



Shaping a strategy for Shaker's facilities: city • schools • libraries

### Partners:







### **Prepared by Planning NEXT**

# **A Vision for Community Facilities**

### August 2019

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# Acknowledgments

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# Special thanks to the following facilities for hosting events/meetings

Shaker Heights City Hall Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building Shaker Heights Main Library Shaker Heights High School Shaker Heights Middle School

### Consultant

Planning NEXT



In early 2019, Shaker Heights launched the Forward Together process to create a vision for community facilities. The City of Shaker Heights, the Shaker Heights City Schools and the Shaker Heights Public Library came together to jointly fund and lead this process. With limited resources and high expectations, it was important to leverage and strengthen current relationships and look for new ways to collaborate and think creatively about the current and future state of the community facilities. Through the first several months, multiple opportunities were designed to provide a platform for everyone who cares about Shaker Heights to get involved and share their thoughts on the future of facilities.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

African Proverb

# Introduction

### What is Forward Together?

Forward Together is a process to develop a forward-looking strategy for current and future community facilities. The City of Shaker Heights, the Shaker Heights City Schools and the Shaker Heights Public Library partnered together to jointly fund and lead a process to develop a collaborative vision for the future of community facilities.

# Why is a vision for community facilities needed?

In general, planning represents good stewardship. Shaker Heights is known as a great place to live, go to school, raise a family and have fun. Collaboratively utilizing our community assets is how Shaker Heights has formed into the community we live in today. It is with this spirit that the City, School District and the Library joined forces to envision the future of their facilities.

### What is a community facility?

Community facilities include the city administration and recreation facilities such as City Hall, Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building, playgrounds, parks and recreation fields, fire and police stations as well as the main and branch libraries and all public school buildings and supporting facilities.

### Why are we doing this?

**To be fiscally responsible.** We are in a new economy of sharing and partnerships are becoming essential to getting things done in a fiscally responsible way. Local municipalities are having to do more with less and collaboration allows for more creative ways to address issues and problem solve solutions.

**To be more collaborative.** The Shaker Heights we know and love today is the result of a tradition of working together to leverage the most of our community assets. But traditionally, each entity has taken a siloed approach to building, maintaining and operating facilities. Now is the time to think differently about this approach.



# To ensure Shaker Heights is a healthy and vibrant community. Shaker Heights sits within a region that has had steady population decline and while it has not lost population at the rate of the county or similar inner-ring suburbs, it is still impacted by the larger regional dynamics. Since 2000, the population of Shaker Heights has decreased 6% versus 10% for Cuyahoga County, 7% for University Heights, 10% for Lakewood, 11% for Cleveland Heights, and 12% for Warrensville Heights. Civic assets can be an important tool in helping to stabilize and attract new residents to the community.

To promote diversity and inclusion. Shaker Heights is proud of its diversity and strives to be an open and welcoming place for all. Community facilities play an important role in creating healthy civic engagement and resiliency by providing residents with places to gather, share, and get to know each other.



# **Process**

### **Task Force**

A Task Force of leaders and board members of the three entities was assembled to help guide the process. This group, combined with input from a series of public workshops and events, laid the foundation of the vision plan.

### **Panel Discussion**

This exciting and collaborative City-Libraries-Schools project kicked off with an educational and inspirational speaker panel on March 26. Thought leaders discussed the future of cities, libraries and education and shared what they thought the trends and themes mean for the future of our civic assets.

### **Vision Workshops**

The Future of Facilities Vision Workshops took place on April 11. Nearly 100 people participated at two different workshops. A brief presentation highlighted what was learned through interviews

and technical analysis. Participants were then able to share their ideas and insight through four interactive activities focused on the future of facilities throughout the City. Another 200 people participated through online activities that mimicked the workshops.

### **Priorities Open House**

On June 12th, 50 people attended the Open House event which allowed participants to learn about the goals and big ideas that were developed as a result of the input provided during the Future of Facilities Vision Workshops. After the event, more than 300 people reviewed the materials online and provided additional input.



