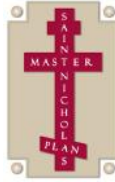




SAINT NICHOLAS MASTER PLAN BACKGROUND REPORT

PREPARED BY AND FOR THE PARISHIONERS
OF ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
GREENWOOD, VIRGINIA

JUNE 21, 2013



ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH MASTER PLAN SUMMARY & BACKGROUND REPORT

Greenwood, Virginia
June 21, 2013

The Board and Parishioners of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Background	3
Affirmed Vision Statement	4
Major Milestones of the Process	8
Positive Results of the Master Plan Process (Conclusion)	19
Appendices	20

This report summarizes the process and the results of the St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, undertaken January through May 2013 by the parishioners of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church (a Parish of the Eastern Eparchy - Ukrainian Church of the USA [Ecumenical Patriarchate]), located in Greenwood, Virginia. It includes the affirmed Vision Statement as well as supporting documentation developed by the parish members who participated in the Master Plan Workshops and a Master Plan Survey.

The parishioners of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church created this Vision through their discussions at four workshops designed to focus on the future of the Parish. The Master Plan Process was initiated by the Parish Board with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony. Facilitation of meetings, technical assistance and preparation of this report was provided by Vladimir Gavrilovic and Karen Gavrilovic, who are parish members and professional community planners.

This report was affirmed for submission to the Metropolitan by the Parish Board on June 15, 2013, and affirmed by the Parish at a full parish meeting on _____, after receiving the blessing of Metropolitan Antony on _____.

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10

Introduction and Background

The St. Nicholas Master Plan was initiated by the Parish Board, with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Antony (then Metropolitan-Elect), on December 2, 2012. The Master Plan process and workshops were undertaken in order to discern God's will for the spiritual and physical growth of the parish, to better focus our efforts to fulfill His will through a shared vision for the future, and to provide a solid foundation for decisions and actions that will ensure harmony in the near term as we work toward that long term shared vision.

The Vision Statement included herein is the first significant product of the Master Plan process. The Vision is intended to be a broadly supported, compelling statement of how we as a parish hope to foster and further our spiritual mission over the next 50 years. It was developed and refined by parishioners of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church over a series of four special workshops conducted between January and May 2013.

With the blessing of the His Eminence, Metropolitan Antony, members of St. Nicholas Parish Board will work with clergy, lay leaders and parish members to implement the Vision through our service groups, and through special committees as appropriate.



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church is visited by His Eminence, Metropolitan-Elect Antony on December 2, 2012
(Photo Courtesy of the UOC of the USA)



VISION ELEMENTS BY TOPIC:

Spiritual - Our Mission (Worship and Outreach)

Liturgy and Worship

- ❖ The parish is thriving with multiple clergy, cared for with adequate compensation and housing, to serve an expanded parish; and yet the same spirit of family and fellowship with which St. Nicholas was founded has been retained.
- ❖ The liturgical and spiritual life of the parish and its parishioners continues to grow, “from Glory to Glory” while holding true to the Orthodox Christian way and the teachings of the Gospel.
- ❖ The parish continues to foster “spiritual progeny” by nurturing future deacons, priests and pious laity for generations and generations.
- ❖ The parish has close ties to the consistory and both sponsors and is served by seminarians from St. Sophia Seminary and other Orthodox seminaries.

Formation, Fellowship and Evangelization

- ❖ The core spirit of friendliness and the family-like bonds among parishioners have been maintained despite growth and change over the years.
- ❖ The parish is truly diverse and welcoming of all Orthodox believers and visitors, and includes all ages, ethnicities and races, treating all as authentic images of Christ.
- ❖ The vibrant life of the parish, its authentic Gospel witness and its outreach work have made St. Nicholas so well known in the region that people seek it out and it is at the center of a growing movement of Orthodox conversions.
- ❖ Saint Nicholas supports and works in conjunction with Orthodox Christian educational institutions such as schools, universities, seminaries, etc.
- ❖ Saint Nicholas has become a catalyst for greater pan Orthodox unity by reaching out and sharing ministries and liturgical celebrations with all Orthodox parishes, missions and monasteries in central Virginia, within the canonical norms of Orthodoxy.
- ❖ The annual parish retreat and pilgrimages are a valuable ministry of evangelization, with both faithful and seekers gathering together each year to participate and be renewed.



