



Core

CAPITAL  
CAMPAIGNS

Feasibility Study Report

## The American Cathedral in Paris

2022



August 1, 2022

We wish to extend our thanks to all for the cooperation, support, and gracious hospitality extended to Maurice Seaton throughout the feasibility study process recently completed.

A special word of thanks goes out to Nancy Janin and Sophie Belouet for coordinating the personal interviews.

During the implementation process, we found friendly, concerned, and open communication regarding the proposed campaign and project plans. A total of 172 units participated in the survey; 24 interviews were conducted, and 148 responded to the online survey. This represents a total response rate of 20% among the members of the community that were contacted.

This study is our distillation of the information, opinions, and ideas gathered through the survey. It represents our combined evaluation and appraisal of major factors related to the proposed campaign.

Now important decisions must be made to continue the momentum essential to the success of a campaign. Maurice Seaton of Summit Fundraising LLC welcomes the opportunity to provide further assistance.

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## **Executive Summary**

### Background

The American Cathedral in Paris has completed its feasibility study and the cathedral family should be thanked and commended on a very good 20% response rate from those surveyed in June and July 2022. A total of 879 households were exposed to the study, and 172 responded.

Those surveyed included: all who consider themselves members of the cathedral, members of the Friends, and members of the American Cathedral Foundation. The results indicate the cathedral family can indeed proceed with a capital campaign centered around the restoration of the Cavallé-Coll organ.

The purpose of the feasibility study was to determine the willingness of the congregation to support a proposed capital campaign to raise €5,080,000. The survey tested support for a campaign after significant time was spent assessing needs, project planning, and communications work in the months prior to the study. Research into how best to restore the Grand Organ began after the last capital campaign and in recent years saw the engagement of several organ buildings and experts to assess and recommend the best approach and included detailed recommendations on every aspect of the instrument. The Tentative Case Statement in the Appendix of this report provided a distillation of the proposed restoration and renewal work to the organ, and a summary of other important capital projects that cannot be funded from the cathedral's operating budget.

The very good 20% response rate lends credibility to the report and was achieved via a combination of twenty-four interviews, plus an online survey. The response rate is about average, based on feasibility studies conducted by Maurice Seaton over the past five years.

### Campaign Goal

An adjusted overall campaign goal of €4,200,000 is recommended as the primary campaign goal and is a reflection of the financial capacity of the cathedral community to support a capital campaign at this time in its history. Importantly, this goal amount includes the lead gift to the campaign that was given some time prior to the feasibility study being conducted. A potential challenge goal of €5,000,000 should be considered and, if achieved will enable the cathedral to accomplish important additional projects.

### Results

Results indicate that 93% of respondents support the cathedral conducting a capital campaign, although some with reservations. Of those who responded to the study 68% are prepared to make a gift, at this stage.

Only roughly 7% of respondents oppose a capital campaign. A concern expressed by several former major donors is that they are no longer as active in the cathedral for various reasons, and this may impact the level of support from some donors to a campaign. Despite these concerns there is a high level of support for moving ahead. Members of the cathedral, the Friends and the

Foundation will all lend support to a campaign to the best of their ability in order to achieve the campaign goal. There is almost universal agreement, and strong support to renovate the cathedral's Grand Organ, a project that many consider long overdue. There is also sizable support for the holistic improvement of the cathedral acoustics, and for the creation of a dedicated music endowment for the cathedral.

In relation to the other projects tested in the feasibility study, there is insufficient support to move ahead with the paperless worship project as part of this capital campaign. A few people believe that retaining the US state flags in the cathedral is important, however most are open to their relocation and for the inclusion of other country flags to foster a more representative and welcoming feel to members of the congregation who are not American. In general respondents were supportive of improved cathedral lighting.

The most controversial project is the idea of replacement of the cathedral pews with chairs. Significantly more education and communication about the options under consideration is needed before any firm decision is made regarding this project. Based on the findings of feasibility study, several people are adamantly against the idea for theological, aesthetic/historical motivations and reasons of tradition, among others. Others are very much in favor of pew replacement for equally strongly held reasons that include flexibility of space use, a more modernist approach to liturgy and worship, as well as the need to sustain the cathedral's future in terms of generating new revenue streams. A prayerful decision will be needed by cathedral leadership about whether to include this project before the campaign can proceed. (Refer to page 11 for bar chart)

There are a number of positive indicators for proceeding: an awareness of the needs, willingness by many to give, identified leadership, and an eagerness at this stage to volunteer and assist with the implementation of a campaign.

