



Supervisor David Couch

## MEMORANDUM

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TO: The Kern County Board of Supervisors, CAO John Nilon, and County Counsel Theresa Goldner

FROM: The Office of Supervisor David Couch

SUBJECT: County Goals

DATE: October 7, 2014

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The following pages contain draft goals we believe the County should consider making a priority in 2015. For each of the goals, we've provided a description, list of benefits, and applicable resources for your review and consideration.

The purpose of this document is to generate discussion and focus priorities. It should, therefore, be viewed as a starting point. It is likely that the specific language of the individual goal statements could benefit from revision. We have formatted this memo so as to place each goal statement on a separate page with plenty of white space to encourage jotting down thoughts about revisions. Some of the goals have already been discussed or partially executed. It is also likely that some of the goals may not be as crucial to achieve in the next calendar year as others. Your input in regards to strategic timing and potential stress on resources is appreciated.

At the conclusion of the memorandum, we provide a rough sketch of a process to set goals based on the suggestions below, and the suggestions of other members of the Board and County staff. While we think that having a process for determining goals is important, you should feel free to adapt the process provided in the memorandum in order to make the goal-setting experience as convenient and effective as possible.

## 1. Complete a Departmental Reorganization Analysis to Achieve Cost Savings and More Effective Use of Resources by July 15, 2015.

In order to reduce redundancies, the County will consolidate functionally-related departments. This goal can be met in phases, with the first phase involving departments regulating the built environment, including but not limited to Roads, ESPS, and Code Enforcement in one consolidated structure and a second structure for culture and the arts including, but not limited to the Board of Trade and Libraries.

### Benefits:

The goal will be to reduce duplicative positions through attrition over time. Additionally, the restructuring should facilitate improved communication among people working in similar environments.

### Resources:

- GAO discussion on consolidating the National Marine Fisheries Service into the Fish and Wildlife Service: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/652207.pdf>

## 2. Reduce Services and Supplies Budgets by one percent (1%) per year for the next five years.

This goal is roughly inspired by the One Cent Solution as discussed in the context of the legislative effort from Congressman Connie Mack and Congressman Mike Enzo to balance the federal government budget through reduced spending.

This goal will benefit from the adoption of other goals involving cost-savings including, potentially, the adoption of customer service plans and lean six sigma.

### Benefits:

Demonstrates seriousness about reducing spending

### Resources:

- The Penny Plan Website: <http://www.onecentsolution.org>

### 3. Use Lean / Six Sigma Methodologies to Author Departmental Customer Service Plans by December 15, 2015.

The customer service plan will include (a) flow diagrams of the key processes engaged in when serving the public and an (b) analysis of each step in the process. The plan will not only report on existing processes, but document the implementation of changes to make the key processes more efficient and/or effective at serving needs or meeting unmet requirements. The process of creating the plan should conform to lean management standards as verified by a third party lean facilitator. Interviews, focus groups, and customer surveys to collect feedback from past or current customers are encouraged.

#### Benefits:

Public satisfaction, greater efficiency, potential cost-savings, a leaner way of implementing Lean Government.

#### Resources:

- Private Sector Process Overview: <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/create-customer-service-plan-2047.html>
- Wikipedia Article on Lean / Six Sigma Practices in Public Sector: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean\\_Government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_Government)

## 4. Adopt Plain Language Standards.

The county will draft all documents intended for public review in plain language unless (a) technical terms of art are required by law or (b) necessary for clarity. Plain language means either standards advocated by Bryan Garner or the federal government “plain language” standards.

### Benefits:

Plain Language documents may help reduce confusion and conflict resulting from said confusion. Furthermore, the County’s investment-friendly policies are more believable and more attractive to potential outside investors when local or staff interpretation is not necessary to decipher them. Finally, the process of translating conveniently ambiguous technical jargon to more concrete everyday language may help introduce clarity and transparency.

### Resources:

- Federal Government Plain Language Initiative: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/>

## 5. Form a Kern County Foundation To Encourage Private Support for County Projects and Services.

The Foundation will allow donors to contribute to specific projects without fear that the money they contribute may be placed in the general fund and redistributed to other projects or purposes in the future. The Foundation bylaws will be drafted in such a way that compliance with formalities and appointment or reappointment of board members requires minimal time, cost, or effort.

### Benefits

In the past, the County has been approached by private donors who wish to contribute to County projects, but have been reluctant to do so without the reassurance of contributing through a foundation. A Kern County Foundation would relieve this frustration and encourage additional donations.

### Resources:

- Bakersfield Foundation Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws:  
<https://spideroak.com/browse/share/brandonmartinco/foundation/KCF/>

## 6. Develop a Civic Crowdfunding Strategy by April 15, 2015 and a Pilot Campaign by December 15, 2015.

After the federal JOBS Act resolved some questions regarding the legitimacy of online equity “crowdfunding,” more cities and counties have begun evaluating whether crowdfunding might be a way to raise additional funding for projects and/or to partner with the public. Not only is crowdfunding potentially a good way to raise extra money in support of specific goals, it may also be a good way of measuring public support and enthusiasm for projects as stakeholders are given an opportunity to “vote by contribution.”

But, how to go about using crowdfunding in Kern County needs further thought. Should the County use one or more existing crowdfunding platforms? Should the County develop it’s own? If the County does develop it’s own platform, should private projects be given access to the platform as well as public projects? How can the county’s existing social media properties be used in support of crowdfunding projects? Are there any legal or ethical reservations?

The County should answer these questions and, in doing so, create a strategy for whether and how to proceed with crowdfunding practices. At least one pilot program to test the efficacy of the strategy should be commenced on or before December 15, 2015.

