

On October 11, 2023 several members of the St. Mary of Mount Carmel Building Committee met with the Diocesan Building Commission to present and discuss the anticipated building addition and remodeling of our church campus. The plans on the opposite side of this sheet represent the plan presented. This updated plan was developed in response to parish input last Spring. This updated plan for the building addition and remodeling project excludes the Parish Offices and the Adoration Chapel, but it included a drop-off area near the building entrance. These changes also reduced the overall project cost from \$8M to approximately \$5M.

To date, the Capital Campaign has been able to receive commitments (written and verbal) totaling nearly \$4M, including the initial \$800,000 offer, a \$1M verbal commitment, and a \$1.2M verbal commitment from an anonymous donor.

On October 18, 2023, in response to the Diocesan Building Commission meeting, Patrick M. Neary, C.S.C, Bishop of the Diocese of St. Cloud, issued a letter to Fr. Omar expressing support of the project.

Below are the primary comments made by the Diocesan Building Commission (DBC) during our meeting. Our response to each DBC comment (SMMC BC) follows each comment:

**DBC Comment: What is the purpose of the project?** SMMC BC Response: Among many other reasons, to provide space for religious education (since the Family Center is planned to be torn down due to its age and need for continued and deferred maintenance), to connect the church and school for lunches, to provide Montessori classrooms, to provide a space for funeral visitation outside the church, and to improve the parking lot safety and traffic flow.

**DBC Comment: What is St. Mary of Mount Carmel's in the parish cluster?** SMMC BC Response: St. Mary of Mount Carmel is the largest parish in our ACC of 5 parishes. We are also centrally located relative to all 5 parishes.

**DBC Comment: The Gathering Space seems to be too small (narrow)?** SMMC BC Response: Due to constraints of the site and the balance between providing sufficient parking and the needed building addition spaces, the Gathering Space is narrower than we prefer. However, it can still function as a Gathering Space for greeting other parishioners prior to and after Masses, include a coat area, provide for a more welcoming entrance into the church, and allow for connection to the school. If needed, the adjacent Fellowship Hall can accommodate "overflow" of these functions.

**DBC Comment: The Fellowship Hall seems to be too small?** SMMC BC Response: The new Fellowship Hall will allow for smaller fellowship-type gatherings after Masses (eg., coffee and donuts), and to provide space for the religious education classrooms by using operable partitions to subdivide the space. The Parish Hall, located in the basement of the church, will continue to accommodate larger gatherings like Parish breakfasts.

**DBC Comment: The Parish Offices need to be relocated from the Rectory to this building addition.** SMMC BC Response: We had originally included the Parish Offices and the Adoration Chapel in the project but, for financial reasons and from parish input, we had omitted them from this project. We do intend to include them in a future Phase 2.

(Additional note: The DBC was adamant the Parish Offices NOT be located in the Rectory, noting these two functions need to be physically separate. We expressed our concerns about the increased financial stress of including this in our plans and discussed the status of parish commitments and other verbal commitments. They were impressed by the large dollar verbal commitments but remained firm on the need to separate the Parish Offices.)

The Diocesan Building Commission meets monthly, and it is the intent of the Building Committee to review the Diocesan Building Commission comments and develop a plan to address their comments at the next meeting in mid-November.

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