

Key Outcomes

2008 Marin LAFCO Strategic Planning Retreat
Held February 1, 2008
LAFCO Office, San Rafael

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

On February 1, 2008, the Marin Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) convened a strategic planning retreat. The purpose of the retreat was to confirm and, where appropriate, revise Marin LAFCO's goals for 2008 and to attach specific objectives and actions to these goals. The Commission also brainstormed the key areas of focus of their work for 2008.

This Key Outcomes document describes the strategic planning goals and objectives for 2008 as articulated by LAFCO members. It also captures some of the key themes that emerged during a brainstorming discussion around how to improve the effectiveness of Marin LAFCO work. Finally, it lists new committee membership for 2008.

PARTICIPATION

LAFCO Commissioners in attendance included: Susan Adams, Jeff Blanchfield (Commission Chair), Carla Condon, Barbara Heller, Charles McGlashan, and Jeff Slavitz.

Commissioners not in attendance were Judy Arnold, Einar Asbo, Chris Burdick and Dennis Rodoni.

Marin LAFCO staff in attendance were Peter Banning (Executive Officer), Candice Bozzard (Clerk) and Evelyn Ellis (Assistant Planner).

Carol Cooper from Sonoma LAFCO was in attendance in the audience.

The retreat was facilitated by Scott McCreary of CONCUR, Inc.

STATUS REPORT

Marin LAFCO Executive Officer, Peter Banning, presented a status report that detailed the accomplishments of 2007, laid out elements of a work plan for 2008 (see Strategic Plan Status Report, Peter Banning, January 25, 2008), and reviewed key areas of unfinished business.

The Executive Officer noted that in the past year 15 proposals were processed, there was significant progress made to the SOI/MSR program, and staff has conducted the first round of five-year review of adopted spheres of influence for spheres in the Novato area.

In looking at the work plan for 2008, Peter discussed the following highlights:

- The budget is on track. Unappropriated reserves of \$60,000 will go up to \$90,000 by year end.
- Proposals involving the Las Gallinas Sanitary District, the Romberg Center (Tiburon), Martha Company (Town of Tiburon, Sanitary District #5), Mount Tamalpais Cemetery (San Rafael) and Camgros property (San Rafael) are upcoming on LAFCO agendas this year. Peter proposed a workshop about a boundary change project to the Martha Company project at the March meeting. He also described the need for an indemnification procedure in which applicants agree to pay the costs of litigation related to boundary changes approved by the Commission.
- The MSR/SOI program is winding down. Outstanding Stinson Beach Water and Fire will be on the March agenda. Tomales Community Services District is the only special district where the alternative is a greater territory. Environmental review for analysis will be needed. Staff will suggest to their Board to hold a community meeting. Scott Davidson is preparing a proposal to do environmental work. Another option is to not amend the SOI and therefore no environmental review would be needed. Marin Resource Conservation District, Water Districts and Healthcare Districts are expected to be completed in the first half of the year. After that, approximately 1,000 hours of staff time will be unallocated.
- Expanded participation in CALAFCO events and legislative program could be an option for LAFCO staff. This would take the form of appointment of Marin staff as Deputy CALAFCO Executive Officer, greater involvement in CALAFCO's legislative program, and/or conducting CALAFCO University courses.
- Current technology requirements for the LAFCO office consist of a new network server and updated computers. Electronic storage should be considered at this time as well that would cost approximately \$30,000 for full implementation for training, hardware, software licenses and scanning all of the Commission's records back to 1964.

- Electronic commission reports could be considered as a way to save paper and money. There was immediate objection to this idea due to the time and paper it would take to print out at home. The Commissioners felt it was essential to get a hard copy of all agenda materials except some voluminous EIRs.
- There are several inactive County Service Areas that have no funds and are not doing any work. This would not require much staff time to clean up and is not a high priority.
- Central Marin Sanitation Agency (CMSA) began a study and process to consolidate their member agencies. Process collapsed due to Ross Valley Sanitary District not wanting to work towards consolidation. The Executive officer asked the commission if they would be willing to pick up the process.

