

# **PUBLIC ACCESS TO DECISION MAKING**

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**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**



**LOS ANGELES CITIZENS'  
ECONOMY & EFFICIENCY COMMISSION  
JULY, 1992**

THE MISSION OF  
**THE ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION**

*To examine any function of County government,  
at the request of the Board of Supervisors, on  
its own initiative, or as suggested by others  
and adopted, and to submit recommendations to  
the Board directed toward improving local government  
economy, efficiency and effectiveness.*



# LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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# ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

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July 31, 1992

Hon. Deane Dana  
Chairman, Los Angeles County  
Board of Supervisors  
822-Hall of Administration

Dear Supervisor Dana:

During the October 1, 1991 Sunset Review of the Economy and Efficiency Commission, your Board directed the Commission, in its advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors "to examine any function of County government, at the request of the Board of Supervisors, on its own initiative, or as suggested by others and adopted, and to submit recommendations to the Board directed toward improving local government economy, efficiency and effectiveness".

In line with your Board's direction and upon the initiative of the Commission, we are submitting to your Board a report completed in July, 1992 entitled "Public Access to Decision Making, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors".

The objective of this study is to provide to your Board recommendations that will improve the ability of the citizens of Los Angeles County to understand and access the workings of county government. Our approach to this problem involved a review of the procedures providing public access to the Board of Supervisors, discussions with interested and involved individuals, and coordination of our recommendations with the Executive Office of the Board. The recommendations that we are submitting, in our opinion, and for the most part, the opinion of the Executive Officer, effectively address our concerns by significantly improving the access of the public to county government decision making. We also feel that efforts should be made to guarantee that the county takes every effort possible to continually address this issue.

We are available to discuss any questions you may have on this report.

Sincerely,

Gunther W. Buerk  
Chair

c: Members of the Board of Supervisors  
Commissioners of the Economy and Efficiency Commission



# **Public Access to Decision Making**

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

## **Prepared by:**

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**July, 1992**



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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a result of our experience and observations, the Los Angeles Citizens' Economy & Efficiency Commission undertook a review of the public's access to the decision-making process of the Board of Supervisors. We are concerned that citizens do not receive adequate notice of issues to be considered by the Board, that proceedings at Board meetings are hard to follow, and that citizens find it difficult to learn what decisions have actually been made. This situation contributes to the view of many that government is a closed system that discourages citizens' involvement in their government.

Our review concludes that the staff fulfills the present legal access requirements. It also concludes that these requirements are not sufficient to insure the public's ready access to government's decision-making.

To improve public access to government decision-making we recommend:

### **Before The Board Meeting**

- **Recommendation 1 (General)**

Develop an outreach program that provides for wider distribution of Board agendas and better notice of their availability to include:

- 1a: Display the agenda and furnish copies at the Public Information Office in the Hall of Administration;
- 1b: Display the agenda at county library branches;
- 1c: Make the agenda available through supervisorial field offices;
- 1d: Distribute the agendas to cities within the county; and,
- 1e: Include information on agenda availability in the basic leaflet on county government.

- **Recommendation 2**

Provide an 800 telephone number for information services.

- **Recommendation 3**

Practice restraint in use of the Green Sheet for substantive agenda additions.

- **Recommendation 4**

Prepare adequately detailed descriptions in the agenda recommendations.

- **Recommendation 5**

Review agenda formats.

**At The Board Meeting**

- **Recommendation 6**  
Provide a concise explanation of Board proceedings in the agenda.
- **Recommendation 7**  
Prominently identify the information desk in the hearing room.
- **Recommendation 8**  
Insure clear statements on motions and amendments under discussion and upon adoption.
- **Recommendation 9**  
Install a "scoreboard" to indicate item(s) under consideration, votes and outcome.

**After The Board Meeting**

- **Recommendation 10**  
  
Issue a brief digest of decisions immediately after the Board meeting.
- **Recommendation 11**  
  
Review the Statement of Proceedings format.

These recommendations should be implemented now. Consideration should also be given to expanding public access by electronic means and television.

