

# The Simple-5: Roadmaps for Green Party Success

by

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## Introduction

The Green Party of Canada has come through an incredible period of growth over the past three years. Two successful elections have raised public awareness about the party and have brought us over \$1,000,000 per year in federal funding. Many of you are probably asking: What next? How do we continue to grow? This essay is an attempt to explore these questions and start to build agreement about the best way to proceed.

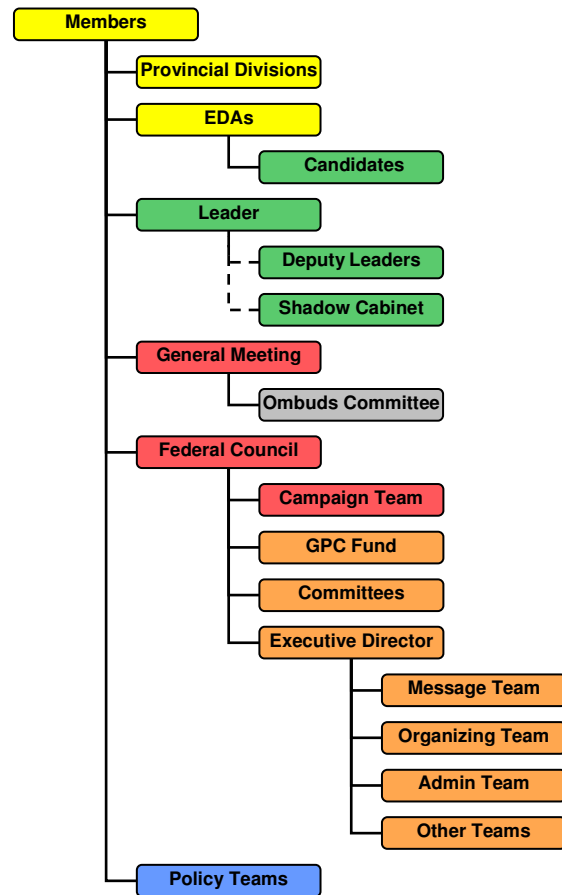
## What Does the Party Look Like?

Three years ago the party had no staff. Two years ago, in the run-up to the 2004 election, we had paid staff but they were all on short-term contracts. We could not hire them because we were not sure if we would win enough votes to qualify for the federal funding that would allow us to pay their salaries over the long term. Today the party has the equivalent of over 20

full-time salaried employees being managed by an Executive Director who reports to council.

Managing this transition has been the primary activity for the federal council elected in August 2004. The party has evolved from an organization where councillors ran its day-to-day operations (e.g. a working council) to an organization that is an employer directing paid staff to do this work (e.g. a governing council). Here is a high-level perspective of what the organization looks like today:

GPC Membership Chart



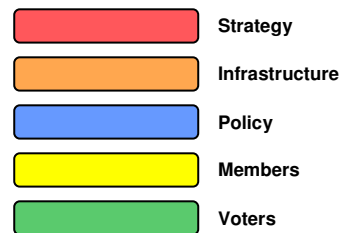
An overview of the different groups is below:

- **Members** join the party because they are attracted to our message, policies and principles. As a group they have the ability to direct all aspects of party affairs.

- **Provincial Divisions (PDs) and Electoral District Associations (EDAs)** are formed by members who want to help build the party in a given region.
- **Candidates** can be nominated by EDAs (or appointed when no EDA exists) and represent the party in a given riding during federal elections.
- The **Leader** is elected by members for a two-year term at a General Meeting and represents the party at the national level.
- **Deputy Leaders** are recommended by the Leader, typically on a regional basis, and stand in for the Leader when the Leader is not available. Deputy Leader recommendations are approved by council.
- **Shadow Cabinet** assists the Leader and members can be selected at a General Meeting. In practice recommendations for new members have been made and approved by the existing Shadow Cabinet.
- **General Meetings** are held every two years. When the membership is in a General Meeting they are the highest authority of the party.
- **Ombuds and Appeals Committee** members are chosen by election by the membership during regular GPC elections. When disputes arise within the party and other avenues for resolution have been exhausted, members can request that the committee review both sides and make recommendations as to how the dispute can be resolved.
- **Federal Council** is comprised of around 25 councillors (including the leader positions, functionary positions and provincial and territorial representatives). Councillors are elected by members for two-year terms at a General Meeting.
- The **Campaign Team** is appointed by council and directs the party's day-to-day operations during a federal election.
- The **GPC Fund** is an incorporated body that was created to provide legal protection for our Chief Agent. Councillors are automatically members of the fund and council has complete control over its activities.
- **Committees** are created by council on an as-needed basis and are accountable to council.
- The **Executive Director (ED)** is the party's top-level staff person and is the link between volunteer councillors and paid or volunteer staff. The ED directs the party's day-to-day operations and is accountable to council.
- **Staff Teams (e.g. message, organizing, admin, etc)** are hired, managed and coordinated by the Executive Director. In some cases volunteers may join staff teams.
- **Policy Teams** such as the Policy Assembly are created by members interested in developing policy for the party. Policy motions may be presented by these teams or by members for approval at a General Meeting.

