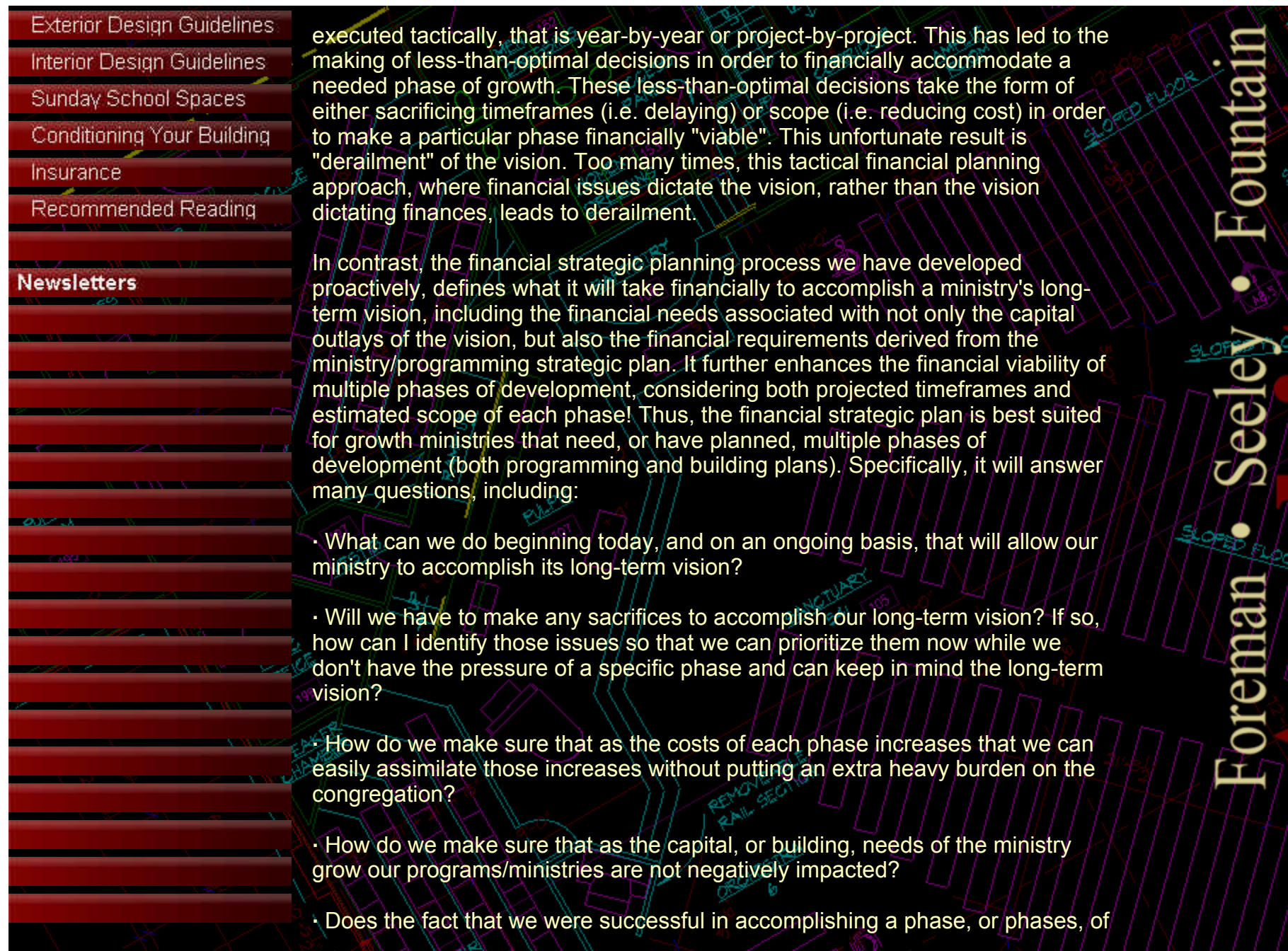


<b>Home Page</b>	<h1>Financial Strategic Planning</h1> <h2>A Paradigm Shift in Ministry Planning</h2> <p><b>By: Strategic Consulting Group</b>          Suite 320, 1000 Whitlock Avenue          Marietta, Georgia 30064          Telephone 770-475-6373 · Fax 770-360-9106  <a href="http://www.strategicconsultgroup.com">www.strategicconsultgroup.com</a></p> <p>Download this page as a PDF file</p> <p>To introduce the unique concept of financial strategic planning, it is first important to describe a progression witnessed over the years in the way that ministries define their visions. Several years ago, it was common for growth ministries to define their ministry/programming plans in short, or tactical terms, usually over a one-year period. Today, most growth ministries have defined their ministry/programming plans in a strategic manner, or over long-term periods. They understand "who they are" today from a programming standpoint, and are able to articulate "who they want to become" along with an implementation timeframe over several years.</p> <p>The second progression seen is evidenced in capital, or building development plans. Several years ago, when growth ministries spoke about their capital plans, the conversation was about the "next" project, usually within 12-18 months. Today, most growth ministries have defined strategically what capital requirements are needed to leverage their long-term ministry/programming growth. Frequently, this is a multi-phased capital development plan (or Master Site Plan), which has been developed with an architect.</p> <p>While there has been a beneficial progression from tactical to strategic planning in the areas of ministry/programming and capital needs, this step has not been taken with regards to financial planning. Rather, financial planning is still</p>
<b>E-mail FSF Architects</b>	
<b>The Firm</b>	
<b>Religious Buildings</b>	
<b>Financial Buildings</b>	
<b>Other Buildings</b>	
<b>Master Planning</b>	
<b>Church Design Resources</b>	
Selecting an Architect	
Services of an Architect	
Why do Master Planning	
Importance of Planning	
Strategic Financial Planning	
Why Not to Build	
Steps in a Building Project	
Steering Committees	
Preparing a Budget	
Site Selection Criteria	
Relocating a Church	



