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Determining Rural Church Growth and Sustainability Based on Population Trends and Outreach

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Consultancy Project & Report

Organization:	Gardner-Webb University College of Education
Project Title:	DETERMINING RURAL CHURCH GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY BASED ON POPULATION TRENDS AND OUTREACH
Candidate:	Kimberly Ford
Consultancy Coach:	Dr. Elizabeth Jones
Defense Date:	October 25, 2022
Authorized by:	Phillip Brande, Pastor, Farmington Baptist Church

Approval

This consultancy project was submitted by Kimberly Ford under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to Gardner-Webb University College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

Elizabeth Jones, Faculty Advisor
Gardner-Webb University

Date

Phillip Brande, Site Advisor
Pastor, Farmington Baptist Church

Date

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To my husband Jonathan, thank you for being a constant source of support and encouragement. I love you.

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Abstract

DETERMINING RURAL CHURCH GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY BASED ON POPULATION TRENDS AND OUTREACH. Ford, Kimberly, 2022: Consultancy Project, Gardner-Webb University.

Farmington Baptist Church is a church located in rural Davie County, North Carolina. The church's mission is focused on children, community, and culture. Due to consistent growth of the church population over the past 5 years, the church will soon outgrow its current space and needs to determine if they are to invest in a new building. The purpose of this project was to help determine if the growth of the church is sustainable based on both external and internal factors, and if so, what was the number of members they should anticipate accommodating with a new sanctuary building. External considerations included growth of the surrounding community, new industry, and future housing. Internal factors included church attendance, outreach and programming, and alignment with mission and vision. The final church attendance projections were based on data from the past 10 years and predicted attendance for the church in 10 years.

Keywords: church growth, church sustainability, church planning

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Purpose

Farmington Baptist Church is a church located in rural Davie County, North Carolina. The church has grown over the last 5 years but saw sustained growth during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The church shifted to two services to accommodate the growing number of people attending services. The growth, however, has continued to progress and has impacted outreach for both children and youth groups (middle and high school-age children). Given these increases across all age groups, the current buildings used for outreach were no longer suited to meet the needs of the church. The purpose of this project was to determine the number of people who must be accounted for if the church decides to invest in a new building. An assessment of the internal and external factors impacting church growth was also conducted to aid in determining if church growth was sustainable in the future or if the church would see a steady leveling off or decline in attendance within the next 10 years.

1.2 Project Qualification

At the beginning of this project, I reached out to several organizations. My goal in the project was to look for something external to my field of work (higher education leadership) and work with a project that would benefit my community. I met with the pastor at Farmington Baptist Church, a local church in my area, to discuss potential projects. To qualify as a project, the Farmington Baptist Church activity must meet several qualifications, outlined in the below table.

Question	Answer	Comments
Does the activity have a start and end date?	Yes	Start date is September 2020. Projected completion date is 10-15 years to complete the new building. Smaller benchmarks lay the groundwork for the project.
Do you know what specific problem you need to solve?	Yes	Growth of the church is no longer sustainable in the current space.
What specific resources have been committed that you can use to complete the activity?	Personnel, time, and limited financial resources	There are no donors, but the church will take up offerings for the building. The church board is on board with moving in this direction, so we can count on stakeholder contributions of time and areas of expertise.
Are there tasks that need to be achieved within a particular time frame for the organization?	Yes	Scoping internal and external factors that will contribute to sustained church growth and determine an appropriate sanctuary size.
Are you responsible for coordinating the tasks?	Yes	There were no additional resources for this work.

Can you develop and demonstrate leadership skills in managing this project?	Yes	Leading focus groups, collecting and analyzing data, and making recommendations for moving forward
Do you need help from others to complete the activity?	Yes	Pastor, leadership board (deacons and church elders), and church members need to contribute.

Given these parameters, the partnering organization saw value in my contribution to help determine the need for a new space. The partnering organization was outside of my typical scope of work and allowed me to exercise project management skills while learning more about faith-based organizations. Progress in this project was measured by gathering data and interviews with key stakeholders.

1.3 Project Complexity and Impact Assessment

1.3.1 Project Complexity

In this project, there were many factors considered in determining the complexity of this project. The time frame for the project is greater than 18 months, considering the time frame to gather data and conduct interviews within the church. The project sponsor anticipated at least 2 years for this entire process. The stakeholders considered in the project were both internal and external. Internal stakeholders included the church pastors and members, and external stakeholders included local government members who could provide insight into the growth of the community. Operational changes were determined to be significant because of the needed restructuring of process and work, particularly in structuring continued outreach. No new contracts are required for this project, so the project complexity was not a factor to be considered. The church had not completed a project or assessment like this in the past, so there was no in-house expertise. Finally, project dependencies were high because other projects depended on this project to be completed. The next phase of building a larger building depends on the success of this project and an accurate number of attendees. The overall project complexity was determined to be 19 of 24, which was a medium-high complexity project. An example of the project complexity matrix is below.

Project Complexity Matrix

Criteria	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4
Delivery timescale (months) 10%	1-6	6-12	12-18	> 18
Stakeholders 20%	Internal and within single organizational area	Internal across more than one business area	Mainly external	Internal and external

Operational change 15%	Very minimal	Some new processes and possibly some retraining	Significant restructure of processes and work areas	Major change/ large scale restructure, outsourcing
Contract complexity 20%	No new contracts required	Single contract with known supplier	Multiple contracts with known suppliers	Contract(s) with new suppliers(s)
In-house expertise 20%	Have done this before many times	Have done this before once or twice	Have done similar before but not the same	Have not done anything like this before
Dependencies 15%	Very minimal links with other projects	Links with other projects but little impact	Links with other projects upon which this project depends	Other projects depend upon this project

1.3.2 Project Impact

In order to determine project impact, three factors were considered. First was strategic contribution, which was determined to be very significant. The outcome of this project determined how the church was to move forward, future programming, and potential future building of a new space. Secondly was the return on investment, which was determined to be 1-2 years. We anticipated that it would be approximately 12-18 months before the information could be analyzed to use for the purpose of church growth. The final metric is operational effectiveness. We were able to determine that there would be significant improvement across the organization as a result of this project. If we are able to determine the factors that contribute to church growth and sustainability, practices could be put in place or enhanced to continue these trends. The overall impact assessment was determined to be 14 of 15 points, which made the project at Farmington Baptist Church a high-impact project. A table outlining the project impact assessment risk is included below.

Project Impact Assessment Matrix

Criteria	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5
Strategic contribution	None	Contributes indirectly to the org. mission	Contributes indirectly to >1 strategic themes	Contributes directly to 1 strategic theme	Contributes directly to >1 strategic theme	Very significant strategic impact
Return on investment	>5 years	4-5 years	3-4 years	2-3 years	1-2 years	<1 year
Operational effectiveness	None	Improves work of a small group of staff < 6	Improves work of a large team of staff > 5	Improves work of whole department	Some improvement across whole organization	Significant improvement across whole organization

1.4 Project Charter Information

A project charter is an informal agreement between the project host (organization) and the consultant. In this case, the project charter was between Kimberly Ford (on behalf of Gardner-Webb University), and Philip Brande (on behalf of Farmington Baptist Church). Project charter information includes general project information, project participants, stakeholders, project purpose, and communication strategies.

In this project, the stakeholders included Farmington Baptist Church leadership, the church body or congregation, and the surrounding communities that would be served by the outreach of the church. The project's purpose was to scope out the needs of the future of Farmington Baptist Church and determined sustainability in the community based on the changing environment. During the project, resources were identified by the project host prior to the start of the project. Most resources identified by the project host were people who could be used as sources of information both inside and external to the church. There were also computer systems that were used to gather data and information throughout the project.

The project deliverables included an analysis of the community, a recommendation on the requirements and scope of the future building, and a recommendation for the number of seats in a new sanctuary. Project milestones were divided into two separate time frames. The first was to perform data and information gathering, and the second was to identify the needs of the future church. The project smart goals were to interview members of the community and the church, conduct an analysis of the Farmington community, and identify and document the future scope of the building. There were very few risks associated with the project, but the largest risk was the lack of funding that would prohibit the church from growing. There was a limited budget planned for this project, so the timeline for future building and growth was determined to change depending on the number of people giving tithes and offerings to the church. The main communication strategy in this project was face-to-face meetings. The project host preferred this type of communication, rather than email or virtual meetings. The project host and I met on a biweekly cadence throughout the course of the project to determine progress to date and future needs. The project charter can be found in Appendix A.

2. Project Objectives

2.1 Outline of Partnering Organization's Objectives

2.1.1. Objectives

This project was a key first step to kicking off the scoping and planning around the new church building. The church anticipated that the building needed to expand in order to accommodate a growing church body, but the project jump-started the necessary steps and planning to scope a new building site plan and determine the needed scope of change. The church decided to partner with me to begin the conversation and gain access to a resource that they would not have otherwise had. Instead of simply building a new building, the project allowed the consideration of internal and external factors to better plan for the size of a new

building and determine how the current space could be used to fit the needs of the organization. Pictures of the current land plot, buildings, and site plans for Farmington Baptist Church are included in Appendix B.

2.1.2 Success Criteria

Farmington Baptist Church measured success in this project by the ability to begin taking steps towards a new building. The project included interviews with internal stakeholders that helped determine the next steps towards engaging current and new members, as well as continuing to do the work of God within the community.

