

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Readiness Assessment



Volume One

This report examines congregational needs and the ability to support a fundraising campaign. Findings are analyzed, conclusions drawn and professional recommendations set forth.

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Purpose of the Feasibility Study

Campaigns conducted by James D. Klote & Associates adhere to a time-tested methodology that has been proven successful for over two decades. There are two distinct phases in a Klote-directed campaign. The first is the Feasibility Study¹ which is then followed by the Capital Campaign. The results of the second phase have a strong causal relationship to the Feasibility Study in that results of the campaign are highly dependent on the quality of the feasibility study effort.

A well conducted Feasibility Study determines if a capital campaign should be undertaken. Where the conclusion is to proceed, the Feasibility Study provides the foundation for a rewarding campaign. The assessment conveys a sense of vision when members, friends, and associates thoughtfully evaluate opportunities and constraints with the intended purpose of formulating a path forward. More than just assessing the state of “readiness” to conduct a campaign, the Feasibility Study identifies:

- Approaches to maximize opportunities,
- Increases the understanding of “need to have” versus “nice to have” through broad involvement,
- Defines a path forward, and
- Helps identify new leaders.²

There are instances where the goals of a fundraising campaign are not clearly delineated at the time consultant support is engaged. The campaign director assigned by Klote must conduct a “Discovery Study” in these instances. These studies are structured to draw out the desires and feelings of the congregants while sharing leadership’s vision or suggested initiatives, as is the case here at Cedar Lane.

¹ The Feasibility Study is concluded with the submission of the Readiness Assessment report.

² Members and Friends identified as possible leaders for a capital campaign are identified in Volume 2 of the Readiness Assessment.



Presenting Circumstances

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church occupies a magnificent location in Bethesda, MD. Set on a wooded hillside, Cedar Lane proclaims this is “WHERE LOVE WORKS.”

During its 2015-2016 term, The Board of Trustees set, as its top priority, engagement with the congregation about the future. A Strategic Direction Team was established to facilitate the dialogue. The Team produced ROOTS AND WINGS: THE VISION 2020 REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS. The document establishes Strategic Directions “- to give intentionality to our path forward.”³

At the May 2016 Annual Meeting, the Congregation adopted the Vision / Mission / Strategic Directions package. Soon after the Congregation’s action, the Board created the Capital Assets Planning Committee (CAPC). CAPC was charged with exploring the implementation of Strategic Direction four:

- **Transform our spaces to better nurture community.**

CAPC undertook its assignment resolved to complete a set of specific tasks:

- Recommend facility improvements
- Continue the Congregational participation process
- Select an architect to develop a conceptual design
- Participate in selection of a capital campaign consultant, and
- Recommend a conceptual design to the Board.

CAPC submitted a recommended conceptual design to the Board which was accepted. At that time, the Board also authorized the selected campaign consultant, James D. Klote & Associates, to undertake a Feasibility Study. This report is submitted in further fulfillment of the terms and conditions guiding the conduct of the Feasibility Study.

Study Objectives

The purpose of the Feasibility Study was to determine if the congregation of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalists Church (CLUUC) was ready to undertake a

³ ...Cedar Lane Vision 2020, May 2016.



capital campaign with the intention of transforming space to better serve community. The study was conducted to:

- Continue the Congregational participation process used in development and implementation of the Vision 2020 Strategic Directions.
- Provide an overview of:
 - Work of the Capital Asset Planning Committee
 - Recent and planned actions of the Board
- Listen to the congregation's
 - Reactions to recommended conceptual building plan
 - Views on fundraising
 - Direction for moving forward
- Gather input for the Readiness Assessment report
 - Compile findings
 - Develop conclusions
- Provide the Board with professional recommendations related to:
 - Undertaking a Fundraising Campaign

Role of the Focus Group Meetings

Central to the Klote Feasibility Study methodology are two simple principles: 1) everyone is invited to participate in the process, and 2) everyone participating in the process is treated equally. These principles were fully engaged throughout the Feasibility Study. They were brought into play through a series of twenty Focus Group meetings conducted over a five-plus week period. Details of the approach used to arrange, conduct and tally the results of the Focus Group sessions are presented in the Appendix located in Volume Two of this report.

Briefly reviewing the function of the Focus Group meetings is important. It is necessary to understand their essential role in isolating findings, drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations. Focus Group meetings and, more specifically, the involvement and contributions of the participants was the primary research tool used to harvest the data upon which much of this report is based.

