

# St. Francis of Assisi

Castle Rock, CO

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## FEASIBILITY STUDY

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March 31, 2026



**Catholic Stewardship Consultants**

Thriving Parishes. Engaged Disciples. Abundant Stewardship.

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## Executive Summary

Catholic Stewardship Consultants, Inc. was retained by St. Francis of Assisi Parish to conduct a feasibility study regarding the possible development of a parish mission in the Crystal Valley area. The study included 64 confidential interviews with parish leaders and parishioners as well as a parish-wide digital survey. The purpose of the study was to assess parish understanding of and support for this concept, identify key opportunities and concerns, evaluate leadership and stewardship readiness, and estimate the potential financial capacity that may exist should parish leadership determine that further action is warranted.

The study indicates that St. Francis of Assisi Parish is experiencing real pressure related to parish growth, especially in the areas of Mass attendance, parking, traffic flow, and overall parish capacity. At the same time, both the interviews and the survey show broad support for continuing to explore a response to future growth in southern Castle Rock. The study does not, however, indicate broad readiness for an immediate major capital campaign to purchase land and construct a permanent mission church or parish campus.

Instead, the findings support a parish-level strategic planning phase that would help Fr. Mark and parish leadership define realistic next steps before determining whether any future fundraising initiative should be recommended.

The findings are encouraging in that they confirm both a real pastoral need and broad support for continued exploration, even while indicating that greater clarity is needed before a major campaign should be recommended.

## Feasibility Study Overview

St. Francis of Assisi Parish retained Catholic Stewardship Consultants to conduct a feasibility study regarding the possible development of a parish mission in the Crystal Valley area. The study was designed to gather feedback from parishioners and parish leaders, assess overall support for continued exploration, identify key concerns and opportunities, and estimate potential financial capacity should parish leadership determine that future action is appropriate.

To assist in this process, CSC conducted confidential interviews with selected parishioners and parish leaders and also administered a parish-wide digital survey. The findings that follow are intended to help parish leadership evaluate the current level of support for continued exploration and determine the most prudent path forward.

## Feasibility Study Questions

During the week of February 23, 2026, CSC representatives Tommy Rose and Brian Morand conducted 64 personal interviews with parishioners and parish leaders, either in person, by phone, or via Zoom. The following questions represent the primary topics discussed during those interviews.

1. What are your thoughts about the growth occurring in the Crystal Valley area and how St. Francis of Assisi Parish should respond pastorally?
2. What are your initial reactions to the idea of exploring the establishment of a parish mission in Crystal Valley?
3. When you hear a possible approach that begins with the purchase of land for a mission, followed over time by the construction of a church and rectory and potentially eventual independence as a separate parish, what feels wise and what concerns or questions does it raise?
4. How do you think the establishment of a parish mission in Crystal Valley might affect St. Francis of Assisi Parish as a whole?
5. If nothing were done and growth continued in the Crystal Valley area, what do you believe would happen?
6. Do you see the idea of a mission in Crystal Valley as a natural expansion of St. Francis of Assisi Parish or as something that could create challenges for the parish?
7. How does the possibility of the mission eventually becoming an independent parish strike you?
8. Based on your experience at St. Francis of Assisi in recent years, do you believe the parish has the leadership strength and stewardship culture necessary to support an initiative like this?
9. What factors do you think would most influence whether this effort succeeds or struggles?
10. If significant early leadership gifts were required, do you believe those gifts exist within the parish?
11. Based on everything we have discussed, do you personally believe the parish should move forward in exploring the establishment of a mission in Crystal Valley?
12. If yes, what level of financial support might you prayerfully consider over a multi-year pledge period?
13. If no, would you still consider supporting the effort in some way financially?
14. Are there individuals you believe we should be sure to speak with either because they may have the capacity to support the initiative at a higher level or because they would offer helpful perspective?
15. Is there anything we have not asked that you believe parish leadership should carefully consider?
16. Based on everything we have discussed, would you lean toward moving forward, waiting, or not proceeding?

*(Although these were the questions used as a guide, some interviews went in other directions and resulted in additional or different information based upon the desires and interests of those interviewed.)*

## Feasibility Study Findings

### PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Of the 64 individuals or couples interviewed, 57, or 89 percent, indicated that they would support continued exploration of the proposed initiative either with a stated financial commitment or with a willingness to consider supporting the effort financially. Seven interviewees, or 11 percent, indicated that they would not support moving forward with the concept right now.