## The Simple-5

The colours in the organization chart are used to categorize the key units of the party into five groups based on their common roles and responsibilities. A roadmap will be defined for each group and the groups will also be used throughout this essay to illustrate key points. Here is a legend with the names given to each group:

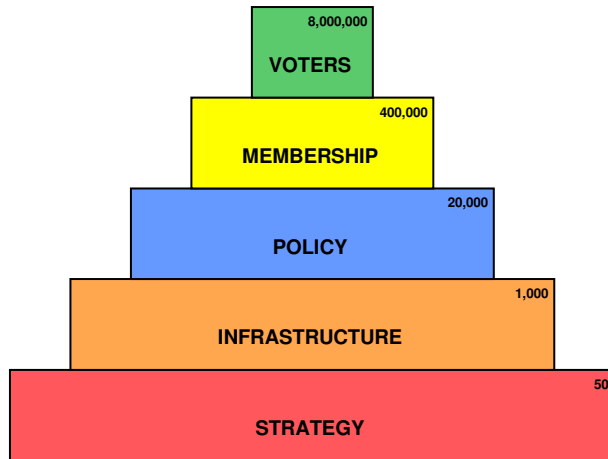


Each group in the party is at a different level in its development process and each has a different set of goals that will need to be met to ensure its success. An analysis of how these issues can be addressed is presented later in the roadmap for each group. Note that the Ombuds and Appeals Committee operates independently and as such hasn't been included in any of the five groups.

For those who like mnemonics you can remember the groups using the phrase *Simple-5*: Strategy, Infrastructure, Membership and Policy LEad to Voters (the V does double duty as the Roman Numeral 5).

## Developmental Pyramid

To begin our analysis let's consider how the various groups in the party interact with each other. Here is one perspective:



Now let's consider the dependencies which form the basis for this pyramid:

*Strategy:* The membership is responsible for setting the direction of the party at General Meetings. When the membership is not in a General Meeting council is responsible for strategic decision-making. The election team is responsible for strategic decision-making during the election cycle.

*Infrastructure:* Staff members and key members in each riding work to implement our strategic plans and ensure that Election Canada regulations and party-wide policies are being followed.

*Policy:* Policy teams can do much of their work independently but they need a solid party infrastructure to maximize their effectiveness. They are also dependent on the party's ability to draw in new members interested in policy development.

*Members:* Many voters are attracted to the party by election materials prepared and delivered by our infrastructure teams. In many cases we will only be able to translate that support into new memberships if we ensure that these materials are backed by detailed policy background information. Clear processes and procedures also need to be put in place by our infrastructure teams to ensure that all aspects of a membership are handled in a professional manner.

*Voters:* Ultimately many Canadians will only vote for us if it clear to them that we have our act together at all supporting levels of the pyramid. It is the responsibility of our candidates, leadership and Shadow Cabinet to win over voters by effectively delivering the message that these pieces have been put into place.

## Number Crunching

You might have noticed the numbers in the top right corner of each level of the pyramid. This is a rough estimate of the number of individuals that will need to be involved at each level to ensure success. There is an interesting inverse relationship as one starts at the bottom step and moves up the pyramid. That is, each step is a 20x increase in the number of individuals that we need to get involved. Here is why I think these numbers are necessary:

*50 strategists:* These are our councillors, election team members and members who submit motions to a General Meeting.

*1,000 infrastructure builders:* These are our national and regional staff members and 2 or 3 key volunteers in each of the 308 ridings.

*20,000 policy developers:* This number may seem surprisingly large to some but we know from past experience that about 1 in 20 members will get involved in policy development. These individuals will ensure that the party has rock-solid policies across the board, backed by research and hard data, educational programs and budgets that have been vetted by experts.

