

6. Three Potential Improvement Projects to Evaluate in FY 21-22, 03/03/2021

Type of Project	Bldg/Rm	Project	Group Suggested to Lead Evaluation
<p>These three potential Improvements are candidates to develop more fully in the coming year and include in a future Campaign. These are large projects where the next steps are to confirm feasibility, design, costs and benefits more fully, and to recommend a specific approach from among the available options. It may be prudent to consult independent engineers, at a modest cost, to provide key inputs into these evaluations. These Improvements have potential but need further definition and development, and fuller discussion within the Congregation, before being funded. The process must include review and input by multiple committees and staff to ensure that congregational needs and priorities are understood and addressed.</p>			
Interior systems	50 Monroe	<p>Install ecological heating and cooling system. A Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) system uses a geothermal or air supply heat pump as a more ecological replacement for current heating and cooling. It would replace the steam boiler in the cellar of 50 Monroe (in Repairs program for FY26-27) that provides radiator heat to 50 Monroe, the Sanctuary and Undercroft, and the conventional outdoor condensing A/C unit on the roof of 48 Monroe (in the Repairs program for FY26-27) that cools the Eastman Rm and classrooms in 48 and 50 Monroe. [The steam boiler in 50 Monroe currently also heats the Chapel and Frances White Room, which would be heated and cooled by a smaller "mini-split" air supply heat pump system in the Improvement Projects to Include in Financial Model and Campaign.] In FY26-27, the steam boiler and conventional A/C unit reach end of life; the Repairs program budgets \$80,000 to replace the steam boiler and \$10,000 to replace the A/C, but if a VRF is installed before then, these replacement costs could be avoided and applied toward the VRF. While VRF is an efficient technology, the evaluation will determine whether replacing natural gas with electricity as the power source increases or reduces our energy costs. New York State incentives would reduce the installation cost and can include low-interest financing to reduce the cash flow impact. Depending on the total net cost, this Improvement could be included in the early years of the 15-Year Program or funded by a mid-future Capital Campaign. By implementing a VRF on this scale, First Unitarian could serve as a model for other houses of worship that are striving to reduce their carbon footprint by converting from fossil fuels to electricity generated from renewable sources.</p>	Green Team
Interior finishes	Undercroft	<p>Expand capacity of Undercroft and support more flexible use: First conduct "listening sessions" with committees, staff, and IELC, to understand how they would ideally like to use a renovated Undercroft, then prepare architectural solutions to meet those needs. Solution could include removing internal walls to create a much larger, quieter and more inviting space for Fellowship Hour, congregational activities, IELC, and community events. May also include installing flexible partitions to create multiple classrooms when needed, and relocating to other locations any storage and other current uses that could be displaced by the renovation. Project would expand upon the Master Plan proposed by Vincet Benic, architect, in 2008. Agree on a general solution within the next year or two, and then include the architectural and construction costs in a future capital campaign. [If undertaken, this Improvement should be completed well before replacing the floor in the Repairs program, which is currently scheduled for FY33-34 but made be needed sooner.]</p>	Recommend the Board designate an ad hoc group to lead this evaluation, starting in September 2021

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Interior finishes	Sanctuary	<p>Enhance the Sanctuary as the home of our Worship Services: A number of Repairs and other actions have been suggested to both maintain the historic beauty of our Sanctuary, built in 1844, and to expand its ability to host Worship Services of our growing and dynamic Congregation. These suggestions should be evaluated together in the coming year (including consultations with independent architects or engineers at a modest cost), and the recommended approaches be brought back to the Congregation for discussion, change or adoption, after which they would be prime candidates for a mid-future Capital Campaign. The suggestions include: (1) clean the interior walls and ceiling; patch and stabilize peeling plaster and paint; determine how best to maintain its 1844 design of faux block painting for future generations; (2) increase the effective seating capacity of the Sanctuary by confirming the structural ability of the galleries (balconies) to hold people (in the Repairs program for FY22-23) and then making them more inviting by refinishing the flooring, installing pew cushions, improving the lighting, etc.; (3) install an accessible restroom on the Sanctuary level: review building codes to ensure compliance, agree on a location (perhaps the west end of the Narthex) and install an accessible, all genders, family restroom for wheelchair users (who enter the Sanctuary via the lift) and families with infants (who may need to change diapers during the worship service); (4) enhance the chancel (front) of the Sanctuary by repairing broken parts of the high pulpit and possibly opening up a larger "stage" for worship and performances (by our Congregation and community groups who rent our space); (5) consider adding a large artwork to the right of the chancel, recognizing the Lenape people and people of color and complementing the Tiffany "Angel" mosaic to the left of the chancel; (6) create an Area of Rescue Assistance in the Narthex, which could include installing fireproof doors between the Narthex and the Sanctuary and galleries.</p>	<p>Recommend the Board designate an ad hoc group to lead this evaluation, starting in September 2021</p>