Charity and Outreach

- ❖ St. Nicholas has a thriving charity ministry that is anchored both through the serving of the needy in and around the parish home, and of those in the areas of Virginia that are hardest hit by poverty, such as Southwest Virginia. This charitable work extends holistically to both spiritual and material needs, including emotional, spiritual and psychological needs, and to the protection of the sanctity of life.
- ❖ St. Nicholas supports Orthodox Christian facilities that serve the needs of established populations in Central Virginia, such as the elderly, monastics, etc.
- ❖ St. Nicholas further supports a wider ministry of charity outreach to the needy outside this area and in the world at large.

Physical - Our Home (Church Building & Grounds)

Grounds:

- ❖ The church grounds are home to a complex of buildings that include:
 - New church building or major reconfiguration/expansion of the existing Church worship space.
 - Parish support facilities, e.g. Social Hall
 - Guest quarters
- ❖ The grounds have been improved with a number of amenities, including:
 - Additional parking
 - Outdoor chapel
 - Baptistry
 - Recreational area and playground
 - Garden for local products (bees, vineyard, etc.)
 - Landscaped walks and meditation trail and
 - Cemetery

Buildings:

- ❖ The new church building is a beautiful and traditional structure that has been built to embody the following features:
 - Traditional Orthodox church architecture
 - A beautiful exterior dome and cross that can be seen from a great distance



- Excellent acoustics, a traditional but functional floor plan and a decorated nave/sanctuary space that are a fitting witness to our faith
 - Hand painted icons on all the walls according to a correct Orthodox iconographic schema
 - Suitable confession area and area for relics
- ❖ A church hall constructed to complement the church which includes the following features:
- Facilities that allow our ministries to flourish, including library, bookstore, kitchen and hall for social gatherings, offices, classrooms and meeting rooms

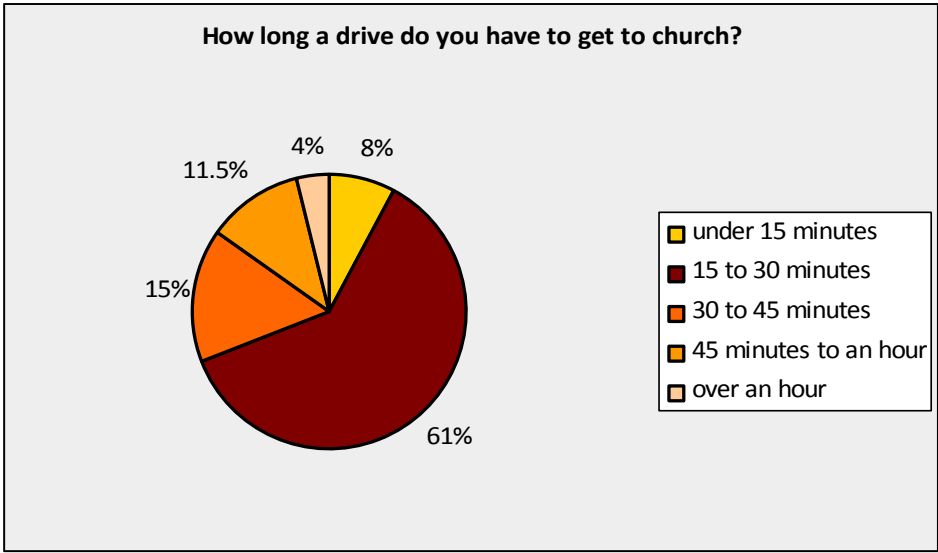
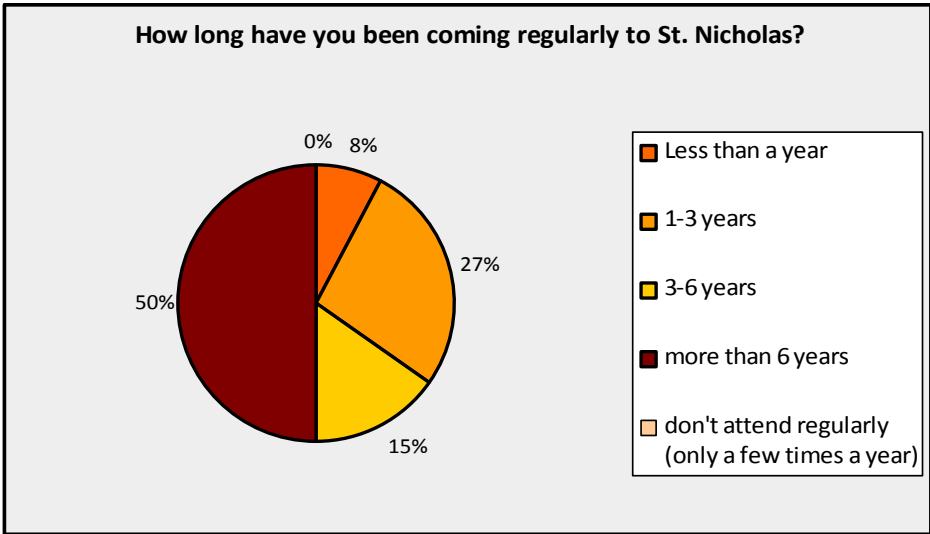
Land Acquisition:

- ❖ The church paid off its first mortgage before the 2030 maturity date.
- ❖ Early on, the parish foresaw the need for additional land to realize its vision and acquired additional property sufficient for all anticipated parish needs for the very long term.



Master Plan workshops, and provided an opportunity for everyone to participate in the process, even if they were unable to attend a meeting. The full results of the Survey are included in Appendix A and summarized briefly below.

The background questions indicated, among other things, that 50% of the 26 survey respondents have been attending St. Nicholas for 6 or more years and that approximately two-thirds of respondents drive between 15 and 30 minutes to get to church.

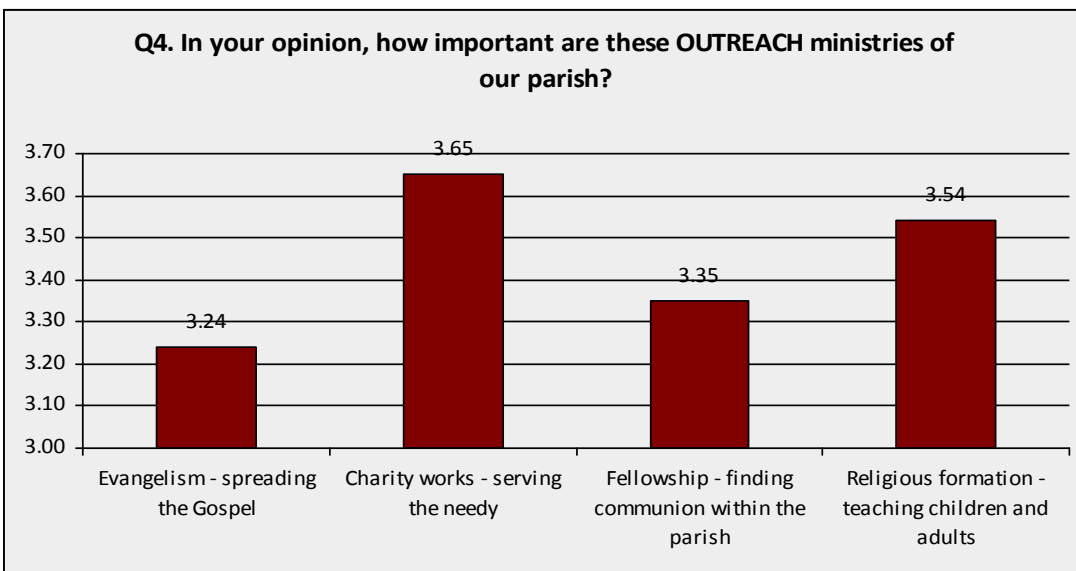
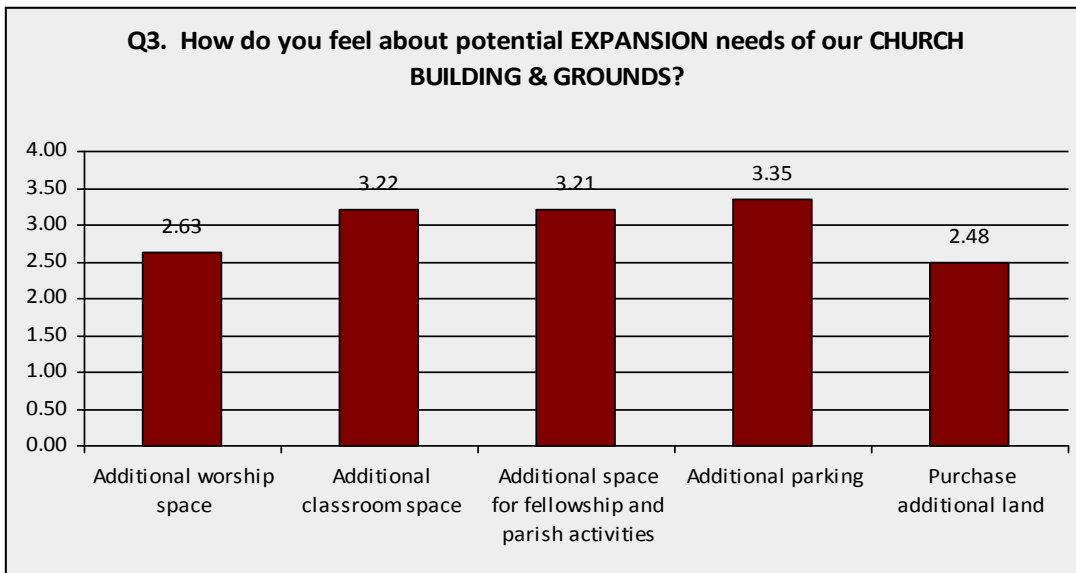


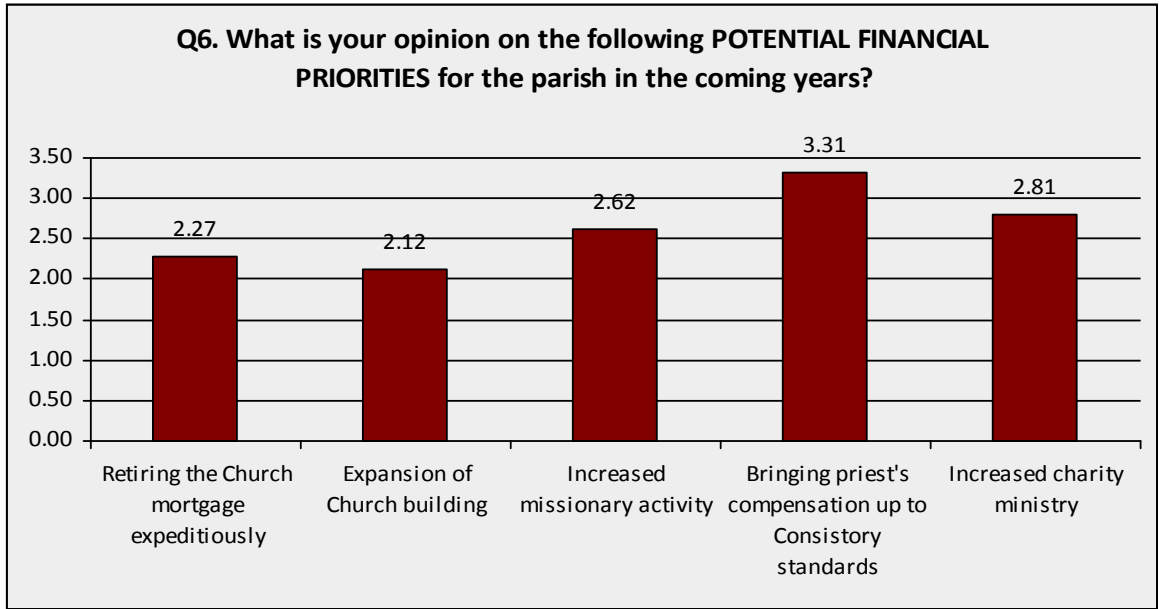
Parking, additional classroom space and additional fellowship space edged out additional worship space and the acquisition of additional land on a question that asked survey takers to assess potential expansion priorities. On a question about potential financial priorities for the future, over 85% of respondents expressed general or strong agreement about raising our