### **INPUT HIGHLIGHTS**

Nearly 800 people have participated in the process so far.

Over **4,250** individual comments and ideas collected.





### **Publicity and Outreach**

Forward Together was an open and inclusive process. To ensure that anyone who lives, works, or cares about the future of Shaker Heights knew it was a choice to get involved in this planning process, a robust outreach and publicity campaign was conducted, which included:

- 2500 project cards distributed
- Email notifications sent by the City, School and Library
- Included in the Mayor's Report
- Blow-in card included in Shaker Life Magazine
- Flyer in backpacks of all K-6 students at Shaker schools
- Social media posts by the City, Schools and Library
- Shared at Morehead Neighbor Night event
- Display on digital signage board at Main Library

- Press release
- Online articles at Cleveland.com and Freshwater Cleveland
- Project Website www.ForwardTogetherShaker.com
- Online Surveys
- Flyers at highly visited facilities such as the Main Library, City Hall, and the Community Building



















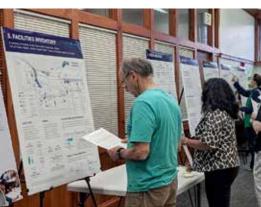










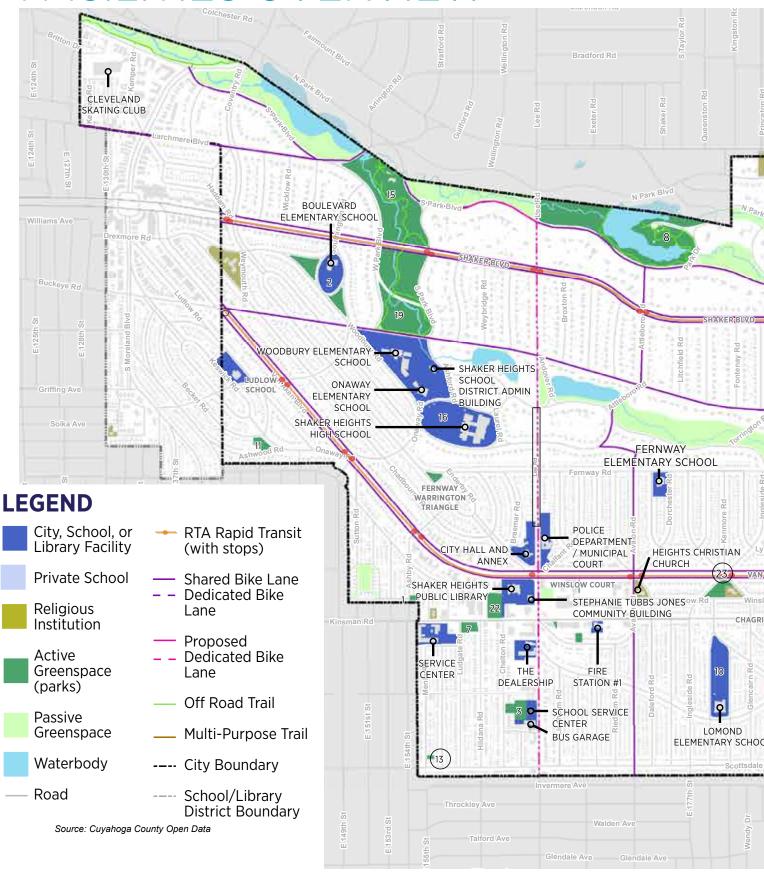


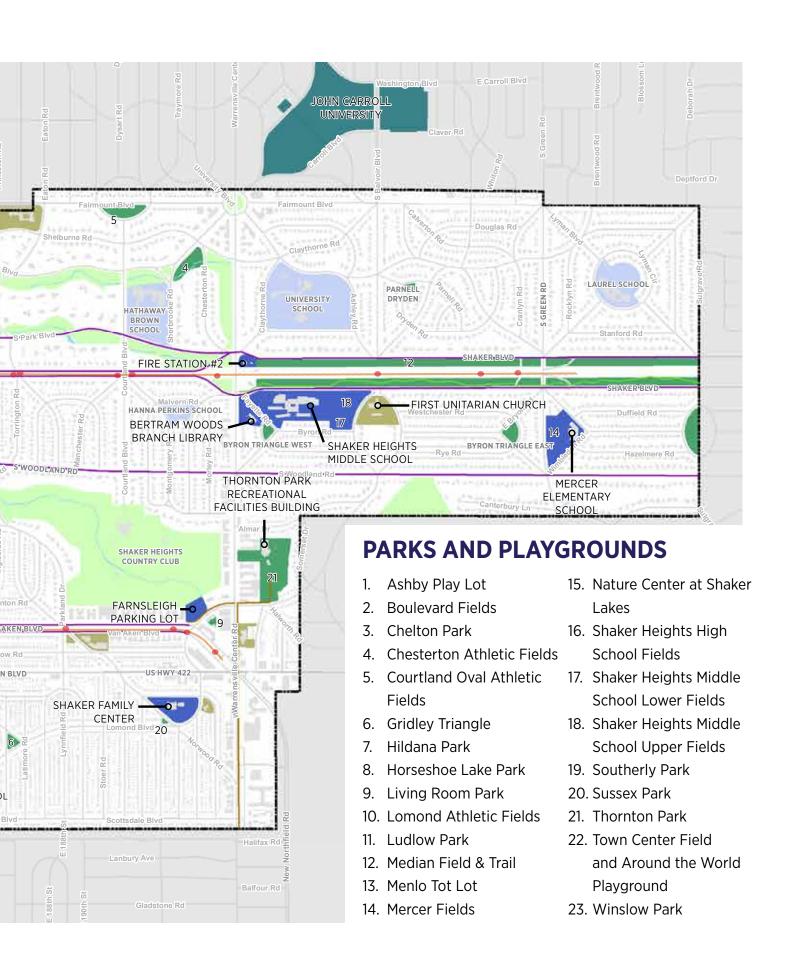


A summary of existing facility types that includes the three entities: City of Shaker Heights, Shaker Heights Public Library, and Shaker Heights City Schools.

Private schools and churches are also included on the map for reference.

# FACILITIES OVERVIEW

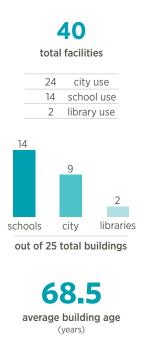


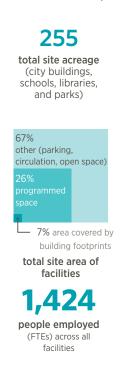


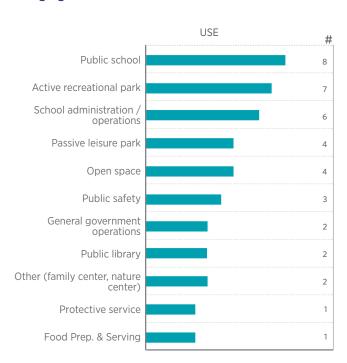
# Facilities At A Glance

### **FACILITIES**

The majority of overall facilities are for city use, however schools own the most buildings. All facilities employ a significant number of individuals, but are also aging.





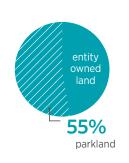


### **PARKS AND PARK LAND**

Over half of entity owned land is park land. Shaker Heights has good access to parks (equal distribution of parks and a low residents per park ratio), but lower overall acres per resident, compared to the national median.