*400,000 members:* This is a little more than 1,000 members per riding and would form the basis for a pool of donors and volunteers who could (for example) visit every house in a typical riding of 40,000 houses in each election cycle.

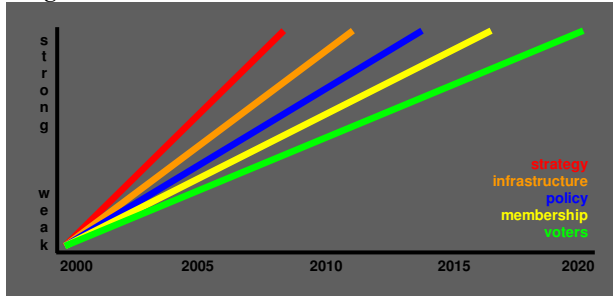
*8,000,000 voters:* This translates to around 50% of the electorate and would ensure that the party could get its policy initiatives passed in Parliament.

Obviously the party has its work cut out for it! But by establishing where we want to end up we can make our plans accordingly now.

## Managing Dependencies

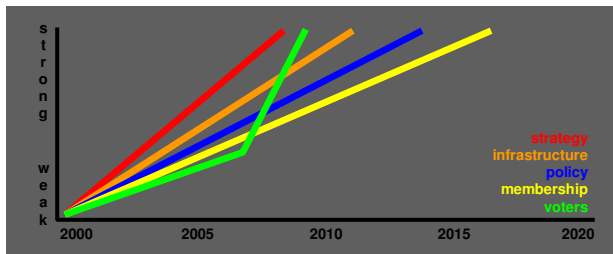
To be effective our roadmaps must take into account the dependencies outlined in our developmental pyramid. One possible 20-year timeline for managing our growth is below. The first part of the diagram reflects our growth from 0.8% and 104,000 votes in the 2000 election to 665,000 votes and 4.5% in the 2006 election.

## Target Timelines



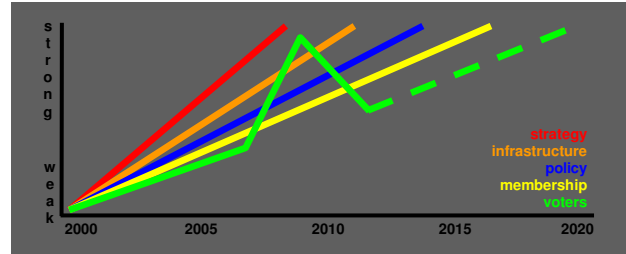
The overall timeline may seem too long for some. However, we need to recognize that many of our policies propose societal changes that will take years of messaging and education to ensure the necessary public levels of understanding, trust and support are in place before implementation. We also need to ensure each foundation level in the pyramid is in place before we can effectively grow a higher level.

Let's consider what might happen if we experience a greatly increased vote total in an election that occurs in the next couple of years. Here is a modified diagram that shows that sort of "hockey stick" growth:



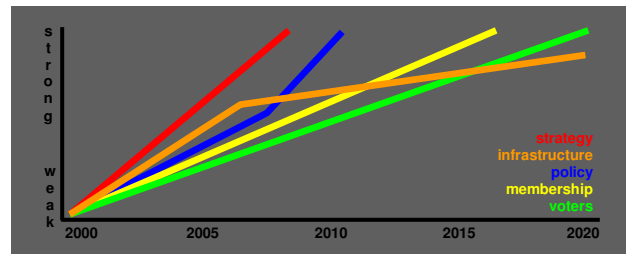
Certainly there would be many advantages to such growth. For example, we would get increased federal funding and media exposure.

There are some downsides to the media exposure, however. Areas where our infrastructure or policies are weak would be exposed and critics and opposition parties could argue that we aren't ready to govern. And we wouldn't have the membership base in place to effectively counter those arguments at the grassroots level. One possible result could be a correction in our vote totals:

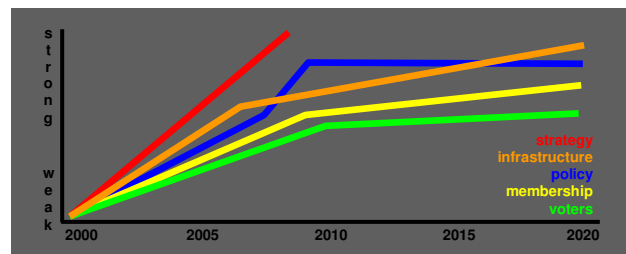


The dashed line represents the fact that it would be difficult (but not impossible) to recover from a significant voter decline by completing the development of our infrastructure, policy and membership.

