

Buildings Needs Task Force – Interim Report (May 2018)

A Facilities Needs Taskforce (Gretchen Maune, Larry Lile, Matthew Bossaller, Connie Ordway, Kevin Fritsche) was appointed by the UUCC Board of Trustees in 2017 and charged with the following objectives:

- Discern the desires of the Congregation regarding changes to and/or expansion of our current church facilities;
- Research practical solutions to meeting these desires, including the possibility of relocating or adding satellite location(s);
- Present to the Board at least three well-researched options for meeting the congregations' aspirations regarding our facilities.

We have made considerable progress towards meeting our assigned objectives and hope to have a final report to the Board within this calendar year. What follows is a brief summary of our progress to date. Team members welcome your questions and feedback.

Membership Growth

Our membership has grown by a rate of ~6% per year since 2013 (i.e., shortly after the start of Rev. Molly's ministry). Over the years our church membership has changed in fits and starts. However, we believe that it is reasonable to expect our membership (264 as of October 2017) to expand to nearly 350 within the next decade. Our current facility could not well-serve a congregation of that size. It seems likely that our future growth would be hampered by facility short-comings/limitations.

Acute/Immediate Buildings Needs

There seems to be a consensus among our members that the installation of an elevator in the space set aside for this during the previous building expansion is a TOP PRIORITY. In addition to an elevator, there are a few other facility modifications that could improve accessibility, which would be modest in cost and should be implemented as soon as it is practical to do so.

There exist several deferred maintenance items that have been pointed out to the team, but the most obvious and frequently mentioned one is the need to replace the carpeting throughout the building.

Building/Space Limitations

Our sanctuary is often filled to capacity, despite the addition of a 2nd Sunday morning service. An expanded sanctuary space would help accommodate projected growth in membership. Reducing clutter in and around the sanctuary by adding more storage space near/adjacent to the sanctuary is a high priority. A modern projection system along with window treatments and lighting control would be desirable features in a renovated or new sanctuary space.

Currently, the space that serves as an entry and welcoming space (i.e., "Greeting room") is too small to accommodate the number of people that gather there on most Sundays. Additionally, the Greeting space is acoustically noisy.

At the present time we do not have suitable office space for our current staffing levels. As we grow in members, we anticipate more staff, which will only make the shortage of office space more problematic. Meeting room space can be at a premium, particularly on Sunday afternoons. Storage space is at a premium both upstairs and downstairs.

The "Forum room" is space used to host the early morning (9 am) adult-discussion group, and is often packed (seating capacity is ~40-50), it has poor environmental controls (e.g., no windows, no dedicated air conditioning), and noise from upstairs (especially drums) can interfere with presentations. Lack of table and chair storage makes the room hard to use for any other purposes. It has had water/flooding problems several times and the carpeting is in desperate need of being replaced.

The upstairs kitchen, while a great improvement over the original church kitchen in the basement, is inadequate in space and equipment to accommodate some of our current group events such as: Easter brunch, Founder's Day, church potlucks. Expansion and renovation of this space to a "commercial" kitchen or the inclusion of a commercial kitchen in a new facility/expansion project would be highly desirable.

On-site parking is limited. Accessible parking is not close to entrances. Guidelines suggest that we should consider expanding our 43 spaces to about 60 or 70.

Possible Options To Meet These Needs

Minimum Project:

Install an elevator and replace the carpet, plus a few other deferred maintenance and accessibility item. Does not meet any needs for additional space, but there is a consensus that these things are a HIGH PRIORITY. Estimated costs: \$100,000 to \$150,000.

Minimum Project Plus:

Complete the elevator and other items in the Minimum Project. Double that amount, and fund a new offsite ministry that we are currently not serving. The specifics of this ministry are not fully imagined. A full-time campus ministry? A ministry that reaches out to and serves people outside of the usual UU socio-economic and racial make-up in our current congregation? Combining a new ministry launch along with a modest building/facilities project could enhance interest in and support for both projects. Estimated costs: \$300,000 & up.

There is no reason we could not go ahead with either the Minimum or Minimum Plus projects, even if we eventually plan a major building expansion. In conversations with other churches who have undergone major expansion/renovation projects, it is not unreasonable to expect a major building renovation/expansion project to take 5-10 years to raise the money and then carry out a major facility renovation/expansion.

Building Expansion on Site:

The Team has spent considerable time researching what opportunities might exist for and possible road-blocks to expanding our present facilities on this site. The Team believes this is a viable option and doing so could result in a facility that would serve our growing congregation's needs for decades. In all likelihood, such a project would include: a new wing directly east of the present sanctuary connected to our present building. This focus of the addition would be to provide us with an expanded sanctuary and an expanded greeting area. We would include a commercial projection system in the Sanctuary, and possibly a larger meeting space downstairs. Additional parking and especially accessible parking near entrances would be added on our site. Installation of an elevator and renovations to some existing areas would be included, if those things had not been already accomplished prior to the start of this project. Having researched other similar local building /renovation projects, we believe that this type of a project is within this congregation's financial means. Financing would require raising considerable capital, along with taking on a modest-sized mortgage. Estimated costs: \$1.7 million to \$2.7 million.

New Location

The idea of moving to a new location has been considered and explored. Based on currently available properties, costs to acquire a new location close to downtown would be \$1- 4 million for just the land, then to duplicate our current building would add an additional \$3.5 to \$4 million. Total cost of such a move would require \$5 to \$8 million. To make matters worse, our current facility can only be sold to another church/congregation, unless it is rezoned to residential. Therefore, it is unlikely to attract a buyer, and thus it is a financial liability relative to our relocating. Additionally, strong attachments to our current location exists for a portion of our current membership, which would undermine widespread support for the relocation option. We believe that unless an overwhelmingly compelling reason to move was evident, this option is probably beyond our means and undesirable. A windfall, such as a smaller congregation with a larger building who wanted to swap, could change this to a compelling option.