

**Washington Youth Soccer  
District 5 Pilot Project:  
Voluntarily Consolidation of District 5 Associations &  
Clubs**

**A Report to the Washington Youth Soccer Board of  
Directors**

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By:

Jan Glick & Associates

[www.janglick.com](http://www.janglick.com)

[jan@janglick.com](mailto:jan@janglick.com)

(206) 517-5199

## Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Background and Purpose	6
3. Process Overview	8
4. Cowlitz Youth Soccer	10
5. Replacement of District 5 Board With Paid Washington Youth Soccer Staff	11
6. Consolidation of Columbia Youth Soccer and East County Youth Soccer	12
7. Club Consolidation in CYSF and ECYSA	14
8. Separation of Governance from Operations	15
9. Lessons Learned	16

## 1. Executive Summary

In 2008, Washington Youth Soccer began implementation of a reinvention process aimed at making a more “seamless soccer” system across its membership. Beginning with the state organization’s Constitutional Convention in 2008-2010, District 5 was selected in early 2009 to serve as a pilot project of how seamlessness could be achieved at the local level.

The goals of the project were to:

- Advance seamless soccer by educating hundreds of leaders and stakeholders about how to best enrich and develop youth players, and avoid adverse recruitment/competition for players that has tended to characterize the youth soccer landscape,
- Separate governance from soccer operations in all organizations involved, and foster improvement in both sets of functions,
- Replace the District 5 board of directors with a Washington Youth Soccer staff member,
- Reduce organizational barriers by consolidating the 3 associations to 2, and reduce the number of clubs by approximately 50%.

After a nearly 2 year pilot process, a significant number of these objectives have either been achieved, or remain works in-progress, on a positive track. The vast majority of club and association leaders and many other parents within District 5 have embraced the concept of seamless soccer and its fundamental strategies of organizational consolidation and reduced barriers to player movement. This result has been institutionalized in a significant number of completed consolidations. The following chart gives a numerical description of the dramatic progress that has been made toward several of these goals, plus a sense of how much more streamlining of the system may be possible in the future.

	Prior to Project, April 2009	End of Pilot January 2011	Possible Next Phase (2011-12)
<b># of Districts</b>	1	0	0
<b># of Associations</b>	3	3	2
<b># of Clubs</b>	13	9	5
<b>Total # of Organizations</b>	17	12	7
<b>Total # of Communication Links (team to WSYSA)**</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>

\*\* A communication link refers to the process for communicating information within the youth soccer system. Thus, to communicate an issue from any team or coach to WA YOUTH SOCCER, or vice versa, required 4 separate communications, thus had four links prior to consolidation: team to club, club to association, association to district and district to state.

The following quotes from leaders of several of the organizations involved provide an excellent overview of both the results of the project and the process that was utilized:

*“My overall perception regarding the need for District Boards is based on what I believe should have been their function, that didn’t seem to be fulfilled, which is governance, especially the long term goal of planning for the entire district. Without such a role being*

*performed, the District is better served overall by a paid state position, which is beneficial in coordinating the State and Association communications. The position is a needed position in facilitating the advancement of the State plan for Youth Soccer.*

*Looking to the future, I would like to see either the paid position and/or the remaining associations assume the the strategic planning role in order to establish and accomplish unified 5 and 10 year goal specific to District 5."*

**-Jack Mathes, Past Commissioner, District 5**

*"Over the last 18 months there has been a lot of activity in district 5 which included the elimination of the District 5 board, and progress toward the consolidation of several clubs and two associations. The process has been fairly smooth and although we are still learning how to handle various situations without a District 5 board, the elimination of this layer of governance seems to be very effective. I believe an eventual single, unified association will further streamline and improve communication and decision making for the governing bodies in Southwest Washington."*

**-Brian Holt, President, Columbia Youth Soccer Federation**

*"The primary catalyst towards merger discussions has been the recent leadership exhibited by the WYSA, including three critical points:*

