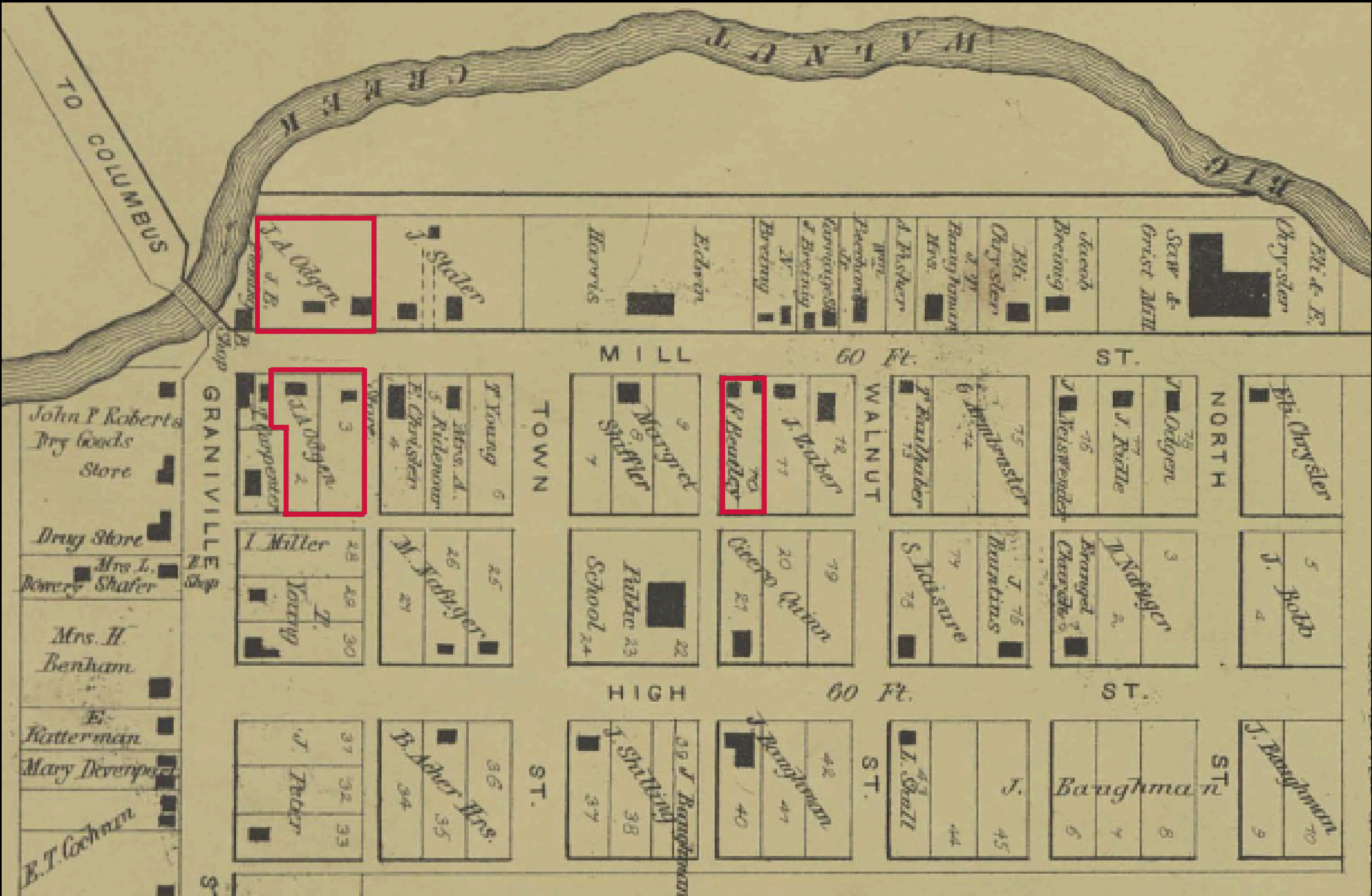


1881-1915

The Start of Local Government in Gahanna

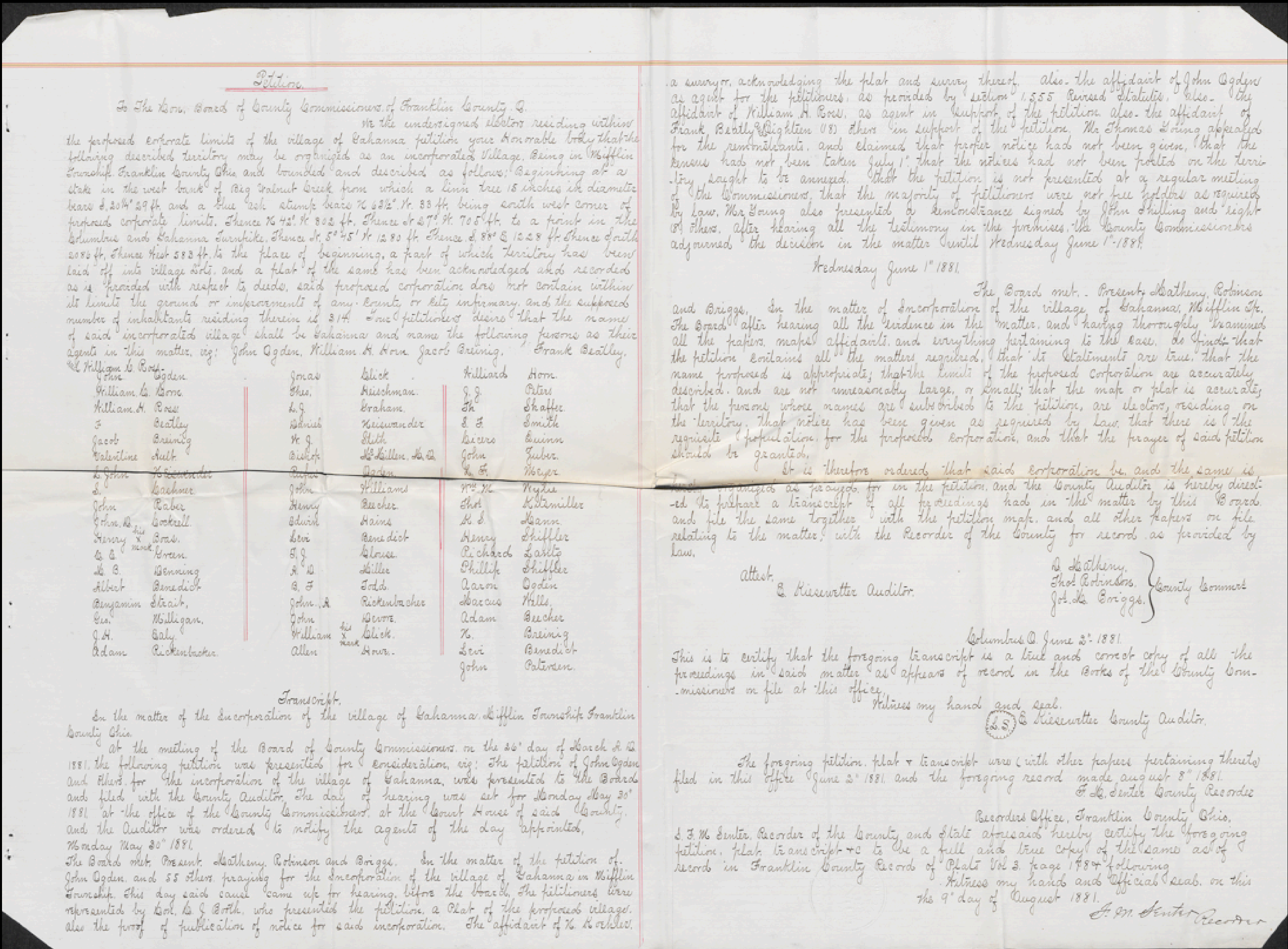
1881 Population: 235



Plat map of Gahanna from 1872. F. Beatley and J.A. Ogden are both listed owning property on Mill St.

