Worship Facility Needs of
St. Rita in the Desert Parish

Building Committee
September 2025

Contents

I. Introduction

St. Rita in the Desert Roman Catholic Parish Community has been serving the people of Vail, Arizona and surrounding communities since 1935. The Shrine was dedicated to St. Rita of Cascia of Italy. The Shrine originally met the needs of the migrant workers and farmers of Vail area. However, in 2000, the Shrine could no longer meet the needs of the growing parish, and it was decided that a larger church was needed. Although design plans were completed, the new church was believed to be unaffordable, so an interim multi-purpose style church was built in 2006. It was named the Pope St. John the XXIII Center.

History has repeated itself, and the Pope St. John the XXIII Center is now also too small. St. Rita in the Desert has inadequate worship space to meet its mission. The most popular mass regularly meets or exceeds the posted occupancy limit of 210, and the population of potential parishioners continues to grow. Since St. Rita in the Desert only has one priest, it is unable to add additional masses to reduce each individual mass size. The purpose of this paper is to express the need for a new parish church to enable the pastor and the community to meet the pastoral, sacramental and formational needs of all who come to pray and worship at St. Rita in the Desert. This paper will provide additional historical efforts and present the growth factors driving the need for a new church. Lastly, three possible options will be provided along with this committee's recommendation.

II. Background and Significance

A. Description of St. Rita in the Desert

On March 31, 1935, the Shrine of Santa Rita in the Desert was dedicated and began its mission to serve the Greater Vail Community. The parish boundaries encompass a very large area of approximately 645 square miles, which is nearly three times the size of the city of Tucson boundaries. The vision of the pioneer families was to provide a prayerful dwelling space to celebrate mass for the railroad, ranch and farm families of mostly Mexican descent in the area. Today that mission is much broader as it supports the rapidly growing communities encompassing the majority of District 4 in Pima County along with parts of Wards 4 and 5 of the City of Tucson.

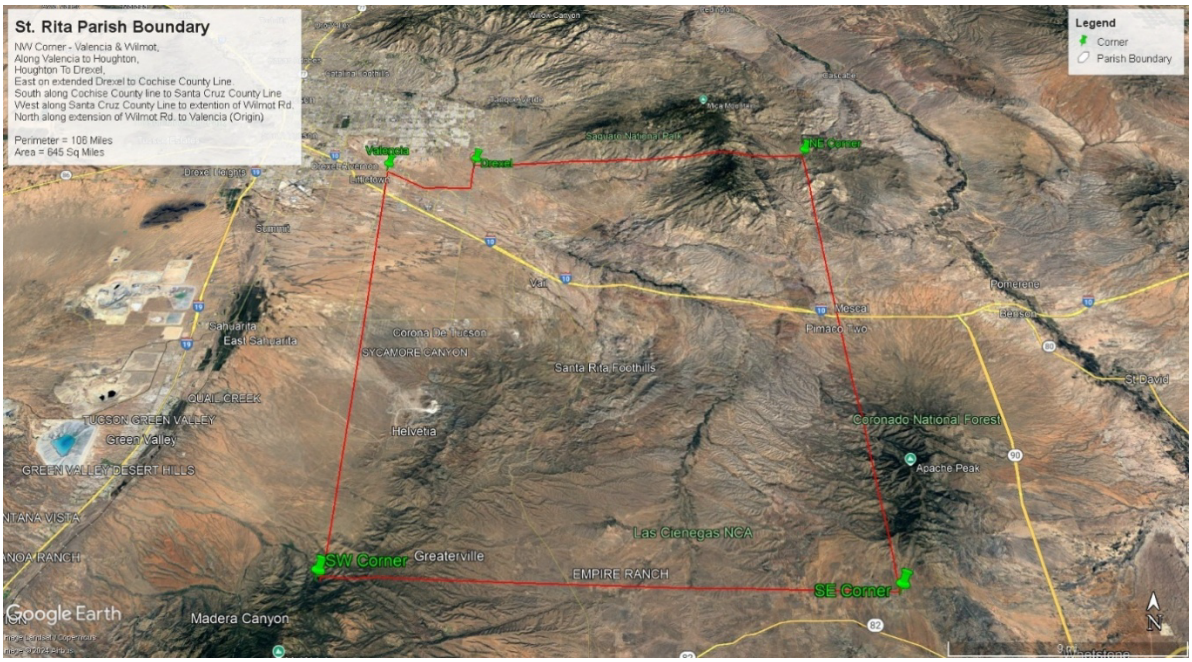

Exhibit 1, St. Rita in the Desert Parish Boundaries. (Diocese of Tucson, 1999) (Google Earth, 2025) (See Appendix A, Decree of Boundaries)

Housing developments in Vail, Corona de Tucson and other unincorporated areas in zip code 85641 are widely dispersed and currently account for about half of the potential parish population with 36,348 people. Less than 25% of the land available for housing in 85641 has been developed, with most future growth expected in these areas given the population density of 86 people per square mile. Housing in Southeast Tucson is denser in Rita Ranch, Wilmot and the Houghton Corridor (zip code 85747) with a population density of 413.5 per square mile accounting for about the other half of the potential parish population with 34,457 people. More than 75% of the land available for housing in 85747 has been developed. St Rita in the Desert has 700 registered families.

	2025	Pop. Density	Avg Inc.	Households	#/Hshld
85641	36,348	86.0	$ 121,647	10,254	2.88
85747	34,457	413.5	$ 107,290	9,566	2.89
Combined	70,805			19,820	

Exhibit 2, Demographics. (zip-codes.com, 2025)

B. Pertinent History

At the beginning of this millennium, the parishioners had the foresight to see that St. Rita in the Desert would quickly outgrow the 1935 Shrine. A committee was formed, and design plans were commissioned at a cost of $344,000. At that time, it was thought that about $3 million would be needed to build a new church, offices and

meeting rooms. Eight additional acres adjacent to the current site were purchased for $200,000 to ensure there was adequate land. In 2003, the parishioners paid approximately $223,000 for refinished, historic stained-glass windows to be installed in the new church. In 2005, the parish decided that it did not have sufficient funds to build the what was estimated to be a $3.8M church complex. Instead, a multi-purpose building was built for $751,000 and opened in 2006. It was called the Pope St. John the XXIII Center (the "Center"). The Center was intended to meet the immediate overcrowding need, and the weekend masses have been held there since it opened. It was anticipated that a permanent, proper church would be built in 5 or 10 years. Unfortunately, due at least in part to amounts paid to settle sexual abuse claims against priests and the 2008 recession, a new church could not be built.

The parish continued to grow, and in 2012 an idea was proposed to expand the Center by 300 seats. Unfortunately, that proposal was overwhelmingly rejected by the parishioners. The primary reason was that the parishioners wanted a "real church" and not merely an expanded multi-purpose building. Also, some parishioners were upset that the debt incurred to build the Center was not already paid off.

In 2020, in response to increasing overcrowding of the Center, a building committee was formed. Since the inability to raise adequate funds scuttled the 2000s construction plans, the building committee decided to retain the fundraising assessment firm Clyde Kunz & Associates, LLC. That firm performed a survey and made the following recommendations (Kunz & McFarlin, 2022):

- Refrain from conducting a capital campaign to build a new church at that time;
- Build excitement around a future project;
- Develop a much stronger culture of philanthropy in the parish; and
- Pay off the mortgage on the Pope St. John the XXIII Center before pursuing further efforts to build a new church.

The building committee endeavored to follow these recommendations. The mortgage on the Pope St. John the XXIII Center was paid in full in June of 2022 and other initiatives were implemented. The building committee held focus group sessions and presented various options. The Kunz Study had identified that there was a disagreement within the parish community as to whether the proposed church should be built on the Diocesan purchased property off Mary Ann Cleveland or at its current site.

To provide insight to this question, the building committee initiated another internal survey in 2023, referred to as the Growth Survey (Middleton, Growth Survey, 2023) (See Appendix B, Growth Survey). That survey concluded that there was interest in using the original 2003 building plans and building on the current site. The committee hired Design Story Spaces Architects ("DSSA") in 2023 to evaluate the 2003 architectural drawings. DSSA believed that, although it would be possible to use the 2003 drawings, it would not be financially feasible and would not achieve the best result. DSSA felt the optimal design should reflect the current parish needs, not the perceived needs back in 2003. Nevertheless, the parish building committee presented its findings to the Diocesan Building Committee, including a recommendation to build the 2003 design at the current site. The Diocese rejected that recommendation and requested that the parish re-consider building a bigger, multi-purpose style church building at the Mary Ann Cleveland site.

In March of 2024, Bishop Weisenberger and Diocesan staff were invited to a town hall meeting at the parish. Bishop Weisenberger and staff presented the multi-purpose style church building at Mary Ann Cleveland. The parishioners had an opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of each site. No final decision was made.

Bishop Weisenberger also requested the parish to purchase an offsite rectory for the parish priest. The 1935 rectory had been repurposed as the parish office in 2008 because the assigned pastor had his own residence. However, a new pastor was assigned in 2019, and the parish had to rent a house within a local subdivision. Since the Diocese of Tucson felt it was not financially prudent to continue to rent, a new off-site rectory in a local subdivision was purchased in 2024 with a $345,000 mortgage.

To assess the viability of developing the Mary Ann Cleveland property, the building committee completed a community-based survey in 2025, called the Site Survey, that included both the parish and the broader community (Middleton, Site Survey, 2025) (See Appendix C, 2025 Results) The 2025 Results indicated:

- 71% reported that the physical location of the church building influences where they will attend mass;
- 63% reported that their preferred drive time was 15 minutes or less;
- 78% reported that the train noise didn't deter them from attending mass nor does it affect their worship;
- 72% reported that the new church should be near the Shrine;
- 82% reported that they would prefer to attend mass at the current location and would be more likely to attend; and

- 79% reported that they would support a capital campaign to build a new church.

Appendix D shows a more complete building development timeline.

C. Current Challenges

The population growth and the corresponding increase in mass attendance at St Rita in the Desert parish continues. Current mass census submitted to the Diocese of Tucson regularly indicates that the Pope St. John the XXIII Center has been and continues to be over the allowed capacity of 210 people at the most popular mass.

