

September 8, 2005

**To:** LCOG Executive Committee

**From:** George Kloeppe

**Subject:** Executive Director Biennial Performance Review, Follow-Up

When the Executive Committee met on June 16, Patrick Lanning had requested that I provide an initial “summary response” to the *360 Degree Review* data that had been presented to the subcommittee and myself the night before. I offered a short, written response at that time, but indicated that I would prepare a more thoughtful reflection for the Committee’s consideration in September.

In those initial observations to the Committee of three months ago, I noted that I was pleased and gratified to see positive and affirming ratings from all four “quadrants.” Where ratings were mixed (communication was cited as an example of a variable that received both *high* and *needs improvement* scores), I agreed that more work needs to be done and should be included in goals for the next review period. Further I observed from the data that the internal “stakeholders” wanted to see or hear more from me; they wanted visibility, guidance, mentoring, and vision-sharing. They wanted creativity and genuine support in greater amounts than they have seen. And finally, the external “stakeholders” wanted to see more extensive issue-based communication, enhancements and expansion of LCOG’s services and a more assertive role in fostering collaboration—bringing parties together.

I think that the six “emerging themes,” extracted from the data by the consultant and the subcommittee, are very useful. Looking specifically at those themes that would command special emphasis in the coming review period, they seem to fall into three categories. The need for:

- Improved communication with and to the staff, particularly regarding agency vision and strategic decisions.

- Improved “hands-on” leadership, direction and support of staff, particularly coaching and mentoring—visibility and accessibility to the LCOG staff.
- Improved intergovernmental dialogue and collaboration between agencies.

Each of these proposed outcomes deserves inclusion on a goals list for the next review period. In addition, I looked again at the individual suggested goals offered by Board members, CEOs, management team members and agency staff. The consolidated list of these suggestions is attached as an appendix. The first section, “Leadership, Areas for Continued Focus,” displays the comments received that related to my overall leadership of the agency; and the second section captures the more general suggestions for “Goals,” offered by all respondents. I put these observations on a single page (that I’m now calling an appendix to this memo) so that I could look for patterns that may not have been gleaned as Emerging Themes by the subcommittee.

As I read the suggestions offered in the first section, I am struck with an expressed desire for more energy in my leadership style. The bullets under “Leadership” certainly touch substantive or specific issues, but overall, they seem to call for more intense involvement. The second section, listing suggested goals, seems to call for communication, trust-building, partnership-strengthening and, again, energy-passion-zing.

The Executive Committee has asked that the results of the “360 Degree Review” be turned into *measurable* goals so that performance during the next two years can be easily assessed, when it is again time for a Performance Review. That is understandable, but it is a challenge to come up with the proper metric for changes in factors such as “zing.” Indeed, the same can be said of nearly all of the suggestions—appropriately so, I think, since the most significant work that I do is fairly subjective and hard to measure. At the end of the day, the assessment of that work will, itself, be subjective.

With that in mind, I offer for the Committee’s consideration and discussion three broad areas of emphasis for the current biennial review period.

### **Possible Goals for 2005-2007**

1. **Internal Communication and Leadership:** Improve the quality and increase the quantity of direct communication with members of the staff; more regularly share the “mission,” agency news and decisions. Be more

intentional about inviting input, suggestions, criticism; make the Executive Director's leadership role more visible to the staff.

2. **Intergovernmental Cooperation:** More aggressively prompt and facilitate the formation of cooperative ventures between jurisdictions (whether LCOG is ultimately involved or not); strengthen communication paths among and between elected officials, chief administrative officers and managers from local governments; enhance the recognized role of the COG as *the* venue and resource for regional problem-solving; facilitate enhanced intergovernmental relationships—personal and institutional.
3. **Agency Operation:** Apply energy and added emphasis to three areas of administration—human resources, SDS management, facilities management. While not ignoring the other administrative obligations, these seem particularly ripe for increased attention. Add to these my intention to continue to refine the operations and protocols of the Board and Executive Committee—pursuing the right balance of information, discussion, deliberation, decision-making.

### **Regarding the 360 Degree Performance Review**

I appreciate the energy that was given to this past year's Performance Review. I know that it can be a challenging task. Your use of a new model this year seems to me to have borne fruit. Certainly, the volume of participation and input received was significantly greater than in years past. Commissioner Morrison has observed that the 42 percent response rate from members of the Board of Directors was less than she had hoped. I could easily agree, but I am also mindful that the Board's participation in my Review this past year was measurably higher than was the case in 2003. If the mass of input contributed from all sources in a measure of the model's achievement, it is fair to conclude that you are on a constructive track.

A tactical option than you might want to consider in the future would be to broaden the solicitation of elected officials. When the cycle is 24 months long, there are inevitably going to be many personnel changes on the Board. (As I looked around the table at our July Planning Session, I was particularly struck with the short tenure of many of the Board members present.) That is a natural thing. But input might be sought from selected former Board members and/or elected officials with whom I interact in venues other than the Board, e.g. MPC members, other councilors and the other three members of the Board of Commissioners. Finally regarding the model, I would urge you to seriously consider soliciting input on

some of the *same* factors when a Performance Review is next conducted. Having the benefit of, not only snapshot data, but information about changes in performance would be highly valuable.

The other observation that I would make about the data that emerged from the four “quadrants” of the Review relates to *relative satisfaction* (the only term coming to mind). When the subject was my leadership of the organization, the higher ratings came from the member jurisdictions, CEOs, and members of the Board, while somewhat lower ratings were posted by the LCOG managers and staff—those that, arguably, know me best. All sorts of conclusions could be drawn (and perhaps overdrawn) from this pattern. On the positive side, it is the primary responsibility of any membership organization’s executive director to assure that needs of the membership are being met. That always must be a higher priority than “keeping the staff happy.” On the other hand, since the subject was leadership, the views of those who are in the best position to observe my leadership style and experience the outcomes of my work have to be seriously considered.

My sincere thanks are extended to the Executive Committee and the subcommittee that oversaw this Review. Likewise, I appreciate the time and thoughtfulness of the 85 people who shared their views of my performance. As I wrote in my *self evaluation* back in April: “...the job remains interesting and challenging...I’m proud of this organization and proud to be taking part in a genuine regional success story.”