



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Finance Committee

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Stephen A. Renner, Chair
Merisa K. Bowers
Jamille Jones
Nancy R. McGregor
Kaylee Padova
Michael Schnetzer
Trenton I. Weaver

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, August 3, 2026

City Hall, Council Chambers

Immediately following the regular City Council meeting and Committee of the Whole meeting beginning at 7:00 PM

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Councilmember Stephen A. Renner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:17 p.m. The agenda was published on July 31, 2026. All members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. DISCUSSIONS:

[2026-0155](#)

Our Gahanna Strategic Plan Priorities for 2027

Councilmember Renner explained that the purpose of the discussion was to move from a broad conversation toward clear Council direction for 2027. He stated that Council typically entered the budget season and then began asking questions of the administration afterward. He emphasized that Council was not reopening the strategic plan or choosing between the administration's list and Council's list. Councilmember Renner stated that the administration had provided three proposed priority areas, each supported by actionable statements, and suggested using those recommendations as the starting framework. He said the Council survey and prior workshop provided important background but did not believe Council needed to review those materials item by item. He asked each member to use those materials to identify where the administration's proposals reflected Council's priorities and where refinement or additions might be needed. Councilmember Renner stated that, for each proposed priority, he wanted Council to determine

whether it supported the overall outcome, which actions deserved emphasis in 2027, and what Council should modify, add, defer, or treat as normal operations. He noted that those decisions would have implications for the 2027 budget discussions. Councilmember Renner explained that Senior Director Vollmer would first present the administration's recommendations. He asked Council members to limit questions during the presentation to brief clarifying questions regarding the meaning, scope, timing, and status of the proposed actions. He asked his colleagues to hold broader questions regarding alignment, priorities, additions, tradeoffs, and Council policy direction until the presentation concluded so Council could hear and consider the administration's proposal as a whole before beginning deliberations.

Senior Director Vollmer thanked Councilmember Renner for the opportunity to help align Gahanna's priorities as the City entered the 2027 budget season. On behalf of the Mayor, she presented the administration's priorities with Senior Director Schultz and Senior Deputy Director Wybensinger. She also thanked Sean Bock and Kelsey Bartholomew for their work on the plan and presentation materials. Senior Director Vollmer reviewed how the strategic plan related to other City plans and the budget. She referenced the City's vision, values, and mission statement and noted that the City had discussed those elements over the previous year and a half while developing and adopting the strategic plan. She explained that the strategic plan stemmed from the vision and values received from the community and that the community-informed plan contained four goals and 65 strategies. She described the plan's structure as goals, objectives, and strategies.

Senior Director Vollmer explained that the strategic plan sat at the top of the City's planning framework, with other plans beneath it, including the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, the Capital Improvement Plan, and other ongoing plans. She reiterated that the purpose of the meeting was to align the strategic plan with the budget before the administration prepared the budget and before Council adopted it. Senior Director Vollmer referenced a calendar-year graphic from the strategic plan book and stated that the City was in the August phase of reviewing the strategic plan and preparing to begin the budget process. She also noted that the capital improvement plan appeared within that annual planning cycle.

Senior Director Vollmer then reviewed the recommended priorities, which the administration had distributed to Council the previous week. She explained that, after consultation with Planning NEXT, the administration considered different ways to organize the priorities. Although the strategic plan organized information by goal, objective, and strategy, she stated that implementation worked better when grouped into priority categories. Senior Director Vollmer reminded Council that the strategic plan covered 10 years and that the City could not complete all 65 strategies in one year. She stated that, following start-stop exercises with departments and conversations with the Mayor and executive team, three priorities rose to the top from the community-informed plan. She identified the three priorities as Creekside: A Strategy, Not Just a Street; Connected Service: One Call, One Answer; and Quality of Place: Safe, Sustainable and Strong. She explained that each priority contained objectives and specific strategies from the strategic plan that the administration recommended beginning to budget toward in 2027. She noted that the City would not complete all of the strategies in one year but would begin with them in 2027 and continue building on them in future years. Senior Director Vollmer asked whether Councilmember Renner wanted her to read all of the strategies.