Year	Min Attend.	Max Attend.	Avg. / Mass	Total Oct.	# of Wknd	Avg/Wknd	# of Wknd Masses
2022	36	215	97.67	2930	5	586	6
2023	62	265	144.20	2884	5	576.8	4
2024	79	267	146.25	2340	4	585	4

Exhibit 3, Mass Attendance. (See Appendix E, October Mass Attendance Census)

Please note that St. Rita in the Desert used to have six masses per week but Bishop Weisenberger directed Fr. Alonzo to reduce the number of masses to four per week in 2023. The 12 p.m. Spanish Mass is the least attended, and the 10 a.m. Mass is the most attended. These numbers are derived annually in the month of October. As such, they don't reflect a large surge in attendance experienced during Christmas 2024 and Easter 2025.

A simple linear trend shows that mass attendance will continue to grow to 325 people at the 10 am Mass in 2025, well exceeding safety standards. Furthermore, average mass attendance for all masses will be at or will exceed the occupancy capacity of 210 people.

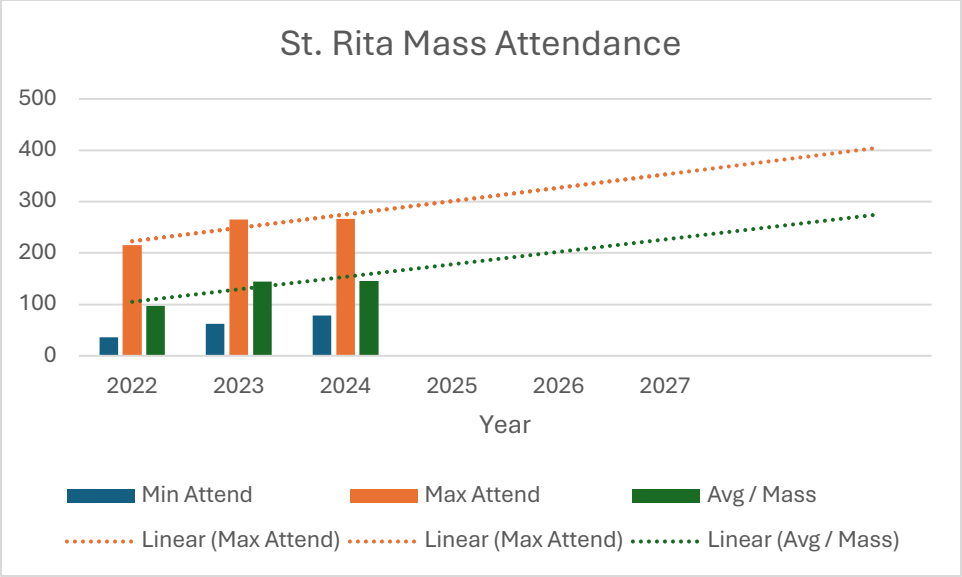

Exhibit 4, Predicted Mass Attendance (Kahle, 2025)

The past and predicted growth in Mass Attendance is fueled by population growth of the parish area. The parish encompasses portions of the six zip codes of 85641, 85747, 85637, 85602, 85611 and 85629. The majority of the populated zip code areas are within the 85641 and 85747 codes. Data will be limited to those areas.

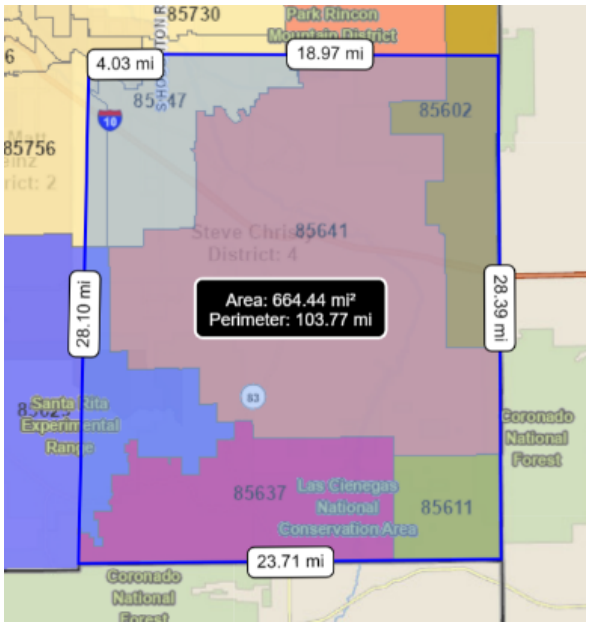

Exhibit 5, Parish Area Zip Codes. (PimaMaps, 2025)

The US Census data from these two zip codes show that there are 70,805 people living within the parish boundaries as of 2025. In looking at the historical data, this area experienced a 24% increase in population between 2020 and 2025. If we do a straight-line prediction, the served population will grow to 87,435 residents by 2030.

	2020	2025	Growth %	Est 2030	Est %
85641	29,538	36,348		44,708	
85747	27,703	34,457		42,727	
Combined	**57,241**	70,805	24%	**87,435**	23%

Exhibit 6. Growth Prediction. (zip-codes.com, 2025)

Although St. Rita in the Desert is already experiencing overcrowding at the 10 a.m. mass, these growth estimates show that mass attendance is likely to continue to increase. The 2020 US Religion Census performed by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies found that 18.9% of Pima County's population report as being Roman Catholic (US Religion Census, 2025). If we apply that figure to our predicted year 2030 parish population, St. Rita in the Desert would have to provide services for 16,525 people. Likewise, Census data reports that there are 2.88 members per family in the two zip codes of 85641 and 85747. Simple math indicates that St. Rita in the Desert will need to provide services for a potential 5,738 families (zip-codes.com, 2025).

The predicted growth numbers may be understated. Some of the St. Rita in the Desert Parish boundaries fall into the southeast metro Tucson. The 2025 Pima County Land Use Study reported that 47% of all residential building permits between July 2020 and June 2024 originated within St. Rita in the Desert boundaries (Psomas, 2025). The same study expects the southeast area to remain the fastest growing area of Pima County and is predicting 5,400 additional residential permits by 2034 (Psomas, 2025). That growth represents about 45% of all expected Pima County residential permits.

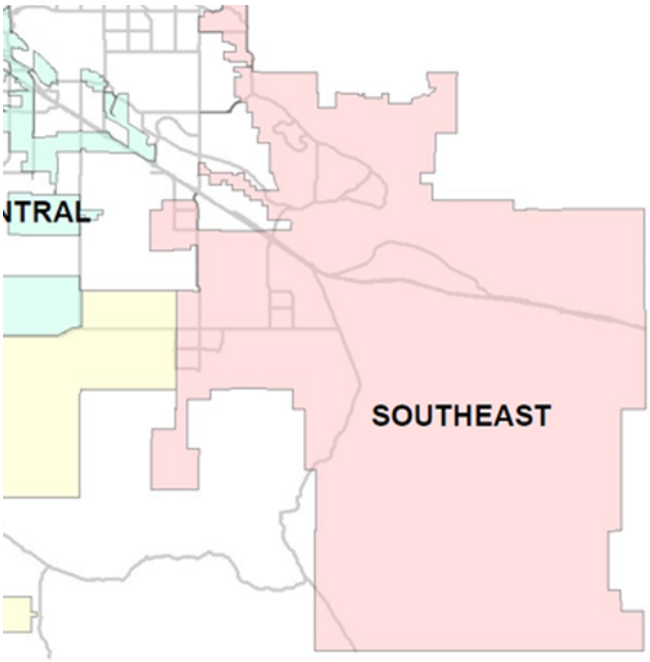

Exhibit 7, Southeast Metro Tucson Area. (Psomas, 2025)

There are numerous new master planned developments within the St. Rita in the Desert parish boundaries. The largest master planned development that is currently being built is Rocking K. Rocking K South is authorized to build 4,526 homes (See Appendix F, Rocking K Master Plan). Rocking K North has not yet been platted but covers a similar acreage as Rocking K South (See Appendix G, Rocking K Conceptual Plan). The Angus Flex Zone is authorized for 320 residential units (See Appendix H, Black Angus Mine Specific Plan). Desert Vistas and Vail Crossings have also been approved by Pima County, and off-site improvements have been completed. The Desert Vistas has been platted and will build 479 homes (See Appendix I, Tentative Plat for Desert Vistas Subdivision). Vail Crossings will build 696 homes over 294 acres (See Appendix J, Tentative Plat for Vail Crossings).

The net effect shows that the parish desperately needs to build at least one new church to prevent current and future unsafe overcrowding. It is also believed that the crowded conditions cause St. Rita in the Desert parishioners to attend other parishes. When seeking opinions from former parishioners as to why they left, many responded that the Pope St. John XXIII Center did not reflect the proper environment of reverence and they want a “real church.” Lastly, the surveys show that the parishioners would strongly prefer to build the new church at the current location. To continue the process of seeking a new sanctuary, the building committee evaluated three options before proceeding:

- Maintain the status quo;
- Build a new church at the Mary Ann Cleveland Site while maintaining current site; or
- Build a new church at existing site.

III. Proposed Options

Unfortunately, there appears to be a conflict between the perceived desires of the Diocese of Tucson and those of the parishioners of St. Rita in the Desert regarding the location of a new church. A thoughtful evaluation of the two possible locations was undertaken in an attempt to resolve that conflict. The option of maintaining the status quo was also considered. This evaluation included objective financial factors such as development and construction costs and subjective human factors such as emotional attachment, history and logistics.

I. Status Quo

The easiest option is always to maintain the status quo. This option would have the parish continue to manage as best it can, given its current facilities. To deal with the growth, the parish could consider adding large screen TVs to the parish hall and/or the courtyard to manage the overflow. Another possibility would be to add more masses, but that would require another priest. Unfortunately, the Diocese of Tucson is experiencing a shortage of priests and is unable to assign an additional priest at this time or in the foreseeable future.

1. Pros

The main benefit of maintaining the status quo is that no action or financial commitment would be required by the parish. The parish would not have to seek funding from its parishioners, and the parish would avoid the inevitable conflicts associated with such an effort. The financial factor is minimal. The subjective human factors are another story.