Section One of the Report provides background and offers detailed conclusions, recommendations, and methodology flowing from the results of the Study. Section Two contains the composite results and comments by respondents, which are unattributed. All of the comments provided by respondents are included in the following report, and you are encouraged to read all of them thoroughly in order to obtain a complete understanding of all the views expressed in the study. The report offers guidance to leadership as decisions are made about final scope and plans for a campaign.

*Section One:*

**Conclusions, Recommendations, and Methodology**

## I. Introduction

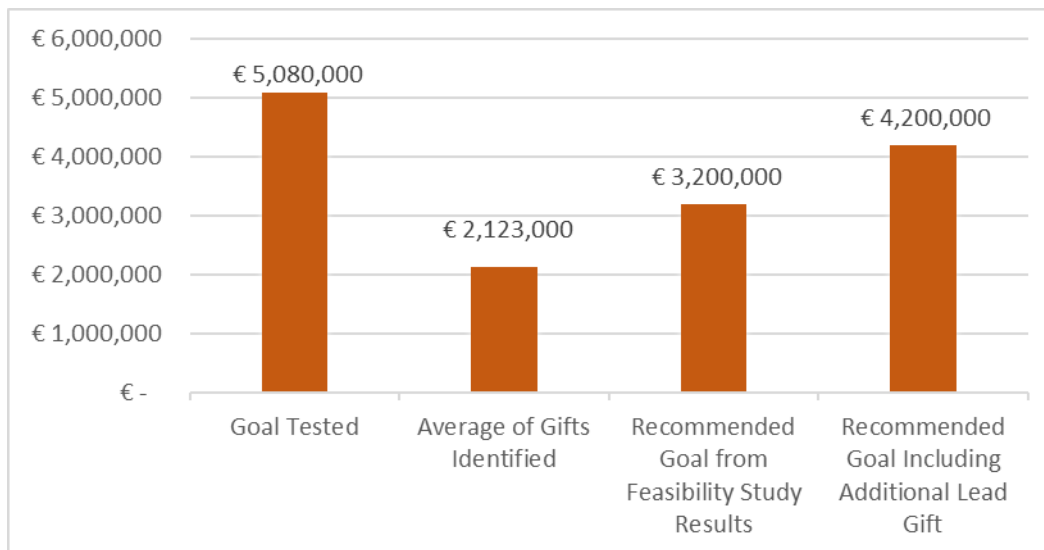
For some time the leadership of The American Cathedral in Paris has been evaluating the parish's programs, facilities, and resources, and assessing the capital needs of the cathedral. After much study and the involvement of many people, the Vestry authorized Maurice Seaton of Summit Fundraising LLC, a Core Capital Campaigns provider, to conduct a feasibility study to explore the willingness of the congregation to support financially these identified needs.

The facts, findings, and recommendations of the resulting survey, now completed, provide a sound basis for leadership decisions with regard to the future of a capital fund drive. A complete description of the goals of the proposed plans may be found in the tentative case statement in the Appendix available in both English and French.