Councilmember Renner stated that there were many strategies and asked Senior Director Vollmer to address each priority area by highlighting the most significant actions and tying the actionable statements together.

Senior Director Vollmer introduced the first priority, **Creekside: A Strategy, Not Just a Street**. She stated that Council and the administration had discussed Creekside extensively through capital improvement projects, the development agreement, and resident feedback identifying Creekside as a major priority. She explained that Objective 1A focused on advancing the Creekside District as a vibrant area. She noted that the discussion extended beyond the Creekside mill area to the district as a whole, including walkability, transportation, parking, pedestrian safety, and streetscape design. She added that some items were already underway, including the review of Creekside District planning documents and code changes that Director Blackford had previously presented. She stated that capital improvement projects would also fit within this priority area.

Councilmember Renner asked whether any members had clarifying questions regarding the first priority, Creekside: A Strategy, Not Just a Street. No questions followed, and he asked Senior Director Vollmer to continue.

Senior Director Vollmer explained that the second priority, **Connected Service: One Call, One Answer**, demonstrated why the administration had organized the strategies into broader priority categories. She stated that the priority included Objective 2A, enhancing internal operations, and Objective 4C, enhancing citywide communications and promotions. She explained that the numbered objectives referenced different chapters of the strategic plan. She stated that the internal operations strategies supported more connected services, that some efforts were already underway, and that some would require funding in 2027. She also stated that continuing to improve citywide communications and promotions represented a shared goal that Council had discussed during its workshop.

Councilmember Renner asked whether members had any questions regarding the second priority. No questions followed.

Senior Director Vollmer then introduced the third priority, **Quality of Place: Safe, Sustainable and Strong**. She explained that the priority included Objective 2B, maintaining a high level of stewardship and safety; Objective 3B, fostering and engaging an inclusive community; and Objective 4B, strengthening placemaking efforts. She noted that Council may have already seen some of those items in the Capital Improvement Plan and that some initiatives were already underway, including the "Gohanna" shuttle. She also referenced efforts to evaluate and enhance urban forestry initiatives. She stated that Council had budgeted funding for urban forestry over the previous several years, including staffing and additional funding for street trees and park trees. She explained that the urban forestry initiative also appeared in the Parks Master Plan, illustrating how the City's various plans connected with one another.

Councilmember Renner asked whether members had any clarifying questions regarding the third priority.

Councilmember Bowers stated that some items within the third priority appeared to cross between internal operations and aspirational goals for the community. Senior Director Vollmer agreed. She used the business continuity plan as an example, explaining that although it functioned as an internal policy, it supported the City's ability to maintain quality of place during situations that required continuity of operations. She stated that the administration grouped the strategies into priority areas to show how multiple goals and objectives aligned rather than limiting the discussion to all strategies under a single objective.

Councilmember Renner asked the administration to expand on what it meant to adopt a sustainability plan. Senior Director Schultz stated that the City did not currently have a sustainability plan and compared the process to developing or updating other major planning documents. He referenced the Capital Improvement Plan as an example of a comprehensive process that involved workshops, committees, Council members, and other stakeholders. He stated that developing a sustainability plan would likely involve a grassroots process designed to reflect the wants, needs, and desires of Council, the administration, and the public. He explained that the administration still needed to determine an appropriate process and timeline that would allow a committee and Council to review and ultimately adopt the plan. He added that sustainability could mean different things to different people and stated that the City first needed to align on what sustainability meant.

Councilmember Renner stated that he was seeking a clearer definition rather than a description of the process. He explained that he did not view the sustainability plan as a standalone document but as a holistic, citywide policy covering six areas, including energy, land use, natural systems, materials and waste, and community infrastructure. He stated that he expected a robust document that unified the City. He added that sustainability led to resiliency and adaptability for the community and tied back to those areas. He stated that he had discussed the subject for three years and wanted the administration to understand Council's expectations as budget discussions approached. Senior Director Schultz stated that the purpose of the discussion was to ensure that Council identified its priorities before the administration developed the operating budget so the administration could begin executing them. He stated that the administration often presented what it believed its priorities should be without always receiving clear direction from Council about Council's

priorities. He explained that the administration wanted those priorities identified so they could be incorporated into the budget. He added that sustainability might not have been the best example because Councilmember Renner had already made his expectations clear.