The Focus Groups' multiple purposes were reviewed with participants by the Focus Group Facilitator at the beginning of each meeting. Attendees were told that their comments would be noted for inclusion in the Feasibility Study being prepared by the Klote consultant. They were informed that the report would



contain Recommendations for the Board's consideration and action. They were also encouraged to complete a brief questionnaire that would supplement meeting notes. Attendees were also advised that all comments, whether verbal or written, when quoted would be used anonymously.

Small Group and Individual Meetings

Among the members and friends at Cedar Lane, there are committees and individuals whose influence helps shape and define the congregation's character. Meeting were held with some of these individuals and committees to gain their insights. These meetings also offered leadership with a sounding board which was used to gauge the "buzz" surrounding the conceptual plan.

These meetings have been going on throughout the Feasibility Study. Although not findings per se, the results are significant. They have opened important topics for deeper examination and helped narrow the field of focus on others.

Study Reliability

Two factors determine the reliability of the findings and conclusions resulting from the Feasibility Study; one is quantitative (rate of participation) and the other qualitative (confidence in the process).

Quantitative Reliability Measure - Rate of Participation

Participation in the Focus Group meetings was open to all. As there was no attempt to generate random participation along traditional sampling methods, there is no representation made or inferred that the findings included in this report are statistically valid.

Rather, the findings offer a snapshot of the opinions, beliefs, convictions and/or biases of those who attended and participated. Participation is a critical element in evaluating and authenticating the data generated by the Focus Group exercise. It is central to determining the reliability of the conclusions drawn from the data. Obviously, the greater the number of participants, the higher the snapshot's resolution.

Defining the Donor Universe

Attendance at Focus Group meetings is not measured by the raw number of people who attend, as is typically the case when taking attendance. Focus Group attendance is measured in the unduplicated count of the fundraising



campaign's prospective donor households⁴. The first step then is to identify the universe of potential donor households.

The critical exercise in identifying donor households is compilation of an unduplicated household list. For the CLUUC's Feasibility Study, this was a bit more circumspect than what is usually encountered. The initial list of Cedar Lane attendees was an all-inclusive listing. It contained over fifteen hundred household records divided among five categories.⁵

Not all households are equally committed or connected to Cedar Lane. The folk wisdom about volunteer membership organizations is that 20% of the members do 80% of what needs to be done. At Cedar Lane there are two categories among the five that provide the congregation's foundation. The Cedar Lane donor universe will be defined from the "Active Members" and "Friends" categories.

Active Members

Cedar Lane households for immediate inclusion in the donor universe are the "Active Members." There are four hundred seventy-two households after scrubbing records for incomplete or missing data. As a collective, they have the strongest connectivity with Cedar Lane being regular attendees of worship services, reliable volunteers and dependable Stewardship contributors.

Friends

In the database, "Friends" is the least homogeneous of any category. These one hundred forty-nine households⁶ engage in Cedar Lane activities with varying degrees of commitment. Their common denominator is that they "have not signed the book."⁷ They may be the spouse of a member, a pledging friend or a Religious Education (RE) family.

Individual connection to Cedar Lane is generally stable along at least one well-defined activities tract. Activity tracts include Religious Education, attending worship services or social justice activism. It is not surprising that the connection

⁴ A prospective donor household can be an individual living alone, a couple or a family. The test is that only one gift to a campaign can be expected from the dwelling unit.

⁵ The five categories are: Active Members, Friends, Guests, Members Emeritus and Adult Programs.

⁶ After data scrubbing.

⁷ Signing the Book is the act conferring Membership upon the signatory.



is strongest between Cedar Lane and those Friends who pledge. There are fifty-two such households that have been included in the potential Donor Universe.

Data for all five categories was imported into Access, the database software used during the Feasibility Study. After data clean-up, there are potentially five hundred twenty-four unique donor units identified in the Cedar Lane database.⁸

Participation

Roughly, 190 individuals attended the twenty Focus Group meetings conducted during the months of September and October. The more important participation measure, however, is the unduplicated count of households represented in the process. As households are the basic unit of a capital campaign, it makes sense to use this measure as the basis for tracking attendance. One hundred twenty-one unduplicated donor households participated in at least one Focus Group meeting.

A typical Feasibility Study needs a household participation rate at or above 20%. This level will generally produce a reliable “sense of the congregation.” At this level of participation, findings and conclusions are confidently presented.

