

January 7, 2025

Q&A: New Hall and Church Development

Thank you to everyone who attended the November 23, 2024, Town Hall to learn more about a new opportunity for our parish.

The Diocese has presented a proposal to partner with Homes by Avi, a local home builder, to redevelop the land currently occupied by St. Pius X. The proposed redevelopment would include a six-storey residential building, as well as a new church, hall, offices, and surface parking.

Since the Town Hall, we have appreciated your thoughtful feedback and questions regarding the proposal. As we continue to carefully evaluate this opportunity, we are pleased to share answers to some of the questions we have received so far.

Next Steps

We invite you to join us for a follow-up meeting to discuss the feedback received to date. The meeting will take place on Saturday, January 18, 2025, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the hall.

Thank you,

New Hall Committee

Background and General Information

Q1: What does the current proposal include?

A: The proposal involves redeveloping the site and constructing a six-story residential building with the ground floor dedicated to a new sacred church space, hall, offices, and covered parking. The development will replace the existing church, hall, and parking areas.

Q2: Why is the parish considering this proposal now?

A: The parish has been struggling with the deteriorating hall since 2015. The hall has continued to age and requires costly repairs. In 2019, a Feasibility Study was conducted by Systemic Architects which affirmed the need for a new hall with an approximate cost of \$2.5 million for a new standalone structure. Parish leadership at that time determined we did not have the ability to generate funds for a new hall. Conversations continued between 2019 to now with other external experts like Chandos Construction, who also confirmed that it is more feasible to tear down the hall than renovate.

After exploring options like renovation, new construction, and various partnerships, the Diocese proposed this solution as the most viable option given the parish's limited ability to fundraise.

Q3: How long has the parish been working on this issue?

A: The need for a new hall has been under discussion for over ten years. Multiple professional consultations and assessments were conducted, but viable options were limited. In the spring of 2024, the parish again asked the Diocese for help in moving ahead.

Q4: Who will build the new development?

A: The Diocese connected with a trusted partner, Homes by Avi Group, who provided this proposal in September 2024. Homes by Avi has partnered with the Diocese on several redevelopment projects in the past and will oversee the design and construction of this redevelopment. They have significant experience with similar projects, including in the University District.

Q5: Were other developers consulted for alternative approaches to meet parish needs?

A: Throughout the course of the last 10 years, other developers have been consulted on a renovation or rebuilding of the hall. On three separate occasions the committee sent out Request for Proposal's, inviting other developers and builders to put forward proposals or expressions of interest. Requests went out in 2018, 2019 and 2022. Several proposals were explored but none were successful.

Q6. How did the Diocese come to the \$7.5 million amount?

A: The Diocese is offering a commitment of \$7.5 million to invest in the redevelopment of St Pius X parish. This is a combination of the guaranteed value of the land and anticipated profit from the partnership agreement with the Diocese. This is a unique way for the Diocese to move forward and invest in a parish.

Q7: How will the \$7.5 million budget be used?

A: The budget will develop the church, hall, and offices, as well as finish the covered parking lot. A: The budget should be sufficient to build approximately 10,000 square feet of new space for the church, hall, and offices, as well as the surface parking lot.

Q8: Why is the church, which has undergone recent renovations, considered for demolition?

A: The current proposal involves the redevelopment of the entire property, which would include constructing a new church, hall, offices, and surface parking. While the existing church does not have structural issues yet, it is a 60-year-old building that will require increasing maintenance over time.

Q9: Can the church be preserved while only developing the hall and parking area?

A: After exploratory conversations with Homes by Avi, it has been determined that it is not economically viable to preserve the church in the proposed redevelopment. The land to the west of the church does not allow for a new structure feasible of pursuing. This redevelopment can only move forward if the entire site is redeveloped as proposed.

Financial and Fundraising

Q10: Will the parish need to contribute additional funds?

A: Based on current estimates, \$7.5 million budget should be sufficient for the base project. However, any additional features or improvements will need to be funded by the parish. The current building fund has about \$740,000, which can be used toward these enhancements.

Q11: Why can't the parish fundraise for a standalone hall?

A: Previous fundraising efforts during the church renovation fell short, even when the community was larger. Parish leadership has assessed that the parish does not currently have the capacity to raise the required \$3.5 million.

Process and Timeline

Q12: What are the next steps in the process?

