

First United Methodist Church of Lakeland
LONG RANGE FACILITIES PLAN: REACHING OUT TOGETHER

Frequently Asked Questions from the Community, rev 2/12/10

Q: How many people attend the church and how many more people are expected? How does that translate into the need for additional parking spaces?

A: Church attendance varies through the seasons of the year from about 1300 to 1800 people each Sunday. It is anticipated that the expanded capacity of the new worship center would over time add 300 to 400 people to the peak attendance period which we measure between 9:30 and 11:00 each Sunday morning. This would translate into an additional parking demand of about 150 more spaces.

Q: What are the anticipated demands on the infrastructure?

A: Minimal in Phase I; primary services will need to be expanded for Phase II
Our new buildings will be energy-efficient, e.g. of a sustainable architecture

Q: What is the earliest that we will see new buildings?

A: If financing were in place today (which it isn't), the earliest building of Phase I could be accomplished in 3 years

Q: Describe the integration of the new buildings in terms of elevation, especially with regard to the new Contemporary Worship Center.

A: We plan to deliver transparency and vitality on the south façade (along Vistabula) and a low profile on the north façade (along Walnut); we will show bulk and size of buildings with massing studies at future community meetings.

Q: Do you plan to show us formal models so we can better understand the size and scope of these buildings?

A: The concept of building a physical model has been discussed only in a preliminary manner. We will be constructing a virtual (computer generated) mass model to assist in the visualization of the new facilities along the Vistabula Street frontage.

Q: Define Phase One Multi-Story Glass Building in terms of height.

A: The Phase One building designed for the corner of Lake Morton and Vistabula is intended to be a three-story building at its highest, which will be 26 feet at the second floor set back to 40 feet at the third floor above lakeside elevation but only about 35 feet above grade to the third floor at the east end near the sanctuary.

Q: Traffic on Vistabula is a great concern and the sound/speed of the traffic already causes neighborhood disturbance. Can the cut-through between Walnut and Vistabula (behind F) be eliminated?

A: Angled parking on the street helps to slow traffic but we understand that it creates less walkability for pedestrians, so after we move the parking inside (angled to our passenger drop-off driveway) the next choices are bricking the streets and using landscape 'thumbs' (like on Johnson / FSC campus) with parallel parking streetside. We acknowledge your concerns about speed bumps adding to the noise.

We can consider eliminating the traffic turnout from our back drive directly onto Vistabula, instead forcing the traffic lakeward, exiting at the main entry to the church.

Q: What is the impact on walkability of the proposed Master Plan?

A: Using landscape 'thumbs' (like on Johnson/FSC campus) with parallel parking along with streetscaping and wide sidewalks are acknowledged as critical to create leisurely walks.

Q: What is the buffer (setback) from Vistabula to the south façade?

A: 20 ft at the narrowest and 55 feet at the widest

Q: The streetscape is what makes a neighborhood work, and much of what the church envisions is a lot of glass and buildings looming over the streets. Won't this block our view and cause the loss of green space?

A: The removal of existing parking and our intent to preserve green space around the proposed buildings will actually increase the amount of green space. As to views, the addition of new buildings will obstruct your view of the present church buildings but the new worship center will be set back from the road farther 25 to 30 feet farther than the home to the east. The proposed children's ministries building will be set back from the street slightly more than the existing administration building. We believe this will better frame the view from Vistabula towards Lake Morton.

Q: How many historic homes could be lost to owner-occupants? Will the historic flavor be kept?

A: We have a variety of means to retain homes and occupants either through re-purposing for our own ministries, the construction of infill housing, or the moving of homes to current parking lots (e.g. along Lime Street). The architecture of the new buildings will complement the iconic sanctuary; although these buildings are not yet designed except in terms of mass, we anticipate that they will feature considerable glass on their facades to capture the transparency we desire. We pledge not to infringe on the quiet enjoyment of living in this beautiful neighborhood.

Q: We appreciate your invitation to give our input and the welcome you have extended. Will you accept our invitation to send a church representative regularly to our neighborhood association meetings?

A: Yes, we will determine a representative that can represent our long-range planning team and church and will be glad to send someone regularly. Thank you for welcoming us, too.

Q: Where would handicapped parking be?

A: Accessible parking will be immediately north of the church and to the south.

Q: Why would you consider building a parking deck? What are the alternatives?

A: The only justification for a parking deck would be if we encounter very high costs for property acquisition to improve pedestrian access to and from the library/museum lot and to augment our close-in senior parking. We are hopeful that our parking needs will be met by full utilization of the existing parking, better access to the 177 spaces that serve the library and museum, similarly improved access to parking to the north at Lake Mirror, and a modest increase in surface parking for our seniors.

Q: It seems the busiest day on campus is Sunday. How much parking would stay unused during other days? Isn't there enough space around Lake Morton to manage the church's anticipated needs for additional parking?

A: Our Wednesday night programs continue to grow and the new multi-purpose worship center will provide more resources for that growth. We believe that the existing on-site church parking will serve the Wednesday night need. And yes, as described above, our intent is to more fully utilize existing parking in the immediate neighborhood by improving the quality of access to that parking.

Q: If the church was able to acquire the portion next to the proposed senior parking lot on Walnut, would that be enough to address the parking needs?

A: That is one option that would satisfy our projected need for more surface parking.

Q: What if the church doesn't get enough parking spaces through acquisition and/or relocation of homes?

A: Again, our need for additional surface parking is not great and the bulk of our parking need will be met by utilizing existing nearby parking facilities.