priest's compensation up to Consistory standards. There was general to strong agreement that all of our outreach ministries (evangelism, charitable works, fellowship and religious formation) are important but serving the needy and teaching children and adults were identified as "extremely important" by 65% and 58%, respectively, of parishioners who took the survey.

The following charts depict more detailed responses to survey questions 3, 4, and 5, summarized above. Respondents were offered four answer choices expressing varying degrees of support for an idea or issue; they were also allowed to write in additional comments or thoughts. In the charts below, the higher the number at the top of the bar, the greater degree of support there was for a particular item/concept.





The final four questions on the survey were open ended and yielded a variety of individual responses but reflected several common themes. The questions were:

- What are some CURRENT STRENGTHS of our parish that you would like to either see maintained or developed in the immediate future?
- What parish PROBLEMS OR ISSUES concern you CURRENTLY?
- What DIFFICULTIES OR CHALLENGES do you see ahead for our parish IN THE NEXT DECADE OR TWO?
- What single church EXPERIENCE or ACCOMPLISHMENT stands out in your mind as particularly significant?
- What service or outreach OPPORTUNITIES would you like the parish to focus on in the future?

Since there was a great deal of overlap between the responses to these questions, and the responses to similar questions posed during Master Plan Workshop One, these survey results will be discussed as part of the Workshop One summary.



Workshop One: Where Are We Now?

On January 25, 2013, over 25 parish members participated in the first Master Plan Workshop to begin discussions about the future by focusing on the first of three questions that provided a framework for the Master Plan Process – "Where Are We Now?" The meeting began with a summary of the purpose of a master plan and sample vision statements and action steps. The phrase "*Parish or Perish*" summed up the presentation meaning that it is the responsibility of this generation to lay a foundation for the next and to uphold the legacy of the parish founders by ensuring that the parish survives and thrives as it carries out the "Master's Plan."

Pani Matka Christine Holet shared images and stories about how the parish evolved over its first 15 years, in effect answering the question "Where Have We Been?" Her remarks made it clear that the Lord was present from the very beginning and as the parish grew spiritually and physically. Following a presentation of the results of the December survey, parishioners broke into two groups to focus on identifying the current strengths and weaknesses of the parish as well as opportunities and threats that may be encountered in the future. Each group developed a list of Strengths/ Opportunities for the parish to build on and a list of Weaknesses/Threats that present challenges.

Among the strengths identified in both the pre-workshop survey and by workshop participants was the dedication and service of Father Robert Holet and Pani Christine Holet, a strong sense of community and fellowship, and a welcoming atmosphere and sound spiritual foundation. Parishioners also viewed charitable giving efforts as a strength and an opportunity for continued outreach. This "word cloud"



provides a visual summary of the strengths identified by church members who participated in the written survey. The larger the word, the more often it appeared in written responses to Survey Question 6 which asked "What are the current strengths of the parish...." There was significant overlap between the survey results and the thoughts expressed at the workshop.

