

REPORT OF THE MD19 STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE June 2021

The mission of the MD19 Strategic Planning Committee is to look beyond the immediate horizon and anticipate variables and future directions of our Multiple District. From that analysis, we can recommend new goals and develop appropriate plans to achieve those goals.

At the beginning of his term, CC Al Hedstrom charged the Strategic Planning Committee to conduct an overview of redistricting, analyze its impact on the Multiple District and recommend courses of action to the Council. We formed as a small committee then expanded to include a representative from each of our nine districts.

While we initially used redistricting as a foundation of our discussions, it became apparent that significant membership losses and leadership issues were also troubling trends that needed to be addressed. In the end, our team looked at all these orbiting issues and determined that redistricting has the potential to positively impact membership and leadership issues.

The Strategic Planning Committee has concluded that MD19 is rapidly approaching a critical point in its history that, absent a significant reversal of membership and leadership trends, redistricting will be the only option remaining for MD19 to effectively continue serving its Lions. As result, the committee feels it would be remiss to simply kick the problems, and the viable solutions to those problems, down the road.

Simply put, the time has come to face a very real possibility that redistricting MD19 will be necessary. Therefore, this report focuses on what redistricting would look like in MD19.

The Committee

Listed here are the members and ex-Officio members of the committee, a broad cross-section of senior leaders from each district in MD19:

ID Allan Hunt
CC Al Hedstrom
CCE John Moralek
VCCE Lyndon Harriman
PCC John Kirry
PCC JD Nellor
PCC Gary Reidel
PDG Shelley Costello
PDG Cecil Fung

PDG Steve Noble
PDG Brien Patton
PDG Chuck Waid
PZC Ed Poquette*
ED Peter Anderson

*Note: Ed Poquette has stepped down and we will be adding PDG Tom Smarsh from District 19-B as we go forward.

The Crisis we Face

Throughout this year the Committee has watched with growing alarm as membership numbers across the Multiple District continue to plummet. To illustrate the decline one can look back just 25 years, when our Multiple District peaked at slightly under 20,000 members. Since that time, our membership has declined steadily and dramatically. In the past five years, for example, we have lost approximately 400 members per year. We now stand at just under 10,000 members in 391 clubs across our Multiple District. All but one of the nine Districts is in “transitional” status (fewer than 1250 members). If that trend continues another five years, we will be nearing 8000 members. In ten years at that same rate we will be at 6000 members. A consequence of membership losses is a developing, acute leadership vacuum in the districts which exacerbates a vicious circle as the districts struggle to find effective leaders who are equipped to address their district’s membership and leadership issues. We must take action to mitigate this looming crisis.

Guidance from LCI

The process of consolidating or redistricting, terms which LCI uses interchangeably, is complex and time consuming. Our group started with a tentative discussion of redistricting using a 2016 PDF manual created by LCI entitled “Guide for Consolidating Districts,” This guide lays out the complex three-year process.

Of great value were the opening paragraphs of that publication which clearly described the reasons for redistricting. I quote here the opening paragraphs of the LCI manual:

“WHY CONSOLIDATE SMALL DISTRICTS?”

“While the ideal size for a district has been debated, there is little doubt that a district should be large enough to have a sufficient pool of trained, qualified district leaders, a well-attended and meaningful district convention and ample resources to support club development.

“While membership growth should always be a part of the plan, redistricting can infuse the district with a mix of new leaders who can look at district activities in a new way, combine resources to more effectively meet the needs of the clubs and even reduce the dues for each member as expenses are shared over a larger population of Lions. (ED Note: this sentence is meant for districts that have annual dues requirements)

“Redistricting, when done well, can strengthen the district and stimulate membership growth, enhancing the districts’ ability to provide needed humanitarian service.

“However, to be successful, it takes a thorough understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities of each district and a detailed plan to ensure the new structure effectively addresses the needs of the clubs. This guide was designed to provide a process to identify opportunities, determine new territories, and establish goals with a plan for implementation.”

A Plan of Action

It has been said “You only have a problem if you don’t have a plan.” The Council should know that we have considered a lot of “what-if’s” before offering the following, tentative redistricting plan. Let’s be prepared to redistrict MD19 if the trend described above is not immediately resolved.

The Committee envisions that MD would undergo consolidation of the nine existing districts into five districts, primarily based on merging adjacent districts rather than completely redrawing district lines. Merging certain zones into adjacent districts would make districts larger thereby increasing the overall leadership pool to the benefit of our humanitarian mission. All districts in the draft plan would meet the LCI requirements of having at least 35 clubs and 1250 Members.