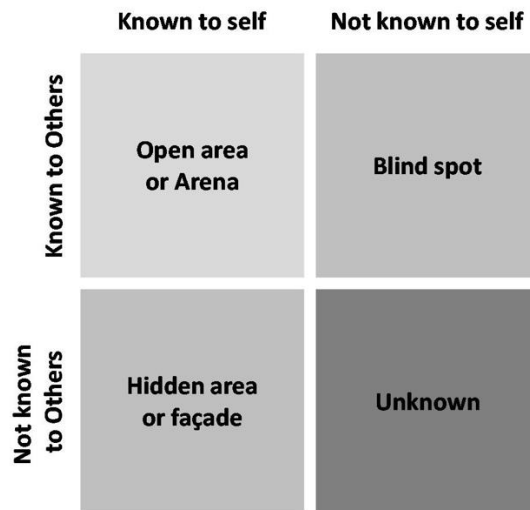
2.2 Student's Personal Leadership Objectives

2.2.1 Objectives

My personal leadership goals in this project were to develop more flexibility, openness to change, and openness to feedback. My first goal was to determine feedback and identify areas of development from peers and colleagues in a work setting. The Johari window model is one that identifies areas of communication and feedback by identifying areas known to you and areas known to others (Communication Theory, 2014). An example of the Johari window model is in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Johari Window Model



The Johari Window Model

My blind window (known to others but not myself) in the Johari window model was almost as large as my public self, meaning that I need to ask for more feedback to become a more effective communicator and leader. My second goal was based on my emotional intelligence score. Emotional intelligence is the

ability to understand and manage emotions to better relate to and understand others. There are four key elements that encompass one's emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and conflict management skills (Bradberry, 2016). Based on my self-assessment, my key area of development was self-management, which was lower than other scores. As I reflected, I understand that if I am more open and flexible with others, my emotional responses to conflict will not be as immediate. In order to continue to develop my emotional intelligence, I committed to setting aside time for goal setting and self-reflection. My final goal was to develop an approach to conflict management through documentation and opportunities to reflect. I used the Big 5 personality for personality traits in this assessment, which include openness to change, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Cherry, 2022). In my Big 5 assessment, I am agreeable and motivated by maintaining harmony. I need to develop skills to be more open to the unavoidable conflict I may experience and practice focusing on the situation, behavior, and impact of conflict, instead of focusing on the relationship that may be at stake.

2.2.2 Success Criteria

Throughout the course of this project, my personal leadership objectives were measured by opportunities to utilize the resources that were made available through this program. I was able to have opportunities to ask for feedback throughout the course of the project and use that feedback for my own personal development. There were also many opportunities to document and journal about things I was learning not only about myself but also about the church environment. For instance, over the course of the project, I was able to identify opportunities for more brainstorming and creative thinking. I realized that I am not as strong in these areas because I tend to think more deeply about the steps to accomplishing tasks rather than brainstorming about how things could be. I was able to use this opportunity to gain experience brainstorming and successfully implementing these strategies.

3. Project Scope

3.1 Definitive Scope of Work

Working in conjunction with the church leadership, I scoped out the needs for the future of Farmington Baptist Church and sustainability in the community based on the changing environment. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the church has seen the need to move to two church services. Even then, the growth of the church is such that the building will no longer allow for all members to be in one space. Therefore, the church needs a new building and potentially other space to allow for successful outreach to the surrounding community.

3.2 Project Benefits

The benefits of the project with Farmington Baptist Church include working with both internal and external stakeholders to perform an analysis of the community surrounding Farmington Baptist Church, including anticipated growth and demographic information

to allow for effective outreach in the future. Additionally, the project will determine the number of anticipated members and visitors to allow for the most adequate building of a new sanctuary to support the needs of the church.

3.3 SMART Goals

1. By March 2021, I met with and interviewed members of the Davie County local government to identify the future growth and scope of Davie County, including new industry, planned construction, and anticipated changes to Farmington Road and the surrounding community.
2. By September 2021, I conducted an analysis of the community surrounding Farmington Baptist Church, including census data and other information, to identify the anticipated community structure.
3. By March 2022, I identified and documented the final building scope and recommendations to hand over to the church elders.

4. Disciplined Inquiry

4.1 Introduction and Theoretical Framework

In this project, I used a convergent mixed methodology to determine the need for a new building, using both qualitative and quantitative data to determine the sustainability of growth for Farmington Baptist Church. The theoretical framework that was used was Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's model is based on five levels of human need, including psychological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. These are often displayed as a pyramid, in which people need to achieve the bottom tiers before they can achieve the needs higher up. Maslow's hierarchy of needs essentially states that people are motivated to fulfill innate human needs based on priority (McLeod, 2022). The second priority in the hierarchy of needs is safety, or the need to have shelter. This is the underlying motivation for building a new church; they need to have shelter.

4.2 Hypothesis

Farmington Baptist Church is located in Davie County, North Carolina. The church is currently outgrowing the space, and the total number of participants at the time of conducting the hypothesis was 910 who attend on a weekly basis. The church vision includes a focus on children, the church, and the community. Based on this information, the hypothesis for the project was that Farmington Baptist Church will continue to grow at a sustainable rate and will need to build a new church building in order to house the number of people who will be attending the church on a weekly basis.

4.3 Research Question

The research question for this project was, "Is the growth at Farmington Baptist Church sustainable, such that they need to construct a new sanctuary?"

4.4 Literature Review

Based on the literature review, there are many factors both internally and externally that contribute to church growth. Tithing impacts church growth from an internal perspective. The more money members are bringing into the church, the more resources they are able to expend. Typically, people with more disposable income tend to tithe more, and they are usually older adults. However, it bodes well for a church if younger people are giving consistently, no matter the amount. Therefore, we need to determine if there is consistent tithing throughout the church and not just from an older generation. Secondly, we look at engagement to determine the percentage of the church body that is participating in volunteering or Bible studies. Finally, we look at outreach to determine how the church is able to reach out and engage with a community. External factors that contribute to church growth include industry, schools, neighborhoods, and proximity to the highways. The only high school in Davie County is located only 3 miles away from the church campus. This was a fairly recent build for the community, and as a result, new neighborhoods are being built in close proximity. The church is located approximately 3 miles from a major highway. Additional industry close by includes a hospital and a new business park. Refer to Appendix C to review the entire literature review.

4.5 Methodology

I used a convergent mixed methodology approach in this project. The qualitative data project was open-ended questions with stakeholders from church and local government. I interviewed seven church leaders, hosted one focus group with eight attendees, and had a series of questions that I asked each. The questions used in the project are below.

1. What resources should be considered in church growth?
2. How do you sustain church growth?
3. What are the gaps you see?
4. Who is tithing?
5. Is the church willing to accommodate a different vision or doctrine, and if so, are the members willing to stay?

Additional data collected include information gathering about what the development of Farmington, North Carolina looks like in Davie County. Questions drafted for local government are below.

1. What is the economic growth potential or outlook for the 3 to 5 buffer areas around the church?
2. What type of commercial or industrial development is projected over the next 5 years in and around the church property?
3. What is the current zoning of the greater area around the church?
4. What is the future land use for the area around the church?
5. What does the market (market analysis) say about the potential economy near the church?
6. Are there any future roadway or highway expansions planned for the subject area that could incentivize economic growth in the subject area?

7. Is there any sensitive environmental land such as wetlands, floodplains, or natural resources that could prevent future economic development near the subject area?

The quantitative data project entailed using trend data sources, including a mission insight report, the Church Center application data, and census data for the surrounding community. The application data included the number of attendees and trends related to tithing. Using a regression equation, I plotted the regression line to predict future church attendance based on community population growth.

5. Continuous Improvement Systems

5.1 Continuous Improvement Planning

Based on the growth of the surrounding community and the continued growth of the church congregation, it was determined that Farmington Baptist Church will continue to grow at a sustainable rate and that the growth will justify building a worship center larger than the current building to accommodate those numbers. Church elders and leadership have approved the plan to move forward with a new building and engage an external company to develop a site plan.

5.2 Continuous Improvement Actions

Based on my recommendations, Farmington Baptist Church is planning to move forward with the building of a larger sanctuary and additional parking to accommodate a growing church. The organization has engaged with a company to develop a site plan for the new buildings and has begun conversations with the builder to determine the fundraising needed to build the church.

5.3 Continuous Improvement Feedback

One of the challenges we encountered throughout the course of this project was the data collected through the Church Center application. My recommendation to the organization was to develop a better plan for tracking attendance numbers for outreach events, worship services, and children's ministries. As they continue to improve the methods of getting those data, we will see a more accurate picture of the number of people being served. The church will be able to better plan for outreach events and for accommodating a growing number of people attending Sunday services.

5.4 Continuous Improvement Implementation

Once the church implements a new system for tracking, I recommend the church continue to implement measures of continuous quality improvement, including spot-checking attendance numbers to compare to the data collected. This is critical to ensuring that the data collection system is correct and that you have an accurate picture of the church attendance. Knowing this information will aid in planning for future programming and resources and anticipating continued growth or identifying trends in attendance data.

6. Deliverables

6.1 To Partnering Organization From Candidate

The partnering organization received the below deliverables based on literature reviews and analysis of church growth for Farmington Baptist Church. A table outlining the key deliverables to the partnering organization is below.

Deliverable	Due Date	Connection to Organizational Challenge
Predicted church congregation size	July 1, 2022	Determination of sanctuary size
Growth potential	April 1, 2022	Determination of internal and external factors that would contribute to sustained church growth
Recommended programming	January 1, 2022	Recommendations for church programming to continue growth

6.2 Deferred Deliverables

The only deliverable that was deferred during the project was a formal interview with the Davie County government officials. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government offices underwent significant reorganization and had multiple public relations concerns. The office did not return phone calls to set up meetings with the county development officer. Population data and information on county and industrial development were gathered from online sources.

7. Communications Plan

7.1 Communications Plan Development

The communication plan that we developed focused on identifying who the key stakeholders were and the best way to communicate with those stakeholders. Prior to crafting the communication plan, we needed to determine who the stakeholders' groups were within the Farmington Baptist Church community. The church leaders in the below table are all part of the decision-making process at Farmington Baptist Church and hold key positions to determine how resources are utilized and how programming occurs within the church. The project host determined how frequently the groups below received updates and recommended either in-person or virtual meetings to deliver information. The project host recommended that we deliver information in meetings that were already scheduled with church leaders, so the frequency of updates largely depended on the frequency of those meetings. A table explaining the communication plan in detail is below.