When 55 residents petitioned Franklin County to incorporate in 1881, the new village had no municipal building of its own. Gahanna officially incorporated on August 8, 1881 and L. John Neiswander became its first mayor on October 6, 1881. That same evening, the first Village Council meeting was held in the home of L. J. Graham.

Throughout the fall of 1881, council meetings rotated among the private residences of council members. Meetings were held in at least eight different homes as officials searched for a more permanent location. An effort to rent the hall above W. J. Stith's drugstore for two dollars per month was unsuccessful.



Original petition for incorporation, 1881.

But, the council continued its search, and by December of 1881, the village was paying a local physician and incorporation-petitioner, Frank Beatley, for the use of a hall above his building to hold council meetings.

A year later, more regular meeting place was secured in December 1882, when Aaron Odgen offered the east room on the second floor of the old Carpenter Building for just one dollar per month. These homes, rented rooms, and community spaces served as Gahanna's earliest city halls.

IMAGE CREDIT:
1. Caldwell, J. A., & Gould, H. T. (1872). Caldwell's atlas of Franklin Co. and the city of Columbus, Ohio: From actual surveys. J. A. Caldwell & H. T. Gould.
2. State Archives. Ohio History Connection.

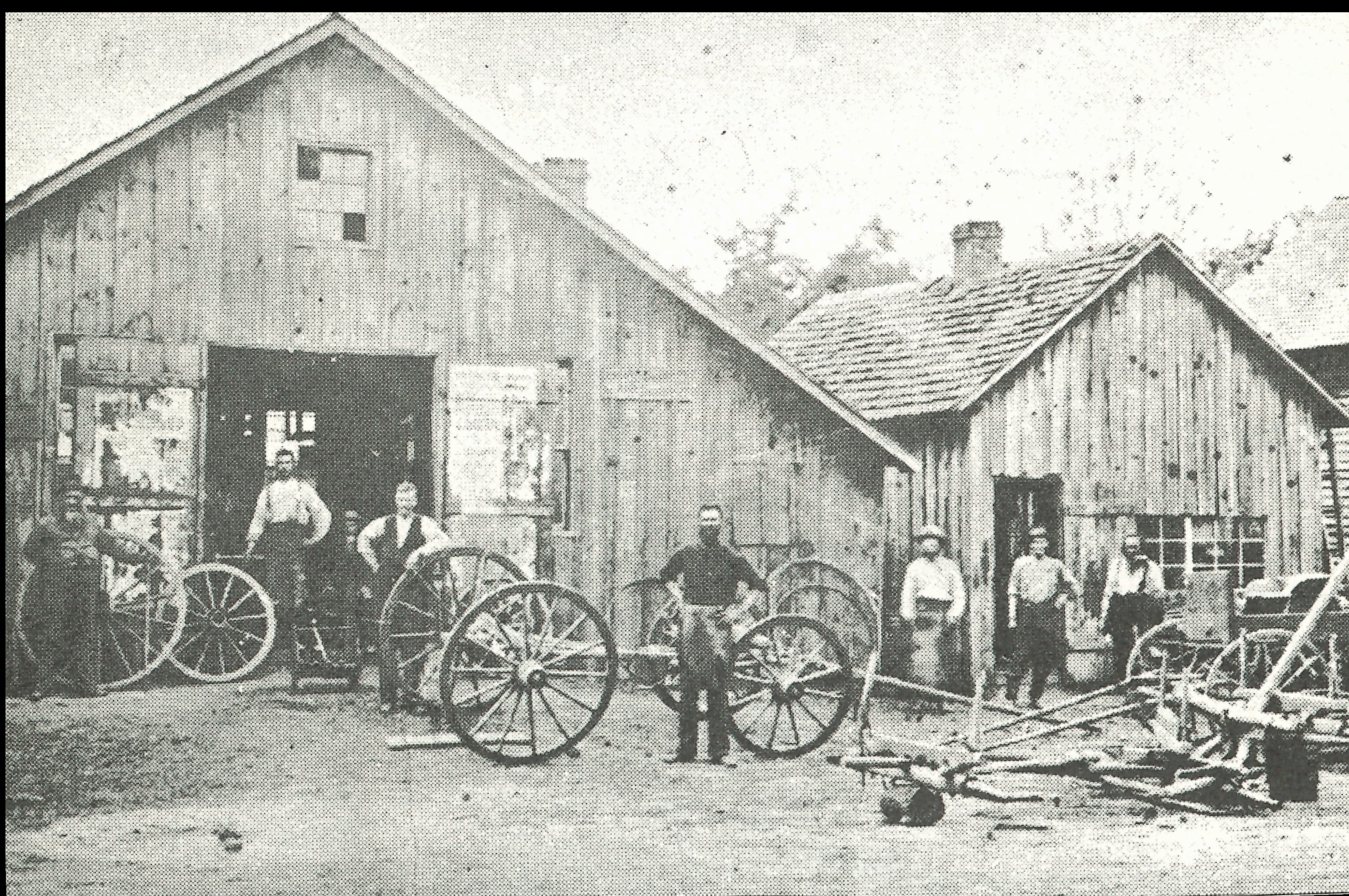
1916-1957

A Home for Local Government

1920 Population: 347

As Gahanna grew from a small village into an organized community, so did the need for dedicated public meeting spaces. In the community's earliest years, school buildings and rented rooms served as gathering places where residents met, debated local issues, and conducted the business of government.

By 1916, the Village had outgrown informal meeting spaces and began renting a room from Aaron Ogden for \$55 per year to hold Council meetings and general elections. To cover this new expense, village taxes were increased.



Buildings on Mill Street owned by the Ogden family.

But finally, a permanent municipal home arrived in November 1926, when the Village purchased a two-room frame office building from Dr. Leon Kramer at 3104 East Fifth Avenue, Columbus. The Muth Brothers relocated the structure to 95 South High Street for \$150, near the site where the Log House and Clark House now stand.