Among those interviewed, 37 individuals or couples offered a preliminary estimate of the financial support they might provide toward the initiative, representing approximately \$1.55 million in potential commitments. An additional group of interviewees indicated that they would support the effort financially but were not prepared to suggest a specific amount at the time of the interview.

The interviews revealed strong openness toward exploring a parish mission, especially in light of continued residential growth in the Crystal Valley area. At the same time, interviewees consistently emphasized the importance of careful planning, strong communication, financial clarity, and preserving the vitality and unity of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. Many expressed greater comfort with a phased approach that would allow continued discernment before any major permanent commitment is made.

Interview financial summary	Total Number
Number of interviews conducted	64
Number supportive	57
Number opposed	7
Number offering estimates	37
Total preliminary estimated support	\$1.55 million
Number supportive but not ready to estimate	35

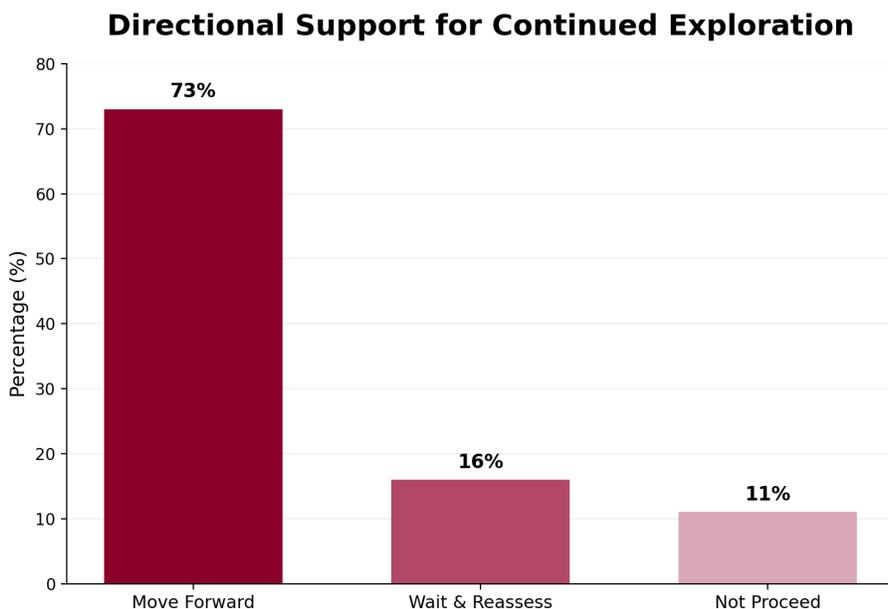
## Parish-Wide Survey

From March 10 to March 29, parish families were invited to participate in an online survey regarding the possible development of a parish mission in the Crystal Valley area. Invitations were distributed via Flocknote on March 10, 13, and 20, with a final reminder sent on March 24.

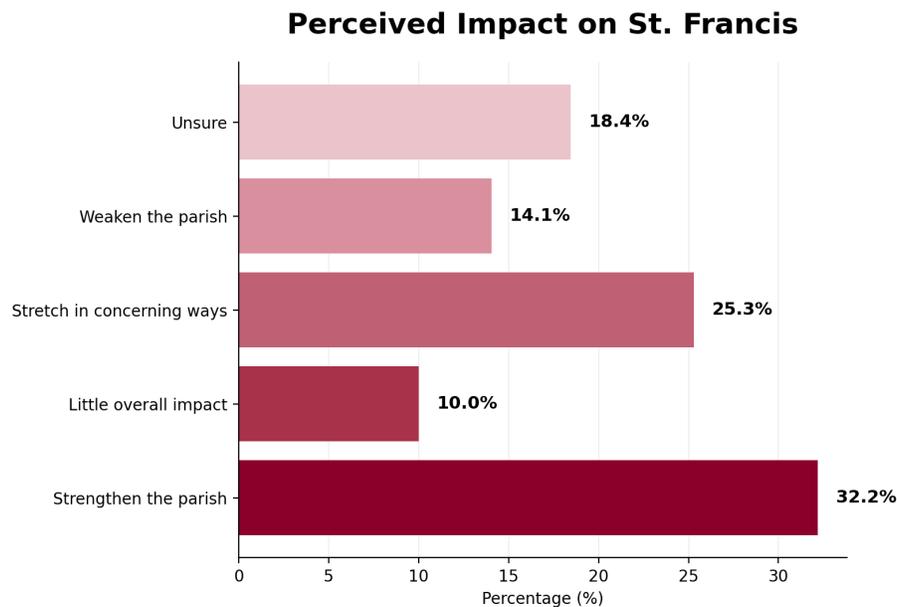
The parish-wide survey generated 381 total responses to the residence question, indicating participation from a broad cross section of the parish community. 11 percent identified Crystal Valley as their residence, 15 percent identified The Meadows, 25 percent identified North Castle Rock, 7 percent identified South of Crystal Valley, and 42 percent identified another area. This indicates that the survey did not simply reflect the views of one geographic segment of the parish.