- 1. Vision: The Seamless Soccer model, even though it is still in conceptual stages, provides clubs with a structured model. Addressing the governance dysfunction at the club and state level and then providing a model structure to resolve the dysfunction was critical. The research and findings of Jan Glick & Associates was the catalyst to discussions between the clubs.*
- 2. Leadership: Without the leadership at the state level we would still be stuck in a broken system. Working to integrate the PDL back into WYS was essential. Replacing District 5 with a state representative was a major step towards unifying soccer in SW Washington. Ron Witherup is the right person for the job and has gained the trust of the all clubs. This trust did not exist with District 5. The perception was that D5 officers/volunteers were promoting their club agendas rather than the community's agenda. The community is now in the process of unifying towards a common goal behind the leadership of Ron.*
- 3. Action: This vision and leadership has been the catalyst to moving soccer forward in SW Washington. This effort helped the clubs put aside egos and petty differences to focus on a better soccer model for our community. These discussions have gained momentum and have helped break down the historical barriers. The true beneficiaries are the players and families who now get a club that can focus on soccer "operations" and development. So much energy has been wasted in clubs duplicating volunteer efforts, competing for players, trying to differentiate programs etc. Even though the CWSC-VUSA merger vote fell short this year, the improved communication and collaboration among clubs is a big step forward. The discussions have already turned toward what both clubs need to do to perform better and possibly pursue a successful merger in the future.*

*I have to also state that having a facilitator throughout this process has been essential. CWSC-WSA and VUSA-Timbers needed someone to guide the discussion and keep us on track. After all we are not soccer governance professionals. We needed the guidance."*

**-Colin Amos, President, Camas-Washougal Soccer Club**

*“Both Washington Youth Soccer and Jan Glick were dedicated and patient in making this voluntary process quick and easy to understand even when some did not seem like they wanted to understand. The direction from the state and regular facilitation made it clear that seamless soccer and its associated consolidation are in the best interest of the kids. The assistance was greatly appreciated, especially by those of us who hadn't gone through the process before.”*

**-Tim Hanson, President, Prairie Soccer Club**

*“The transition to a one club concept for CYSA I believe will benefit youth soccer in our area. This concept was talked about a few years before but we did not believe that we could find a solution that all the local clubs would buy into. It was very beneficial to have someone with facilitation skills that could walk us through the differences in the various clubs views on how organized soccer should look like at CYSA. Jan Glick helped us with the process and come up with a framework for our organization.*

*Although we have come a long way with regards to consolidating and coordinating, registration, referee assigning, and equipment purchases, we still have separate committee financial accounts that will report through CYSA for tax purposes.*

*Ultimately one of the major reasons for clubs buying into consolidation was to become 501(c)3 compliant and the legal ramifications if they remained deficient.”*

**-Phil Dahl, President, Cowlitz Youth Soccer Association**

*“The concept of a single association with:*

*a) a true pyramid delivery of service with one club providing travelling top level players/teams with coaches able to develop those players,*

*b) two to three clubs providing recreation and metropolitan advanced competition soccer with the ability to develop u5-u10 into the two streams of fun local soccer and advanced competition, and*

*c) clubs of sufficient size to plan and deliver those services,*

*is not new. Region Five is just ahead of the game but still swimming against the current.*

**-David Hughes, President, Vancouver United Soccer Alliance**

## 2. Background and Purpose

Washington Youth Soccer's Strategic Change Plan, approved in 2009, calls for a pilot project to be implemented in District 5, in order to "Voluntarily Consolidate Districts, Associations and Clubs to improve communication between local and state bodies, reduce duplication of efforts, and allow better focus on capacity building at the local level." (Goal 2, Strategy 2F1 of the WA Youth Soccer plan). The consolidation process envisioned was aimed at allowing development of a better system to serve players, creating a more seamless and flexible system for player development and movement between recreational, select and premier levels, leagues, and clubs.

