

# Site Selection Criteria

Adapted from several sources:

- **Convenience to current membership.** Can a great majority of current members and friends make the trip in 20 minutes or less
- **Future geographical growth patterns.** Site located toward the to future growth trend?
- **Visibility:** The new church can make a tremendous statement to the community if the public sees it as they travel past.
- **Frontage:** Adequate frontage in order to make the proper statement and in order to attract the traffic passing by? There also needs to be enough frontage to ensure proper sight distances for traffic.
- **Size:** How much land is needed to meet the goals and mission statement of the church? 4-6 acres seems adequate. (rule of thumb—about one acre for every 100 people; one parking space for every 2.5 people in the largest typical worship service, and then adding another 30 percent for growth)
- **Storm water and flooding:** Is the property in a flood plain or flood prone area? A site that does not flood today may flood five years from now when a large housing development uphill covers much of the land, increasing the rain runoff.
- **Setback requirements:** Get a copy of the site setback requirements for the site to determine how far from each property line the buildings must be. See if parking, buffer zones, or green space requirements are allowed within the setback area.
- **Utility availability:** Determine the availability of all utilities for the site, including electricity, water, natural gas, telephone, and sewer (or septic with perk-test certification).
- **Soil conditions:** Are the soils suitable for building? Soil samples can be evaluated to determine the answer to that question.
- **Legal restrictions:** Carefully review the legal restrictions on the property. There may be deed restrictions that could limit the use of the property. There may be easements affecting the property for utilities, sight, access, or any number of reasons.
- **Zoning:** Don't assume you will get zoning changed to build a church if it is not already properly zoned. Do not close on the purchase of the property until adequate zoning is in place. Your contract should allow a contingency for zoning if rezoning is required.

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- **Neighborhood:** If the use of the neighboring property is offensive it will deter new members and hurt future values.
  - **Traffic:** From a business perspective it is cheap advertising. It is also a good indicator of future values of the property. Accessible to major traffic arteries.
  - **Noise pollution:** Notice if the property is located in an area that may be exposed to excessive noise that will potentially hurt the value of the property.
  - **Site dimensions:** An odd shaped tract may limit development and building.
  - **Topography:** Severe variations in the contours of the land may make a site not suitable for building or too costly to build on. A topographical survey will point out the areas that may cause a problem for building.
  - **Environmental concerns:** One cannot be too careful in the evaluation of the environmental aspects of the site. One should have contingencies in the purchase contract to protect the church. If a church is going to finance the purchase of the land or the buildings, the lender is going to require certification of a clean site. The church should try to get the seller to agree to provide an environmental report at his expense. Do not forget wetlands in the environmental evaluation. Building on site would have minimal negative impact on the environment.
- Indicates MUST criteria, deal-breakers.