

Responses to questions from the congregational meeting on February 21, 2021

The Building Expansion Team (BET) gathered all the questions from the chat window. Many of the questions were similar, so we grouped them into categories. If you feel your question wasn't answered, please e-mail buildingexpansion@foothillsuu.org and we will follow up with you.

Pandemic-influenced planning

The question of future in-person meeting. Will we really need expanded capacity? What are the guidelines?

We cannot know the future, nor can organizations of congregations yet know what our future holds. The UUA is being conservative in asking congregations to move slowly in returning to meeting "in person". We are attempting to incorporate recommended features like better airflow, air filtration, touchless entries, and the capacity for more distancing in our planned buildings.

In the near future, we believe that most congregants will want to return to meeting "live", and that many who have joined the congregation during the Covid pandemic will also want to be in our physical space. We have had plenty of feedback from congregants that they want to gather in person once again. Should new pandemics occur in the future, we will be well served to have more space to allow greater social distancing as well. Our current facility is so small that we were not able to design gatherings that permitted social distancing.

We have made plans to expand the building to accommodate 400 seats, based on pre-pandemic attendance trends and a desire to build for the future – at least the next 20-25 years.

We are planning a flexible space with moveable chairs, so that we can arrange fewer chairs to accommodate smaller groups as well as having the capacity for 400. The large capacity would also allow for some whole church gatherings as we have held in the past at other facilities.

The current building occupants, guests in the FFH program for homeless families, will probably be returning to a rotation among participating churches in summer, once other churches begin to open, in advance of our moving back into our building, and before construction begins.

We have not yet specified whether the sanctuary windows will open, but we will have enhanced air handling to allow plenty of fresh air.

Question about expansion of administration space

We still have an expansion of administrative space, including facilities for volunteer meetings planned for a later phase of the entire expansion. The first phase does include the use of the current foyer for a significant increase in office space. We also know that there will be a continued societal trend toward staff working from home and will wait to evaluate actual space needs for the office based on those new working conditions.

Solar and other green features

Will the building achieve Leed certification?

We have enrolled the project in a city program that aims toward energy-efficient building, the IDAP (Integrated Design Assistance Program) and have focused on this aspect of design from the beginning of planning. We engaged an architectural firm that is committed to Net Zero buildings and we are working toward that goal. At some point in our process, in conversation with Ewers Architects and Pinkard Construction, the Building Expansion Team decided not to pursue LEEDS certification due to the cost of that program. We elected instead to put the funds we have into features in the building that will allow us to achieve our goals within our budget.

In some areas we hope to exceed the standards for LEEDS certification, without extra staffing cost for the formal program.

Solar Storage

We do not plan to provide battery storage for solar power in the initial phase, and the cost of the solar panels are not included in the current planned budget. We have investigated several ways of obtaining a large solar array that can provide power to the church, perhaps owned by outside investors and have not yet pursued a particular approach.

Bathrooms

Are there really enough? Could handicapped-accessible stalls be placed differently to make them more accessible?

All of the bathrooms in the existing buildings will continue to function and there is one additional conveniently placed unisex bathroom with multiple stalls next to the sanctuary. Peter Ewers assures us that the number of proposed stalls meets city requirements. Features like the placement of particular stalls have not yet been planned, but often a handicapped-accessible stall requires grab bars anchored to the wall, which can dictate placement within the room.

Comments about current bathrooms being chilly – we hope this can be addressed by the new HVAC system.

Building Orientation and Layout, including Windows

Building Orientation was raised several times and centers around having a SW view of the foothills.

There are many factors that go into the building orientation, including size/shape of the property, city set back, desired flow of traffic inside the complex, sightlines from the entrance hall, aesthetics, relationship of the ramp to the stage, sun/lighting/windows, and relationship of the sanctuary entrance to the stage, among others. The current orientation is not set in stone, although the general rectangular shape and square footage are set. The length–width dimensions might change, but the square footage will need to remain the same due to cost constraints. We will continue investigating where windows could be placed and the location of the stage. Having windows facing SW is a possibility, but as always, there are disadvantages as well.

The curved walls from the initial design were eliminated due to the additional estimated cost of \$150,000 - \$200,000. The rectangular shape allows us to use standard rather than customized materials and design.

We will continue to look at the stage design and location as it relates to the distance from the back rows and potential blind spots from the side.

Windows will be installed that minimize sun glare and heat. We have \$25,000 in the budget for window coverings.

We have not considered whether the sanctuary would be easily expanded, as we have very little open property left, and parking would also become a major consideration. Phase 2 and phase 3 will also consume additional lot space, making it even harder to consider future sanctuary expansion.

Cost Issues

A cost breakdown for **phase 1**:

\$ 215,000 – already spent

\$ 455,000 – remaining Architectural fees

\$5,770,000 – estimated construction costs

\$336,000 – FUC responsible costs: worship needs/chairs, AV/IT, window coverings, testing & commissioning fees, legal fees, and asbestos remediation

\$ 610,600 - Project contingency

\$7,386,600 – Total project cost estimate

The construction cost estimate was made by our General contractor Pinkard Construction and is their estimate on materials and contractor labor. Of course, this could change a bit as the economy improves, thus the reason to get started as soon as possible. We have a contingency built into our budget to help cover any material cost increases as well as any unforeseen construction issues.