Gahanna's first municipal building bought from Dr. Kramer in 1926.

Village Council held its first meeting in the new municipal building on November 19, 1926, establishing the community's first dedicated Village Hall. The council met in this space through the Great Depression and the first World War. The office served as an anchoring point between resilient community, and a growing local government.

IMAGE CREDIT:

1. Gahanna Historical Society, (1976). *History of Gahanna 1776-1976*. Rocky Fork Printing Company.

2. Columbus Dispatch, (1958, July 20). *Gahanna Municipal Building* (Identifier: PS_B143_F21_26a) [Photograph]. Columbus Dispatch, Subjects Collection, Columbus Metropolitan Library Digital Collections.

1958-1968

Room to Grow

1960 Population: 2,717

In 1958, Gahanna transformed the former Gahanna Bank at 66 Mill Street into its new town hall. While the building was renovated, Council met at Citizens Bank at 104 Mill Street. The completed town hall was formally dedicated on April 6, 1959.

The new space soon proved too small. Gahanna’s population reached 2,717 in 1960, and continued growth created new demands on local government. By 1962, Council records noted that meetings had exceeded the building’s seating capacity.



66 S. Mill St. Gahanna Municipal Building, 1959-1979.

Officials considered several locations for a larger municipal building, including the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall, Peace Lutheran Church, and property along Hamilton Road. The search reflected Gahanna’s growing need for more functional municipal space.

In the following years, Council moved between temporary meeting spaces, including the City National Bank basement and Gahanna Lincoln High School Room 101. City offices also expanded to 130 Mill Street, where the tax, finance, and mayor’s offices were housed.

In 1965, the Gahanna Civic Center Inc. was established to help acquire and develop a permanent municipal complex, and architectural plans were completed the following year.

GAHANNA COUNCIL ACCEPTS COMPLEX IN PUBLIC BALLOT

By **RAY LAMBERT**
Of The Dispatch Staff

The Gahanna City Council Monday passed a resigning councilman’s motion to officially accept the three-building Municipal Complex. The building will have cost Gahanna residents \$2.16 million when it finally is paid for in the year 2010.

Open discussion and voting on the

\$54,000 annual rent for 40 years at which time the city takes ownership.

