



Tara Mandala Strategic Plan
November 2016

UPDATED JUNE 2017

Mission • Vision • Values

Vast view • Open heart

The Mandala of Tara is a symbolic template for the awakening of the compassionate heart through the manifestation of Tara, the female Buddha of compassion.

Mission

Tara Mandala is a Buddhist organization led by Lama Tsultrim Allione, based at Tara Mandala Retreat Center in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. Its mission is to benefit all beings through teachings leading to the development of wisdom and compassion, with a primary focus on the lineage of the 11th century Tibetan woman teacher, Machig Labdrön. Her teachings offer the revolutionary paradigm of feeding not fighting that which assails us, which has applications in both personal and collective arenas.

Vision

We envision Tara Mandala generating a global network of meditation centers and sanghas practicing the lineage of Machig Labdrön for the benefit of all beings, using both ancient Tibetan teachings and modern adaptations of these methods. Tara Mandala is a vibrant international Buddhist Community with its hub at the 700-acre retreat center in Pagosa Springs, Colorado where both group and solitary retreat facilities are available. We maintain and steward Tara Mandala Retreat Center with careful attention to the spirits of the land and its preservation for future generations. We offer a complete path to realization anchored in Machig Labdrön's lineage with opportunities for both deep retreat and practice in the world.

Organizational Values

- We recognize the sacredness of all life
- We recognize there is an imbalance in the world creating the current state of ecological and political emergency
- We believe the re-emergence of the sacred feminine through spiritual and social development is a key to healing this imbalance leading to partnership between masculine and feminine, in a more balanced and compassionate world
- We support a just and equitable world
- We cut through our hopes and fears by feeding not fighting our demons and thus transforming obstacles into allies
- We see all that arises as a potential path to awakening
- We know compassion is the recognition of interdependence and act accordingly
- We find ways to offer teachings to people in a variety of circumstances

Tara Mandala Strategic Plan 2016

Tara Mandala, Inc. was incorporated as a Colorado Nonprofit Corporation in 1994. Tara Mandala is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) religious organization and church. Tara Mandala is lead by Spiritual Director Lama Tsultrim Allione and managed by its Board of Trustees who follow its bylaws.

Tara Mandala has a rich history of manifestation and development in its first two decades of existence. As we look forward to the next phase of maturation and refinement for the organization, we are pleased to complete a strategic planning process to identify the core priorities that will guide our work in the coming years. Through this strategic planning process, we will commit to objectives for the short, medium and long term to ensure the organization is moving toward the manifestation of these priorities - Lama Tsultrim's vision. Today, on November 18, 2016 we present this plan for review to the Board of Trustees.

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Tara Mandala began with Lama Tsultrim's vision of a retreat center where practitioners in the West could achieve the depths of meditation at the level what was achieved in Tibet. Through synchronicity and spontaneous manifestation, Lama Tsultrim and David Petit found and purchased the retreat center land, with the generosity of donors often coming forward just when needed. Starting with little more than her vision of the Tara Temple, and David's help, the first structures and buildings were constructed on the land. Beginning with a collection of tents and yurts, Tara Mandala soon built the Community Building, Prajna Residence Hall, four retreat cabins, and in 2009 completed the Trikaya Tara Temple. The physical facilities of Tara Mandala rose improbably, almost magically, through the hard work, generosity, and dedication of Lama Tsultrim, David, the growing sangha, and the many staff and volunteers who worked on the land. Similarly, dharma blossomed on the land through teachings from Lama Tsultrim, visiting Rinpoches, and other teachers who were brought to Tara Mandala. It became to be known as a power place for practice, teachings, and deep retreat. Lama Tsultrim later clarified and organized long-term practice paths for students into what is now established as the Gateway and Magyu lineage programs. Students continued to be drawn to Lama Tsultrim, and Tara Mandala satellite sanghas sprung up around the country and throughout the world.

This auspicious beginning laid the foundation for the organization and prepared Tara Mandala to enter its next 22-year phase. The bootstrapping boldness of the early days that was necessary to establish and grow Tara Mandala is now giving way to a more formal, robust management and an eye to long term stability and sustainability for the organization.

To ensure its current health and future functioning, Tara Mandala has laid the foundation for a shared, collaborative effort, enabling Lama Tsultrim to develop a team both at Tara Mandala and remotely to whom she can entrust the organization. As the teachings show us, the impermanence of human life is unpredictable and inevitable. Lama Tsultrim and her team are taking pains to ensure that Tara Mandala will not only survive her but thrive in the years after her passing enabling

the center to be the seat of her future reincarnations. Looking toward the future, we understand the importance of establishing a management plan and structures to support consistent progress toward the strategic priorities of Lama Tsultrim's vision in the short, medium, and long term - the culmination of which is this strategic plan.