## II. INTRODUCTION

### ***Background***

Attending a meeting of the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors can be a baffling--and frustrating--experience. "Without objection, so ordered" is heard over and over from the chair. Holds, continuances, motions and amendments follow each other in a confusing and often lengthy succession. People may leave the hearing room uncertain as to just what decision the Board has made on a specific issue. Unless the issue is one that draws media attention, citizens may not be aware that a matter of concern to them is coming before the Board. In such instances, they may not learn what action the Board has taken on the issue.

Although individual commissioners have been aware of problems with public access to decision-making at the county level, it was the Economy & Efficiency Commission experience with delays and confusion during our Sunset Review and the renewal process which prompted our examination of this situation. Our study has resulted in a number of suggestions for improvement. Problems with public access affect the efficiency of Board operations, the economy and effectiveness of government as a whole, and the opportunities for citizens to meaningfully participate in the process.

Improving public access can play a role in countering the prevalent perception of government as isolated. Fairly or unfairly, many in Los Angeles see their county as a closed system. Knowledge of the county's responsibilities, structure and resources is limited at best, even among otherwise well-informed citizens.

The employees who currently have responsibility for maintaining public access do well what they have been asked to do. We believe, however, that in these times of voter turnoff and discontent it becomes increasingly vital that more be done to make access to government open and easy.

### ***Methodology***

In undertaking this study, we first looked at available resources to identify the current procedures and how they are implemented. We sought information about procedures in other counties and checked state law governing public meetings. We discussed current procedures with individuals both inside and outside the system. This process enabled us to incorporate suggestions with both perspectives. In general, we do not attempt in this report to offer detailed proposals for changes, but rather focus on recommendations for improving access that may require further staff action for their effective implementation.

A draft of this report was given to the Executive Office for comment. We are pleased to note that many of our recommendations were judged by the Executive Officer to have "considerable merit". In those instances where the recommendations have related to administrative matters within the control of the Executive Officer, a number have been or are in the process of being implemented. This report includes the Executive Officer's responses to these recommendations.

## Report Format

This report's discussion is divided into three sections:

- **Before The Board Meeting**
- **At The Board Meeting**
- **After The Board Meeting**

Each of these sections is divided into three parts:

- **Situation**
- **Problems**
- **Recommendations/Responses**

### **III. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1. BEFORE THE BOARD MEETING**

##### **Situation**

California State law, the Brown Act, establishes requirements for meetings of local agencies' legislative bodies. As amended in 1986, it requires publishing agendas with a "brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting". The legislative intent cited in the clarification of the amendment was for agendas to "contain sufficient descriptions...to enable members of the general public to determine the general nature of subject matter of each agenda item, so that they may seek further information on items of interest. It is not the purpose of this bill to require agendas to contain the degree of information required to satisfy constitutional due process requirements". (See Appendix A)

The process of preparing each week's agenda for the Board of Supervisors is spelled out in the publication, Agenda Procedures. The agenda for each week's Board meeting (or agendas when the Board meets on Thursday as well as Tuesday) is prepared for release on the preceding Thursday. The Executive Office is responsible for preparing the agenda and for filing it electronically, together with supporting documents, for access by departments.

The Board agenda sent out before the meeting is in the form of a 5½ by 8½ inch leaflet (a standard 8½ by 11 inch sheet folded over). In addition to this leaflet, the Executive Office issues the same agenda on stapled legal-size sheets for use at the Board meeting. Any individual or organization, including departments, may ask to be placed on the distribution list to receive a copy or copies of the printed agenda at no charge. Currently, the distribution list includes members of the public, departments, members of the media and some cities.

California State law requires that a legislative body post an agenda at least 72 hours before a regular meeting in a location "freely accessible to members of the public". In Los Angeles, this requirement is met for additions, deletions or corrections to the printed agenda by issuance of a document titled "Green Sheet". Only a supervisor or the Chief Administrative Office can authorize items for inclusion on the Green Sheet. The rules of the Board request each supervisor to limit the number of items to appear on the Green Sheet, plus those which are presented orally, to a total of five per meeting. Also under California law, no action can be taken on items not on the printed or posted agendas, except when a majority of the Board decides an emergency situation, as defined by law, exists. Two-thirds of the Board must determine that "the need to take action arose subsequent to the agenda being posted", or "when an item appeared on the agenda of, and was continued from, a meeting held not more than five days earlier".