At the outset of the project, District 5 consisted of the following three associations with the number of member clubs and individual members as noted below:

1. Cowlitz Youth Soccer Association (7 clubs, 2495 individual members, "CYSA")
2. Columbia Youth Soccer Federation (8 clubs, 5473 individual members, "CYSF")
3. East County Youth Soccer Association (3 clubs, 2915 individual members, "ECYSA")

Participation in the process was purely voluntary in nature. However, the process benefitted from the experience of several clubs within Columbia Youth Soccer Federation and East County Youth Soccer Association that had already undergone consolidation. In 2009, Columbia Premier Timbers Soccer Club merged with Vancouver United Soccer Alliance, and FC Vancouver merged into the Camas-Washougal Soccer Club, which retained its name. Thus two local clubs had merged rec-select-premier programs.

Based on scoping discussions in the spring of 2009, the following objectives for the process were outlined:

- Separation of Governance from Management - All organizations involved would separate governance roles (finance, fundraising, board development, personnel, strategic planning, etc) from soccer operational roles (administering leagues, developing players, etc), thereby allowing specialization and better performance of both sets of roles.
- Replacement of District Board with WA Youth Soccer Staff - Paid staff were envisioned as playing the coordination and communication role with Washington Youth Soccer instead of a volunteer District board of directors and district commissioner.
- Consolidate Associations and Clubs - It was envisioned that a reduction/consolidation of clubs would be possible, from a starting point of 13 across the District, down to a mutually agreeable number, estimated at 6-8 initially. Ideally, a reduction in associations from 3 to 2 was also envisioned as possible.
- Move Seamless Soccer Forward - Soccer operational roles were to be specifically structured and designed to provide best opportunities for enrichment and growth in all three levels of play, as per WA Youth Soccer's vision for the entire state.

At the conclusion of the pilot project, it was envisioned that the leadership groups of all consolidated organizations would be well-organized with a clear direction for the future,

understand each other's roles and responsibilities, and in general, be prepared to collaboratively and successfully lead the new clubs and streamlined associations.

The following report provides details regarding how each of these objectives was pursued, and what results were achieved in the first 20 months of the project.

### 3. Process Overview

#### Orientation & Startup

The concept of association and club consolidation in District 5 was first proposed by the District 5 Commissioner, Troy Maxcy, in early 2009, and was incorporated into Washington Youth Soccer's strategic plan at that time, a few months prior to the ratification of Washington Youth Soccer's new bylaws at the May 2009 AGM. To move the concept closer toward implementation, Washington Youth Soccer's President, Doug Andreassen, and its consultant, Jan Glick & Associates, held several meetings with a broad group of District 5 stakeholders in February-May, 2009. At that time, the District 5 board called for and accepted a proposal from Jan Glick & Associates for facilitation of a comprehensive consolidation process.

In total, including time spent prior to and following consideration of the consulting proposal, Washington Youth Soccer, District 5 and Glick & Associates invested approximately 6 months orienting leaders across District 5. Primarily through monthly meetings of groups of 20-30 stakeholders from many clubs and associations, these meetings covered a great amount of detail regarding the process, objectives, and potential benefits. **The orientation process culminated with the production of a white paper in the fall of 2009, describing the history of CYSF, ECYSA and their member clubs, a vision for better, more flexible player movement and better player development, with a small number of larger, consolidated clubs in Clark County.**

Toward the end of this orientation, leaders of a few associations and clubs had enough information for a few specific consolidation projects to be conceived, and these organizations requested facilitation from Glick & Associates as outlined in the consulting scope of work.

#### Coalescing Toward Specific Consolidation Processes

Gradually during summer-fall of 2009, both CYSA and CYSF embraced the consolidation vision and launched internal processes aimed at streamlining and consolidation. These processes generally included a strategic planning process plus orientation/training of leadership regarding roles and responsibilities in the new leadership structure under which governance and operations were to be separated.

