



EMPOWER YOUR PURPOSE

**Ann Arbor DDA
Executive Director**

360 Performance Review Summary

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Executive Summary

Rehmann conducted a 360 degree feedback survey for Maura Thompson, Executive Director of the Ann Arbor DDA. The objective of this 360-degree evaluation is to assess the performance and leadership qualities of this leader. The evaluation focused on competencies that are critical to success, organized in ten main categories: character, communication, team leadership and management, relationship with Board Members, strategic leadership, collaboration with city and stakeholders, financial leadership, operational leadership, feedback, and professional development.

Methodology

The evaluation was created and administered using an internet-based survey. Individuals were invited to share their feedback using a secure link to access and complete the evaluation. Members of the DDA Board, DDA staff and individuals from various community organizations, 29 in total were invited to provide feedback. In addition, Maura was asked to provide a self-evaluation. The survey was available for feedback from December 9, 2024 through December 18, 2024.

Key Findings

- Overall, this leader's review was very positive with most items exceeding expectations
- The data suggest all rater groups believe this leader exceeds expectations with character and ethics including honesty, integrity, dignity and fairness while being an effective communicator.
- This leader is also effective in collaborating and building relationships with the board members and city member and stakeholders, a core requirement of this job.
- There is opportunity for incremental improvement in the area of professional development.
- Most notably, this leader rated themselves lower than other rater groups in most categories.

Summary

According to the data collected, this leader has brought strong character, communication and team leadership to the role of Ann Arbor DDA and exceeds expectations in most categories. This leader's strong character and ability to build trusting relationships with team members, the board and community likely positively impacts her ability to perform the essential functions of this role.

The Evaluation

The Sample

Twenty-nine individuals were invited to provide feedback using the evaluation. Nineteen individuals provided feedback, which includes Maura's self-review resulting in a 66% response rate. Below is a breakdown of the response rates:



The Evaluation Scale

The evaluation focused on competencies that are critical to success. The evaluation included 56 rating-based items using the five-point scale below. The scale asks raters to respond to the degree to which they believe this leader meets expectations.

1. Does not meet expectations
2. Occasionally meets expectations
3. Consistently meets expectations
4. Occasionally exceeds expectations
5. Regularly exceeds expectations
6. "Have not experienced or observed"

Evaluation Competencies

Individuals were asked to respond 56 items to grouped in ten important leadership and role competency areas below and overall categories.

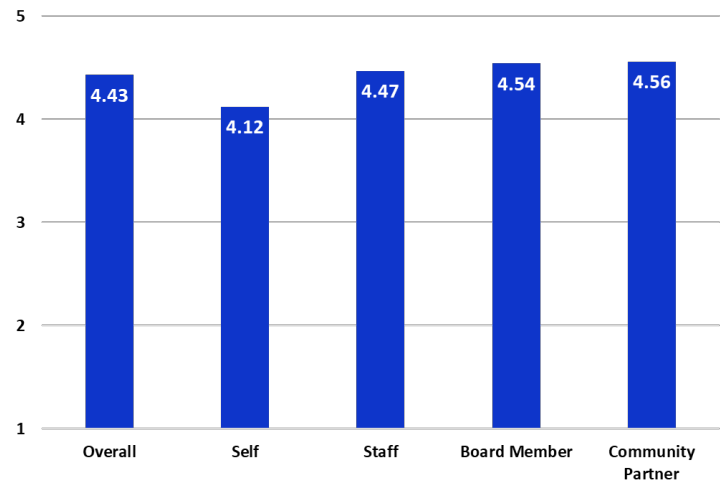
- Character
- Communication
- Team leadership and management
- Relationship with Board Members
- Strategic Leadership
- Collaboration with city and stakeholders
- Financial leadership
- Operational leadership
- Feedback
- Professional development

In addition, raters were offered an opportunity to share specific comments in these categories and overall in 13 open-ended questions.

Results

Overall

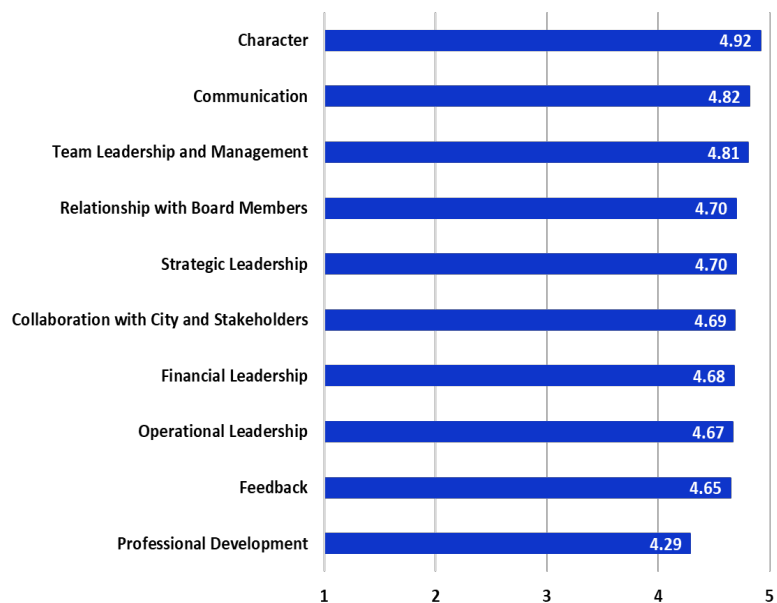
The overall average of all items in the survey, for each rater group is below.



The results above show there isn't a significant difference between the rater groups with the exception of the self rating, which is lower than others – all fall into “occasionally exceeding expectations” levels.