Event	Stakeholder	Information needed	Why needed	When will they get it	How will they get it
General updates	Project sponsor	Project progress	To monitor ongoing progress	Once per semester	Project status report submitted
General updates	Project host (Pastor Phillip)	Project progress and next steps	To ensure the appropriate scope of the project and address any concerns	Bi-weekly in meetings, more often in project management template	In-person meetings bi-weekly, and ongoing pm updates by Excel workbook
General updates	Church elders	Big-picture planning of new building	Hold leadership role in church and must vote on planned changes or future growth of the church	Quarterly updates in church elder meetings	In-person meetings
General updates	Church members	Details about new church needs	To understand perspective of what will work in new space, and what needs to change	As directed by project host; quarterly business meetings	In-person meetings
Focus group with church members	Church members	Questions related to church growth	Information on what works well, what needs to be improved upon, and what is the church of the future	Once during meeting	In-person focus group
Interview with Davie County	Davie County government officials	Questions related to the state of growth near Farmington and surrounding area	To understand how the area is growing or has grown, to better predict church growth	Once during meeting	Phone call/ meeting with officials

7.2 Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Stakeholders for the project are identified through their involvement in the church. The stakeholders include church volunteer leaders, church elders, community leaders, and church leaders. These were identified based on their involvement in the church body, expertise and perspectives on church growth, and involvement in the community. The church leaders were invaluable in determining the resources needed for church growth and how to engage the community in that growth. The church leaders and volunteers expressed thoughts and ideas that were in line with the vision of the church, including a focus on children, the church, and the community.

Stakeholder	Stakeholder key contacts	Level of interest (low>medium>high)	Ability to impact (low>medium>high)	What we want from stakeholder	What stakeholder wants from us	Conflicts of interest	Relationship owner(s)	Organizational cross-over with stakeholder
Church Volunteer Leaders	Philip Brande, Seth Parnell	High	Low	Interviews for qualitative data to determine what factors contribute to church growth, and where the church needs to improve	Updates on timeline and progress as needed	None Identified	Philip Brande	Interaction with church elders and pastor
Church Elders	Philip Brande, Greg Quinn, Seth Parnell, Thomas Seaford, Chad Harwell, Aaron Sink, Brian Myers	High	Medium	Interviews for same qualitative data as above, as well as approval on direction and vision for church growth. Approval for building process and any financial investment that needs to be made	Timeline and progress, guidance on anticipated roadblocks as related to church growth	None Identified	Philip Brande	Interaction with church congregation, including volunteer leaders, and church pastor
Local Government	Brian Myers	Low	Medium	Data on local community growth	Data on scale of new building	None Identified	Brian Myers, Philip Brande	Interaction with church pastor
Church Pastor (Project host)	Philip Brande	High	High	Setting the vision for the project, and communicating with stakeholders as outlined in requirements above	Updates on progress, updates on interviews and meetings stakeholders	Member of church	Philip Brande	Interaction with all stakeholders

8. Risks

8.1 Mitigation and Contingency

Risk Description	Mitigation Plan (what to do to avoid the risk occurring)	Contingency Plan (what to do if the risk occurs)	Impact (what the impact will be to the project if the risk occurs)	Likelihood of occurrence (e.g., %, or high/medium/low)
Change in direction for church, such that the church no longer wants to expand the sanctuary	Develop strategies for changing business practices to accommodate growing congregation	If the church decides to change its direction and not plan an additional building, we will work with the church to determine how they can reformat their worship and outreach to accommodate a larger congregation in the same space. We will acknowledge and plan for increased resources to meet that need.	Qualitative data will no longer apply, and programming recommendations will change accordingly	Medium
Church does not continue to grow, and church membership either levels off, or membership migration occurs such that there is no net growth	Monitor church attendance to determine if stabilization is occurring and increase outreach efforts if growth is desired.	If the church doesn't continue to grow, we will have to shift the focus of the church to determine if the current facility is adequate enough to support the mission and vision of the church, and the outreach that's being done. The shift of the focus will go from Building B (main sanctuary) to Building D (annex that's focused on outreach).	Linear regression must be updated to determine new size of sanctuary, if any change is needed, and how the church can sustain the population.	Medium
Church leadership changes and the pastor is no longer leading the church	Gather information from new leader to determine direction and strategy for growth	Start meetings with new pastor to determine direction of church. Recommended size of building will not change.	Minimal impact on data and outcomes	Low
Lack of resources	Develop strategies for meetings, interviews, and opportunities to gather data so that we only run high-yield meetings, and do not overtax our resources	If resources (people from the church, and time, specifically) are no longer available for this project, we have two contingency plans that have been developed. First, we can reach out to local churches in the community to determine if church growth is associated with growth of the community, establishment of new schools, and economic impact of local businesses moving into the area. If trends are similar, we are able to make some basic assumptions about church growth. These include determining if the church will continue to grow, strategies that are successful for growth, and areas in which the church needs to invest in order to	Limited qualitative data available	Medium

		ensure growth. The second strategy we can use is personal observation and literature searches to determine the church's opportunity for growth and likelihood of growth in the future. There may be data that support the growth of churches based on certain trends in the surrounding communities. These data points, accompanied by personal observations of the church's outreach, mission and vision, and local impact will give enough insight to determine if church growth is sustainable, and therefore we will need a larger building to support members.		
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8.2 Constraints

There were very few constraints from my partnering organization. One of the most important points was the desire to keep our work confidential for the first 2 years of the project. The church wanted to first scope out the potential for a new building before the new building was made public to the church body. In order to interview members of the church, the project host had to first meet with them to explain future plans and ask for their help in keeping the information and plans confidential.

9. Budget

For the purposes of this budget, I focused on two key areas: developing a recommendation for congregation size and the sustainability assessment. We identified three key areas for budget purposes, including time needed from stakeholders, personnel for interviews and ongoing meetings, and budgeted dollars for programming. The program identified for purposes of tracking data is the Church Center application. The Church Center application includes a planning center system that allows for tracking of population data and running reports for trend data. The application also allows for tracking of members who tithe, participate in volunteer efforts, and enroll in outreach. There were no financial expenses outside of the Church Center application; therefore, the majority of the budget was personnel and time dedicated to interviews and data collection.

Deliverables	Cost categories	Details
Recommendation for congregation size	Time, personnel, program	Quantitative data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel: three people (two church secretaries to get information and access to Church Center database and one person to help sort data) Time for personnel: 8 hours Church Center App: Approximately \$304/month
Sustainability assessment	Time, personnel	Qualitative data Stakeholders interviewed: 17 people total

		<p>Time for meeting with stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Host/Pastor: once every other week for 2 years, 3 months (58 hours total) • Church elders: once per quarter (4 hours total annually, 2 years = 8 hours) plus 1-on-1 interviews (6 members, 1 hour each = 6 hours) • Focus group = 1 hour • Davie County Government = 2 hours <p>Total hours: 75 hours</p>
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10. Analysis and Recommendations

Based on the data collected from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis, the recommendation given to Farmington Baptist Church is to continue moving forward with plans for a second sanctuary building. The quantitative analysis was based on a linear regression, and the qualitative data were primarily from interviews with church leaders and members.

The results from the quantitative data analysis showed that the Farmington Baptist Church population would continue to grow. This is based on an average community growth of approximately 1.43% in Mocksville, North Carolina over the past 5 years (2017-2022). In this case, I wanted to use the known population of the Mocksville community to predict church attendance. I had 5 years of data for both the community and the church and saw consistent growth in both spaces. A linear regression is often used for predictive analytics, to determine the relationship between two variables as a means to predict future performance. In this case, the population of Mocksville, North Carolina was used as a dependent variable, and church attendance was the independent variable (Statistics Solutions, 2021). After performing a linear regression, I determined that the Farmington Baptist Church population in 2027 would reach approximately 1,272 guests. Based on this analysis, the current sanctuary will not accommodate this growth, and a new sanctuary will need to be built. Additional factors that contribute to church growth include tithing, as previously mentioned. Based on data collected by the church, 22% of young adult families, ages 20-40 currently tithe on a regular basis (at least monthly). Additionally, 72% of church members have volunteered in some capacity, whether by annual outreach or weekly volunteer opportunities. Consistent volunteering will contribute to sustained growth as the number of church members increases.

The results of the qualitative analysis also supported the growth of the church. Of those interviewed, 33% stated that church growth was primarily discipleship, which aligns with the vision of the church and with the literature supporting church growth. More than half (53.4%) of those interviewed stated that the community will be the primary focus of the church in the future, and 24% of interviewees stated that the surrounding community is the greatest resource in growing the church. Those interviewed supported the notion that the greatest resource the church has available is its flock. The overwhelming majority of those

interviewed (70.8%) identified people as the largest gap in church growth. Not only does the church need more people to continue to achieve its mission of reaching people, but people need to be disciples of men and need to maintain a personal touch within the church.

Based on this feedback, I have the following recommendations for Farmington Baptist Church:

1. **Increase church sanctuary size.** Based on the results of the quantitative analysis, the church body will increase by 29% in the next 5 years. In 10 years, the church body will have grown by 42%. The current sanctuary is unable to sustain this growth. Therefore, it is recommended that the next church sanctuary increase in size by approximately 50% to accommodate the growing size of the church, increasing the sanctuary size to 600 seats.
2. **Formalize a discipleship program for church volunteers.** Based on the literature, the number of volunteers and financial contributions of the church both have a positive, direct impact on church growth. Farmington already has a high number of volunteers, but as the church grows, continued opportunities for engagement should be fostered and made available. This program should be accessible and easy to engage in and offer opportunities for both frequent and infrequent volunteerism (ranging from weekly to annually).
3. **Increase community outreach.** Based on data from the qualitative and quantitative analysis, the community surrounding Farmington Baptist Church will continue to grow over the next 10-15 years. Church growth includes not only conversion (bringing people to salvation) but also the transfer of membership from other churches. A growing congregation size not only allows for an increased social impact but also strengthens the need for engagement within the church. In order to meet the social needs of the church, the number of outreach events at the church must increase.