BRAINSTORMING

- **What special studies remain due for updating? Should we plan for a ramp down in staff time? What are the inherent benefits and opportunity costs?**

The Executive Officer stated that the mandated studies that remain unfinished are the Tomales Community Services District, Water Districts, Healthcare District and Marin Resource Conservation District. The Southern Marin cities are next to be restudied for the 5-year review but the scale of this study is yet to be determined.

The commissioners discussed the workload for the next year to determine if staffing should be ramped down. The Martha development proposal may be submitted in the next year and could require significant staff time combined with other proposals. There may be an opportunity for staff to assist in consolidation discussions with member agencies of CMSA. Mapping, records management and electronic storage projects could absorb staff time depending on how quickly the process unfolds.

Commissioner McGlashan stressed the “History Project” that could be flexible and utilize staff time when sphere reports are complete and the proposal workload allows. Staff understood “History Project” to include several records management projects to be performed in-house with existing resources to include:

- Digitize all agendas and minutes 1964 to present;
- Institute process for standardized electronic file storage for proposals and special studies from 2000 onward;
- Scan completion documents (recorded certificate of completion, map, legal description & resolution of approval) to lead to boundary development maps for each city and special district.

- **How broadly should LAFCO's scope be framed for Year 2008? How creatively should we interpret the agency's mandate?**

The Commissioners discussed a role for LAFCO in becoming engaged with Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Regional Blueprint processes. LAFCO should be more proactive in getting on the agendas of these agencies. It would make sense to get a regional group of LAFCOs together to be more productive than Marin LAFCO working alone.

Commissioner McGlashan added that there is a growing disconnect with the State concerning the assumed capacity for growth and then handing it down to the local level. He referred to constraints on growth in Marin County not recognized in State planning policies.

The Bay Area LAFCOs have a meeting planned for March 20, 2008 that could be an opportunity to bring up this topic and figure out the interest of other LAFCOs regarding this idea.

- **Would a stronger role in CALAFCO be advantageous? What are options for taking on a greater role?**

The Executive Officer discussed options for becoming involved with CALAFCO including taking on an Assistant Executive Officer role and being more involved with CALAFCO University.

Marin County is not affected specifically at the State in order to be involved at the State level. Perhaps it would make more sense to create a regional linkage to focus on Bay Area discussions first and then move on to work at the State level. The Commissioners seemed more interested in becoming involved at a regional level than in expanding contributions of staff time to CALAFCO.

- **What staffing and technology will be needed for records retention, knowledge management, data security and communications?**

The Executive Officer discussed a possible records retention project. We have ten years of records and resolutions at the office and the rest off-site. Electronic archiving is different than scanning using PDF files. There is more value to having a more searchable way of archiving. We need to consider this method at least when going forward. Candice's computer is in need of an update. Now is the time to look into a new system as far as the current needs for the next two years. Commissioners were disinterested in digitizing old records using more sophisticated Laserfiche technology, but open to an archive system based on existing capabilities and moving forward from the present.

Commissioner Adams brought up the Granicus system, the County's "G Channel", which is a resource for special districts for web casting and archiving meetings. Staff researched this system two years ago and it did not seem cost effective for Marin LAFCO and would involve shifting meeting venues. Commissioner Adams suggested that the price has decreased in the past two years and the logistics would have to be thought out.

It was agreed that a Technology Subcommittee be formed to determine the appropriate technology for Marin LAFCO for the immediate future.

- **Budget Requirements**

The Executive Officer discussed the budget requirements saying that a new computer is not a big cost. The archiving of files can be initiated in-house and can utilize existing staff. This could be a fill-in task. The regional discussions would also utilize existing staff resources as would new proposals in southern Marin. The Commissioners determined that they would like to see budget alternatives or scenarios to be developed for and explored by the Budget Committee.

Commissioner Heller stated that the Commission needs to "staff to core values". It is not fair to keep staff and charge the cities and special districts for anything above and beyond. It was also noted that technology is a core value and should be fed into the budget scenarios. However, the Commission should be careful about decreasing staff in order to have adequate staff for regional dialogue. The Commission would be generously staffed given special studies that are already programmed and regional outreach. The Commission would be adequately staffed if these activities are combined with major new proposals.