When asked how they felt about exploring the possibility of establishing a parish mission in Crystal Valley, 45 percent strongly supported exploring the possibility and 26 percent somewhat supported it, for a combined 71 percent expressing support for continued exploration. Fourteen percent were neutral or unsure, while 15 percent were somewhat hesitant or strongly opposed.

On the final directional question, 73 percent said move forward in exploring a mission, 16 percent said wait and reassess later, and 11 percent said not to proceed. These responses indicate broad support for continued discernment, though not a mandate for immediate project execution.



When asked how a mission would affect St. Francis of Assisi Parish as a whole, 32 percent said it would strengthen the parish and 10 percent said it would have little overall impact. At the same time, 25 percent said it could stretch the parish in concerning ways, 14 percent said it could unintentionally weaken the existing parish community, and 18 percent were unsure. This indicates that parishioners are open to continued exploration, but many want assurance that the existing parish will not be weakened financially, pastorally, or communally in the process.



The open-ended responses repeatedly referred to current crowding, parking, traffic, and the sense that St. Francis is already strained, especially on major weekends and holy days. Many respondents said that if no response is developed, the parish will become increasingly overwhelmed and some families may drift elsewhere. At the same time, respondents also raised repeated concerns about clergy workload, volunteer depth, financial strain, and uncertainty about what exactly a mission would mean in practice.

When asked about the possibility of a mission eventually becoming more autonomous, 63 percent said they would be comfortable with that possibility and 13 percent said somewhat comfortable, for a combined 77 percent expressing comfort. Fifteen percent were unsure, while only 8 percent expressed concern. This indicates that many parishioners understand the concept of a mission as part of a longer-term growth path rather than simply a second worship site permanently tied to St. Francis.

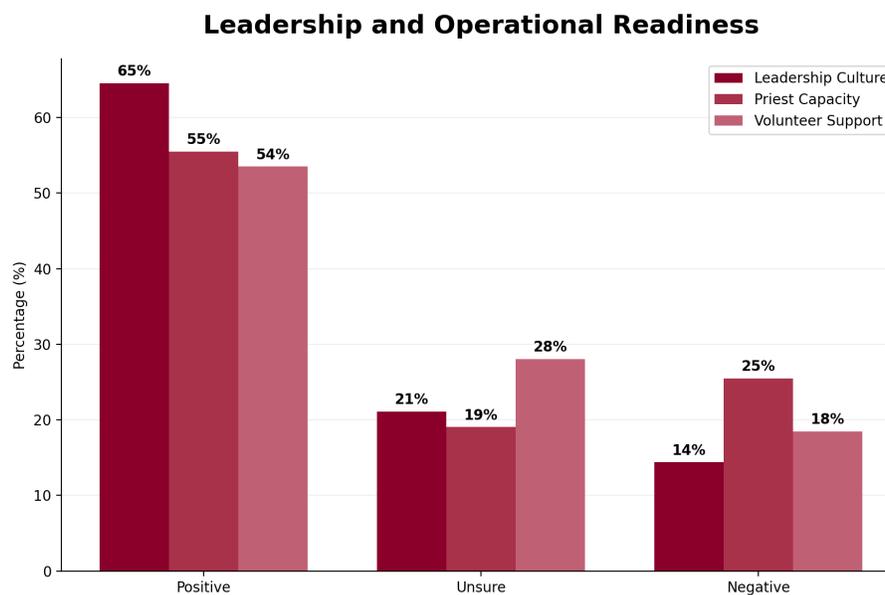
One theme that emerged consistently in both the interviews and the open-ended survey responses was the desire for greater clarity regarding what, specifically, is being proposed. Much of the hesitation expressed by parishioners does not appear to reflect opposition to the concept itself, but rather uncertainty about what a mission would mean in practical terms. Parishioners also expressed questions about how it would affect St. Francis of Assisi Parish, who would provide priest leadership, and what financial commitments would ultimately be required. This lack of definition appears to be one of the primary reasons many parishioners support continued exploration while remaining cautious about immediate action.