The long-term mortgage will be for 25 years, with the interest rate being only an estimate, as we will not need this loan for several years. We have not determined the exact lender yet, but we are looking at a C-Pace or conventional bank loan. Other loan possibilities include the UUA, Northern Colorado Foundation, member notes, and our endowment fund.

The increase in our operating budget due to debt service is anticipated to be primarily covered by increased operating pledges, continued increase in new member (pledges), and rental income. At this time, an additional capital fund drive is not anticipated for at least the next 5 - 7 years.

Sound and Music

The questions we received related to acoustics and sound, choir and noise.

Acoustics is a topic that was brought up early in the design process and is a top priority. Ewers Architects is consulting with a sound engineer who will provide expertise in acoustics. Since we are only in the preliminary design phase, we can't give you any details about what will be done to ensure good acoustics. The BET will continue to follow up on acoustics as the design progresses.

We have put new sound equipment into the budget. In our first design, the new sound booth was in the back of the sanctuary. When the sanctuary design is finalized, we will share drawings showing the booth location. We are planning to leave the existing sound booth in its current location to provide sound to the new social hall when needed.

We believe that the improved building envelope will have better soundproofing and that traffic noise from Drake Rd. will be less intrusive.

The choir has been a frequent topic of discussion. Since we will have much more space and flexible seating, it will be possible to have a designated seating section for the choir in the

sanctuary. We have also discussed putting risers on the stage or on the floor. Perhaps the wide risers that can hold chairs. Nothing is determined yet, but we are exploring possibilities.

We have several options for choir warmup space on Sundays. Until we have clear plans on how Sunday mornings will function in the new space it is impossible to figure out what will work best. We understand that choir needs a more workable solution than we have had in our current building.

RE concerns

The questions received related to the lack of new space for RE in the revised design.

The sanctuary basement is intended to be RE space. If we were able to finish it, there would be classrooms, a chapel, an open play space, and a “messy” area for art projects. While we are unable to pay for the finishing at this time, the space is still there and will be used to expand RE. We are thinking about ways to make the space useful without building walls.

The connection between the two buildings and a single indoor check-in station were high on the list of RE priorities. We have accomplished those items in this design.

The BET cannot include members from every constituency in the congregation, there would be so many members that no work could be accomplished. We take our responsibility very seriously and do our best to represent the interests of all congregants. We have made significant efforts to gather information and ideas from the congregation and from staff, including Eleanor.

Phasing

Questions referred to items that have been postponed and to the timeline.

Our original phasing divided the project into roughly 3 pieces. The first phase was the largest, including a new entryway, increased parking, the sanctuary with a finished basement, a new social court, conversion of the current sanctuary to a social hall, conversion of the current social hall to a foyer, a green room, more bathrooms, a connection to the RE building with an area for family check-in and much of the landscaping. We also planned to remove the stage from the new social hall and install large overhead doors leading to the social court.

Phase 2 included the remodeling of the RE building and playgrounds

Phase 3 was the expansion of the administration wing.

We agreed that phase 1 would be first priority and the other phases would be more clearly defined and prioritized when funds became available to complete them.

The current plan postpones some of phase 1. All the features intended for phase one will be completed at some point, except for the green room. For now, the basement, entryway, parking lot, social court, stage removal, and overhead doors are postponed.

An exact groundbreaking date can't be determined at this time. It will depend on how long it takes to get permits and approvals. We are aiming for this fall, with the first services in the new sanctuary being held in December of 2022. We'll keep you updated

In the meantime, ministerial staff will continue to plan for resuming in-person services this fall when the health situation allows.

Miscellaneous

What's that circle on the left side? On the north side?

Not sure exactly what you're looking at, but I think all the circles are trees.

The foyer seems huge. Will it be redesigned/reutilized in the second phase?

The foyer is large. That was one of our design requirements. The goal is to have that available to the congregation during the week, as well as ensuring good flow into and out of the building. We envision a rolling library, comfortable seating, and room for socializing.

With all the windows, do we still even think of art in the foyer area?

The foyer in this plan is not exactly what we will have when we are able to complete the project. When we complete the new entryway, the foyer will have more wall space. We will have room for art in many places throughout the building. We think it's important and will convene a group to look at that down the road.

When lighting is being designed, can we look at daylight spectrum (more blue) lights?

One of the consultants on Ewers Architects' team is a lighting designer. There are lots of new technologies and options for flexible lighting. We will be sure to ask about daylight spectrum.

I second Marty's thought to try to keep the original fireplace, or have one someplace

The existing fireplace does not fit into our energy efficiency goals. It is wood-burning and leaky. We will check into converting it or finding a new location for a fireplace.

interested in outward-facing community needs: climate-resilient design for responding to emergencies. Are we designated as Red Cross shelter?

We are not currently designated as a Red Cross shelter. We need to balance our budget and congregational needs with our desire to serve the community. We will continue to participate in the family housing network and food bank on a regular basis. We don't feel that we have the resources or space to serve as a shelter at this time.

Wondering about keeping the small kitchen when industrial use can also help with small-scale economic projects.

A better kitchen will be included in a future phase of the project.

How are we dealing with parking?

A new parking lot will be included in a future phase. We currently are close to the maximum number of spaces the city will allow us to have. We may be able to add a few by redrawing lines. We have made inquiries to the owners of large parking lots nearby, discussed shuttles from lots to the church and the possibility of implementing a car-pooling app. We will continue to investigate parking solutions.