Foreman • Seeley • Fountain



Exterior Design Guidelines

Interior Design Guidelines

Sunday School Spaces

Conditioning Your Building

Insurance

Recommended Reading

**Newsletters**

executed tactically, that is year-by-year or project-by-project. This has led to the making of less-than-optimal decisions in order to financially accommodate a needed phase of growth. These less-than-optimal decisions take the form of either sacrificing timeframes (i.e. delaying) or scope (i.e. reducing cost) in order to make a particular phase financially "viable". This unfortunate result is "derailment" of the vision. Too many times, this tactical financial planning approach, where financial issues dictate the vision, rather than the vision dictating finances, leads to derailment.

In contrast, the financial strategic planning process we have developed proactively, defines what it will take financially to accomplish a ministry's long-term vision, including the financial needs associated with not only the capital outlays of the vision, but also the financial requirements derived from the ministry/programming strategic plan. It further enhances the financial viability of multiple phases of development, considering both projected timeframes and estimated scope of each phase! Thus, the financial strategic plan is best suited for growth ministries that need, or have planned, multiple phases of development (both programming and building plans). Specifically, it will answer many questions, including:

- What can we do beginning today, and on an ongoing basis, that will allow our ministry to accomplish its long-term vision?
- Will we have to make any sacrifices to accomplish our long-term vision? If so, how can I identify those issues so that we can prioritize them now while we don't have the pressure of a specific phase and can keep in mind the long-term vision?
- How do we make sure that as the costs of each phase increases that we can easily assimilate those increases without putting an extra heavy burden on the congregation?
- How do we make sure that as the capital, or building, needs of the ministry grow our programs/ministries are not negatively impacted?
- Does the fact that we were successful in accomplishing a phase, or phases, of

Foreman • Seeley • Fountain

our long-term plan insure that we will in fact be able to accomplish the whole vision without having to change our methodology?

- How can we become very attractive to external financing sources, so that as our ministry needs increase we will have viable funding sources?

In addition, the financial strategic plan provides the following benefits:

- It will essentially "marry" your long-term capital and programming plans with a long-term financial plan. That is, if the church knows today how it wants to develop its property for the next five to ten years, the financial strategic plan will give the church a roadmap, or game plan, exemplified by a time line on which financial steps the church needs to take beginning now, and as it grows, so that it will be better positioned to be successful in achieving those development plans.
- It will explore the financial implications to your long-term programming needs and make specific recommendations for financially achieving these in conjunction with your building needs. By doing this, it can help you avoid feeling like "you are building rich, but programming poor"
- It will consider the financial implications of any one phase of your development to your overall master plan, or vision. This view will allow us to explore what specific financial obstacles (from a financier's perspective) exist in accomplishing the overall vision and make specific recommendations to eliminate, or mitigate, them.
- It will consider the most viable combination of funding sources for each phase, and give you specific recommendations so that your timelines for future phases are met and will not have to be compromised.
- It will position your ministry so that the likelihood of success in attracting viable funding sources will increase even as your potential need for external funding

Foreman • Seeley • Fountain

increases due to the increased cost of future phases.

- It will define what it will take from a financial perspective to accomplish the vision, instead of having financial issues define the vision!

There are a couple of reasons that strongly supports the execution of a financial strategic plan. First, if a ministry is already thinking strategically about its programming and capital needs, then this financial process will complete the planning circle, allowing the ministry to fully leverage the benefits of long-term planning. Secondly, the dramatic growth in the overall size of ministries today has led to a substantial increase in scope, or capital outlays, associated with any given phase. Thus, to continue to leverage the blessing of growth, ministries are faced with an exponential increase in the cost of a particular phase relative to a decade ago or relative to prior phases. It is therefore important to explore, identify, and understand the financial implications of multiple phases of development.

For these collective reasons, we believe it is imperative for a ministry to embrace this paradigm shift in ministry planning and develop a proactive financial roadmap, or strategy, for achieving its vision in order to avoid the derailment frequently associated with tactical financial planning.

Download a PDF version of this article: [Strategic Financial Planning](http://www.fsfarchitects.com/Strategic.htm)

Foreman • Seeley • Fountain