



SHAKER HEIGHTS

Memorandum

To: Members of the Finance Committee
From: Patrick F. Sweeney, Chief of Fire
cc: David E. Weiss, Mayor
Mathew P. Carroll, Chief Administrative Officer
Date: January 20, 2026
Re: Donation of city property (2009 & 2014 Horton Rescue Squads)

The Shaker Heights Fire Department provides emergency medical services to residents utilizing two front-line rescue squads operating out of Fire Station One on Chagrin Boulevard and Fire Station Two on Warrensville Center Road. In addition, a third rescue squad is maintained in reserve status and is placed into service when a front-line unit is out of service for repairs or when a third simultaneous EMS call is received. When deployed, the reserve rescue squad is staffed by firefighters assigned to a fire engine at Fire Station Two. This reserve unit was originally designated as a front-line rescue squad and was rotated into reserve status as newer units were added to the fleet.

Historically, the Fire Department has maintained a fleet of three rescue squads and donated older, out-of-service units to neighboring communities in need, regardless of vehicle age. In recent years—particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic—the department retained older rescue squads longer than usual due to extended manufacturing and delivery timelines for replacement vehicles. Procurement times that once averaged approximately six months have increased to more than three years, accompanied by significant cost increases.

With the recent delivery of a new 2025 Rescue Squad and the inclusion of funding in the 2026 Capital Improvement Program to order an additional replacement unit (with delivery anticipated in approximately three years), the department now has two older rescue squads that are no longer in service or needed for operational readiness. The Fire Department proposes donating these vehicles to neighboring communities that are experiencing critical shortages due to mechanical failures and accident-related damage to their existing rescue squads.

Specifically, the Maple Heights Fire Department and the Oakwood Village Fire Department are both in urgent need of replacement rescue squads. The readiness and reliability of emergency medical response vehicles in neighboring jurisdictions is a concern not only for those communities but also for Shaker Heights and other partnering departments. When a neighboring department's rescue squad is unavailable, that department must rely on mutual aid, placing additional strain on surrounding agencies and potentially impacting response coverage across the region.

For these reasons, the Shaker Heights Fire Department is requesting authorization to donate the following rescue squads:

- **2009 Horton Rescue Squad** – Maple Heights Fire Department
- **2014 Horton Rescue Squad** – Oakwood Village Fire Department

Both vehicles have accumulated in excess of 100,000 miles and have been replaced by newer or recently acquired rescue squads.

The donation of surplus Fire Department equipment is not unprecedented for the City of Shaker Heights. In 2014, the city donated a 2002 Horton Rescue Squad to the City of East Cleveland, and in 2019 a 2004 Rescue Squad was donated to University Hospitals' EMS Training and Disaster Preparedness Institute.

While the City could offer these vehicles for sale on the open market, with an estimated value of approximately \$10,000 per vehicle, the Fire Department believes the greater value lies in supporting neighboring departments that are in immediate need of critical emergency response equipment. Strengthening regional response capabilities benefits not only those communities receiving the equipment but also Shaker Heights by reducing the likelihood of increased mutual aid demands.

This item was presented and approved by the Safety and Public Works Committee on January 9, 2026. Council Member Alvarez requested assurance that the proposed donation would not compromise the redundancy of the City's rescue squad fleet. Chief Sweeney advised that the department's current inventory combined with a recent capital appropriation, places the department in a strong operational position.

It is respectfully requested that the Finance Committee recommend to City Council the donation of these two rescue squads—a 2009 Horton Rescue Squad to the City of Maple Heights and a 2014 Horton Rescue Squad to the Village of Oakwood.