

In many ways, a long range plan is similar to a roadmap. We are driving to a specific destination by outlining the routes we believe will get us there the fastest, with the least amount of cost, and with the most opportunity to learn from and enjoy the sights.

When the long range plan was originally developed, our destination was defined in the form of a Vision Statement. A vision that

Freemasons of Washington will be recognized as a relevant and respected Fraternity, committed to attracting and retaining all men of high quality, who strive for self-improvement and the opportunity to make a positive difference in their community.

This Vision Statement is as true today as it was a decade ago.

As we continue our travels to this destination, it is fair to ask what have we learned and enjoyed along the way? What have been our highlights, and what adjustments need to be made on as we continue our journey?

Since the long range plan was last reviewed at the 2006 Annual Communication, we have seen

- The development and subsequent conduct of a training workshop for the Deputies of the Grand Master
- Expansion of the Grand Lodge data base system to allow easier access by constituent Lodges.
- Creation of web hosting through the Grand Lodge Office, along with the development of a template to allow Lodges in the Jurisdiction the ability to create and develop their own Lodge web site
- Sponsorship of a "Concordant Body of the Month" program to stimulate attendance, education, and cooperation between concordant and appendent orders.
- The continued enhancement of the Lodge experience via the Pillars of Progress recognition program

These accomplishments notwithstanding, a good strategic plan - as well as being focused enough to help guide our journey toward becoming better and better at what we do - must also be flexible enough to change, as needed, to respond to the ever-changing landscape ahead. As the Grand Master likes to remind us, "you cannot step in the same river twice."

One needed change that was discovered on this journey was that being focused on the future at times caused us to lose sight of the present. To address this issue, the Long Range Planning Team took a critical look at the work of the Grand Lodge as an entity and proposed the inclusion of a Mission Statement within the plan.

Where the Vision Statement concentrates on the future and serves as a source of inspiration, the Mission Statement focuses on the present by defining the fundamental purpose of the organization. To that end, the Long Range Planning Committee put forth that the Mission of the Grand Lodge of Washington is

- To provide strong and viable leadership to the Masons of Washington
- To develop and implement programs to assist the Lodges in becoming more visible and active in their communities and to assist in the Masonic education of individual members
- To facilitate the charitable outreach of the Grand Lodge of Washington

- To enhance public awareness of the craft and its core principles throughout the state

With a sense of purpose renewed by improved directions, it then became essential for the Long Range Planning Team to review the journey ahead to determine whether or not any additional adjustments to the plan needed to be made.

The initial work of the committee indicated that the current litany of strategic initiatives was proving to be unwieldy. The committee's first recommendation was to reduce and refocus the initiatives. The key question the committee felt needed to be answered was simply this: From a high level perspective, what can Grand Lodge do to best assist individual Lodges?

To gain further insight, a Tiger Team was formed comprised of brethren at various stages within their respective Masonic careers from throughout the jurisdiction. These brethren were appreciative of the opportunity, and eager to provide feedback - both positive and negative.

It is with this backdrop that on behalf of the Long Range Planning Committee and the Tiger Team, I present to you, my brethren, this proposed iteration of the Long Range Plan.

Pillars of Progress:

The Long Range Plan employed by our Grand Lodge has established its goals and objectives via these Pillars of Progress: Grand Lodge Organization, Education and Training, Family Involvement, Community Involvement, Public Relations, Fraternalism, and Cooperation with Concordant Organizations. All of them tie into the Grand Lodge Mission and Vision Statements.

Each Pillar is integral to achieving the mission & vision, and therefore equal emphasis is placed on the accomplishment of all goals and actions within each objective. Because resources may need to be appropriated to achieve some of the objectives and related actions, timelines will need to be established to provide a suggested flow and as a means to provide needed focus.

Pillar No. 1: Grand Lodge Organization

Rationale:

A dedicated program to review and update our organization, and the way we do business, is needed to make our Grand Lodge capable of timely response to the needs of constituent Lodges.