Weaknesses and threats that were common among the two workshop groups and survey takers focused on the burden of too much work on too few people (especially Father Robert and Pani



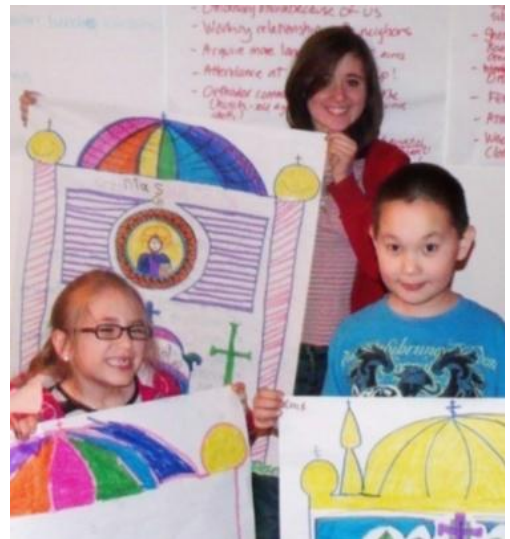
Christine) and loss of continuity and organizational structure because of the transient nature of the parish. Participants also had concerns about financial matters such as the priest's compensation and a lack of understanding about tithing and stewardship, as well as worries about secular influences and lack of individual spiritual initiative.

At the end of the meeting, workshop participants used sticky dots to rank the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities generated by each group. The lists of strengths and weaknesses developed by each group are included in Appendix B, along with numeric notations of the dot voting. The top vote getters from each category are summarized below; similar ideas from the two groups were combined to create the final list. These results were used to begin to identify themes that became organizing principles for subsequent workshops and the Vision Statement.

<i>Strengths to Build On & Opportunities for the Future</i>	<i>Weaknesses to Address & Threats to Consider</i>
❖ Tithing of church to charity (9)	❖ Burnout & loss of continuity (8)
❖ Religious Education at all levels – adult, youth, inquirer/ <u>Organized</u> Inquiry process (9)	❖ Individuals who don't understand stewardship/tithing and Imbalance of Tithing – what if big donors leave? (8)
❖ Friendliness/Trust/ Cooperative Spirit (8)	❖ Workload burden on too few people (7)
❖ Welcoming Spirit/Welcoming (6)	❖ World outside/secularism (7)
❖ Diversity - converts and cradle, all ages, talents (6)	❖ Church has mortgage (6)
❖ Full Time Priest (5)	❖ Administrative duties fall to Pani/Father (5)
❖ Integrity of Orthodox Faith – not watered down (5)	❖ Priest's compensation not up to par (5)
❖ Service Group Model/ Shared leadership (4)	❖ Lack of spiritual initiative of some could hurt us (5)
❖ Gift of the liturgy to us and the world (4)	❖ No deacon (4)
	❖ Non-liturgy attendance (vespers/matins/feast days) (4)

Workshop Two: Where Do We Want to Be?

On March 5, 2013, the Second Master Plan Workshop was held in the church social hall. This session focused on the question "Where Do We Want To Be?" About 25 parishioners attended the workshop and developed some very thoughtful (and very interesting) ideas about the church's shared future in terms of both spiritual and physical growth. Pani Matka Christine set the stage with Part II of "Where Have We Been?" by showing slides and describing the leap of faith and financial commitment required to purchase and renovate the current church property.



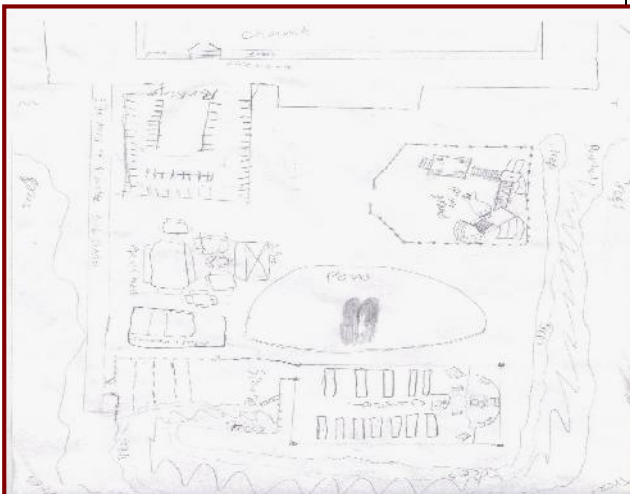
Before breaking out into smaller groups, the results of the previous workshop were summarized. In addition to highlighting key themes that emerged from the SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Threats/Opportunities) exercise, there was an opportunity to brainstorm about how to temporarily put aside constraints and think big and very long term – 50 or even 100 years into the future. The remainder of the evening centered on a series of questions designed to spur the imagination and to consider a future without limitations. Workshop participants divided into two groups to discuss the mission of church over the next 30 to 50 years and what kind of church home would be needed to carry out the church's spiritual mission. Church members used their thinking caps to envision a time when they might arrive at church by jetpack! Even the youth of the Parish participated by sharing their visions for the future which were both insightful and colorful.