Councilmember Renner responded that he was demonstrating the point by stating his expectations and that the sustainability discussion should carry into the budget process in that manner. Mayor Jadwin stated that both perspectives were correct and provided background on the City's earlier efforts to develop a sustainability plan. She explained that several years earlier the City had begun working internally with a retired environmental consultant who had helped other communities establish sustainability plans. She stated that the City quickly recognized that it first needed other foundational pieces, including a Capital Improvement Plan and an overall strategic plan. She noted that the City now also had an Economic Development Strategy. She agreed that sustainability covered multiple areas, including internal City operations, fleet electrification, stormwater management, and economic development. She stated that the work completed over the previous several years had created the building blocks necessary to move forward with a more robust sustainability plan. Mayor Jadwin stated that the purpose of the Our Gahanna process was to identify the community's vision for Gahanna. She explained that the administration had now presented its priorities, including a sustainability plan, and wanted Council's feedback before beginning the budget process. She stated that clear Council support would allow the administration to prioritize the sustainability plan and include funding in the budget to develop it. She reiterated that the City had previously attempted to move in that direction but had not yet been in a position to advance the work and stated that the City was now in a better position to do so.

Councilmember Renner stated that he had participated in many of those earlier meetings and recognized the foundational pieces the City needed. He also noted that he had not yet discussed the related capital projects and acknowledged that those would require further discussion. He stated that the current discussion reflected the culmination of three years of waiting and confirmed that he understood the administration wanted feedback that evening. He described sustainability as an important issue that encompassed a broad range of topics. Councilmember Renner then stated that he may have set the tone

incorrectly and apologized. He asked Senior Director Vollmer whether she had completed her presentation. Senior Director Vollmer confirmed that she had. Councilmember Renner then asked whether any members wanted to discuss other items within the priority areas.

Vice President Jones discussed Objective 3B regarding an engaged and inclusive community. She stated that, although she did not have a specific budget request at that time, Council should continue considering accessibility throughout the community, particularly for people who use mobility devices. She suggested broadening the concept of an inclusive community beyond the Citizens Police Academy and age-friendly initiatives to include accessibility. She also referenced ongoing discussions about multi-use paths, e-bikes, and related policies and stated that Council should ensure that those policies did not create exclusions for wheelchair users or others who rely on mobility devices.

Councilmember McGregor asked Vice President Jones to provide an example of where she saw a need for increased accessibility. Vice President Jones responded that the issue required broader conversations with people who use mobility devices and noted that her comments came from conversations and emails from residents. She stated that Council needed to exercise caution when considering additional regulations for e-bikes and similar devices so that those regulations did not unintentionally restrict people who use mobility devices. She also discussed the need for additional paths so residents could navigate the City without relying solely on cars. She stated that creating a pedestrian-friendly community related to sustainability and that sustainability also led to accessibility.

Councilmember Padova added that the Creekside District could provide an example of this type of accessibility planning. She stated that, as the City reimaged the district, it should ensure that paths were wide enough for different mobility devices. She also referenced the need for ramps and more direct access for people who use wheelchairs.

Councilmember McGregor stated that sustainability might be a priority for Councilmember Renner but was not necessarily one of her priorities. She said she did not always see the financial benefit of sustainability options and expressed concern that the strategic plan called for additional plans, strategies, staff time, and consultants. She stated that

she had a large collection of plans at home that the City had never implemented and questioned the benefit of developing more plans. She added that the City had creative staff and questioned why it always needed a consultant to develop another strategy. Councilmember Renner responded that he did not believe the City needed outside firms or experts and agreed that the City had creative staff with the knowledge necessary to complete the work. He explained that he envisioned a unifying document that would guide the City across the six areas he had previously identified. He described sustainability as a three-legged stool of people, profit, and planet, which would then lead to resiliency and adaptability. He stated that such a document would help the community prepare for events such as heat waves, floods, and fires. He reiterated that he believed the City already had the necessary knowledge internally.

