

Memo for Round 1 Engagement: Building the Vision

November 17, 2021

This document summarizes several inputs as part of the engagement process for Forward Together, which was conducted between October 6 and October 31. The first round of engagement sought to engage the public on their thoughts regarding facility locations, equity, education, and alternative uses for city facilities. The feedback process was open to all, however participants in the process were self-selected and the results are not a statistically valid sample.

The memo includes the following:

1. Purpose
2. Outreach and Publicity
3. Engagement Overview
4. Results

1. Purpose

The first round of public engagement sought to re-energize the community to the Forward Together process and build excitement for public participation. It was an opportunity to provide background information on the master plan process and how it will move forward to make the vision, established as part of the first phase, a reality. Most importantly, this public engagement opportunity was a chance to ask big picture questions and hear future facility ideas and opportunities desired by the community. The input will help the planning team understand important and relevant issues that should be addressed in the facilities master plan and to develop concepts based upon that input.

2. Outreach and Publicity

Extensive outreach was conducted to spread the word about the opportunity to participate in the Forward Together process. The process capitalized on existing networks through each of the three entities (City, Schools, Library).

- 2,500 printed rack cards distributed throughout the community
- Email notifications sent by the City, Schools, Library
- Social media posts by the City, Schools, Library
- Featured on front page of City website, starting 9/20/21
- Article in Shaker Life Magazine
- Weekly Neighborhood Notes flyer
- Rack cards distributed to 27 local businesses, 10/9/21 Moreland Fall concert, local events
- Flyers distributed in Recreation's senior programming mailer
- Flyer in backpacks of all K-6 students in Shaker schools
- Included in City Enews from August 30 to October 28
- Direct email to neighborhood association leaders
- Online articles in Cleveland.com and Patch.com

3. Engagement Overview

Round 1: Building the Vision included many ways to get involved, both in-person and online. All engagement formats included the same information and critical questions for participants to learn about the process and provide their input. Formats included: an online survey available on ForwardTogetherShaker.com from October 6 to October 31; virtual workshops held on October 7 at two times, noon and 6pm; in-person workshops held on October 13 at the Middle School, October 14 at the STJ Community Building, and October 14 at Chelton Park; and two “meeting-in-a-box” sessions which allowed for facilitation in small groups of key demographics whose voices had not been heard through the other engagement formats.

4. Results

This section summarizes the input collected. It draws from what was learned from each engagement activity. Over 7,000 pieces of public input were collected during this phase of engagement.

Building the Vision Workshops

Below is the summary of the key themes and ideas that were shared as part of the public workshops, virtual workshops, online survey, and meeting-in-a-box sessions. This section is organized into two main sections: Participation and Station Results. Station Results are further broken down by station.

Participation

719 people participated in the workshops, filled out the online survey or attended a meeting-in-a-box session. Participants filled out an exit questionnaire which included questions on age, race/ethnicity, and neighborhood. The following insight is based on the responses collected.

- Participants were diverse, but not as diverse as the community. 20% of participants identified as African American, compared to 47% of the Shaker Heights School District.
- There was participation from a wide range of ages; however, people aged 18-34 year were underrepresented at 9% compared to 18% in the whole community.
- Residents from all neighborhoods were represented in the engagement process. Ludlow and Moreland had the lowest levels of representation with 2% and 7% of respondents respectively.

Age:

Under 18:	9% (Census = 26%)
18-24:	1% (Census = 6%)
25-34:	8% (Census = 12%)
35-44:	26% (Census = 13%)
45-54:	27% (Census = 12%)
55-64:	17% (Census = 14%)
65+:	12% (Census = 18%)

Race:

Asian:	1% (SHSD = 3%)
Black/African American:	20% (SHSD = 47%)
White/Caucasian:	74% (SHSD = 40%)
Latinx/Hispanic:	1% (SHSD = 3%)
Two or more:	4% (SHSD = 7%)
Other:	1% (SHSD NA)

SHSD = Shaker Heights School District Demographics

Neighborhoods

Boulevard	11%
Fernway	13%
Lomond	19%
Ludlow	2%
Malvern	9%
Mercer	13%
Moreland	7%
Onaway	20%
Sussex	8%
I am not sure	1%
I live outside the city	5%

Station Results (by station)

The following summarizes the feedback from the engagement by station. Qualitative feedback was analyzed for key themes and listed in order of magnitude.

Station 1: Guiding Principles

Do you agree with these guiding principles?

- Yes: 94%
- No: 6%

Please provide any comments you have on the guiding principles. If you think there are guiding principles missing, please write them below.