COUNCILWOMAN MRS. JANE L. Geroux, the only council member voting against acceptance, said she could not vote affirmatively until Law Director Benjamin Clark assured the council all required documents were made available and declared legal.

Mrs. Geroux stated the council in September had asked her to request

1969 Dispatch article announcing new municipal complex approval by City Council. It was a 6-1 vote.

PHOTO CREDIT :
1. Gahanna Historical Society, (ca. 1931–1950). Gahanna Municipal Building photograph [Photograph], Gahanna History Collection.
2. Lambert, R. (1971, October 23). Gahanna council accepts complex in public ballot. Columbus Dispatch.

1968-1992

The First Municipal Complex

1970 Population: 12,400

In February 1968, Gahanna purchased 6.67 acres at 200 South Hamilton Road for \$4,000 per acre. The site would become a new municipal complex designed to house the Civic Center, Public Library, and Police Department.



Color rendering of municipal complex. Front to Back: City Hall, Police Department and Fire Station, and Public Library.

Construction began on May 16, 1969, as Gahanna continued to experience rapid growth. By 1970, the city’s population had reached approximately 12,400, driven by postwar migration, major employers, new residential

development, and the construction of Interstate 270. The former town hall at 66 South Mill Street was authorized for sale in February 1970, formally ending its role in city government.



Gahanna’s Municipal Complex on City Day, September 27, 1970.

On September 27, 1970, residents and officials gathered to dedicate the completed Municipal Complex at 200 South Hamilton Road during Gahanna’s “City Day.” This marked the point when Gahanna transitioned from a village to a city.

The new facility brought several essential city services together in one location and provided Gahanna with room to serve its expanding population. It remained the center of municipal government until 1992.

1992-2005

The Second Municipal Complex

1990 Population: 28,500



TOP: Dispatch article announcing demolition of City Hall.
MIDDLE: September 11, 1994 dedication of City Hall.
BOTTOM: Completed Gahanna City Hall, 1994

In 1992, Gahanna began a major redevelopment of the municipal complex at 200 South Hamilton Road. The original buildings were demolished and replaced with an entirely new City Hall, Police Department, and Senior Center. During construction, city offices temporarily operated from 830 Morrison Road.

The new complex was dedicated on September 11, 1994. Residents and city leaders gathered to celebrate the return of municipal services to South Hamilton Road and the opening of facilities built for Gahanna's growing community.

City Hall was dedicated to General James Abraham, former public service director, in recognition of his leadership and service.