11. Reflection

11.1 Professional Learning

My professional growth during this project is something that I am especially proud of. In my professional career, I have not had the opportunity to be the point person for project management. That has always been outsourced to groups that specialized in that area. During this project, I was able to use tools such as Microsoft Project™ and Excel™ to build a project plan to help keep me and the partnering organization on track. Using tools like this allowed me to consider the importance of timely updates, acknowledge pain points during the project, and be better able to address those issues. During the course of this project, I was also given opportunities to brainstorm and think creatively with my partnering organization. This is a skill set I am continuing to develop because I am such a practical thinker. We were able to utilize different strategies, such as thinking of the worst idea and moving backward from that idea. Having the opportunity to brainstorm and think about problems from a different perspective was a stretch for me and took me outside of my comfort zone. However, developing the ability to brainstorm and think creatively is an important skill for leaders to practice. The other benefit of doing this project was simply building my

professional network. My cohort consists of many colleagues from many different backgrounds who are working on a wide variety of projects. I was able to reach out to many of them to determine best steps to move forward and really lean into their areas of expertise. I believe that was one of the most valuable parts of this experience. I am lucky to have gone through this program with the cohort I did and see us all encourage each other, build each other up, and learn from each other in order to meet our goals.

11.2 Personal Development

My personal leadership also has evolved over the course of this project. I am fortunate to have worked at the same organization for almost my entire professional career, but that has truly limited my scope of growth and development. I have been in higher education administration for 11 years and have learned so much about working with different stakeholders and how best to develop and grow my team in order to serve the needs of learners. Through the course of this project, I learned so much about the technical aspects of leadership and was able to really hone my skills in areas like project management, systems thinking, and approaches to creative thinking. This project also challenged my ideas about what innovation truly entails. There are so many new technologies and opportunities that are available at our fingertips every day, so true innovation means remaining connected and always learning about the organization.

In my career so far, I have been told that I am a great people leader. This project in this program has really highlighted the importance of human capital and an investment in your team. I have learned to lean into other people and the value that they bring to the organization, both in a positive way and in a negative way. Sometimes, the best advice and perspective come from our biggest opponents, and this project and the program helped open my eyes to that potential. Overall, this opportunity has allowed me to become a much better leader who is able to think clearly, better understand the system, and become a better decision maker. I have also found a lot of confidence in my leadership ability and how I can uniquely contribute to the goals of the organization. I am so grateful for the opportunity to work on this project and to learn from my colleagues and the professors at Gardner-Webb University.

Appendix A

Project Charter

CONSULTANCY PROJECT CHARTER

1. General Project Information				
Project Title:	Designing the Church of 2070			
Project Host(s):	Farmington Baptist Church			
Project Sponsor (GWU):	Gardner-Webb University			
Project Manager:	Kimberly Ford	Date:	9/8/2020	
Project Description	Farmington Baptist Church has outgrown the current facility, in both number of occupants and desired outreach capability. The church anticipates starting construction on a new building to accommodate a growing church body and scope of community outreach. Prior to starting the building process, the church needs to be able to identify the needs and demographic information of the community for both the present, and the future (looking forward 50 years). The purpose of this project is to identify trends in the community and projected growth of the church body such that Farmington Baptist Church's location is sustainable.			
2. Project Participants and Roles (add or delete lines as needed)				
	Name	Role	Telephone	E-mail
Project Manager:	Kimberly Ford	Project Manager	336-409-8558	Kford5@gardner-webb.edu
Team Members:	Phillip Brande	Pastor	336-608-8856	Bobvestal@me.com
	Greg Quinn	Church Elder		
	Thomas Seaford	Church Elder		
	Chad Harwell	Church Elder		
	Aaron Sink	Deacon		
	Brian Myers	Deacon		
	Robin Quinn	Church Secretary		
3. Stakeholders (e.g., those with a significant interest in or who will be significantly affected by this project)				
Stakeholders include: Farmington Baptist Church Elders, who will advise on growth of the church Church Body- considered customers in this scenario Church community in the area—will be served by outreach of the church				

4. Project Purpose Statement	
Project Purpose <i>Describe the need this project addresses</i>	
<p>Working in conjunction with the church leadership, I will scope out the needs for the future of Farmington Baptist Church and sustainability in the community based on changing environment. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the church has seen the need to move to two church services. Even then, the growth of the church is such that the building will no longer allow for all members to be in one space. Therefore, the church needs a new building, and potentially other space to allow for successful outreach to the surrounding community.</p>	
Resources <i>Describe the resources made available by the project host for this project</i>	
<p>People: Church Pastor, elders, and Deacons to work as development team. Church secretary to aid in meetings and contacting others. Davie County Mayor, city planner, and others in government bodies Money will be available to plan and build, but none in the development stages.</p>	
Project Deliverables <i>List the high-level "products" to be created (e.g., improved xxxx process, employee manual on yyyy)</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysis on community surrounding Farmington Baptist Church, including anticipated growth and demographic information. 2. Recommendation on requirements and scope of future church building. 3. Recommendation on requirements and scope (including potential use) of "building D" 	
Project Milestones <i>Project significant accomplishments anticipated over the life of the project with estimated timeline</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-12 months (September, 2021): Research on Davie County current and projected growth and demographics. Meet with Davie County local government officials to determine future projected growth of county. Research growth in church bodies and best practices for expanding campus. 2. 12-18 months: Identification of church needs and future growth of Farmington Baptist Church, including advising on building scope and capabilities to fit future worship services 	
Project SMART Objectives <i>Include 3 to 5</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By March of 2021, I will meet and interview at least 3 members of the Davie County local government to identify future growth and scope of Davie County, including new industry, planned construction, and anticipated changes to Farmington Road and surrounding community. 2. By September of 2021, I will have conducted analysis on community surrounding Farmington Baptist Church, including census data and other information, to identify anticipated community structure. 3. By March of 2022, I will have identified and documented final building scope and recommendations to hand over to the church elders. 	
Major Known Risks (including significant Assumptions) <i>Identify obstacles that may cause the project to fail.</i>	
Risk	Risk Rating (Hi, Med, Lo)
Change in direction for church	Low
Church does not continue to grow	Low
Church leadership change—Money is a risk	Low
Funding	Medium

Constraints List any conditions that may limit the project team's options with respect to resources, personnel, or schedule (e.g., predetermined budget or project end date, limit on number of staff that may be assigned to the project).

Limited budget for the church for the initial planning phase of the building project. Church is primarily funded through tithes and offerings, so project timeline for building may change dependent on offerings.

External Dependencies Will project success depend on coordination of efforts between the project team and one or more other individuals or groups? Has everyone involved agreed to this interaction?

Davie County government (Mayor, city planner) and chamber of commerce to advise on growth of community. Church elders have been notified of ongoing plan. Connections with members with construction expertise, and local government connections have been identified for initial points of contact.

5. Communication Strategy (specify how the project manager will communicate to the Host, Sponsor, Project Team members and Stakeholders, e.g., frequency of status reports, frequency of Project Team meetings, etc.)

Meet bi-weekly to update on status of the project with Pastor Philip.
As we progress in planning, meet with church elders and deacons as needed.
Email communication as needed- all saved and documented

6. Sign-off

	Name	Signature	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Project Host	Phillip Brande	Phillip Brande	09/10/2020
Project Sponsor	Elizabeth Jones		
Project Manager	Kimberly Ford	Kimberly Ford	09/08/2020

