

APPENDIX B: CRITERIA FOR LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF PARISHES WITHIN THE ARCHDIOCESE

Parishes are a primary means of developing a communion of faith, hope, and love among the faithful in our local Church. Under the Strategic Plan, all parishes are called into greater collaboration. Identification of the criteria of long-term parish viability in the areas of communion, mission, administration, and relationship to the local Church help us in discerning how to utilize best our collective gifts in living out the mission of the Church at both the parish and the archdiocesan level. The Archdiocese has identified the following areas of criteria for long-term viability of parishes:

Communion – A viable parish celebrates engaging liturgy, meets the sacramental needs of the faithful, offers faith formation opportunities for all ages, provides compassionate pastoral care, and utilizes the time, talent, and treasure of its lay members in support of parish life and the local Church.

- Explicit connections with and support of the local Church of the Archdiocese and the universal Church
- Reverent, engaging liturgy and music
- Well attended liturgies (most weekend liturgies are more than two-thirds full)
- Appropriate number of priests and deacons available to administer the sacraments
- Quality, comprehensive, life-long faith formation and education
- Compassionate pastoral care for the sick, the dying, the grieving, and others in need
- Significant lay participation in support of parish life and the local Church
- Intentional means of ensuring ministries meet the needs of the faithful and the local Church

Mission – A viable parish makes the name of Jesus Christ known and loved by all through acts of charity, social justice, outreach, and evangelization.

- Various programs and services complementing the sacramental offerings
- Conscious efforts to spread the Gospel and strengthen our communion through evangelization
- Significant number of parishioners engaged in outreach, charity, and social justice
- Responsiveness to the pastoral needs of the wider community in which the parish exists

Administration – A viable parish is a good steward of the gifts God provides, as well as the contributions of parishioners. This good stewardship entails living within the means of the parish, adherence to sound administrative and finance practices, competent leaders and staff, and a vision for the future.

- Full compliance with archdiocesan policies and procedures
- Active finance council that helps analyze current and future financial trends
- Active advisory councils, especially a pastoral council
- Competent leaders and trained, qualified paid staff and volunteers
- Just compensation for employees
- Regular supervision and annual evaluation of all employees
- Consistent payment of financial obligations, including: regular operating expenses; insurance premiums; contribution to all employee benefit and retirement funds; archdiocesan assessments; maintenance and capital needs; and appropriate accruals for the servicing of existing debt
- Reliable mechanisms for developing, implementing, and monitoring balanced budgets that: maintain sufficient reserve funds; contribute to a capital improvement fund for the long-term upkeep of facilities; and the ability to adjust operations if trends in actual income and/or expenses do not meet the original budget projections
- Accurate record-keeping and timely reporting

Relationship to the Local Church – A viable parish intentionally cooperates with other parishes to create a cohesive fabric of ministry in the Archdiocese in order to more effectively live out the mission of the Church.

- Decisions about the locations for and types of ministries offered reflect: comprehensive ministry availability in an area without unnecessarily duplicating services; sensitivities to cultural needs; and demographic trends, including a community's age structure, ethnicities, total population, Catholicity, poverty index, and disposable incomes