Objectives:

- Identify areas where Grand Lodge can assist constituent Lodges.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Grand Lodge Organization to be responsive to positive changes and new opportunities.
- Assess the talents of individual members, as a pool of resources, to be placed in strategic leadership positions/roles.
- Have a Grand Lodge that is well organized, well managed, efficient, and uses technology to its best advantage.

Initiatives:

1. Develop, maintain, and utilize as a talent bank, a data base of member occupations and interests as a means of determining future Grand Lodge Team members.

At the recent Wardens Conference a survey was taken of every attendee that focused on current employment and hobbies & interest. This data is being compiled and will be shared with the elected line to aid in the development of future leaders of our fraternity.

2. Develop a long-term funding program to ensure the financial stability of the Grand Lodge and its programs

If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that the \$15 per capita barely covers basic operating costs. That coupled with a drop in the value of Grand Lodge assets, means that there may be little funding available for any new projects. We also must understand the fact that some of these initiatives cannot be successfully accomplished with volunteer effort alone.

That said there is no doubt that a breaking point exists whereby the brethren will not agree to future increases in the Grand Lodge per capita. A charitable giving program similar to the one currently employed by the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite should be explored and implemented by the Grand Lodge. Furthermore, if such a program is to be undertaken, a committee comprised of estate attorneys and financial professionals - maybe even outside professionals - should handle this work.

3. As a means of increasing communication between the Grand Lodge and the constituent Lodges, institute a Committee of the Month Program.

Much like the Concordant Body of the Month Program, each month would be appropriately designated. The Grand Lodge and the Deputies of the Grand Master would communicate this program to the constituent Lodges, and the respective Worshipful Masters would contact the appropriate committee chairman who would in turn provide a program to said Lodge.

Pillar No. 2: Education and Training

Rationale:

Education has long been a priority in Freemasonry. Through a series of well developed and presented courses of instruction, Lodge Officers and members will gain an understanding of what it truly means to be a Mason, increase their interest and involvement, and motivate them to increase and share that knowledge.

Objectives:

- Establish and implement educational programs designed to teach and apply Masonic knowledge to the daily lives of the membership.
- Provide Masonic leaders the necessary training to manage and allocate resources to achieve optimum results.

Initiatives:

4. Promote completion of the Proficiency in Lodge Management Exam

To quote from a recent presentation from WB Bert Bautista, the Proficiency in Lodge Management is truly more than just knowing the Standard Work and the Masonic Code. The program is about defining one's character, knowing the length of your cable tow, and living up to your commitments.

Note: Whether or not the amendment to make completion of the Proficiency in Lodge Management a requirement for first time Masters passes or fails, RW Santy Lascano (assuming election to office) has set a term goal to increase participation in the Proficiency in Lodge Management program at 50% above present levels. RW Lascano has also set aside time at the planned Regional Communications to recognize those brethren who complete the Proficiency in Lodge Management.

Pillar No. 3: Technology

Rationale:

Lodges need access to membership statistics, easier methods of communicating with Grand Lodge and their own membership, easier methods for managing their finances and Lodge data, and provide Masonic education.

Objectives:

- Utilize technology to improve Lodge administration and Masonic education.

Initiatives:

5. Create an online version of Part A of the Proficiency in Lodge Management

To quote one of the younger members of the Tiger Team: "I would say that the younger generation of Masons is excited and enthusiastic about the craft, and we appreciate historic and esoteric teachings just as much as the fraternalism."

An online version is a very attractive option to those brethren who already have experience in the avenue of online learning. An online version, would provide immediate feedback, aid in decreasing the turnaround time in grading exams, could instantly communicate results to the respective Deputy, and serve as an impetus for completing Part B.

Pillar No. 4: Family Involvement

Rationale:

To attract men of high quality, Masonry must develop and implement programs, which are of interest to the whole family. The time spent in Masonic brotherhood should, to a certain extent, fulfill a brother's needs as a Mason, while concurrently satisfying his wishes to be with his family or to meet their needs through his Masonic association.

Objectives:

- **To develop a closer tie between individual Masonic families by well-planned activities within the Lodge framework that will include all family members.**

Note:

Assuming election to office, RW Santy Lascano has tasked his Deputies and appointed officers to compile a list of family involvement activities undertaken within their respective Districts. These activities will be posted on the Grand Lodge website.

