



Grand Lodge of Washington Free and Accepted Masons Long Range Plan (Pillars of Progress)

Long Range Plan Strategic Initiatives

Background:

Recognizing the benefit to be gained by continuing programs which have more than a one year life span, the Grand Master tasked the Long Range Planning Team to reevaluate the Long Range Plan. In addition, the other elected officers in the Grand Line committed to continue their support and execution of the Plan.

The Vision for the Grand Jurisdiction for the next five years and beyond is still as relevant today as it was when it was developed in 2000:

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.

The Pillars of Progress, as developed in 2000, will continue to be the supports which will lead to the achievement of the Vision. They are:

Grand Lodge Organization

Education and Training

Technology

Family Involvement

Community Involvement

Public Relations

Fraternalism

Cooperation with Concordant Organizations

With these Pillars as the focus, the Long Range Planning Team was tasked to assemble an ad hoc committee to assess where we are as a Grand Jurisdiction with regards to the Long Range Plan and offer suggestions for it to be updated. Masons were invited to participate who had been identified as current or future leaders in their constituent lodges, leaders in their Districts, or leaders within the Grand Jurisdiction. Through seminar type discussions, opinions and ideas were received and have been incorporated into this iteration of the Long Range Plan.

The Long Range Plan is intended to be a living document, to be updated on an annual basis, or as frequently as deemed necessary. It solicits inputs from all Masons at any time so timely changes may be made to assist in achieving the Grand Lodge Vision.

Situation:

Hours spent at our usual vocations, as well as commuting to and from the job, leave much less time for participation in activities outside the home. Therefore, to become involved or join an organization, it must fulfill a want or need. And yet, men of all ages are once again being drawn to Freemasonry. What attracts them to our fraternity is as diverse as the individuals themselves. What is clear, however, is that lodge activities must be worth the expenditure of this their limited leisure time. In short, the participation must be relevant to the individual and enable him to see the benefit to himself, his family, the Fraternity, and Society as a whole.

The Leadership of the Grand Lodge of Washington recognizes that to be successful, it must start at the constituent lodge level. However, there are several ways the Grand Lodge can assist. The Grand Lodge has access to assets, which are not available at the local level. The function of this plan and its execution will be to make these additional assets readily available to all lodges throughout the Grand Jurisdiction.

Pillars of Progress:

Each of the eight Pillars of Progress is essential to the attainment of strategic initiatives proposed by the Grand Lodge Elected Officers and adopted by the body of the Grand Lodge at its Annual Communication. Within each pillar there are broad or non-specific areas, objectives, which encompass several concepts or ideas. Within each of the objectives there are goals or actions, which can be specified and measured. In addition, time frames for accomplishment can be delineated. Both objectives and under-riding actions may be adjusted and updated during the life of this plan and the supporting execution plan.

The Pillars of Progress are numbered one through eight. This is not meant to establish a priority sequence. Each Pillar is integral to achieving the vision and therefore equal emphasis should be placed on the accomplishment of all goals/actions within each objective. Because resources may need to be appropriated to achieve some of the objectives and related actions, a timeline may be established to provide a suggested flow and as a means to provide focus at appropriate times.

Pillars of Progress

Pillar No. 1	Grand Lodge Organization
Pillar No. 2	Education and Training
Pillar No. 3	Technology
Pillar No. 4	Family Involvement
Pillar No. 5	Community Involvement
Pillar No. 6	Public Relations
Pillar No. 7	Fraternalism
Pillar No. 8	Cooperation with Concordant Organizations

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.
- Alter the structure of the Grand Lodge Organization, where needed, to insure the efficient implementation of the Vision and Pillars of Progress. The objective is to have a Grand Lodge that is well organized, well managed, efficient, and uses technology to its best advantage.

Actions:

- Develop roles and responsibilities for each appointed Grand Lodge officer, e.g., serve as chair of a Standing Committee.
- Review the composition of committees to ensure that the members have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be effective.
- Develop, maintain, and utilize as a talent bank, a data base of Committee assignments that Grand Lodge Team members have held.
- Conduct a study to review and report on a potential change of date, location, agenda, and duration for the Annual Communication of Grand 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.

