

St. Francis of Assisi Church

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December 16, 2023

RE: St. Francis Parish South Entrance – All are Welcome!

Dear Parishioners:

This is a transcript of the announcement that was made at the December 16th & 17th weekend masses.

“Some time has passed since the last discussion of our South Entrance access plan project, and we want to give you an update on its status.

We have a proud Parish history. Our ancestors built a legacy, setting the example for what is possible when they built this magnificent House of God. It was designed and built with what was surely a giant leap of faith at the time. Today, we are a strong and vibrant Parish, but we should be questioning as to what we want our legacy to be?

- † We have a need today for a new ADA compliant entrance. We have several Parishioners who are unable to enter our Church, and we want all to have a welcoming atmosphere that enables all people to enter our Church with independence and dignity for prayer and fellowship. We recognize that the need for an accessible entrance will only continue to grow, especially as we all are living longer with the advancement in medicine and fighting debilitating diseases.
- † We want to continue in the footsteps of our ancestors and past St. Francis parishioners. It's important to remember the financial and physical sacrifices they made when building this Church and all the additions since. We want to add a structure we are proud of for generations to come. In keeping with that principle, this beautiful design was created to conform with the beauty of our Church and presented to our Parish.
- † About 1.5 years ago, we secured the Bishop's approval, but prior to moving forward with construction, Parish Leadership paused to carefully assess the financial sources and Parishioner support.
- † In July 2022, every Parish family was invited to participate in a survey to determine the support for this project. The results were very insightful, giving an indication of the thoughts of the Parishioners. 52% of respondents were in full support of the project presented. 30% were in favor of and saw the need for an improved entrance, but had concerns about cost.
- † The survey feedback also included ideas for other options, and those options have been discussed and considered. For example, the north entrance does not allow for accessibility in the form of parking, and also has icing issues in the winter. The front or west side of the Church would require a very long access ramp, resulting in insufficient space to build the ADA compliant ramp. It also would not allow for parking and/or drop off, in addition to completely changing the look of the Church's main entrance.

We recognize that over a year has passed since the survey was conducted, but we felt this project was too large of a commitment to rush into quickly, so a lot of thought and investigation was put into this decision prior to informing the Parish of the ultimate decision.

After much careful and cautious consideration, a final decision has been made, and we will be moving forward with the project as presented. Twelve (12) local contractors will be supplying the labor and materials, and please be assured that estimates were obtained in every instance to make certain that our costs are properly managed.

This will be an amazing and beautiful addition to the Church that our generation and those of the future will be very proud of. And most importantly, it will enable and encourage Mass attendance for the many in need of a more accessible entrance to our Church.

Philippians 2: "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."

We realize that not everyone will completely agree with the design presented, but in the spirit of moving forward and making progress, we have chosen what we think is the best path forward. God calls his people to live in unity with one another, so it is important to make every effort to live together in harmony with everyone. On behalf of the Parish, we sincerely ask each of you for your support, prayers and cooperation as our Parish takes on this brave, bold move for a new ADA accessible entrance, and we will be providing you with periodic updates on the project as it progresses with an anticipated start date in the spring."

Father Dan Friedman & Finance Council Members