

St. Luke Church Master Plan Implementation Team Report



While we must report that there have been twists and turns at each and every decision point, we are pleased to report that we are moving forward with focus and confidence.

A major focus of our work has been the street vacating and this will be our primary focus until we have a resolution for this part of Stage One.

Since last August we have reviewed various pedestrian path options that allow us to retain the Vermont House. As we have moved from the master plan phase of the project into design development for Stage One we have discovered additional complications, mostly related to building code requirements that must be met in the renovation work on our current facility. Some creative solutions are emerging. Based on this new information, we are reallocating the Stage One budget and priorities list and are looking forward to sharing this information with you as soon as it is available.

Currently, we are working on an amendment to the ordinance and examining cost estimates for an option with additional considerations that has the potential to tremendously benefit St. Luke and the entire neighborhood. We are working closely with the City of Portland, and if costs and other considerations show a value for St. Luke, we may choose to amend the existing street vacating ordinance.

Our goal is to have our recommended written plan for the St. Luke Council in the next few weeks. You are invited to a June 1st MPIT Update meeting and there is a possibility we will need a special congregational meeting during the summer to keep this work in process with the City of Portland. This approach will allow us to reach several significant milestones such as the ability to apply for building permits by January 2015.

We have hired dedicated professional planning support to help us to refine our civil engineering and architectural plans for our property projects as well as our meetings with the City of Portland. Our team now includes the Bookin Group (TBG) for working through the Ordinance conditions and several Conditional Use processes, William Wilson Architects (WWA) for design, PBS Engineering + Environmental for civil engineering and Ferguson Land Surveying for surveying and lot consolidation. Each service provider has a contract for defined tasks and specific areas of expertise to support Stage One of our Master Plan.

Chris Hagerman of The Bookin Group, LLC provides this summary of the status of this project: As mentioned above, there are multiple moving parts to St. Luke's plans. The vacating of SW 46th comes with the condition of providing pedestrian paths in keeping with Portland's requirements to increase pedestrian connectivity and access. Given the difficulty of meeting this requirement, the Portland Bureau of Transportation has proposed alternative conditions that would provide greater public benefits while potentially simplifying the process for St. Luke in completing the vacation and planning for future development. The technical consultants are working with the MPIT and City staff to determine if this alternative can meet with approval by both the congregation and City Council.

At the same time, St. Luke will need to pursue Land Use approval through a Conditional Use review to accommodate the changes in the church's site that will result from the completion of the vacation as well as proposed changes to the church building itself and reconfiguration of parking lots and access points. Wrapped up in these two major projects are ongoing discussions related to rationalizing underground utilities, configuring property in St. Luke's best interest, and maintaining open and clear communication about evolving plans with the congregation, neighbors and the wider community. Accountability is very important to us. We are carefully keeping track of the resources provided by your generous contributions.