President Weaver thanked Councilmember Renner and the directors and stated that he appreciated the opportunity to provide direct feedback. He agreed that budget discussions could become reactionary and said Council and the administration had not always used the same process for communicating priorities. He thanked Senior Director Vollmer and Councilmember Renner for working to bring the discussion forward. President Weaver stated that the administration's priority list largely aligned with his own priorities. He first highlighted Objective 1A7 regarding walkability and pedestrian safety *within* the Creekside District and suggested broadening it to include accessibility *to* the Creekside District. He referenced prior discussions with Planning NEXT and noted that parking and access to Creekside were interrelated. He stated that he could not reach Creekside from his residence without a car. President Weaver next highlighted Objective 2B5 regarding urban forestry initiatives. He thanked the administration for its recent street tree outreach and noted that he had seen resident questions about the program on social media. He stated that he had submitted a request for his own residence and looked forward to hearing what next steps the administration might propose. President Weaver also highlighted Objective 3B2 regarding becoming an age-friendly community to support healthy aging and improve quality of life for all. He stated that the objective connected with housing, missing-middle housing, and step-down housing. He noted that Gahanna was largely landlocked and said the community faced a real issue when residents wanted to move from larger homes but had few alternatives within the City. He referenced

his own parents, who lived nearby, and said he did not know where they would go if they wanted to move. He concluded that those three areas represented the priorities he most wanted to highlight, while acknowledging that they remained broad and interconnected with other issues.

Councilmember Bowers stated that she had several questions before offering feedback. She asked whether the priorities in the Economic Development Strategic Plan, which the City developed alongside the strategic plan, would appear within the current priorities or remain independent. Senior Director Vollmer responded that those priorities would remain independent. She explained that after Council set the priorities under discussion, department directors would return to their individual departmental plans and align those plans with Council's priorities. Councilmember Bowers asked whether the discussion could therefore shape economic development priorities or other departmental priorities. Senior Director Vollmer confirmed that it could. Mayor Jadwin referenced President Weaver's comments about step-down housing and stated that, if Council identified that issue as a priority, it could rise from the broader discussion and become something Director Gottke would consider within his work.

Councilmember Bowers stated that she did not see affordability for the community clearly reflected in the priorities and said it remained a concern for her. She referenced prior discussions regarding the waste contract and water pricing and expressed concern about passing infrastructure costs on to residents as the region expanded and commercial demands on water increased. She stated that she wanted to identify more opportunities to improve affordability for residents and reduce costs where possible. She cited the sidewalk cost-sharing program as an example and asked how the City could use the resources residents had provided to help reduce their costs. Councilmember Bowers also discussed step-down housing for aging residents and stated that the City should also consider ownership opportunities in multifamily housing, including duplexes and quads. She said those housing types could provide important opportunities for people to enter homeownership and stated that she would like the Economic Development Plan to consider those ownership opportunities. Regarding the third priority, Quality of Place, Councilmember Bowers discussed recycling, composting, and soil health. She encouraged the

administration to approach those issues strategically and focus on areas that could produce the greatest impact, including large employers. She asked whether the City could develop composting programs internally and in collaboration with the school district and other major employers. She stated that she did not want the City to rely on diesel trucks to collect food waste and said that approach would conflict with the purpose of the initiative. She also asked the administration to consider ways to decrease fertilizer and pesticide use and to apply those practices within City operations. She stated that she wanted to learn more about the administration's proposed approach. Councilmember Bowers also expressed support for gateway improvements and wayfinding, noting that Council had discussed those topics since 2018 or 2019 through the land use and branding plans. She stated that those improvements were needed in the community. She also discussed the objectives under 4C and said an annual report could give residents concrete information in a digestible format. She said she valued receiving similar information from the school district and believed a City annual report would be beneficial. However, she cautioned that she did not believe Objective 4C2 necessarily warranted additional staff. Councilmember Bowers stated that she understood the communications discussion to focus on refining how the City connected the strategic plan to its communications. She said the City was already doing a solid job using available communication channels, while acknowledging that opportunities for improvement remained. She then asked when Council would revisit the priorities before the budget process so members could receive more information about specific projects before committing to the priorities.

