

## King County Elections

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**From:** Egan, Bobbie  
**Sent:** Friday, August 18, 2006 9:55 AM  
**To:** Bascom, Brooke; Duncan, Carolyn

FYI -- The report we released in January was intended to be an assessment of the impact moving to VBM in 2006 versus 2007 would have on our organization. The January report identified the need for a project team whose job it will be to provide an implementation plan. Ultimately, the funding we received from the Council was to fund a VBM team and I believe we only rec'd that funding in June/July.. We are in the process of hiring that project team that will develop the detailed work plan and outline for moving King County to all mail voting,

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**From:** Coppersmith, Megan  
**Sent:** Friday, August 18, 2006 9:24 AM  
**To:** Egan, Bobbie  
**Subject:** FW: Sound Politics piece on Ron Sims

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# SOUND POLITICS

Sound Commentary on Current Events in Seattle, Puget Sound and  
Washington State

« [Darcy Burner passes gas, burns Cantwell, Dicks, Larsen](#) | [Main](#)

August 17, 2006

## A MAN, NO PLAN, A CANARD: RON SIMS!

Ron Sims discussing his mail-only voting scheme on KUOW *Weekday*, **June 15**:

We do have a very good plan. And Dean has really put together a very, very good plan

[[audio clip of quote](#). complete exchange online at KUOW starts at 5:28]

I've been seeing indications for the last two months that **Sims didn't really have a plan** for mail-only voting. Now I've seen what Sims calls his "plan" and I can say with assurance that he really doesn't have a plan.

Timeline: I sent a [records request to Sims' spokesman on June 20th](#) asking for the details of the "very, very good plan". Deanron responded a few days later indicating that **the documents would be produced by July 20th**. On July 20th I received a letter indicating that there were **1,968 pages responsive to my request**, and that I could get copies of all of them

as soon as I paid \$295.20. I asked to review the documents before I ordered copies. I didn't hear back until I received a letter on August 10, informing me that there were actually "**730 responsive documents**", and that I could get copies of all of them as soon as I paid \$109.50. I asked again to review the documents before I ordered copies. Yesterday I was able to review what were represented to me as "**all documents responsive to your June 20, 2006**". As I suspected, these documents cannot reasonably be characterized as an adequate plan for the transition to mail-only voting.

Most of the substance is in this **glossy brochure**, which was released on January 31. It's not a plan, but mostly a lot of half-baked brainstorming, and at best what one source called "**a plan for a plan**". What then were the "730 responsive documents"? It included multiple copies of the January 31 document and multiple copies of various working drafts and source memos for the January 31 document. There were also some additional documents of interest, such as working memos with details that didn't make it in the final version, interna e-mails, correspondence with prospective vendors.

What was most interesting about the documents is that reveal how rushed and incomplete of a job King County did in order to create the minimal semblance of a "plan" that Sims could trot out to the Council and the news media.

\* The only real work on the "plan" **commenced on January 11**. (I find it interesting that **Paul Tanaka** attended the kick-off meeting to provide "context". Tanaka is one level above Dean Logan in the King County foodchain, and his presence signals to me that Ron Sims had a personal interest in this project above and beyond his routine responsibility for election administration).

\* The work on the plan was essentially finished on January 26. The next few days appear to have been spent wordsmithing the meeting notes into a somewhat readable document.

\* **This e-mail from Bill Huennekens** acknowledged that they really don't have much information other than product literature on some of the vendors they're considering.

\* This e-mail from one of the project leaders calls the whole process "**rushed**".

\* I saw no documents that would indicate that any substantive work has been done since the glossy brochure was finished on January 31.

This all makes one wonder -- if this was such an important project to improve accuracy and accountability of election administration, why was there such a rush to produce a plan-like document in 3 weeks, only to suspend all further work on the plan? One gets the impression that the whole thing was all about Ron Sims' hard-on to ram this through the Council as quickly as possible.

