



**CITY OF GAHANNA
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
ONBOARDING PACKET**



Charter Review Commission Overview

The City of Gahanna Charter Review Commission (CRC) is a commission outlined in the Gahanna City Charter.

The Commission reviews the City's Charter and recommends to Council such alterations, revisions, and amendments, if any, to the Charter, as in its judgment are desirable.

The Commission will determine its own processes and procedures and will be guided and supported by the City Attorney and City Clerk. The CRC has **full latitude** in its recommendations as long as they do not conflict with state or federal law.

These recommendations are due to the Gahanna City Council in a formal report by July 1st of the year in which the commission meets.

These recommendations are individually submitted to the voters of the city at the next general election and become law if a majority of electors vote in the affirmative.

Under Article 22 of Gahanna's Charter, the Charter Review Commission:

- Is a commission of seven (7) qualified electors, holding no other office or appointment in the city.
 - Four (4) of the members are appointed by the council, and three (3) are appointed by the mayor.
 - The City Attorney sits on the commission ex officio.
 - The City Clerk sits on the commission ex officio.
 - Must meet every 5 years. Taking place during years ending in 1 and 6.
- Review the municipal charter in meetings open to the public.
- No later than July 1st of the same year, make their recommendations to the Gahanna City Council.

What's a Charter?

In Ohio, a city charter is a legal document that allows a municipality to operate under "home rule". A Home Rule Charter gives a municipality greater local control and flexibility in how they are governed than the state statutory form.

Adopted by local voters, a charter serves as a city's constitution. It outlines the structure of local government, the roles of elected officials, and the procedures for passing ordinances and managing services.

Gahanna CRC Structure

The charter of the city of Gahanna allows significant leeway in how the commission organizes itself and conducts its business.

The City Attorney and Clerk of Council (or Deputy Clerk) sit on the commission as “Ex Officio” Members and do not hold voting rights. The City Attorney advises the commission as it pertains to legal matters, while the Clerk records minutes, conducts official CRC processes, and facilitates external communications. Both are also excellent sources of institutional knowledge for the commission to utilize.

A Chair of the Commission is required under section 22.04 of the Gahanna Charter for the certification of a new charter. By practice, a Vice Chair of the Commission is also elected. Both the Chair and Vice Chair are selected through a vote by the seven commission members.

Outside of the official duties of the CRC Chair, the Chair and Vice Chair have historically taken to informally leading the commission. This includes but is not limited to: leading deliberations, shepherding meetings, ensuring all members have a voice, conducting consensus-building practices/activities, and tracking CRC progress.

Additionally, the CRC customarily gives a presentation on their recommendations to the Gahanna City Council following the submission of their official report. Any member of the commission may conduct the presentation, but this has historically been conducted by the Chair and Vice Chair of the commission.

Gahanna CRC Members:



Key Deliverables of the CRC

1. CRC Recommendation Report to City Council

The Charter Review Commission Report is the core deliverable of the commission and is required by the City Charter to be submitted to Council by July 1st.

This report is a compiled list of all the proposed amendments the CRC is recommending to be voted on.

Core Components:

- A preamble describing the general process and experience of the CRC, and whether any overall themes or intentions exist in the recommendations made.
- A list of each proposed amendment with a summary of the change or new article proposed.
- A signature page from the commissioners.

2. CRC Report Presentation to City Council

The CRC report presentation is the opportunity for the CRC to formally submit and explain their proposed amendments to the City Council and the public. This presentation has typically been led by the Chair and Vice Chair of the commission during a Committee of the Whole meeting after submission of the report. However, any member of the commission may lead or be a part of the presentation.

Afterwards, the Council adopts the recommendations via resolution to be submitted to the electors of Gahanna at the next general election.

3. Certification of the new charter

After the election is held in which the proposed amendments were voted on, the Clerk of Council will reassemble the CRC for a final meeting. In this meeting, the Chair of the Commission must sign the final updated charter for the City of Gahanna. After this certification process is complete, the work of the current CRC is concluded.