There are two measures of participation offered for CLUUC’s unduplicated households attending a Focus Group. The first is that 23% (121 of 524) of identified households were represented at a focus group session. This is comfortably above the participation threshold.

Secondly, the participating households were compared to the list of 2017-2018 pledging households. 25% of Cedar Lane pledging households participated in the focus group exercise. This is an indication of significant interest in the process demonstrated by those who are reliable, financial supporters of Cedar Lane. This is a good outcome.

A note of caution must be sounded, however despite these positive indicators. The more reliable findings will be those where there is a preponderance of data supporting a position or an expressed opinion. Data reliability diminishes as it is more thinly sliced.

⁸ This number will fluctuate during the Study and any subsequent Campaign due to deaths, departures and arrival of new members. Adjustments may also be made for households outside the immediate Bethesda area.



Qualitative Reliability Measure – Confidence in the Process

Acceptance by the congregation of the Feasibility Study's findings is dependent on their belief that the process of collecting data is open, unbiased, and transparent. The Board must also have confidence that congregants believe in the process if Board members are going to act upon results of the process.

Question # 6

Although it may be fair to assume that the participation rate is a suitable surrogate for confidence in the process, Question # 6 on the questionnaire addressed the topic of "confidence" directly:

6. Do you believe this process for sharing and gathering the congregations' input will yield findings and conclusions that the Board can rely on to make decisions and take action?

Confidence in the process is expressed by respondents' belief/disbelief that findings and conclusions are "reliable." 87% of the responses to Question # 6, affirmatively responded that findings and conclusions yielded by the process could be relied upon when making decisions. These responses were typified by the following:⁹

- *I am pleased with the discussion and process. Open communication is very important.*
- *I think the process is effective but could be more effective with more information coming from the pulpit. Focus groups are great.*
- *Will certainly help, I think.*
- *Yes, people are outspoken. People ignore the opportunity to provide input then say they weren't heard. This process is most likely to achieve conclusions to support good decisions.*

Several of the affirmative responses, however, were of a conditional nature. The respondent optimistically stated that they, "hoped so" or felt that it would "help."

Sentiment among the less confident (13%) displayed a consistent theme:

- *More information needs to be shared about options.*

⁹ Statements attributed to focus group participants and their responses to questionnaire questions are in 14 pnt. And italicized.



- *Not sure. If we can't reach a consensus it may be difficult to implement.*
- *Sort of, but not really. See all three options and then decide.*

This call for seeing all the concepts prepared by the architect was echoed during several of the facilitated discussions.¹⁰

Only two respondents felt the process would not produce reliable results:

- *Not unless 90% of congregation takes part in the process.*

Ideally, there would be one large meeting with everyone present and the process of reaching decisions would continue until consensus is achieved. This is a lofty notion, but unrealistic and impractical.

Great effort was made in developing the methodology used at Cedar Lane for the conduct of Focus Groups. The meetings are structured to 1) accommodate wide spread participation, 2) achieve a baseline familiarity with the proposed Concept Plan and 3) facilitate open, candid discussion among the participants. Ultimately, the congregation will have the final say regarding initiation of a capital campaign.

- *No - too many cooks! I have seen many attempts to do this.*

Clearly, this respondent does not believe the process will ever result in anything getting done. This sentiment strongly points out the need for clear, continuous, comprehensive communication with the members of the congregation. The disbelief expressed in this response must be addressed with transparency emanating from a single source – The Board of Trustees.

The balance of this report presents the aggregated findings from the Feasibility Study process; a series of conclusions drawn from the findings; and recommendations which define a path forward for Cedar Lane.

¹⁰ The architect, Ritter · Norton Architects, prepared three conceptual options. The first addressed a minimum of the identified constraints; the second addressed the minimum and several additional opportunities; The third was an unrestricted concept addressing constraints, opportunities and big dreams. The third option was presented to the congregation in the spirit of the founder's bold planning and willingness to dream big.



Findings

Data for development of findings is accumulated through four sources:

- Facilitated Discussion
- Small Group/Individual Discussions
- Questionnaire
- Fundraising Capacity Assessment

Each makes a unique contribution to the overall development of the Feasibility Study analysis. The facilitated discussion analysis and input from the individual conversations establishes the framework for reviewing the questionnaires. The fundraising assessment provides critical input needed to determine the congregation's financial ability to raise funds at a targeted level.

