

July 2024 Report from WB to CPs about Planning and Future of the WSC

This report is to help prepare for the July conference participant (CP) web meeting, which will continue the conversation about planning and the future of the WSC. The report includes ideas about

- [Section 1: the planning process \(and the board's recent work on the content of the plan\),](#)
- [Section 2: working together as a conference to draft the CAR survey, including a recommendation from the board to include all ideas for literature and service material in the CAR survey rather than in motions to create project plans, and](#)
- [Section 3: how to use time at the conference more wisely, including a recommendation from the board to recognize consensus in the initial straw poll as a conference decision.](#)

Background on this Discussion

Developing a more collaborative planning process and a WSC devoted to discussion and consensus-based decision making has been an aspiration for years. Surveys, reports, WSC sessions, and CP web meetings have been devoted to the topics.

This cycle we are making progress!

February: The Future of the WSC Workgroup forwarded ideas related to a unified planning system, collaborative development and prioritization of motions, and the CAR survey along with a frame for a CP web meeting.

The World Board further developed the ideas and the webinar outline.

March: Conference participants discussed ideas at their March web meeting. A report from that meeting, including the small group notes, is in your Dropbox.

June: Results of that discussion were considered by the World Board (WB), at their June in-person meeting. The WB also devoted a day to the strategic plan and planning process. This report summarizes some of their discussions.

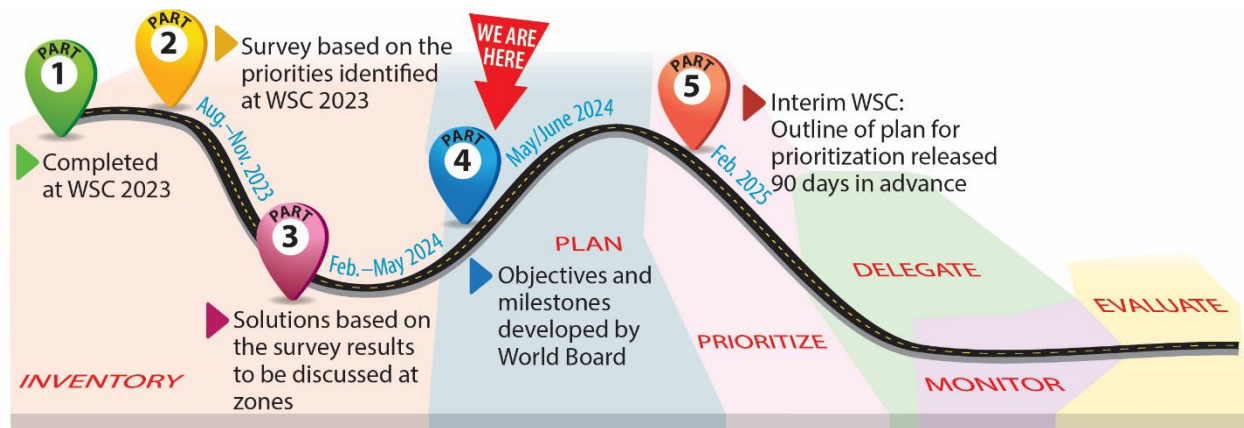
July: The July CP web meeting will be devoted to discussing the ideas in this report and any others CPs have for things we can try this cycle. The week before the July CP web meeting, the Future of the WSC Workgroup will review the ideas and act as a sort of “focus group.”

Section 1: Planning

The board devoted an entire day of their June in-person meeting to further developing both the content and process for the NA World Services strategic plan.

The new collaborative planning process epitomizes this cycle's theme *Creating Our Future*. Even a well-established strategic planning process is central in **creating the future**, because a strategic plan drives change. But in our case, we are creating not just the plan but the planning process itself this cycle. The board worked on both in June, taking the first steps toward drafting objectives (cycle goals) for the plan, and discussing what the cycle-long process might look like.

The workshops at zones went so well! (The [results of the zonal workshops](#) are posted on the conference page.) It's filled us with optimism about the prospect for a truly collaborative process. We're building in real ways to extend the involvement of conference participants all the way through the process. Because this is the first time we are using this process and we are developing it as we go— with the help of conference participants— we don't have everything lined out and charted. You are helping us make the map. We will refine as we go, and certainly next cycle will look different than this one once we factor in all of our ideas for improvement.



The Plan Itself—Key Result Areas and Work on Objectives

The strategic plan contains objectives for the cycle and approaches to those objectives, some of which lead to project plans. In our attempt to make the plan easier to understand, we intend to organize objectives and approaches under one of four “Key Result Areas”:

- Public Relations
- Service System Support
- Fellowship Support
- World Service Structure and Operations

These are like the four pillars of the plan. They will likely change very little, if at all, from cycle to cycle.