To this end, Tara Mandala created a Strategic Planning Committee in 2012. In 2013 and 2014, the organization engaged the input of organizational consultants Susan Skeij and Sheldon Romer. The Board of Tara Mandala then looked to Lama Tsultrim's vision, and together with Lama Tsultrim, wrote updated mission and vision statements for the organization in 2015. In 2016, the Strategic Planning Committee identified the key priorities toward which Tara Mandala can direct and focus its efforts. This committee drafted an original version of this strategic plan and reviewed it with Lama Tsultrim Allione. Next, the committee engaged in a formal process to solicit the feedback of key stakeholders within the sangha of the organization including authorized and apprentice teachers, national and international Satellite Sangha leaders, current and past Board Members, current and past Executive Directors, Magyu and Gateway participants, major donors, as well as current and past staff and volunteers. The result of this process is the following six areas of strategic priorities. This list represents the roadmap that will guide Tara Mandala as it transitions from the "establishment" and "start-up" phase to the "stability" and "longevity" phase, extending forward into the future.

The intention in presenting this at the November 2016 Board of Trustees meeting is to review, discuss, crystalize, and propose a plan for adoption. Where we are unable to provide exact figures in this plan, we commit to including project leaders and dates as to when this data will be researched and added to the Strategic Plan.

The priorities for Tara Mandala's strategic plan include six main areas:

1. Support for Lama Tsultrim Allione
2. Physical and Digital Resources
3. Dharma Teachings and Lineage
4. Tara Mandala Sangha
5. Residential Community on the Land
6. Financial Stability

Each of these can be understood as containing facets of the jewel of Tara Mandala.

1. Support **Lama Tsultrim Allione**
 - a. Support Lama Tsultrim's vision and leadership for the development of Tara Mandala Retreat Center and broader Sangha including the lineages practiced. **on-going, level 1**
 - b. Support Lama Tsultrim to focus her time on leadership, practice, teaching, writing, and personal retreat by stepping out of all day-to-day operations and freeing her to step into administration only for key decisions. **on-going, level 1**

- c. Executive Director and team to create consistent, written reports to be sent bi-monthly to Lama Tsultrim, Lopöns, and the Board to update them on key developments and status of the organization. The outcome will be clear communication among key leadership bodies Lama Tsultrim, the Board of Trustees, and the Executive Director. **on-going, level 1**
 - d. Executive Director to send Executive Council minutes biweekly to Lama Tsultrim, Lopöns, and the Board. **ong-going, level 1**
 - e. Development of a clear Succession Plan for when Lama Tsultrim passes away or becomes unable to teach or in the event act as the leader of the organization. **1-3 years, level 1**
2. Maintain, Conserve and Protect existing **resources**, build out necessary **Capital Improvements** including physical and digital infrastructure
- a. Maintain and improve our existing physical infrastructure, including assessment of resource usage and bringing existing infrastructure back online: **1-3 years, level 1**
 - i. Temple **on-going, level 1**
 - ii. Prajna & Community Building **on-going, level 1**
 - iii. Retreat Cabins **on-going, level 1**
 - iv. Land Vehicles **on-going, level 1**
 - v. Water infrastructure **on-going, level 1**
 - vi. Energy Resources **on-gonig, level 1**
 - b. Create a Land Master Development Plan including
 - i. Additional residential housing **1-3 years, level 1 to create plan**
 - ii. Cremation grounds **1-3 years, level 1 to create plan**
 - iii. Residential building Upaya to house residents, retreatants, and treatment rooms. **1-3 years, level 1 to create plan**
 - iv. Retreat cabins **1-3 years, level 1 to create plan**
 - c. Create and commit to upholding standard maintenance schedules for all major physical assets. **on-going, level 1**
 - d. Implement technology improvements for the land facilities
 - i. Functional, consistent, reliable internet access **1 year, level 1**
 - ii. Develop a plan to improve archive organization and host all archives and digital assets on internal and external file server. **on-going, level 1**
 - iii. Develop integrative database system (e.g.: Salesforce) **1-3 years, level 1**
 - e. Based on the the Land Master Development Plan, research and adopt appropriate land use policy with Archuleta County. **1-3 years, level 1**
3. Organize and Disseminate Dharma **Teachings & Tara Mandala Lineages**
- a. Develop an annual retreat calendar with offerings that support the Gateway and Magyu Lineages at Tara Mandala as well as offerings from other teachers and traditions that align with our mission. **on-going, level 1**