Facilitated Discussion

A facilitated discussion followed each focus group presentation. Participants were given the opportunity after the presentation to express their sentiments through direct dialogue and probing questions from facilitators. Notes were kept of the comments. The notes were combined across all discussions and subjected to a cluster analysis. The resulting list of key word and/or topic reveals what is uppermost on the collective minds of the participants during the discussion. The list becomes the analytical framework.

The presentation introduced focus group attendees to the unrestrained conceptual plan developed by the architect in response to congregational input.¹¹ The cluster analysis identified the following list of topics for further examination:

- Cost
 - History
 - Endowment
- Building
 - New & existing
 - Parking
 - Accessibility & Security
- Growth
 - Disconnect

¹¹ A copy of the Presentation is included in Volume 2 of the report.



Cost

Not a single focus group meeting was concluded without at least one attendee remarking on the projected cost range for the conceptual plan. It was the single most referenced topic. Some found the cost daunting:

- *The price is so high; sticker shock*
- *I'm a realist. Is this too big? \$9-12 million?*
- *How can we even think about this? We struggle to make the annual budget balance.*
- *Finances over the years have caused concern about ability to raise this much money. I'd be more optimistic if we had a healthy operations budget.*

A few looked beyond cost in their enthusiasm for taking decisive action:

- *This is long overdue. How can this be a large church without a sanctuary?*
- *This takes vision. It's taken 20 years to have the impact on the community that we have. We shouldn't limit our vision to a space we've outgrown.*
- *We might be able to do this. You never know where you're going to encounter amazing generosity.*

Others sought cost shifting opportunities that might exist if the conceptual plan were implemented:

- *So what are the revenue opportunities of building?*
- *Lots of people using the facilities are not members. We should either convert them or charge them more.*
- *If we have better facilities, we can charge outside users higher fees.*



Still others were skeptical, but rather than seeing the conceptual plan and its cost as a non-starter, they used it as the jumping off point for discussing the possible:

- *The estimated cost of the concept plan is a starting point.*
- *Agree with looking forward. There are lots of things that can be accomplished at a lower price.*
- *Can we raise 3 to 4 times annual giving?*

In summary, very few embraced the projected cost, more than a few were intimidated by it.

The willingness of attendees to accept the architect's findings was instructive. During the focus group discussions there were no attempts to refute the constraints associated with the building's current condition. There was some effort by a few to put the building's operating condition in a historical context.

History

There were previous efforts to advance building improvements. Some went well, some didn't. One which didn't stood out:

- *Back around 2004 when the congregation failed to adopt a plan for improvements from the options offered, the consequences were severe. We were scarred and lost our ability to dream.*
- *Some think we dodged a bullet back in 2004 by choosing the do-nothing option. I think it had an impact on our psyche.*
- *Offering three options the last time was a mistake.¹²*

As a result, "We've been riding the backs of the founders." Yet, there was a measure of optimism present. In one remarkable moment the following exchange occurred:

- *A success will restore our ability to dream.*

¹² Although unable to confirm, an attendee claimed the three options were presented without associated costs. Cost figures were eventually produced in response to congregation demands.



- *Discreet achievable efforts like the Chalice House are needed. Let's be successful now – we don't need to shoot the moon.*
- *Don't drop the ball by taking on too much.*

Endowment

Maintaining existing facilities should not fall under the heading, “taking on too much.” Yet the replacement of the aging HVAC system nearly did. As the system rapidly approached and eclipsed its projected usable life, no meaningful plan was implemented to ensure a smooth transition. To secure replacement funding from the Cedar Lane Endowment fund without needing a full, and time-consuming vote of the congregation, the funding was secured as a loan.

Funds were borrowed from the Endowment to purchase and install a new system. The CAPC included \$1.3 million in the conceptual plan cost estimate to replenish the Endowment Fund.

Inclusion of this item drew pointed comments:

- *HVAC was a perfectly reasonable for expenditure from the endowment.*
- *Dipping into the endowment for major capital expenses seems reasonable. Fund the endowment over time, but not now, not as a loan repayment.*

Others saw it quite differently:

- *We need to increase the endowment as a cushion against recession.*
- *Endowment currently pays for operations because operating budget is underfunded.*
- *Don't eat your seed corn.*

Both points of view have merit, but something stands out. What should have been a decision made in a timely and orderly fashion wasn't. The issue is greater and more complex than how does Cedar Lane pay for the new HVAC. It begs the question framing the endowment's purpose.



