



Final Report

**Archdiocesan Task Force
on Waterfront Ministry
of the Archdiocese of Newark
New Jersey**

December 1, 2008



Archdiocesan Task Force on Waterfront Ministry

FINAL REPORT

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MANDATE GIVEN THE TASK FORCE

1. To review current realities and analyze the strengths and short-comings of Waterfront Ministry in the Archdiocese.
2. To examine and study trends locally and nationally, including best practices, as they might apply to Waterfront Ministry in the Archdiocese.
3. To develop recommendations with timelines that support short term and long term goals, and ultimately fully developed plans, that will strengthen Waterfront Ministry.
4. Report due to Archdiocese by December 1.

TASK FORCE

The Waterfront Ministry Task Force (WMTF) is composed of clergy, religious, and laity involved in the waterfront in some way. Members are involved in pastoral ministry, education, real estate, development, communications, and government.

Members: Rev. Thomas Iwanowski, Monsignor Frank Del Prete, Rev. John Mullin, SJ, Sister Donna Ciangio, O.P., Mrs. Mary D. Baier, Mr. Joseph Turula, Mr. Mark J. Bonamo, Sister Kristin Funari, C.S.J.P. Mr. Joseph Doria, Ms. Roseanna Petruzzelli

Consultant: Mr. Mark Howard

THE PROCESS

The WMTF met together four times.

The WMTF was broken down in five working groups. Each working group was given specific tasks. The working groups met together to fulfill their assigned tasks. These groups and tasks were as follows:

1. GROUP ONE (Parishes)

Review current ministry and practices and future plans of Catholic parishes and other (non-educational) Catholic institutions on the waterfront. Consider how development on the waterfront has impacted the previous and present populations. How has the Church responded? What has and will happen to the older, poorer population on the waterfront?

MEMBERS: Fr. Tom Iwanowski, Monsignor Frank Del Prete, Sr. Donna Ciangio

2. GROUP TWO (Schools)

Review current state of Catholic education on the waterfront and projected future changes and needs. Consider how Public and Private Schools are responding. Consider how development on the waterfront has impacted the previous and present populations of those who seek Catholic Education. How has the Church responded? What has and will happen to the older, poorer population on the waterfront?

MEMBERS: Mrs. Mary Baier, Father John Mullin

3. GROUP THREE (Demographics, Growth)

Study current and projected demographics, socio-economic groups and construction on the waterfront. Seek information and projections of government & business concerning changes on the waterfront.

MEMBERS: Mr. Joseph Doria, Mrs. Mary Baier

4. GROUP FOUR (Best Practices)

Study best practices and approaches to similar situations by other dioceses and other religious institutions in our area and nationally. What have other areas of the country done in similar situations? What are other religious bodies and non-profits doing to respond to current and projected changes on the waterfront?

MEMBERS: Sister Kristin Funari, Mr. Mark Howard, Sister Donna Ciangio

5. GROUP FIVE (Needs of the population)

Study the religious life, needs, and affiliations of the current and projected populations on the waterfront. (Are we dealing with an increasingly non-Christian population and a religiously indifferent population? Who is living and will be living on the waterfront? Are we dealing with a population that may be open to evangelization?)

MEMBERS: Mr. Joseph Turula, Mr. Mark Bonamo, Ms. Roseanna Petruzzelli

DEFINITION OF THE “WATERFRONT”

The WMTF decided to define the waterfront that it would study as the area south to north, from Bayonne to Fort Lee, along the Hudson River. The WMTF would concentrate on areas where new development is taking place or planned. It would restrict itself to areas about one or two miles west of the Hudson River.

The following parishes were determined to be on the waterfront as defined above.

Bergen County

Edgewater Holy Rosary

Hudson County

North Bergen Our Lady of Fatima
Sacred Heart

Guttenberg Holy Redeemer (St. John Nepomucene site)

West New York Holy Redeemer (Our Lady Help of Christians site)

Our Lady of Libera
St. Joseph of the Palisades

Weehawken St. Lawrence

Hoboken Our Lady of Grace & St. Joseph

St. Ann
St. Francis
Sts. Peter & Paul

Jersey City Resurrection (sites: St. Peter, St. Bridget, St. Mary, St Michael)

Holy Rosary
Our Lady of Czestochowa

Bayonne St. Vincent de Paul

St. Henry
Mount Carmel
St. Joseph & St Michael, linked

OBSERVATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

The WMTF drew the following conclusions from its observations, studies, surveys of parishes and schools, and experiences on the waterfront. The basis for these conclusions may be found in the appendices to this report.

