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Mayor's Town Center Task Force formed

PARMA, Ohio - Parma Mayor Tim DeGeeter has announced the creation of a task force intended to take a big step toward making the words "Town Center" more than just a concept.

The Parma Mayor's Town Center Task Force is charged with giving real, implementable substance to the idea of the Town Center. The task force will meet several times over the next six months or so and then present a viable, fundable strategic plan to the Mayor and the City Council. The first meeting of the task force, later this month, will be organizational in nature. It is envisioned that the task force will solicit input through public sessions and also allow for residents to provide input online through a website or via e-mail.

The geographic area of the Town Center would include The Shoppes at Parma, Stearns Farm, the Day Drive corridor, Parma City Hall, The Parma Library, Byers Field and the University Hospitals Parma Medical Center.

Cuyahoga County Planning Commission Executive Director Glenn Coyne, who was volunteered by Cuyahoga County's Loaned Executive Program, will serve as facilitator. Coyne is well-versed in community development and planning.

The 15-member task force includes representative of many Parma stakeholders that fall within the geographic region of the proposed Town Center. These include the Parma City School District, Parma Hospital, Proud of Parma, the Parma Area Chamber of Commerce, and the West Creek Conservancy. Polish and Ukrainian villages are also represented. The Shoppes at Parma mall manager will represent mall developer Phillips-Edison. Most of the members of the task force are also Parma residents. For example, Katherine Holmok, who is a member of the Parma Planning Commission, is a landscape architect. There is only one elected official on the panel, Parma City Councilman Scott Tuma, in whose ward the Town Center falls.

One of the ideas that the task force will consider is the connectivity of the geographic area, making the area more pedestrian friendly and adding other modes of transportation, such as biking, to connect the various attractions of the area.

“This is a great opportunity to create some real synergy here in Parma, to have a viable ‘downtown’ feel in this area,” DeGeeter said. “Already we have seen new growth and reinvestment in this area this past year. We are looking forward to the task force’s recommendations. It’s exciting to consider what can happen when this area comes alive.”

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