## II. Conclusions

### Gift Potential

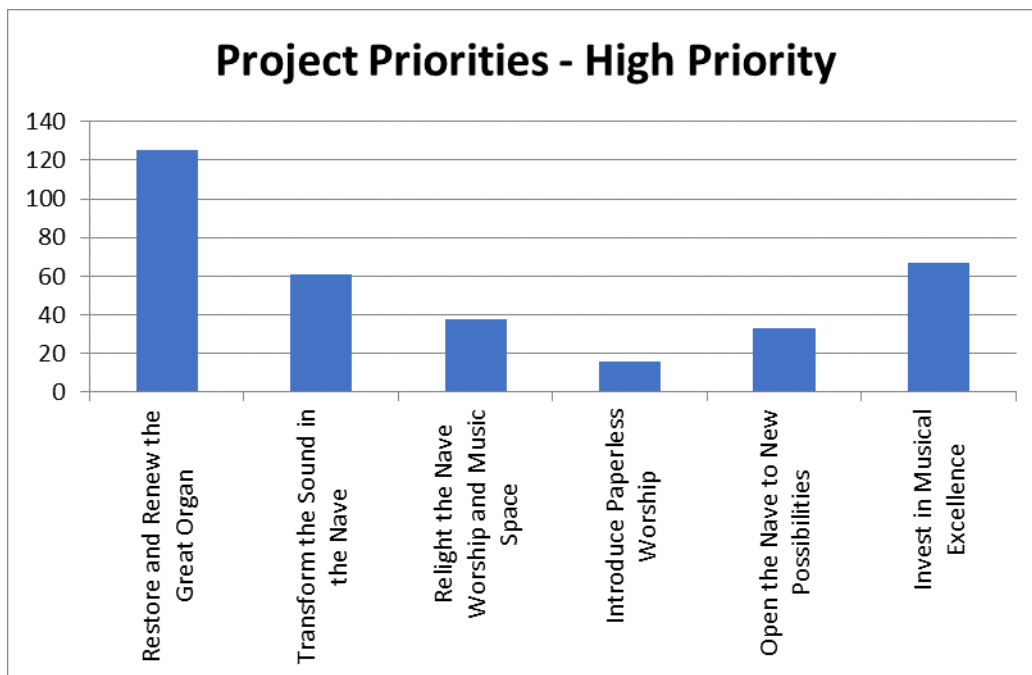
Experience tells us we can take the average between the low estimate (€1,498,500) and the high estimate (€2,747,500) of the pre-campaign projections revealed in the Study and multiply by a factor of 1.5 when certain percentages and comments (as revealed in this study) are attained. Thus, the average, €2,123,000, when multiplied by this factor (1.5) reveals a suggested goal of €3,200,000. This recommendation is made factoring in the reality that additional gifts, not yet identified, will be forthcoming; hence the multiple of 1.5.





### Awareness of Need

A majority of respondents (81%) were aware that The American Cathedral in Paris is considering a possible campaign, and 82% were also aware of some or all of the proposed plans. Of course, not all the items received the same degree of support. Present awareness of need is a positive; however, each project should be studied and prioritized with consideration given to the degree of support and the resources available.

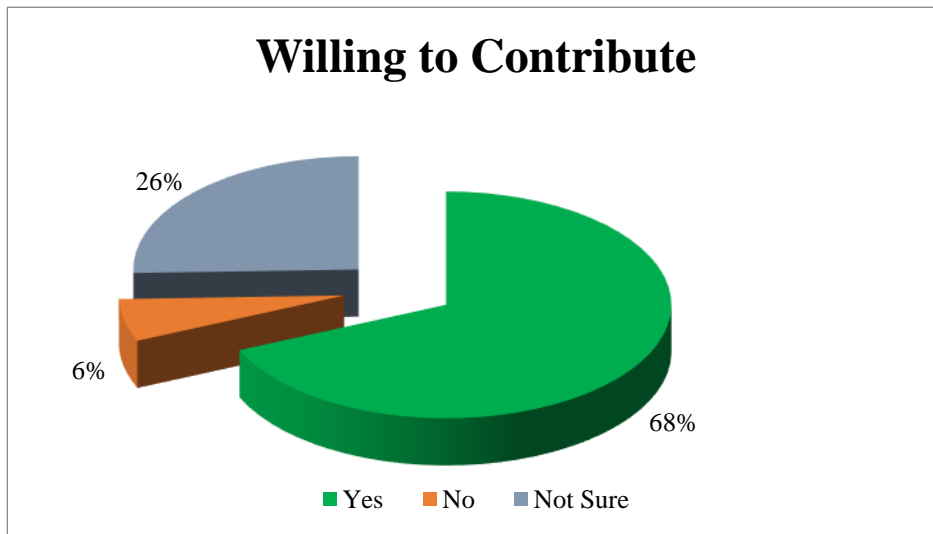
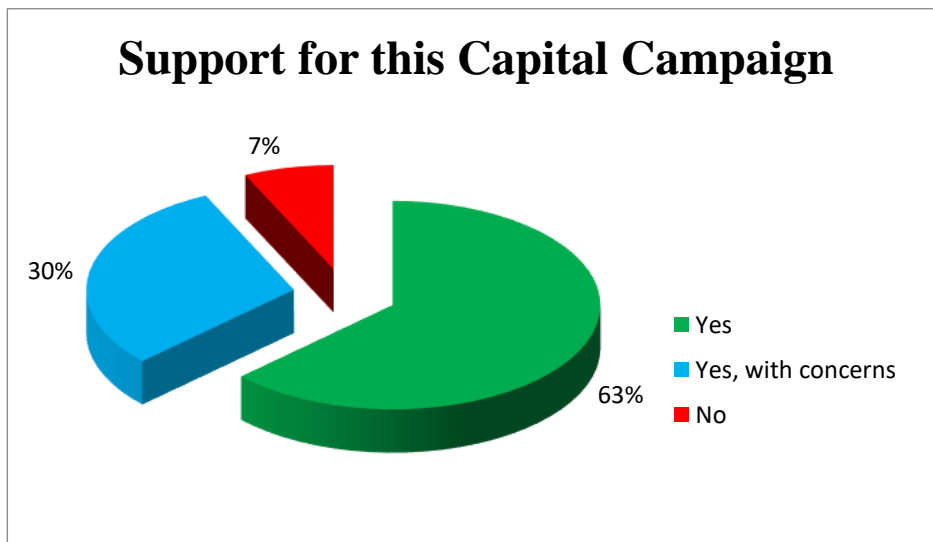