2. Cons

The cons of this option are numerous. The human factors include unsafe overcrowding, inhospitable outdoor environments and limited parking. The potential negative financial factor would be a potential loss of parishioners and their contributions.

Clearly, the first option of status quo, while possible, does nothing to solve the problem.

F. Build New Church at Mary Ann Cleveland Site

The Diocese of Tucson has suggested that St. Rita in the Desert relocate to Diocesan-owned land off Mary Ann Cleveland (MAC) just east of the W. Anne Gibson-Esmond Station Library. The Diocese suggests that St. Rita in the Desert first build its permanent church at MAC location and then, at some future time, relocate all other supporting facilities such as offices, rectory, meeting rooms, classrooms and parish hall to the MAC location. When the future relocations are completed, the Colossal Cave Road site would be abandoned with the exception of original rectory, well site and the Shrine of St. Rita. This paper is limited to considerations applicable to the initial phase, i.e., building the new church at the MAC site. Please note that the Diocese first recommended a temporary multi-purpose building, but the Kunz study indicated that parishioners would not financially support that plan (Kunz & McFarlin, 2022). Since only a proper church would be financially supported by the parishioners, preliminary estimates show that a 600-700-seat church at the MAC site would cost approximately $5.58 million (See Appendix K, Preliminary Cost Estimates). That estimate includes all construction-related items except the land purchase (estimated at $600,000) and interior furnishings, so the total price will be higher. Exhibit 8 provides a conceptual drawing.

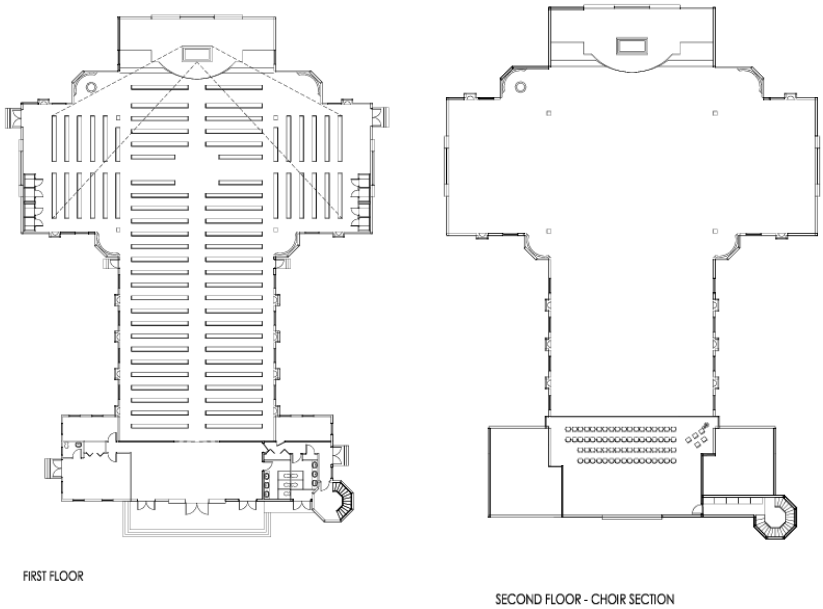

Exhibit 8, Conceptual Drawing, applicable at either location.

The MAC site's tax parcel number is 14117011J. As depicted below in Exhibit 9, it is a 28.53-acre amorphous shape. Unfortunately, the building envelope is only 7.7

acres because Pima County has reserved an easement for recreational trail and landscaping purposes as shown in Exhibit 10 (See Appendix L, Reserved Easement).

Exhibit 9, Diocese of Tucson Parcel. (Pima.gov, 2025)

Exhibit 10, Deed Restricted Building Envelope (Pima.gov, 2025)

In one proposed building option, Exhibit 11 shows that the building envelope would be even more restricted to accommodate a shared parking lot.

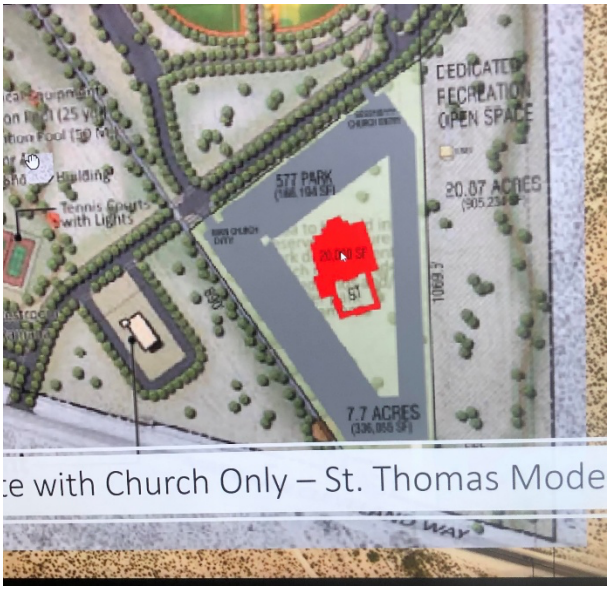

Exhibit 11, Shared Pima County Parking Concept

3. Pros

Of course, there are pros and cons associated with each option. Pros for this option include:

- Higher visibility of Church on major roadways – MAC and Houghton;
- The location is more central to current population densities such as Rita Ranch and developments along Houghton Road. This fact may increase parishioners and corresponding donations; and
- Over time, St. Rita in the Desert would have all new and efficient facilities.

4. Cons

The cons for this option include higher costs and human factors. The financial factors primarily revolve around construction and operating costs, namely:

- The land must be purchased from the diocese for approximately $600,000;
- The buildable land is only 7.7 acres. The other 21 acres are unusable due to right-of-way and easements reserved for public use;
- The additional development cost at this site is estimated to be over $1 million since it is an undeveloped site, lacking necessary infrastructure. (See Appendix K, Preliminary Cost Estimates);

- The additional cost of maintaining two sites, such as cleaning, landscape, maintenance, and security is estimated to be an additional $260,000 over the $484,645 cost to maintain the existing site. The current weekly collections would not cover this. (See Appendix M, Operating Cost Estimates);
- Increased travel expenses between two campuses;
- Inefficient use of priest, staff and volunteer time shuttling between campuses;
- Traffic congestion on a major road may necessitate the use of off-duty traffic police during services; and
- This property is within a flood plain and will complicate construction and may necessitate the need for flood insurance. (See Appendix N, Flood Plain Map).

The human factors include:

- The perceived emotional loss of moving St. Rita in the Desert from Vail to Tucson. St. Rita in the Desert has been a parish for 90 years at its Vail location.
- There are many traffic accidents and much traffic congestion on Mary Ann Cleveland Road. The MAC site may be dangerous for left turns.
- The two sites would be subject to two different governmental entities – City of Tucson and Pima County.
- The church parking lot may need to be shared with Pima County Parks. This may create conflicts on weekends and holy days.
- Restrictive Covenants in the Warranty Deed from Pima County to the Diocese of Tucson prohibit the Diocese from discriminating on the basis of, among other things, religion, potentially limiting our ability to fully and exclusively practice our Catholic faith.
- Some parishioners have expressed health related concerns given the proximity of the high-voltage power lines.
- The closest fire and EMS service is slightly farther away and it would be provided by the City of Tucson.

Analysis shows that the cons far outweigh the pros of the MAC site option. The scope and scale of the financial factors alone would be advisable to reject this option. Once the human factors are added in, the MAC site option becomes even more undesirable.

F. Build New Church at Existing Site

The third option is to build a new church at the existing site on Colossal Cave Road. This option would build a 600–700-person church on the east end of the existing property. The proposed church would be the same conceptual church as depicted in Option Two above. The preliminary estimated cost is $4,556,277 (See Exhibit I, Preliminary Cost Estimates). All construction related items are included except interior furnishings, so the total cost will be higher.

The existing site is tax parcel number 30513053C and consists of a total of 12.9 acres, which includes eight acres that were purchased in 2001 for $200,000 for the new church. Please note that the land is already paid for. Vail Water recently extended a municipal water line to the property, and St. Rita in the Desert now has municipal water service. The existing site is only 40% developed as shown in Exhibit 12. The existing site contains adequate space to build a new church and expand the parking lot.

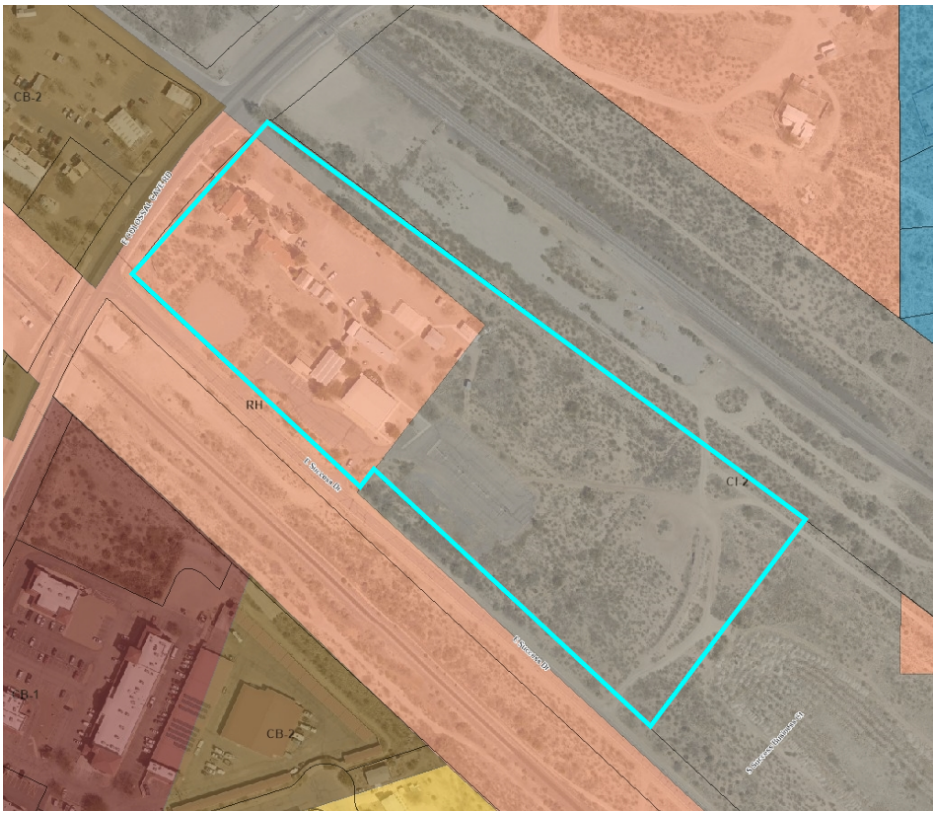

Exhibit 12, Existing Site. (Pima.gov, 2025)

5. Pros

The chief merit of this option is that St. Rita in the Desert continues to operate out of the same location as it has for the past 90 years. The additional advantages are:

- Economical option since there are no additional land costs;
- This site now has municipal water and well service;
- This site has two large non-potable water cisterns;
- The land is already developed, and the parish has a beneficial history of working with local county and fire officials;
- The existing parking lot can be used, thereby reducing expenses;
- There is still land available to construct a new on-site rectory;
- The Pope St. John the XXIII Center can be converted into a new parish hall with a commercial kitchen. The new parish hall could be used for parish events, classes, and retreats. The new parish hall could also provide another source of income through rental agreements with the community. The aging current parish hall can be removed or sold to Vail Preservation Society;
- Pima County Sheriff regularly uses the existing parking lot which increases safety and security; and
- The parishioners have a strong preference for this option and will be much more likely help fund it (Middleton, Site Survey, 2025).

