



ABBREVIATED FEASIBILITY STUDY FINAL REPORT



info@mminternational.ca | 420-192 Spadina Ave. | mminternational.ca



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

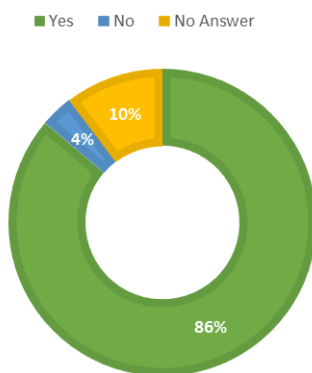
Participants in St. Peter's Cobourg *Abbreviated Planning Feasibility Study* were asked to comment on elements of the plan to repair and restore the Church Sanctuary.

Study respondents are very supportive of and connected to St. Peter's Church and parish. Its long history, beautiful and historically significant church grounds, and vibrant outreach programs were highlighted by parishioners and by leaders in the wider community. The parish is considered a welcoming community that focuses on spiritual growth and pastoral care. Respondents most commonly identified the following **strengths of the parish: the mission-driven outreach, the welcoming nature of the parish community, and the beautiful and historic campus**. The parish sees itself as full of caring people living the mission of the church.

When asked about **weakness**, respondents primarily identified the **lack of focus on younger families and youth**. Respondents are aware of the decreasing size of the congregation, with a mostly older population. Additionally, various respondents stated that there is a decline in attendance and worry about volunteer burnout and long-term financial viability.

THE CASE

The respondents are **very aware** (93%) and are **generally supportive (90%)** of the Case for Support, detailing the plans to repair and restore the roof, ceiling and bell tower. **All Study elements can be considered highly supported and fundable**.



In general, respondents are anxious to get back into the church, and many stress the importance of moving ahead with these plans now. In fact, eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents think **St. Peter's should launch a fundraising campaign** to fund the Case for Support. The building repairs, such as the **ceiling and roof** were cited as the highest priorities. It should be noted that some respondents have views on how the repairs could be done more cost effectively. **The bell tower** also received overwhelming support. A few respondents felt that the

bell tower was of less importance to the function of the church building. Some also expressed hope that the broader community would support this element.



In general, the Case for Support is strongly supported by the interviewees, especially if details of the Plan for Mission are communicated, as concern increases about staying financially viable into the future.

LEADERSHIP AND VOLUNTEERISM

For St. Peter’s, **willingness to volunteer for a fundraising committee** was **moderate**, with only thirty-four percent (34%) of respondents who *would* volunteer or *might* volunteer.

Additionally, respondents suggested individuals who they felt could **lead a campaign**. In total, thirty-two (32) parishioners were identified by respondents as individuals capable of leading a campaign or being a committee member.

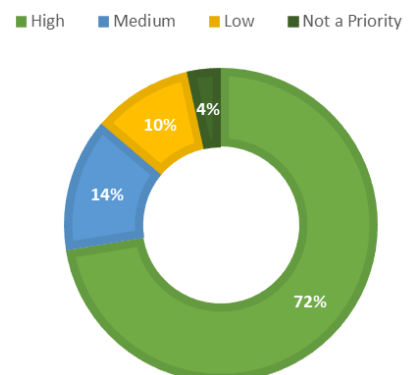
GOAL ATTAINABILITY AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Of the twenty-nine (29) respondents interviewed, seventy-nine percent (79%) agreed to support the campaign financially with a disclosed amount, should leadership decide to proceed. There is some hesitancy about the attainability of the goal. Further specifics are needed.

The **parishioners** included in this report **who indicated a specific amount would contribute approximately \$241,050 in gifts**, estimated on the low side, and \$526,000 on the high side. A conservative estimated average gift size of \$8,312 per respondent or, on the high side, \$10,480 per respondent who considered a gift. This is a **moderate to strong average gift response and support** for the campaign.