Results by Competency/Skill Group

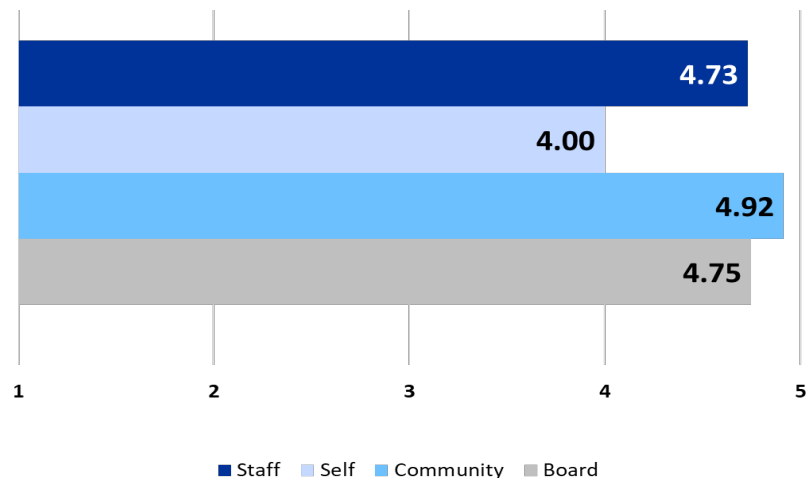
Below are the overall results, for all rater groups for each competency category. The chart represents the overall average (based on five-point scale) for all responses to all items within each category.



Overall Questions

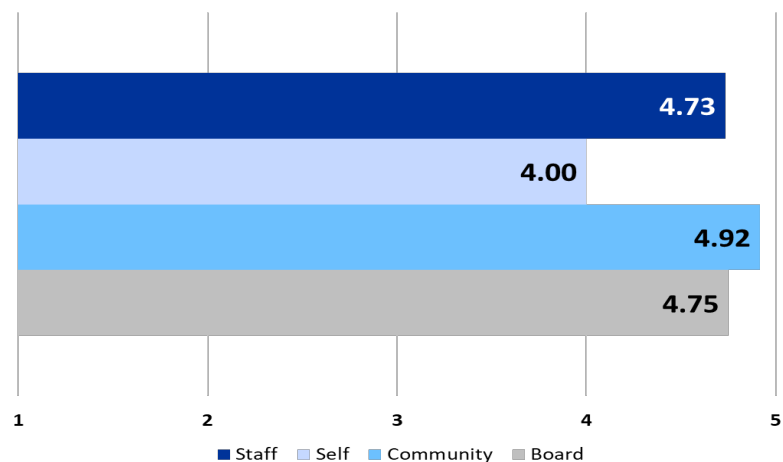
Raters were asked to respond to two overall questions. Results are below.

Overall, how well does this leader do in achieving the goals and objectives of the Downtown Development Authority?



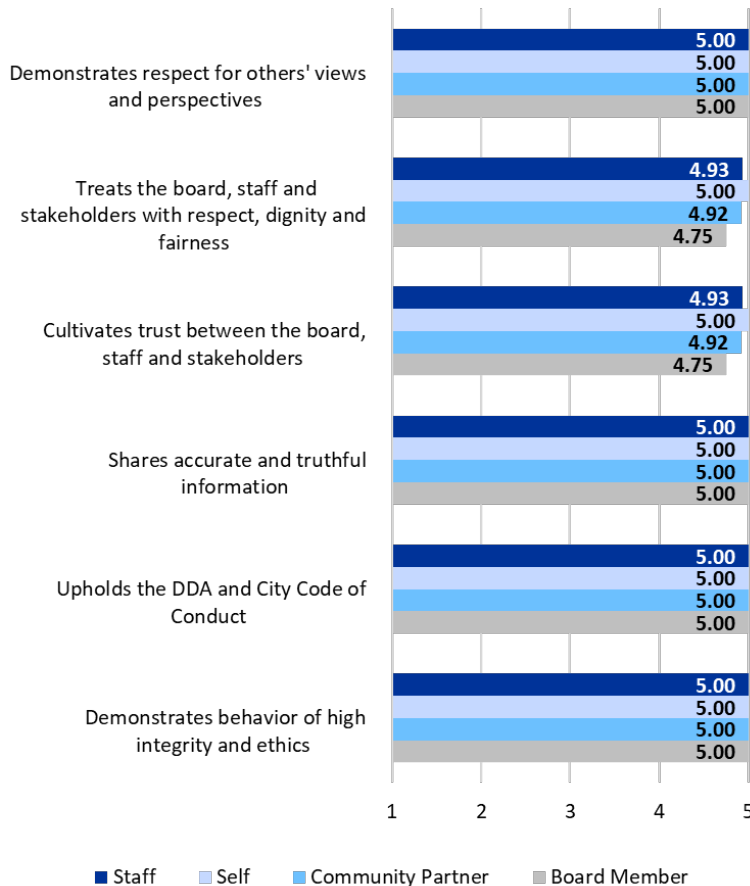
The responses to this overall question show consistent perceptions between all rater groups.

Overall, how well is this leader performing the essential duties of the job?



Similar to the items above, there is consistent perceptions between rater groups.