Development

1. The waterfront is a growing, changing, developing area; this is particularly true for the Hudson County waterfront. Thousands of new housing units are under construction or planned. Between now and 2018, it is estimated that there will be 10,000 additional housing units in Hudson County. 8,000 of these will be in Jersey City. The waterfront will see the greatest growth.
2. Affordable housing in Hudson County will become less available.

Affects of the Current Economic Turmoil

1. The current economic downturn will affect development on the waterfront in the next year or two as new residential and commercial projects are placed on hold. Units planned as residential condos are being changed to rental units. This will mean a continuing high level of transiency in the waterfront population.
2. The high end market will not be as affected as the middle level market, which will be problematic.
3. The NJ Unemployment Rate will be 8 to 10% through 2009. This will be the highest since the 1950s.
4. The economic downturn will be most severe in the spring and summer of 2009.
5. The waterfront will be more affected than other areas of the state.
6. The economic downturn, which will particularly affect the waterfront, will put increasing financial pressure on schools and parishes located on the waterfront. Those who already find themselves financially challenged will find 2009 and 2010 particularly bleak.
7. The need for greater efficiencies in this current economic downturn may encourage parishes to work more closely together.

Population on the Waterfront

1. Where there were once declining populations, urban blight and decaying infrastructures, there are now building booms, gentrification, multi-cultural and ethnic populations and younger people.
2. The population on the waterfront is growing in number, but also growing less connected to organized religion. The population is also becoming more non-Christian and non-religious. Non-Christian due to demographics; non-religious due to secularization. These trends are likely to continue in the future.

3. There will be a continuing high level of transiency in the waterfront population.
4. There is continuing migration from Manhattan to Hudson County as Manhattan prices become ever higher and as congestion increases.
5. There is also a trend of semi-retired Baby Boomers coming to Hudson County to be close to Manhattan.
6. The waterfront population appears to be open to gentle evangelization.
7. The population is interested in community building events, social and educational activities.
8. The Catholic Church is seen in a positive light by those disconnected from religion when it is engaged in community building and activities that positively impact the wider community.

Parishes

1. The majority of the parishes on the waterfront are in maintenance mode. They are going from day to day, struggling to meet operating expenses. Most foresee declining financial health.
2. The economic downturn will negatively affect parishes and schools located on the waterfront. Those who already find themselves financially challenged will find 2009 and 2010 particularly bleak.
3. A few parishes are showing positive signs of growth in terms of numbers, financial viability, pastoral outreach, and innovation.
4. The parishes showing signs of growth are staffed with people who have embraced a pro-active, innovative approach to ministry on the waterfront.

Schools

1. The majority of schools on the waterfront are in maintenance mode. They are going from day to day, struggling to meet operating expenses. Most foresee declining financial health.
2. The prevalent concern among all schools is financial stability. Many principals note that their schools need financial assistance. These principals rely heavily on scholarships, a few endowments, benefactors, and fundraising for their financial stability. A small percentage takes advantage of Inner-City Scholarships with the rest relying on the assistance from their parishes.