Actions:

- Task the Grand Lecturer, with the assistance of the Research and Education Committee, to develop and conduct regional programs for Deacons and Stewards, that includes floor work and symbolism, per the guidelines in the Lodge Officers Handbook.
- Task the Grand Lecturer to develop and conduct training workshops for the Deputies of the Grand Master, as directed by the Grand Master.
- Investigate and evaluate the possibility of allowing copies of the Standard Work, currently used by the Grand Lecturer and the Deputies, to be made available to the Worshipful Master of the Lodge during his term of office.
- Develop a course outline for a Masonic University that can be used throughout the Jurisdiction providing education, ritual and floor work, symbolism, and Masonic history.

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.

Actions:

- Expand the Grand Lodge data base system to allow easier access by constituent lodges.
- Create interactive forms for lodge reports.
- Create web hosting through the Grand Lodge Office and provide a template for all lodges in the Jurisdiction.
- Create and issue electronic formats of all ritual work as authorized by the Code.
- Develop interactive Masonic educational programs.

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.

Actions:

- Task the Membership Development Committee to form a focus group composed of a cross section of brethren from throughout the Jurisdiction, and their wives, to identify those family oriented activities/events, which could be conducted at Grand Lodge functions, such as the Grand Lodge Communication, cornerstones or district meetings. The composition of the focus group should be broad-based in terms of age and experience.
- 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.
- Recognize the opportunities that Masonic youth organizations provide for family oriented activities and encourage participation by lodge members.

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.

Actions:

- Under the direction of the Public Relations Committee, develop, implement, and expand a speaker's bureau throughout the Jurisdiction to build awareness of Masonry among key community organizations, government and community leaders.
- Task the Public Relations Committee to coordinate with service organizations, on a statewide level, to identify those areas of common concern where constituent lodges may partner to be of greater service to the community.
- Through the Public Relations Committee, sponsor/support community events statewide which enhance a positive image of the Masonic organization. Identify appropriate local fairs, festivals, and celebrations throughout the state. Encourage lodges to participate in them through booths, participation in parades, youth sports team sponsorships, etc.
- 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.
- Encourage lodges to identify and participate in local community service opportunities.
- Encourage lodges to link their web sites to local and statewide community informational systems, such as local Chambers of Commerce.

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:

- Develop, publish, and execute a Long Range Public Relations Plan.
- Encourage and assist the constituent lodges to develop good working relationships with the local media in their communities or geographical areas.

Actions:

- Task the Public Relations Committee to develop a Long Range Public Relations Program. The program should include as a minimum, the identification of the target audience, media they use or observe, and a proposed budget for at least a three-year time period.
- Task the Public Relations Committee to develop and deliver to the constituent lodges a comprehensive training program, including how to write a press release, on the media available to them, and ways to publicize events.
- Task the Public Relations Committee to submit positive examples of public relation successes for publishing on the Grand Lodge web site and in Masonic publications.

Pillar No. 7: Fraternalism

Rationale:

Freemasonry is founded on the principles of Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love. If we as Freemasons plan for our Fraternity to prosper with new membership and to have brethren remain active in our lodges, we must all share these common principles.

Objectives:

- To communicate the meaning and importance of Fraternalism.
- To promote programs encouraging visitation and cooperative activities among lodges.
- To be able to identify talents within the Fraternity and make use of them when the occasion should require.

Actions:

- Encourage the districts to form a Lodge Officers and Members Association (LOMA), or a variation thereof, to encourage participation and interaction between the lodges.
- Encourage the development of a “Sister Lodge” program within the Jurisdiction, whereby lodges will develop relationships with lodges in other parts of the State.
- Continue establishing “Mentor” programs in the lodges whereby newer Masons develop a personal report with more experienced and knowledgeable Masons.

Pillar No. 8: Cooperation with Concordant 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.

Actions:

- Grand Lodge to remain an active participant in the Washington Masonic Alliance.
- Encourage the formation of local coordinating councils, composed of organizations meeting in the local lodge hall.
- Task the Youth Committee to develop an informational program for lodges on how to start and sponsor a Masonic Youth Order.
- Task the Public Relations Committee to have speakers available to address concordant bodies regarding Grand Lodge activities.
- Sponsor a "Concordant Body of the Month" program to stimulate attendance, education and cooperation.