Character



Insights

Highest rated item:

Perfect 5.0 for most items

Lowest rated item:

Two lowest rated items were 4.90

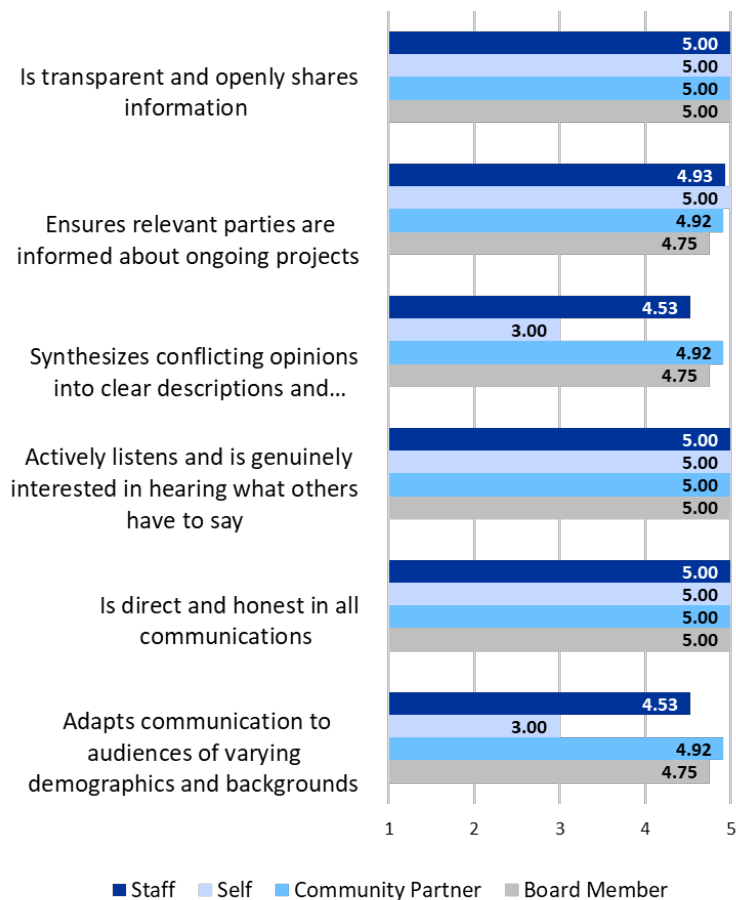
Summary

Nearly 5.0/5.0 - regularly exceeds expectations for most items - a strength

Comments

- High integrity executive, Maura has been an excellent leader and rebuilt trust amongst staff, board, and community.
- I am relatively new to the board and have little experience with most of this. I can only speak to her interactions with the board, not with staff.
- I've always observed Maura treating people with respect.
- Maura is a leader of high integrity. She's thoughtful and wants good outcomes for all involved.
- Maura is an exceptionally open and straightforward person. She is consciously respectful and fair in her dealings with others. She creates a culture where it feels safe to share ideas.
- Maura is great. - partner
- Maura's integrity is spotless. She prioritizes others over herself and consistently demonstrates great character. I'm proud of the DDA's leadership with her at the helm.
- Treating all people with respect and conducting myself with integrity are standards I uphold at all times and without compromise.
- Maura is one of the most open and honest people I know. I have worked in the downtown for over ten years and have never heard a bad thing said about her from anyone, including; community members, business/property owners, or City representatives and partners. I fully trust that she is always honest and transparent

Communication



Insights

Highest rated item:

Three items with 5.0/5.0

Lowest rated item:

Synthesizes conflicting opinions into clear descriptions and actions (4.30)

Adapts communication to audiences of varying demographics and backgrounds (4.30)

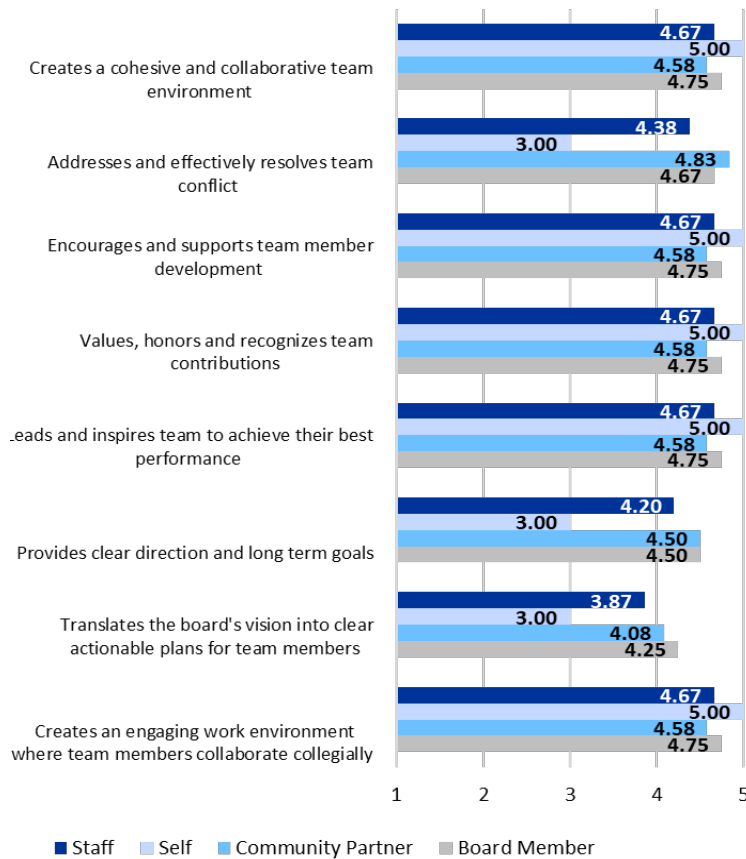
Summary

High ratings from all rating groups – self rating variation

Comments

- Maura's communications are always factual and concise.
- Maura will meet you where you are, and genuinely cares about what you have to say - even if she doesn't agree. If she feels she can make a connection between stakeholders or provide something helpful, she will.
- This is an area of great strength for Maura. She is genuine and caring and it comes through in her communications.

Team Leadership and Management



Insights

Highest rated item:

Most items 4.75/5.0 (items 1, 3, 4, 5, 8).