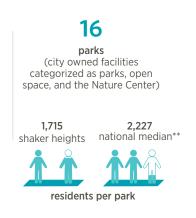
acres of park land

5.06
park acres per 1,000
residents
(national median 10.1\*\*)



of Shaker Heights is within a quarter mile walk to a facility (park, school, playground, library, etc.)

publicly accessible natural water features (Horseshoe Lake, Doan Brook, Green Lake, Lower Shaker Lake)



### **COMMUNITY SPACES**

Shaker Heights has more libraries per capita than the state average and a variety of meeting spaces in facilities across the city.

libraries
(Shaker Heights Main and Bertram Woods)

community meeting rooms
(ranging from 2 person occupancy to 50+ person conference rooms)



### PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATION AMENITIES

Shaker Heights residents per number of playground exceeds the national median. The number of recreation centers per residents is also higher, but the space could be better utilized as not all space is being used as recreation space.

total outdoor sport courts and recreation amenities (i.e. athletic fields, pool, skate park, etc. includes one indoor ice rink)

sites contain recreation trails





41,000
total square feet of recreation and/or senior centers
(Thornton Park and STJ Community Building) This amounts to about 1.5 square feet of recreation / community center per resident, exceeding the national median of 0.8.



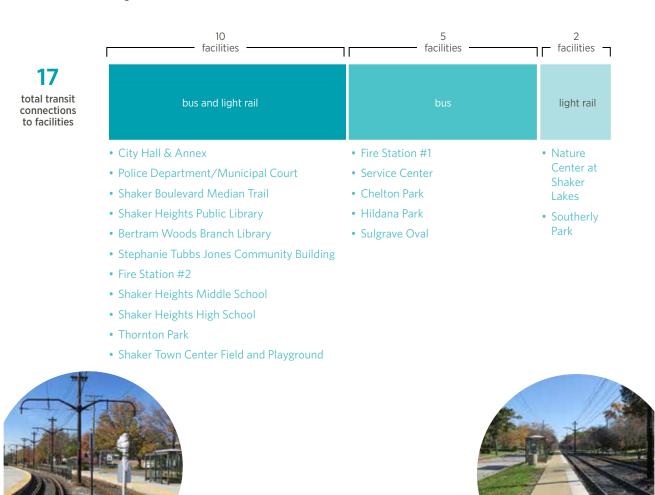
### **MOBILITY AND CONNECTION**

Shaker Heights currently has limited connectivity to multi-purpose trails, though many facilities are located along bike routes.



### **TRANSIT**

Shaker Heights currently has good transit connections to both libraries, city use buildings, the Middle School and the High School.





The vision and goals for Shaker Heights were crafted by numerous engagement activities with the community throughout the Forward Together process. The specific key initiatives are a collection of projects, processes or programs suggested by the community that seek to advance the vision and goals for the future of Shaker Heights facilities.

"This is a wonderful process which gives me great hope for our future."

> Future of facilities workshop participant

# Vision

The vision for the future of our community facilities is one where collaboration is at the heart of every opportunity, decision and investment.

### **GOALS**

This collaboration leads to providing community facilities that...

**Gather People...** Places and programming that bring the entire community together and strengthens bonds through recreation, fun, fitness, educational and social opportunities.



**Connect Places...** A network of safe and easily accessible routes that connect the community facilities to one another and to the neighborhoods they serve, as well as the infrastructure that supports virtual connections within the community.



**Utilize Assets...** A well-maintained network of facilities that are adaptable, multi-functional, efficient and utilized to their full potential.



**Collaborate Broadly...** A collaborative spirit and intent between the taxing authorities (School, Library and City) and private entities (private schools, religious organizations, non-profits) as well as with regional partners is at the root of all planning and investing, leading to maximum efficiency with respects to costs and the environment.



### **Approach to Facilities**

Our approach to facilities is one where the focus is not only on providing city-wide spaces and places to gather together as a whole community but also seek to reinforce our strong neighborhood pattern and pride to provide access to amenities within each neighborhood. From a regional perspective, partnerships will be explored when appropriate as part of the planning stage for new ideas, projects or collaborations. See a breakdown below of what types of facilities could be a focus for each scale.