In many ways rapidly increasing vote totals would be a nice problem to have. A different sort of problem could arise if we don't allocate our resources effectively. For example, let's consider what could happen if we redirected many of our resources from infrastructure development to more rapidly improve our policy development:



I believe that in the long term the lack of infrastructure support will result in organizational problems that will ultimately limit our ability to grow:



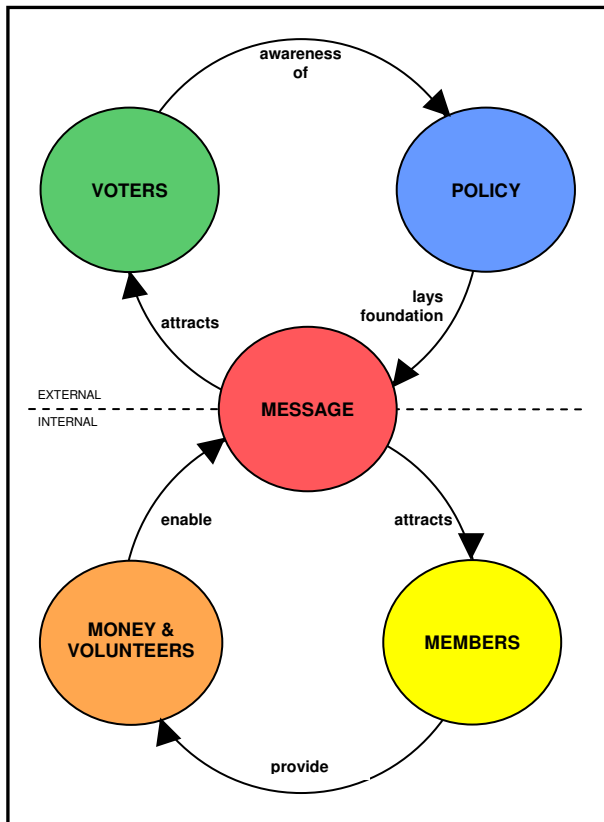
The key point being made in this section is that our growth needs to be managed in a series of stages, starting at the base of the pyramid. If our growth is not managed in this way it is likely that corrections will occur that will bring our

growth cycles back into their natural order in the pyramid. If we are not careful these corrections could also compromise our ability to reach our ultimate goal of enabling societal change.

## Cycles of Growth

The linchpin for all of our growth is our message. A diagram showing how the groups in the party interact to deliver this message is below.

The diagram should reinforce how the growth of each group is dependent on the success of other groups. A key point to consider is that without a solid infrastructure (e.g. money and volunteers) we will not have capacity to deliver our message, regardless of how strong our policies are. That is one reason why it is key to get a strong infrastructure in place as soon as possible.



There are other implied connections (e.g. members develop policy and votes translate to federal funding) that have been left out of the diagram for simplicity.

There are three primary ways we can deliver our message: grassroots (e.g. door-to-door canvassing, leaflet drops or tabling); technology (e.g. our website and email bulletins) and mainstream media (e.g. paid advertising and news articles about our noteworthy activities). Strategic decisions about how to most effectively allocate our resources to enable this messaging are made by council and the election team.

## Roadmaps

Now that we've established a framework for building the party let's organize the work that needs to be done for each group into a series of roadmaps. The information will be presented as a set of past and future high-level milestones. For simplicity only major issues are included.

Note that the future dates are just proposals until they are reviewed and adopted by council as part of the strategic planning process. Certainly there will be much discussion and consultation between councillors, members and staff about the best ways to prioritize our work and allocate our resources in the coming years. Members will be kept informed as decisions are made and the work to implement these decisions is completed.