OTHER

Respondents generally support a campaign in the parish with eighty-six percent (86%) stating that the campaign is *high* or *medium priority* for them. Most respondents were concerned about the length of time the building has been inoperable and if this *‘stalling’* will continue. Factoring in decline in membership (generationally), respondents are



cautiously hopeful but do not see **a plan to stay financially viable into the future.**

Eleven percent (11%) of the respondents have already left a gift to St. Peter's in their Will, while a further **forty-four percent (44%) would or might consider leaving a gift.** This indicates a strong sense of support for the future of the parish. It also indicates that a program of information and bequest identifications would benefit the parish.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Individuals were supportive of St. Peter's plans and had suggestions and ideas on ways their organizations and possibly others in the community could collaborate with St. Peter's. Many respondents suggested names of leaders in the community who may help with the community portion of the campaign. As well, some respondents suggested individuals who may possibly be interested in supporting the initiative financially, and some mentioned grants which are available to historically significant landmarks and re-development partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, **a campaign at St. Peter's Cobourg has approval and broad support** from parishioners for the Case elements of the Sanctuary's bell tower, ceiling, and roof. The study indicated that parishioners are prepared to support these initiatives to the best of their ability. Most respondents were unaware of the Plan for Mission details and thus immediate outward communication to the parish is essential to the success of a campaign.

St. Peter's is seen as iconic to the streetscape of Cobourg and thus the community of Cobourg is also ready to support, at a moderate level, a campaign for these fundable initiatives, most specifically the bell tower.

M & M International recommends that the **parish campaign launch as soon as possible.** The interviewees place significant importance on regaining access to the Sanctuary and repairs and restoration of the building. As a result, it is important to make strides immediately. Respondents' frustrations with perceived inactivity have mounted over the past few years. Still, the congregation feels able and willing to support the proposed plans at this moment.

M & M International recommends that **a parish campaign goal be set at \$750,000** based on final evaluation of respondents' financial commitment, costs of projects and initiatives, and other funding plans.

We also recommend a **Community Campaign with an initial goal of \$100,000** based on the evaluation of the commitment offered by the community interviewees. Once the community campaign case is developed, a revised goal may be considered.

The following are highly recommended **in preparation for a successful campaigning:**

1. **Revise and clarify the Case for Support** with the **amended Parish goal of \$750,000**. Establish and outline additional financial sources to fill in the funding gap.
2. **Move forward immediately with the parish campaign** in order to maintain momentum and support. With parishioners unsure whether the repairs and restorations will actually be undertaken, it is important to communicate the progress toward undertaking a Campaign. The financial support of parishioners may be reduced as time elapses with no concrete plan of action.

The results of this Study are predicated on initiation of the campaign process within the next 6 – 9 months. M & M International is not confident that the same support will be available if no immediate *outward facing* action is taken.

3. **Communicate and execute actions of key areas of the Plan for Mission as soon as possible** so as to inform constituents, parishioners and the broader community about St. Peter's plans for a growing future and re-development initiatives to meet Cobourg's community needs. This communication should include an indication of **strong financial viability** for the future. This clear communication will establish confidence in a hopeful future and promote buy-in to the upcoming campaign.
4. Investigate and **implement strategies to strengthen, invite and engage key demographics** – including but not limited to – youth, young families, new residence to Cobourg, and recent retirees; expanding on the foundational Plan for Mission.
5. Prior to the launch of the campaign, **implement a communication strategy with a plan to update parishioners and other constituents on the updated Case for Support elements and costs as they become available.**
 - a. Use all available channels: After-service coffee hour, announcements at services, bulletins, mail, website, social media platforms and e-communications.
6. Include a legacy or bequest invitation as a significant component of the campaign.
7. M & M International recommends running a separate community campaign with an initial goal of \$100,000 – as a preliminary figure. Details on a specific approach will be garnered during the active parish campaign. This campaign would include, but is not limited to, community engagement activities and a targeted online communication campaign.
8. Based on the engagement of the parish and interest of volunteers, **M & M International** recommends a **parish campaign starting in the Fall of 2021. This would be followed by a community-engagement campaign.**