

Phase 2: Local Area Plan Report Form

To be completed by the Local Planning Area Facilitators.

E-mail completed report to the Office of Pastoral Planning: eneu@richmonddiocese.org by **May 31, 2008**.

A copy of this form can be downloaded from the Diocesan website

www.richmonddiocese.org/PlanningGuidelines.pdf

1. Local Planning Area: 1
2. Name of person completing this report: Jeff Foster
Phone # and e-mail address: 757-477-9223, Jeffrey.foster@cox.net
3. Describe staffing allocation changes to accommodate the reduction or increase of active priests for your local planning area in the next 5 years. Include the names of parishes that will be clustered and the model selected (reference a model included under "Cluster Models" page 29 or describe a model that your Local Planning Committee developed).

Representatives of the parishes of Local Planning Area 1 were unable to reach consensus as defined for us by the Planning Guidelines, i.e. everyone agreeing to a plan or at least being able to live with it. Following are three plans to be considered by the Planning Commission:

Model 1

The six parishes of Norfolk are divided into three pairs. Each pair has a priest. A fourth priest is shared by the six parishes.

Blessed Sacrament pairs with Christ the King

Sacred Heart pairs with Basilica of St. Mary

St. Pius X pairs with Holy Trinity

This model is supported by Holy Trinity and St. Pius X. Sacred Heart would support Model 1 if necessary (but prefers Model 2).

Model 2

The six parishes of Norfolk are divided into two groups of three with each group sharing two priests.

Basilica of St. Mary, Christ the King, and St. Pius X share two priests.

Sacred Heart, Blessed Sacrament, and Holy Trinity share two priests.

This model is supported by Basilica of St. Mary, Sacred Heart, Christ the King, and the Campus Minister from ODU.

Model 3

Two of the six parishes stand alone. The other four form two pairs.

Blessed Sacrament has one priest.

St. Pius X has one priest.

Sacred Heart and Basilica of St. Mary share a priest.

Christ the King and Holy Trinity share a priest.

This model is supported by Blessed Sacrament.

4. Describe other changes that are needed to support the staffing changes proposed.

There is a suggestion that the Planning Area begin to look at regional staff members (e.g. Youth Ministry, Adult Formation, etc.). The group did not have time to explore this possibility.

It should be noted that the campus minister for EVMS will not be replaced and this ministry will fall to the priests and parishes of the LPA.

5. Describe other recommendations that will help parishes in your Local Planning Area provide better services and ministries through inter-parish collaboration.

There has been an initial attempt at meetings among the parishes to dialogue about collaboration in the region. Not all parishes were able to attend. The planning group is committed to future meetings to explore these opportunities.

The group sees a need for the parishes to work together prior to the implementation of any of the plans that reduce the number of priests in Norfolk. The representatives expressed concern that the process focused first on assignment of priests and not on the development of communities and collaborative ministry would make possible a smoother transition when the number of priests in the city is reduced.

Some expressed the need for the priests of Norfolk to be replaced by new personalities when implementation of the plan begins. Priests assigned to pairs or clusters of parishes must be chosen carefully, fully weighing the specific gifts they are able to bring to the increased demands of this type of arrangement.

6. If your Local Planning Committee did not reach consensus on these recommendations, please describe how closer your group is to consensus and explain the minority position and/or points of disagreement.

No model is supported by a majority of the parish participants. As described above, two parishes support Model 1, three parishes (plus ODU) support Model 2, while one parish supports Model 3.

The group had difficulty making decisions based on the data provided, noting that it was out of date, too narrowly focused, or not complete.

After agreeing that the decision of priest allocation should be based on the number of parishioners attending Mass – instead of the number of registered parishioners – it was noted that the reduction from six priests to four would not be possible. The current distribution of parishioners among the six parishes cannot be served by 12 Masses (3 for each priest) without one or more parishes reducing its weekend schedule to one Mass. The severe financial consequences of such a change would cripple the parishes forced to reduce weekend Masses to a single celebration.

With that in mind, those in favor of Model 2 support it because it allows for two Masses at each parish each weekend and they recognize the need for all the parishes to share the burden of the declining number of priests.

There was a brief discussion of the expansion of current facilities to accommodate more parishioners. Although none of the parishes saw this as a real or immediate solution, there is opportunity for exploring this possibility in some of the parishes. Most, however, would not be able to expand.

7. Please include any other information that will assist the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Commission in evaluating your Local Plan (i.e. support by parish leadership, special challenges, etc.).

The representatives feel that clustering parishes in Norfolk is not ideal. However, they do see value in working together.

Representatives from Basilica of St. Mary want to ensure the continuation of the African-American culture in that parish and note its value for Norfolk and the surrounding area. The presence of a growing Hispanic community in Norfolk will be a significant factor in the ministry of the parishes. Currently this community is served by Holy Trinity.

Map Showing Inter-Parish Collaboration for LPA 1