## Leadership and Operational Readiness

On the question of whether St. Francis currently has the leadership strength and stewardship culture necessary to support an initiative like this, 65 percent answered yes or probably yes, while 21 percent were unsure and 14 percent answered probably not or no. This reflects moderate confidence in leadership, but not overwhelming conviction that the parish is fully ready for a major undertaking without further planning and definition.

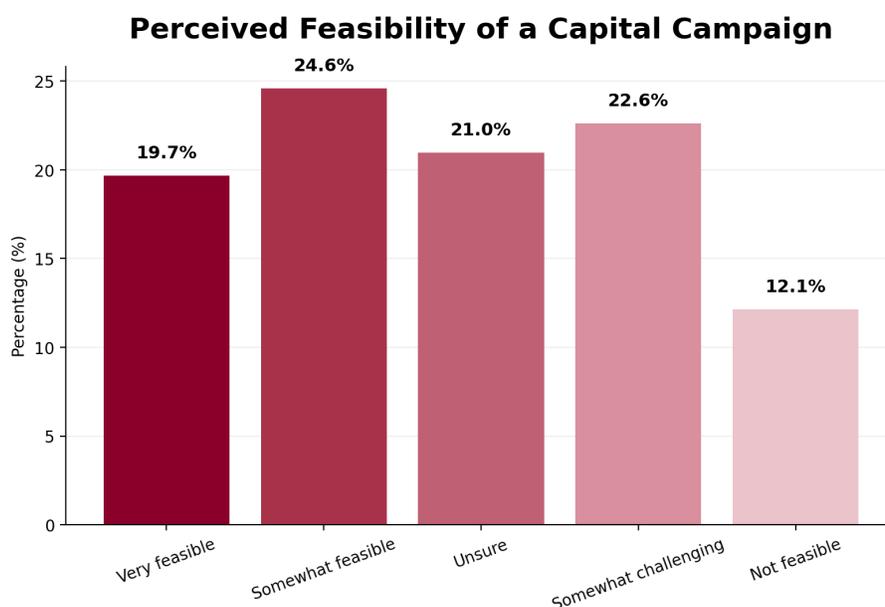
On priest leadership, 55 percent said they were very or somewhat confident that adequate priest leadership could be sustained for both St. Francis and a potential mission. At the same time, 25 percent were somewhat or very concerned, and 19 percent were unsure. These responses do not appear to reflect a lack of confidence in current priest leadership, but concern about overall capacity, given the existing demands on the parish and the practical challenge of supporting multiple locations.

Volunteer and lay leadership capacity appears less certain. 54 percent answered yes or probably that sufficient volunteer and lay leadership would exist without significantly weakening ministries at St. Francis. 18 percent answered probably not or no, and 28 percent were unsure. This suggests that many parishioners believe a mission could eventually develop the needed volunteer base, but they are not convinced that both locations could be sustained easily without strain.



## Campaign Feasibility and Fundraising Potential

The survey results on campaign feasibility are more cautious than the interview gift data alone. When asked how feasible a capital campaign would be over a three- to five-year pledge period, 44 percent said very or somewhat feasible, 21 percent were unsure, and 35 percent said somewhat challenging or not feasible at this time. The open-ended responses to this question frequently referred to diocesan responsibility to purchase land and build a new church, economic uncertainty, recent financial obligations of the parish, inflation, and the practical question of whether parishioners would want to support a church they may never attend.



The annual giving survey question suggests some broader participation at modest levels, but it does not materially strengthen the case for a major immediate campaign. Among those answering that question, only a very small number indicated willingness at upper leadership levels, while the largest categories were less than \$1,000 annually, \$1,000 to \$2,499 annually, would not participate, or preferred not to say. The stronger evidence of leadership gift capacity remains the interview data.

Taken together, the interview and survey data suggest that if a fundraising effort were conducted for a clearly defined, modest, and phased first step, the parish may be capable of raising more than would be required for that limited purpose alone. A campaign in the range of approximately \$4 million to \$5 million may be achievable under a clearly defined effort with strong leadership support. At the same time, the current findings do not support recommending a major permanent-build campaign right now. Rather, they suggest that some level of future fundraising could be possible only if parish leadership first defines a more limited and realistic objective.