Cowlitz Youth Soccer's motivation for consolidation was heightened by the fact that several clubs within the association were either not legal corporations or did not have IRS tax exempt status, and thus consolidation allowed for a legal structure in addition to a streamlined structure. In fact the association itself did not have 501(c)3 status until such status was received during the midst of the consolidation process. Therefore, CYSA leaders participated throughout the orientation phase, but their situation was significantly less political in nature than CYSF-ECYSA, and did not involve the staffing and larger budget considerations of the Clark County Associations that each included premier clubs. Therefore CYSA followed a separate, although similar process toward consolidation, after the orientation phase was completed.

As the CYSF consolidation track began to move forward, Salmon Creek Soccer Club asked ECYSA if it could join. However, because SCSC was a member of CYSF, such a move was deemed conditional upon the two associations (CYSF and ECYSA) merging. Because the associations were not ready to merge at that time, this option was tabled.

The District 5 board in its monthly meetings began to plan to phase itself out and draft a job description for a staff person to replace the entity. Jan Glick facilitated one of these meetings, at which roles and responsibilities were clarified for the period following elimination of the District:

- For the new regional director of member services staff position
- For each remaining association
- For a transitional body consisting of one member of each remaining board to deal with any residual issues remaining following the transition.

Eventually, because of the positive impact of all the orientation meetings, two sets of merger discussions were organically initiated:

- The two united rec-select-premier clubs, Camas Washougal Soccer Club (within ECYSA) and Vancouver United Soccer Association Timbers (within CYSF), began to hold discussions about the potential of a merger. When it became apparent that these discussions held promise, ECYSA and CYSF also began to meet to pursue a simultaneous association merger. As these processes (as well as CYSA's) progressed, an attorney specializing in corporate formation issues, nonprofits, and youth soccer was engaged to draft merger legal documents and insure compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations.
- Battleground, Lewis River, Prairie and Eisenhower Clubs (within CYSF) began to hold merger discussions.

The following sections provide additional detail about these processes

## 4. Cowlitz Youth Soccer Association

After participating in the orientation meetings as described above, CYSA leaders perceived a real benefit of consolidation within their association because many of their entities, including the Association itself, were either not incorporated or did not have 501(c)3 status. Consolidation offered a straightforward path toward legal compliance and served as a positive motivating force in what became a very fast process. Once Glick & Associates began meeting with the CYSA board and collaboratively developing a strategic plan and clarifying roles and responsibilities under the proposed new bylaws separating governance and operations, the association and its member clubs readily asked to move as fast as possible toward closing the deal. In only 6 months (excluding the orientation phase), CYSA concluded the consolidation of its four primary clubs into four geographically based committees of the parent association, CYSA, and a select committee. (Note that this excludes the Rainier Clatskanie Club, that is located in Oregon but plays within CYSA). It is believed that this one-association, one-club, local committee structure may be applicable to other rural areas of the state.

The CYSA process was very smooth, and concluded relatively rapidly. However, final document signing, which consists of many similar-looking documents, proved confusing enough to be delayed for a few months while the attorney worked with the association leadership to cross T's and dot I's. In the future, it is recommended that the attorney or merger consultant be on hand for final document signing to assure that all documents are appropriately signed on the effective date, and avoid further delays and further confusion.

A final loose end remains, however. Ocean Beach Youth Soccer, located 50 miles to the west of the population centers of Longview and Kelso, never responded to communication from CYSA or the consultant. Also, according to the CYSA President, it is unlikely that Ocean Beach has 501(c)3 status.

## 5. Replacement of District 5 Board with Paid Washington Youth Soccer Staff

Following the orientation period described in Section 3, the District 5 board in its monthly meetings began to plan to phase itself out and draft a job description for a staff person to replace the entity. Roles and responsibilities were clarified for the period following elimination of the District, for the following parties:

- The new regional director of member services staff position
- Each remaining association
- A transitional body consisting of one member of each remaining association board (thus 2 or 3 people) to deal with any issues remaining following the transition.