## Interest in and Support for a Capital Drive

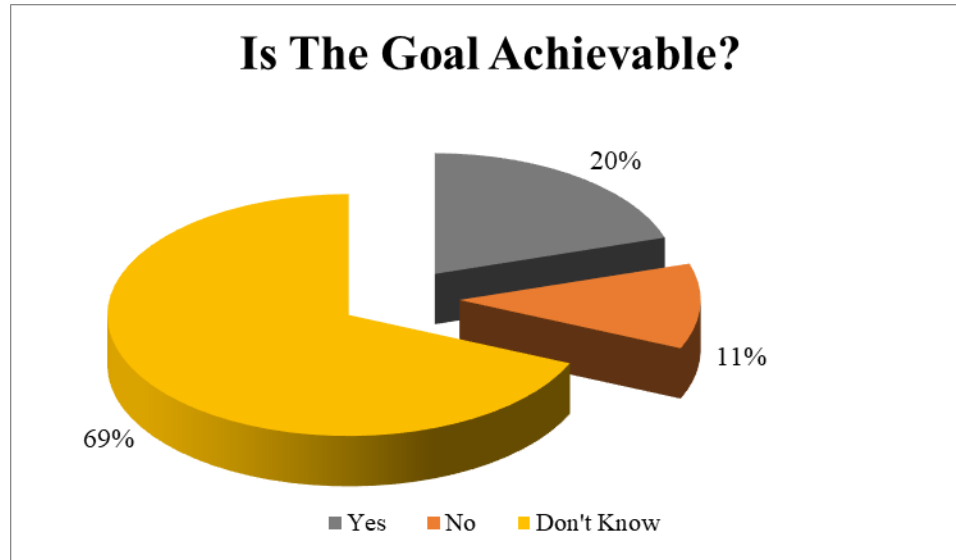
There is significant indication of support for the proposed campaign, but also signs that suggest caution. Positive signs from respondents include:

1. Ninety-three percent are in favor of the campaign, although some with reservations.
2. Only 7% are opposed to the proposed campaign timing.
3. Sixty-eight percent of respondents would give to the campaign.
4. Eighteen percent are willing at this early stage to consider a volunteer position.

