

Shaker Heights Principles (BlackSpace) Preamble

City, School District, and Library leadership have adopted the [BlackSpace Urbanist Collective's Manifesto](#) as our guiding principles for *Forward Together*, in both process and desired outcomes. BlackSpace is a collective of Black urban planners, architects, artists, activists, designers, and leaders working to protect and create Black spaces in the built environment.

We believe these principles will support a planning process with the most authentic and meaningful community collaboration, and outcomes that are most beneficial to the vitality of the Shaker Heights community as a whole. We chose to adopt BlackSpace's principles because they are the product of some of the best, most creative, and most equity-oriented minds in planning and design, and because naming and orienting ourselves toward the Black experience is critical if we are to achieve our goals of becoming a truly equitable community.

Importantly, this is *not* at the exclusion of any racial or ethnic identity, or any other marginalized identity. Community vitality is a collective pursuit and accomplishment, not a zero-sum game; as the Shaker Heights School District's [Educational Equity Policy](#) notes, "equity benefits the District as a whole," just as it benefits the City as a whole. The BlackSpace principles are a framework to guide us as we strive to include all voices and perspectives, while also staying mindful of the historic exclusion and absence specifically of Black voices from public planning processes such as this one. Again, as the School District's policy notes, "equity does not mean equal." In adopting the BlackSpace Manifesto as our guiding principles for *Forward Together*, we are taking an equitable approach to this important effort to plan for community facilities to take our historic City into the future—a vibrant future that we design together.

- Forward Together Leadership Group