The deadline for including items on the Green Sheet is 12 noon on Friday. It is posted in the Hall of Administration at approximately 4:45 p.m. each Friday. It may also be

picked up there at that time or on Monday. In addition, it is available to departments electronically after 8 a.m. Monday. No copies of the Green Sheet are mailed.

## **Problems**

While agenda preparation and distribution are described in detail in Agenda Procedures, that publication is specifically designed to help departments prepare recommendations for Board action. No similar, or more general, publication is available for the information to the public. The county's basic leaflet on government, "Its People and Their Government, County of Los Angeles", refers to Board meetings but gives no indication on how or where to obtain information on those meetings. The leaflet does give the general information number, (213) 974-1311. Queries on the agenda distribution are referred to the Executive Office.

While the present agenda distribution system may be adequate on a "need-to-know" basis, it actually reaches only those who know that they need to know such as, government personnel, civic organizations or activists and some, but not all, other government entities, such as cities, within the county. Action affecting a city may be taken without that city's prior knowledge if it has not placed itself on the distribution list. Citizens may not be made aware of issues affecting them before decisions are made.

The Green Sheet presents problems for a citizen who wants to know what items the Board will actually be discussing at any given meeting. Personnel on the electronic loop at least have access to the Green Sheet the day before the meeting. Members of the public must drive to the Hall of Administration on Friday afternoon or Monday or rely on the good will of an Executive Office employee to read items over the phone. Increasingly, the Green Sheet seems to be expanding to include numerous substantive and/or controversial matters which the public might expect to appear on the more widely distributed printed agenda. In some quarters the Green Sheet is perceived as a "stealth agenda," where items can be brought up for action with insufficient notice to the parties involved. (See Appendix B)

The lack of adequate detail for alerting the public to planned action on agenda items can at times be a problem even for those who receive the agenda and obtain the Green Sheet. (See Appendix C)

## **Recommendations/Responses**

An effort should be undertaken to increase the availability of the weekly Board agenda, and awareness of its availability to the public. The Executive Office's current project to extend the electronic distribution of agendas, with brief versions of accompanying documents, to libraries and to others with modems, represents a significant step forward for the foreseeable future. However, wider distribution and availability of the printed agenda must be a priority.

- **Recommendation 1 (General)**

**Develop an outreach program that provides for wider distribution of Board agendas and better notice of their availability to include:**

- 1a: **Display the agenda and furnish copies at the Public Information Office in the Hall of Administration.** Prominently displaying and making available the agenda at the Public Information Office, in addition to its current availability in the Executive Office, will improve the public's access to issues under consideration.

**Executive Office Response:**

*We will request the CAO to begin displaying a copy of the Board's agenda at the Public Information Office in Room 358 Hall of Administration. Copies of the agenda also will be made available to the public at that location.*

- 1b: **Display the agenda at county library branches.** Agendas could also be provided to main libraries in cities.

**Executive Office Response:**

*We will make arrangements with the County Library to display a copy of the agenda at each of the Library's 92 branches.*

- 1c: **Make the agenda available through supervisorial field offices.**

**Executive Office Response:**

*We will make arrangements with each Supervisor to make the agenda available through each of the Board's 14 field offices that have a staff on site each day.*

- 1d: **Distribute the agenda to cities within the county.** This can be accomplished by automatically sending the agenda to cities within the county, as is the current practice in Orange County.

**Executive Office Response:**

*Although approximately one-third of cities in the routinely receive a copy of the Board's agenda prior to the meeting, we will include all 88 cities on the distribution list.*

- 1e: **Include information on agenda availability in the basic leaflet on county government.**

**Executive Office Response:**

*We will work with the Public Information Office of the CAO to add agenda information to that office's pamphlet entitled "Its People and Their Government, County of Los Angeles".*



- **Recommendation 2**

**Provide an 800 telephone number for information services.** The outreach effort should also include provision of an 800 telephone number for information services. Ideally available with automated attendant response on a 24-hour basis, this 800 number could provide access to the Green Sheet and general information about the Board, together with answers to frequently asked questions.