- b. Develop a coherent study and practice curriculum in collaboration with Satellite Sanghas (Vajra, Buddha members) that leads to the development of students to become lineage holders and fully awake individuals. The curriculum will include and be informed by Tara Mandala lineages, Lama Tsultrim's teachings, the enlightened feminine, and social justice. **1-3 years, level 1**
 - c. Create a robust set of Online Programs to support students while they are not present on the land, or unable to attend retreats in person. **1-3 years, level 1**
 - d. Continue to develop the authorized and apprentice teacher programs including a training retreat held every 2-years. **on-going, level 1**
 - e. Teaching Lineages
 - i. Continue to offer the 10-year programs of Gateway and Magyu. **on-going, level 1**
 - ii. Increase teachings on Chöd through the Chöd Conference and follow up retreats and events. **on-going, level 1**
 - iii. Explore the creation of a Chöd School and other programs supporting. **3-5 years, level 2**
 - iv. Continue to increase offerings that celebrate the Sacred Feminine in the 21st Century (e.g. Wisdom Rising, WisdomWomen). **1-3 years, level 1**
 - v. Explore the development and inclusion of body based practices into our lineages (e.g. lujong, eight movements of Tibetan yoga). **3-5 years, level 2**
 - f. Develop curriculum to address the needs of families, youth, and children. **3-5 years, level 2**
 - g. Share Lama Tsultrim's teachings globally through tours in the US and in Europe. **3-5 years, level 2**
 - h. Develop a Strategic Vision for the Tara Mandala Library including the focus of its collection (English and Tibetan) and key translation projects, and bring this vision to fruition. **1-3 years, level 1**
 - i. Continue to develop Machig Publications (print, video, audio) as another arm of Tara Mandala's dharma outreach. **1-3 years, level 1**
 - j. Explore the development of residential practice retreats (1-mo, 3-mo, 6-mo) as paid programs for retreatants. **1-3 years, level 1**
 - k. Explore the development of parallel children's programs to both support mothers and fathers on retreat as well as to nourish our youngest practitioners (e.g. mindfulness, dharma) **3-5 years, level 2**
4. Stabilize, Nourish, and Develop the National and International Tara Mandala Sangha
- a. Continue to develop and support our Satellite Sanghas in the US and abroad to expand their membership, curriculum (online, in person), community events and outreach, and integration with the Tara Mandala land and community. **on-going, level 1**
 - b. Develop and implement a formalized umbrella structure for US based Satellite Sanghas to enable Sanghas to receive tax exempt status, insurance coverage and streamlined marketing guidelines. **completed**
 - c. Develop a Satellite Sangha Coordinator position who will be charged with holding monthly calls to ensure consistent communication between Tara Mandala and satellite sanghas. This person will be responsible for developing and nourishing Satellite Sangha relationship. **completed**

- d. Continue to build and strengthen relationships with sibling sanghas such as EWAM, Chagdud Gompa, Dzogchen Community, and possibly Druk Zangri Khamar, the Monastery in northeastern Bhutan dedicated to Machig Labdrön's lineage. **3-5 years, level 2**
 - e. Continue to commit to the work of Tara Mandala's Diversity and Inclusion Council, developing the initiatives that emerge from the Council. **on-going, level 1**
5. Stabilize, Nourish, and Support the Residential Community on the Land
- a. Continue to develop a residential practice community that holds the lineages of Tara Mandala on the land (e.g. Gateway, Magyu, Chöd). **on-going, level 1**
 - b. Enhance clarity of roles and responsibilities among Lama Tsultrim, the Board, Executive Director, management team, residential staff and volunteers to empower operational staff and volunteers to own and execute their responsibilities effectively under Lama Tsultrim's guidance. **on-going, level 1**
 - c. Continued development of year-round programs for Residents, including leadership development, Dharma education as well as opportunities for movement and art. **on-going, level 1**
 - d. Continued development of the Living Dharma Program. **on-going, level 1**
 - e. Develop a more robust Human Resources department to support residents as well as develop a commitment plan for the residential community including standardization of benefits and salaries. **on-going, level 1**
 - f. Create feedback opportunities for residents to formally offer their input to the management, the community, and one-another and to receive constructive feedback (e.g. council, appreciative inquiry, personal bi-annual reviews etc.) **on-going, level 1**
 - g. Continue to develop new resident housing on the land and improve existing structures, where possible, to have indoor plumbing, running water, and other accommodations that support year round residence. **on-going, level 2**
 - h. Hire new Executive Director to start in Summer 2017 who will commit to a 3 to 5-year term. **complete**
 - i. Invite and cultivate a residential teacher to live at Tara Mandala year-round. **on-going, level 1**
6. Enhance our financial stability
- a. Build an Endowment of \$X by 20XX. **1-3 years, level 1**
 - b. Increase our Annual Fund \$X per year by 20XX. **on-going, level 1**
 - c. Develop a Prudent Reserve of \$X by 20XX. **on-going, level 1**
 - d. Develop an Annual Report that will include Financial details to create fiscal transparency. This will be shared annually with Tara Mandala sangha and made available on our website. **1-3 years, level 2**
 - e. Explore business and resource models for revenue generation, including bodywork services at retreat and facility rental for like minded groups looking to rent Tara Mandala during off season beginning 2018. **1-3 years, level 1**

- f. Commit to adhering to legal and financial best practices to ensure the governance of the organization is compliant with the requirements of 501(c)(3) religious organization and church status. on-going, level 1

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CONCLUSION

With the approval of the Board of Trustees of Tara Mandala, this strategic plan will be officially adopted by the organization with the profound intention to serve present and future generations of students seeking liberation from the self-clinging and attachment that obscures our true nature.

In order to do so, we commit to fostering a stable, healthy, compliant, functional, and wise organization that integrates dharma and leadership best practices into its management from the level of volunteers to Directors and Board Members. May limitless beings sentient benefit from this work. May it be so!

ADOPTED 6:05 PM MST, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2016

**UPDATED 12:45 PM MST, SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 2017 by Lama Tsultrim
Allione and the Board of Trustees by application of the
Capital Purchases & Capitalization Threshold Policy's
Organizational Needs Chart to the six main priorities as noted in bold face**