The board reviewed the great work coming out of the planning sessions at zones and also discussed three more factors developed at the last World Service Conference. These factors were not discussed by zones because there was barely enough time to talk about six factors, but they came up frequently in the zonal planning session discussions and elsewhere, so it seems like there is support to add them to the plan. We combined some factors identified by the WSC that seemed similar and the result is these three additional factors:

1. Public Relations,
2. Generational/Cultural Differences & Social Discrimination; Generational Preferences for Engagement & Communication,
3. Disruption or Bottlenecks in the Flow of Funds; Increasing Financial Constraints

The plan's objectives will spring from the nine total factors. We are still working on the draft, and we will dedicate time at CP webinars and the Interim WSC meeting to review and discuss the draft together.

What Happens When

Before the Interim WSC

- Interim *CAR* published 28 November.
- Time during one or both of the two CP web meetings will be devoted to the plan and prep for the Interim meeting: 21 September & 7 December.

Interim WSC (28 February & 1 March)

- Conduct legally necessary business and business related to WSC 2026 processes (e.g., budget for this cycle, motions related to the nominations and amendment-making processes carried over from WSC 2023).
- Review tentative cycle objectives for the strategic plan (WSC confirms).
- Collaborate on the content of the *CAR* survey (collective priorities).
- In future cycles, when the plan is developed, we'll use the interim meeting for the monitoring and evaluating steps of the planning process.

WSC

- Approve plan and project plans, set priorities using the *CAR* survey results as a guide.
- Possibly start work on the priorities in the plan (e.g., framing issue discussions).
- Report (and celebrate) progress/success (zones and WB).
- Discuss new ideas as needed.

Together We Can

Truly collaborative planning is becoming less of an aspiration and more of a reality. We cannot thank conference participants and zones enough for your participation, ideas, and involvement so far. The board discussed what the process might look like when it is fully implemented.

- Conference participants have discussions before the WSC and come to the in-person meeting with ideas for the initial inventory and framing.
- Priorities are developed through discussion and surveys.
- Those priorities are discussed at zones, similar to the workshops this cycle.
- The board together with all CPs develop those ideas into objectives and approaches during the cycle.
- The conference refines those ideas and begins to develop the next list of issues for the *CAR* survey and perhaps *CAR* motions at the Interim WSC.

Each cycle, the conference would be doing the work called for in the current plan as well as developing next cycle’s plan. We believe this is possible and is a bright and effective step for the WSC.