The three sets of roles and responsibilities were communicated to Washington Youth Soccer's Executive Director, and were basically accepted. After a few additional months' District 5 board meetings, when it became apparent that there were no real barriers to elimination of the District, the District board voted to dissolve itself. One factor which certainly validated this decision was that the District itself was not a corporation, so had been essentially operating as an ad-hoc committee of Washington Youth Soccer.

The search process for the new regional director of member services was a collaboration among the leaders of all three local associations and the Executive Director of Washington Youth Soccer. The search culminated in the selection of an individual who could effectively coordinate the many clubs and associations in the district towards common goals.

In the six months since the District dissolved itself, and the new regional director of member services began, the staff member has added tremendous value to the district, resolving perceived conflicts, leading in planning and helping facilitate all the organizations toward common objectives to benefit the players and their families. The new staff member has been talking to and meeting regularly with key club and association leaders to explain the proposed new system, and, because not all leaders of every club are familiar with the new system yet, build support for seamless soccer and its related elements, including consolidation of clubs and associations. This local staff work based on a statewide perspective appears to be exactly what is needed to maximize efficiencies and therefore achieve the promise of seamless soccer in the future.

Overall, the replacement of the district 5 board with paid Washington Youth Soccer staff was a painless process with a widely-agreed upon successful outcome.

## 6. Proposed Club Consolidation in CYSF and ECYSA

### Battle Ground-Lewis River-Prairie-Eisenhower

Following the orientation meetings and the white paper that laid out a vision of approximately 3-4 consolidated clubs within CYSF-ECYSA, in October 2009, three recreational clubs within CYSF expressed an interest in exploring a merger. Battle Ground, Lewis River and Prairie held several conference calls with Jan Glick, culminating in:

- A draft merger strategic plan, and
- A better understanding among the club presidents of how the new model club bylaws would affect the clubs in the future by separating governance from operations, and thereby allowing continuation of local recreational play with a local identity, as committees of a consolidated club.

At that point, at least one of the clubs' board members expressed some hesitance about moving directly toward a full merger. Instead, the clubs agreed to work first on refinement of a coordinated select program named Pacific FC, which ultimately included a fourth club, Eisenhower. At the time of this writing, a year after initial discussions, this collaboration seems to be going positively forward with the prospect of a full merger among three or four of these clubs a strong possibility for 2011, having been openly discussed in several CYSF board meetings, with details discussed among the four clubs' boards for one year.

### Vancouver United Soccer Alliance - Camas Washougal Soccer Club

In April, 2010, Vancouver United Soccer Alliance (VUSA) and Camas Washougal Soccer Club (CWSC) initiated merger discussions. These discussions, among the two largest clubs in the region were unique for two reasons. First, each club had recently been through their own mergers to form united clubs consisting of recreational, select and premier programs. In addition, VUSA was the sole Regional Club within CYSF, and CWSC, which included the Washington Soccer Academy, was likewise, the regional club within ECYSA. (In fact, CWSC had over 98% of the players within ECYSA, since the other club member, The Gorge Soccer Club, has less than 50 members.)

Because the two clubs spanned two different associations, for the club merger to be fulfilled, the parent associations would also have to merge. Yet since ECYSA and its member clubs had spun off from CYSF over 15 years ago, this was a logical strategy, and parallel association merger discussions were initiated.

The VUSA-CWSC merger discussions proceeded with regular meetings among a negotiating committee of leaders from both clubs. Beginning in August, because of the complexity and size of the two clubs, these meetings turned into weekly conference calls. Discussions began with the most strategic issues first (i.e. merging paid staff, developing job descriptions and a unified budget) and working eventually toward operational details, with a target of concluding a merger prior to the beginning of the 2011 season. Of special note is the complexity and amount of work

associated with the development of a merged club budget for a club of over 3000 members with an approximate \$1M budget. The budget spreadsheet took months to develop, and the process required the entire merger committee to provide input on program and budget assumptions and parameters to both clubs' Treasurers.

While this 8-month process was complex and required hundreds of hours of the 2 clubs' leaders' time, such an effort is very standard for a merger of two nonprofits with a combined \$1M budget.