2005-2020

Renovations and the Pandemic

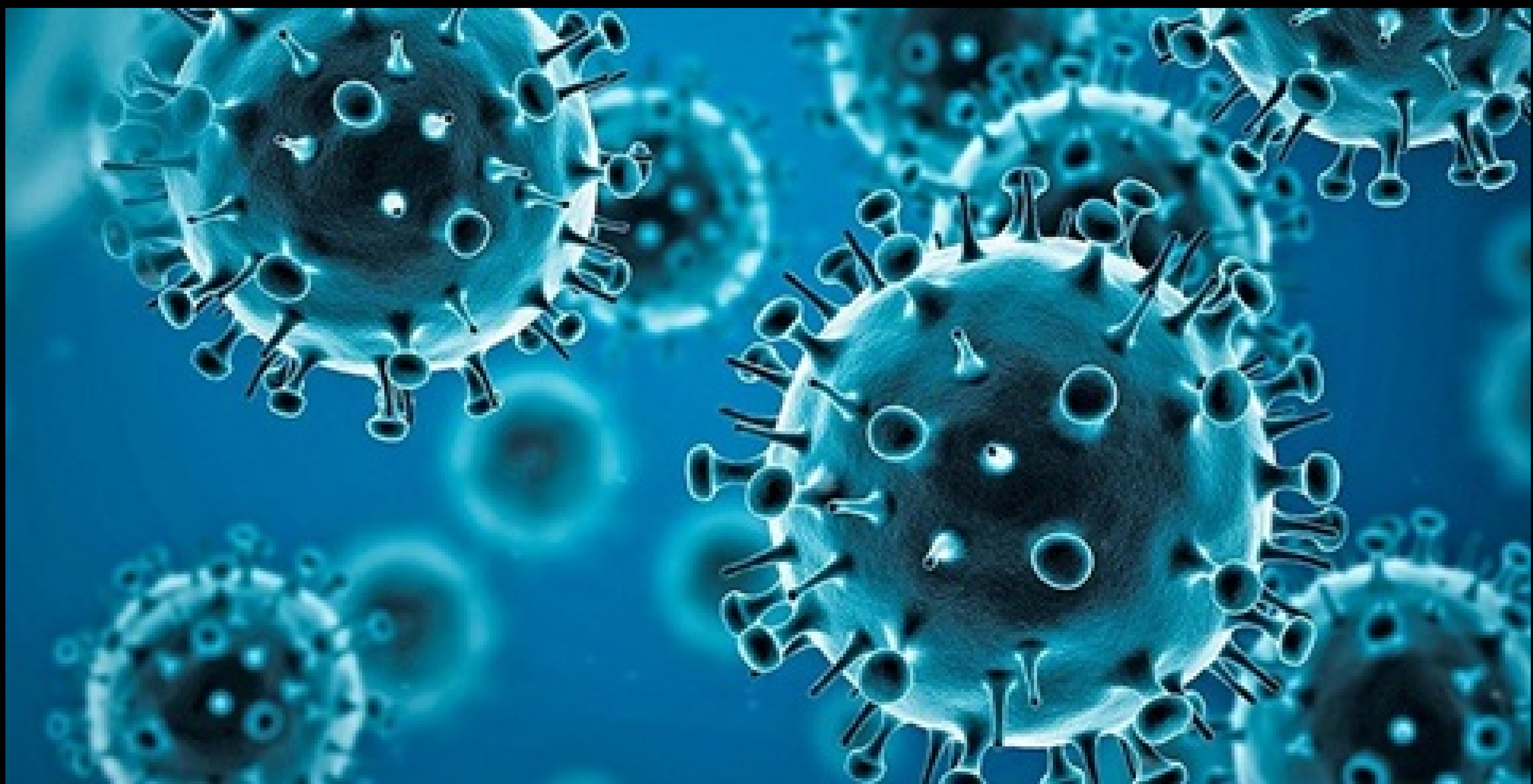
2010 Population: 33,248



Gahanna City Hall at 200 S. Hamilton Rd., 2020.

Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, Gahanna's municipal operations became increasingly digital. As technology advanced, the City transitioned many records, communications, and administrative processes from paper to electronic

systems while continuing to modernize City Hall through renovations and updated workspaces. These changes improved efficiency, expanded public access to information, and prepared the organization for a more connected future.



In 2020 Gahanna's City Hall temporarily closed to the public from March 16-July 6, moving all public meetings to a virtual format. Image: COVID-19 virus.

The digital transformation proved essential in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily moved City Hall operations online. Staff continued providing services remotely, and City Council meetings were held virtually until July 6, 2021, allowing local government to continue during an unprecedented time.

Today, Gahanna continues to build on that progress by digitizing historical records, preserving decades of City history while making it easier for staff and the public to access these important documents.

2022-2026

Today, Tomorrow, Together

2020 Population: 35,726



City staff at groundbreaking ceremony at 825 Tech Center Drive, 2024.

In 2022, the City purchased the property at 825 Tech Center Drive, launching the transformation of the site into Gahanna's new Civic Center. The \$59 million project was envisioned as a place where residents could access City services, connect with one another, and experience local government in a welcoming, modern environment.



Gahanna Civic Center at 825 Tech Center Drive, 2026.

In August 2026, the Gahanna Civic Center officially opened as a “three-in-one” facility, uniting City government, the Police Department, and the Senior Center all under one roof. By bringing together the Mayor’s Office, City Council, all City departments, public safety, and community services, the Civic Center strengthens collaboration while better serving residents. It represents Gahanna’s commitment to the vision of *Our Gahanna* and its investment in future generations.