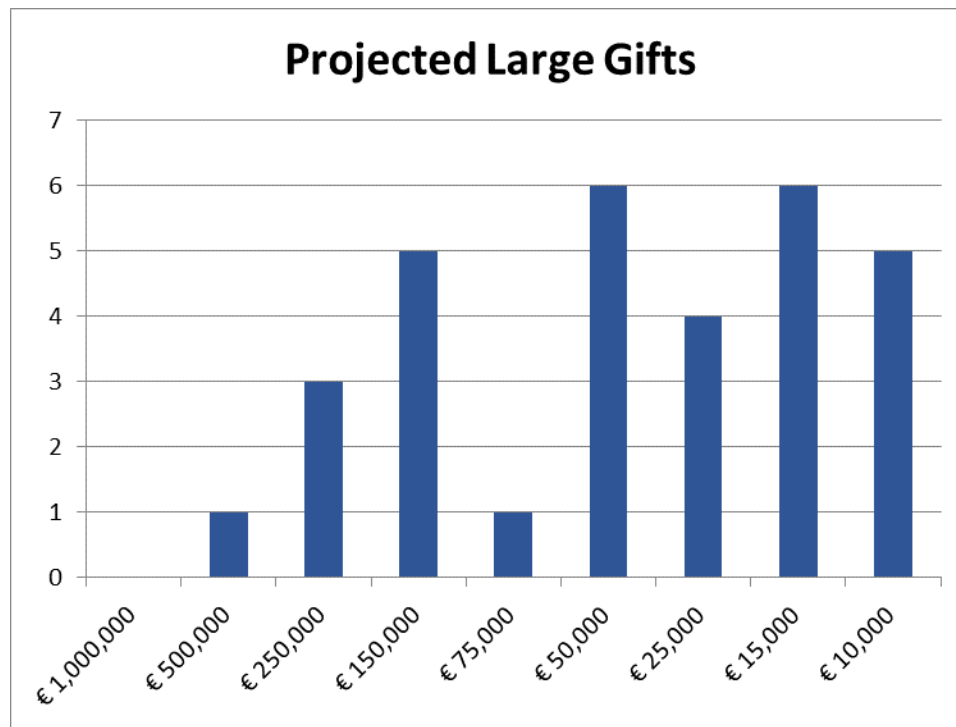


## Concerns

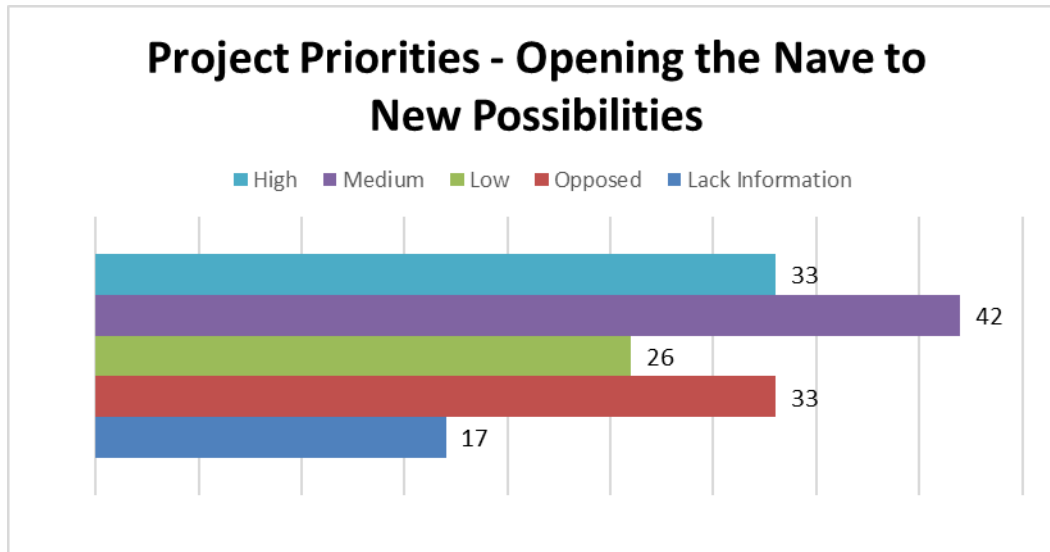
1. Approximately 20% of respondents feel the goal is reachable. Eleven percent feel it is too high. The remaining 69% had no opinion on whether this goal can be achieved. Concern exists that the tested goal is too high. Donors should have confidence that a reasonable and achievable goal for the campaign is determined.



2. Too few larger gifts were reported at this early date to allow a goal of €5,080,000 to be fully embraced.



3. Respondents were split on their responses to the prioritization question regarding opening the nave to new possibilities.