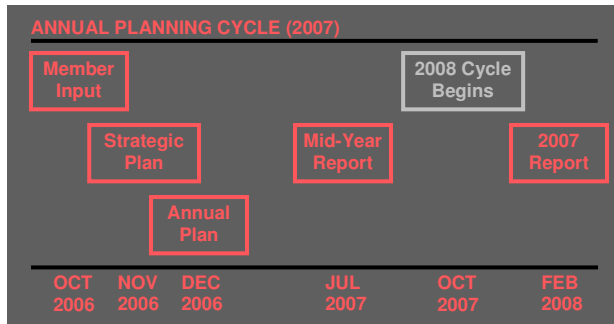
## Strategy Roadmap

Here are some key strategic decisions the party has made over the past few years:

- Late 2003:* Borrow money to try to run 308 candidates
- Post 2004 election:* Allocate \$1 million federal funding
- 2004 GM:* Formed Constitutional Review Committee
- Early 2005:* Decision to transition to governing council
- Late 2005:* Ratification of revenue sharing
- Early 2006:* Start transition to annual planning cycle

As mentioned earlier the transition to a governing council comprised much of the work done by the current council. This work included completing key infrastructure activities such as hiring an Executive Director and incorporating the GPC Fund. Now that the transition is nearing completion a framework has been

established that will allow council to engage with members in a strategic planning process that is more proactive than reactive:



The diagram outlines five key components of the annual planning cycle:

- Oct 2006:* Solicit feedback from members for 2007 plan
- Nov 2006:* 2007 strategic plan completed by council
- Dec 2006:* 2007 annual plan from Executive Director
- July 2007:* Mid-year progress report to members
- Feb 2008:* 2007 annual report to members

When February 2008 arrives the party will have completed one full cycle and had the opportunity to work out any kinks that occurred along the way for the next cycle. At this point a strong process for the strategic group will have been established and this meets the target timeframe we set for growing the party.

Note that strategic planning and objectives set by our campaign team can be confidential and may change on short notice so these are not discussed in this essay. However, the campaign team for the 2006 election did interact regularly with members during the election cycle and will be distributing an election report to members. This sort of feedback loop is likely to occur for future elections as well.

## Infrastructure Roadmap

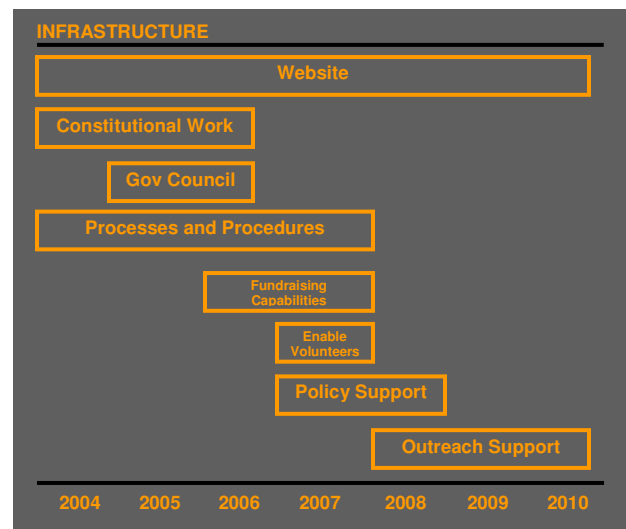
Perhaps not surprisingly building the party infrastructure has been the primary growth activity undertaken by the party over the past three years. Sometimes this work was accelerated by the two elections we ran and at other times the elections caused delays. Here are some of the major milestones that have been completed:

- 2000:* \$20,000 annual budget
- Mid 2003:* First paid staff member (contract position)
- Early 2004:* Organizing and messaging teams in place
- Early 2004:* Major website upgrade
- Post 2004 election:* 15 staff including two employees
- Mid 2005:* Executive Director hired
- Mid 2005:* Most staff are employees
- Late 2005:* Revenue sharing plan implemented
- 2006:* \$2 million annual budget
- Early 2006:* GPC Fund incorporated

The above milestones represent a lot of work that could be classified as "extremely urgent" to complete. However, there is still a lot of infrastructure work that could still be considered "very urgent" remaining. In particular:

- Our website needs to be constantly updated to keep up with technological changes and strategic decisions.
- The constitutional review process must be completed.
- Many of our processes and procedures are still weak and these need to be strengthened.
- We need to improve our fundraising capabilities since many of the items on these roadmaps will require more funds than we will get from our federal funding.
- We need to better enable our volunteers by defining and publishing volunteer opportunities.
- We need to put better support teams in place for our policy development and outreach work.

It is not possible to do everything at once but a proposed roadmap for how to prioritize the remaining infrastructure work is below. This roadmap will ensure we reach our timeline objective of having a strong, self-sustaining infrastructure with a stable budget in place by 2010:



*Ongoing:* Website enhancements  
*Mid 2006:* Complete constitutional review process  
*2004-2007:* Strengthen processes and procedures  
*2006-2007:* Improve fundraising capabilities  
*2007:* Enable volunteers  
*2007-2008:* Strengthen policy development support teams  
*2008-2010:* Strengthen outreach support teams

In the organization chart at the start of this document you will notice there are four teams reporting to the Executive Director. The senior staff member for organizing, messaging, and administration (e.g. office management and finances) are Director-level positions.