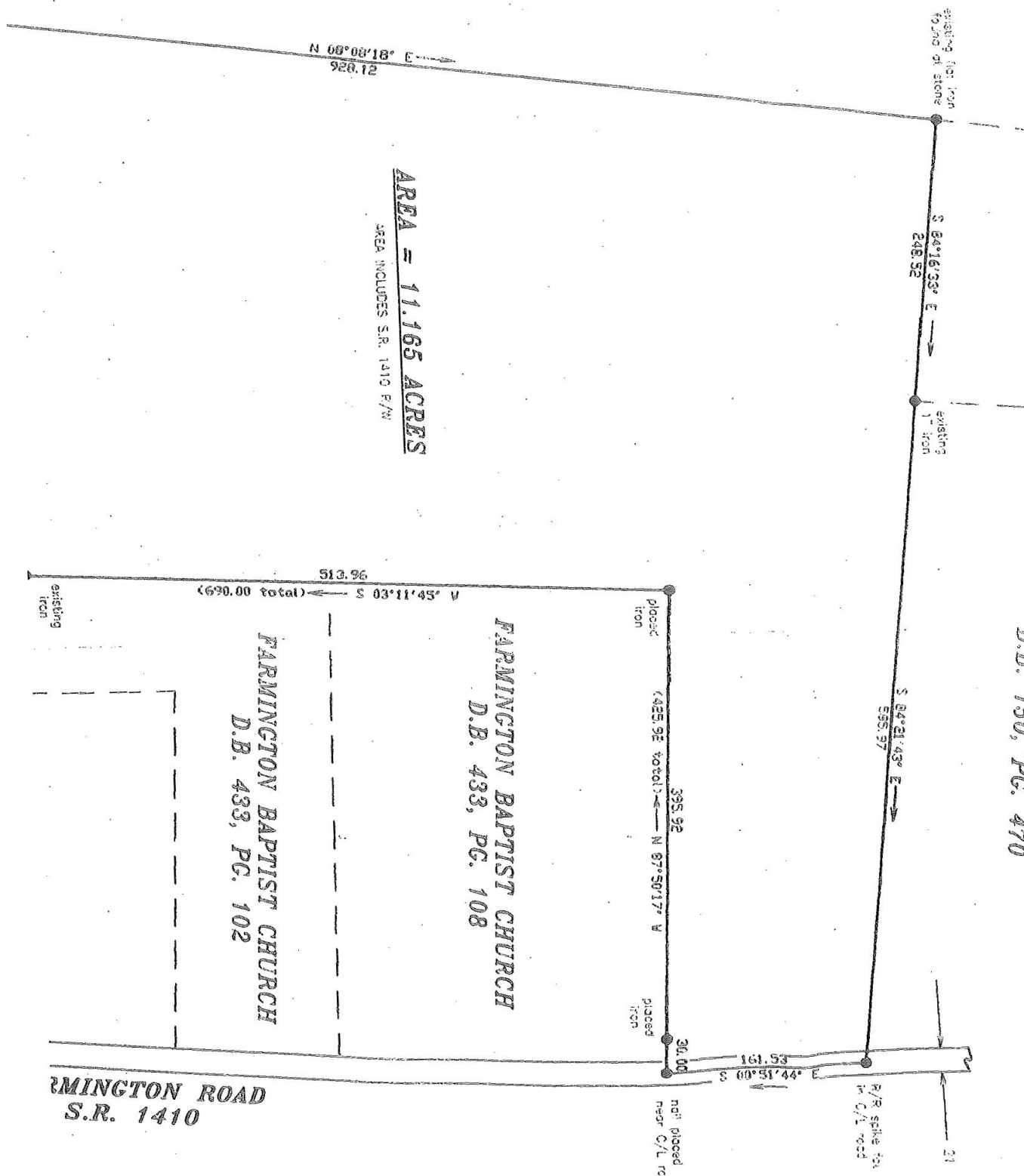
7. Notes

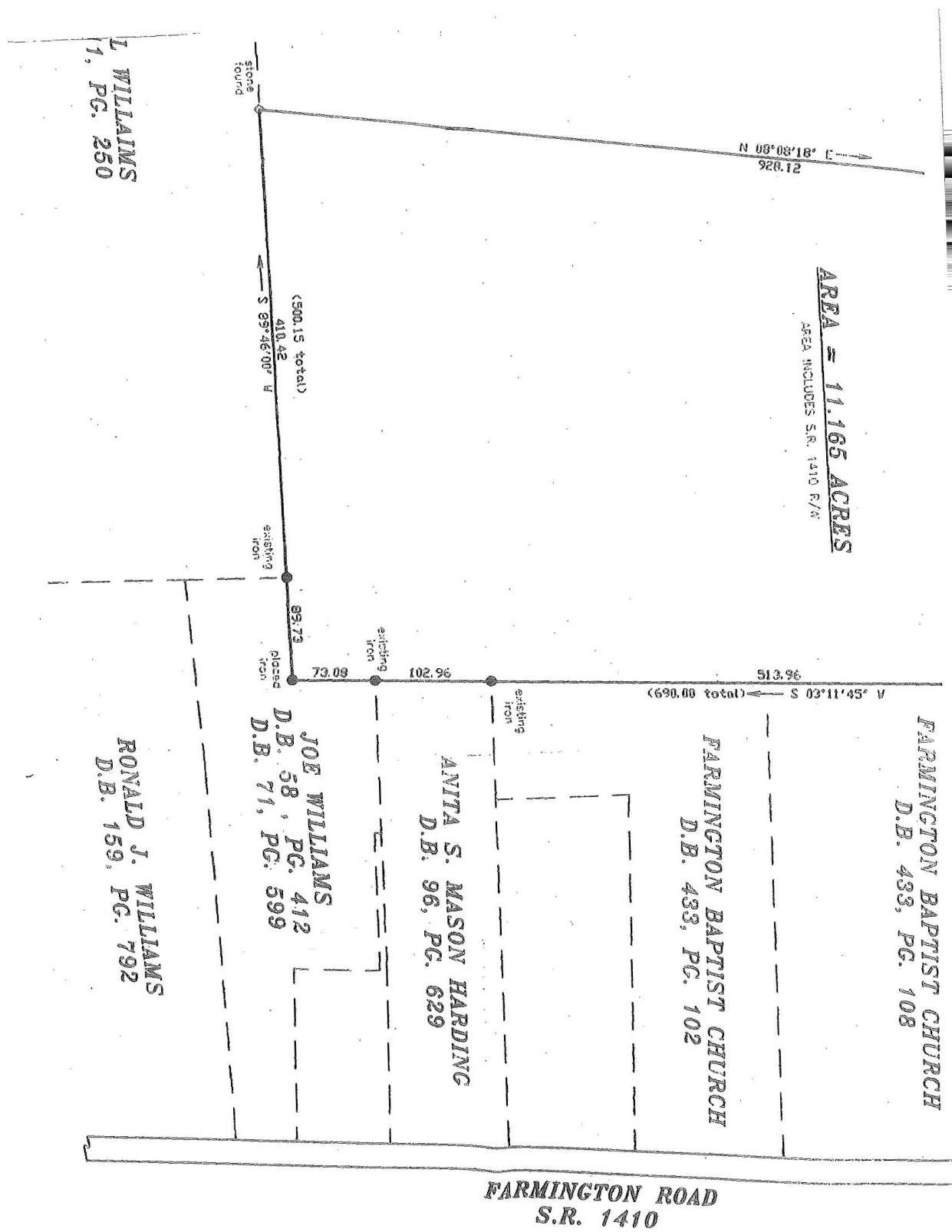
Site plan with architect – tentative within 2 years; may include a contract at some point near the end of the project
Plan edited in October 2020 to include "building D", which is an annex space that will be utilized by the church to help with community outreach

