

MEMO

To: Miranda Vollmer, Senior Director, Administrative Services

7/27/26

From: Sarah Bongiorno, Director and Julie Colley

Re: Council Engagement Summary

This memo summarizes two sources of Council input gathered for the Our Gahanna Strategic Plan implementation process: a pre-work session survey completed by Council members between July 10 and July 17, 2026, capturing their individual priorities and questions ahead of the workshop, and notes from the Strategic Plan Council Workshop held on July 20, 2026, covering a start/stop exercise, a discussion of the Creekside District, and communications to Council, and next steps for implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Pre-Work Session Survey

Five Council members responded to the survey in advance of the July 20 workshop, sharing their individual priorities for the Our Gahanna Strategic Plan and questions about its implementation.

Top priorities for the Next Five Years shared through the survey

- Advancing the Creekside District as a vibrant, walkable area, including improved wayfinding, streetscape design, and pedestrian safety
- Elevating Gahanna's regional identity and strengthening placemaking
- Fostering strong, engaged, and inclusive neighborhoods, with expanded sidewalks and multi-use paths
- Delivering “15-minute” mobility, per the Comprehensive Transportation and Mobility Plan
- Aligning economic development tools to attract priority businesses, revitalize underutilized areas, and grow small, local business
- Developing a housing and reinvestment plan
- Making sustainability, urban forestry, and natural systems core priorities, alongside public safety and emergency preparedness

Top long-term priorities shared through the survey

- Exploring water independence from Columbus and reducing residents' utility cost burden
- Planning for the turnover, replacement, and modernization of aging housing stock as the population ages
- A recreation center and new aquatics facilities
- Stronger synergy among Administration, Council, and the City Attorney to support year-over-year implementation
- Positioning Gahanna as the gateway from the airport ahead of its new terminal opening in 2029, and growing the city's digital and civic identity

Questions and Concerns shared through the survey

- How Council and the community will be involved in implementation and future updates to the plan

- What the Administration's priorities are for implementation
- How other city plans and the budget process connect to the strategic plan
- Lack of clear prioritization, accountability, and quantified funding across the plan's 100-plus actions, while it is a strong citywide framework that connects the CIP, department work, budgeting, and public reporting

July 20 Council Workshop

The workshop covered a start/stop exercise, a discussion of the Creekside District, and Council communications and reporting.

Start/Stop Exercise

- Continue tracking capital projects through the CIP structure, which has helped focus Council and reduce the number of active subcommittees
- Start speaking the plan's language and institutionalizing alignment within departments
- Orientation for future Council members to the plan
- Improve communication with residents who are not yet engaged, connecting projects back to the plan (for example, a “Your Dollars at Work” campaign, or QR codes and signage on project sites)
- Clarify where Council fits into communications, outreach, and transparency, and what the Administration expects of Council and vice versa

Creekside District

- Define and plan for the whole district, not just Mill Street or the plaza, to build vibrancy and capitalize on momentum
- Extend sidewalk and trail connections along Clark, Carpenter, and Johnstown Road so northeast side residents can walk or bike to Creekside (can see Creekside but can't get there)
- Address parking, wayfinding, and capacity, including a possible parking availability app
- Improve pedestrian safety on Granville Street through parking buffers, mid-block crossings, and traffic calming
- Continue collaboration and engagement with community and distinct stakeholder groups

Communications to Council

- Explore reporting formats, including a quarterly dashboard tracking strategic plan progress with a green, yellow, and red status system
- Develop an implementation matrix showing the timing of strategies in the plan across the planning horizon

Next Steps

- Establish legislative infrastructure for the strategic plan going forward, potentially through an ordinance
- Annual report containing Strategic Plan progress updates, Capital Improvement Plan updates, and the Popular Annual Financial Report