

August 6, 2009

To: LCOG Executive Committee

From: George Kloeppe

Subject: Board of Directors' Planning Session, Agenda Item 2

The Board's Planning Session on September 24 is over a month away, but the Committee's attention to both the process and the substance of the event will be very helpful. Ann Mortenson has contacted all members of the Board (successfully reaching the majority) and asked for three important issues. The results of her survey can be found on the attachment.

Let me here offer a presumed purpose statement and a proposed design, both of which the Committee is welcome and invited to challenge and modify.

Purpose of the Session: I believe that the Board's work in September will provide guidance and direction to staff and the Executive Committee with respect to priority activities for the LCOG organization. In February, the question was: What can the Board do to enhance the quality of life in the region.... I think that remains a good construct. But the agency, as well as its policy Board, can be considered a resource for addressing priority issues. Realistically, if agreement can be reached on one, two or three areas of increased emphasis, and a commitment made to pursue constructive actions, the Session will have been a great success.

Design of the Session: The Committee's insights are vital here. My sense is that the Planning Session will have three basic components.

A. Review the Data

After the Board's short business agenda is dispensed with (about a half hour), we would begin with and overview and discussion around the issues that were identified by Board members. Either Greg or I could lead that discussion and the object would be to clarify the issues and to refine the groupings. Certainly, additional points could be raised, but fundamentally this step would be to set the

stage the small group discussion of what can be done. This first step would probably take 45 minutes.

B. Identify the Visions

Then, based upon the groupings, the Board would be divided into four groups—four or five persons per group—whose task would be to focus on desired outcomes. I would suggest that the rubrics for the small group discussion not constrain the task (at this point) to what LCOG can do, but rather encourage the identification of *where we want to be*. This middle section of the Session's design is really the nut of the Board's planning work. We would have a skilled staff member facilitating each of the groups. It will be important to have the four groups move past complaining about what is wrong (the issues) and get to a collective sense of what is desired (a vision). The groups would be asked to identify, and later report to the full Board, TWO visions for a better community. With the logistics involved, the small group discussions will probably take an hour.

C. Refine, Prioritize, Actualize

Reassembled as the full Board, a representative of each of the four groups would report on their two visions—no debate, just a report. These will be captured on white board or chart pack and would represent the eight areas of substantive community betterment that the decision makers of the region envision for the future. While few in number, those visions can be very powerful. They say: *This is where we want to be*. I would hope to have the reporting consume no more than 20 minutes. Then, the two questions for the full Board's consideration would be: (1) Which of the visions are suited for regional (multi-jurisdictional, perhaps multi-sector) attention? And (2) What role, if any, can/should LCOG play in moving toward the desired outcomes? It is difficult to predict how long this latter discussion might take. If the Board was able to quickly tick off five of the eight visions as *regional* and identify two or three of those as *pertinent for LCOG's consideration*, we would have something manageable to work with at the December meeting. On the other hand, this is a point in the design where there is a risk that the group will wander and wallow, and Greg will need to really push for closure. We are committed to end the meeting by 9:00, so there will be only about a half hour to work with.

How does all of this look to the Committee? Am I on the right/wrong track? Let's firm this up under this agenda item. The Committee will meet again two weeks ahead of the September Planning Session and polish the design.