RECOMMENDATIONS SHORT TERM

Parishes

1. There is a need for “re-imagining” or “re-visioning” ministry, outreach, and evangelization on the waterfront. Parishes cannot simply do what they have done before, nor can they operate as if they were located in the more stable and settled areas of the Archdiocese of Newark.
2. It would be advisable to combine the more successful parishes on the waterfront in some way so their staffs might work together in a collaborative fashion. These parishes could be grouped as a *waterfront cluster/deanery*.
3. We recommend that Our Lady of Czestochowa in Jersey City and Saints Peter and Paul in Hoboken be the first parishes in such *waterfront cluster/deanery*.
4. The parishes in this *waterfront cluster/deanery* would retain their traditional pastor and staff structure for the present, but a future structure would be encouraged to evolve as they work together. The structure would evolve from the lived ministry and experience of the two parishes. We foresee this would most likely evolve to the point where there would be a common staff, skilled in ministry to the waterfront, serving both parishes.
5. This *waterfront cluster/deanery* would focus on pastoral excellence and growth.
6. This *waterfront cluster/deanery* would engage a facilitator to guide the parishes in working ever more closely together and encourage continuing formation and growth in pastoral skills.
7. The staff of *waterfront cluster/deanery* would serve as a resource to those parishes not within its structure. It would also share ideas, resources, etc. that it has found effective in its ministry to the waterfront.
8. This *waterfront cluster/deanery* must be in a continual process of developing a strategic plan as well as evaluating its programs, ministries, and effectiveness. The services of a professional planner or organization should be retained to ensure this happens.
9. All the parishes on the waterfront must make use of the modes of communication preferred by the population on the waterfront. This will require an investment in hardware, software, computer services, and staff.
10. Each waterfront parish should demonstrate how its mission statement and parish goals address the dynamic changes taking place around it.
11. If the report of the WMTF is approved by the Archdiocesan Implementation Team and by the Archbishop, there should be a meeting of all the waterfront parishes where this report can be made know and explained.

Evangelization/Outreach

1. There needs to be a stress on evangelization and outreach. The days of simply publishing a Mass schedule and having people arrive, does not hold true on the waterfront.
2. The parishes on the waterfront should be involved in community activities outside the confines of the parish. Parishes need to be seen as helping to strengthen civil society on the waterfront.
3. The positive role that parishes play in community building and strengthening social ties needs to be stressed.
4. The positive role our parishes and schools play in stabilizing a transient community and in building community needs to be stressed.
5. Parishes on the waterfront will be challenged to develop new ministries to respond to the economic downturn, namely, counseling, housing, dealing with stress, etc.
6. The parishes on the waterfront should develop a baptismal preparation program designed to encourage parents to grow in their appreciation of their own baptism and the faith into which their children are to be baptized. This program should consist of various phases designed to draw parents into a relationship with the Church as represented by the local parish community.

Schools

1. The schools that are located in the parishes that have chosen to be part of *waterfront cluster/deanery* should work together in a similar manner as the parishes of this *cluster* or *waterfront deanery*.
2. The schools of the *waterfront cluster/deanery* should particularly emphasize early childhood education as should all Catholic schools on the waterfront. The need for such early childhood education is particularly evident at the present time.
3. The schools of the *waterfront cluster/deanery* must be in a continual process of developing a strategic plan as well as evaluating their programs and effectiveness. The services of a professional planner or organization should be retained to ensure this happens.
4. The staffs of the schools of the *waterfront cluster/deanery* should serve as a resource to those schools not part of the *waterfront cluster/deanery*. It should also share ideas, resources, etc. that it has found effective in its educational ministry on the waterfront.
5. In this very transient area, stability in the school staff is critical. The school must be seen as an anchor in the community. This happens when the face of the school, namely its leadership and its teaching staff, are stable and rooted in the community. This stability also provides a continuity of vision and mission.

6. The schools on the waterfront must make use of the modes of communication preferred by the parent population on the waterfront. This will require an investment in hardware, software, computer services, and staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS LONGER TERM

