

First Parish Accessibility Platform: A Summary of Key Findings

1. The process of considering renovations to First Parish has been going on for more than a decade. It is time to make a decision, even if the decision is to do nothing.
2. There is broad support for improving accessibility; we see accessibility being aligned with our covenant.
3. Previous improvements that we have made to First Parish to enhance accessibility have served us well, but the elevator is seeing greater use and advancements in mobility technology have made it obsolete—it is time for an upgrade.
4. Option B, our current plan from our architect, greatly exceeds our financial capacity. Major reasons for this were trying to rebuild space lost to the construction of a new elevator and second floor bathrooms and requirements to bring First Parish up to code because the cost of construction exceeded certain benchmarks. Thus, it is no longer a viable plan.
5. We can develop a new plan for an elevator to improve accessibility to fit in the current Parish House (RE wing). We will lose some space.
6. It will take some additional time to develop a new plan more aligned with our budget.
7. Cornerstone recommends that we launch a \$500,000 capital campaign and that we consider a \$250,000 mortgage or loan from the endowment. There are pros and cons to leveraging the endowment to help finance this work, and we need to discuss this as a community.
8. Our congregation is generous but not wealthy and it will take time to raise funds for this project. However, \$275,000 has been pledged to date and 76% said they would contribute.
9. Any capital campaign will need to be coordinated with the annual canvass to ensure that funds for our operating budget are not adversely affected.
10. For some, this is a time of anxiety, for others, a time of opportunity.
For all, it offers a time to build community.