Still, the process left only two months to explain to the clubs' memberships. While CWSC needed only a board vote to approve the merger, which it did, VUSA is a more membership-driven organization and while not legally required to do so, the board called upon the membership of the club to approve the proposed merger. VUSA's voting members consist of one vote for each team aged U-9 and above. Unfortunately, the vote failed by a vote of 27-25, out of a possible total of 102 teams. The Portland Oregonian described the turn-down as "Perhaps some teams felt it was too much merging, too soon," reflecting on the 2009 VUSA-Timbers merger. Ideally, more time would have been available for such member dialog, but with the playing season fast approaching and the prospect of an association merger dependent upon the club merger, such additional time was not deemed available during this project.

Despite the defeat of the merger, leaders from both clubs agree that the process of working together only helps achieve seamless soccer objectives in the short and long terms. Cooperative tournaments, fundraising and possibly an eventual merger at a later date are all possibilities.

#### Salmon Creek Soccer Club and Westside Soccer Club.

Some merger discussions have also taken place between Salmon Creek Soccer Club, Westside Soccer Club and Eisenhower Soccer Club.

## **7. Proposed Consolidation of Columbia Youth Soccer and East County Youth Soccer Association**

Following dissemination of the white paper outlining the vision of several mergers leading to three or four large clubs within CYSF, Glick & Associates facilitated an assessment and mini-strategic planning process for the association. In addition, JGA provided some training regarding the roles and responsibilities of the future board under the proposed new model bylaws.

Once VUSA began merger discussions with CWSC, it was critical that the parent associations launch parallel merger discussions so that the club merger would not conflict with association boundaries – a governance impossibility. Because CYSF had undertaken a mini strategic planning process and was preparing to adopt the new model association bylaws separating governance from operations, its proposed new organizational documents served as the model for a consolidated association, and CYSF was defined as the “surviving” organization following the proposed merger.

Glick & Associates met or held conference calls every 4 to 6 weeks with a merger committee consisting of several leaders of ECYSA and CYSF, including the two Treasurers. Because associations don't provide the level of services to their members that clubs do, the association merger process was relatively straightforward, especially compared to the VUSA-CWSC process.

When the VUSA membership vote failed, the proposed association merger was tabled. However, should a future VUSA-CWSC merger ever pass, the association merger would be framed and ready to go.

## 8. Separation of Governance form Operations

The proposed adoption of model club and association bylaws that separate governance from operations was discussed at nearly every meeting held in the District over a 20 month period. As of this writing:

- CYSA has adopted the new bylaws and structure,
- CYSF has taken a straw poll of its board members who have blessed the concept, and assigned a drafting committee to make final revisions to the draft model bylaws document for a planned vote to adopt on March 3, 2011.
- VUSA separates governance from operations in its bylaws
- Battleground, Lewis River, Prairie and Eisenhower are committed to separating governance from operations per model club bylaws in their proposed merged club.

## 9. Lessons Learned

### A) General

Primary Issue: Developing trust between local clubs and their leaders calls for overcoming and/or moving beyond historical conflicts between clubs

The primary issue that needs to be addressed within this sort of consolidation project is clearly the culture and history between clubs that historically have competed around recruitment of players. Such history is incredibly common across youth soccer, and therefore has led to ongoing creation of new clubs when leaders feel that they want to control their own recruitment, and subsequent lack of trust when a process such as this begins.

This low level of trust leads to an inevitable long orientation process, and relatively long process overall, before the many leaders and members involved are comfortable closing any merger deal. Near the end of each merger process in the final weeks and months prior to voting, all of this old history and an explanation of why the current leaders across town can be trusted to implement seamless soccer needs to be explained again to rank and file members (beyond merger committee members). In short, the rationale and benefits of seamless soccer and organizational consolidation need to be explained many times in such a process, and this should be considered a standard expectation at the outset. One possible communication objective is to make sure that a presentation to every local club board is made at least once a year to inform each and every club board member, and respond to questions, and thereby not rely on district-wide or association-wide meetings for communication.

