



MEMORANDUM

Parks & Recreation Department

TO: A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, MPA, City Manager

THROUGH: Juliana B. Bellia, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Sandy Pfundheller, CPRE, Parks & Recreation Director

CC: Trish Sturgess, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director
Chuck Speake, Public Works Director
Stacy Aloisio, Emergency Manager
Janet Carrillo, Social Services Manager

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Alternate Locations to House North Port Senior Center Operations

DATE: October 20, 2025

During the October 6, 2025, City Commission Workshop, the condition of the Community Education Center located at 4940 Pan American Boulevard prompted discussion about future accommodations for its lease holders, including the North Port Senior Center. In response, Parks & Recreation conducted an initial review of Senior Center operations and explored alternate locations within the park system.

Under the current lease, the Senior Center utilizes approximately 4,880 square feet to deliver community-based health and human services, educational programs, and related administrative uses. While the lease specifies that the Senior Center is required to utilize the premises for a minimum of 32 hours, the lease allows access for up to 50.5 hours weekly across the following areas:

- Main Lobby Area
- Main Sitting Area
- This & That Area
- Offices 101, 102, and 103
- Kitchen
- Peterson Room

Hours of Use:

Monday	8:30am-4:30pm
Tuesday	8:30am-3:00pm
Wednesday	8:30am-6:30pm
Thursday & Friday	8:30am-9:30pm

Alternate Locations

The Parks & Recreation Department evaluated three public facilities as potential alternate locations for the North Port Senior Center should the Community Education Center no longer be available for lease: Scout House, Morgan Family Community Center, and George Mullen Activity Center.

A) Scout House (Dallas White Park Campus)

- **Proximity:** Located about 2.5 miles from the Community Education Center
- **Size:** ~2,400 sq ft
- **Pros:** Large meeting space, small kitchen, screened porch
- **Limitations:** No lobby or office space; limited availability (8:30 AM – 2:30 PM, weekdays); priority use given to scout troops

B) Morgan Family Community Center (Butler Park Campus)

- **Proximity:** Located about 3.4 miles from the Community Education Center
- **Size:** ~33,300 sq ft
- **Pros:** Extensive amenities including full-size gymnasium, fitness center, locker rooms, meeting space, art room, kitchen, outdoor patio, lobby/reception
- **Limitations:** Shared public lobby; kitchen access restricted; office space at capacity; availability impacted by seasonal commitments for camps, programming and youth leagues

C) George Mullen Activity Center (City Center Campus)

- **Proximity:** Located about 4.4 miles from the Community Education Center
- **Size:** ~12,500 sq ft
- **Pros:** Gymnasium with stage, meeting rooms, locker rooms, small kitchen, small lobby/reception
- **Limitations:** Shared public lobby; office space at capacity; availability impacted by seasonal commitments for camps, programming, and youth leagues

Key Considerations

- Public meeting spaces within Parks & Recreation Department facilities are rented on a first-come, first-serve basis in accordance with hourly rates as established annually in Appendix A - Citywide Fee Schedule. Due to the seasonality of programming and changing space needs, multi-year lease agreements are not standard practice.
- Existing Parks & Recreation facilities lack the space and flexibility to replicate the Senior Center's leased footprint and usage schedule. No vacant offices are available for administrative functions, lobby areas are shared public spaces unsuitable for dedicated use, and there is no capacity to support a designated thrift area.
- Both the Mullen Center and Morgan Center serve important civic and public safety roles for the City that must remain available and accessible for timely activation. Both facilities are designated polling precincts during elections and are activated as emergency response resources when needed.
- The current \$200 per month lease rate is significantly below market rental rates and does not align with cost recovery goals.
- Integration of Senior Center activities into underutilized spaces could expand programming to a broader older adult community, facilitate intergenerational programs, enhance access to amenities, and improve operational efficiency through shared reception, janitorial, utilities, and staffing.

Recommended Action Steps

While existing Parks & Recreation facilities cannot replicate the leased space and usage schedule of the North Port Senior Center, there is synergy in pursuing a strategic partnership that enhances services for older adults and supports a more sustainable operational framework. This approach aligns with national trends and recognizes the vital role our community centers serve in fostering social connections, reducing isolation, and providing inclusive gathering spaces.

Should there be interest in transitioning from a lease-based model to a rental arrangement or full integration into departmental services, the following action steps are recommended:

- Conduct a comprehensive usage audit of Senior Center activities and operations to identify core needs and peak utilization.
- Engage stakeholders to gather input, assess unmet needs, and future goals.
- Overlay projected demand with parks and recreation facility capabilities to identify compatibility and partnership potential.
- Assess the financial implications of transitioning from a lease-based model to either a rental arrangement or full integration into Parks & Recreation operations.

SP/JBB