6. Cons

There is only one financial factor, but there are a few human factors.

The financial factor is:

- Sewer service is not available, so the septic system will need to be upgraded.

The human factors include:

- Train noise and frequency can occasionally lead to traffic delays;
- There is uncertainty as to whether and exactly where the County intends to build a new railroad overpass in the vicinity of the current crossing at Colossal Cave Road. Depending on the location, construction of the new crossing or overpass may impede access, reduce the visibility, and impact the structural stability of the Shrine;
- Congestion along Success Road may develop given proposed increased residential subdivisions east of St. Rita in the Desert; and
- The Diocese of Tucson may not authorize construction.

Analysis clearly demonstrates the pros of this option substantially outweigh the cons. This option is the most economical option and will take the shortest amount of time to achieve a cohesive parish campus.

IV. Conclusion

A. Recommendation

This paper provides a description, pertinent history and current challenges facing St. Rita in the Desert Parish. The parish serves over 700 families in southeast Pima County over an astounding 645 square miles. The parish has existed for 90 years. Both the rectory and the shrine are listed with the National Register of Historic Places. As such, the parishioners are proud of their history, and it provides roots to the parish community. However, the parish boundaries are within the fastest growing area of southeast Pima County, and it has experienced a 24% growth rate over the last five years which has led to overcrowded masses in the Pope St. John the XXIII Center. Furthermore, near-future predictions indicate the growth rate will only continue over the next 10 years. St. Rita in the Desert needs to solve its problem of having inadequate worship space to meet its mission.

Three options were considered which included 1) Status Quo, 2) Build Church at Mary Ann Cleveland Site and 3) Build New Church at Existing Site. The pros and cons of each of the options were explored. The first option of status quo will not solve the core problem of inadequate space. The second option of building a new permanent church at MAC had two serious drawbacks: it would be much more expensive, and it would lack parishioner support. In fact, this option would initially cost around $1 million more than Option Three (Exhibit 13). Moreover, the parish would still face spending significant additional costs for the future relocation of offices, classrooms, parish hall, and rectory.

Item	Total (Existing $)	Total (MAC $)
Construction Subtotal (excl D&E & Contingency)	$ 3,668,500	$ 4,491,000
Design & Engineering (8%)	$ 293,480	$ 359,280
Contingency (15%)	$ 594,297	$ 727,542
GRAND TOTAL (Estimated)	$ 4,556,277	$ 5,577,822
Additional Expense for MAC		$ 1,021,545

Exhibit 13, Preliminary Cost Estimates New Church Locations

The third option of building a new permanent church at the existing site would solve the problem and would continue to provide an enduring sense of permanence for the future. The third option respects the past sacrifices of the pioneer families and the recent residents that have built the Shrine of St. Rita, rectory, meeting spaces and worship spaces by continuing to use those spaces. Additionally, the third option builds on that legacy and provides benefits for future generations by building a proper, reverent church. The cost for this option is approximately $4.56 million (exclusive of furnishings, etc.). To solve this problem, a number of action steps will need to commence.

Please note: The St. Rita in the Desert building committee is merely offering its recommendations and is unable to definitively say what will happen. The Diocese of Tucson will determine the final course of action.

B. Action Steps

A successful plan requires a successful execution. The parish leadership along with staff and the building committee will have to follow a specific number of steps to successfully meet the recommendation of building a new church at the existing campus. Based upon the recommendation to adopt the third option, a specific set of steps will need to occur.

1. Pay Off Existing Debt (October 2025 – April 2026)

Step one is to pay off all existing debt. The only existing debt is the rectory which was purchased in 2024 with a mortgage loan of $345,000, of which $17,000.00 has already been paid, so the mortgage balance has been reduced to $328,000. A rectory debt payoff plan should be implemented no later than September 2025 with an intended payoff by April 2026. The plan only requires 500 parishioners to commit to paying $100 per month for seven months (between October 2025 and April 2026). Please note that St. Rita in the Desert has 700 registered parishioners, and the committee recognizes that not all families may be able to contribute at the $700 level. Any funds received in excess of the mortgage payoff will be applied to the cost of building the new church. The primary purpose of paying off the rectory debt early will be to demonstrate to the Diocese that St. Rita in the Desert is financially and spiritually able to manage debt and arrange for early payoff. The only challenge is to achieve the goal without any leadership donors.

2. Inform Parishioners of Study (Throughout)

St. Rita in the Desert parishioners need to be informed of the recommendations of the building committee. They must understand the full history, actions to date and

the vision for the future. Past surveys indicate that there is also some trust that needs to be rebuilt since the perception is that a church was promised but not delivered. The most effective way to build trust is through transparency. The parish leadership and its building committee must be completely transparent on the need for a new church and the funds needed. Five million dollars plus is a very large ask for a relatively small parish. Parishioners must understand that they are not only building a church for themselves but for generations to come. The Kunz study underscores this need to develop a culture of philanthropy. Specific recommendations are to inform the parish of the building committee's recommendation to build a church at the permanent site pending approval from the Diocesan Bishop. This study must be made available on the parish website and should be electronically distributed to all parishioners. Hard copies of this study will also be made available in the Pope St. John the XXIII Center. Numerous town halls will be held at various times so everyone can also hear the study results.

3. Secure Authorization for New Church at Existing Location (Fall 2026)

The next step will be to secure authorization to build the church at the existing location. The suggested timing of Fall 2026 may be optimistic. The Diocese of Tucson is currently without a permanent bishop, and it's possible we will not have a bishop by Fall 2026. There are currently many dioceses that have been without a bishop for two years or more. The Diocese of Tucson is lucky to have its former bishop serving as the Apostolic Administrator, and the parish leadership may be able to approach him on this matter given the current and expected overcrowding. Nonetheless, the decision to build a multi-million-dollar church is a big decision, and the acting bishop may be reluctant to make that decision for his successor.

If or when the Diocese authorizes St. Rita in the Desert to build a new church, the next step would be to start a comprehensive capital campaign plan. That plan will be developed closer to the time of authorization by the Diocese. If such authorization is not achieved, a secondary plan will need to be developed.

V. References

Baker & Associates Engineering, Inc. (2024, 4 10). Tentative Plat for Vail Crossings. Tucson, Arizona, United States of America.

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VI. Appendices Pages 22-40

Appendix A, St. Rita in the Desert Parish Boundaries

DIOCESE OF TUCSON
192 SOUTH STONE AVENUE
P. O. Box 31 • Tucson, Arizona 85702-0031
520 - 792-3410 FAX 520 - 792-0291

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DECREE OF CHANGE IN BOUNDARIES
SANTA RITA IN THE DESERT PARISH, VAIL (PIMA COUNTY)

Following the decree of erection, dated February 22, 1999, establishing St. Brendan Parish, Tucson, Arizona, as a new territorial and movable parish in the Diocese of Tucson, and after due observance of the revised Code of Canon Law (1983), with the approval of the Diocesan Presbyteral Council and after consultation with the proper pastor, the undersigned hereby decrees the boundary changes for the parish of Santa Rita in the Desert Parish, Tucson, Arizona.

Boundaries for said parish Santa Rita in the Desert are as follows:

NORTHERN BOUNDARIES

Beginning at the juncture of Wilmot Road and Valencia Road thence East along the South side of Valencia Road to Houghton Road, thence North on Houghton Road to Drexel Road, thence East along the South side of Drexel Road to the Cochise - Pima County line.

EASTERN BOUNDARIES

Thence South along the Cochise - Pima County line to the Santa Cruz County line.

SOUTHERN BOUNDARIES

Thence West along this line to the extension of Wilmot Road.

DECREE OF CHANGE OF BOUNDARIES
SANTA RITA IN THE DESERT PARISH, VAIL

WESTERN BOUNDARIES

Thence North along this extension of Wilmot Road, and along Wilmot Road to Valencia Road, to the point of origin.

Given this twenty-second day of February, in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and ninety nine, at Tucson, Arizona, under our signature and seal.

Most Rev. Manuel D. Moreno, D.D.
Bishop of Tucson

Rev. Van A. Wagner
Vicar General

Appendix B, St. Rita in the Desert – Growth Survey (2023)

ST. RITA IN THE DESERT
CATHOLIC CHURCH

1. Did you attend the town hall meeting in August of last year or have you viewed a recording of the town hall meeting where the preliminary building options were discussed?

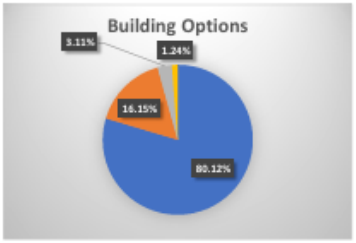
Yes:	39.51%
No:	60.49%

2. Did you participate in the Feasibility Study conducted by Clyde Kunz & Associates in 2022 or review the study's Executive Summary?