Key Roles in the Ideal Collaborative Planning Process

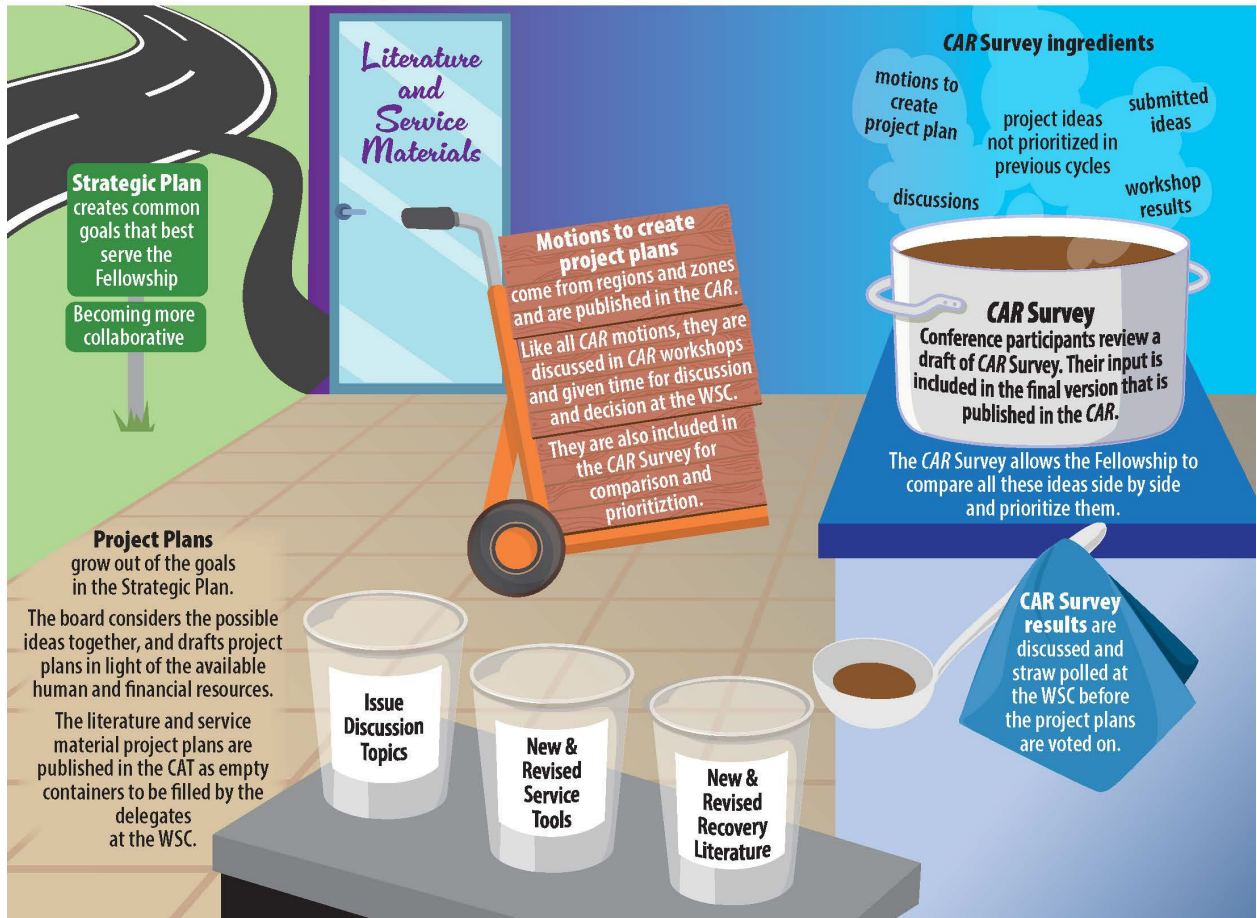
The board discussed who might do what in the collaborative process.

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| <p>WSC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve plan • Approve budget • Train RDs (provide mentoring, guidance, help/support, materials) • Single point of accountability and evaluation of progress • Distribution mechanism for the planning process | <p>WB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support/coordination • Communication/motivation • Model for leadership • Utilize input to help set common goals (and establish service opportunities) |
| <p>Zones Will need to be an adaptable process since zones are so different</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection between WSC and local services (RSC/ASC) • Gather input • Prioritize best practices • Package information • Call to action • Support / mentor / serve (adopt priorities for implementation at the zone & regions) | <p>Regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide input • Gather information and spirit • Key connection with Fellowship (disseminate, inform, participate, elicit, inspire) • Active participation in planning |

We will talk about all of this together at the July conference participant web meeting, but these pages give you a sense of some of the overarching discussions we’ve had about the strategic plan. Following are some ideas about the CAR survey and how to better collaborate on its creation.

Section 2: CAR Survey

Current Project Plan Process—Literature & Service Material



In the 2023–2026 cycle, we launched a new planning process that involves all conference participants as well as communities that are members of a zone but not seated at the conference. The goal is a single system to evaluate all of the needs and ideas for projects next to each other and make strategic decisions together about what to accomplish first.

We're not there yet, though. Currently we have a patchwork approach that involves regional/zonal motions, the *Conference Agenda Report (CAR)* survey, and projects from the World Board that have come out of the strategic plan.

World Services Projects Report

The above passage and image come from the [Current Project Process & Status](#) resource we recently posted on the conference page that summarizes the status of World Services literature and service material projects and explains the process of creating those project plans. One of the things we discussed at our last board meeting is how to make the CAR survey a more integrated part of the collaborative planning process.

In an ideal planning system, the *CAR* survey would contain all of the ideas for literature, service material, and IDTs to be considered by the WSC. WSC participants would create the *CAR* survey collectively and feel some ownership of it as the central tool to prioritize ideas.

We need a process that allows participants to create the *CAR* survey together—a process for CPs to identify what goes in the survey, combine similar ideas, and determine what is most important to include, so that the lists are a practical size (we've heard many say they are often too long!).

We are proposing some ideas and we want to hear what you think. Many of these ideas have been shared by CPs and by members of the Future of the WSC workgroup. We have been listening, and here is some of what we've heard.