Past CRC Activities

Meet with internal and external Stakeholders:

Previous invitees have included:

- Mayor of Gahanna.
- Gahanna City Council.
- Gahanna Department Heads
- Mayors/City Managers/Councils of peer cities.
- Internal and peer city employees, commissioners, other elected & appointed officials, etc.
- Subject matter experts and academics (OSU).
- Non-profit & civic organizations (Ohio Municipal League, labor representatives, etc.)
- Employee/Department Head/Official Survey

Hold Public Input Hearings

All CRC meetings will be open to the public, but the CRC has historically held 1-3 public input meetings dedicated to hearing from the community

Commission Activities

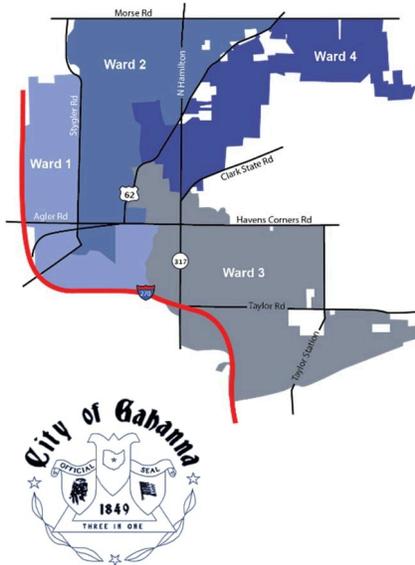
Commission Activities are methods of gaining understanding, building consensus, and/or whittling down decisions for the commission.

Previous Activities have included:

- Individual and group redlining.
- Creating priority statements/values to guide decision making.
- Pro and Con lists.
- Ranking Proposals.
- Analyzing other charters.

GAHANNA CITY HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

History



Gahanna was founded along the Big Walnut Creek in 1849 by John Clark. Clark named his property the Gahanna Plantation, from which the City of Gahanna derives its name. The name “Gahanna” translates from a Native American word meaning “three creeks joining into one” and is the former name of the Big Walnut Creek. The City of Gahanna's Official Seal refers to this confluence of three creeks with the inscription, "Three In One."

Gahanna maintained a considerable rivalry with the town of Bridgeport, which was located directly across Granville Street from Gahanna and also along the banks of the Big Walnut Creek. Bridgeport was founded in 1853 by Jesse Baughman, a former Franklin County Commissioner. The two towns eventually put aside their differences and merged into one. They adopted the name Gahanna and incorporated into a Village in 1881. Today, Gahanna is

a 12.6 square mile home-rule municipality located within Franklin County in central Ohio.

City Government

The City is governed by the laws of Ohio and the City Charter, its constitution, which can only be amended by a majority of the City's voters.

The City's elected officials are the Mayor, the City Attorney, and the seven members of the City Council. The City Charter provides the constitutional framework within which city government operates. The City's codified ordinances contain the laws of the City.

City Council

All legislative powers of the City are vested in the City Council. City Council members exercise their duties by adopting legislation in the form of ordinances or resolutions. Four Council members are elected from geographic wards and three are elected at-large by all voters of the City. All members serve four-year terms. The City Council is responsible for passing an annual appropriations ordinance and authorizing the Mayor to sign contracts and agreements as applicable. City Council determines its own rules of procedure, and each year elects from its membership a President and Vice-President to preside over its meetings. Council meetings and their proceedings are open to the public.

Gahanna's Mayor

The City has a strong Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor is popularly elected by the citizens of Gahanna, serves a four-year term, and serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the City. As the City's chief administrator and official representative, the Mayor is responsible for the general management of the City and for ensuring that all laws and ordinances are enforced. The Mayor appoints professional directors to the City's departments, who administer the day-to-day operations of the City.