Initiatives:

6. Task the Membership Development Committee to review ongoing activities in the Jurisdiction, where some Lodges have been working to get their families involved, and develop a database of family activities accomplished by constituent Lodges for dissemination/review by all Lodges in the Jurisdiction.

This initiative can be best accomplished via two methods. First, request attendees of the Wardens Conference to share in writing the family related activities accomplished by their respective Lodges. This information could then be reduced to a white paper or database and shared with the brethren throughout the jurisdiction.

Second, the Deputies of the Grand Master and appointed officers must take an active role in promoting this initiative.

Pillar No. 5: Community Involvement

Rationale:

To be relevant in today's society, the Masonic Fraternity must recognize that its members desire to use their personal and collective talents to promote the basic tenets of our institution outside the walls of their Lodge rooms.

Objectives:

- Develop and foster positive relationships and partnerships within Washington as a community at large.
- Seek ways in which Masons and Lodges can be significant and meaningful participants in the health, growth, and enrichment of their local communities.
- Recognize organizations and individual members of the community, from outside of the Fraternity, who espouse Masonic ideals and character, for their outstanding service.

Note:

Assuming election to office, RW Santy Lascano has tasked his Deputies and appointed officers to compile a list of community involvement activities undertaken within their respective Districts. These activities will be posted on the Grand Lodge website.

Initiatives:

7. Develop a program to recognize members of the community, outside of the Fraternity, for their outstanding service. Actively encourage Lodges to forward deserving examples for Grand Lodge recognition. Develop media contacts to publicize such awards and activities.

Lodges should either develop local community outreach programs or use existing programs (Bikes for Books, GL Scholarship Program, etc.) to identify outstanding person to recognize and honor. As a talking point at visitations Grand Lodge Officers, Deputies, and Committeemen should be prepared to share with constituent Lodges any such available programs.

Constituent Lodges should be encouraged to sponsor youth sport teams, and the Public Relations Committee under the direction of the Grand Master should develop guidelines for the use of the square & compasses on youth sports team uniforms, e.g., Little League.

8. Encourage Lodges to become involved in the Family Support group of an Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard Reserve or National Guard unit in their local area.

Lodges need to know how to make appropriate contact. The Deputies and the Military Recognition Committee would be the best avenues of discovering this information. In light of recent tragedies, perhaps we should also include law enforcement officers and firefighters.

Pillar No. 6: Public Relations

Rationale:

The perception the public has of Freemasonry affects our ability to enrich our communities through our various philanthropic projects, as well as, our ability to attract new members.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness and visibility in a positive fashion.
- Communicate and disseminate the Public Relations Playbook

Initiatives:

9. Encourage Lodges to undergo a Lodge beautification project as a means of raising public awareness of the fraternity

The Lodge building itself sends a message to the public 24 hours a day. Question for each Lodge... What is your building telling, (if not shouting) about the fraternity to the public? Lodges that undertake this initiative should be appropriately recognized at the Regional Communications.

10. Quickly pounce upon PR opportunities as they present themselves (release of certain books or movies), and develop talking points that can be used by the brethren at large.

The Masonic License Plate needs to be a regular talking point. Additionally, if the Craft is a focal point of upcoming books or movies the Public Relations Committee needs to be at the ready to disseminate talking points.

11. Budget for and spend money on targeted statewide publicity of Masonry and its local community events.

Promote Masonry via institutional ads that are generic in nature (see examples). That is, small ads in community newspapers aimed to keep Masonry in the public consciousness. Pick 5 - 10 small publications to start the test, perhaps once a quarter. For example:



Washington Freemasons

For more info call 800-XXX-XXXX
Sponsored by the Grand Lodge of
F.&A.M. of Washington



Happy Thanksgiving from the Freemasons of Washington

Sponsored by the Grand Lodge of
F.&A.M. of Washington
For more info call 800-XXX-XXXX

Pillar No. 7: Fraternalism

Initiatives:

12. Promote the Masonic Outreach Services Program.

The brethren should know that the Masonic Outreach Services Program provides our elderly brethren and area seniors access to services and resources needed to stay healthy and safe in their own homes or in a retirement community. Additionally, the Trustees of Landmark on the Sound needs to develop and disseminate materials on the Outreach Services program to the member Lodges.