Parishes

1. The suggested *waterfront cluster/deanery* would grow by **attraction** and **appointment**. Other parishes on the waterfront would be attracted to join this configuration because of its success. We anticipate that other parishes would embrace the vision and mission of the successful parishes that are joined in this *waterfront cluster/deanery*.
2. **(Attraction)** Parishes on the waterfront that request to join this *waterfront cluster/deanery* must embrace its vision and approach to ministry. The staff of a parish that requests to join must share the vision, understanding, and pro-active approach of the staff of the parishes that are part of this *waterfront cluster/deanery*. A shared vision and approach to ministry must be maintained as this *waterfront cluster/deanery* grows.
3. **(Appointment)** When pastorates become vacant in the defined waterfront parishes, pastors for these parishes would be chosen from the parochial vicars already working in the *waterfront cluster/deanery*.
4. The *waterfront cluster/deanery* would serve as a training ground for future waterfront pastors. In order for this to happen, parochial vicars would be assigned to this *waterfront cluster/deanery* not only to minister to the parishes but also to acquire the necessary skills for them to assume the pastorates of the parishes in this *waterfront cluster/deanery*
5. Staffing within the *waterfront cluster/deanery* is critical. Pastors, parochial vicars, pastoral associates, etc chosen to work in this *waterfront cluster/deanery* must embrace the vision, mission, and collaborative approach that will be central to this *waterfront cluster/deanery*. Staff members must be skilled in working with the highly educated, affluent, secular, and often religiously indifferent population.
6. In this very transient area, stability in the pastoral staff is critical. The parish must be seen as an anchor in the community. This happens when the face of the parish, namely its leadership and pastoral staff, is stable and rooted in the community. This stability also provides a continuity of vision and mission.
7. As this *waterfront cluster/deanery* grows, it should consider the need for additional worship sites to serve the waterfront population. These worship sites could be rented or leased. Renting or leasing would allow greater flexibility and also permit the sites to become active much more quickly. Renting or leasing would not require the tremendous outlay of money, time, and energy to buy property and erect a worship space.

Schools

1. The schools of the *waterfront cluster/deanery* must have an ongoing strategic plan. This plan should be developed with the services of a professional planning organization.
2. If a parish school wished to join the schools of the *waterfront cluster/deanery* in more closely working together, that parish would have to become part of this *waterfront cluster/deanery*.
3. As additional parishes and schools became part of the *waterfront cluster/deanery* there might be an evolution to a *waterfront cluster/deanery* regional school system. We feel attraction and evolution over time is the best approach.

APPENDICES

Information on Development on the Waterfront

- Between now and 2018, it is estimated the following number of new housing units will be developed in the areas we are concerned with:

Bayonne *	1,500 to 1,800 (when Peninsula is developed 5,000 units)
Jersey City *	8,000
Hoboken	650
Weehawken	11
WNY	450
All of Hudson County	10,000 units

* *indicate Joe Doria's estimates.*
- In the first quarter of 2008 in all of NJ 9,000 permits were issued to build new housing, 25%, or 3,000 of those permits were in Hudson County.
- Hudson County is a developing, growth county.
- By 2020 the Hispanic population in NJ will be 30%
- There is also a growth in the Asian population.

Summary Statements from Parish Survey

18 Parishes were contacted, 15 responded.

RESPONDED:

Edgewater	Holy Rosary
Bayonne	Mt. Carmel
	St. Henry
	St. Vincent
Hoboken	Our Lady of Grace (and St. Joseph),
	St. Ann
	St. Francis
	Sts Peter & Paul
Jersey City	Resurrection
	Our Lady of Czestochowa
	St. Anthony
	Holy Rosary
North Bergen	Our Lady of Fatima
Weehawken	St. Lawrence
West New York	St. Joseph of the Palisades

NO RESPONSE

Bayonne	Saint Joseph & Michael
North Bergen	Sacred Heart
West New York	Holy Redeemer

General Summary of the Holy Rosary, Edgewater Survey

While Holy Rosary is now a viable parish, it needs to do more to enhance its presence on the waterfront. This is something that cannot be achieved on its own. The parish will have to work in collaboration with other parishes, not necessarily with those in New Energies.

Perhaps it would be more beneficial if Holy Rosary were part of a “super waterfront deanery” whose goal would be to develop ministries and a welcoming outreach for those moving to the waterfront areas of Hudson and Bergen Counties.

Since as reported, the parish resources are sparse, on its own Holy Rosary would not be able to develop the staff or programs necessary to attract parishioners. However, if the parish worked in collaboration with other parishes, the sharing of resources and talent would enable a more effective outreach to develop.

General Summary of the Bayonne Parishes Surveyed

The waterfront parishes in Bayonne could probably benefit from a “summit” to discuss the needs of the area. Since there will be future development in the navy yard and other areas, a facilitated series of discussions, with information gleaned from our survey and the reports of the other areas of the Waterfront Task force, could lead to integration and collaboration of ministry in the area. While the parishes seem stable, finances will have to be increased and possibly new ministries added and headed by full time lay or religious staff as some of the priests will be called upon to become pastors in other parishes. Parishes would also want to seriously consider having a business administrator or director of operations who can look after finances and buildings.