- Is the endowment intended to cover revenue deficits resulting from stewardship shortfalls? or
- Is the endowment a source of funding for the planned replacement of major facility capital systems?

These important questions deserve the full attention and best thinking of leadership. When they have developed their endowment policy proposal for Cedar Lane, submitted it for congregational approval. From that point forward the parameters and limitations of the endowments use will be a matter of record. In the absence of a clearly articulated consensus, this is not an issue to be resolved as a by-product of the Feasibility Study.

Building

As noted, the architect's facilities assessment was accepted as presented. The conceptual design presented was the unrestrained response to the limitations and opportunities encountered at Cedar Lane. In preparing the unconstrained response, other, limited responses were also developed as noted previously.

New & Existing

Some in attendance had seen the other design responses/options at earlier meetings. Others had not. Both groups were open to alternatives:

- *Architect offered three options – we should see all three.*
- *Space is a problem. Is a new sanctuary the answer? Can't we add to existing space?*
- *Why not rehab the existing building?*

There was interest expressed in considering alternatives to the grand concept. The alternative designs developed by the architect relied less on new construction and more on refurbishing/repurposing existing space. These approaches didn't address as fully the constraints and opportunities, but they have the advantage of a smaller price tag.

Parking

No one argued that current parking is sufficient. It was widely held that parking is inadequate:



- *Street parking is necessary now. Crossing Cedar Lane is dangerous.*
- *Parking doesn't accommodate current uses. Significant shortage when there is a big wedding.*
- *Parking – we need more now.*

Suggestions were offered for near-term relief:

- *Parking assessment – even if it does meet code.*
- *Should we try a shuttle bus to the metro stop?*

Improved parking can be achieved, but at a cost that some are not ready to pay:

- *Do not sacrifice trees to expanded parking!*
- *Re-stripe the parking lot, max out available space before tree cutting starts.*

Parking, in the broad sense, is an access issue requiring tradeoffs if more parking is desired.

Accessibility & Security

Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and improved security both appeared to enjoy immediate, widespread support.

- *It must be ADA compliant, no matter what is done.*
- *Let's do something about the building's security now.*

Growth

CEDAR LANE VISION 2020 devotes an early section of the report to “Characteristics of a Thriving Church.” The focus is on ways successful churches adapted to challenges. The primary lesson of a referenced book, *Simple Church*, is that aligning all facets of church life with mission is the way to create a vibrant, growing church characterized by volunteer involvement.

For Cedar Lane where, “We have fewer families, RE attendance is down,” attracting new members is a fundamental issue. The “getting back to basics” approach advocated in *Simple Church* seemed like the right advice. A simple



review of the four Strategic Directions in Vision 2020 shows the influence of the *Simple Church* lesson on Cedar Lane. Early results, nearly sixty new members, have outpaced previous years' results and may be an indication the approach is yielding results.

The results may also be a result of a dramatic change in the political climate.

- *Current growth speaks to who we are in this political climate. It's how we live out our work & beliefs.*

It is also likely that the political climate change is acting as a multiplier of Cedar Lane's mission alignment strategy.

Regardless, friends and members are certainly aware of the precarious relationship of membership growth to continued existence. Where they balk is the conceptual plan's ability to stimulate the desired growth:

- *Will changing our space really draw more people? Maybe.*
- *How does this really drive Mission?*
- *I'd like to see us achieve our goals/diverse members. Does this plan get us greater diversity?*

They freely shared their alternatives:

- *Membership growth trend. Consider what is driving this – ride the crest*
- *\$12 million to stimulate growth is too much. Use a 2-pronged approach, 1) fix what we have and see how we grow, then 2) commit to new construction.*

A single line in the Cost slide of the Focus Group presentation caught the attention of many attendees. It proposed setting aside funds for mission fulfillment. No specific use for the funds was offered, rather attendees were encouraged to speculate how they might put the allocation (\$0.5 -- \$0.9 million) to best use. The overall impression of the resulting discussions was succinctly summarized:

- *Growth is in programs. Fund them.*



Disconnect

The lifeblood of a congregation is the young family that becomes a member.

Attracting young families by appealing to their children has been a basic membership development strategy for decades. At the time of its founding, Cedar Lane's primary focus was the religious education of its young members' children. The strength of the approach is evidenced by the number of adults attending focus group meetings who received their youthful religious education at Cedar Lane.