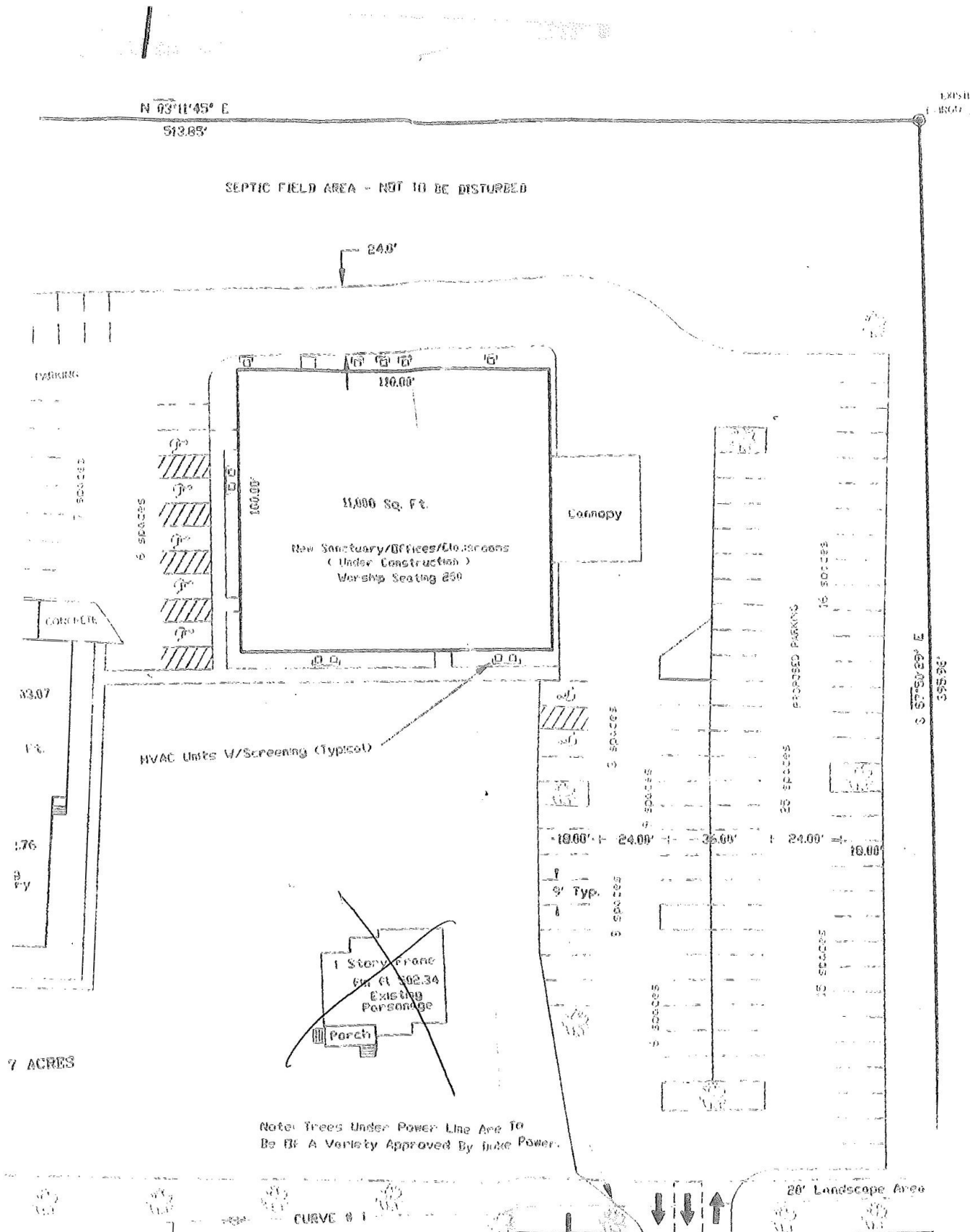
Appendix B

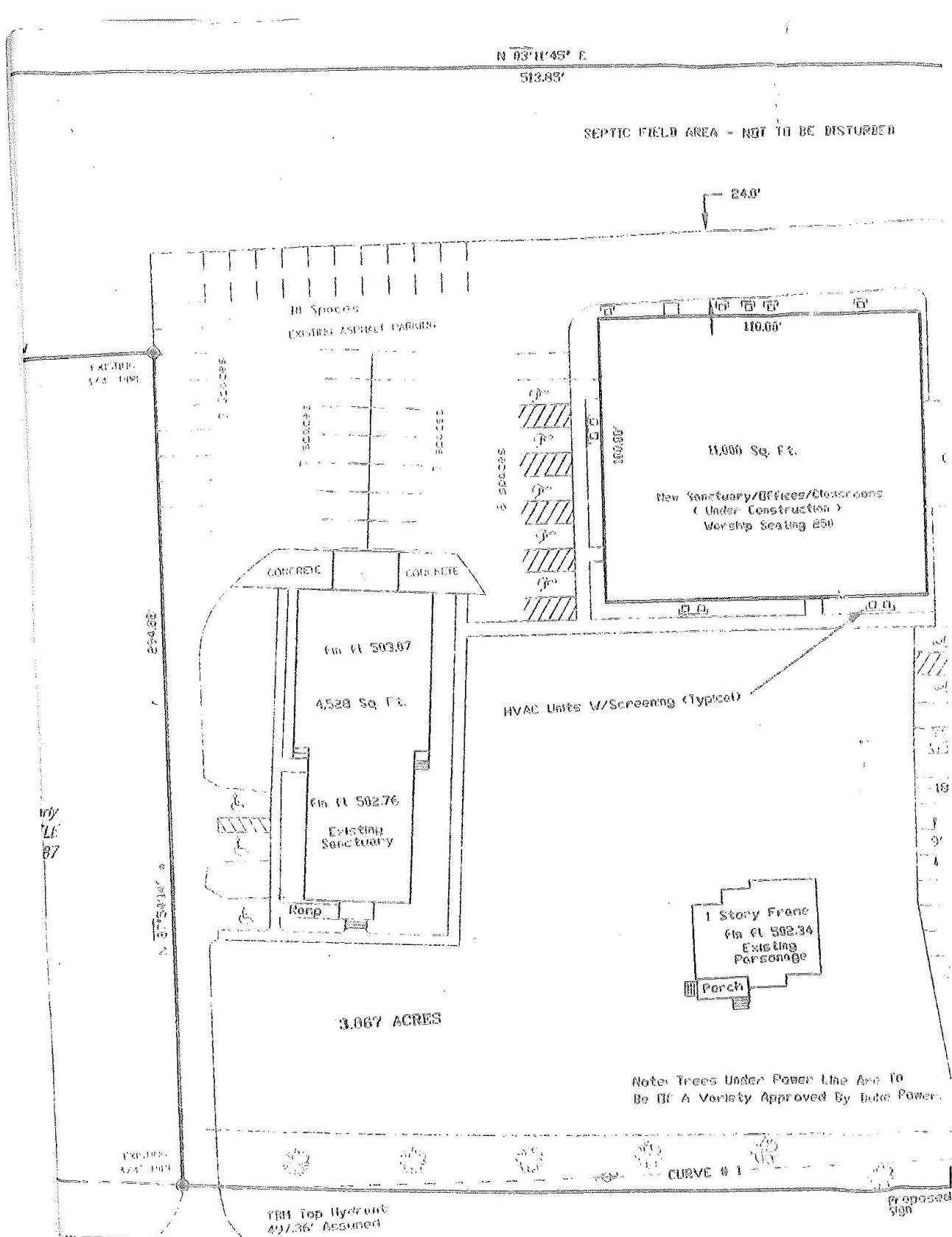
Farmington Baptist Church Current Site Plans

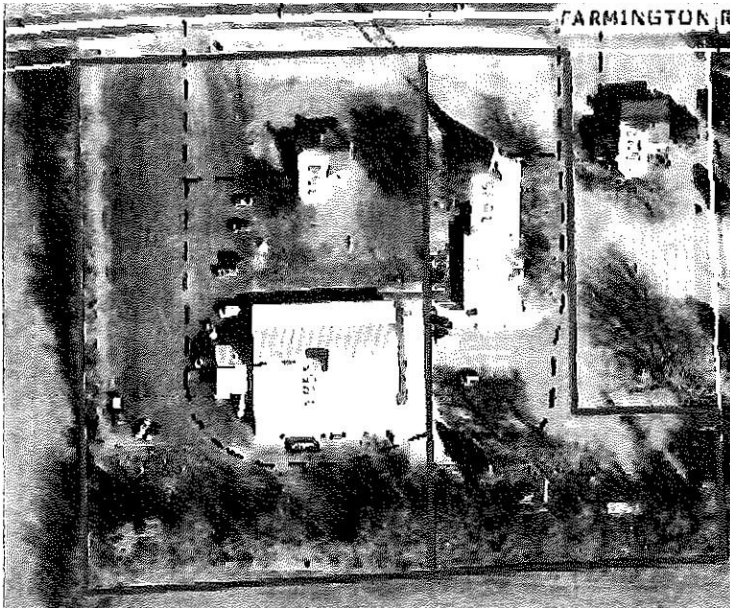
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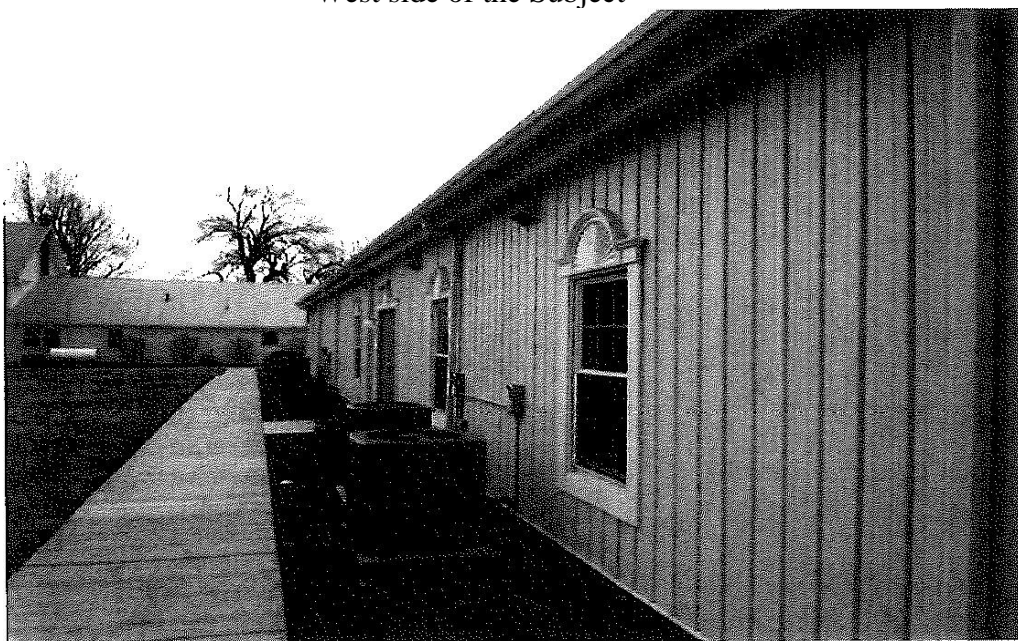




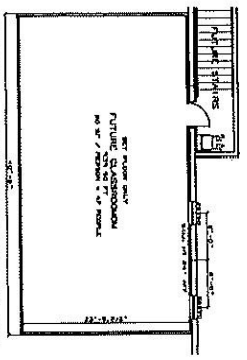
- Topography:** The subject has level topography at grade and no areas of wetlands.
- Soil Conditions:** The soil conditions observed at the subject appear to be typical of the region and adequate to support development.
- Utilities:**
- Electricity: The site is served by public electricity.
 - Sewer: City sewer
 - Water: City water
 - Natural Gas: City gas
 - Underground Utilities: The site is serviced by underground utilities.
 - Adequacy: The subject's utilities are typical and adequate for the market area.
- Site Improvements:**
- The subject doesn't have street lighting.
 - The subject has sidewalks.
 - The subject doesn't have curb and gutter.
 - The landscaping consists of shrubbery with mulch in front of the building and in the parking lot. There are trees planted on the property and along the perimeter of the northern and western property lines.



West side of the Subject



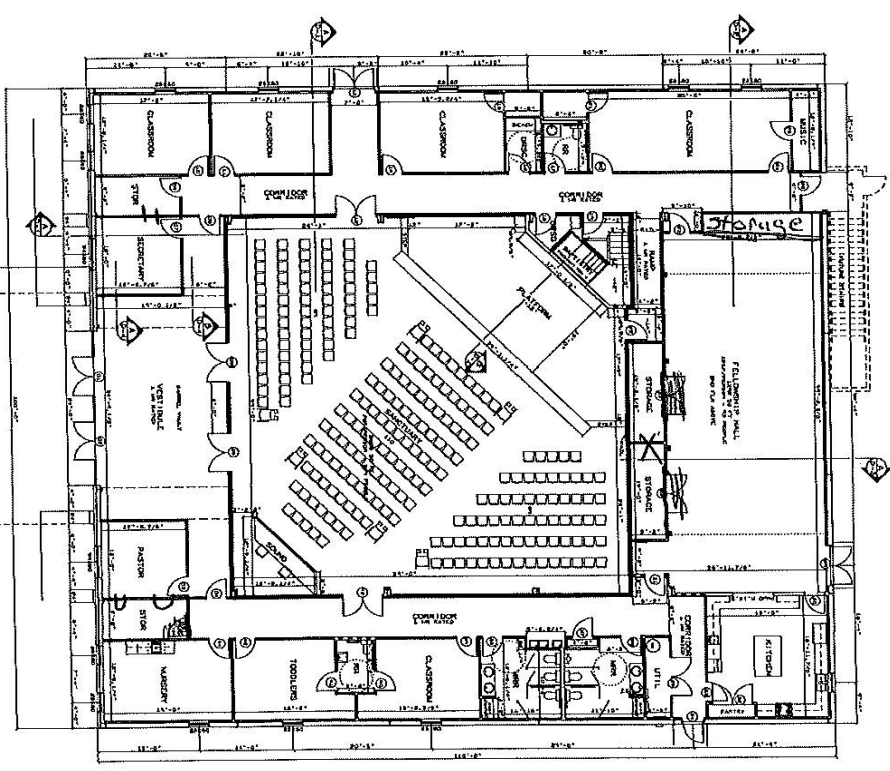
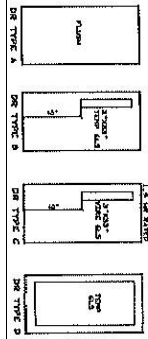
East side of the Subject