Lowest rated item:

Translates the Board's vision into clear actionable plans for team members (3.80)

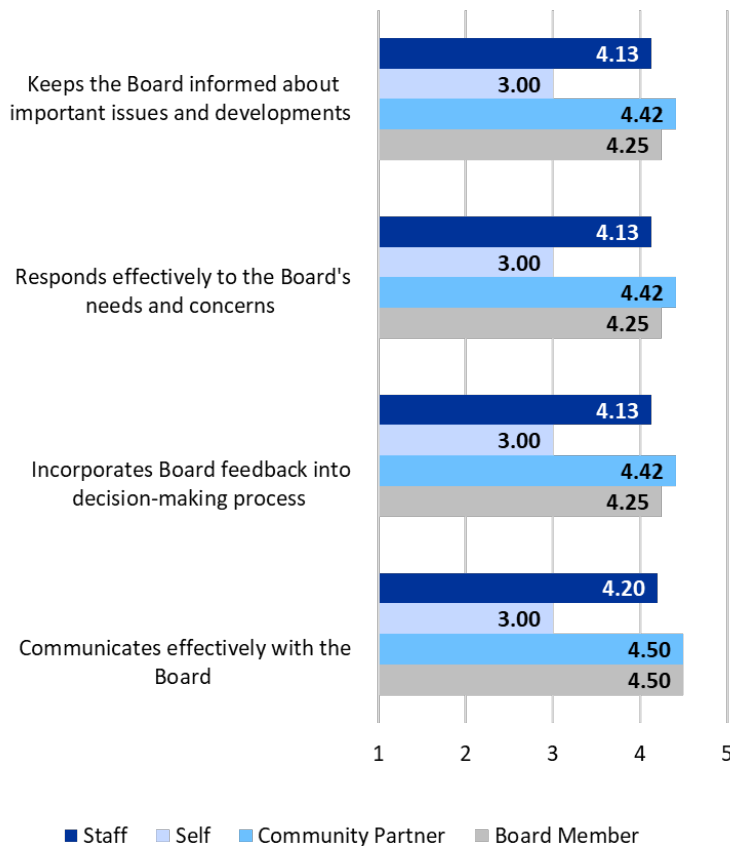
Summary

Notable is the high direct report ratings, consistent with other raters

Comments

- As a board member, most of these cannot be observed.
- As an outside partner, I recorded all as not experience. I suspect she does very well in this area.
- I appreciate that Maura leads a weekly team meeting where she shares what she's working. The meeting is also an opportunity for staff to share updates and collaborate on challenges.
- I do not have not witnessed Maura in this area.
- Maura is wonderful at leading her team.
- My management approach is collaborative. In a sense I view my job as a support role for staff, working to remove obstacles to allow them to do their jobs to the best of their ability and to help them maintain a healthy work life balance. Because DDA staff members are so talented, smart, and dedicated they frequently are instinctively on track with what needs to be done to reach long term goals. I do provide direction however in a much more collaborative way.
- My role is outside the DDA so I haven't observed much of Maura's direct management. I do observe she appears to have an excellent relationship with her staff.
- Some of these questions misunderstand the DDA. In particular, the Board is not regularly setting a vision for staff to implement. The Board sets policy for staff to implement and through a single Development Plan, sets the staff direction.
- The board is very removed from the day-to-day operation and it's difficult to accurately assess Maura on some of these.
- We have weekly staff meetings where Maura shares updates. I always feel very comfortable to speak up if I have questions or comments. Everyone has a voice at the table and is respectful. We have a very strong team under her leadership and it makes me want to do good work. Very rare to find in a job.

Relationship with Board Member



Insights

Highest rated item:

Communicates effectively with the board (4.05)

Lowest rated item:

All other items average (3.95)

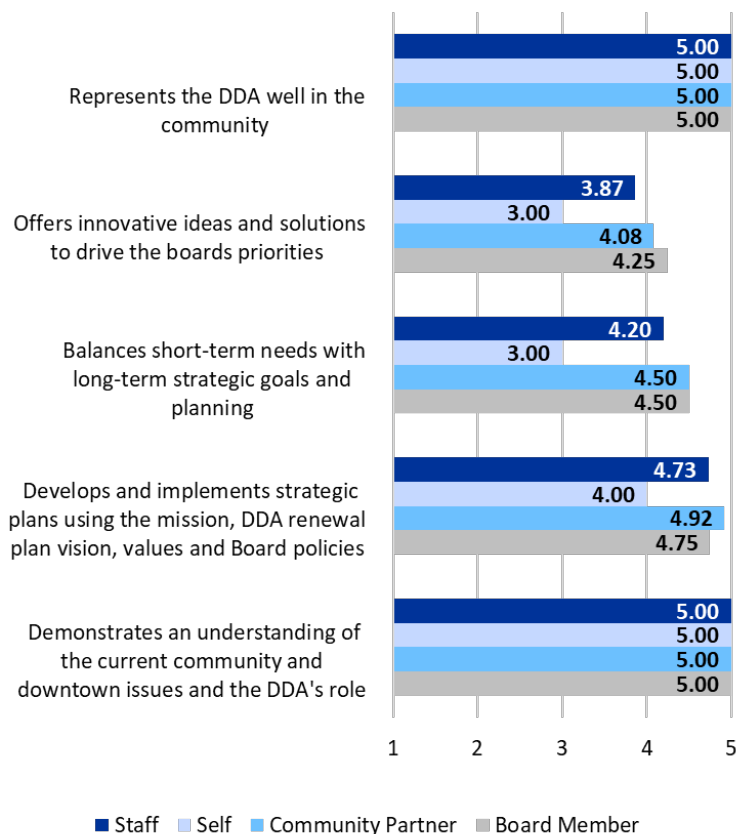
Summary

Self-ratings less than other raters; board members consistent with other raters

Comments

- From what I hear in Board meetings, Maura does keep them very informed with our work. If there is a concern she addresses them with follow-up with our team and the Board members.
- I have not witnessed this area.
- I hope I am meeting the Board's expectations but would defer to Board member experience over my perception.
- Maura makes herself very available to meet with board members and encourages them to call or meet with her if they have any questions.
- Outside partner. Marked all no experience
- This is what I can see from the outside based on public meetings and interactions.