***Executive Office Response:***

*We are already investigating the cost and feasibility of providing an 800 telephone number for the public to use for dial-up access to computerized agenda information in response to a motion by Supervisor Antonovich which was approved by the Board on April 7, 1992. We will also investigate the feasibility of providing 800 line access for recorded information relating to agenda and other information about the Board as per your commission's recommendation.*

*One of my office's ongoing goals is to provide public access to the computerized agenda at Library branches. At the present time the Library does not have the computer equipment necessary to achieve this goal. However, we will continue to work with the Library to make the computerized agendas and Board letters available at the branch libraries.*

- **Recommendation 3**

**Practice restraint in the use of the Green Sheet for substantive agenda additions.** Increasing accessibility of the Green Sheet is difficult because of the time constraints involved, since it is issued just before the office closes on Friday, with additional access being unavailable until office hours Monday. It is ironic that the reform intended to prevent local governments from acting on issues without advance notice to the public is now seen by some as a device for bringing up issues with minimal notice. Restricting subject areas or amounts of money to be considered through Green Sheet additions has been suggested. Such limits may be impractical or unrealistic. However, we are recommending that supervisors make every effort to insure substantive matters appear on the printed agenda. Use of the Green Sheet should be limited, as far as possible, to matters which truly could not have been placed on the regular agenda or that could not have waited for a following agenda.

***Executive Office Response:***

*Your recommendation that the Supervisors "make every effort to insure that substantive matters appear on the printed agenda" rather than on the Green Sheet is a policy matter for the Board's attention.*

- **Recommendation 4**

**Prepare adequately detailed descriptions in the agenda recommendations.** As for the inclusion of sufficient detail in agenda item descriptions, we recommend that the Executive Office continue their efforts to insure that these descriptions provide adequate information in advance of the decisions to be made. These efforts are doubly beneficial because they provide easier access in tracking actions after the meeting.

***Executive Office Response:***

*Our responsibility to insure that agenda items are described in detail sufficient to allow interested members of the public to determine whether or not to monitor or participate in the discussion is one of our main missions. There is no question that we will continue our efforts in this area.*

- **Recommendation 5**

**Review agenda formats.** We also recommend reviewing the practice of printing the agenda in two forms. It is unclear why is it necessary to print both the leaflet and the legal sheet version. If the leaflet continues to be the choice for advance mailings, time and postage costs could be saved by simply addressing the leaflet itself, without its enclosure in a large envelope. The legal sheet could also be mailed in the same way. We note later in this report that a still different format is used for the Statement of Proceedings issued after meetings. Since we are urging a wider distribution of the agendas, it is only reasonable that we suggest ways to pay for that wider distribution by developing cost-savings within the present methods. (See Appendix D)

***Executive Office Response:***

*We will begin putting labels and stamps directly on the booklet agenda rather than putting the agendas into envelopes for purposes of mailing. As to continued use of the two agenda formats, standardizing on one size of printed agenda is one aspect of our automated agenda goal. We will continue to work toward this end.*

## **2. AT THE BOARD MEETING**

### ***Situation***

The order of business for the Tuesday and biweekly Thursday meetings of the Board of Supervisors is established by the Board rules amended and readopted in 1972 and revised on numerous occasions since that date. As amended earlier this year, the basic order of a Tuesday Board meeting, scheduled to start at 9:30 a.m., is:

- Invocation and pledge of allegiance;
- Presentation of scrolls;
- Action on posted agenda items;
- Items not on the posted agenda for discussion and possible placement on a future agenda for action;
- Items not on the posted agenda which meet Brown Act criteria for action;
- Agenda items to be individually considered;
- Comments by the public on matters within the board's jurisdiction.

The Board operates under a consent calendar system, by which recommendations are adopted without discussion on all matters not held for individual consideration. It also schedules "set matters," designated by an "S" in the printed agenda, for special reports. (See Appendix E) On February 4, 1992, the rules were changed so that normally only one set matter is to be scheduled, at or after 11:00 a.m..