Yes:	47.53%
No:	52.47%

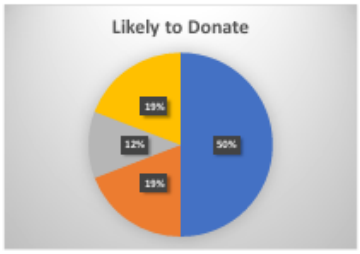
3. Building Options (Rank in Order of Preference)

	#1	#2	#3	None	Average	% Ranked #1
Option A (2003 Plan on Current Site)	129	12	10	11	1.13	80.12%
Option B (2003 Plan on Mary Ann Cleveland)	26	102	12	21	1.65	16.15%
Option C (Diocese Plan in Mary Ann Cleveland)	5	17	99	39	2.10	3.11%
None	2	12	10	11		1.24%



4. Do you feel you and your family could commit $100 per month for 42 months to meet the building need to expand St. Rita in the Desert enabling us to better to support your Catholic community?

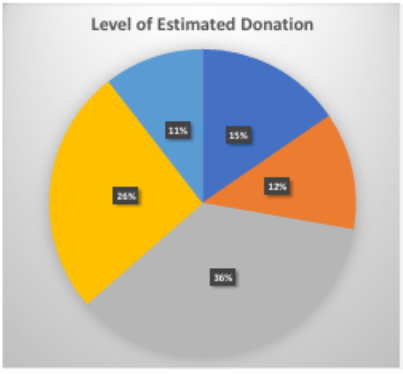
	Count	Average
4-Most Likely to Donate	81	50.00%
3-Second Mostly Likely to Donate	31	19.14%
2-Less Likely to Donate	19	11.73%
1-Least Likely to Donate	31	19.14%
Overall Average:	**3.00**	



5. The sample scenario used an average pledge of $100 per month per parish family. Some families can contribute more while others must do less. Which amount do you feel your family would most likely pledge?

	Count	Average
$25 per month or less	25	15.43%
$25-$50 per month	20	12.35%
$50-$100 per month	**58**	**35.80%**
$100-$200 per month	**42**	**25.93%**
$200-500 per month or more	**17**	**10.49%**

Estimated Pledges for 1000 Families Participating		
Average Monthly Pledge:	$	109.03
Estimated Pledge Total:	$	4,579,166.67
79% Pledge Rate:	$	3,617,541.67



Appendix C, St. Rita in the Desert – Site Survey Results 2025

St. Rita in the Desert -Site Survey Results 2025

1. In what zip code do you reside?

85641	87	69%
85747	31	25%
85756	5	4%
Other	1	1%
85730	2	2%
	126	

2. How many people reside in your household?

1-2	73	58%
3-5	40	32%
5-10	13	10%
	126	

3(a). Are you or is someone in your household a Catholic Christian?

Yes	121	96%
No	5	4%
	126	

3(b). Do you know where St. Rita in the Desert Catholic Church is currently located?

Yes	125	99%
No	1	1%
	126	

4. Have you ever attended mass or another event at St. Rita in the Desert?

Yes	121	96%
No	5	4%
	126	

5. Do you regularly attend mass or other worship services?

Yes	117	93%
No	9	7%
	126	

6. When you attend mass, is it at St. Rita in the Desert? (Please answer with the response that best describes you.)

103	82%	Yes, I attend St. Rita's the majority of the time
4	3%	Yes, I attend St. Rita's sometimes but generally other parishes
1	1%	Yes, I attend St. Rita's but only for special holidays or events.
5	4%	Yes, I attend St. Rita's about half the time
5	4%	No, I don't attend St. Rita's but I do attend mass at another catholic church.
4	3%	No, I don't attend church at all.
4	3%	No, I don't attend catholic mass but I do attend other worship services.
126		

7. Does the physical location of the church building influence where you will attend mass?

Yes	90	71%
No	36	29%
	126	

8. When attending mass, what is your preferred drive time?

5 minutes	21	17%
10 minutes	25	20%
15 minutes	33	26%
20 minutes	18	14%

St. Rita in the Desert -Site Survey Results 2025

No limit. I'd attend regardless	28	22%
I would not attend mass.	1	1%
	126	

9. Does nearness to trains and train noise deter you from attending mass or does it affect your worship?

98	78%	No, The trains do not bother me or hamper my worship
18	14%	Somewhat, I would prefer not to have the trains but it is not a major issue for me
10	8%	Yes, the trains are an issue for me
126		

10(a). When attending mass, are you most comfortable in the church if it is...

Full	4	3%
Nearly Full	27	21%
Half Full	12	10%
Doesn't matter to me	83	66%
	126	

10(b). St. Rita in the Desert will continue to maintain the Shrine of Santa Rita. The new church location may or may not be near the Shrine.
Do you think the church should remain in close proximity to the Shrine?

Yes	91	72%
No	6	5%
It doesn't matter to me	29	23%
	126	

11. If you had a choice of location, which location would you be more likely attend mass?

84	67%	Current Location, Colossal Cave Rd. (12.31 acres of land)
19	15%	Either Location but I would prefer the current one
10	8%	Either Location but I would prefer Houghton & Mary Ann Cleveland Way
9	7%	Houghton & Mary Ann Cleveland Way (7.25 acres of land)
4	3%	Neither location, I will not attend mass.
126		

12. The following will impact my decision to contribute to the capital campaign...

St. Rita in the Desert -Site Survey Results 2025

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Average Score
Location	**41%**	17%	25%	9%	8%	3.75
Building Type	20%	25%	**41%**	7%	6%	3.45
Clergy and Staff	19%	22%	**41%**	10%	8%	3.35
Building Design	21%	24%	**43%**	6%	6%	3.46
Train Noise	3%	3%	**39%**	17%	**38%**	2.17
Cost of Construction	8%	23%	**53%**	10%	6%	3.17
Traffic Issues	6%	19%	**55%**	10%	11%	2.98

13. What is the likelihood you will support the capital campaign to build a new church?

Very Likely	65	52%
Likely	34	27%
Somewhat Likely	13	10%
Unlikely	9	7%
Very Unlikely	5	4%
	126	

Appendix D, St. Rita Church Building Timeline

St. Rita Church Building Timeline

Date	Activity
2000	Plans drawn up by architect for St Rita in the Desert Pope St. John XXIII Center under the direction of the Salvadorian Priests.
2001	Stained glass windows refurbished and paid for to be installed in St. Rita in the Desert Church (approx. $250,000.00). This was done under the direction of Fr. Bob—windows need to be re-glazed to be used for the Church. Eight additional acres purchased at Colossal Cave site for new church.
2006	Construction of Pope St. John XXIII center began.
2007	Masses began in Pope St. John XXIII Center.
2007	Diocese appointed Fr. John Alt as pastor of St. Rita in the Desert. The railroad indicated that St Rita cannot build a church where previously planned because a municipal water line cannot be run under the tracks.
2009	Tucson Diocese bought land for a new church for St. Rita in the Desert on Mary Ann Cleveland.
2010	Fr. John Alt held meeting with parishioners to discuss the possibility of adding another 300 seats onto the Pope St. John XXIII Center. This was rejected by parishioners because they wanted a church, not an addition to the multi-purpose building.
2017	Under the supervision of Fr. Martin Martinez, a select group of parishioners viewed the Mary Ann Cleveland site and felt it was adequate to build a church.
2019	Fr. Alonzo Garcia was instructed by Diocese to build a new church.
2020	A formal building committee was developed.
2021	Diocese held meetings with the building committee informing them of steps needed to begin process of building a church. Two Zoom meetings were held.
2021	Organizational meeting of the building committee held. The committee broke into building sub-committees to complete work. The committees were building sub-committee and fundraising committee.

2021	Board interviewed three survey/fundraising groups and selected Clyde Kunz and Associates because they have done similar work and provided the best fit in relationship to St Rita's needs. Kunz & Associates selected for feasibility study.
5/2022	Kunz study completed and released to parishioners.
6/2022	Pope St. John XXIII Center paid off.
8/2022	Parish Town Hall meeting to present potential solutions
11/2022	Growth study initiated which involved focus group sessions that presented three options of 2003 church plan at current site, 2003 church plan at Mary Ann Cleveland, and multi-purpose church at Mary Ann Cleveland.
3/2023	Vail Water extended municipal water under the railroad tracks. St. Rita's now has municipal water supply.
4/2023	The data from the Growth Survey was presented to Diocese of Tucson and requested that a capital campaign to commence to build the church at the current site using the 2003 plans. The request was denied and the Diocese strongly encouraged the parish to look at the Mary Ann Cleveland property. Parish is also directed to purchase a new rectory.
5/2023	The building committee received results from an architecture firm, Design Story Spaces, that completed an analysis on the 2003 church designs.
3/2024	Bishop Weisenberger and diocesan staff attended a town hall at the Parish.
9/2024	A rectory is purchased offsite with a $345,000 mortgage.
4/2025	To assess the viability of developing the Mary Ann Cleveland property, the building committee completed another survey that included the wider community. Referred to as the Site Survey.

Please note that from 2019 – 2022 that St. Rita's in the Desert spent approximately $55,000 to maintain facility infrastructure primarily due to water, septic and electrical repairs. There are several septic tanks and cisterns on the campus, however, each are pushing their limits. Also, $20,000 was spent yearly to rent a rectory for the priest.