After the small group breakout exercises, parishioners reconvened to share their visions for the future. Gold domes, multiple priests and deacons, a parish house and monastery were among several ideas that surfaced. The children proposed an interesting line-up of future priests (male and female) grown from our own parish. The options ranged widely from really big picture items, like unification with Catholic Church, to ones very much within our immediate reach, like adding a safe outdoor play area for our children, which made selecting priorities a challenge.

Voting with dots once again, participants placed dots on items related to OUR HOME, the physical elements of the parish, and OUR MISSION, the spiritual endeavors of the parish. Top priorities in each category are listed below; similar ideas from the two groups were combined to create the summary list below. The full list of ideas, including those of the parish youth, is included in Appendix B. These concepts were incorporated into the Vision Statement that was introduced in Workshop Three.

SAINT NICHOLAS CHURCH 50 YEARS IN THE FUTURE

<i>OUR HOME (physical)</i>	<i>OUR MISSION (spiritual)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Newly Built Traditional church with dome, bell tower, church hall (11) ❖ Full iconographic presentation in church (presumes Dome), frescos (10) ❖ Courtyard with water feature, baptismal pool, permanent Baptismal Facility/Baptistry (7) ❖ Bookstore and Coffee Shop (7) ❖ Parish and people growing in faith and spiritual maturity (5) ❖ Orthodox Cemetery with regular prayers (4) ❖ Guest Rooms for Travelers (4) ❖ More classroom space – school building (4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Two priests, three deacons, six sub-deacons; thriving lay server ministry (9) ❖ Our outreach ministry is thriving – people seek us out (6) ❖ Supporting seminarians – they serve here and we support them (5) ❖ Orthodox nursing home/assisted living (5) ❖ Attendance at all services is up! (5) ❖ St. Nicholas has fostered a series of satellite churches anchored by large church (4) ❖ Annual Parish Pilgrimage (4)



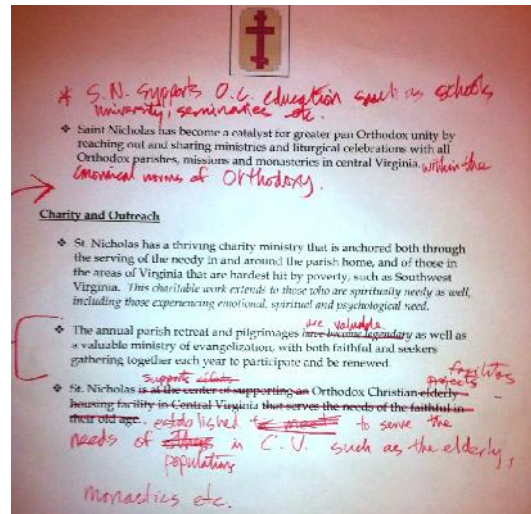
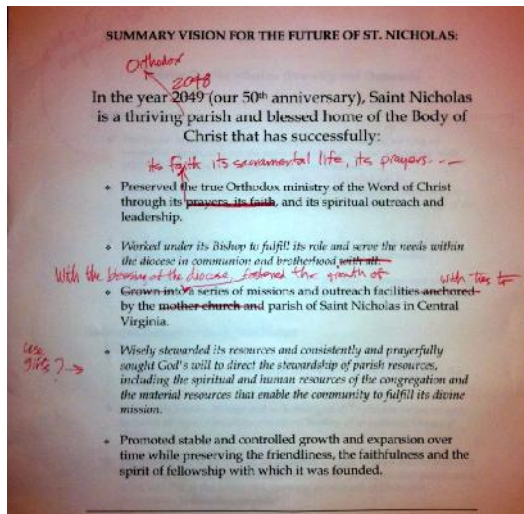
Plan for St. Nicholas Church by Gregory Brogan, age 10.