The printed agenda begins with recommendations for commission or committee appointments and then takes up recommendations by individual supervisors in rotating district order, followed by recommendations from the Chief Administrative Officer.

Other actions are listed by the departments recommending them, in alphabetical order. Each department heading indicates which supervisor has oversight of that department or if that department is supervised by the Board as a committee of the whole. Next come miscellaneous communications, such as reports continued from previous meetings. This is followed by ordinances for introduction and adoption.

"Robert's Rules of Order" govern proceedings of the Board, although the rules state that failure to follow these or the Board's rules "shall not invalidate any action taken". The County Counsel serves as parliamentarian, providing parliamentary advice upon the request of the Board Chair.

Board rules give responsibility for allocating time for public discussion to the Chair, with concurrence of the Board. The Chair is to allocate equal time to opposing sides insofar as possible and limit the time a person may address the Board during the public discussion period. This is necessary "in order to accommodate those persons desiring to speak and to facilitate the business of the Board".

Before taking up recommendations, supervisors indicate those items they wish to be held for discussion later in the meeting and those they wish to continue to a specified future meeting. Also, any person may request that an item be held over in order to address the Board. An individual's request must be made before the meeting begins and is limited to one item per person. Items which have been held are taken up in a rotating order by district number of the supervisor requesting the hold.

A list of items held and those continued is prepared immediately by the Executive Office staff for the use of supervisors. The list is also available to the public in the hearing room. Copies of the agenda and request forms to address the Board are also available to the public at a desk inside the railing.

Board proceedings are carried by a sound system to offices in the Hall of Administration and departments throughout the county. Department heads with matters on the agenda are required to be present at the Board meeting or to hold themselves "in readiness" to provide information to the Board. A deputy may be designated for this duty.

### **Problems**

Members of the public who attend Board meetings are largely on their own. Individuals may figure out that others are going up to the railing to pick up agendas, etc., but the purpose of this desk is inadequately identified. Once members of the public have agendas in hand, there is little guidance to explain proceedings, other than, as one longtime observer commented, not entirely in jest, "how to get thrown out". However, instructions are included in the printed agenda for addressing the Board, together with rules of conduct.

Unless the observer arrives at the beginning of a session, he or she could be unaware of which items had been held or continued and could sit for hours waiting for the item to be taken up. This has happened to fairly seasoned observers who were unaware that a printed list of held and continued items was available at the information desk.

The new approach to set matters has not solved the problem of long delays experienced by those on hand to present special reports or recommendations. In some cases, the agenda is not completed within normal business hours. At times there may not even be a break for lunch.

Priorities on time allotted for public hearings and individuals participating in them are not clear to observers.

Observers are not always clear as to what action has been taken by the Board. They may not even be sure what item is being considered. Matters can be more confusing for those listening on the sound system since they may not even know who is speaking. Apparently, motions which are modified are not submitted in writing in their final form to the Chair or the Executive Officer. The Executive Officer is the agent responsible for calling the agenda and for noting the action taken on each item. In spite of that officer's best efforts to clarify decisions, in some instances the public, staff and affected parties may still not be sure what action was taken. Time and effort must be spent later to clarify the decisions.

### **Recommendations/Responses**

The Board adopted rules, with the guidance of Robert's Rules, appear to be basically adequate to insure that proceedings are reasonably clear for the public to follow. This is true if the public is provided with information as to these procedures and if the rules are adhered to, with consideration for the public's understanding of the actions taken.

- **Recommendation 6**

**Provide a concise explanation of Board proceedings in the agenda.**

To assist in providing information on the Board procedures, a concise explanation of those procedures should be prepared. The explanation should include such details as the consent calendar nature of the agenda, holds and continuances, requirements for adoption of ordinances, and the various designations, such as "A" and "S" items. This guide could be printed as part of the present agenda format, along with its statement of rules of conduct, etc. It could also be available through the information system as a separate publication, useful, for example, for school groups and others planning to attend Board sessions.