The fourth staff team in the organization chart ("other") is a place-holder. This represents the staff members and volunteers who do work as time, funding and other resources permit on areas where we are currently weak. When we begin to strengthen these areas we can take actions to reinforce our commitment to their success. For example, when we start to strengthen our policy development process in 2007 we could hire a Director of Policy Development and start allocating other resources to help them build our infrastructure in that area.

At this stage in the party's growth it is necessary to continue to allocate resources for infrastructure development. A volunteer pool is not available for many staff positions where we need trained, full-time employees whose work the party can direct as circumstances require.

## Policy Roadmap

For the first 20 years of our existence the party's main activity outside of running candidates in elections was policy development. The strength of our fundamental principles, our policies and our ability to draw on a worldwide Green movement are the things that have drawn many of us to the party and provided the solid foundation that allowed us to get to where we are today. Here are a few important policy milestones:

*1980s to present:* Development of party policies  
*Late 2003:* Living Platform established  
*Early 2004:* Shadow Cabinet formed

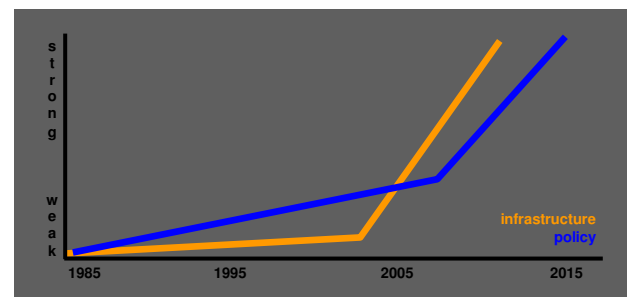
*Mid 2004:* 2004 election platform published  
*Early 2006:* 2006 election platform published

In the last two elections there has been focus on getting our message out and the latter milestones in the above list reflect this. There has also been a need to add breadth to our policies so we could publish comprehensive election platforms that address the concerns of today's voters.

We are rapidly approaching an era when our ability to attract new members will be dependent on increasing the depth of our policies. So the question arises: How and when is the party going to direct our increased resources to further our policy development? As outlined in the infrastructure roadmap I believe this should be done in 2007 and 2008, after which I think the policy development work can and should be self-sustaining (e.g. the funding we allocate to that area should stabilize).

It is important to remember that resources we allocate to the policy group will need to be allocated to support policy development, not define policy. As outlined in the organization chart, policy development is a responsibility of member-driven policy teams and the work staff do to support these teams should be focused on making it easier for members to get involved.

I think a delay of one more year before starting to direct more resources to policy development work is reasonable. Primarily this is because of the need to get our other infrastructure work completed. I believe the following diagram is an accurate representation of what our policy development vs. infrastructure development will end up looking like over 30 years:

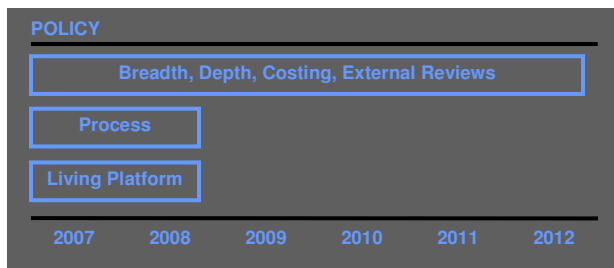


Continuing to allocate resources to infrastructure work is necessary since we must complete the

correction required to align the growth of these two tiers in our developmental pyramid.

We do have a pool of talent and skills that can sustain and gradually improve our policy until such a time as we can direct more resources to it. For example, over 200 volunteers worked on our recent election platforms. In practice we will need to draw on these volunteers and thousands more over the coming years if we want to be able to convince Canadians that our policies - which in some cases will fundamentally change Canadian society - are practical and advisable.

A simple roadmap proposal for policy work is below. The core policy development is not broken down into more details since I believe much of the work will be done organically. The timeline does reflect the fact that I think it will take 5 or more years to get the costing, background facts and research, educational programs and bipartisan and public support for many of our policies to a point where they could be passed by Parliament.



*Present-2012:* Continue to improve the breadth and depth of our policies. Incorporate complete costing and external reviews into the process.