### **Preliminary Fundraising Guidance**

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Estimate Range</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Modest phased first-step effort	\$4M–\$5M	Possible if clearly defined and appropriately limited
Major permanent-build campaign	Not recommended at this time	Not supported by broader parish
Strategic planning phase	Recommended now	Most prudent next step

## **What Would Strengthen Confidence**

One of the clearest survey findings came from the question asking what would most strengthen confidence if parish leadership were to move forward. The top response, by far, was strong diocesan backing with clear priest leadership assignments at 45 percent. This was followed by clear communication about impact on St. Francis at 18 percent, clear financial transparency and safeguards at 16 percent, and a phased, test-and-grow approach at 15 percent. These responses indicate that parishioners are not rejecting the idea itself. They are asking for more clarity, more realism, and more confidence about how such an effort would actually work.

## Consultant Assessment

The data point to a real pastoral need, but not yet to a clearly defined and broadly supported major-project solution. The study strongly suggests that St. Francis of Assisi Parish is already experiencing strain related to growth, and that many parishioners believe some form of future response will eventually be necessary. The combined interview and survey findings therefore support continued exploration of a mission concept in Crystal Valley. Importantly, the study does not suggest that the vision lacks support. Rather, it suggests that support for the vision currently exceeds clarity about the specific path forward.

At the same time, the broader parish does not appear ready to support an immediate major campaign tied to major long-term land acquisition and permanent construction. Support for exploration is broad. Confidence in immediate execution is not. Concerns about diocesan responsibility to purchase land and build a new church, priest leadership, volunteer capacity, financial strain, and long-term sustainability remain too significant to justify recommending a major permanent-build effort currently.

The Diocese of Colorado Springs is also currently in a period of transition following the departure of Bishop Golka, as the diocese waits for a new bishop. That circumstance reasonably counsels prudence regarding any permanent institutional commitment, even though it should not prevent St. Francis of Assisi Parish from continuing parish-level discernment and planning now.

## Recommendations

- CSC recommends that St. Francis of Assisi Parish continue exploring the pastoral need represented by growth in the Crystal Valley area.
- CSC does not recommend an immediate major capital campaign for land acquisition and permanent church construction.
- CSC recommends that the parish enter a parish-level strategic planning phase led by Fr. Mark and key parish leaders in order to clarify realistic pastoral, operational, financial, and communication options before determining whether any future fundraising initiative should be recommended.
- CSC recommends that any future concept be approached in phases rather than as an all-at-once permanent solution.
- CSC further recommends that any future fundraising effort, if eventually pursued, be tied only to a clearly defined and realistic first step rather than to a full future parish buildout.

## Suggested Next Steps

Over the next several months, CSC recommends that St. Francis undertake a formal parish-level strategic planning phase. That process should help Fr. Mark and parish leadership do five specific things.

First, clarify what is meant by a mission in practical terms and determine what type of phased response, if any, is realistic.

Second, evaluate how any future response would affect St. Francis of Assisi Parish, especially in the areas of priest leadership, volunteer capacity, finances, and parish life.

Third, determine whether there is a modest first-phase objective that is clear enough, limited enough, and prudent enough to merit future fundraising consideration.

Fourth, develop a stronger communication framework for the parish so that future discussion is more concrete and less ambiguous.

Fifth, determine at the conclusion of this planning phase whether the parish should recommend no fundraising effort, a modest and clearly defined first-phase effort, or a later return to the question after additional clarity is gained.

If parish leadership wishes, CSC can assist Fr. Mark and parish leadership during this strategic planning phase by facilitating discussions, helping define realistic phased options, refining the pastoral and financial case for any possible first step, and helping shape parish communications related to the process.

## Conclusion

The feasibility study indicates that St. Francis of Assisi Parish is experiencing genuine pressure related to growth and that many parishioners believe some form of future response will eventually be necessary. The study also indicates broad support for continued exploration of a possible mission in the Crystal Valley area. At the same time, it does not support an immediate recommendation for a major permanent-build capital campaign. The prudent next step is not to step away from the vision, but to strengthen it through a parish-level strategic planning phase in which Fr. Mark and parish leadership more clearly define the realistic options before determining whether any future fundraising effort should be pursued.



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