***Executive Office Response:***

*We will immediately begin work on a description of the Board's procedures including an explanation of the consent calendar; nature of the agenda; holds and continuances; vote and other requirements for various types of actions, including adoption of ordinances; and explanation of "A" and "S" items. Because of the probable length of such a document, we may determine that it should be a separate handout. This handout would be made available to the public at the Board meetings, at the Executive Office front counter, at the Public Information Office of the CAO, etc.*

- **Recommendation 7**

**Prominently identify the information desk in the hearing room.** The information desk in the hearing room should be adequately identified, possibly with an additional notice on its location at the entrance to the hearing room.

***Executive Office Response:***

*We will obtain signs designating the location of the information desk in the Board room so that it can be easily found by the public. We will also include this information in the handout discussed above.*

- **Recommendation 8**

**Insure clear statements on motions and amendments under discussion and upon adoption.** The Board should make sure that the Chair, or the Executive Officer at the direction of the Chair, insures that all motions are clearly stated at the time they are adopted. In the instances where proceedings must be interrupted for such clarification, the time spent during the session will eliminate the need to spend more time later to reconstruct specifics of the action taken.

***Executive Office Response:***

*Most motions are, submitted in written form. The final motion is not in written form if the motion is modified and developed through discussion by the Board members at the meeting. The Executive Officer's job is to closely follow discussion in order to understand the motion which is before the Board at any given time. Further, his job is to ask for clarification during the Board meeting if he does not fully understand the motion. It is a very rare occurrence that an action taken by the Board must be reviewed after the meeting for purposes of clarification.*

- **Recommendation 9**

**Install a "scoreboard" to indicate item(s) under consideration, votes and outcome.** To assist the public in following proceedings, a "scoreboard" should be installed to indicate the item under consideration, individual votes and the outcome. Such devices, in varying degrees of sophistication, are used in the legislative bodies of other government entities, many much smaller than Los Angeles County. Sample costs for this equipment indicate such a system could be obtained for well under \$10,000. (See Appendix F)

***Executive Office Response:***

*In the past, we have looked into the various methods of visually keeping track of items before the Board for the convenience of the public without much success. However, the idea is still a good one. We will again study the question and develop recommendations for the Board.*

### **3. AFTER THE BOARD MEETING**

#### **Situation**

Following each Board meeting, the Executive Officer is responsible for preparing the Statement of Proceedings. This document, on stapled 8½ by 11 inch gray sheets, repeats the agenda description, indicates supervisors absent for consideration of each item and how each supervisor has voted. According to Agenda Procedures, this statement is completed on the Friday after each Tuesday meeting and distributed the following week to departments. County regional libraries also receive copies. It is not automatically sent to those who have requested agenda mailings. It is published in the Metropolitan News Enterprise, a legal newspaper, each Friday.

Proceedings are recorded on cassette tapes. The public may purchase tapes for \$9.50 each or may listen to a tape, without charge, in the Executive Office. Staff members will assist people in finding the desired item on the tape through the use of a log of proceedings.

Full minutes of Board meetings are prepared by the Executive Office and adopted by the Board on a monthly basis. For example, minutes for the February, 1992 meetings were on the April 14 agenda for approval. Board minutes are open for public review.

#### **Problems**

Unless an issue has attracted the notice--and consistent follow-up--of the media, it is not easy and convenient for the public to learn what action the Board has taken. Even when an issue has received earlier attention, its outcome may not be reported. For example, the Board's decision to place the question of an elected executive before voters was omitted in The Los Angeles Times brief report on measures for the November ballot. In the absence of comprehensive coverage in this competitive media market, even those who receive the printed agenda may not learn what has happened at a Board meeting. One observer, again not entirely in jest, has suggested that one way is to track continuances on an item and when it no longer appears on the agenda to check into whether a recommendation was approved or rejected. In some instances, even receiving the Statement of Proceedings is not adequate to follow an item. If a matter is continued from a Tuesday meeting to the next Thursday or the following Tuesday, the mailed statement will not arrive in time for advance notice. The April 21 statement, for example, was received by mail on May 4.