A: You will continue to see more communication from the Committee and Parish Leadership in the New Year. On Saturday, January 18 we will hold a parish wide meeting to further respond to concerns raised to date and to set out a process for coming to a decision.

The parish will be involved through the next several steps of developing the criteria for decision making and working together to define the mission and direction of the parish.

Q13: How will parishioners be involved in the decision-making process?

A: The committee, church leadership and parish council are determining how to include parishioners in the discernment process. Parishioners will have opportunities to participate in the process in the new year. Feedback from this phase will help shape decisions and ensure the proposal aligns with parish needs. More details will be shared with the parish at the upcoming town hall on January 18, 2025.

Q14: What is the timeline for the decision?

A: Since our last Town Hall, the overall timeline for the decision has been pushed back. More details on future meetings will be shared at the upcoming January 18 Town Hall. We anticipate a decision will be made by March 2025.

Q15: When would construction begin?

A: Land use approvals, design work and permitting would take place in 2025 and 2026. Demolition and construction will only begin once all designs and permits are finalized. Construction would begin in 2027, with a new church ready to be consecrated in early 2029.

Impact on Parish Life

Q16: How will the new development serve the parish's mission?

A: The new hall and church space will be designed to reflect the spiritual values and support the activities of the parish community. This includes creating a warm and functional environment for worship and community engagement. Efforts will be made to maintain continuity and unity throughout the transition.

Q17: What happens to parish activities during construction?

A: Details on temporary arrangements will be discussed to minimize disruption to parish life. The church's leadership is committed to providing creative ways to ensure that parish life can continue at the same level without disruption.

Q18: How will temporary relocation affect parish attendance and activities?

Parish leadership will require full participation in developing the strategies to maintain the congregation. We will use St Pius X school for services and explore neighbouring structures to maintain the current level of activities. We will also continue to offer online access. We will explore all ideas to support the parish community.

Design

Q19: Will parishioners have input on the design of the new church and hall? Can key architectural features be preserved in the new design?

A: The design phase will include opportunities for parishioners to provide input on the required functions and spiritual aspects of the building. Homes by Avi is aware of the parishioners concerns that the new church may not resemble a church and will work with architects to design a place of worship that considers the collective vision. We are interested in learning what design elements are important to parishioners and look forward to exploring that in future stages.

Q20: What are the specific quality standards and specifications for the proposed development?

A: Specific building standards are determined during the design phase by professional consultants (architects, engineers etc.) and are approved by the City of Calgary through the Development Permit and Building Permit processes. The Diocese will be supporting the need for a well designed and liturgically appropriate space.

Q21: How will the new space preserve the spiritual and communal essence of the current church?

A: Following the decision on the proposal, parishioners will have the opportunity to share in the vision of the church. Collectively, the vision will help to establish and preserve the spiritual and communal essence of the current church.

Transparency and Parish Involvement

Q22: Why weren't more options presented?

A: The parish has exhausted other options over the years, including grant applications, requests for proposals from other builders, and feasibility studies.

Q23: How will you ensure transparency, and how will parishioners be included in the decision-making process moving forward?

A: The committee is working with engagement specialists to ensure parishioners are actively involved in the decision-making process. This includes implementing clear reporting methods to transparently share information collected throughout the process.

We will share details about the next steps in the collaborative process at the Town Hall on January 18, 2025.

Q24: How can parishioners provide feedback?

A: Feedback can be provided through poster boards at the church entrance, handouts, or email. The committee encourages all parishioners to participate in this phase. Please continue to reach out to Committee members directly or by email at:

june@stpiusx.ca

glen@stpiusx.ca

Q25: What if the proposal is not supported by parishioners?

A: Part of the discernment process is to assess what happens next to the parish if the proposal is not supported. This requires the parish to look forward at their mission over the next ten plus years and assess what building infrastructure will be required to support the parish community and their desired activities.

Commitment to Parishioners

Q26: How will the committee ensure transparency moving forward?

A: The committee is dedicated to maintaining transparency and fostering collaboration. Regular updates will be shared through parish communications, and parishioners are encouraged to actively participate in discussions, feedback sessions, and decision-making processes.

Q27: Where can I find more information?

A: Additional information, including presentation materials and this Q&A document, will continue to be available on the parish website under the "Our Hall" tab, or visit the dedicated website at www.stpiusxrenewal.ca. Handouts with detailed project information will also be available at the church.