

St. Paul the Apostle & Immaculate Conception Parish

Planning Feasibility Study — Parish Summary *June 2026*

Purpose of the Study

St. Paul the Apostle and Immaculate Conception Parish commissioned M&M International to assess the feasibility of a proposed \$3.4 million Master Facility Plan and Reserve Fund. The study examined parishioner priorities, willingness to support a fundraising campaign, potential volunteer leadership, and whether the proposed financial goal was achievable over five years.

The consultation included 34 confidential interviews involving 47 participants, as well as Open Forums attended by approximately 46 parishioners. Participants represented both worship sites and a range of involvement within parish life.

What We Heard About Our Parish

The study found a parish community with significant strengths. Parishioners described St. Paul the Apostle and Immaculate Conception as welcoming, vibrant and active, with strong ministries and committed volunteers. Fr. Norberto's leadership was repeatedly identified as a major strength, particularly his welcoming presence, spirituality, community involvement and connection with young people. Parishioners also value outreach, social gatherings, music and the growing number of children and families. Immaculate Conception's history, rural setting and traditional character were particularly valued.

Important challenges were also identified: aging facilities and accessibility issues, particularly at Immaculate Conception; limited parking and some facility needs at St. Paul's; difficulty recruiting new volunteers; a need for more programming for youth, young adults and young families; and a sense among some parishioners that the two worship sites do not yet function fully as one parish community.

Which Projects Have the Strongest Support?

A clear pattern emerged: parishioners strongly support projects addressing demonstrated needs, particularly accessibility, repairs and responsible long-term maintenance. They are considerably less supportive of expansion or primarily aesthetic projects.

- St. Paul the Apostle: accessible washrooms received the strongest support (85%), followed by the proposed maintenance/reserve fund (79%). Support was substantially lower for second-floor finishing, additional office/storage space, signage and exterior improvements, and the proposed statue.
- Immaculate Conception: the strongest priorities were a proper washroom (88%), repairs and maintenance (88%), and exterior/brickwork repairs (84%). An accessible entrance also received substantial support (72%). There was less support for reconfiguring pews, adding offices, storage or a multipurpose room.

The overall message was consistent: take care of what we have, make our churches accessible and welcoming, and address essential maintenance before undertaking major expansion. The report recommends connecting these investments directly to the parish's mission rather than presenting them simply as building projects.

What Does This Mean for a Capital Campaign?

There is significant goodwill toward undertaking a campaign. 94% of respondents were at least somewhat supportive of the parish's overall priorities, and 88% believed the parish should proceed with a fundraising campaign. However, that support does not translate into comparable support for the original \$3.4 million proposal.

Only 33% believed the parish could raise \$3.4 million. Concerns included the economy, pressure on family finances, donor fatigue following the 150th anniversary campaign, the size and scope of the proposed project, and uncertainty regarding the future of Immaculate Conception.

Willingness to participate financially was nevertheless encouraging: 84% indicated that they would contribute to a campaign above their regular offertory, and most who identified a gift intended to pledge it over five years. Study participants collectively indicated approximately \$120,000-\$262,000 in potential gifts.

No identified commitments of \$25,000 or more emerged among study participants, although potential donors at that level were named. Based on the findings, M&M International concluded that a campaign of approximately \$350,000-\$500,000 is presently attainable, provided the parish follows the study's recommendations and receives professional campaign support.

Important Questions to Resolve

Parking also emerged repeatedly as a concern, particularly at St. Paul's. Parishioners expressed concern about projects that would further reduce existing parking. The study also found indications that deferred maintenance requirements may be greater than currently documented.

Recommended Path Forward

The report does not recommend proceeding with the original \$3.4 million campaign in its current form. Instead, it points toward a more focused and phased approach.

- Concentrate first on essential repairs, accessibility and an appropriately sized reserve/maintenance fund.
- Reconsider or defer expansion and lower-supported projects until there is stronger parish support and greater donor capacity.
- Obtain a professional building-condition/engineering assessment of both churches and reassess the amount required for a 5-10 year reserve fund.
- Develop a five-year parish mission plan and communicate clearly what is proposed, why it is necessary, what it will cost and how decisions are being made.
- Identify potential major donors before a public launch, cultivate additional volunteers, use a five-year pledge period, and consider memorial, honour and planned-giving opportunities.

Moving Forward Together

The central finding is that there is genuine willingness within the parish to move forward, but the plan needs to be more focused, financially realistic and clearly communicated. Parishioners strongly support responsible stewardship of the churches, improved accessibility and essential maintenance, while also asking for transparency and confidence that proposed projects are genuinely necessary.

The recommended next step is therefore not simply to begin fundraising. It is to discern the findings as a parish, clarify the future of Immaculate Conception with the Archdiocese, establish the true condition and needs of both buildings, refine project priorities and costs, and then communicate a clear plan to the entire parish.

The goal is ultimately larger than renovating buildings: it is to ensure that St. Paul the Apostle and Immaculate Conception continue to grow together as one parish—welcoming, worshipping and serving the community for generations to come.