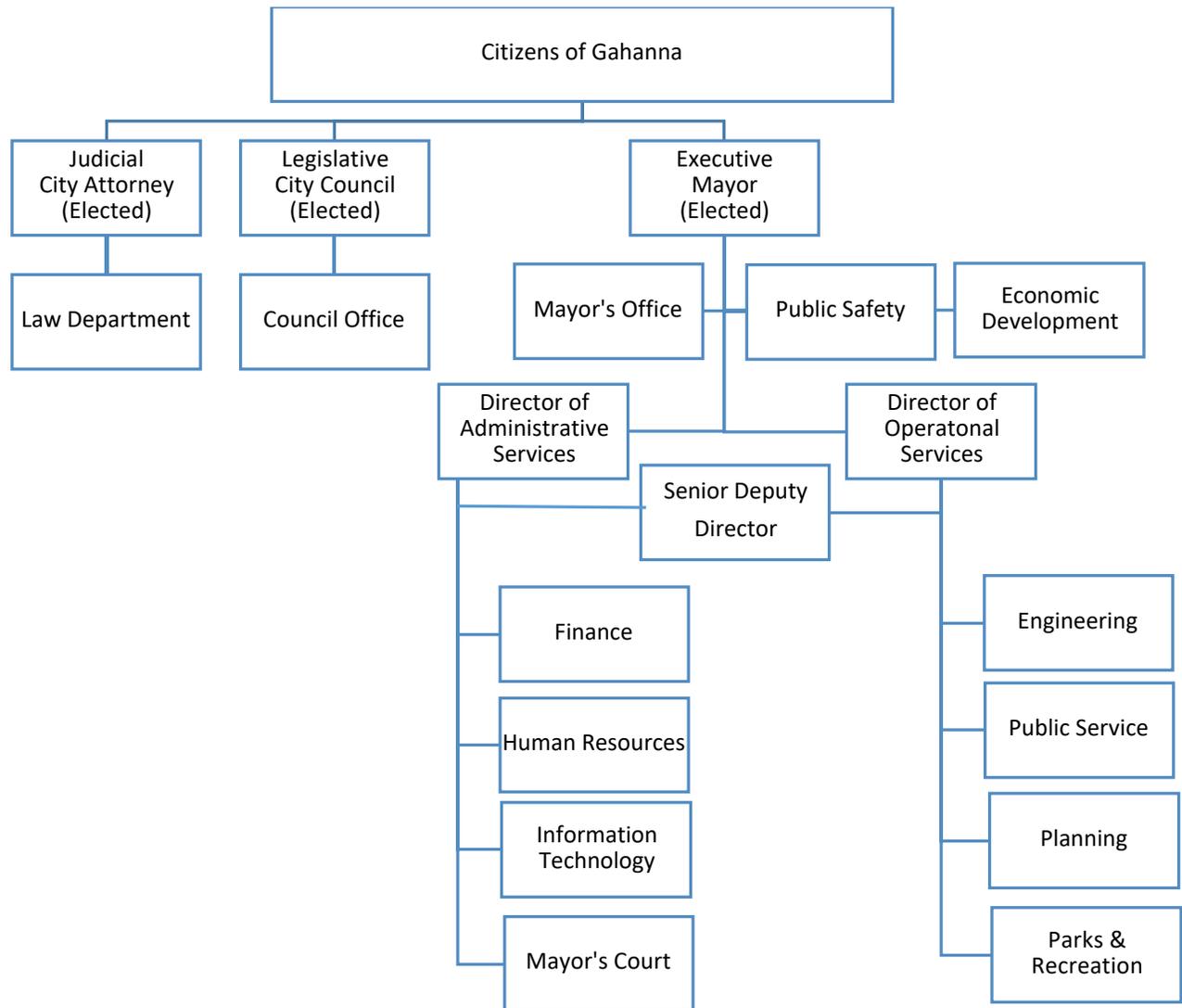
City Attorney

The City Attorney is an elected position that provides advice and legal representation to the City, elected and appointed officials, and employees of the City in their official capacities. The City Attorney prosecutes or defends all suits for and on behalf of the City and ensures that the interests of residents are protected. The City Attorney serves also as legal counsel for the City's various boards and Commissions.

CITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The City's organizational structure is designed to support quality services to the citizens of the Gahanna community. The day-to-day operations of the City are managed by the Mayor and appointed department directors. The City is staffed by a mix of full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees whose compensation and benefits are authorized through three bargaining-unit contracts and multiple separate annual salary and benefit ordinances.

City of Gahanna Organizational Chart





Boards & Commissions

Community Reinvestment Area Housing Council

Meets as needed to conduct annual property inspections, act as an appellate board for tax abatement disputes, and recommend approval of the annual tax abatement report filed with the State.

Fair Housing Board

Meets as needed to hear complaints on alleged housing discrimination in accordance with Chapters 790, 791, and 792 of the Codified Ordinance of the City of Gahanna.

Property Appeals Board

Meets as needed to hear and decide appeals when it is alleged that there is an error in any requirement, decision, or determination made by the Designated City Official in the enforcement or administration of Chapters 780, 1308, 903 and 521.06.

Charter Review Commission

Convenes every five years to review the municipal charter and recommends amendments, if any, to Council.

Landscape Board

Meets as needed to study, investigate, counsel, and develop and/or update and administer a written plan for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along streets and in other public areas.

Planning Commission

Meets twice per month to evaluate the planning and design, location, removal, relocation, and alteration of new or existing structures, approve plats, and advise Council on issues concerning future physical development of the city.

Board of Zoning & Building Appeals

Meets as needed to hear and decide appeals pertaining to zoning, building, and landscaping in the City.

Civil Service Commission

Meets as needed to hear and decide appeals/grievances from administrative determinations pursuant to the provisions of the Civil Service Rules and Regulations.

Local Board of Tax Review

Meets as needed to hear appeals from taxpayers regarding decisions made by the City's tax administrator (RITA) and the Director of Finance.

Parks & Recreation Board

Meets monthly to make recommendations to the Mayor on equipping, operating, directing, and maintaining all the recreational facilities, park facilities, and City recreational programs.

Records Commission

Meets at least twice per year and as needed to establish rules, regulations, and procedures for the retention and disposal of all City records and archives.

GAHANNA AT A GLANCE

Form of Government

Strong Mayor-Council Government

A Popularly Elected Mayor serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the City, and a seven-member Council constitutes the legislative body (four Council members elected by ward, and three at-large Council members).

Land and Infrastructure

Area in Square Miles: 12.64 square miles

Streets Maintained: 282.65 lane miles

Streetlights: 1,887

Traffic Signals: 332

Pavement Condition Rating (2021): 85.65%

Water Main Miles: 179.24

Sanitary Sewer Miles: 164.35

Storm Sewer Miles: 155.09

City Owned Miles of Fiber: 35.0

Parks:

801 acres	3 athletic complexes with 30 fields
4 Community Parks, 11 Mini Parks, 10 Neighborhood Parks	11 basketball, 3 tennis and 4 pickleball courts
245 acres preserved open space	1 Dog Park
2 aquatic facilities	3 Kayak Launches
20 miles of trails	1 State Nature Preserve
5 outdoor and 2 indoor rentable shelters	Gahanna Municipal Golf Course
17 playgrounds	Senior Center

Demographics

Population: 35,529 (2023 Census Estimate)

Median Age: 39.1 years old

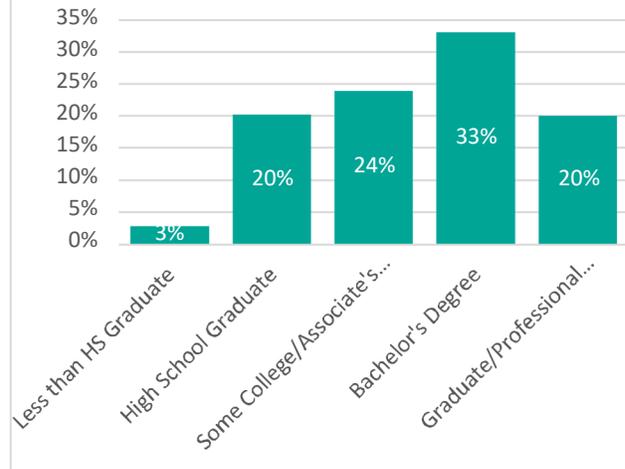
75.7% of population over 18 years

16.1% over 65 years

Diversity: Gahanna is one of the most diverse suburban cities in Central Ohio:

White 75.9%	Black 12.6%	Asian 3.4%	Hispanic 2.5%
----------------	----------------	---------------	------------------

Educational Attainment of 25 and Over



Unemployment Rate: 3.8%

Households: 14,396

Average Size: 2.45 people

- 67.1% Households are families
- 70.4% Owner-occupied

Median Household Income: \$104,555

Median Home Value: \$358,854

Average Home Sales Price: \$352,967

Education

Public-Gahanna Jefferson School District

- 1 Preschool Program
- 7 Elementary Schools
- 3 Middle Schools
- 1 High School
- 1 Joint Vocational/Technical School

School Enrollment (2023): 9,132

Private Schools:

- Columbus Academy Gahanna
- Christian Academy St.
- Matthews School
- Shepherd Christian School

Economics

Sales & Use Tax: 7.50%

Real Estate Tax (2023)

Total tax rate assessed per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation in Gahanna-Jefferson: 133.10

Gahanna City portion: 2.4 mills (2023 mill rate levied for taxes payable in 2024)

Real Value (2023)

The County Auditor assessed value of real property within the City of Gahanna \$1,249,899,130. The real estate tax rate would be applied to this value to generate property tax receipts for 2023.

Real Estate Taxes Paid on a \$180,000 House in Gahanna-Jefferson School District

\$3,740 total, City share is \$135 (Based on 2023 mill rate, excludes rollback & homestead exemptions)

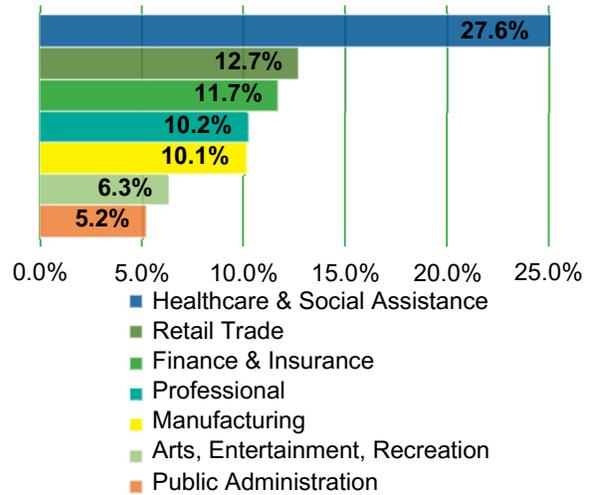
Your Real Estate Tax Dollar At Work



Top Ten Real Estate Taxpayers (2023)

- Ohio Power Company
- Columbus Southern Power Co.
- Columbia Gas of Ohio Inc.
- Stoneridge Plaza Shops LLC
- Vista at Rocky Fork LP BVF-V
- Wren LLC McGraw Hill
- education LLC Meritex
- Properties LLC Traditions at
- Gahanna Trilogy Real Estate
- LLC Provident-Hunters Ridge
- One LTD RCS-COP II LLC
- Morse & Hamilton LP

Gahanna's Major Industries



Income Tax Collections

Municipal Income Tax Rate: 2.5%

Income Tax Collections by Type (2023)

- Withholding \$28.99 M, 76.17%
- Individual \$4.33 M, 11.37%
- Net Profit \$4.75 M 12.47%

Top Ten Income Tax Withholders (2023)

Employer	Type
Gahanna-Jefferson Schools	Public School District
The Ohio State University	Healthcare Provider
State of Ohio ODOT	State Agency
Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co	Insurance Services
The Columbus Academy	Private School K-12
AEP Ohio Power City of Gahanna	Utility Service
Ohio Health	Municipality
Physicians Group Inc	Healthcare Provider
AEP Service Corporation	Utility Service
The Kroger Co	Food Services