

## Summary of July 8 Master Plan Presentation/Discussion

(The poster of the Master Plan used at the presentation and an information sheet explaining features of the plan are available in the gathering space)

On July 8 our architects presented their work on the new master plan for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish. The plan continues to mature as the Steering Committee continues to receive and evaluate input from parishioners and the Parish Council.

The foundational concept of the plan is the desire of the parish to maintain the current sense of intimacy and togetherness while accommodating a growing number of parishioners. Priorities include an environmentally “sustainable” design, having a “Catholic” look, maximizing natural lighting, and creating an overall look of noble simplicity. Other desires of our parishioners include a first-floor nursery, a visible tabernacle, and ensuring accessibility for handicapped, children (cry room) and an aging clerical population.

The architects are now considering placing the worship space at the north end of the site, to make the most of natural sunlight patterns (both in the worship space and in the use of glass walled walkways), encouraging pedestrian traffic around the site, and to separate formal worship space from the social and educational activities of the church. They are also investigating ways of making more green space available for prayer walks, gardens, statues, or recreational activities such as church picnics and gatherings.

The master plan identifies space for educational, social, and recreational activities. It is anticipated that the building project will take place in phases, as the resources to build various pieces becomes available.

Discussion and questions asked by parishioners following the presentation included topics such as number of parking spaces, the economic efficiencies of situating the worship space in various locations on our grounds, where the parish stands regarding reduction of past debt (Fr. Neil reported that we have been able to pay off all debts to date and have begun accumulating a healthy balance that allows funding early design work now in process), water features on the west side, phasing in of new classrooms, basement space under the Worship Space, the viability of the planned green space walkways, planned use of the existing worship space, total square feet of worship space required for 1,200 people, drop-off areas, new features of the internal Gathering Space, how the new Cry Room would work, the need for additional water retention (runoff from new roof surfaces) and roofing types.

The design work will begin to focus more on the formal worship space. Over the last 3.5 months, parishioners have had a chance to experience various seating arrangements. Although our current space was not optimal for these temporary arrangements, we were able to get a general sense of what these layouts might feel like. The survey results from this experiment showed that parishioners prefer a shallow U-shaped seating arrangement (similar to our original layout), with an altar more in the center, a more central and visible baptismal font, more opportunities to sit “close to the action,” and a musician’s layout that projects sound better.

The next steps for the building project include a feasibility study conducted by our funding consultant to determine whether it is realistic to begin the project now based on our ability to fund it (or portions of it), followed by a capital funding campaign if the results of the feasibility study are positive. By mid- to late-December, it is likely we will know how much of the building project can be included in the first phase, and the time it will take to collect the funds required to break ground and begin the initial phase of construction.