*2007-2008:* Define and implement processes for development, ratification and annual review of policies in a way that allows large numbers of members (e.g. thousands) to be involved.

*2007-2008:* Improve the Living Platform (and/or Living Policy).

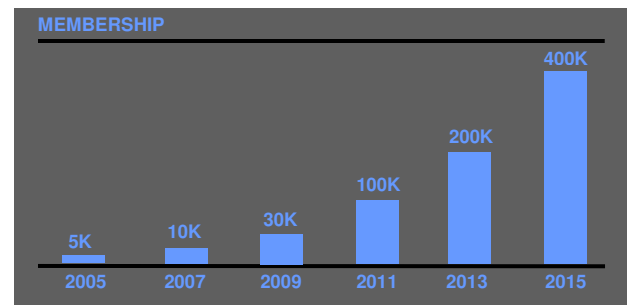
## Membership Roadmap

Membership plays a key role in our developmental pyramid in that increasing numbers of members will help to drive both policy development and voter support. It is a responsibility of our existing members to support this growth by forming EDAs and

regional groups and by doing volunteer recruitment work.

You might have noticed that "strengthening membership support" was not included in the infrastructure roadmap and that is because an existing objective of our organizing team is to support membership development between and during elections (the focus of these roadmaps is on areas where we are weak). For example, national and regional organizers are working hard at building EDAs and initiated programs to start to identify which voters support us.

Currently we have about 5000 members. Here is a 10-year plan for reaching our target of 400,000 members by 2015:



Given the current state of our existing membership base, our infrastructure and our policy, I think this is a realistic plan. However, the plan is conservative to start and it is the one where I hope we can achieve our objectives earlier than planned.

One important premise I'm using is that it will take on average two hours of volunteer time to recruit a new member by tabling, going door-to-door canvassing, etc. Of course this number will vary widely depending on many factors. For example:

- If our recruiters work in teams then the total time spent recruiting is a multiple of the number of members in that team.
- If tabling is being done at a public event such as Earth Day the recruitment rate may be higher but these events may occur infrequently in a given area and there could be event fees as well.
- The amount of time it takes to go door-to-door canvassing or dropping off leaflets will be very different in urban, suburban and rural areas.

Using paid recruiters is another option. An estimate I've seen for the cost of salaries, materials and coordinating and supervising this work is \$50 per new member. This could be a useful strategy for attempts to recruit up to 100 or 1000 members at a time but for larger-scale recruiting the costs would be prohibitive (e.g. 100,000 new members would cost \$5 million).

Based on the above assumptions let's analyze the steps in the roadmap:

*10,000 members by 2007:* It should be possible to double our membership in the next two years. Some infrastructure work including completing our membership database, developing better recruiting materials and a members' handbook still need to be completed. The organizing team is working on building EDAs and these EDAs will attract new members on their own in the short term. We can run some pilot projects using paid recruiters to determine whether this could be a successful long-term strategy.

*100,000 members by 2011:* The four years from 2007 to 2011 should be a period of more rapid growth, increasing our membership by 10 times. This should be possible because much of our infrastructure work will be completed and our policy will have an increased depth that will be attractive to potential members. Our ability to identify and communicate with our voters (a pool of likely new members) will be much stronger. Strong EDAs and regional groups should be in place to support paid and volunteer recruiting projects.

*400,000 members by 2015:* After 2011 the recruitment pace will likely slow down. Much of the easier recruitment of our voters who "naturally" belong to the party will have been done. To recruit new members at this point in the party's development we will need to have rock-solid policies and, probably, some measure of electoral success. Membership recruiting will likely be driven by door-to-door canvassing and will be tied closely to other contacts with the voting public at large.

## Voter Roadmap

Over time more and more Canadians are becoming aware of the fundamental issues underpinning many Green Party policies. If we are well-organized we will be able to capitalize on this social awareness of issues where we are leading the political way. Canadians who vote for the Green Party will be giving us a mandate to enact societal change.

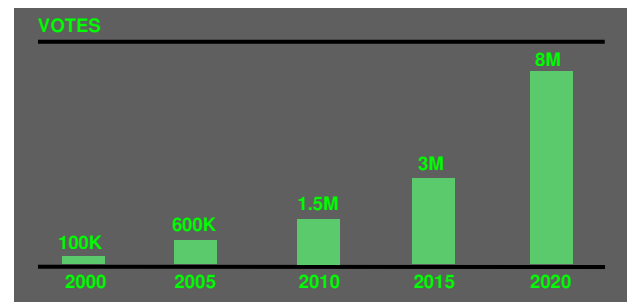
It is a responsibility of our leadership, candidates and Shadow Cabinet to present our

policies and vision in a way that will build broad-based support for our party amongst Canadian voters.

