



For immediate release:

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**PROPOSED VIKINGS STADIUM LOCATION A THREAT TO BASILICA**  
***Linden Ave. Location Would Adversely Affect Membership,  
Community Outreach and Historic Landmark***

(MINNEAPOLIS – Jan.10, 2012) At a press conference today, representatives from The Basilica of Saint Mary said the proposal of Linden Avenue as a new location for the Vikings stadium will severely impact The Basilica’s ability to serve its parishioners, the community and puts at risk the historic landmark status of the 100-year-old building.

“While we support the Vikings and respect what the team means to our state, we have serious concerns about the proposal to locate the stadium just 300-feet away from our historic building,” said Father John Bauer, Rector of The Basilica of Saint Mary. “The majority of our more than 6,300 families drive in from the suburbs to support our parish and a stadium so close to our location would severely impact our Sunday worship schedule as well as greatly prohibit our ability to serve the community throughout the year. In addition, a major construction project so close to The Basilica and the increased traffic to the area would place a tremendous strain on our efforts to preserve this historic landmark.”

Following the construction of I-94 in the 1960s, The Basilica was forced to transform from a neighborhood parish to a destination parish. That project resulted in a huge loss of parishioners and almost ended the congregation due to the decline in membership. Since that time The Basilica has raised over \$30 million for restoration efforts for the campus.

“After four decades, The Basilica has finally rebuilt its membership and reestablished its position as a community destination for so many individuals,” said Bauer. “Not only is our parish made up of thousands who drive in from the suburbs, we are a refuge for the poor and a resource for the community. If a stadium is built a football’s throw away from us, it will severely limit who will be able to get to us and how we can help them. Currently, Sunday Masses attract 2,000 to 3,000 people to The Basilica of Saint Mary. I can’t imagine how our thousands of Sunday worshippers would be able to compete with the more than 60,000 people who attend a Vikings game – there simply isn’t that much room in this area and the traffic, congestion, tailgating and parking issues alone could be disastrous for our Sunday worship schedule.”

In addition to Sunday Masses, The Basilica hosts hundreds of programs and events each year that would be adversely impacted by the stadium. Activities like the St. Vincent de Paul outreach program that serves those in need, and The Basilica Block Party, which is the church’s largest fundraiser and raises millions of dollars for building restoration, would be at risk.

Father Bauer sent a letter to all parishioners today asking them to contact their legislator and city officials and express concern for the future of The Basilica.

“It’s important that we reach out to those who are working on this issue now and be a voice at the table to show our concern for the future of The Basilica of Saint Mary and for all the good that is done by our parish,” said Bauer.

#### **ABOUT THE BASILICA LANDMARK**

The Basilica Landmark is a nonprofit organization that builds awareness and raises funds to ensure The Basilica of Saint Mary remains a spiritual home and a center for community activities and social welfare for generations to come.

The Basilica Landmark:

- Preserves and restores the historic architecture of America’s first Basilica
- Encourages the use of The Basilica as a center for the cultural arts
- Develops and conducts educational and historical programming

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