



Feasibility Report Summary, October 2024

Once the officers of the church became convicted that it was time to begin looking into solving some of our space challenges, it became apparent that we faced several unknowns. To help us navigate these unknowns, we decided to seek outside help. After contacting different consulting companies about a feasibility study for a building expansion, the Session decided to partner with the Canaan Group due to their strong connections to and history with our denomination.

The Canaan Group then did the following:

1. Conducted an introductory series of meetings to understand the scope of the proposed project and to assist the Site Plan committee with creating a background statement document for the project to be tested with the congregants and leaders of the church.
2. Performed face-to-face interviews with key leaders of the church and later select members and givers to Sycamore, along with an electronic survey for the rest of the congregation's feedback.
3. Gathered and assembled all data from interviews and survey responses, along with meetings with the committee.
4. Held weekly leadership meetings to discuss progress and address challenges.
5. Wrote and presented an extensive report to the session with their recommendations for how to move forward as a church in a potential capital campaign to meet the current needs and goals.



NATURE OF A POSSIBLE CAMPAIGN

In order to address the tangible challenges, especially relating to our church facilities, Sycamore leadership has identified three project phases that we propose to pursue in the next several years.

1. Education and Classroom Space: We aim to pursue the renovation of existing spaces, and the possibility of a new structure consisting of classrooms and an office suite to accommodate our growing staff and leadership teams.
2. Children's Space: The current infant and toddler nursery space, along with the children's ministry space, will be fully renovated to be an accommodating and inviting facility for our many children, including aesthetics, space improvement, and security features.
3. Sanctuary Space: We aim to build a new, dedicated worship space to accommodate our growing congregation. Just as importantly, this will allow our currency sanctuary, which was never intended to be our long-term worship space, to be used as a dedicated fellowship hall for gatherings, education, and many other uses.

METHODOLOGY

After outlining our goals and priorities, a Feasibility Study Questionnaire was then created to gather information by gauging general impressions on the campaign, its purposes and planned course of action, as well as on Sycamore as a whole. We received feedback from 107 families. The reactions to a potential campaign are hopeful and enthusiastic.

CURRENT OUTLOOK

Interviewees were overwhelmingly positive in their feedback on the life of the church. There is also great excitement for what these projects represent in growth opportunity for the church. The general perceptions on the life of the church among the survey respondents are very positive. The congregation is excited about the direction of the church, and enthusiastic about its vision to grow both internally and in the community.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS

Interviewees repeatedly cited worship services and small groups as two highlights of Sycamore's church life. Specifically, worship services are Scripture-focused, reverent, and organized, while small groups are viewed as the primary way that congregants fellowship with each other and encourage one another.

Adult education is a strength of the church in terms of its content and quality; however, many feel that there is room for growth in the breadth of teachers, topics, and availability, all of which are limited by a lack of space.

CONFIDENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Interviewees cited a high level of assurance that leadership is operating from a position of humility, wisdom, and care for the church's ministry and resources.

STRENGTHS

When asked to zero in on the one thing they would highlight as something Sycamore does exceptionally well, interviewees noted the following, in order of priority:

- Scripture-centered and truthful preaching and teaching
- Fellowship/community, particularly: caring for people in need/crisis
- Welcoming newcomers/hospitality
- Outreach
- Sunday morning worship/music

CHALLENGES

When asked to cite their largest perceived challenge facing the church, interviewees cited:

- Lack of space/"landlocked" property limiting growth
- Aging facilities
- Ministering to younger generation and getting them involved
- Managing growth
- External culture
- Finances
- Outreach struggling to keep up with area growth

PRIORITIES

When asked to prioritize the three proposed facilities projects, there was significant consensus that the Children's Space is the highest priority, the Education & Classroom Space is the second highest priority, and the Sanctuary Space was the third highest priority.

PERCEIVED FEASIBILITY

Among interviewees, \$3-\$4 million was the most often cited range of an "ambitious but doable" fundraising initiative, with some responding more ambitiously, and others more conservatively.

DEBT?

The majority (approximately 80%) are comfortable seeing the church take on some level of responsible mortgage debt as a part of a facilities initiative. Approximately 20% cited they would prefer to see the project completed without taking debt.

PROJECT SUPPORT

There is unity in the church that the facilities need to be addressed to accommodate growth. In addition, there is general agreement that the three project components proposed are the appropriate points of focus—albeit perhaps not all at once, nor immediately.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sycamore leadership has the trust and good of the congregation, along with a recognition of current space availability being a limit on ministry priorities. It would be prudent to move forward with a building campaign that prioritizes the children's space and classroom space as a first phase.

- There is plenty of bandwidth for worship space on Sunday mornings. Though the second service is cited to be nearing capacity, the first service is nowhere near it. With some encouragement, and possible adjustments to service times or other logistics, a balancing of attendance across the two services would alleviate this issue in the short term.

- Among those most involved in church ministries, in oversight or volunteer capacities, the children's and education space are where the most acute pain points exist.

- These components will be likely the most vital in retention of new visitors, especially young adults and families.

- The project costs of these two projects will be manageable compared to a new sanctuary building, and likely doable as a first phase.