



## Forward Together Key Initiatives

Hundreds of ideas and suggestions were generated by the community as part of the 2019 Forward Together Vision process. Through discussion and prioritization, this list was narrowed down by the community and the Joint Facilities Task Force to the following list of projects, programs and processes. The Task Force members determined the relative priority of each initiative in a group exercise. View the initiatives below and learn about progress made in those areas as of spring 2025.

### 1. Continue the Joint Facilities Task Force

**Progress:** Shaker's three taxing entities have transformed the way they communicate and collaborate for the public good. Monthly collaboration meetings take place and have resulted in tangible opportunities, including:

- Additional school space available for City recreation programs.
- Sustainability initiatives – composting at Lomond School is open to residents; a Shaker Heights Schools representative is participating in the City's sustainability committee and a City staff member is participating on the District's committee and other initiatives.
- Permission to put flyers in elementary school students' backpacks to promote City recreational opportunities directly to families.

### 2. Re-imagine the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building

**Progress:** The City's Housing Department has relocated from the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building and became the combined Building and Housing Department in newly renovated office space in City Hall. As a result:

- The Community Building now accommodates nonprofits, including the Shaker Youth Center and the Shaker Heights Arts Council.
- Other office space has been repurposed for recreation programs.
- Long-term, the Lee Road Action Plan, adopted in 2023, envisions expanded recreation use at the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building and in the public space adjacent to the building.
- The City's Recreation Strategic Plan, now under development, will also consider future options for this building and its grounds.

### 3. Study Lee Rd. Facilities

**Progress:** The Lee Road Action Plan (2023) is a community-driven plan that creates a vision to comprehensively transform the area south of Van Aken Boulevard. Specifically:

- The plan calls for creating a thriving mixed-use commercial district that is attractive, walkable, bike-able and transit-friendly.

- The City has raised more than \$17.7M in grants to implement infrastructure improvements in 2027, including a bikeway that will connect Lee Road to the Van Aken District.
- A study of the Shaker Heights City School District's bus depot facility is proposed for 2025.

#### 4. Explore Projects to Improve Connections Between Facilities and Neighborhoods

**Progress:** The City is developing two new bikeways to improve connections within the City. Specifically:

- The City has received funding and is in design and engineering for the Van Aken Bikeway that will connect Farnsleigh Road and the Van Aken District to Lee Road in 2024.
- As part of the Lee Road Action Plan, the City will install an off-road bikeway along Lee Road south of Van Aken Boulevard to Scottsdale Boulevard and an in-road bike shoulder north of Van Aken Boulevard to the City limit.

#### 5. Create Community Calendar

**Progress:** A new facility scheduling tool is under development and will allow users to see available school athletic space and schedule the facilities for use. The system is hosted by the Shaker Heights City School District.

#### 6. Inventory Community Meeting Spaces

**Progress:** The Main Library's renovation improved spaces available for community meetings. The Library went from three larger rooms, two small rooms, and a conference room, to four larger rooms and two conference rooms. Bertram Woods also has a community meeting room available now, post-renovation.

#### 7. Explore Expanded Community Use of Schools

**Progress:** Continued discussions about shared facility use have resulted in:

- Expanded use of Shaker Heights City School District pools for City recreation programs, including swim lessons and open and lap swim.
- Indoor pickle ball in District facilities.
- Locating the District's Engagement and Registration office in Main Library.
- Additionally, a youth sports working group made up of community members and City and Shaker Heights City School District staff meets regularly to discuss collaboration opportunities, facility scheduling, and ways to expand access to youth sports. Outcomes include:
  - In 2023, the discussions expanded to include adult sports opportunities.
  - To help expand access to opportunities for youth sports participation, the District now allows the City's Recreation Department and youth sports organizations to send flyers to elementary school families in backpacks.

#### 8. Re-imagine Thornton Park

**Progress:** Read the City's Recreation Strategic Plan to see concepts for redeveloping Thornton Park based on community feedback.

#### 9. Explore Need for Additional Athletic Fields

**Progress:** Collaboration has resulted in an umbrella platform to manage and maintain fields in collaboration with the schools. Long-term field needs will also be addressed in the Recreation Strategic Plan.

## 10. Create Additional Multigenerational Programming

**Progress:** Recent multigenerational programming initiatives have included:

- A month-long series of events celebrating the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in January 2024.
- The Shaker Heights Police Department attracted residents of all ages for its first National Night Out event.
- The Recreation Department hosted a multi-generational Swim-Skate-Climb-athon in collaboration with Shaker Rocks.
- Dive-in Movie at Thornton Park pool, Touch a Truck at the Van Aken District, the Memorial Day parade, and School District's annual Back-to-School Cookout.
- This past spring, the Library hosted an eight week Intergenerational Puppet Making and Playwriting workshop for seniors 55+ and children in 3rd grade and older. The workshop was funded by the Ohio Arts Council.

## 11. Explore the Potential for Creating a Recreation Center

**Progress:** Concepts for a two different recreation centers were developed based on community feedback and included in the Recreation Strategic Plan.

## 12. Modernize Existing Facilities

**Progress:** All three entities have made progress when it comes to modernizing existing facilities, specifically:

- Shaker Library has renovated and modernized both of its buildings with well-appointed spaces for use by residents, organizations, and School District and City entities.
- The City and the Library recently collaborated on a new public art installation, The Reader's Picnic, near Main Library.
- Shaker Heights City School District's bond issue approved by voters in late 2023 will enable the District to expand its pre-K program and house it in the former Ludlow School building. The District's bond issue will fund facility renovations to support modern educational concepts.
- The City Hall space study resulted in the renovation of the second floor offices for the Building and Housing Department, along with first floor renovations.
- The City's Recreation Strategic Plan will evaluate ways to modernize existing recreation facilities.

## 13. Invest in the Shaker Lakes

**Progress:** The Doan Brook Restoration project will create a new 60-acre public park in the Horseshoe Park area with amenities like trails, Nature Play, a sensory garden and more. In addition, the Lower Lake Dam reconstruction project will provide improvements in that area.

## 14. Consider Opportunities for Creating an Indoor or Outdoor Performance Space

**Progress:** Currently studying the use of the Colonnade space and other appropriate outdoor venues.

## 15. Explore Opportunities to Expand Technology Infrastructure

**Progress:** The City's technology upgrades are ongoing and in recent years have included:

- Adding technology to enable live-streamed public meetings.
- Expanding use of videoconferencing.

- Expanding use of online platforms for the Recreation and Building and Housing departments.
- Continuing to provide fiber optic network connections for the District's Innovative Center for Personalized Learning and Family Engagement.