Cedar Lane continues its tradition of emphasizing religious education. R.E. occupies nearly all the lower level space at Cedar Lane. Despite sharing the building's space, many feel the two levels exist virtually independent of one another. As a focus group attendee put it:

- *You're an RE parent or you're upstairs. There's no real connection.*

The staircases connecting the upper and lower levels are narrow, closed-in and each has a turn near the bottom. They are functional staircases, but don't provide a smooth, seamless transition between the two levels. The conceptual plan calls for a redesign of the staircase and installation of a second. The idea is to improve the physical connection between the upper and lower levels. Attendees expressed doubt:

- *How does this overcome the upstairs/downstairs disconnect?*
- *Disconnect between RE families and other congregants is program based, not the design of the building.*

The dynamic at play here, the sense of disassociation, won't be resolved by improving the physical passageways from the lower to the upper level. But seen as a metaphor, it's exactly what needs to happen. The passageway for children and adults from RE to worship, volunteering and activism must be improved and, perhaps, radically redesigned.



Questionnaire¹³

Questions # 1, 2 & 3

The facilitated discussion that occurs during each focus group meeting provides the participants “expressed preferences.” Through the questionnaire, attendees “revel preferences.”

The first three questions are interdependent; the first examining aspirations, the second – fears and the third actions that could reconcile the two. Collectively, the three reveal what the respondents want to do.

Question # 1

My hope and aspiration for Cedar Lane UU are:

Question # 1 is goal oriented. It asks respondents what they aspire to; what do they hope for? The timeframe of the response is highly indicative. A short time horizon generally addresses physical things. A longer-term time horizon often indicates aspirations that are more conceptual or abstract in nature.

Responses to Question # 1 indicated very little aspirational interest in things of a physical nature. Respondents were not fixated on building. There were a few who were, “...encouraged and excited about the concept plan.” However, the clear majority of responses were drawn to hopes and aspirations in one of two clusters: sustainable or impactful.

Sustainable

These respondents were looking to membership growth, a more welcoming environment (including improvements to existing facilities) and greater diversity as methods and means for sustaining Cedar Lane UUC. The essence of these responses is the desire to be a presence in the community and to serve.

Impactful

These respondents' primary desire is for Cedar Lane to have spiritual impact. They seek to impact the community through service. They feel drawn to social justice activism to impact society.

Both are rooted in the Strategic Directions of Vision 2020.

¹³ Responses to Questions # 5 and # 7 are included in Volume 2.



Question # 2

The most important challenge Cedar Lane UU must overcome in the next 3-5 years is?

Finances and membership are the dominate responses to Question # 2.

Clearly many respondents are troubled by the inability of the congregation to cover operating costs through Stewardship. During an interview it was said:

- *We were uncomfortable being that comfortable relying on the endowment to cover the annual shortfall, but not animated enough to do anything about it.*

Others carried the stewardship shortfall forward as the basis for doubting a capital campaign could be successful.

For some increasing membership is the important challenge. This may dovetail with the financing concern. More members should mean more stewardship pledges resulting in revenue sufficient to cover expenses.

For others, increasing membership is a demographic necessity. Cedar Lane's overall membership profile represents a demographic cohort in decline. Millennials, on the other hand, are the demographic cohort needed to bolster membership. Unfortunately, they are disinclined to associate with organized religion and adverse to joining anything. But they do volunteer and seem to understand the value of serving.

Question # 3

What can be done to ensure that Cedar Lane UU is reaching out to the future?

For many respondents, what they fear is what they want. Question # 3 looks at how this might be reconciled.

A quick summary of how Cedar Lane can reach into the future would be:

1. Promote membership through programs and service
2. Be welcoming physically and spiritually
3. Get the financial house in order



There are variations on these themes and narrower takes on each of them. But when taken in total and distilled down this is what the congregation is saying it wants to do.

Question # 4

This is the only close ended question on the survey document, but it is an extremely important question. Responses to this two-part question indicate the willingness of the congregation to undertake the obligation and responsibility of conducting a capital campaign.