Workshop Three: Our Shared Vision

April 23, 2013 was a night for translating grand ideas into a shared Vision for the Future. Approximately 25 parish members spent the evening previewing and parsing a Draft Vision Statement based on the survey results and Workshops One and Two. The following draft vision was distributed before the Work Session to give everyone an opportunity to participate even if they were unable to attend in person.

The Draft Vision was a first effort to capture the comments and statements from the first two parish work sessions and the thoughts expressed in survey comments. All comments were considered but more weight was given to those ideas/themes that recurred most frequently or had the most dot votes. The Vision, by its nature, is intended to be somewhat general so very specific comments were grouped within or fall under a larger theme.

Meeting participants were asked to approach the draft vision statement with the idea that although it may not be expressed in the exact words that a given participant might choose, the ideas that it contains should generally be those that everyone can support. Church members were asked not "Is this the correct wording?", but, "Can I generally support this idea or concept?" Finding the right tone and spirit to express the concepts of the shared Vision appropriately took the better part of the evening. The draft Vision statement is included in Appendix B of this document but, the evening's activities can be summed up in the pictures below:



Parishioners voted to generally support the Vision statement as amended and to reconsider it at a subsequent workshop. The evening ended with a review of an aerial map of the church property and a discussion of potential development constraints such as floodplain areas, steep slopes, and zoning regulations.

Workshop Four: How Do We Get There?

The final Master Plan Workshop was held on May 21, 2013. About 20 parishioners came out to review and affirm the revised Draft Vision Statement and to brainstorm practical ways (financial, administrative and spiritual) to achieve that vision. After a few additional refinements, the group affirmed the draft Vision Statement. The remainder of the session focused on the question "How Do We Get There?"

The purpose of the final meeting was to develop a series of potential next steps that the parish and Parish Board would use as a guide for spiritual endeavors and physical improvements over the next year to fifteen years. The group participated in a roundtable discussion to generate ideas for actions the parish could undertake in the coming months and years to realize its mission through service groups, the Parish Board and special committees as appropriate. Parishioners also put pen to paper, marking up an aerial map of possible physical improvements to the church property.



For the final time, with smiles of relief or accomplishment or both, parishioners used dots to assess proposed actions. Green dots were used to indicate a short term (less than one year) priority item and blue dots were used for medium term (more than one year but less than five) priorities. Dots were applied to the written comments and to the marked up map. The list of all proposed actions and their ratings is included in Appendix B. The top short and mid-range priorities

chosen by workshop participants are listed below. The entire list was forwarded to the Parish Board for initial review at their meeting on June 15, 2012. The list of potential actions developed at the final workshop along with other recommendations from the workshops and survey will be refined over the coming weeks and months to develop a final Action Plan.



ACTION PRIORITIES (Draft from Workshop Four)

Short Term Priorities (Less than 1 year)

- Within 12 months, raise stewardship participation by 25% with a goal of 50% or higher participating (G-8)
- Identify ways to keep our youth in fellowship with other Orthodox youth; "Build our Bench" and carry that message home – "make our home a mirror of the church" (G-6, B-1)
- Improve service group communication/information (G-5)
- Additional parking in back (G-5)

Medium Term Priorities (1 to 5 years)

- Hire an engineering firm to write an RFP for the purpose of determining wastewater treatment capacity and to explore all options for treatment within state limits (B-10)
- Acquire additional land (B-8)
- Ordain a deacon or deacons to serve our church (B-6)
- Building expansion/new wing at back (B-4, G-1)



Appendices

Appendix A - Survey Results

Appendix B - Workshop Summaries with Group Results

Appendix C - Power Point Presentations/Handouts