Strategic Leadership



Insights

Highest rated item:

Represents the DDA well in the community (5.00)

Demonstrates an understanding of the current community and downtown issues and DDA role (5.00)

Lowest rated item:

Offers innovative ideas and solutions to drive the board's priorities (3.80)

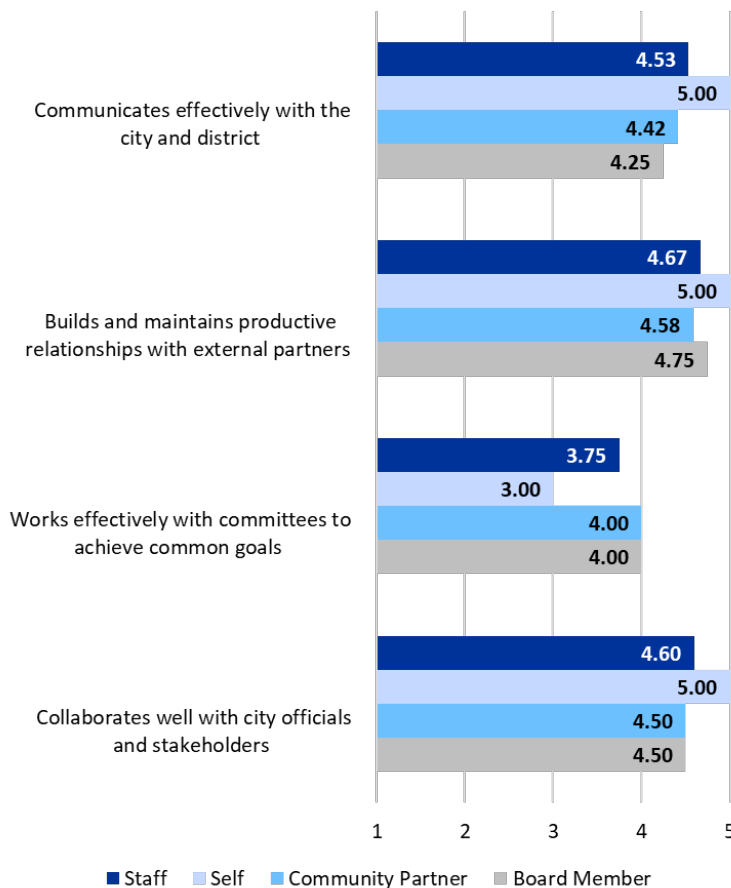
Summary

Favorable ratings among all rater groups

Comments

- Circulation study
- I am new to the board and she is new to the role so most of these have not yet been observed.
- I responded with Occasionally exceeds expectations related to some questions about strategy and innovative solutions to drive the Board's priorities because the need for strategy and innovation does not come up as often as other aspects of leadership in this organization.
- I think the DDA has been exemplary in its continuing progress on the initiatives we've decided to undertake, like people friendly streets & bikeways. I think we can do a bit better in considering the next steps for the organization in terms of visioning and role.
- Maura balances the needs of the DDA and the community very well.
- Maura has provided excellent strategic leadership in a time of turbulence and change - from post pandemic recovery, to DDA renewal and master planning efforts, she has shepherded the various processes and initiatives forward.
- Maura is thoughtful and a great listener. She uses what she hears to be strategic in everything she does. She goes above and beyond attending various City and community meetings to make sure she's considering all angles with her work. She'll also be the one to help staff at an outreach session take out the garbage at the end, or shlep pizza's to an event.
- The DDA under Maura's leadership has demonstrated a commitment in evolving and rethinking what's it's capable of. I believe the board and community would welcome even more out of the box thinking as to how the organization is structured and the types of things it does to strengthen downtown, build community, and economic development.

Collaboration with City and Stakeholders



Insights

Highest rated item:

Builds and maintains productive relationships with external partners (4.75)

Lowest rated item:

Works effectively with committees to achieve common goals (3.69)