- **Sustainability:** Sustainability and a response to climate change should be included in the principles.
- **Accessibility:** Facilities should be accessible, safe, and should provide inclusive programming, especially for seniors, teens, and all income levels.
- **Too many principles/not meaningful:** The principles are poorly defined, vague, and/or there are too many to be meaningful.
- **Cost and taxes:** Principles should consider costs, taxes, and fiscal sustainability.
- **Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) :** Important to include diversity, equity, and inclusion. DEI efforts should be acted on and better defined.
- **21st Century Learning:** 21st Century Learning should be better defined. Listen to the needs of students and teachers. High-quality education is important but changing facilities and curriculum risks changing what works well now.
- **Hesitancy regarding efficiency and collaboration:** Principles regarding collaboration, efficiency, and transformation should be better defined. Transformation, collaboration, and efficiency may result in inequities and in the mission of the different facilities being ignored in favor of other uses.

Station 2: Where our facilities are located

Please reference the location numbers as shown on the graphic. Thinking city-wide, how important are the current facility locations to you? Which locations are most important and why?

- **Current locations important (75%):** Majority of respondents indicated that some or all of the current locations are important to them or their community.
- **Libraries (25%):** Libraries, both Main Library and Bertram Woods, are important locations.
- **Neighborhood elementary schools (19%):** Residents in favor of having neighborhood elementary schools because they are walkable and build sense of community.
- **Tri-school area (19%):** The location of the High School, Woodbury, and Onaway is important to residents.
- **Thornton Park (19%):** Residents value a recreation space in the community.
- **Walkability and transit access (10%):** Respondents want walkable facilities, want improved sidewalks and safe access to facilities, and value facilities that are accessible by transit.

Thinking about where you live in your neighborhood, what types of facilities or spaces (schools, library, city facilities, playgrounds etc.) do you want?

- **Community or recreation center (32%):** A facility that provides meeting spaces, recreation space, exercise equipment, and programming for all ages (particular focus on teens and seniors).
- **Playgrounds (24%):** Playgrounds in neighborhoods – both stand-alone and located on school grounds.
- **Athletic and green spaces (24%):** Green and open spaces, basketball courts, tennis courts.
- **Neighborhood elementary schools (20%):** Preference for neighborhood elementary schools in safe walking distance.
- **Library (19%):** Respondents value access to existing libraries.
- **Dog park (15%):** Neighborhood dog parks

Thinking generally about facilities (schools, library or city) would you rather have decentralized facilities (facilities in each neighborhood) or centralized facilities (one larger facility that draws entire community together)?

- Centralized: 35%
- Decentralized: 41%
- Other: 24%

Additional comments on centralized and decentralized facilities:

- Majority of “Other” options preferred a mixture of centralized and decentralized facilities.
 - Many respondents prefer decentralized neighborhood elementary schools and centralized middle and high schools.
 - Many respondents prefer decentralized playgrounds and smaller recreation and athletic facilities (e.g., basketball courts).
 - Respondents generally favor a centralized recreation and/or community building.

- Respondents generally prefer one central library with decentralized branch locations or libraries co-located in neighborhood facilities.

Station 3: How our facilities can be improved

If the following facility is to remain, how should it be improved?

	Renovate Existing	Build New
Shaker High School:	82%	18%
Shaker Middle School:	36%	64%
Shaker Elementary Schools:	91%	9%
STJ Community Building:	73%	27%
Thornton Park:	54%	46%
Bertram Woods Branch:	77%	23%

If the following facilities are not used for their current use, what alternative uses do you imagine for the building location?

Shaker High School:

- Other school (e.g., middle school, vocational school, continuing education) (23%)
- Community or recreation center (22%)
- Keep as the high school (17%)
- Housing (7%)

Shaker Middle School:

- Community center, recreation center, or athletic complex that utilizes existing pool/facilities (39%)
- Other school (15%)
- Green space/athletic fields (8%)

Shaker Elementary Schools:

- Combine schools or use for other schools (20%)
- Community or recreation center (19%)
 - Many mentioned smaller recreation/community spaces and use of facilities for community gathering after school hours
- Keep all buildings as elementary schools (15%)
- Housing (10%)
- Use as preschool/pre-k/daycare (10%)

STJ Community Building:

- Expand offerings and utilize as a full community center (26%)
- Expand Innovative Center or use as other alternative education space (8%)
- Youth center (8%)

- Senior center (7%)
- Event or meeting space (7%)
- Private business (7%)

Thornton Park:

- Majority of respondents want Thornton Park to remain – either renovated, built new, or the same (63%)
- Main alternative uses:
 - Green space (9%)
 - Housing (8%)

Bertram Woods Branch:

- Keep as the Bertram Woods Branch Library (22%)
- Community or recreation center (18%)
- Combine with existing middle school building (either as middle school or as a different building) to form a centralized campus (17%)
- Alternative learning space like Innovative Center, tutoring center, or school (12%)

Station 4: How our facilities can be more equitable and inclusive

What inequities do you see in the current locations of Shaker facilities (schools, library or city)?