Presented in Table 1, below, is the distribution of responses:

Table 1: Funding and Staffing Responses

Response Distribution for Question # 4: Would you consider supporting a Capital Campaign at Cedar Lane?			
Categories:	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>NEED MORE INFORMATION</i>
<i>Financially</i>	69	6	27
<i>As a Volunteer</i>	39	24	36

Table 1 reveals, first and foremost, the overwhelming indication of willingness to financially support a capital campaign expressed by those attending the focus group meetings. Of the 102 potential donor households responding to Question 4a, sixty-nine indicated they would financially support a campaign. Six respondents replied “No” to the question, but half of these indicated the negative response was a result of current financial limitations or fixed income. That’s a ratio of nearly 11:1. A ratio of 7:1 is an indication of solid potential, based upon extensive experience with this question.¹⁴

Returning to Table 1 to examine the results for Question 4b will determine if there is willingness to perform voluntarily work on a capital campaign. The biggest campaign manpower need is for volunteers to visit other members of the congregation. A good rule of thumb is that 1 volunteer is needed for every 10 donor households identified. Given the 524 prospective donor households, fifty plus volunteer visitors are needed.

¹⁴ The meaningfulness of this ratio doesn't indicate increasing support above a ratio of 10:1.



Table 1 indicates that 39 households have expressed a willingness to volunteer their time to a capital campaign. The ratio of Yes / No is a disappointing 1.6:1. Disappointing because over half those saying “No” to volunteering said “Yes” to pledging. They’re willing to contribute their treasure, but not their time.

If those Needing More Information (36 responses) break along the same ratio, an additional 18 – 20 volunteers could be available.

These results indicate recruiting sufficient volunteers to staff a capital campaign will be challenging. Therefore, volunteer recruitment must be a major emphasis area if Cedar Lane wishes to successfully conduct a capital campaign.

Diligence must be applied in the recruitment process from the very beginning to the completion of the campaign. Otherwise, the likelihood of adding additional time to the schedule for completion increases; a prospect that does not generally yield more favorable results.

Cedar Lane Fundraising Capacity

Before undertaking the task of estimating any group or organization’s ability to raise funds from among its members, an important distinction must be drawn.

Capacity to give, that is, financial *ability* to donate funds from either wealth or income, is NOT an indicator of willingness to give, that is, the *desire* to donate funds.

Although there is no scientific method for accurately, consistently predicting what any given group of individuals might donate to a cause, there are some techniques, generally, able to project what a group of individuals might be capable of giving. An important instrument in the Klotz consultant’s tool box is the Scale of Giving. This modeling device allows the consultant to examine the giving capacity of a congregation through a process of projection and confirmation.

The Scale of Giving

Model development begins with the number of donor units and the target for the “funds to be raised.” The Scale of Giving is divided into three tiers; A, B, and C. The top or A tier represents about 20% of the congregation’s membership and about half of its giving capacity. Lead gifts are resident in the A tier. Tier C has about half of the congregation’s members and 15-20% of its capacity. Initial



distribution of the congregation's membership and the associated giving capacity of each Tier are projections based on many years' experience utilizing the model.

The model fundraising target, \$10 million, is slightly above the low end of the projected cost presented during the Feasibility Study. There are approximately 520 households or "prospects" at Cedar Lane. The assumed rate of participation for Cedar Lane prospects was set at 32%. This is a substantial reduction from the Stewardship pledge rate of 84%.¹⁵ The steep reduction is consistent with taking a conservative approach to projecting the congregation's willingness to give.

The Donor Assessment Process

The next step is to determine whether there are sufficient donors capable of populating the A section of the model. This is a confidential process.¹⁶

It is accomplished by reviewing friends and membership lists with knowledgeable individuals. Their opinions are sought regarding the overall fundraising capability of the congregation and, in some instances, the giving capacity of potential donor households. Meetings are one-on-one with the Campaign Consultant. Participants are not told who else is doing the review and they are instructed not to discuss the process. This is to ensure unfettered responses while providing the utmost respect and confidentiality for friends and members.

The result was that not enough capacity could be identified in the A Tier to support an initial \$10 million campaign target for Cedar Lane. The target that did appear to be reasonably within reach, albeit with a stretch, was \$5 million. This is more in line with typical Klote campaign' metrics.¹⁷

Conclusions

The purpose of the James D. Klote & Associates engagement at Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church is to determine if a capital campaign should be conducted now. This encompassed soliciting from the community expressions of hope and aspirations, both large and small. The intention was to draw out

¹⁵ Church records indicate there were 441 pledges received for the program year 2017-2018. Pledge value was over \$904,000.

¹⁶ Participants are assured confidentiality to secure their input and candor.

¹⁷ The average campaign raises five times annual giving.



input that would be useful in determining the feasibility of conducting a campaign at Cedar Lane - the extent to which the congregation is ready and the scale of the undertaking.