# Key Initiatives at a Glance

Hundreds of ideas and suggestions were generated by the community as part of the process and through discussion and prioritization were narrowed down by the community and the Joint Facilities Task Force to the following list of projects, programs and processes. The prioritization designation (high priority or medium priority) outlines the priority level of each key intiative as determined in a joint exercise by the Task Force members. Other initiatives that were not chosen as a high or medium priority will be included in the appendix.

	Key Initiatives	Timeframe	Priority Level
1	Create a collaborative entity focused on facilities.	Near term	High
2	Study opportunities to re-imagine the Community Building.	Near term	Hlgh
3	Study Lee Road facilities.	Near term	High
4	Explore projects to improve connectivity to facilities and neighborhoods.	Near term	High
5	Create a community calendar.	Near term	Medium
6	Understand inventory and access to community meeting spaces.	Near term	Medium
7	Explore expanded community use of schools.	Medium term	Hlgh
8	Study opportunities to re-imagine Thornton Park.	Medium term	High
9	Explore need for additional athletic fields.	Medium term	Medium
10	Create additional multi-generational programming.	Medium term	Medium
11	Explore the potential for creating a Recreation Center.	Long term	High
12	Work to modernize existing facilities.	Long term	High
13	Invest in the Shaker Lakes.	Long term	High
14	Study opportunity to create an indoor or outdoor performing arts venue.	Long term	Medium
15	Explore opportunities to expand technology infrastructure.	Long term	Medium

# Key Initiatives Details

The following section provides further details on each of the key initiatives organized by timing. The timing designation outlines a general timeframe for beginning to work on the specific key initiative, it is **not** an indication of when a specific key initiative will be or should be completed. The timing designation is based upon funding and resource needs/opportunities and additional studies or other strategic work that needs to be completed first in order to better inform the key initiative.

### **NEAR TERM**

Key initiatives to begin work on in the next 1-2 years. It is important that these key initiatives start soon in order to take advantage of time-sensitive opportunities and fully leverage partnerships.

Treate a collaborative entity focused on facilities. Establish a working group or task force made up of representatives from the three taxing authorities and other partners that meets regularly to discuss facilities and opportunities for collaboration.

### **Collaboration**

- The collaboration potential for this key initiative is to not only institutionalize a formal working group made up of representatives from the City of Shaker Heights, Shaker Heights City Schools and the Shaker Heights Public Library but to also look at collaboration with private schools, religious organizations or other community groups with community facility assets.
- The work program for the group will include exploring ideas for joint funding and cost efficiency/cost sharing across partner organizations. This entity also serves as the oversight committee for all priorities contained in this Collaborative Facilities Vision Plan.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

• High Priority

- Identify member organizations and individual representatives.
- Develop detailed work programs for vision plan key initiative items.
- Review similar organizations around the country to determine an appropriate legal structure.
- Review best practices for joint funding and operation of facilities from other communities.

### **NEAR TERM CONTINUED**

Study opportunities to re-imagine the **Community Building.** Take advantage of current opportunities (renovation at Main Library, potential renovation to City Hall) to think differently and re-imagine the potential future uses of the Community Building.

### Collaboration

 Work with the Shaker Heights Public Library to explore ideas to better connect or strategically position the Main Library and Community Building to take full advantage of the proximity and space between the two facilities. Understand the potential renovations to City Hall, based on the ongoing Space Study, and how that might impact the Community Building opportunities.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

High Priority

### **Moving Forward**

- · Coordinate with the Main Library design process to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Study Community Building current uses/tenants.
- Move Housing Inspection and the Neighborhood Revitalization Department to City Hall in order to create additional opportunities at the Community Center.
- Study Lee Road facilities. Develop a facilities strategy plan for Lee Road that focuses on the best and highest use of land currently occupied along the Lee Road corridor, including the school district bus garage and Chelton Park.