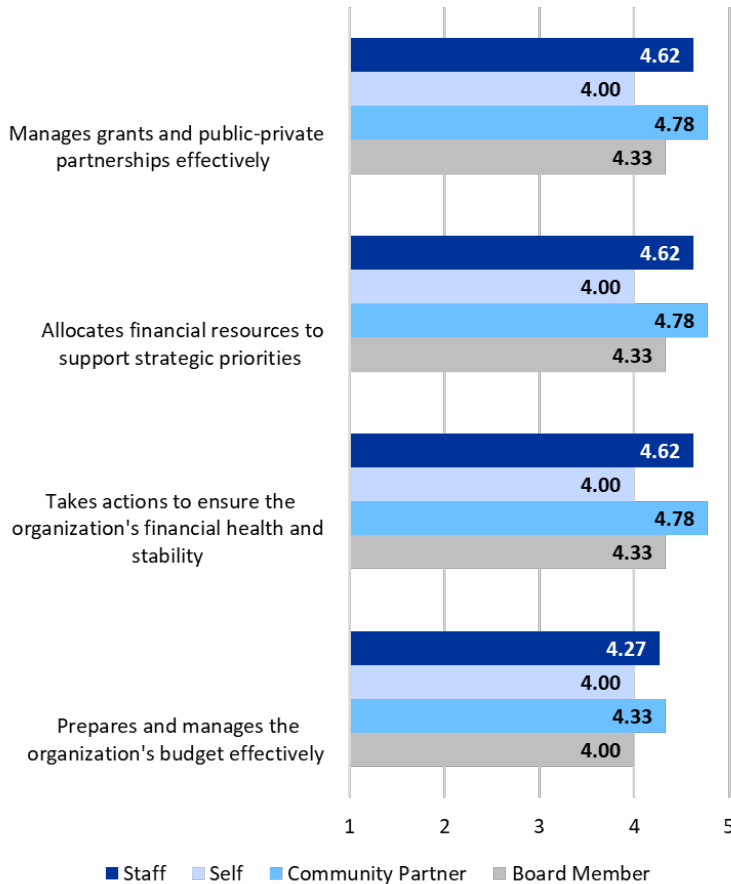
Summary

Slight variation in ratings

Comments

- I believe one of the strengths I bring to this position is relationship and trust building which I achieve by being an active listener, respecting others opinions, and genuinely caring about people.
- Maura (in collaboration with other staff) has done a great job teeing up important conversations about our renewal and our DDA Development Plan. I feel confident that our organization is headed in a positive direction, and that City officials, staff, partners, and stakeholders have (or will have) the information they need to understand the options presented during this process.
- Maura has moved the organization toward a more collaborative partnership with the city.
- Maura is great at these aspects.
- Maura is greatly respected in the community. She is open to meet with anyone and will always take the time. She is an active listener and always transparent.
- The DDA and City relationship appear to be as strong as ever – and collegial/collaborative under her leadership.
- The question about working effectively with committees was unclear so I checked not experienced or observed. I didn't understand which committees the question was referencing.
- Working with the downtown districts, Maura has done an outstanding job of meeting community demands.

Financial Leadership



Insights

Highest rated item:

First three items have same average rating (4.43)

Lowest rated item:

Prepares and manages the organizations budget effectively (4.15)

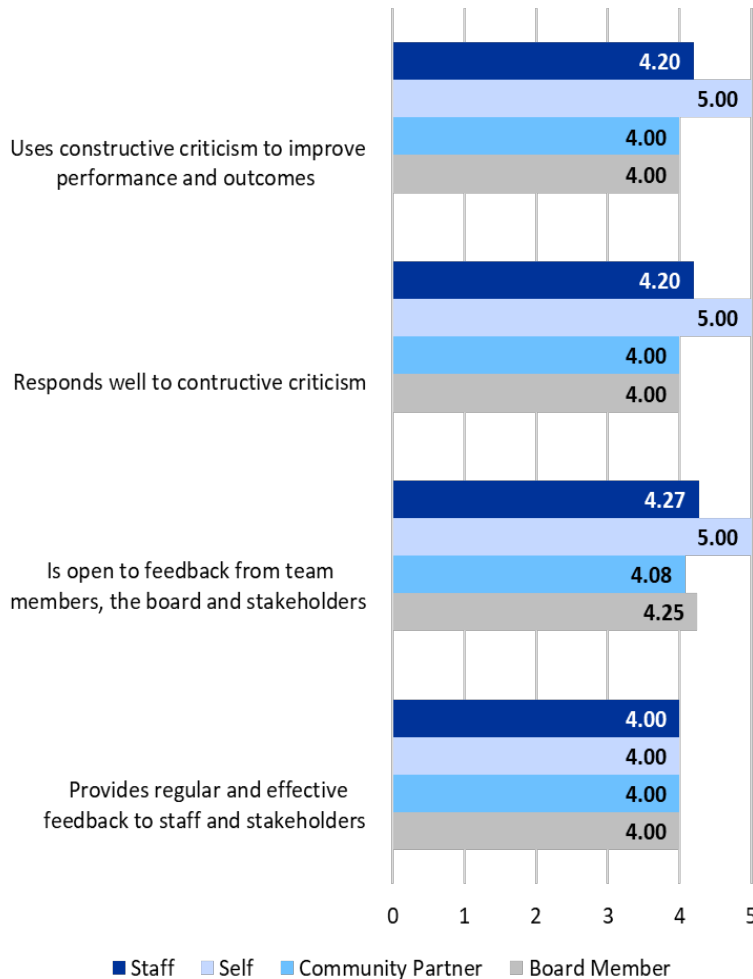
Summary

Consistent high ratings among all raters

Comments

- I oversee the DDA's Accounting Director who actually prepares the budget and manages all financial matters.
- I see our accountant presenting the budgets, and I believe she prepares them. Same with grants. But I do know Maura supports actions to always be cautious to our stability and finances. And I see in the presentations that we are always referencing our work connecting to our priorities and goals.
- Maura is extremely financially aware in her role.
- Outside partner, marked most not experienced
- The Financial Leadership questions are confusing because the language used implies that Maura directly manages these financial tasks. Maura has delegated tasks like budget preparation and grant management and ensures that staff exceed expectations in these areas. I answered the question with the overall intent in mind.
- The organization has improved in this area under Maura's leadership.

Feedback



Insights

Highest rated item:

Is open to feedback from team members, the board and stakeholders (4.40)

Lowest rated item:

Provides regular and effective feedback to staff and stakeholders (4.00)