FUTURE 2ND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

DOOR SCHEDULE

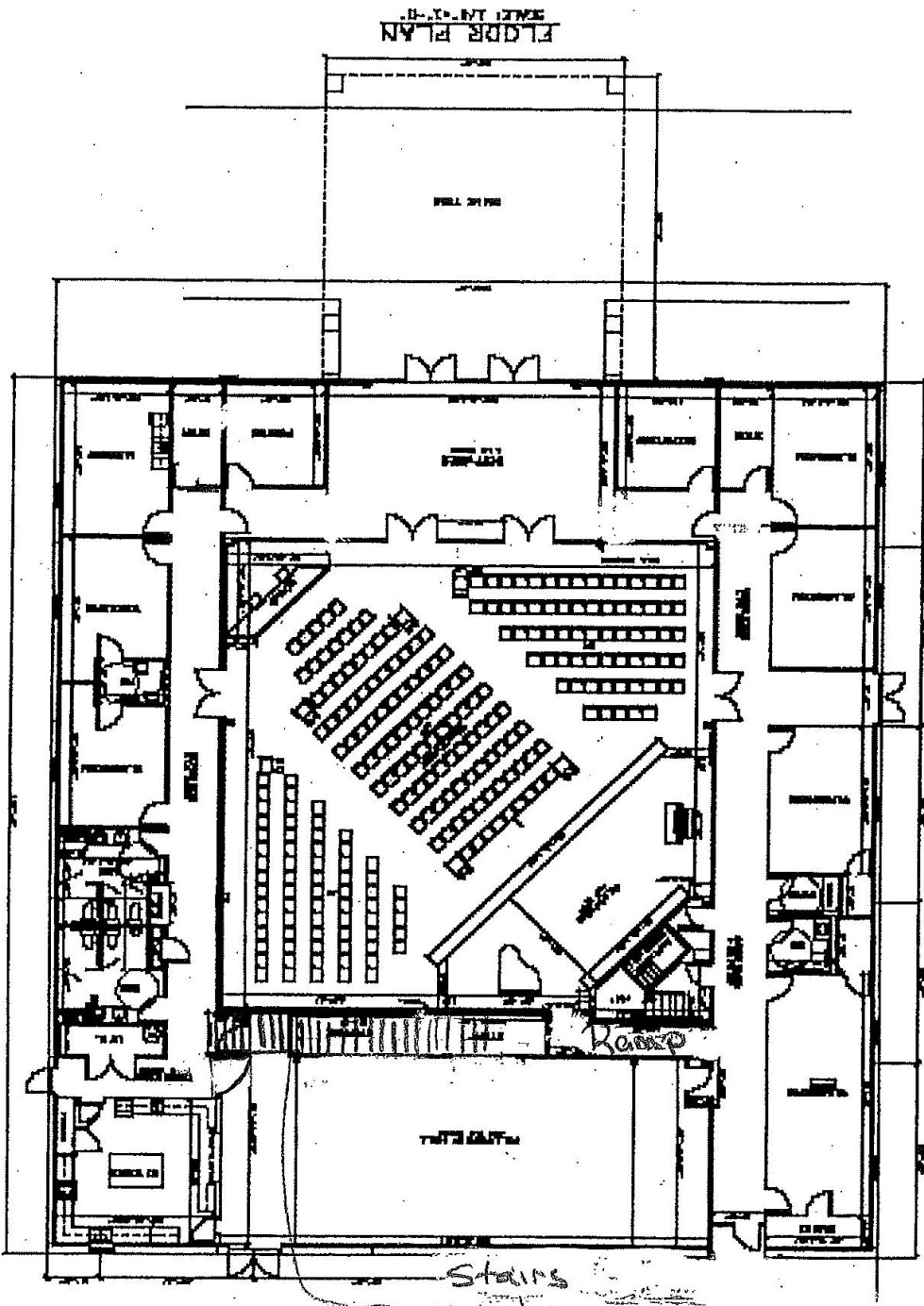
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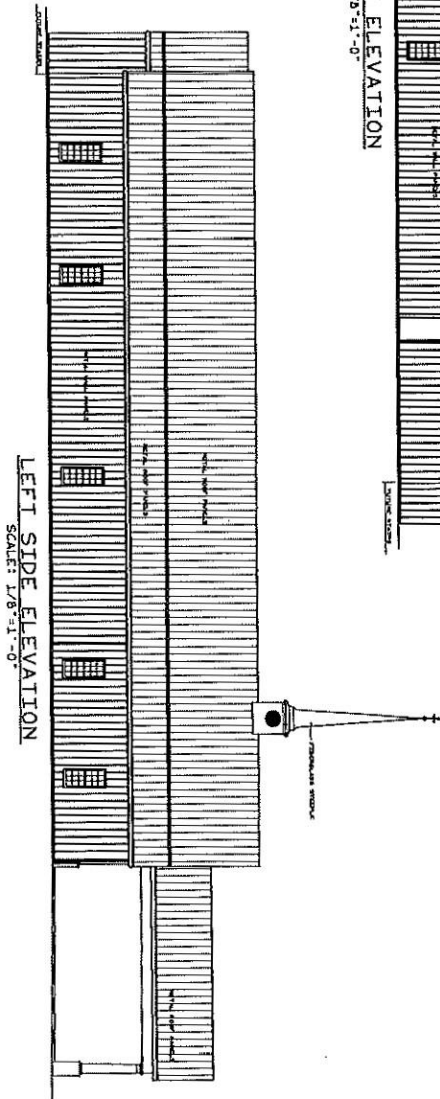
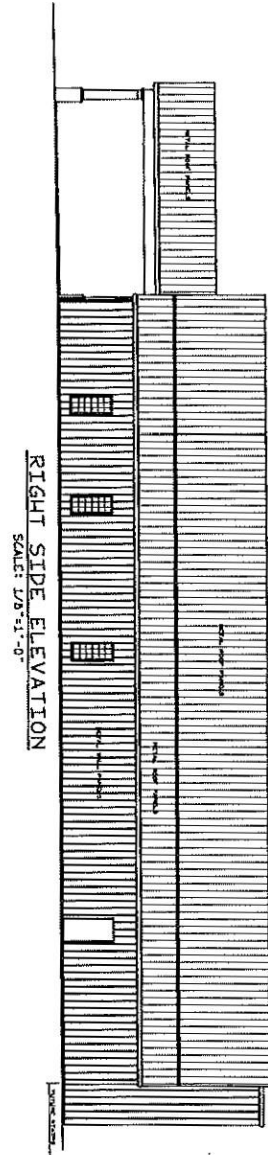
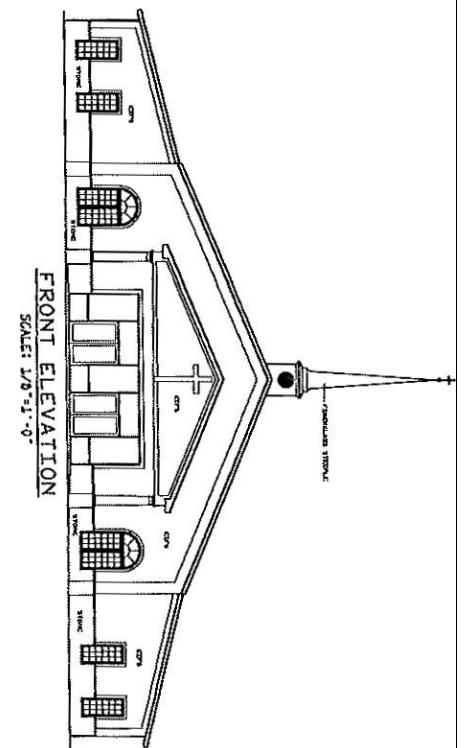
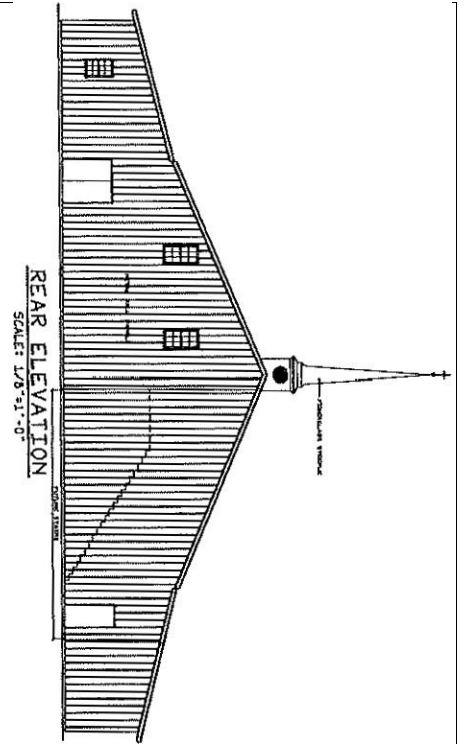
FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

PRELIMINARY - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

	FLOOR PLAN	<div>DATE: 07/14/2014 DRAWN BY: J. M. CHECKED BY: J. M.</div> <div>FARMINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH FARMINGTON, N.C.</div> <div>7000</div>		<div>TEHEART CONSTRUCT ' ON 2teg Nag co." . D' RC 27103 336 794</div>	<div>SEAL 24916</div>	<div>Sai th Engineer ing and P.A 1310—9 Wayno Mamor lot N.C. 27534 Phone: 919,736.2141 919.730.2142</div>
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Stairs
To Upstairs
Layout of sanctuary not correct (ie chairs, piano, etc.)