And by the way, King County just scored a \$4.7 million federal HAVA grant for mail ballot processing equipment, which Ron Sims calls "**the foundation for the County to transition to all mail voting**." Hmm. If I am to believe that the documents I was shown yesterday are "**all documents responsive**" to my request for the mail-only voting plan, then there is no plan for spending the HAVA money. Somebody should alert the federal auditors.

Posted by **Stefan Sharkansky** at August 17, 2006 06:40 PM | [Email This](#)

## Comments

1. Love the headline!

Posted by: **Michele** on August 17, 2006 06:46 PM

2. Hey, the HAVA grant is just another fed handout with no accountability. Sims will probably use the money to maintain trees on public rights of way.

Posted by: **Hunter** on August 17, 2006 07:48 PM

3. let's put this into historical and cultural perspective of one's Great Contemporaries and Ethnic Leaders:

'...if you can't convict, you must acquit...'

will history repeat itself? usually does for those who don't remember...

HAVA nice day!

Posted by: **Jimmie-howya-doin** on August 17, 2006 07:53 PM

4. Stefan,

I would love to hear Larry Phillips response. After all, remember the big City Council meeting where the public was allowed to comment on mail voting?

Does Larry Phillips want to reconsider his support in light of your exposure of lack of planning from the Sims camp? Or wouldn't that at least be grounds for revisiting the issue and taking more public input?

One would think that all parties would be concerned about moving a county as large as King County to all mail balloting with no more consideration than a glossy brochure and some brainstorming amongst election staff?

Posted by: **Jeff B.** on August 17, 2006 08:46 PM

5. Woa! Who says Ron doesn't have a plan? Anyone who can get away with all that he has and still be in office has a plan, believe me. And as I see it he is working diligently on maintaining the status quo.

Posted by: **Fed Up** on August 17, 2006 09:56 PM

6. Was there any paperwork in the material the elections office assembled for you, showing any request/need for federal money from HAVA? It's hard to believe someone from the federal government just said: "" Hey, we've got more money than we need, lets send some to King County, so they can buy some mail processing equipment."" It's even harder to believe that a Jan 11, 2006 King County meeting could generate a \$4 million dollar grant being approved in Washington in Aug.

Posted by: **pagar** on August 18, 2006 05:07 AM

7. <http://www.secstate.wa.gov/Elections/pdf/HAVA%20Grant%20Process.pdf>

HAVA grants info for Wa State

Interesting 7 page pdf file from sos office. also worth noting, Dean Logan was on the Advisory Board !!!!

Posted by: **Chris** on August 18, 2006 06:37 AM

8. Dean Logan, Page 3 of the glossy brochure: "Following a successful implementation process, we will be the largest jurisdiction in the nation to conduct all elections by mail. In doing so, we have the opportunity to be a regional and national model for elections management. Our recommendations were formed with that in mind."

And whenever asked about supporting an elected auditor, Ron Sims says that King County is too large for one.

Posted by: **Commentator Anonymous** on August 18, 2006 07:03 AM

9. Wow,

Just got done reading the questions on the grant request for HAVA funds. Like 3 big questions. After further digging ([http://www.secstate.wa.gov/Elections/hava/HAVA\\_board\\_meeting\\_minutes\\_10272005.aspx](http://www.secstate.wa.gov/Elections/hava/HAVA_board_meeting_minutes_10272005.aspx)) and ([http://www.secstate.wa.gov/Elections/hava/HAVA\\_board\\_meeting\\_minutes\\_01232006.aspx](http://www.secstate.wa.gov/Elections/hava/HAVA_board_meeting_minutes_01232006.aspx)) it becomes evident that the board just bent over backwards to DeanRon.

I would like to get ahold of KC's application to see the detail of the request for funding.

Posted by: **Chris** on August 18, 2006 07:14 AM

10. Mr Sims plan: Mo' money, mo' power.

Posted by: **Jericho** on August 18, 2006 07:27 AM

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