The following is the tentative plan as drafted by committee member PDG Chuck Waid. It has been thoroughly discussed and the general concept has been approved by the members of the committee. We recognize that other adjustments may be needed as the plan further evolves and develops.

The overall tentative plan is:

1. Districts I and A would **Merge** to form a single district.
2. Districts C and G would **Merge** to form a single district.

3. Districts B and H would **Merge** to form a single district.
4. Districts D, E and F would be realigned. District D would be divided at the US-Canada border and the lower half would merge with some portions of E and F. The upper half (Canadian) portion of the current District D would join ranks with the Washington/Idaho/ Canadian upper half of District E to form a new district.
5. District E would be divided just above Spokane. The resulting northern portion of E and the northern portion of D would combine to create a new international district.
6. The southern portions of D, E and F would merge to create a district made up of eastern Washington and northern Idaho.

Resultant members and clubs if the above plan is implemented based on current membership (all above LCI requirements of 1250/35)

Merged Districts I and A:	2212 members, 97 clubs
Merged Districts B and H:	2035 members, 76 clubs
Merged Districts C and G:	2408 members, 82 clubs
Merged Districts D and E (north)	1494 members, 75 clubs
Merged Districts D, E and F (south)	1861 members, 70 clubs

Critical Timelines

There are many administrative timelines to redistricting. Here are some considerations:

1. Each district must approve a redistricting plan at their annual convention or hold a special convention to approve this (or any) redistricting plan.
2. The MD must approve the overall plan at its annual convention.
3. A redistricting plan must be presented to clubs 60 days before their district conventions or any special conventions, and the district must approve the redistricting plan by majority vote.
4. If approved by the districts and the MD, a redistricting plan must be approved by the LCI Board at their annual October meeting. An approved redistricting plan must be sent to LCI at least 60 days before its annual October meeting.

So, given this jumble of conflicting timelines, the theoretical *earliest* MD19 could get administrative approval for a redistricting plan from LCI would be October 2022. The practical timeline pushes the earliest approval from LCI another year out. Here are some details:

- Districts must send the plan to their clubs 60 days before voting on the plan at a special convention using online/email voting.
- The MD must approve the plan at their annual convention or by special convention. Currently the MD plans to hold a virtual convention in November 2021.
- The LCI Board must receive the District/Multiple District approved plan 60 days before their annual October Meeting. This means a plan could not be voted on by the LCI board until its regular meeting in October 2022.
- Once LCI approval is granted, a redistricting plan would be effective at the close of that meeting, but complete execution could take another year after approval.
- Primary to the plan is an emphasis on electing DG's and VDG's that would be merged in an effort to have no loss of leadership going forward.

Special Considerations

1. Since all districts and their leadership pool would be increased by the consolidation plan outlined above, it is highly recommended that districts adopt a shared method of visitation. That is, visitations would need to be shared by the DG, 1VDG and 2VDG on some form of a rotating basis. All visitations need to carry the DG message to the clubs. This rotational plan concept was embraced by LCI several years ago but has not been universally adopted by districts.
2. The southern portions of Districts D, E and F merged together would be a big territory for the new DG team. While all of their members will be in eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, the sharing of visitation responsibilities would become a necessity. The committee will form a subgroup of the committee representatives of D-E-F to look at ways of expanding leadership roles to mitigate the large distances involved in a redistricting plan such as is set forth above. This is applicable to the other merged districts as well.

Summary

The Multiple District Council of Governors must consider this matter with urgency. The steady and dramatic decline of members has become a serious problem. As districts shrink, fresh leadership, new ideas and creative energies also shrink. It has been the Committee's hope that membership initiatives would reverse current trends, but the results of those programs have yielded little success in MD19. It is clear, however, that we can no longer continue "business as usual." The options are: Reverse the membership losses in each district, build effective and continuous leadership chains in each district, or redistrict the MD. There are no other options.

By consolidating districts, we can, to paraphrase the words of LCI, "infuse the district with a mix of new leaders who can look at district activities in a new way and combine resources to more effectively meet the needs of the clubs."

Undertaking the above or any path toward redistricting MD19 is not a panacea. However, the Strategic Planning Committee urges the Council to consider redistricting as a most critical and urgent matter.

Respectfully Submitted by the MD19 Strategic Planning Committee,

PCC John Kirry
Chair