

Dear parishioners:

2/22/14

In last week's bulletin was included the two-dimensional design of the proposed new church facility. The main entry way of the church contains a very large version for your review as well.

Included this week is the schematic study of what the proposed facility design would look like from a bird's eye view on the land purchased at the corner of College Road and Valley View Drive. The bird's eye view is a look at what the entire Phase I and Phase II design would look like. Phase II is not a major consideration for us at this time, but it is important in the sense of what the entire facility could look like in the distant future. In planning for that more distant future, the accompanying layout was created.

This location provides multiple access points for traffic, is very flat, is in an active and "visible" location of Council Bluffs, provides for current and future needs, and facilitates a future ministry toward for the Catholic deaf community and becoming a Newman Center for ministry to students at Iowa Western Community College.

As you look at the layout, you will see that the main entrance faces south. This is in order to keep cold northerly winds and drifting snow from collecting at the main entrance. Imagine that it is winter time and that the morning sun is rising in the east, you can visualize that the main parking areas on the south and east sides would melt faster to keep walking traffic and car traffic a little safer. With the Presbyterian Church just a bit south on Valley View, notice that their main entrance faces south and west.

By the main south entrance are a number of designated handicap parking spots. On the north side you will see a smaller entrance which contains a place for cars to drive-up and drop-off individuals in need of further assistance. The drive-up and drop-off area would be part of Phase I.

Having two good entrances/exits and a circular parking layout is an issue of hospitality and welcome. Note that Phase I includes two entrances/exits on different roads which was a requirement by the bishop. With two entrances/exits it will be much easier for cars to get in and out of the parking lots. A circular layout encourages good traffic flow. These may seem like minor points, but they are big items toward inviting new parishioners. You have probably experienced congestion in other parking lots on a normal Sunday. This happens at St. Patrick, especially on major holidays and celebrations. With multiple access points and ample parking of a circular design, this would make the new location more inviting to people.

In planning for Phase II you will notice that it is directly attached to a major wall in Phase I. The reason for that is to keep to a minimum the transition costs associated with developing a Phase II. Phase I in the meantime could use that area as a nice big green space to use for outdoor activities like parish picnics and festivals, kids' activities, Ragbrai, etc..

On the diagram you can also see three storm detention basins. When property is purchased in Council Bluffs for construction, about 15% of the land has to be allocated toward rain water retention and treatment. The basins are situated there, because based on the land's slope rain water tends to move south-west.

These detention areas can be made to look attractive and "park like". A pure functionalist approach would be to make a hole and call it good enough. However, it would be better to see even those areas as an opportunity to use special grasses and various plants and flowers to make the water retention areas look beautiful. Perhaps even a small path could be developed in that area and an outdoor Stations of the Cross put there, or perhaps a Marian grotto, or perhaps a more general prayerful reflection area. Those are just a few ideas. The point is that the water retention areas provide opportunities for enriching the beauty and prayerfulness of parish life even though they do not initially sound like an interesting part of the layout.

As you look at the layout you can see a general building pad. By "building pad" I mean the area onto which the church, hall, and gathering space would be built. That building pad would need to be above the flood plain. Half of the building pad is already at the 500 year flood plain, which is good. In order to get the rest of the building pad up to the 500 year flood plain, dirt from the remainder of the site, particularly from the retention ponds, is sufficient to bring 100% of the pad up to the 500 year flood plain. Parking lots are not required to be above flood plain. For comparison, please look at the parking lots of Valley View Elementary School which is distinctly below the school's building pad.

Hopefully this has answered a few more questions. Just since last week a few more good ideas have surfaced. More questions and more ideas are part of the process. And that is okay. Genuine time is needed. With time we will learn together.

Fr. Glen