- **Review of Adopted Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

The Executive Officer gave an update of the Policies, Procedures and Guidelines stating that the personnel policies are still at County Council and the draft policies will be coming to Commissioners for review in the spring. Staff has since received a useful memo from County Counsel's Office.

2008 STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal #1: Continue to Carry Out AB 2838 Mandates and Bring Marin LAFCO into Compliance with all other Applicable Laws and Regulations

Strategic Objectives:

1. By September 12, 2008, the Executive Officer and staff will complete the Municipal Service Reviews and Spheres of Influence for Tomales CSD, Marin Resource Conservation District, Marin urban water services, and the Marin Healthcare District.
2. By May 8, 2008, the Policy Committee will review and update the adopted Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.
3. By August 2008, the Commission will review the adopted SOIs from the 2003 studies and identify changes requiring further study.
4. By July 1, 2008, staff will create a digital, searchable record of all Commission minutes (1964 to present) and establish internal procedures for updating these records on a quarterly basis.
5. By April 10, 2008, the Technical Information Committee will meet to discuss technology needs of the commission and staff and make recommendations for the Commission's 08/09 Budget.

Goal #2: Align the Work Plan and Budget Process with the Strategic Plan

Strategic Objectives:

1. On an ongoing basis, the Executive Officer will align the work plan and budget process with the strategic plan to reinforce accountability and cost efficiency, including anticipating changes in workload.
2. By May 8, 2008, the Commission will discuss and define the anticipated changes in workload, such as completion of the Commission's MSR/SOI program and/or more involvement in potential consolidations or other broader activities, to incorporate budget implications into the Commission work program.

Goal #3: Increase Public Communication and Outreach to Promote Understanding of LAFCO Mandates and Functions

Strategic Objectives:

1. On an ongoing basis, the Executive Officer and the Commissioners will expand LAFCO informational briefings to a broader group of elected officials and other boards and councils in order to provide good communication and outreach to new elected officials.
2. On an ongoing basis, LAFCO staff and Commissioners will convene meetings in any community where major special studies or boundary changes are contemplated.
3. By May 8, 2008, LAFCO staff and Technical /Public Information Committee will investigate administrative or communication tools that may be useful in furthering Commission objectives.

Goal #4: Exchange information and partner with other LAFCOs and other peer organizations to improve efficiency in LAFCO's work

Strategic Objectives:

1. On an ongoing basis, the Executive Officer will attend meetings of Bay Area LAFCO Executive Officers and other regional meetings, such as ABAG and MTC, to exchange information and explore partnerships on pertinent topics such as their interaction with COGs.
2. By May 8, 2008, the Executive Officer and the Commission will discuss and define Marin LAFCO's role on subregional issues and the linkage to LAFCO's core mandate and investigate whether LAFCO should engage with regional LAFCO partners in a dialogue about State growth and policy legislation.
3. By September 1, 2008, Commission and staff will coordinate with cities, special districts, water district and school districts to respond to the implications of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process and related regional development policy issues.

Goal #5: Provide a venue for public discussion of Countywide issues on services and planning that affect LAFCO's mandate

Strategic Objectives:

1. On an ongoing basis, the Executive Officer and Commissioners will attend meetings that discuss Countywide issues, such as housing, land use, transportation, fire and related policies. It is important to get LAFCO "to the table" and offer a LAFCO perspective in critical land use deliberations to allow decision-makers to think through organizational and boundary implications of land use and related issues.

PROPOSED COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS (2008)

(Note: Judy Arnold, Einar Asbo and Dennis Rodoni were not present when these assignments were made.)

Policy/Administrative Procedures: Einar Asbo, Jeff Blanchfield, Chris Burdick
(alternate Susan Adams)

Technical/Public Information: Susan Adams, Carla Condon, Jeff Slavitz (alternate Jeff Blanchfield)

Budget: Charles McGlashan, Dennis Rodoni, Barbara Heller (alternate Einar Asbo)

Legislative: Judy Arnold, Dennis Rodoni, Barbara Heller (alternate Charles McGlashan)