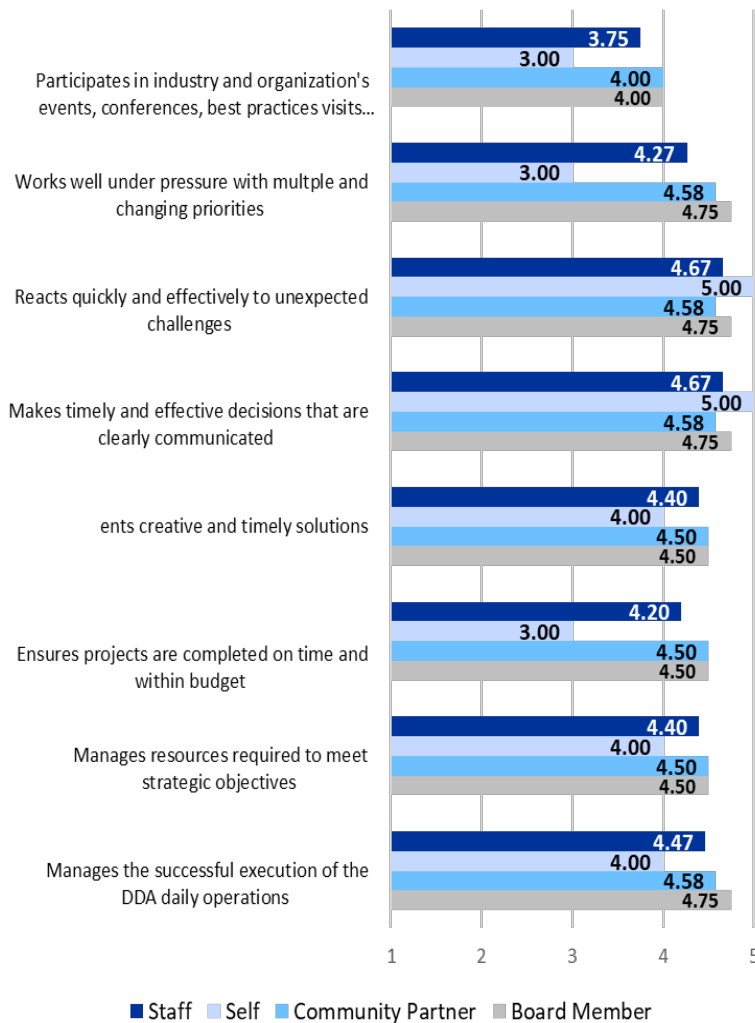
Summary

Variation between self and other raters – unique item

Comments

- I feel like I always know where I stand with Maura, she's just a very open person. Some of the work we do gets strong criticism and I've always seen Maura handle it well. She always listens and addresses concerns.
- Maura always listens to others comments on how to improve.
- Maura creates a very collaborative work environment that allows us to receive and provide feedback in a constructive way.
- Maura values the feedback of staff members. When Maura has shared feedback with me, the tone has always been encouraging.

Operational Leadership



Insights

Highest rated item:

Reacts quickly and effectively to unexpected challenges (4.75)

Makes timely and effectively decisions that are clearly communicated (4.75)

Lowest rated item:

Participates in industry and organization's events, conferences, best practices visits (3.69)

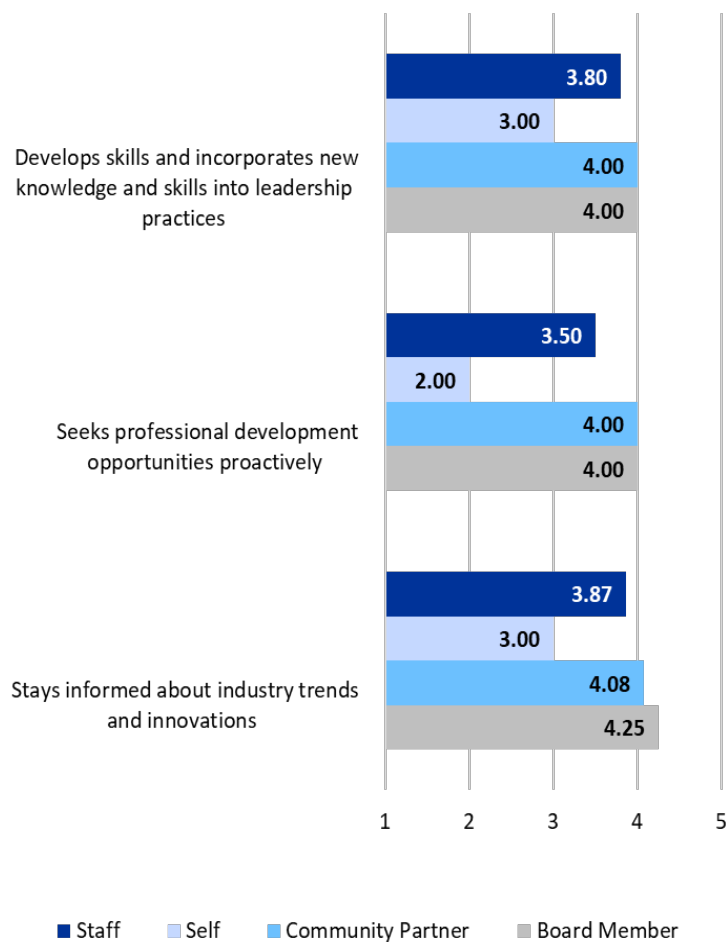
Summary

Variations among raters – possible development area

Comments

- As a board member and fairly new to the role, I cannot judge most of this.
- I don't have feedback. I feel very supported and encouraged. Maura is humble, honest, and strong. Grateful to work with her.
- I think Maura could take advantage of some conference or industry events to continue to learn best practices and take ideas from surrounding communities nationally.
- In her role as DDA Executive Director, Maura is a key leader for Ann Arbor and our region. She does a great job and the DDA and our work would benefit from more visibility and presence at key regional gatherings and community events.
- Maura exceeds what is expected of her in just about every aspect. Some of these questions understate/misunderstand the collaborative nature of problem-solving that good leadership encourages.
- Seeing the transformation of the DDA after COVID, Maura has been very successful in managing this new landscape.

Professional Development



Insights

Highest rated item:

Stays informed about industry trends and innovations (3.80)

Lowest rated item:

Seeks professional development opportunities proactively (3.38)

Summary

Potential development area

Comments

- I am not familiar with how Maura incorporates two of these items into her regular professional development plan - but am confident this is a part of her effective and excellent management of the DDA.
- I know she's always looking at other communities and what they are doing. When she was on vacation, she came back with photos to share with the team of bike lanes she saw and different urban planning elements.

Comments-Based Questions

What is this leader doing well?

