

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ketchum Canada Inc. (KCI) was retained by the Parish of St. Isidore in Kanata to conduct a Feasibility Study investigating the likely support from its parishioners for a \$7 million campaign to renovate and expand the existing 120 year old St. Isidore Church on its current March Road site.

STUDY FINDINGS

Image

Parishioners have a generally positive image of the Church, the parish community and its theologians. The Parish, through its worshippers, has a recognized tradition of continued togetherness and spiritual solidarity. However, the advent of strong demographic growth within urban Kanata has created the perception of a virtual divide between the “rurals” (early settlers) and the “urbans” (new residents) fostered namely by the delivery of masses in two different locations. Participants noted that communication to the parishioners about the expansion is lacking details and opportunities to question or challenge the proposed design.

Response to the Case

Close to half of the participants endorsed the need for renovation and expansion and an additional quarter accept the plans. The need for renovations and modernization is undoubtedly recognized and there is a belief that a renovated facility would strengthen the spiritual community by bringing back parishioners who have chosen to worship elsewhere. However, many question the perceived need for expansion and even more so, the massive expansion as proposed in the Statement of Need. Reservations were also expressed with regards to preserving the old building, not relocating within the area of current demographic growth and questioned the support to be received by the Archdiocese. The Case was seen as lacking information about maintenance and operating costs of the expanded Church for future parishioners.

Campaign Plans

Endorsement of a fundraising campaign has not received the necessary support. While parishioners understand that parish support will be needed as part of the financing strategy for the new building, it was felt that the project as presented could not be placed solely on the shoulders of parishioners and the following generation. Archdiocese involvement, debt financing,

phasing out the project, starting anew or looking at different alternatives would contribute to making the campaign plans more acceptable.

Attainability of the Goal

The majority of respondents doubt that the Parish could support a \$7 million project. The goal was qualified as overly ambitious and unrealistic by many parishioners based on current regular mass attendance and donation levels, which can barely support current maintenance costs. Reaching goal is also felt to be conditional on having a strong and cohesive community supporting the expansion, which must be driven by a strong team of community leaders which they recognized in the members of the Expansion Task Force Committee. Suggestions of a lower goal tied to a reduced expansion alternative or debt-financing were perceived as more realistic and potentially more easily received by the parishioners.

Potential Financial Support

In line with recognizing and accepting that the Parish of St. Isidore requires modernization and some form of expansion, parishioners largely identified the campaign as a personal charitable priority. However, very few disclosed a potential donation amount as this would hinge on the nature and the size of the project presented to them as well as the campaign leadership. Without specifically pointing out an amount, most of the respondent would see themselves as donors within the lower part of the Giving Chart. Most agreed that donor recognition, while not necessary to them personally, should be considered within the campaign strategy, as long as it doesn't commercialize the spirit of the new Church. In addition, a majority of interviewees stated that they would continue to maintain their weekly/annual financial support in addition to making a campaign gift.

Volunteer Leadership

Parishioners said they would consider volunteering, but not in a leadership capacity. Talent for taking on the leadership of the campaign is felt to be present within some of the key parish leaders. Prominent, influential and affluent leaders have been identified as potential Cabinet Chairs. Active clergy involvement in the campaign will be necessary to secure volunteers and gifts at the highest levels.

Campaign Timing

Two-thirds of all participants felt that timing is as good as it can get to embark on a campaign, given the state that the economy as well as the housing market in Kanata. There was a sense of

urgency to move forward with the plans now, as construction costs will likely rise with delay. This sense of urgency is also reinforced by the fact that, after hearing about the need to modernize and expand the church for many years, no concrete actions are being taken.

A significant number of participants (a third) do not agree with the appropriateness of the timing. They expressed that the community was not in favour of the plan as presented; that alternatives needed to be considered; and that campaign leadership needed to be recruited to conduct a campaign of this magnitude.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION STEPS

The Study findings indicate the Parish is not in a good position to launch a campaign for \$7 million at this time due to concerns about the project costs, expansion plans, and limited financial support from the community. It is KCI's recommendation that the Parish reassess their plans and consider a campaign goal between \$1.5 to \$3.5 million to fund their revised plans. The Parish should also consider financing part of the project and bolstering their major gifts solicitations with a planned giving program.

KCI recommends that the Parish of St. Isidore take a strategic approach to revising their plans for expansion and devote time, effort and resources to the following key activities:

- Re-evaluating expansion options and developing a less costly alternative to the \$7 million project tested in the study
- Developing a communications strategy to promote key messages about the Parish's new plans and its responsiveness to the concerns identified in Study interviews
- Crafting a new Case for Support for a campaign goal that can be achieved through a mix of major gifts, parish gifts, planned giving and financing
- Building and strengthening relationships with key constituencies, including current and former parishioners
- Enlisting volunteer leaders who will act as ambassadors for the new Church and help to widen its circle of influence
- Enhancing the Parish's internal resources so that it has the capacity to drive fundraising activity forward

KCI anticipates that the Parish of St. Isidore Kanata will need to focus on these activities for the next 3 to 6 months before commencing with leadership gift solicitations for its campaign.