- **Locations of facilities are inequitable (36%):**
 - Not all neighborhoods have elementary schools
 - Not all neighborhoods have access to a library or recreation facilities
 - High school and middle school are not accessible to all neighborhoods
- **Walking and transit access (25%):**
 - Not all city facilities are in walkable areas, particularly elementary schools
 - Many facilities are not located near public transit
 - High schoolers do not have option to bus to school
 - Sidewalks and street crossings are not always safe to use
- **Inequities in predominantly black and lower income neighborhoods (24%):**
 - Neighborhood schools closed
 - Far from other city facilities
- **Disproportionate levels of bussing (20%):**
 - Students who are bussed are predominantly black
 - Black students do not have access to neighborhood schools
- **Inequitable programming and services (11%):**
 - Some facilities have better programming than others
 - Programming is not financially accessible to all
 - Neighborhoods without elementaries have access to extracurriculars/difficult for parents to get involved in schools and school community





How can our community facilities be more equitable?

- **Improve transportation (25%):**
 - Free transportation for high school
 - Improve public transit
 - Build facilities on transit lines or offer new transit options
 - Increase walkability and bike access
- **Reopen neighborhood schools or redistrict (16%):**
 - Redistrict or reopen schools in neighborhoods without neighborhood elementary.
- **New or renovated facilities future investment (10%):**
 - Investment, renovation and new facilities should be focused in neighborhoods that currently lack facilities.
- **Welcome all voices (9%):**
 - Make facilities more welcoming
 - Seek diverse perspectives in planning
- **Centralize school facilities (8%):**
 - Centralize school and other facilities
- **Broaden programming (7%):**
 - Include programming for more groups (e.g., teens, seniors, different income levels)
 - Focus programming on issues impacting equity/equitable access (e.g., childcare options)
 - Broaden programming options (e.g., art, music, dance, etc.)

Station 5: How our schools can embrace 21st Century Learning

The images below represent different ways school spaces can be organized or designed. Which of these images resonate with you?

<p style="text-align: center;">Example 1</p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Example 1</p>	55%	<p style="text-align: center;">Example 5</p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Example 5</p>	45%
<p style="text-align: center;">Example 2</p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Example 2</p>	47%	<p style="text-align: center;">Example 6</p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Example 6</p>	35%

<p>Example 3</p>  <p>Example 3</p>	<p>44%</p>	<p>Example 7</p>  <p>Example 7</p>	<p>11%</p>
<p>Example 4</p>  <p>Example 4</p>	<p>60%</p>	<p>Example 8</p>  <p>Example 8</p>	<p>13%</p>

Please explain why you chose the photos. What was it about them that resonated with you?

- **Physical environment:** Respondents liked examples 1-6 because they are bright, open, comfortable, colorful, support creativity, and have supportive furniture (34%).
- **Flexibility:** Respondents selected classroom styles that are flexible, functional, and offer a variety of learning spaces to support different learning styles. They favored options that allowed for some segmentation of the learning space over completely open spaces (34%).
- **Collaboration:** Respondents selected examples that allow for more collaboration, cooperative learning, and interaction (30%).
- **Open spaces are challenging:** Open spaces, particularly 2 and 6, can be challenging, loud, and distracting. Spaces that are too open are not conducive to individual learning (14%).
- **Hands-on learning:** Example 5 is supportive of hands-on learning and supports vocational and artistic learning and maker spaces (13%).

How do you envision our schools in the future?

- **Supportive of different learning styles and paths:** Support different paths through school (e.g., college prep, vocational, etc.) and different learning styles (e.g., online education, individual learning, experiential learning).
- **Updated buildings and modern classrooms:** Modernize classrooms with new technology, updated buildings, air conditioning, supportive furniture.
- **Flexible and inclusive spaces:** Learning spaces should support a variety of learning styles and be inclusive for all students.
- **Community and collaboration:** More ways for students to engage with community, for community to be involved in the schools, and for students and teachers to collaborate with one another.
- **Support teachers and evidence-based curriculum:** Quality education starts with quality teachers, continuing education for teachers, and an evidence-based curriculum.

Station 6: How our schools are organized

Do you have a preference on the re-organization of the grades?

Example A [PK / K-5 / 6-8 / 9-12]	65%
Example B [PK-2 / 3-5/ 6-8 / 9-12]	35%

If you do not have a preference to Example A or B, please suggest or comment on a grade organization you think is appropriate.

- Majority of respondents preferred grade banding that kept K-5 or K-6 together.
- Many respondents prefer models that result in fewer transitions.
- K-5 or K-6 allows for fewer transitions, is better for families with multiple children in elementary school, and allows for mentorship and leadership between grades.
- Many respondents indicated a preference for Pre-K alone, grouping early childhood ages together (K-2 or 3), and keeping grades 6-8 or 7-8 together as these grades are developmentally similar.