### **Influential Leadership**

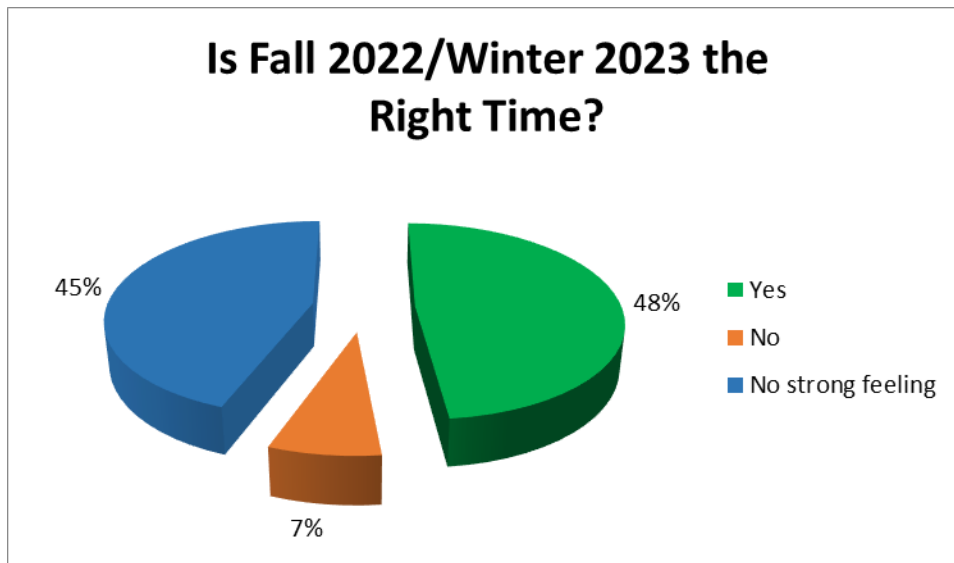
Strong leadership—both financial and volunteer—is absolutely essential for the success of any campaign. A leadership core is presently in place. It is the challenge of this leadership group to expand involvement within the cathedral and from the Friends and the American Cathedral Foundation based in the USA, including other individuals who may have significant giving potential. With involvement comes commitment.

### **Planned Giving**

Several people requested planned giving information, and 35 indicated the cathedral was already in their estate plans. This is encouraging and suggests that such future planned gifts could be used to help build endowment or retire future indebtedness.

### **Campaign Timing**

The respondents endorsed the proposed campaign timing. Of course, decisions on the priorities of projects must be made. It is imperative to revisit the proposed plans and make appropriate changes in the size of the effort, the proposed goal, and other sources of funding.



### III. Recommendations

#### Recommendation #1

The information revealed in this study suggests that a capital campaign for a primary goal of €4,200,000 is realistic and appropriate. This goal includes the lead gift to the campaign which was made prior to the launch of the feasibility study. This presupposes that an assertive campaign involving the entire constituency would be launched, and that the type of methodology used by Summit Fundraising LLC would be followed.

Recognizing that immediate needs are greater than what is revealed in the study, leadership may wish to consider €4,200,000 as the “primary” goal and establish a larger “challenge” goal of €5,000,000, which would encourage the constituents to stretch to longer pledges—five years rather than three years, for example.

If the “challenge” was not reached, the constituents would still experience success by achieving the “primary” objective, but hopes would be high that the challenge, at least in part, could be accomplished.

#### Recommendation #2

Planned giving activities should be pursued during the campaign in an effort to encourage major gifts to underwrite the future of the cathedral. Such gifts, often deferred and received in future years, are helpful in reducing mortgages or future indebtedness. The list of those who have remembered the cathedral in their estate plans should be used to grow the existing planned giving program centered around the Trinity Society. Summit Fundraising LLC will guide this work in the next phase.

**Recommendation #3**

Review the Tentative Case Statement and make final decisions based on the financial feasibility revealed in the Study. Consider also the prioritization suggested by respondents.

**Recommendation #4**

Share as soon as possible the revised plans with the congregation and seek increased consensus. Increase significantly all publicity concerning this project.

**Recommendation #5**

Once the leadership has had an opportunity to review the study recommendations and revise the proposed plan, a timetable such as the following should be considered to maximize success:

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Months 1-2 | Determine campaign calendar and budget. Announce goal. Begin materials development (pledge cards, brochures, letterhead, etc.). Recruit and train campaign leadership and volunteers. Evaluate Quiet Phase donor prospects.                          |
| Months 2-3 | Continue to recruit and train leadership and volunteers. Complete materials development. Launch the Quiet Phase solicitation of gifts and pledges. Contact planned giving prospects, as appropriate. Coordinate capital and annual giving campaigns. |
| Months 3-4 | Set up pledge collection and acknowledgment systems. Complete Quiet Phase solicitation. Prepare for the launch of the Public Phase of the campaign.  |
| Months 4-5 | Hold kick-off event. Begin Public Phase of the campaign. Continue monitoring of solicitation efforts for all constituencies.   |
| Months 5-6 | Finalize all calls. Hold celebration event to acknowledge conclusion of the campaign and recognize the leadership and volunteers.  |

**Recommendation #6**

Select professional management to guide and direct the campaign to ensure efficiency and the implementation of a proven, successful fundraising methodology. Maurice Seaton of Summit Fundraising LLC looks forward to continuing to work with The American Cathedral in Paris.