- Start fresh! Conference participants—including the board—who wish to would submit ideas for the 2026 *CAR* survey. The 2023 *CAR* survey would be distributed as a reference so that participants can reintroduce some of those ideas if they wish.
- Ideas emerging from planning discussions at the Interim WSC could be added to the lists as well.
- When the lists of ideas are compiled, CPs would prioritize them via ballot.
- The results of the prioritization ballot would be distributed to CPs, and together we would decide how to winnow the lists to more manageable sizes.
- In this way, CPs would collectively create the final lists for the *CAR* survey. CPs would have the final decision, and the *CAR* survey results would help shape the focus of project plans, particularly for recovery literature, service material, and Issue Discussion Topics.

The board is recommending that participants (regions, zones, and the board) utilize this new *CAR* survey process to submit ideas for literature and service material projects for WSC 2026 rather than making motions to create project plans.

Again, the board is proposing to try these ideas on an experimental basis for 2026 only. If it seems to work, the conference can choose to adopt them on an ongoing basis, and we will be a step closer to one unified collaborative planning process. If the process doesn't go well, the conference can try something different in the future.

Like most things that we try for the first time, we anticipate there will be changes and refinements. We've outlined the steps in the process and we can, together as a conference, figure out the details if CPs like the basic ideas. For one thing, the timeline is not entirely worked out—when would the deadline be for ideas to include on the *CAR* survey; when would the prioritization ballot be sent out; etc. We also may want to discuss a method for considering similar ideas together—not just trimming the size of the lists but determining which items are repetitive and can be combined.

Also, we know that conference participants want an opportunity to share about their ideas for literature, service material, and IDTs so that the ideas can be fully understood. We've heard

suggestions (from the Future of the WSC workgroup among others) that we schedule a web meeting early in the cycle (when it's not yet "CAR season") for CPs to share their ideas with one another and begin to prioritize them before the ideas have taken shape into CAR survey items or motions. We've also heard suggestions that we schedule time for this sort of discussion later in the cycle after ideas are in the form of motions or CAR survey items.

We are not in consensus as a board about a recommendation, and, given the amount of time and energy it is taking to launch a new planning process, we do not believe we have space to implement an extra CP web meeting this cycle. But it's an important idea and piece of the process that we hope we can try next cycle, after we have more discussion as a WSC how that might work.

Section 3: Use of Time at the WSC and Interim Meeting

One thing we know for sure: successful, truly collaborative planning depends upon meaningful dialogue, and that requires a commitment of time, especially in a body as large and diverse as the WSC. We spend a lot of time, as a conference, in debate that isn't very fruitful. We've heard many ideas from conference participants and the Future of the WSC Workgroup about how to reduce the time spent in unproductive debate at the conference and increase the time for meaningful discussions. And we have some ideas of our own.

Items for decision (motions and amendments) are straw polled in advance of the WSC, and the results of those straw polls are announced to all CPs and posted online. This helps the cofacilitators order the items for decision and helps the body decide where to spend its time. In 2023, all 28 of the items that had consensus support retained consensus after discussion. Regardless of whether the level of support was 80% or 98%, discussion didn't result in any of them losing their consensus level of support.

[We are recommending one simple idea to try in-session at the 2025 Interim WSC. If the process works well, we will propose it for use at WSC 2026:](#)

[If a motion has consensus in an initial straw poll \(that's 80% or more in support or not in support\), the Cofacilitators will ask the body to accept the straw poll results as a decision to move forward.](#)

By the time a motion reaches the floor of the conference, participants have had time to voice their thoughts at CP web meetings and elsewhere. All of us at the WSC, share a respect for the Ninth Concept; it's critical to hear all viewpoints. The purpose of ideas like the one we are suggesting—to accept the consensus expressed as a decision—is not to silence any voices, it's to make our voices more meaningful and allow more time for productive, creative discussion.

Many of the ideas address how to prioritize motions for discussion and decision at the WSC. Can there be a mechanism for collaboratively considering and prioritizing ideas *prior to* drafting

the *CAR*? Is there a way to collaboratively prioritize motions for consideration by the conference *after* the *CAR* is written? We agree with the input we've heard and would like to see something in place to allow CPs to collectively prioritize motions. We've had initial discussions as a board, but as we say above, we do not believe we have the time in the current cycle to adequately support changes to the process beyond the recommendations we are including here. We hope more discussion among participants will lead to a consensus to try *something*—likely for the next conference cycle.

That's a lot, but it's only a start. There is so much more. We want to hear your ideas about what else you believe we can and should try for WSC 2026 and in this cycle.

The new collaborative planning process focuses our collective time and attention on the ideas that challenge the Fellowship in effectively carrying the message and on the solutions and experience of NA around the world. We look forward to creating our future together—a future where we approach our work strategically and collaboratively.