

**A Summary Report of Parish Facilities Forum #1: Prioritizing Space Needs**  
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**April 12, 2009**

***Introduction***

On March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, two 90-minute forums were held in the Parish Center for the purpose of allowing parishioners to make their first decisions about what parish programming needs should be addressed by the upcoming building renovation/replacement project. These forums were heavily promoted weeks in advance through announcements from the pulpit, and through an extensive bulletin insert the week before the forums.

In order to set the stage for the prioritizing exercise, critical questions were answered by Father Mike and members of the Facilities Project Steering Committee, with Mike Redlin serving as facilitator of the Forums. Then, participants were briefed on three studies that are the foundation upon which the Facilities project is based, namely:

- The Strategic Planning Study of 2006-2007 which led to the formulation of our Mission and Vision, and 37 Action Plans,
- The Project Conditions Report that was performed in October, 2007, and
- The architectural team's Feasibility and Conceptual Design Study completed in July, 2008.

After each segment, arranged at tables of 16, participants were able to ask questions of the presenter, and then discuss the information in that segment for a brief period of time in their table group. Recorders at each table kept a record of these discussions, and of the questions raised during the Forum.

Following the stage-setting presentations, after a short break, Mike Redlin reconvened the Forum to explain the prioritizing exercise. One of the major architectural concepts developed as a part of the design study, Concept 8, was presented as Figure #1 shows. This concept was selected because it would address facilities implications for all 37 programs that flowed from the Strategic Planning Study, with spaces dedicated to those programs. Parishioners were given six red dots, and told that they could "spend" those dots any way they felt was appropriate. That is, if a parishioner believed that the most important need for added space in the parish were a large gathering space, he or she could "spend" all six dots on that aspect of the Facilities Plan. Clearly, there would need to be prioritizing on the part of everyone because there were more spaces than dots.

One major outcome of the Forums, attended by a total of 62 parishioners, was the felt need to extend this prioritizing exercise to a greater number of parishioners because all of the parish will need to pay for whatever plan is approved. Subsequently, the Facilities Project Steering Committee distributed an email version of this exercise. Nineteen parishioners submitted their votes as shown separately in the results in Figure #2.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Concept 8: Full Program**  
(showing only the spaces that could be created or expanded when enlarging the Parish Center)

<b>Space/Use</b>	<b>Loc</b>	<b>Current Program</b>	<b>Full Program</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Total Votes</b>	
Reception hall (divisible)	PC	1 @ 3000SF (into 3 rooms)	1 @ 3640SF (RH01) (into 2 rooms)	for large meetings and food events		
Kitchen attached to reception hall	PC	1 @ 100SF	1 @ 410SF (KT01)	for support of food events in reception hall		
Lounges	PC	1 @ 480SF	1 @ 290SF (LN01)	for youth religious education on Sunday morning, otherwise for reflection-oriented uses (e.g., small faith groups) and library		
			1 @ 360SF (LN02)	for youth religious education on Sunday morning, otherwise for general use including bridal lounge so better wedding experience		
			1 @ 360SF (LN03)	for Children's Liturgy of Word and youth religious education on Sunday morning, otherwise for play space		
Meeting rooms (large) (divisible)	PC	None	1 @ 1080SF (ML01) (into rooms A&B)	both parts for youth religious education on Sunday morning & for choir rehearsals just prior to Mass so not to impact silence in church before Mass, otherwise for special courses and large meetings		
Offices: Full-time staff	PC	1 @ 420SF	1 @ 250SF (PO01)	Pastor		
			1 @ 140SF	1 @ 150SF (OF01)		Pastoral Associate
			1 @ 140SF	1 @ 150SF (OF02)		Pastoral Associate
			1 @ 210SF	1 @ 150SF (OF03)		Music Director
				1 @ 150SF (OF04)		Priest in-residence or other full-time staff
Offices: Part-time staff/volunteers	PC	1 @ 120SF	1 @ 400SF (OP01)	for youth faith formation staff & volunteers		
Narthex connecting CH&PC	CH/PC	None	1 @ 1570SF (NX01)	for church main entrance, socializing after Mass, overflow seating and pre-function space for reception hall		
Chapel for daily Mass	PC or CH	1 @ 430SF In PC with own tabernacle	1 @ 420SF (EU01) In CH with shared tabernacle	for daily Mass with shared tabernacle so heating & cooling of entire church not required		
Crying Room	CH	1 @ 120SF	1 @ 150SF (CR01) 1 @ 180SF (CR02)	for parents with young children so quieter Mass		

The balance of this report will present 1) the answers given by Father Mike to four “Big Questions that underlie the timeliness of the project;” 2) a sense of the Q and A content and discussions at the participants’ tables; and 3) a graphical presentation of the results of the prioritizing exercise. For your information, all of the raw data from the two March Forums, including notes from table recorders, questions asked of the presenters, and web locations of the three studies alluded to above, will be available on St. Catherine’s website on the Facilities tab. Every effort is being made to have the Facilities Project process be as transparent and as inclusive as you can help us make it.

