

February 4, 2010

To: LCOG Executive Committee

From: George Kloeppe

Subject: Pursuit of a “Climate” of Enhanced Regional Prosperity, Agenda Item 3

An opinion: It is a healthy thing that the policy makers of this organization struggle with the prioritization of important regional issues and the identification of the most constructive steps that LCOG can take to increase the well-being of the region.

If valid, the above statement suggests that we are healthy, indeed. After reviewing the results of the Board’s Planning Session in September, the Executive Committee concluded, and so advised the Board, that it could profitably address shortcomings in the areas of human services coordination and communication. Further, the Committee recommended that task teams be utilized to identify the most constructive steps to bring about improvement. The Board heard this recommendation in December and concluded that, as an alternative, economic enhancement and the creation and retention of well-paying jobs should be the agency’s focus in 2010. When the Executive Committee met in January, it was concluded that the three identified issues were interrelated and that, together, they constituted a road map for a constructive venture by the LCOG organization.

It was agreed that the Chair should act to establish a task team to flesh out the goals identified at the Planning Session and to recommend focused actions that were targeted to bring about measureable improvements. The Committee recommended that a task team be named and confirmed at the February Board meeting, and that that team would (1) include both Board members and other knowledgeable individuals; (2) be asked to utilize three subcommittees (human services coordination, communication and job creation); and (3) meet as necessary in order to report back to the Board at its April 29 meeting with specific recommended action steps.

I would suggest that, to be effective, the task team should be kept to a manageable size (18-20) and that the Chair ask specific individuals to lead both the full team and the subcommittees. It is suggested that each of the three subcommittees include 3 or 4 willing Board members and 3 or 4 key persons with expertise in the topic area under review. As an example:

SUBCOMMITTEE ONE Economic Enhancement/Jobs

Board Member _____

Board Member _____

Board Member _____

Key Person Jack Roberts (industry support, recruitment)

Key Person Chuck Forster (job training)

Key Person Michael McKenzie-Bahr (infrastructure development)

Key Person Steve Dignam* (business assistance, loans)

SUBCOMMITTEE TWO Human Services Coordination

Board Member _____

Board Member _____

Board Member _____

Key Person Kay Metzger* (seniors and disabled support system)

Key Person Priscilla Gould (funding, volunteerism, agency coordination)

Key Person Steve Manela (non profit support, coordination)

SUBCOMMITTEE THREE Communication

Board Member _____

Board Member _____

Board Member _____

Key Person Brenda Wilson (intergovernmental relations, advocacy)

Key Person Jody Cline* (technology)

Key Person _____

This model can certainly be modified in a number of ways, but is offered as a starting point. It would tap nine members of the Board of Directors (including some or all of the Executive Committee members) and a more-or-less equal number of non-elected persons, both from within and outside of government. After the February Board meeting, the staff would assist in getting the full group together. That meeting would include (1) a brief gathering of the whole body (reinforcing purpose, orientation and process) and (2) meetings of the three subgroups. It is very important that there be a clear expectation of outcomes, both for the whole task force and for the three subgroups.

To that end, let me suggest for the Committee's consideration the following:

Purpose and Intended Outcome from the Work of the Task Force

With input from the subcommittees, identify specific steps that the LCOG organization can take that will complement the work of others in the region to integrate job creation, human services coordination and communication to establish a climate of prosperity and well-being in the region, and to craft a report and recommendation for the consideration of the LCOG Board.

Purpose and Intended Outcomes of the Subcommittees

With the larger mission in mind, to assess the designated subject areas, determine deficits or inhibiting factors in the achievement of objectives, and propose action steps to the task force.

While this effort is important and valuable to the region, it is not supported with grant or contract funds. Hence, it is suggested that COG staff members both provide support to and participate as members of the subcommittees; staff members identified with * would sit on subcommittees, both for their professional knowledge and to assure that the groups' needs are met. I would expect to provide staff support to the full task force.

Finally, I would say that this is a potentially exciting venture with elegantly unknown prospective outcomes. The Board of Directors has demonstrated significant energy and interest in the proposition that their council of governments can bring about improvements in the well-being of the community, without overpromising and without duplicating the efforts of others. The Executive Committee's task is to structure a process that gives life and meaning to that proposition.