Appendix E, St. Rita in the Desert Mass Attendance Census, 2022-2024

3ER MASS COUNT 2022 2022 OCTOBER MASS COUNT

PARISH NAME, CITY: St. Rita in the Desert—Vail, AZ DATE: 10/31/2022

	1st Mass	2nd Mass	3rd Mass	4th Mass	5th Mass	6th Mass	7th Mass	8th Mass	9th Mass	10th Mass	Total Attendance
Please indicate the Mass Start Time	5:00p	7:00a	9:00a	11:00	1:00p Spanish	5:00p					
Oct. 1-2 Attendance	92	74	215	123	53	43					600
Oct. 8-9 Attendance	93	86	160	115	58	39					551
Oct. 15-16 Attendance	85	91	185	136	55	57					609
Oct. 22-23 Attendance	93	80	140	143	67	36					559
Oct.29-30 Attendance	106	91	186	111	61	56					611

Attendance	
Grand Total	2930

ER MASS COUNT 2023 2023 OCTOBER MASS COUNT

PARISH NAME, CITY: St. Rita in the Desert, Vail, AZ DATE: 10/30/2023

	1st Mass	2nd Mass	3rd Mass	4th Mass	5th Mass	6th Mass	7th Mass	8th Mass	9th Mass	10th Mass	Total Attendance
Please indicate the Mass Start Time	5p	8A	10A	RP							
Sept. 30-Oct. 1 Attendance	106	153	171	96							526
Oct.7-8 Attendance	116	131	221	100							568
Oct.14-15 Attendance	137	163	265	62							627
Oct. 21-22 Attendance	111	144	207	122							584
Oct.28-29 Attendance	118	156	204	101							579

Attendance	
Grand Total	2,884

Appendix E, St. Rita in the Desert Mass Attendance Census, 2022-2024, cont.

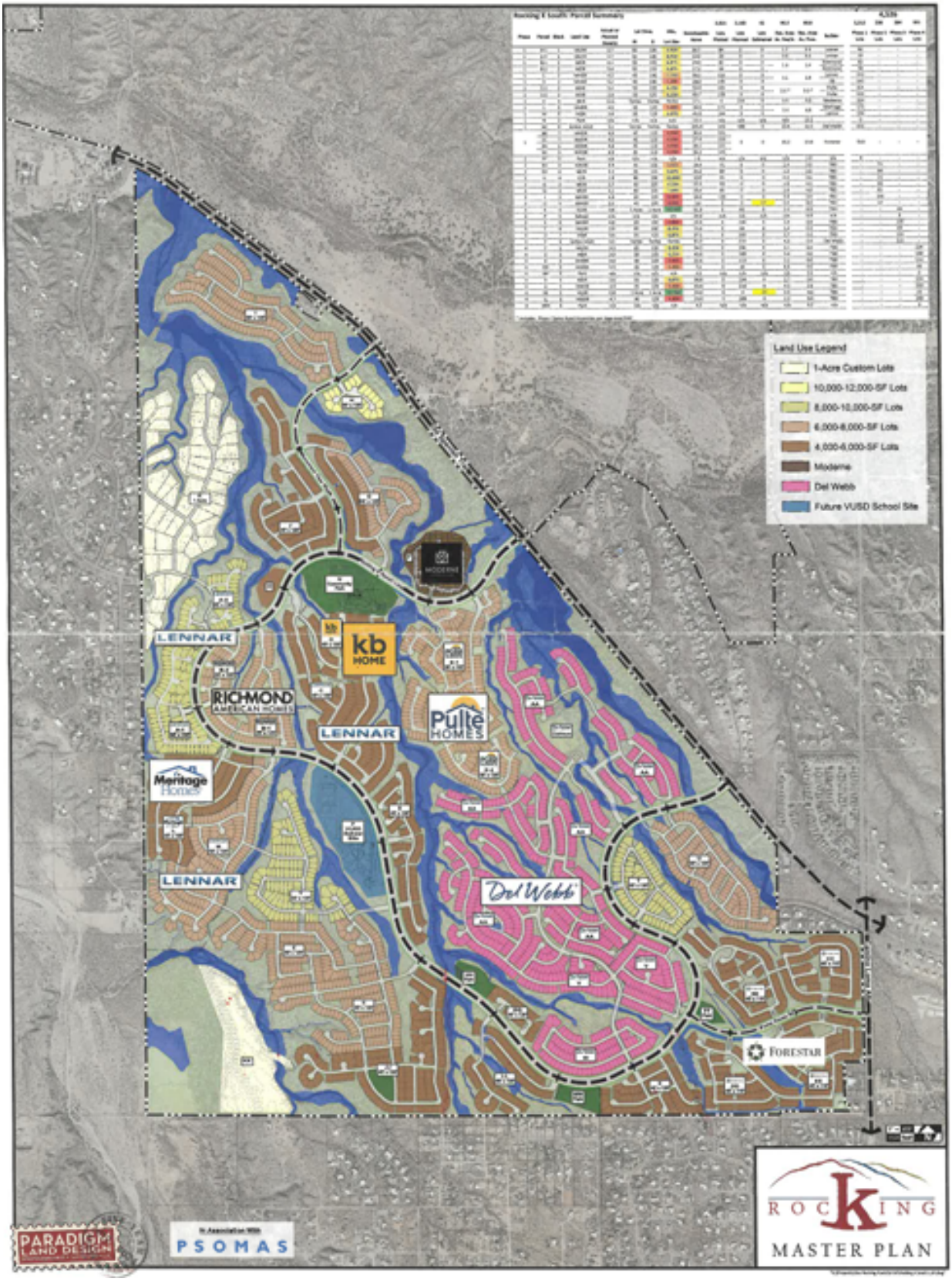
2024 OCTOBER COUNT

PARISH NAME, CITY: St. Rita in the Desert, Vail, AZ DATE: 10/29/2024

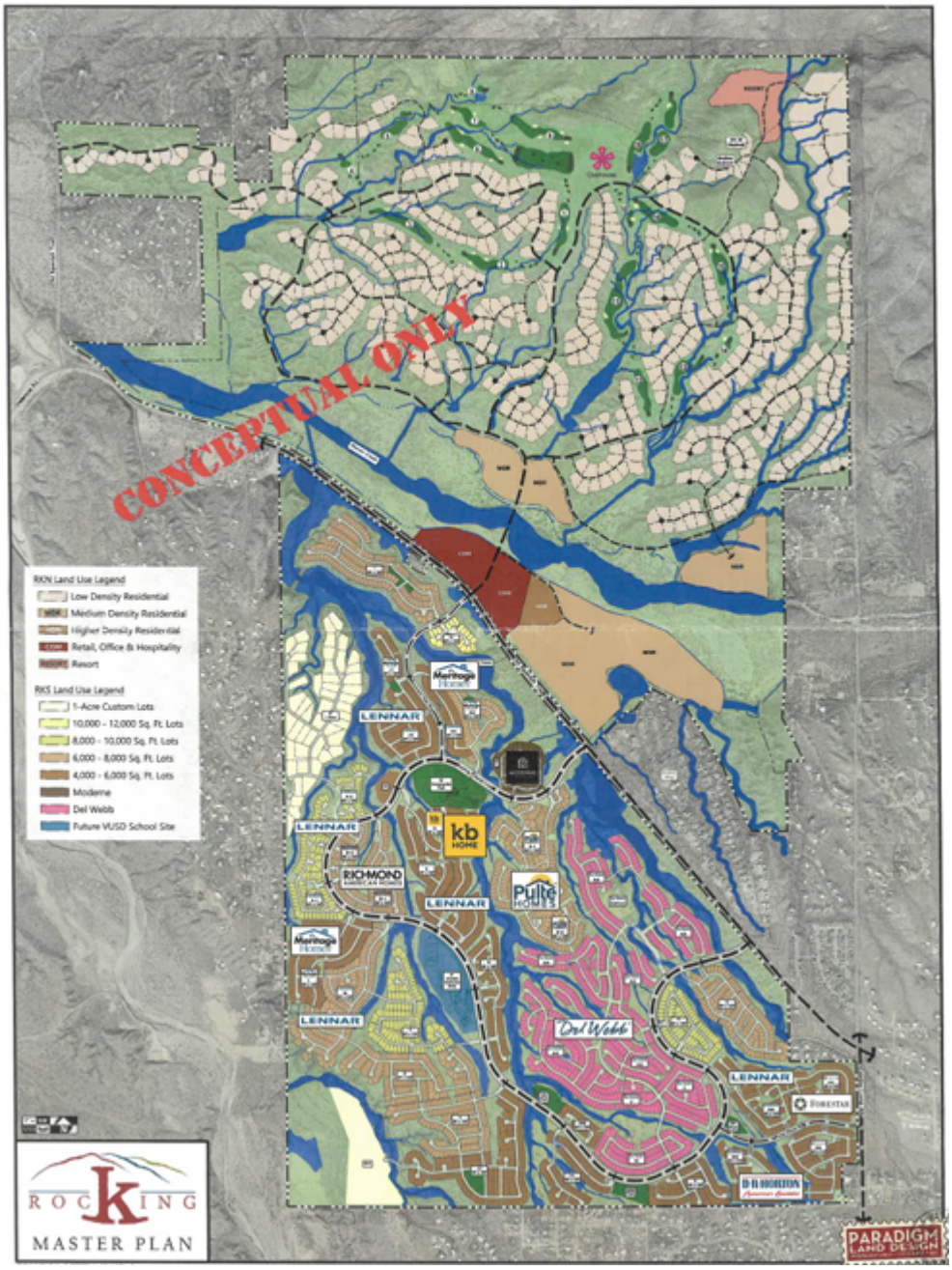
	1st Mass	2nd Mass	3rd Mass	4th Mass	5th Mass	6th Mass	7th Mass	8th Mass	9th Mass	10th Mass	Total Attendance
Please indicate the Mass Start Time	Sat. 5pm	Sun 8am	Sun 10 am	Sun 12pm							
Oct. 5-6 Attendance	114	162	188	79							543
Oct. 12-13 Attendance	115	145	238	85							583
Oct. 19-20 Attendance	151	90	267	98							606
Oct. 26-27 Attendance	117	152	232	107							608
	497	549	925	369							2340