## **IV. Methodology**

### **A. The Feasibility Study**

As the cathedral considers a capital campaign, it should reflect on several important questions:

- ◆ What conditions are essential to a successful campaign in the community?
- ◆ How much money realistically can be raised?
- ◆ Will the cathedral community support a drive that fulfills the goals of the proposed plans? The cathedral will need to coordinate participation by the Friends and Foundation in the United States.
- ◆ When should the campaign begin, and how long should it last?
- ◆ What volunteer leadership is available to head the campaign?

Determining the answers to these and other questions was the major purpose of the Feasibility Study. Through the Study we have researched, analyzed, and evaluated fundamental factors present, or capable of development, which might influence a capital campaign.

The study was conducted in three phases: research, personal interviews, and online.

#### **Phase I**

An examination of the proposed needs, development of a “Tentative Case Statement,” determination of optimum campaign goals and timing, and review/selection of personal interview prospects were completed during sessions with the cathedral leadership.

#### **Phase II**

A sampling of cathedral members was selected for personal interviews. A total of 24 interviews were ultimately conducted by Maurice Seaton of Summit Fundraising LLC.

#### **Phase III**

An online survey was sent to 855 households. Included in the mailing was an email requesting participation in the survey, the online questionnaire, and the tentative case statement.

## STATISTICAL NOTE:

- ◆ A total of 855 online surveys were sent to the cathedral community including members of the parish, the Friends, and Foundation members.
- ◆ Of those, 148 were returned: an online response rate of 17%.
- ◆ Including the 24 who were interviewed, 879 units were exposed to the study. Of those, a total of 172 units or 20% participated.
- ◆ Based on experience, this response rate is a good representative involvement from the cathedral community, lending credibility to the study findings.
- ◆ Regarding how respondents attend the cathedral's worship services and/or concerts, 82 attend mostly in-person, 20 attend mostly online, 40 attend both in-person and online, and 20 do not attend.
- ◆ Of the total that participated, 26%, attend worship services and/or concerts one or more time(s) per week. Another 32% attend two to three times per month.
- ◆ Regarding the financial-giving practices of those who responded, the majority, 55%, are regular contributors with a written annual pledge.
- ◆ In evaluating the importance of charitable donations, the cathedral ranks in the top five charities that respondents donate to with 39% rating it as such. Another 32% rank the cathedral as their most important charitable donation.
- ◆ Fifty-one respondents attend the cathedral on a seasonal/part-time basis.
- ◆ Of the respondents who attend on a seasonal basis, six are away in the winter, eight are away in the spring, 13 are away in the summer, four are away in the fall and 35 attend at various times in the year.
- ◆ Twenty-nine seasonal respondents consider themselves a member of another parish.
- ◆ Regarding the primary financial support of seasonal respondents, 19 primarily support the cathedral, 17 primarily support another parish, eight try to support both equally, and four do not support either church financially.

## **B. Elements of a Successful Campaign**

There are certain elements which must exist in connection with every successful fundraising campaign.

1. Recognition and acceptance of the “tentative needs” as expressed.
2. The case for widespread appeal.
3. Availability of strong financial leadership.
4. The capability of existing leadership to recruit additional support.
5. Past and current support levels for other church-wide capital campaigns.
6. The congregation’s awareness of the proposed plans.
7. The economic optimism of the parish community.
8. Overall response to goal attainability.
9. Indicated interest in contributing to, and projected levels of support for, the proposed campaign.
10. Projected timing of the campaign.

These elements are carefully reviewed in this report. The Conclusions and Recommendations Section of this report addresses the elements of success as we consider the readiness of The American Cathedral in Paris to proceed with a major capital campaign.

*NOTE: Minor editing has occurred in the comments to ensure grammatical accuracy and preserve the anonymity of the feasibility study respondents. Also, the spelling of some names could not be verified.*