- Balancing priorities, politics and economics
- Communicating and creating an environment that is conducive to supporting staff to do good work and planning.
- Communication - Maura is great at keeping staff in the loop about what she's working on and the status of important initiatives. I also feel very comfortable approaching Maura when I have questions about things I'm working on. Trust - Maura is involved, but she also trusts her staff and doesn't micromanage. She has also earned the trust of staff through her hard work, dedication, strong relationship development skills, and extensive knowledge of local dynamics. Leadership - Like I stated above, I feel confident that our organization is headed in a positive direction, and I think Maura is doing a great job having important conversations with City officials, staff, stakeholders, and partners.
- Excellent communicator, and always available to have a discussion or help bring someone up to speed.
- I believe I am doing a good job in the following areas: Creating a positive, joyful work environment
Establishing relationships and building trust with community stakeholders, elected officials, and City staff
Communicating the role of the DDA to stakeholders and elected officials
Streamlining procedures for more efficient operations
Changing the perception of the DDA as a quasi governmental organization to more clearly reflect the DDA as a component unit of the City by aligning our practices, policies, and operations with those of the City
- I believe Maura does an outstanding job!
- The most important thing that this leader does exceptionally well is to demonstrate enthusiasm for the goals of the DDA, which gets transferred to the staff, board, city, and community. She is very open and honest about herself, which invites open and honest communication of questions and ideas between board members.
- Maura has created a work environment where staff feels very supported in their work. She is always available to provide advice and guidance, but also helps you feel confident in your own work and decisions.
- Maura is open and flexible in her thinking. She assimilates new information and adjusts. This is critical in an organization that continuously faces unique challenges, and in a position that must balance the goals of the Board, the needs of staff, and the needs of the community and the DDA's community partners.
- Maura is taking a City Component Unit (the DDA) that was not well trusted, appreciated, or understood and is building a consistent focus and community understanding. Public entities should be transparent, responsive, and value/outcome-driven. The DDA is all of those things under Maura's leadership and it will take time to deepen trust and awareness with the broader community. Some of the questions in this survey regarding the Board's vision, innovative solutions, and external partnerships are more nuanced than stated. While these actions are needed, that response must be balanced with integrity and the overall DDA Mission to rebuild community trust and ensure the DDA meets stated priorities. Maura regularly does just that.
- Maura simply knows how to do the job inside and out. Her teams love and respect her, and she puts everything into the role. We're lucky to have her.
- Maura understands the landscape, maintains strong relationships, and is very effective in building consensus.
- Pretty much everything
- The DDA's relationship with TheRide is great. - Matt Carpenter, AAATA

What is something this leader can do immediately to be more effective in their role?

- A few months ago, I would have said to hire a communications staff member to replace some of the critical functions of Maura's previous communications position. Maura recently created a job description and hired a staff member for that role, which allows the DDA to be more effective moving forward.
- Can't think of anything
- Get more organized.
- I think one challenge is connecting the Board to the job - the composition of the board has changed dramatically, so while things buzz along with staff, I think there's room for growth at the board level in terms of learning, facilitating engagement, and future visioning.
- Maura's in a unique position leading an org that has big objectives but isn't always in control of their own destiny. There's not much Maura can do about it, but she does an excellent job adapting on the fly to political or resource realities that impact the DDA's plans.
- Not sure I have an answer here. I might ask how the board may support the DDA in some of the financial caps that have been placed in past years and are there enough resources for the projects asked of Maura to complete?
- Provide clear-direct feedback if DDA Board is ever missing expectations or not participating fully. There was some confusion related to scheduling that may have affected quorum, and I think instituting a board scorecard / annual assessment to ensure the board is fulfilling on its commitments is key!
- Seek opportunities for personal development.
- Work on board recruitment and filling open seats

What additional feedback do you have?

- First and foremost, a leader shows the way. A leader walks the walk. A leader inspires, encourages, and guides, but mostly a leader is an example of what they want the people in their organization to do. You do a great job of this.
- Great job, we are lucky to have Maura in the role of Executive Director
- I think doing one activity oriented toward team building per year would be nice. It could be something educational that we all do together, or some kind of volunteer work. I really enjoy working with my colleagues, and I think a little team building would only strengthen our organization. Just a suggestion!
- Keep up the great work!
- Looking forward to working with her for years to come!
- Maura is an exemplary example of leading with sensitivity.
- none
- Thank you for your service and exceptional leadership.

Highest and Lowest Rated Items

The lists below represent the 56 rating-based items on the evaluation. The top and bottom 10 behaviors are listed below with (average rating) in parentheses.

Highest Rated

The following items received the highest overall ratings for all rater groups.

- Demonstrates behavior of high integrity and ethics (5.00)
- Upholds the DDA and City Code of Conduct (5.00)
- Shares accurate and truthful information (5.00)
- Demonstrates respect for others' views and perspectives (5.00)
- Demonstrates an understanding of the current community and downtown issues and the DDA's role (5.00)
- Represents the DDA well in the community (5.00)
- Is direct and honest in all communications (5.00)
- Actively listens and is genuinely interested in hearing what others have to say (5.00)
- Is transparent and openly shares information (5.00)

Lowest Rated

- Seeks professional development opportunities proactively (3.38)
- Participates in industry and organization's events, conferences, best practices visits regionally, statewide and nationally (3.69)
- Works effectively with committees to achieve common goals (3.69)
- Develops skills and incorporates new knowledge and skills into leadership practices (3.70)
- Offers innovative ideas and solutions to drive the board's priorities (3.80)
- Translates the board's vision into clear actionable plans for team members (3.80)
- Stays informed about industry trends and innovations (3.80)
- Incorporates Board feedback into decision-making process (3.95)
- Responds effectively to the Board's needs and concerns (3.95)
- Keeps the Board informed about important issues and developments (3.95)

Overall

The data present a leader who is exceeding expectations in most categories. This leader works with integrity, honesty and trust – a great foundation for any leader. Using this relationship building strength with strong team leadership and communication skills likely contributes to exceeding expectations in other operational areas. Potential opportunities exist in professional development.