	Attendance
Grand Total	2340

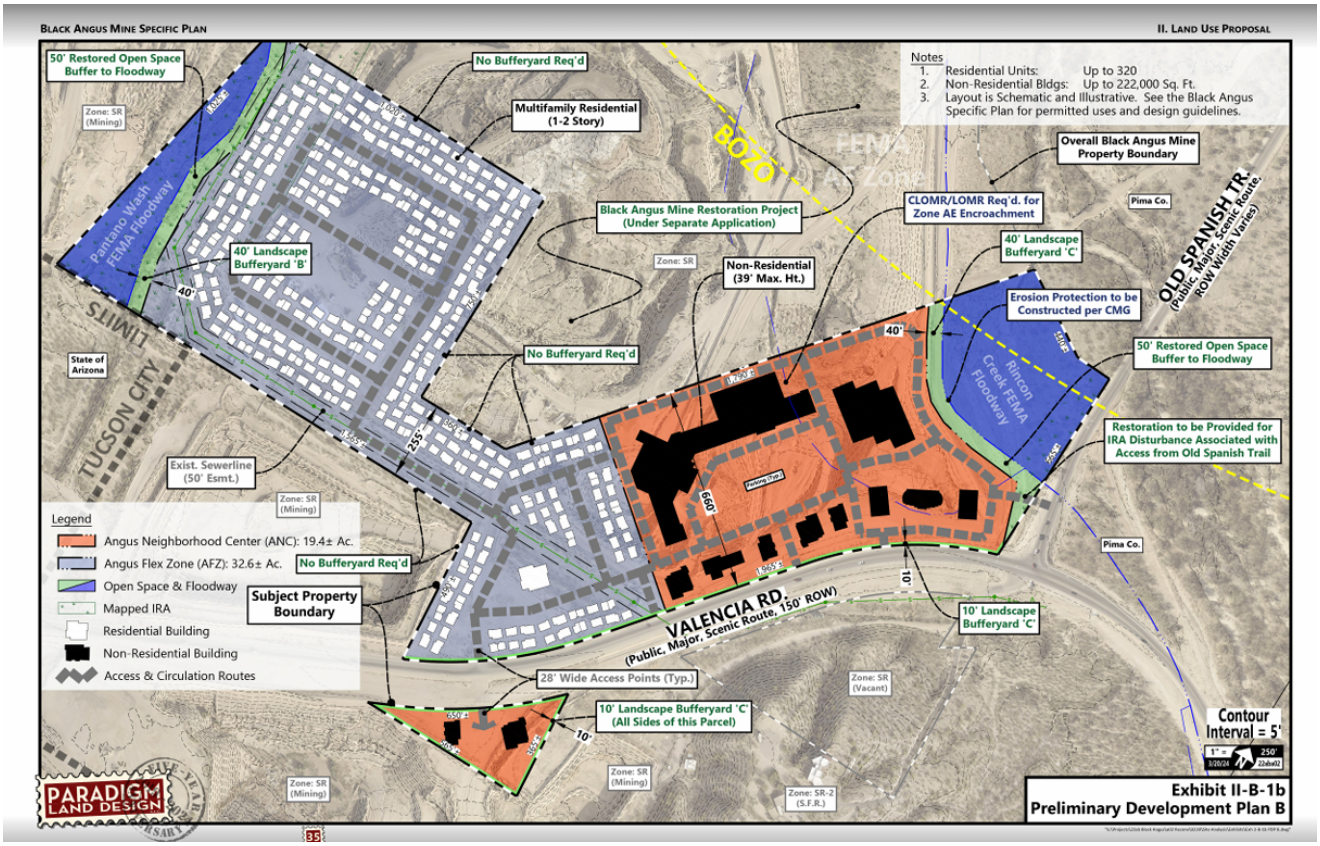
Appendix F, Rocking K South Development Plan



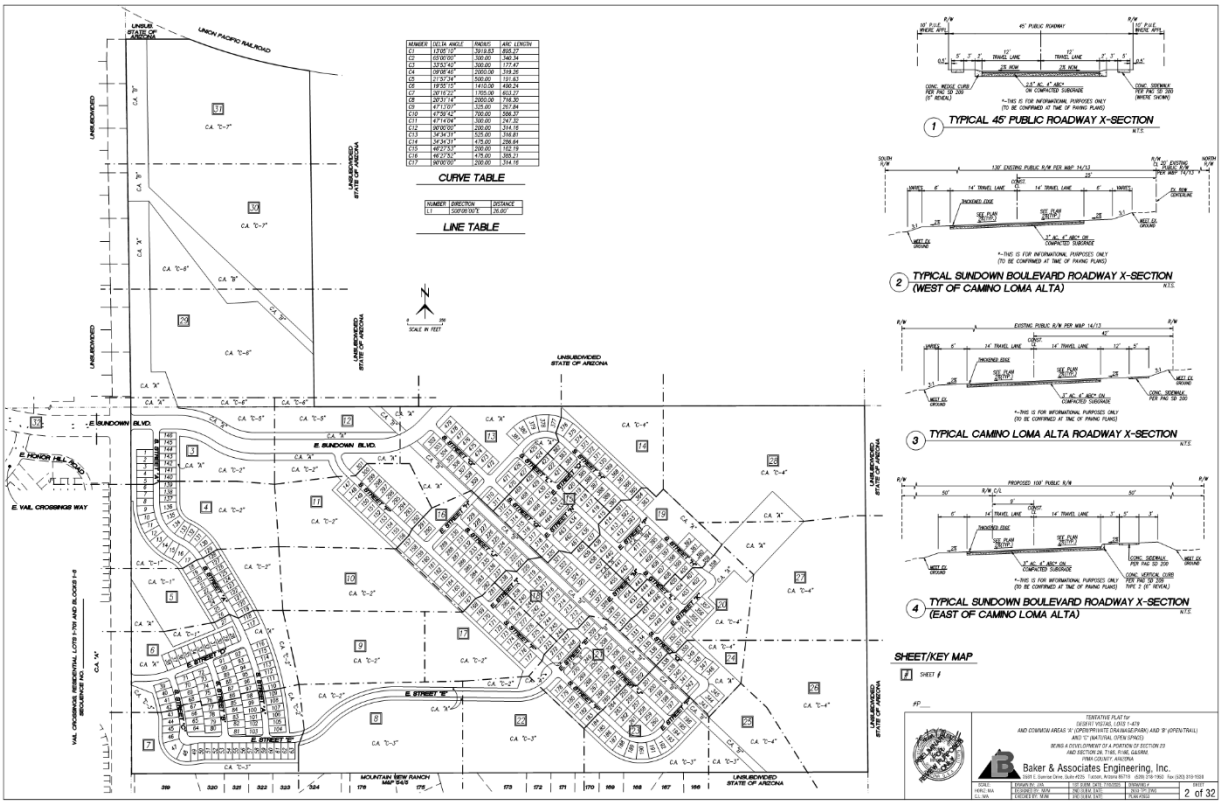
Appendix G, Rocking K North Conceptual Plan



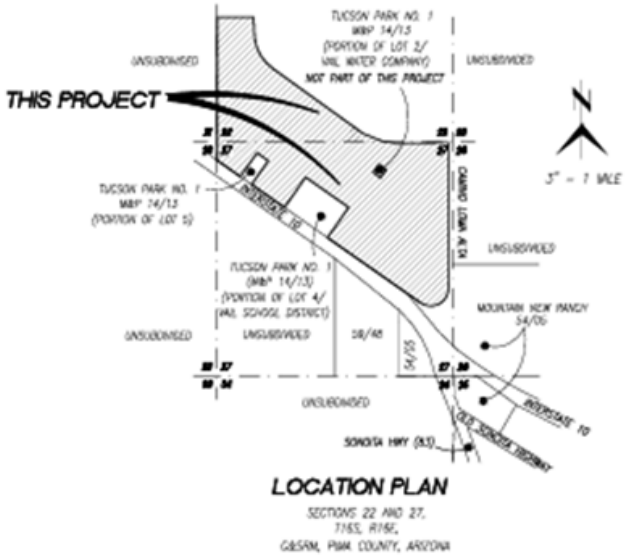
Appendix H, Black Angus Mine Specific Plan

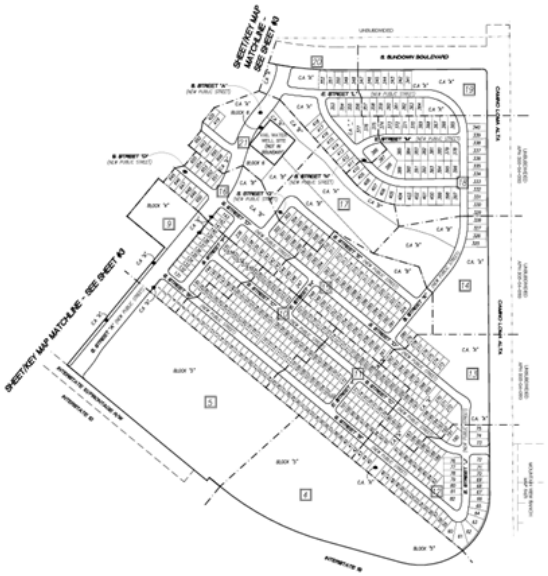


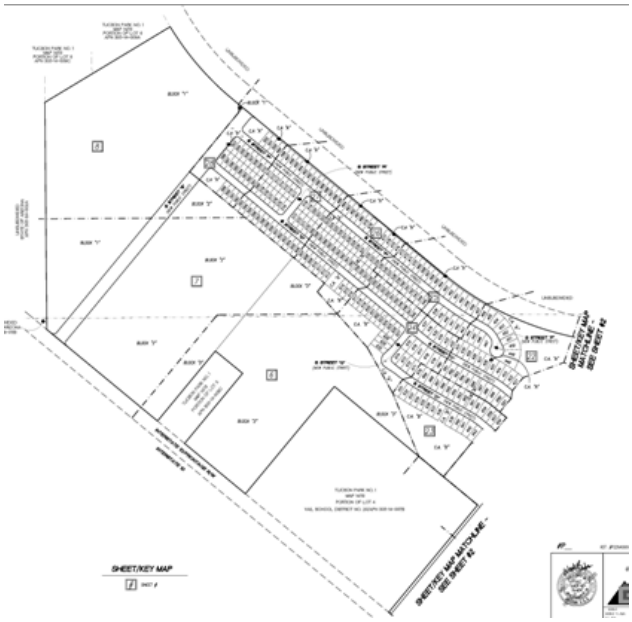
Appendix I, Tentative Plat for Desert Vistas Subdivision



