

This legislation does permit localities to continue using electronic voting machines that are already in place. By purchasing new digital scan voting machines, the City will increase its capacity to move voters through the polls and reduce delays while staying compliant with Virginia law. The new machines will provide a voter verifiable paper trail.

After seven years of use, the eSlate continues to perform well, and the system has accurately recorded close to half a million votes. As such, the City is planning to keep at least one eSlate machine at each polling place in order to better accommodate individuals with disabilities, including voters who are blind or visually impaired. In addition to these accessible machines, the City will continue using the current software and absentee paper ballot features that are part of this system.

Because the new digital scan voting machines will operate with inexpensive paper ballots and portable voting booths, it will be easy to expand or contract the number of voting booths available at each polling place. This will provide the flexibility to add a large number of portable voting booths for large elections such as the 2012 General Election.

Operating Costs Associated with Purchase of Digital Scan Voting Equipment:

It is projected that an additional \$19,000 per year will be needed for operating costs associated with the digital scan voting machines. This will provide funding to print ballots, pay license fees for the new equipment and pay for operating supplies for the new machines.

Summary and Future Actions:

The Alexandria Electoral Board, which is comprised of three members who are appointed to staggered three-year terms by the Alexandria Circuit Court, is responsible for overseeing election activities in the City. During the next year, the Electoral Board and its staff will research the City's options for purchasing additional voting machines to increase our capacity for the Presidential Election. Currently, the only viable option is to purchase digital scan voting machines, but it is possible that the State legislature could lift the ban on purchasing electronic machines and that would expand our options. In either case, the City will be required to purchase voting equipment that has been tested and authorized by the State Board of Elections. The Electoral Board and its staff will consider all viable options and make a recommendation to City Council by early calendar year 2012. Thereafter, the Board plans to acquire voting equipment in the summer in time for use in the November election.