### **Collaboration**

 Working together, the School District and City should study and analyze current bus garage locations to discover the best location. Work with City's Parks and Recreation Department and Moreland Neighborhood to fully understand Chelton Park's current uses and potential opportunities. Also consider the adjacency of the City Service Center and that potential location for a consolidation of services (school and city).

### **Task Force Priority Level**

High Priority

- Lee-Chagrin Commercial District Facilities Redevelopment Analysis.
- Define scope of a Lee-Chagrin Corridor Study.
- Explore options and sources to fund a plan.

### **NEAR TERM CONTINUED**

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**Explore projects to improve connectivity to facilities and neighborhoods.** Improve walkability throughout the community by investing in more multi-use paths, pedestrian infrastructure (cross walks, lighting, etc.) and safety measures.

### **Collaboration**

 Work with all public and private entities to conduct projects related to improving walkability within the community – prioritizing safe routes between neighborhoods and activity hubs/community facilities within the city.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

High Priority

### **Moving Forward**

- Identify sidewalk and other walkability projects that align with safe routes between community facilities and parks.
- Meet with other entities and partners regarding walkability to gather ideas and brainstorm potential projects.
- · Identify projects and funding sources.



**Create a community calendar.** Explore platforms and a process for creating a community-wide calendar of events that can be utilized and updated by multiple organizations.

### **Collaboration**

Each entity and community organization can access the platform and
put their own information onto the calendar. This will not only serve
as a great resource and tool for the public to better know what is
going on in the community but also helps organizations across the city
better collaborate on events and scheduling to reduce date conflicts.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

Medium Priority

- Research software platform and best practices for creating a community wide calendar tool.
- Pilot tool between the three taxing entities before opening to other community wide partners.

### **NEAR TERM CONTINUED**

**Understand inventory and access to community** 6 meeting spaces. Create a meeting space inventory and one-stop shop space reservation platform to simplify access of community meeting space across the city.

### **Collaboration**

• Allows for a one-stop portal for understanding different types of community meeting spaces available and reserving the space across the three entities and other community partners. This allows for broader access of meeting spaces rather than just thinking about spaces by ownership structure.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

• Medium Priority

- Inventory community meeting space currently available in the community (across all public and private entities). Include items such as size, amenities, availability of technology etc.
- Identify gaps or missing types of space and amenities (for consideration in future renovation projects or opportunities).
- Create an online portal for reserving space and promote to partner organizations and community members.

### **MEDIUM-TERM**

These key initiatives begin in roughly 3-5 years based upon funding availability and capital improvement plans and needs.

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### **Explore expanded community use of schools.**

Study opportunities for increased community use of school facilities.

### **Collaboration**

 Expanded access to school facilities allows for more utilization of current facilities by other entities and community members.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

High Priority

- Analyze current usage of school buildings and facilities during off-school hours to better understand what parts of the schools and facilities could be available for community use and at what times of day.
- Determine legal, policy, and/or cost implications regarding liability of community use of schools.
- Create a MOU or agreement detailing the expectation for shared use of school facilities across entities.

### **MEDIUM-TERM** CONTINUED

Study opportunities to re-imagine Thornton

Park. Re-imagine the entire Thornton Park to modernize recreation facilities and better connect to the larger community as well as to the Van Aken District.

### **Collaboration**

With some of the largest recreational spaces in the community,
 Thornton Park could host additional field space or function as a
 recreational center. Depending on the direction of a community
 recreation center the demands of Thornton Park may change.
 Collaboration could potentially include the Van Aken District,
 schools and private educational institutions if there is a desire for
 specific programs.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

• High Priority

- Review Thornton Park Ice Arena study to establish an investment strategy.
- Examine community use of exterior tennis and other sports courts to determine either continued maintenance or identification of different space utilization.
- Explore plans to improve the park entry and connections to the trail system.



### **MEDIUM-TERM** CONTINUED

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### **Explore need for additional athletic fields.**

Undertake an athletic field study to better understand the need and opportunities for additional field space as well as how to better manage current field space within the community.

