



AGENDA ITEM 8B

MEETING: January 18, 2017
TO: Humboldt LAFCo Commissioners
FROM: Colette Metz, Administrator
SUBJECT: **Strategy Session for 2017 Work Plan**

With the beginning of a new year, staff is proposing to hold a strategy session with the Commission to discuss activities and priorities for 2017. The following questions were sent out prior to the meeting to generate input. Six responses were received as summarized below. There will be an opportunity to further discuss emerging concepts, interests, and priorities during the strategy session.

1. What do you think is LAFCo's most significant contribution to member agencies and the community?

Responses focused on the primary policy directives of LAFCo including encouraging logical growth, preserving agricultural land and water resources. In addition, there was a strong theme towards the role of LAFCo as an independent group that can facilitate communication and consensus between public agencies on issues related to public services. There is an appreciation for the knowledge and experience that staff brings to the table and the outcomes of LAFCo decisions affecting both short-term and long-term interests.

2. What are ways we can improve the overall understanding of LAFCo's role among member agencies and the community?

- I just finished reading "What is LAFCo?" I would like these little introductions sent to all the member agencies with the possibility for follow-up by staff on any questions.
- Maybe more news items in local papers/websites, explaining some of the issues we deal with, like annexations, water issues, and inviting the community to our meetings.
- Perhaps more info out in the media. Seems like an interesting "my word" could be composed that could talk about all the efforts with the Fire Districts (as an example). As we say with the last Grand Jury report there is confusion over what LAFCo can or cannot do. Have other LAFCos had success in getting information out to the community about what they do? As far as the other agencies go it could be helpful to host some type of LAFCo 101 but more general.
- Our EO and support staff do a good job of representing LAFCo at local meetings and events and should keep doing so. Possibly more articles in local newspapers about the activities of LAFCo.

- Community education about LAFCOs role in community development.
- LAFCo might consider staff visiting member agencies with brief public presentation on role of LAFCo, agency jurisdiction vs SOI, importance and role of MSR, basics of out-of-area service issues, etc.

3. What are ways we can provide more support or resources to member agencies?

- Same as #2
- Possibly, have brainstorm sessions, discussions outside of our meeting schedule.
- Well, following on the last question....many of them probably don't know what they CAN ask for. A good first step is making them aware of how LAFCo may be helpful to them.
- Do a good job now. Maybe a specific handbook for agencies on how LAFCo can be used to their benefit. Templates on completing sphere of influence studies etc.
- More communication--maybe quarterly LAFCo update to agencies on general LAFCo issues, or at least communications of general nature when issues arise.

4. What are the most critical issues and challenges facing LAFCo?

There is interest in LAFCo taking a more prominent role in to addressing infrastructure needs for existing and proposed development, and providing technical assistance to small agencies that may need assistance with required application submissions. "Assuring/convincing member agencies we are here to help, not hinder, reasonable development and extension of services while meeting state and county requirements..."

There is some anticipation that cannabis may result in changes affecting LAFCo and that sea level rise will need to be a bigger consideration for existing and future development. There is interest in interacting more with CALAFCO on issues affecting the entire state, including a number of state overrides that is reducing LAFCo's authority at a local level. There is also concern about increasing workload and staff getting stretched a bit thin.

5. Should updating policies and procedures be a staff priority in 2017? If so, what topic areas would be useful to guide decision making? (Currently our Commission has administrative policies, outside agency services policies, and MSR policies.)

- Yes...I have run into a couple areas where I think policies need some minor changes and at the CALAFCo conference was made aware of other issues we should be sure the policies adequately cover.
- I think we can rely on CALAFCO to see what other local commissions are doing with policy updates. Local staff does not have to totally re-invent the wheel.

- Certainly we should keep our policies and services updated, and again, discussions outside of meetings might be very helpful...
- If older than 8 years - yes they should be put on a timeline for updating.
- How long have the current policies been in operation? Is there a demonstrated need to modify certain areas due to changes in law?
- As a new commissioner, I am still learning these things.
- Topic areas, not sure what this means, but, 1. Doing what can be done to encourage good representation from agencies to LAFCo. 2. Finding or doing an exercise involving long-range planning. What do we envision Humboldt County will look like in 10 years, 30 years and what does that mean related to the work of LAFCo.

6. How satisfied are you with each of the following? (ranking question)

- a. MSR/SOI Schedule – 50% very satisfied, 50% somewhat satisfied
- b. MSR/SOI Content – 100% very satisfied
- c. Application Processing – 66.67% very satisfied, 33.33% somewhat satisfied
- d. Staff Reports – 83.33% very satisfied, 16.67% somewhat satisfied
- e. Budget – 83.33% very satisfied, 16.67 somewhat satisfied
- f. Website – 50% very satisfied, 33.33% somewhat satisfied, 16.67% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- g. Member Agency Interaction – 50% very satisfied, 50% somewhat satisfied

7. What could be improved or addressed in 2017?

- I am very pleased with staff, and the products they produce. See # 2 above.
- See 2 and 5
- Possibly, more interaction between staff and commissioners.
- Well, for me it would be a different meeting date as I have a conflict on all but 2 of the meetings this year.
- Updating of dated material. Prioritizing the major interests of LAFCo in meeting state requirements and assisting smaller agencies in doing so. Exploring any influence the Commission may have in moving project along in a more timely fashion.
- Updating the website

8. What is one thing that would make a difference in your Commissioner role or increase your enthusiasm for LAFCo?

- I think it would be valuable for me to attend a statewide conference.

- My attendance to CALAFCO meetings has help me understand my role as a commissioner (better). I come back with new ideas and understanding.
- My first attendance at CALAFCo was very rewarding.
- LAFCo is such a strange creature compared to other commissions...but I can't think of anything off hand that I can suggest in answer to your question.
- Just having the opportunity to receive information that will enhance the understanding of our roles and influence LAFCo can really have on local agencies.
- Enthusiasm is outstanding. I would appreciate a hard copy of the items addressed at the meetings mailed automatically at least a week before the meetings. Emailed a couple of weeks earlier for review. New items coming before LAFCo emailed as needed.

9. Please add any additional thoughts or suggestions.

- I have the highest regard for LAFCo staff and my fellow commissioners. I look forward to the meetings.
- Maybe the staff and the commissioners should meet, in an informal brown bag way "occasionally", and discuss services, policies, etc.
- Sorry I don't have any amazing suggestions for you guys....seems like I think of things throughout the year as they come up but can't think of things now.
- Staff does a great job!
- One of my biggest take-aways from CALAFCo was how relatively good (and in some ways easy) we have it in Humboldt County. Some other jurisdictions run into fairly nasty and almost impossible to resolve issues related to development EIRs, conflicts between LAFCo and member agencies and/or developers, etc. Up here, we seem to be able to "play well with others"--much of which is probably a product of not being a venue for big developments.