PRELIMINARY - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Appendix C

Professional Literature Review

My focus for the consultancy project was the sustainability of church growth for a Southern Baptist church located in rural North Carolina. The goal of the project was to consider factors related to ensuring the church is able to appropriately grow and meet the needs of the community for the next 50 years. In order to do so, we must understand factors contributing to church growth and sustainability of growth, particularly for Christian churches. These factors include but are not limited to understanding the types of church growth, understanding engagement for church members, and considering leadership strategies needed for church growth.

Understanding Church Growth

Church growth is defined as, “the subject area which seeks to [analyze] why Christian churches, at various levels of [organization], grow or decline using a numerical growth as a vital area of analysis” (Bretherton & Dunbar, 2020, p. 63). In this respect, church growth is based primarily on the number of members coming in the doors and the number of those who ultimately end up joining the church. There are two different types of membership growth that should be considered. First is the attraction of new members who are converting to Christianity. As explained by Davis et al. (2010), “the foundational, theological cornerstone of the Christian church is converting non-believers in Jesus Christ, or ‘saving lost souls’” (p. 353). This conversion of believers adds members to the body of Christ through salvation. The second type of membership growth is the transfer of membership from one church to another. Transfer of membership can be viewed as simply working with a market that is already in existence and not necessarily net growth of the market (Davis et al., 2010). Both types of membership, however,

contribute to the overall growth of the church.

According to Stark (2015), there is much misinformation about church attendance in America. Despite popular belief, church attendance in the United States has remained stable over the past 40 years. In 1974, approximately 36% of Americans attended church on a weekly basis, and in 2014, that number remained fairly stable at 34%. It is true, however, that the number of Americans claiming to belong to no religion in particular has increased to approximately 22% of Americans in 2014. Over the same period of time, the number of people attending church did not decrease and the number of Atheists did not increase. This indicates that instead of claiming to belong to one religion or another, more Americans are comfortable claiming to belong to no religion but still having a belief in God. Based on these data, the nonattending believers in Christ have become more comfortable claiming this identity of no particular religion (Stark, 2015). Given that analysis, there is not a negative trend in the number of Americans attending church, and therefore there is still room and opportunity for growth of churches.

Church Engagement

Church engagement may take on many forms as technology increases. During the most recent COVID-19 pandemic, church attendance for many institutions transitioned online. According to Idowu (2020), the shared sentiment among church members during the pandemic was that “nothing can be compared with the physical appearance” (p. 9) of brothers and sisters in Christ coming to worship together, rather than an online appearance where there is room for lack of discipline. Even during the pandemic, there was no replacement for being in shared company with other believers. Particularly with the lack of structure and human interaction, online attendance was not as strong as in-person attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lessons learned from this experience include the significance of the structure of worship, the sense of

belonging, and the importance of face-to-face interactions for those attending church (Idowu, 2020).

As Antoine de Saint-Exupery once said, “if you want to build a ship, don’t summon people to buy wood, prepare tools, and distribute jobs and organize the work, rather teach people to long for the endless immensity of the sea” (Singletary, 2009, p. 192). Emergent planning is key in developing churches for future growth. Instead of planning in a linear fashion, taking a stepwise approach to church growth, church planning will be more successful with a flexible approach. Learning organizations are circular in nature, continually moving and considering new factors. Taking into account the “process of engaging stakeholders and valuing their perspectives for what is an adaptable, ever-changing approach to serving others” (Singletary, 2009, p. 196), organizations can continue to learn from their stakeholders. By taking this approach to church planning, the church is able to take into account the changes in community, membership, leadership, and other variables as it prepares for church growth (Singletary, 2009).

In addition to emergent planning, church leaders should also consider the role of social media in engaging members for the purpose of church growth. According to Cooper (2017), a study was conducted to assess any relationship between church growth and engagement of church-related tweets on Twitter. For reference, Twitter is a social media platform with almost half a billion tweets every day and over a quarter of a million active accounts. According to a study conducted in London, England, the analysis found that there is a significant relationship between religious or “church-related tweets” (Cooper, 2017, p. 46) and the growth of churches in the areas from which the tweets were sent. These tweets were found to be positive in nature and could be traced to areas where churches were growing. Given these data on social media engagement, church leaders may consider the use of social media to engage followers and

potentially increase the rate of church growth (Cooper, 2017).

Church Leadership

When considering church growth, the leadership of the church should not be overlooked. There has been debate among researchers that considers if the idea of “stale in the saddle” (Davis et al., 2010, p. 358) over an extended period of time applies to church leaders and the tenure of pastors at the top of growing churches. In other words, do leaders tend to become less effective over time? Organizational leaders tend to come in with strong decision-making capabilities that level out over time when they become more conservative with their decisions. A pastoral leader, or any leader, who stays in one office over time may become “susceptible to strategic inertia where momentum and gestalts are created that do not allow the organization to easily respond to shifts in the environment” (Davis et al., 2010, p. 353). Southern Baptist churches are unique to the Southern Baptist Convention in that they do not have the same oversight as other religious bodies or organizations. Southern Baptists can act autonomously, which allows for more strategic choice and autonomy of leadership. Based on findings from Davis et al. (2010), new church leaders tend to see an increase in church attendance as they take on the role of leader of the church. This tends to plateau over time; however, we see that leaders who are at an organization for longer periods of time may see church attendance will most likely continue to increase, similar to earlier in their tenure as pastors. Moreover, although attendance may drop off after the newness of a leader wears off, contributions made by members do not. Tithes and offerings to the church tend to increase and remain stable with leadership tenure (Davis et al., 2010). Given these trends, leadership in church bodies should be mindful of the engagement of existing members as they grow their church.

Leadership in the church is one of immense responsibility, “ultimately [bearing] the

responsibility for the organization's overall conduct and performance" (Davis et al., 2010, p. 357). Given the importance of the leader in the church, those in leadership positions should take seriously the development of their leadership capabilities. According to Cincala and Chase (2018), servant leadership is a model closely associated with the teachings of Jesus Christ. "A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities in which they belong" (Cincala & Chase, 2018, p. 81). This leadership is different than more traditional forms of leadership that focus on power for the leader instead of the interest of the follower. Servant leadership should be developed among church leaders to ensure the focus of the church is to serve its members. In addition to servant leadership, churches should also consider having strategic leadership capabilities at the top. Among many other factors, "biblical material, revelation and the testing of its accuracy, time to listen to God, spiritual gifts, theological reflection, and prayer are of importance to strategic leadership in the church" (Jenssen, 2019, p. 1). In this light, leadership and theology both contribute to the development of a church and church body. Strategic leadership of a church allows for leaders to develop these strategies that are biblically based and important for the multiple areas that represent the church's impact and work (Jenssen, 2019). Both strategic leadership that is forward-thinking and servant leadership that is outward-thinking must be developed among leaders.

In considering church growth, thought must also be given to the type of church that is growing. Stoll and Petersen (2008) discussed two distinct types of churches: high-tension and low-tension churches. Based on the analysis conducted by the two, high-tension churches, otherwise known as conservative churches, are growing, and low-tension churches are not experiencing growth. Higher-tension churches tend to have a church membership with a higher level of commitment from those members. Higher costs of membership, however, are associated

with a higher level of reward. According to Stoll and Petersen, a relationship with God, who is innately loving and good and can provide more than you can imagine, is an example of a religious reward. This type of reward relationship develops a higher level of commitment from members, and it is found that members of high-tension churches give more resources, specifically time and money, than low-tension churches. Due to this relationship of giving, these resources are good predictors of growing churches. Conservative churches tend to have members who give more money and, in turn, tend to grow at a faster rate than more liberal churches. The engagement of members in high-tension churches may lend to more resources that allow for church growth (Stoll & Petersen, 2008). Leadership must take into account these factors when considering how to engage the church body.

Once church members are engaged in high-tension churches, strategic planning must be considered for predicting the future of the church. According to Bretherton and Dunbar (2020), the size and membership of the church body are “negatively associated with the active involvement of its members, that is, the larger a congregation, the lower active member engagement” (p. 65). Strategies that keep members engaged in growing churches must be utilized to ensure church members are active in church activities. According to an interview with Phillip Brande, pastor at Farmington Baptist Church, church growth means that the church continues to invest in members to not only increase the number of members but actively engage and grow believers in Christ. This includes providing resources and programs for members, investing in small groups for socializing, and continuing to meet people where they are in their lives (Brande, personal communication, November 23, 2020). By balancing growth in numbers with continued efforts in engagement, a subgroup stratification must occur wherein members engage in smaller groups to build relationships (Bretherton & Dunbar, 2020). By engaging in

these groups, members are involved in a way that allows for continued church growth and participation. According to Chaney and Lewis (1977), “church growth can only occur when those individuals making up the ‘body’ are growing individuals” (p. 57). Focusing on the inward investment in members while also balancing outreach in the community will ensure sustainable church growth.

Church growth takes into account many factors, including engagement of members, development of leadership, and understanding of the environment in which the church is growing. A community focus, understanding the scope and engagement of members in the church, and strong and effective leadership are all key factors to understanding how and why churches grow. All of this should be taken into consideration when planning for church growth or sustainability of churches when looking at the future. When considering the growth of Farmington Baptist Church in North Carolina over the next 50 years, all the previously stated factors must be considered and taken into account when planning for the church of 2070.

Appendix D

CITI Certification

		Completion Date 25-Apr-2021 Expiration Date 24-Apr-2024 Record ID 41168272
This is to certify that:		
Kimberly Ford		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		
<div>Graduate School of Education Research Investigators (Curriculum Group) Graduate School of Education Research Investigators (Course Learner Group) 1 - Basic Course (Stage)</div>		
<div>Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.</div>		
Under requirements set by:		
Gardner-Webb University		
 Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative		
Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w46e3b273-41ed-422e-97f0-07ef8384aa63-41168272		

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