While New Energies has been successful in other areas of the Archdiocese, it does not seem to have impacted in any significant way two of the three parishes that responded to our survey. The collaboration of parishes in an area may be the future of how ministry will be done as the number of priests declines or the skills of priests do not fit the needs of the ministry of the area.

General Summary of the Hoboken Parish Survey

There are five worship sites in a city that is one square mile in size. There needs to be a serious study of the parishes and whether the five sites are necessary.

There does not appear to be a great deal of collaboration among the parishes of Hoboken. Rather than duplicating ministries, it would be good to see how the parishes might work together more effectively in their outreach to the people they serve. Perhaps the parishes might want to explore the possibility of hiring a business administrator to help facilitate the day to day operations of the facilities as well as for the purchasing of supplies. While Sts. Peter and Paul is in an effective New Energies partnership, New Energies has had little or no impact on the other parishes.

General Summary of the Jersey City Parishes Surveyed

The parishes are responding to what is taking place around them according to the vision of the parish leadership (this includes clergy, pastoral staff, and leading parish members.)

The two ethnic parishes, Holy Rosary and Saint Anthony's, are presently surviving, but as time passes and their population continues to age, these parishes will decline. Holy Rosary particularly seems to be insulated from what is taking place on the waterfront.

Resurrection and OLC are dealing with a transient and mobile population. OLC has a population that is the youngest of the four parishes. Resurrection is hampered by inadequate income and also a large plant that it must maintain.

OLC seems to be more future orientated and willing to try new things, for example, it is working with Sts. Peter & Paul in Hoboken. It also seems to be more aware of what is taking place around it. The four parishes of the Jersey City waterfront could more closely work together perhaps as a "waterfront deanery." However, there needs to be a common, shared vision among these parishes before this can happen. There needs to be right staffing for a bright future.

General Summary of the North Bergen Parishes Surveyed

Sacred Heart Parish did not respond to the survey. This would seem to indicate a lack of interest in the planning for the future. It would seem to be a parish that is doing what it has done in the past.

OLF seems to be a parish where the pastor has a sense of things happening around his parish and sees the need of the parish responding to these changes. In particular, this means reaching out to the people living on the waterfront. OLF needs to find a way to bring those waterfront people "up the hill" or to bring the church "down the hill" to them. (The same thing is true for St. Joseph of the Palisades in West New York.)

OLF would seem to be in need of additional financial support and also in need of funds to build a parish center. However, it would seem this parish center, if it were to be built, might be located on the waterfront and be a way to have "up the hill" meet "down the hill."

General Summary of the Weehawken Parish of St. Lawrence

Saint Lawrence seems to be operating as it has done in the past. It does not seem to have been impacted by the residential development in its area or does it expect to be so in the future.

Attendance seems to be declining and the financial outlook is not good. The parish does not seem to see the future as bright, nor does it seem to be planning to try and make the future brighter. It seems to be doing what it has done in the past.

General Summary of West New York Parishes Surveyed

From the lack of response it would seem that Holy Redeemer is not overly in touch with the development on the waterfront.

St. Joseph of the Palisades is a very large parish with inadequate operating funds. This is affecting the parish and the outlook is not bright. The parish feels it needs support from

the Archdiocese for its “mission work” to the poor and immigrant population of WNY. Other religious groups are making inroads into the Catholic population.

The present worship sites are not adequate and there is a need of a presence on the waterfront, or a way needs to be found to bring the people on the water up the palisades to the parish, or to bring the parish to the water. This situation is similar to that at Our Lady of Fatima in North Bergen. *Up the hill* needs to meet *down the hill*.

It seems the parish is financially struggling to minister to the present poor and large Spanish language population, yet recognizes that a ministry needs to be developed to the waterfront. This ministry would need to be different in outlook and language (English) from the ministry up the hill.

The parish sees a need for marketing more than on a one parish basis and sees the need for a large worship site for WNY or a consolidated approach by the parishes of the area.

Complete statistics from the parish survey are available on the CD ROM included with this report.

The Final Report is also on the CD-ROM