It is unlikely that our large-scale electoral success will occur overnight. Although most Canadians are now aware of our party we will likely need to talk to every Canadian so they can build understanding, trust and support in our policies.

This will be a lot of hard work but there is time set aside in these roadmaps to get it done. For example, if a candidate wanted to visit half of the 40,000 homes in their riding, and they believe they can visit 10 homes per hour, then they need to set aside 2000 hours to do so. If they were willing to canvass 10 hours per week (500 hours per year) their objective could be met in 4 years (by 2010). If they had a good support team in place the team could probably visit more houses and/or take less time to do so.

Here is a roadmap with our historical vote results and some target vote results:



Here is some analysis of how we can achieve these vote totals:

*1.5 million votes by 2010:* This represents 10% of the electorate and a little more than double our current level of support. This level is now being achieved in many ridings where we have a basic local infrastructure in place and it likely represents our core level of support. By 2010 we should be able to complete enough of our strategic, infrastructure, policy and membership development work to tap into this support base nationally.

*3 million votes by 2015:* This represents 20% of the electorate. In Alberta, a Green Party candidate who canvassed every door in parts of their riding won 25% of the votes in the areas she canvassed. By 2015 we should have been able to complete this sort of canvassing in large areas of the country and will likely have elected many MPs

by this time. Their influence should allow us to work with other parties in bipartisan efforts to get some of our policies passed into legislation.

*8 million votes by 2020:* This represents 50% of the electorate which is likely somewhat higher than even a theoretical maximum. But there are a number of factors that could bring about a majority Green government. The success of our MPs elected to previous Parliaments will bring us trust and support. There could also be a recognition on the part of the electorate of the increasingly urgent need to implement our policies due to societal or environmental changes. If we can get thousands of individuals involved in our policy development process our policies should have matured to a point far beyond those of the other parties by this time. A majority government will then give our MPs a mandate to implement them.

## Challenges

In my experience all GPC members support our six fundamental principles of Ecological Wisdom, Social Justice, Participatory Democracy, Non-Violence, Sustainability and Respect for Diversity. I believe that most party members also support most of our policies and planks in our platform. It is these public documents that in large part define who they are and who we are. To capitalize on our shared values I think there are three key challenges the party needs to address in the short term.

The first challenge is that the central party needs to better communicate with our members about the party's plans and activities. I've outlined a number of ways this can be done in the strategy roadmap. Federal council is also setting up a group that should allow us to better track, prioritize and communicate work that needs to be done (more details on this group will be provided as work progresses).

The second challenge is that members need to try to manage their expectations about what the party can accomplish in a given timeframe. As this essay outlines there is a lot of work that needs to be done. But there are already many very dedicated volunteers and staff members (both regionally and nationally) who have done the work necessary to allow us to grow to our current size. Recognition of these accomplishments is important to ensure that these individuals feel their work is valued and appreciated.

The third challenge is the nature of our communications. Debate and dialogue is essential to ensuring that we adopt the most effective policies and procedures. We need to try to ensure that when we disagree we do so in a way that is healthy for the party and respectful of those with whom we are disagreeing. I look forward to the day when the quality and tone of Green Party discussion groups are respected and admired by members and non-members alike.

## Conclusion

In order to be successful different groups and individuals in the party need to be on the same page as to how we should grow. To help build this agreement this essay outlines a number of roadmaps that will help build the party in a systematic manner. There is some overlap in the roadmap timelines but a key point is that our success will be more likely if we try to focus our efforts by building the framework for key areas of the party based on how that area fits into our developmental pyramid.

The essay also discusses how our organization currently looks and outlines how the various units of the party interact with each other. There is no one right way to build the party but an attempt has been made to consolidate a number of strategies in a way that addresses the broad-based issues and concerns we face. The essay also attempts to raise awareness about the extensive inter-dependencies between the various units of the party so everyone is aware of the challenges the party is facing.

Whether or not these specific roadmaps are used we can only be successful if we work together in a spirit of cooperation, goodwill and support to implement whatever plans are put in place. When we elect Green Party MPs to Parliament they can use these same principles to work collaboratively with other parties to implement our policies and build a better Canada.