One key mantra to be repeatedly said to members during such a consolidation process is, therefore, “that we shift the energy that is often expended on competing among clubs toward developing, coaching and mentoring youth players.”

Primary Conclusion: Clubs should ideally report to Washington Youth Soccer; Associations add little value

This pilot project highlighted the fact that local associations add relatively little value to the soccer system. Thus, the ultimate seamless soccer structure would have clubs reporting directly to WA Youth Soccer. This finding was, in early 2010, captured in the SWYSA strategic plan as “*Seek Opportunities to Provide Increased Value for Members,*” noting that the primary way to add such value could be through coordinated fundraising and marketing. By raising new philanthropic dollars that would be passed through to local clubs and members, an association could either provide better services to members and/or offset player fees.

However, as the process of CYSF-ECYSA consolidation neared its final vote, several stakeholders called openly for the eventual elimination of the association with all the clubs falling under the umbrella of a single club, once again validating the small value added by associations.

Primary Lesson Learned: It takes significant time and resources to facilitate premier and/or united club mergers, and mergers of clubs where individual members or teams have a vote on merger approval. Expect and plan for a process that takes **at least 12 months or more** prior to the point of legal merger. While the VUSA-CWSC process was complex and required hundreds of hours of the 2 clubs’ leaders’ time, such an effort is very standard for a merger of two nonprofits with a combined \$1M budget. In fact, with nonprofit organizations requiring membership votes, it is common for such merger negotiations to extend well beyond 12 months, allowing both the detailed committee-level negotiations and plenty of time for extensive dialog with both clubs’ members. The Battleground-Lewis River-Prairie consolidation similarly will require approximately 2 years from first interest until if and when it is concluded.

In short, when initiating such merger discussions, a good starting point may be to avoid putting deadlines on the process, such as concluding a merger prior to the next playing season.

*Note: Because CWSC was not incorporated, the legal form of the proposed merger was actually an asset transfer, which does not require a membership vote according to either VUSA bylaws or Washington State law. In order to insure member involvement and buy in, however, VUSA leadership decided to employ an optional membership voting process. VUSA membership is defined in its bylaws as one vote per team at U-9 and above.*

Lesson Learned: It takes far less time to facilitate an association merger or merger of recreational clubs, if trust exists and the parties involved understand that a merger of recreational clubs in no way affects local play and local identity.

Lesson Learned: Rural associations and clubs may be open to the prospect of less bureaucracy as shown by Cowlitz Youth Soccer’s embrace of a single association, single club structure.

Lesson Learned: Have the attorney or merger consultant on hand for final document signing to assure that all documents are appropriately signed in a timely manner.

Lesson Learned: Have the attorney study and guide the membership voting process for any merger membership vote.

Lesson Learned: Include members with specific focus on each of the three levels of play - recreational, select and premier - on any merger committee of “united” clubs.

## **B) Administration of the Consolidation Process**

### *Process Facilitation for District, Associations and Recreational Clubs*

At the outset of the project, the District asked each association to invest a minimal amount of funding, between \$500 and \$1000, toward the cost of the process. Ultimately, District 5 had sufficient cash funds built up over several years to cover the majority of the cost of the process facilitation. However, it should be noted that other Districts may take a different approach to financial management and therefore may not have built up enough reserves to pay for a similar process. In that case, other sources of funds may be required - from either Washington Youth Soccer or the relevant local associations.

Various meetings among different entities were held on the same or successive evenings to minimize consultant travel time and cost.

### *Regional Director of Member Services*

The ongoing expense for the regional director of member services position was covered in part for the first year by the portion of the player fee that used to go to the district.

### *Process Facilitation for Clubs with Premier Programs*

In the case of the merger of Vancouver United Soccer Alliance and Camas Washougal Soccer Club, the clubs themselves paid for the merger facilitation work. Both of these clubs include premier programs and had sufficient funds to cover the costs.