### **Collaboration**

- There are many different organizations and groups needing field space in the community. Understanding the need and how to best utilize and manage the field space will allow the community to be more efficient with space. Part of this analysis should also be focused on how the field space could possibly also serve other needs when not in use during off seasons.
- Partner with local private educational institutions.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

• Medium Priority

- Engage with an athletic field study consultant to conduct a thorough analysis of current field space, type, quality and need and make recommendations.
- Establish an umbrella management platform to manage field space across multiple owners.

### **MEDIUM-TERM** CONTINUED

**Create additional multi-generational** programming. Look for ways to expand current programming offerings to create more unique opportunities that appeal to a wide audience.

### **Collaboration**

• Work across entities and with different partners to find opportunities (possibly aligned with new renovated space at Main Library) to offer a range of programming geared towards a wider audience and designed to bring different generations together.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

Medium Priority

- Develop a database of existing multi-generational programming to identify gaps.
- Connect with local multi-generational organizations to understand needs/desires of the community.

### **LONG-TERM**

These key initiatives start in six or more years due to other strategic planning that must take place first to better inform the full scale and scope of the key initiatives.

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### **Explore the potential for creating a Recreation**

**Center.** Explore the potential for creating a central recreation and community center focused on fitness, recreation and community gathering spaces.

### **Collaboration**

Understanding the needs of multiple entities is critical in considering
the need for developing a Recreation Center. With several different
scenarios of how a Recreation Center may take shape, it is important
to involve as many organizations as possible in the community to
understand the needs and fully understand the strategic vision for
the schools, how Thornton Park may be re-imagined, or if private
institutions would want to partner.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

• High Priority

- The school district will undertake a long-term schools facilities planning process and will invite input from the city and library.
- Review pros and cons of a centralized recreation center compared to a dispersed approach throughout the community that may offer different types of amenities.
- Location Study
- Coordinate with school institutions

### **LONG-TERM CONTINUED**

Work to modernize existing facilities. Continue efforts to modernize and upgrade current facilities as opportunities for renovation and other improvements present themselves.

### **Collaboration**

• All entities will be working to identify opportunities to improve facilities beyond the basic maintenance to upgrade facilities to 21st century standards and expectations.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

High Priority

### **Moving Forward**

- Undertake a school facilities strategic visioning and planning plan.
- Complete the Main Library planning and design work, which may or may not include the Community Building.
- Complete the ongoing City Hall Space Study project in order to rehabilitate the second floor firehouse space.
- Determine use of Community Building.

**Invest in the Shaker Lakes.** Explore opportunities to create more site amenities and programming and improve maintenance at all Shaker Lakes to encourage more active recreation of these unique community assets.

### **Collaboration**

 Work with schools and library to create additional programming and increased usage of lakes. Participate in neighboring jurisdictions as part of their planning processes that involve the lakes or land adjacent to the lakes.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

High Priority

- Study current usage of Shaker Lakes to identify community needs for improvement.
- Explore potential for additional educational programs involving environmental studies or similar programs with schools, library, Nature Center, Doan Brook Watershed Partnership and other relevant entities.

### **LONG-TERM CONTINUED**

Study opportunity to create an indoor or outdoor performing arts venue. When considering renovations and modifications to current facilities, consider the possibility of creating an indoor or outdoor performing arts venue.

### **Collaboration**

 Community use of an outdoor performing arts venue may include multiple types of organizations across the community. There could even be regional participation from private institutions or organizations.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

Medium Priority

### **Moving Forward**

- Review use of existing outdoor amphitheater area to understand demand and usage and issues with current location and design.
- · Collaborate with other institutions.
- **Explore opportunities to expand technology infrastructure.** Explore opportunities to better connect residents through technology infrastructure.

### Collaboration

• The City should work with neighboring municipalities to determine if there are connection opportunities.

### **Task Force Priority Level**

Medium Priority

### **Moving Forward**

• Review and/or update previous study for city-wide wi-fi.







tbd

