First Forum Summary

The following summary reflects the feedback gathered from the First Forum held on March 2, 2025.

Approximately 60 congregation members attended and shared their thoughts on the potential development of our land, alternative opportunities for its use, additional information needed to make an informed decision, and preferred communication methods. This document organizes the key themes and concerns raised during the discussion.

Question 1: Looking Ahead 10 Years – Potential Benefits & Challenges of Developing Our Land

Potential Benefits:	Potential Challenges:
Aligns with our broader mission	Loss of control over land use and development
Convenient location near the school and church	Concerns about environmental impact and loss of green space
Provides much-needed housing, including options for those who can't afford market rates	Possibility of community or neighborhood opposition
Eliminates maintenance costs (e.g., mowing)	Risk of losing members over the decision
Generates revenue: • Helps reduce debt/mortgage • Provides long-term budget support • Contributes to the city's tax base	Once sold, the land is permanently gone; may regret decision to sell someday
	Sale price may not be significant

Potential legal and financial considerations:

- Possible tax implications
- Possible liability issues
- Impact on tax-exempt status
- Aesthetic concerns
- Keeping the church a landmark, not blending in with new development
- Ensuring the design aligns with church values
- Need for alternative ways to meet community needs without selling land
- Relocation concerns (sheds, gardens)

Question 2: Alternative Uses for the Land to Benefit the Church & Community

Green Space & Recreation:	Community-Oriented Projects:
Park or athletic fields	Columbarium
Community garden	Islamic center
Prairie restoration	Partnership with Gustavus, the city, or a conservation group to preserve as green space
Tree farm	Collaboration with Living Earth Center at Good Counsel for garden development
Labyrinth	

Other Considerations:

- Leave as is
- Efforts to recruit new families

Question 3: Additional Information Needed to Make an Informed Decision

Financial & Legal Considerations:	**Community Impact & Logistics:**
Would the church owe taxes on the sale?	Would rezoning be required?
Cost-benefit analysis of selling vs. keeping the land	Conditions that could be placed on the sale
Estimated net revenue from the sale	Developer options and level of church involvement in the project
Potential impact on endowment structure	
What cuts would the finance committee consider if we don't sell?	**Congregational Engagement:**
If it was planted as a restored prairie what would be the initial and ongoing costs?	Input from members in nursing homes, assisted living, and younger families
Is the land abstract or torrens?	

Question 4: Preferred Communication Methods & Update Frequency

Methods:	Announcements (e.g., temple talks, First Out Loud updates)
Emails	Written versions of temple talks for broader access
Hard copies	Wednesday evening updates for families
Direct mailings	
Church website	**Frequency:**
Town halls	Quarterly or even monthly updates
Small group discussions	Over-communicate through multiple channels

Other Considerations:

- What percentage of the total FLC "green space" does this land make up?
- Show us exactly where the property lines are that you are talking about.
- What exactly would happen to our mortgage if we sell the land?
- How much could we reasonably expect to see in yearly disbursements if we put the rest of the money in an endowment? It depends on negotiations with Thrivent.
- Do we have any control over what would possibly be built there? Choosing a responsible developer offers some control.
- What will happen to the trees that were planted?

The answers to the most frequently asked questions about FLC's vacant land will be in next month's newsletter.

Thank you for your engagement as we continue this important discussion!