### Benefits

An additional, non-compulsory revenue source. Widespread public “buy-in” for County projects.

### Resources

Article from Co.exist on Civic Crowdfunding - <http://www.fastcoexist.com/3031412/pay-for-your-city-crowdfunding-for-civic-projects-is-unusually-successful>

## 7. Adopt a “2030 Plan” for Kern Medical Center

Adoption of the 2030 plan for Kern Medical Center or the proposed Health Authority will require a long-term visioning process. The end result will be a long-term plan that will help ensure that the board has guidelines it may use to make sure that decisions are both wise in the short-run and strategic in the long-run.

### Resources:

- USC Keck Medical Center Strategic Plan Announcement:  
<https://kmcstrategy.usc.edu/in-the-news/k-medical-center-unveils-its-long-term-strategic-plan/>

## 8. Decide if the County Will Form a Water Department by December 31, 2015.

Recently passed Groundwater Management Legislation gives the County a potential role in groundwater management. A Kern County Water Department could exercise authority over “undistricted” areas. It could also help to create a uniform set of standards for measuring groundwater useage and other key metrics necessary to determine progress towards sustainability and meet state-mandated planning requirements. Ideally, the County will determine not only what whether the County will for the department, but what role that department will play. If it continues beyond the next year, uncertainty about the County’s role in groundwater planning could cause unnecessary delay and anxiety for stakeholder.

### Benefits:

Protection of the groundwater basin and avoidance of costly adjudication. The current approach to regulating groundwater has resulted in useage patterns that are not sustainable as well as seemingly endless legal and political disputes among a variety of stakeholders. With the state threatening to intervene, the need for the County to provide a leadership role is apparent.

### Resources:

- California Water Foundation Report:  
[http://www.californiawaterfoundation.org/uploads/1405009350-GMPReport2014\(00256304xA1C15\).pdf](http://www.californiawaterfoundation.org/uploads/1405009350-GMPReport2014(00256304xA1C15).pdf)

## 9. Consider an Initiative to Reform Kern County's Civil Service Rules.

Before placing the initiative on the ballot, the Board of Supervisors should be assured that the any new rules will result in the County being able to handle personnel matters faster and more efficiently. Risk should be reduced and flexibility increased.

### Benefits:

From budgeting to hiring, civil service rules are distorting decisionmaking at the County and making government less efficient and effective. The system the County now labors to operate under has been in effect for decades and is both unnecessary to protect employees and inappropriate given the way the County operates today. Rules that are in need of modernization will be modernized.

### Resources:

- Laws Governing Local Ballot Initiatives: [http://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_local\\_ballot\\_measures\\_in\\_California](http://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_local_ballot_measures_in_California)
- Cheever Thesis: <http://www.csus.edu/ppa/thesis-project/bank/2011/Cheever.pdf>

## 10. Initiate a County-Wide Review of Volunteer Programs

The emphasis of the review will be on making sure that (1) the County is achieving cost-savings from its volunteer programs and that (2) opportunities to integrate volunteers into County operations are being identified and acted on.

### Benefits:

Cost-savings and better community outreach.

### Resources:

- National Association of Counties' Volunteer Toolbox: <http://bit.ly/1zwPFMV>

## 11. Create a Program to Incentivize Continuing Education of County Employees.

The County should invest in developing a “deep bench” of potential management staff. One way of doing this is to offer promising employees an opportunity to attend qualified universities through a reimbursement contract in exchange for a commitment to continue working at the County for a period of years after completion of an advanced degree. Ideally, participants in the program will be expected to maintain a minimum grade point average.

### Benefits:

A more skilled, more engaged County management staff. This benefit may assist recruitment of top talent into County positions.

### Resources:

- NYT Article on Tuition Funding Programs:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/15/education/15iht-SReduction-mba15.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>

# 2015 Goal Setting Process

One way of achieving a more effective, county-wide goal-setting experience is to extend the County's existing strategic visioning work by requiring a subsequent second effort to create and document a set of goals, which are compatible and consistent with the County's higher level vision. This can be done in a four step process, as follows:

## **Step #1: Supervisors Generate Potential Goals for Discussion**

Each member of the Board will (1) review the County's strategic vision and (2) prepare for a more specific goal-setting discussion by creating a list of three goals for the County using the smart goal writing framework. The goals should be distributed in advance of the meetings discussed, below, in accordance with any applicable open meeting laws.

## **Step #2: The Board Meets to Draft the 2015-2016 Statement of Goals**

After distribution of the draft goals, a meeting of the Board of Supervisors should be held in the point room. The task before the Supervisors at this first meeting will be to reduce the fifteen goals previously circulated down to a statement of five or ten smart goals, drafted in such a way that consensus can be reached on each. A vote to adopt the revised goals should be scheduled for a future public meeting.

## **Step #3: The Board Receives Feedback from Staff and Approves 2015-2016 Goals.**

A hearing to finalize and approve the 2015-2016 County goals should be agendized with a request that department heads review both the draft goal-setting document, and be prepare to discuss with the board (a) any concerns they may have with implementation of the goals, and (b) suggestions for changes necessary in regards to their department to make the goals achievable. The purpose of this discussion is not about the relative size of county budgets, but about aligning the allocation of funds with performance goals.

## **Step #4: Staff "Closes the Loop" By Reporting on Goal Attainment Progress.**

Staff should provide reports to the board on progress towards goal attainment throughout the following year. The goal list should be discussed and referenced when it is applicable to other matters before the Board of Supervisors.