13. Encourage the districts to form a Lodge Officers and Members Association (LOMA), or a variation thereof, to encourage participation and interaction between the Lodges.

LOMA's can serve as an outstanding vehicle for communicating Grand Lodge initiatives, as well as promoting fraternalism within a given district, e.g., LOMA's could ensure that Lodges within the LOMA are not holding installations "on top of each other."

14. Encourage the development of a "Sister Lodge" program within the Jurisdiction, whereby Lodges will develop relationships with Lodges in other parts of the State.

Deputies should communicate with their counterparts in other Districts to determine possibilities for sister relationship and report back to the Lodges for follow up action.

15. Continue to encourage "Mentor" programs in the Lodges whereby newer Masons develop a personal report with more experienced and knowledgeable Masons.

The the New Candidate Education Program or the Alternate Proficiency Program needs to be revisited. Are newly initiated brethren receiving this program as mandated by WMC 20.10? The Membership Development Committee should be charged with pursuing this issue in earnest over the coming years with the desired outcome of said pursuit to be that more and more of the Lodges will not only issue the program, but will also use the program as a topic of discussion and Masonic Education in the Lodges.

Deputies and the Membership Development Committee should develop a specific action plan for prospective mentors on how to properly mentor and disseminate to Lodges a "train the trainer" type program.

Pillar No. 8: Cooperation with Concordant & Appendant Organizations

Rationale:

Many members of the Masonic Fraternity are also members of concordant organizations. These organizations share the same basic tenets and are another avenue to participate in good works and fulfill the desire to make a difference in a brother's respective community.

Objectives:

- To raise awareness and strengthen the bond that exists within the Masonic Family including its concordant and appendent organizations.

- To foster support for Masonic Youth Orders and recognize that their strength and viability will improve the future of the Masonic Fraternity.
- To recognize that by working together, we can strengthen our combined abilities to take advantage of the various opportunities facing the Fraternity today and in the future.

Initiatives:

16. Task the Youth Committee coordinate with the Youth Orders to develop an informational program for Lodges on how to start, sponsor, and support a Masonic Youth Order.

Instruct the Youth Committee to make available to constituent Lodges the contact information for the various youth orders. The idea being that the Worshipful Master will invite these leaders to a Lodge meeting to present an informational program on how to start, sponsor, and support a Masonic Youth Order.

Promote the idea that constituent Lodges make it a priority to attend at least one meeting of the youth groups that meet within their buildings en masse at least once in the course of a term.

My brothers, this is the updated plan that we present to you as roadmap for our fraternity as we travel the road ahead. Shortly, I will ask for acceptance of this report, and with that adoption of the plan. To be sure, we still need to set benchmarks and timelines for the various initiatives, and to that end I have been communicating with next year's committee chair as that will be a key responsibility for next year's committee. Yes, some of the initiatives that have been put forth may appear to be lofty. I remind everyone the words of Past Grand Secretary, Edward Bennett: "The problem is not that we aim too high and miss, it's that we aim too low and hit!" In order to achieve lofty things, we must set lofty goals.

No organization is perfect; no plan is perfect. We have had our bumps on the road traveled thus far, and we will have our bumps on the road ahead. Some have been or will be out of our control because of circumstance; others have or will be due to the fact that we're human. But because we're human, we will learn, grow, and move forward to our eventual destination:

Freemasons of Washington will be recognized as a relevant and respected Fraternity, committed to attracting and retaining all men of high quality, who strive for self-improvement and the opportunity to make a positive difference in their community.

Along the way, we'll be sure track our progress, reflect upon what we have seen & learned, while continually checking ahead to determine whether or not we need to make any adjustments. Once we reach our destination, we'll celebrate the accomplishment... and then we'll begin another journey.