Indication that a congregation is ready to undertake a Capital Campaign requires affirmative responses to three questions:

- Is there sufficient capacity to undertake a Capital Campaign of the magnitude envisioned?
- Is there a willingness to conduct a Capital Campaign?
- Is there consensus on the scope of a Capital Campaign?

In this section, answers to each question will be developed based on the report's Findings.

Is There Sufficient Capacity to Undertake a Capital Campaign?

Yes, the Cedar Lane Fundraising Capacity evaluation indicated an ability to undertake a capital campaign with a target range of \$5.0 million. This is within the standard performance metric for a Klote campaign and appears suited to Cedar Lane.

Is There Willingness to Conduct a Capital Campaign?

Yes, the data indicate a willingness to conduct a capital campaign.

Strong indication of willingness to financially support a campaign was demonstrated by responses to Question # 4a.

Although the responses to Question # 4b indicated adequate support to staff a capital campaign, the slim margin must be noted. Failure to secure sufficient volunteer manpower is a significant risk to a campaign's success. Securing an ample supply of volunteer manhours must be a leadership priority throughout a campaign's duration.

Is there Consensus on the Scope of a Capital Campaign?

Yes, through the work of the architect, Ritter · Norton Architects, a list of building constraints and opportunities was developed. During the Feasibility Study, the list of constraints and opportunities was validated.

The grand conceptual plan, however, was not in line with the congregation's sense of an appropriate response to the identified constraints and opportunities.



As noted in the findings, less expensive – less ambitious conceptual approaches focused on building improvements were of interest.

Secondly, the findings clearly indicate strong support for the underwriting of programs capable of capitalizing on current membership trends and strengthening the connectivity between R.E. and other Cedar Lane program elements.

Recommendations

The following are the professional recommendations offered to Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalists Church by James D. Klote & Associates. They are based upon the information and data gathered during the Feasibility Study, analysis of that data and professional interpretation of analysis results.

Recommendation # 1

CLUUC should immediately proceed with a fundraising campaign under the direction of a Steering Committee.

The Conclusions presented in the previous section, based upon Feasibility Study Findings, indicate the affirmative presence of the necessary and sufficient conditions conducive to the successful undertaking of a capital campaign. The fundraising activities should consist of:

- Immediately conducting a capital campaign lasting 30 to 32 weeks.

There are several factors supporting the immediate initiation of a capital campaign:

- Through the Focus Group activities, awareness among congregants is very high and there is a prevailing expectation of further action.
 - Congregants have clearly demonstrated support for fundraising activities.
 - Delay will sap momentum generated by the Focus Groups, threaten the availability of funds when needed, and the Feasibility Study process will have to be repeated.
- Appointment of a Steering Committee to direct the campaign.



The organizational framework for leading and conducting the capital campaign will consist of a Steering Committee appointed by the Board of Trustees. Steering Committee membership will be limited to the Campaign Chair(s) and individuals with supervisory oversight for a campaign functional area.¹⁸

Within four business days of approving this recommendation, the Klotz consultant will produce and deliver to the Board a **PLAN OF CAMPAIGN**. The Plan will describe each position composing the Steering Committee. Additionally, it will lay out the phases of the campaign, present the initial schedule and detail the interrelationships of the various Steering Committee members across the phases of the campaign.

Recommendation # 2

CLUUC's should set the following goals and targets for the recommended capital campaign.

- The target for a fundraising campaign shall be \$5.0 million with a recommended pledge fulfillment period of four years.
 - Funding will be designated only for repairing, remodeling, renovating and refurbishing existing buildings on the Cedar Lane property, with the explicit exception of the Chalice House.
 - Funding will be dedicated to expanding membership through measures that enhance mission fulfillment

Scope of remodeling and renovations will be guided by the constraints and opportunities previously identified by the architect. The conceptual plan shall be scaled down to most efficiently and effectively address as many constraints and opportunities as practicable.

Mission funds are established as a supplement to current mission related revenue and expenses. These funds shall not be used in lieu of current revenue committed to mission fulfillment activities, staffing or programs.

¹⁸ As an example, the campaign will have a communications team. The communications team leader(s) will serve on the Steering Committee.



Recommendation # 3

The Annual Stewardship Campaign be conducted concurrently with the Capital Campaign under the aegis of the Steering Committee.

Coordination of the Capital Campaign and the Stewardship Drive is fundamental to the success of both. They need to be conducted in a complementary manner, making the most of shared resources.

