;
  - c. Require that elections officials wear face coverings, and make face coverings available to voters who do not bring their own. Voters will not be required to wear a face covering to vote;
  - d. Require face shields or partitions and gloves for all election officials where appropriate for the task.

The order is effective until November 4, 2020, and does not apply to future elections.

## **One-Stop Plans**

### **Submission Deadline**

The deadline for submission of one-stop plans is extended to **Friday, August 7, 2020**. This modifies [Numbered Memo 2020-13](#), which had set a deadline of July 31, 2020.

We anticipate that the State Board will hold its meeting to consider non-unanimous plans on August 31, 2020. The three weeks between the submission deadline and the State Board's meeting



is necessary to compile data and research for the State Board's consideration of non-unanimous one-stop plans.

### **Modification of Existing Plans**

If a county board has already adopted a plan, the board will need to meet again to modify its plan unless the plan complies with all requirements. All board members must attend and vote for a plan for it to be unanimous. You must also submit a new plan to the State Board using the survey link.

To modify a plan, a county board must notice a meeting at least 48 hours in advance. The meeting notice must be sent to the list of members of the public and media who have requested notice of board meetings. The notice must also be posted on the county board website, if maintained by the county board, and on the principle bulletin board, or if none, then the door of the usual meeting room. We encourage county boards to hold meetings remotely, if possible. A call-in number must be provided for the public to listen in to remote meetings, and we recommend you provide this service for any board meeting so that members of the public who are unable to attend may listen to the meeting. Your board may choose to accept public comment during its board meeting and/or in writing in advance of the meeting. While public comment is not required, we recommend your board accept public comment to provide a source of input from voters who have an interest in their county's one-stop plan.

### **Requirement of 1 site per 20,000 voters**

Pursuant to the emergency order, one-stop plans for the 2020 general election must include one site per 20,000 registered voters. For example, if a county board that has 19,000 registered voters, the requirement is satisfied by opening one site, either the county board office or in lieu of site. Because there is only one site, that site must be open at least the following hours: weekdays from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., 10 hours on the first weekend, 10 hours on the second weekend, and the last Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. If a county has 21,000 registered voters, for example, they are required to open two sites. Similarly, if a county has 117,000 registered voters, they are required to open six sites. If a county has at least two sites, they are not required to open their county board office or in lieu of site on the weekends if it is only open regular business hours.

### **Waiver Requests**

A county board may request a waiver of the requirement of one site per 20,000 registered voters. The request must be made in writing in the form of a resolution or letter from the county board of elections and should indicate whether the request is unanimous. No particular form is required.

The waiver request must specify in detail how the board's proposed plan meets the requirements of the emergency order. If the resolution or letter from the county board does not include this information, the director may provide a supplemental letter with the necessary details.

A county board must demonstrate in its request that the proposed plan is sufficient to:

1. Serve the voting population;
2. Maintain social distancing; and
3. Reduce the likelihood of long lines.

The request should include details about the proposed sites, such as the square footage and number of voting booths or machines that may be accommodated, and the anticipated number of voters Who will be able to vote at the site. Keep in mind that it will take slightly longer for voters to vote this fall due to the protective measures in place. We encourage you to include in your request references to prior elections, including comparisons of the number of one-stop sites, turnout, average wait time, and days on which voter turnout was highest, to demonstrate why the proposed plan meets the required criteria. The burden is on the county board of elections to demonstrate why a waiver is justified.

A waiver will not be approved based on a summarily stated concern for lack of pollworkers or the cost of additional sites. Please be mindful that this emergency order was issued to ensure proper social distancing, reduce long lines, and accommodate the voting population so that we reduce the exposure to coronavirus. The more we spread the opportunity for voters to vote during the 17-day early voting period the less their exposure to coronavirus, including reducing long lines and issues with social distancing on Election Day.

Unanimous requests will be considered by the Executive Director, and non-unanimous requests will be considered by the State Board. Waiver requests should be submitted to Davy Lowman, In-person Voting Program Specialist, at [davy.lowman@ncsbe.gov](mailto:davy.lowman@ncsbe.gov).

### **Use of Federal Funds**

State Emergency Management and DHHS will be supplying personal protective equipment (PPE) needs for all 100 county boards of elections. Provided PPE will include face masks for voters and elections officials, face shields and gloves for elections officials, disposable cotton swabs as styluses for ballot marking devices, screen wipes, and disinfecting wipes for all polling locations. We are also finalizing plans for the SBE to provide single-use pens to all counties and are working with a national distillery to provide hand sanitizer for all voting locations in the state.

These contributions free up several million dollars in CARES Act funds to allow county boards of elections to pay for other needs related to efforts to respond to the pandemic. County boards may use CARES Act funds to pay for additional one-stop sites and workers needed because of the pandemic, including due to the requirements outlined in the July 17, 2020 Emergency Order. You may also use the funds for things such as poll worker pay, lease fees on alternative polling sites, increased postage costs due to increased absentee by mail requests, and other efforts to respond to coronavirus.