Media reporters may ask the county's press specialist to assist in determining the outcome on an issue, when those present at the meeting have not found the action clear. While the obvious course for the public may be to call his or her supervisor, it may take time to reach the appropriate staff member.

## **Recommendations/Responses**

Ideally, the print media would include a brief summary of Board actions along with a more extensive coverage of those considered to be "hot", similar to the "Sacramento Summary" regularly carried in some newspapers in coverage of State government.

- **Recommendation 10**

**Issue a brief digest of decisions immediately after the Board meeting and include it with the following week's agenda.** The Commission believes that the county can help fill this information gap and also make it easier for the media to cover the Board's actions. To provide easier and faster access to the Board's decisions, a brief digest of the day's actions should be prepared immediately after each meeting. This would simply indicate, by number, those items which were not agreed to by the consent calendar process, together with the action taken. It would also indicate items that were continued. By reference to the printed agenda, those interested would be able to pursue the issue, faster and more efficiently. For example, this format could be as follows: "All recommendations on the agenda were adopted, with the exception of items 1, 2, and 3 which were continued, items 4 and 5 were adopted after amendment, and item 6, which was rejected". This digest could be added to the on-line information available to departments throughout the county and to whatever information is included as this electronic service becomes available to the public. A print version should be available in the Executive Office and the Public Information Office and should be included in the agenda of the following week.

### **Executive Office Response:**

*While I agree that a digest sheet summarizing the day's actions could serve a useful purpose, our first responsibility following a meeting of the Board is to devote our resources to immediately communicating the Board's actions to the individuals, organizations and departments affected. Preparing such a digest would be particularly impractical if a meeting runs into the afternoon, which has become more and more common.*

*As to media access to information on the Board's actions immediately following the meeting, this already occurs. Representatives of the media do contact our office for information. To my knowledge, no representatives of the media have complained about their inability to obtain information concerning an action of the Board after the meeting is over.*



- **Recommendation 11**

**Review the Statement of Proceedings format.** We earlier recommended a review of the practice of printing the agenda in two forms. This review should be expanded to determine if the Statement of Proceedings can be based on the same form. The goal of this review is to save both time and funds in its preparation. (See Appendix G and H)

***Executive Office Response:***

*As I indicated, the format of the agenda is already under review as part of my goal of automating the preparation of both the agenda and the Statement of Proceedings. The formats of the two documents will be similar as you recommend.*

#### ***IV. Future Direction***

Our review of the present situation, together with our recommendations to resolve, in part, some of the problems of public access, focuses primarily on proposals which could be implemented immediately. As finances and technological advances permit, the county should look to new forms of electronic democracy. "A single face to government", for example, is the eventual goal of Info/California, a project detailed at the April 22, 1992 "Sharing Solutions" technology conference co-sponsored by Los Angeles County's Internal Services Department, Productivity Commission and Productivity Managers Network. Kiosks at convenient locations would provide access to information from nearly all levels of government on a 24-hour basis. An on-line public information project now being developed at the Glendale Public Library was also demonstrated at this conference.

Eventually, the supervisors' hearing room should have individual computer outlets at each supervisor's desk and a large screen for the public to follow proceedings. Until this becomes feasible and/or affordable, some interim electronic scoreboard, as suggested earlier, should be installed.

Eventually, Los Angeles County government should join other governmental entities on television. Congress is now on C-SPAN 1 and 2 and the state legislature is on CAL-SPAN. Los Angeles city government, other cities in the county and other counties within the State are also on cable television. Meetings of the Los Angeles Unified School District Board are carried on the district's own broadcast channel. As the county looks to joining these governmental entities in telecasting Board meetings, it can benefit from their experience.

Members of this Commission are truly encouraged by the responsiveness and efforts of the Executive Office to address the issues raised in this report. We look forward to working with the Board and the Executive Office in the implementation of these recommendations.

#### ***Executive Office Response:***

*As my staff has indicated to you we have been looking into establishing information kiosks at locations around the county and bringing automation into the board room for use by supervisors. We will continue to develop information on the feasibility and cost in this regard for presentation to the Board for approval.*

*The decision as to whether or not the Board's meetings should be televised is a policy matter for review by the Board.*

## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENT***

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