### ***Those BIG Questions***

To kick off the Forum, Father Mike and Larry Walker assured participants that, contrary to rumors that may be extant, **“No decision has yet been made about the Facilities Project!”** They then addressed four questions that many parishioners have been asking or thinking.

1. **Why this project at this difficult time?** Answer: We started this process with our strategic planning study in 2006, and we are now at the facilities stage in the process. Too, we are at a critical point regarding the deterioration of our facilities—particularly roofs and HVAC systems. We must do something now and want to spend our money wisely.
2. **How are we going to pay?** Answer: We don’t know now, but are seeking a good answer to this question through a fundraising study conducted by a professional consulting firm, RSI. Results are due in late spring.
3. **How will the final decision be made and by whom?** Answer: I (Fr Mike) will have to make the final decision, but I want this to be a group-authored decision. So, the Parish Council needs to bring forth a well thought out, comprehensive plan with parish wide support, and I will support it.
4. **How will what we do in this Forum inform that decision?** Answer: The work you do today will inform your eventual choice on the proposed plan. The shape of the final project will not be clear until we combine today’s work at this forum with the results of the financial feasibility study, and create a comprehensive proposal for parishioners’ consideration in the fall.

### ***Nuggets from the Table Discussions, Including Q and A of Presenters***

- Is there a difference between what is legal and what needs to be done to meet building codes? If we do something to a building, are we bound by newer codes? Answers: Yes, and probably yes.
- What’s a Narthex? Answer: Pictures of representative structures, plus group input, clarified why such a structure might be desirable for us.
- The current large meeting space in the Center received a lot of attention for its deficiencies.
- Participants seemed to accept the idea that simply fixing a programmatically deficient space, the parish center, was not a good idea. “\$700,000 for fix would be throwing away our money.”

- One participant looked at the design and cost for Concept 8 and stated that two parishes he knows of—Sts. Peter and Paul in Elmira, and a parish in Jamestown, built much more space for much less money.
- Does the cost of the “save the parish center” option include the expense of moving our programs elsewhere during renovation? Answer: No. If we built a new parish center, though, the current building would remain operational until the new building is ready to be occupied.
- What is the current square footage of the current parish center (10,500) and Concept 8 (19,200)?
- What are the chances that St Catherine will be a standalone parish in 10-15 years? What are the chances that we will be clustered? Answer: (Fr. Mike) It is not likely that we will be clustered, now that the rural parishes have all been clustered. The stronger and more vibrant we are, the less likely it is that we will be clustered. A shortage of priests does not automatically mean clustering. Without a priest, a parish can be run by a parish administrator.

### ***Where from Here?***

The Pastoral Council and the Facilities Project Steering Committee are committed to parish-wide participation in the decision-making process. Having seventy-six parishioners vote in the prioritizing exercise is understandable at this preliminary stage. The Financial Feasibility Study completed by early June will show the level of financial support for a facilities project. After the Steering Committee matches the Study’s results about funds with the prioritizing exercise’s results about space, it will, for the first time, present the parishioners a comprehensive and specific proposal. In September and October, the Pastoral Council and Steering Committee believe the parishioners will participate in a significant way because the eventual decision will set St. Catherine’s direction for many years to come.

**FIGURE 2: Results from the Dotting Exercise!**

**Summary Results from Parish Facilities Forum**

March 22 & 24, 2009

**Prioritizing Space Exercise**

Category	Forum Votes	Email Votes	Total Votes	%	Abbrev
Reception hall (divisible)	51	16	67	15%	RH
Kitchen attached to reception hall	55	20	75	17%	KIT
Lounges	52	9	61	14%	LNG
Meeting rooms (large) (divisible)	41	13	54	12%	MRL
Offices: Full-time staff	23	18	41	9%	OFT
Offices: Part-time staff/volunteers	22	5	27	6%	OPT
Narthex connecting CH&PC	45	7	52	12%	NAR
Chapel for daily Mass	25	13	38	9%	CHP
Crying Room	14	11	25	6%	CR
Total Votes	328	112	440	100%	

<b>Voters</b>	62	19	81
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