Appendix J, Tentative Plat for Vail Crossings





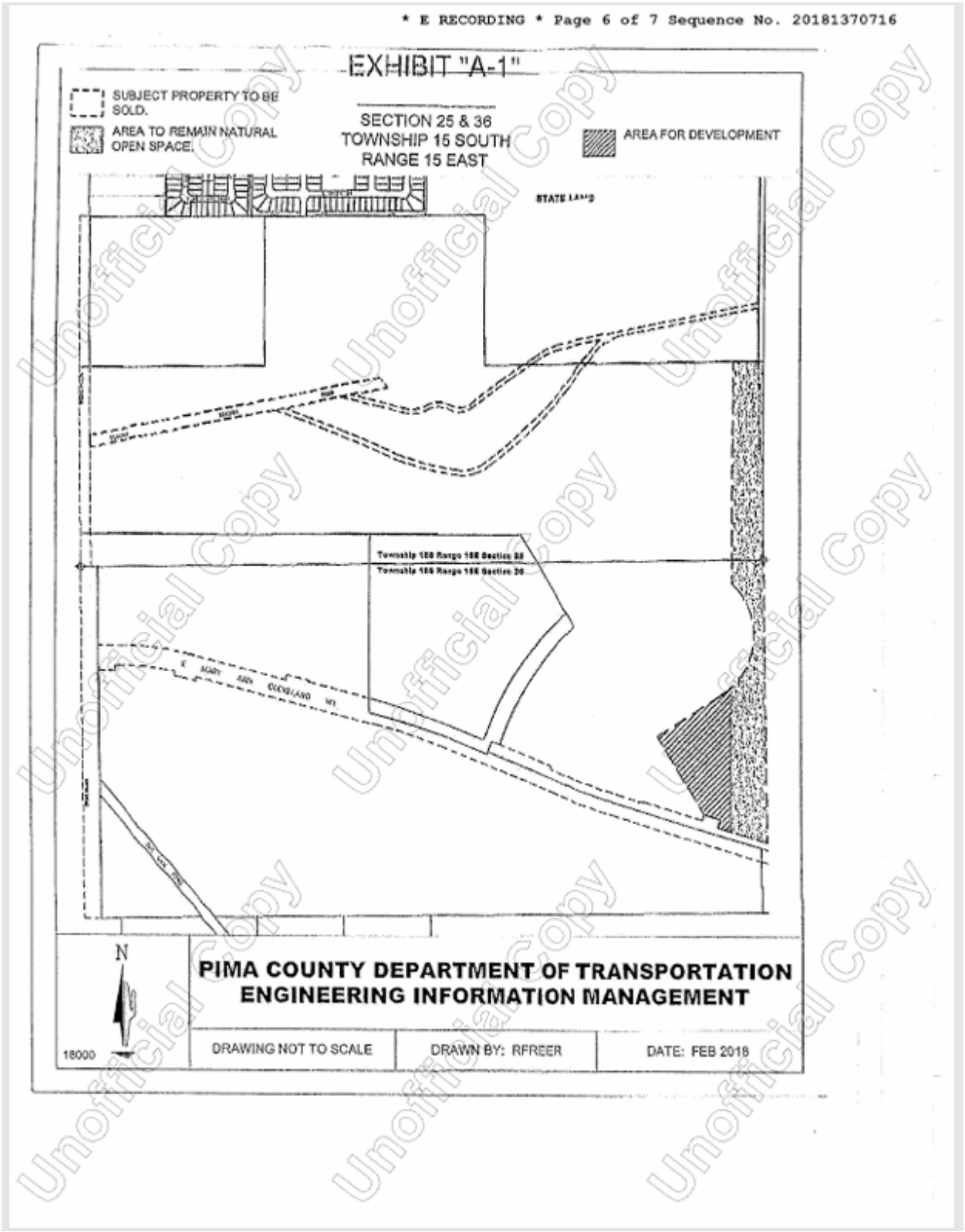


Appendix K, Preliminary Cost Estimates

Item	Total (Rita $)	Total (Cleveland $)
Construction Subtotal (excl D&E & Contingency)	$ 3,668,500	$ 4,491,000
Design & Engineering (8%)	$ 293,480	$ 359,280
Contingency (15%)	$ 594,297	$ 727,542
GRAND TOTAL (Estimated)	$ 4,556,277	$ 5,577,822
Additional Expense for MAC		$ 1,021,545

Assumption	Value
Building cost per SF	$200/sf
Paved parking cost per stall	$3,000/stall
Convert gravel to paved per stall	$2,500/stall
Rehab existing paved stall	$500/stall
CMP crossing (installed)	$12,000/each
Driveway	$200/lf
Hydrology study (if required)	$25,000
Design & Engineering rate	8% of construction subtotal
Contingency rate	15% of subtotal + D&E
Date generated	2025-08-08 (America/Phoenix timezone)

Appendix L, Reserved Easement

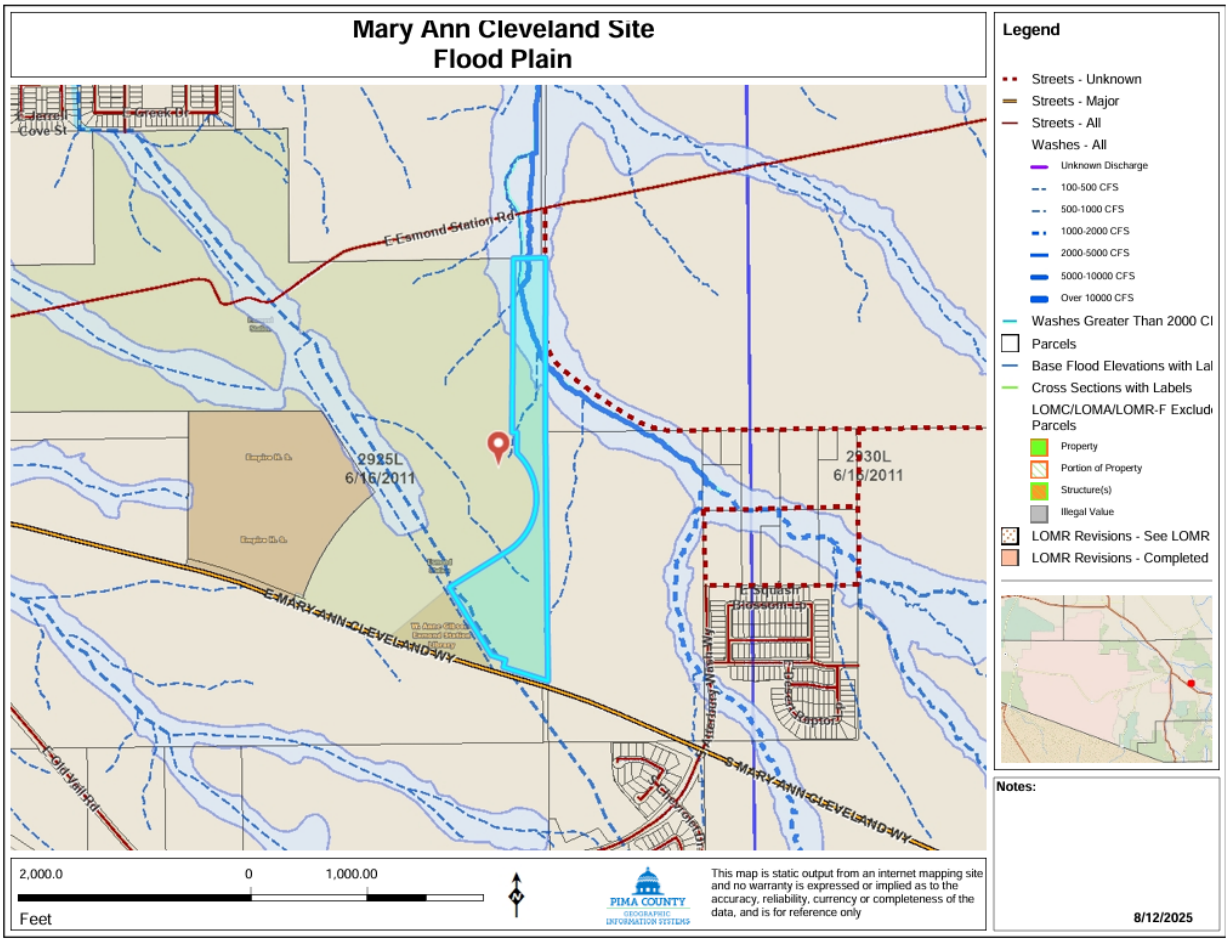


Appendix M, Operating Cost Estimates

St. Rita in the Desert Roman Catholic Church Budget FY25
FY 2025 (Jul 2024 - Jun 2025)

	Accounts	Budget totals 1 Campus		Budget Totals 2 Campuses	Assumptions
Income					
	002 Contributions				
	Total 002 Contributions		$ 438,350.00		
	003 Activity Revenue				
	Total 414200 Restricted Revenues		$ 21,400.00		
	4300 Program Fees				
	Total 4300 Program Fees		$ 7,135.00		
	Total Income		$ 504,085.00	$ 756,825.00	
Expense					
	5100 Administrative Expenses				
	Total 5100 Administrative Expenses		$ 215,979.43		
	5200 Liturgical Expenses	$ -			
	Total 5200 Liturgical Expenses		$ 51,165.00		
	5300 Program Expenses				
	Total 5300 Program Expenses		$ 41,850.00		
	5500 Assessments	$ -			
	Total 5500 Assessments		$ 85,700.00		
	5600 Festival/Loan Interest	$ 15,000.00		$ 15,000.00	
	56741O Festival Expense	$ 15,000.00		$ 15,000.00	
	Total 5600 Festival/Loan Interest		$ 30,000.00		
	5700 Maintenance				
	Total 5700 Maintenance		$ 59,950.00		
	Rectory Furniture				
	Uncategorized Expense	$ -			
	Total Expense		$ 484,644.43	$ 751,275.00	**$ (266,630.57)**

Appendix N, Flood Plain Map



Building Committee Members would like to thank the parishioners for the ability to research and make recommendations for St. Rita in the Desert parish facility needs.

Thomas Carbone

Lee Dotson

Ken Gallagher

Fr. Alonzo Garcia

Valerie Golembiewski

Juan Guerrero

Anne Haywas

Monica Hernandez

Jayme Kahle

Jorge Mata

Tamara Middleton

Leo Miller

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Carol Wagner Williams

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