Senior Director Vollmer stated that the City had already delayed the budget process because of the move taking place that week and the following week and that the budget would open to directors on the 17th. She offered to discuss specific questions individually but explained that the administration needed to take some issues back to department directors and staff because the presenters did not have expertise in every subject area. Senior Director Vollmer explained that, for example, if a department wanted to advance recycling and composting under Objective 2B7, the department would explain during the budget process what it proposed to do and what budget allocation it requested. She noted that some initiatives might not require budget allocations and stated that Council would hear those details when the administration presented the budget information. Mayor Jadwin cautioned against

confusing objectives and priorities with specific projects. She stated that the discussion focused on identifying the objectives and priorities that the City should emphasize. She explained that the administration would then take Council's direction back to the appropriate departments and ask them to determine what projects could address those priorities and meet community needs. Councilmember Bowers stated that the explanation helped clarify the process.

Senior Director Schultz stated that Council should recognize that the City would not necessarily address every bullet point with a specific project or program. He said the City would instead begin making progress on the priorities over time and noted that many related efforts were already underway. He used Objective 2B5, evaluating and enhancing urban forestry initiatives, as an example and stated that the Parks Department already had a three, four, or five-year strategy for implementation. He emphasized that the City was not starting from the beginning on many of the objectives and was already partway through implementing several of them. Councilmember Bowers stated that she understood and asked whether the priorities would lead to new projects or initiatives and whether Council could receive a preview of those items before the budget process. Senior Director Schultz stated that if the administration presented a program or project that did not satisfy one of the identified goals and objectives, Council should reject it. Senior Director Vollmer agreed and explained that, during the budget process, any department seeking funding for something that did not align with the identified priorities would have to explain to Council and the Director of Finance why that item should receive funding over something that did align. She stated that the administration's goal was to present a budget aligned with the priorities, although one or two items already underway might fall outside them. Senior Director Vollmer again used recycling and composting as an example. She stated that if Public Service proposed something unrelated instead of advancing recycling and composting, the administration would question why it was not pursuing the identified priority. She explained that the process differed from prior years because the community had already identified what it wanted through the strategic planning process, and the administration and Council were now discussing which priorities and objectives should begin or receive consideration in 2027. She noted that not everything would receive funding.

Senior Director Vollmer stated that, at the next update on the 17th, she would show Council some of the metrics and reporting tools that would track the objectives. She added that, similar to the Capital Improvement Plan, the strategic priorities would continue to develop and receive refinement each year. She stated that the Capital Improvement Plan could also change based on the priorities and the results of the ongoing discussions. Senior Director Schultz stated that the priorities provided him with a framework for evaluating and prioritizing projects beyond need and resource availability alone. He explained that projects could be evaluated against the identified goals and objectives and that a project addressing six goals and objectives would receive higher priority than one addressing only three.

Mayor Jadwin stated that the priority framework would provide accountability and measurable results for residents because residents had spent 15 months describing what they wanted Gahanna to become. She said the priorities came from community feedback and explained that, as the administration brought projects and budget requests forward, it could directly link those projects to the identified objectives and later report what the City had accomplished in response to residents' stated priorities.

Councilmember Bowers stated that some interpretation remained regarding what specific priorities meant in practice. She used expanded recycling and composting as an example and asked whether that meant curbside composting or another approach. She said the language reflected values and priorities identified by residents but could support different implementation approaches. She asked whether the administration wanted Council members to provide their impressions of the priorities and explain how they fit with the priorities identified in the strategic plan. Senior Director Vollmer confirmed that the administration wanted to know whether the seven Council members agreed that the City should begin budgeting toward the identified priorities in 2027. She noted that President Weaver and Vice President Jones had identified several specific items they wanted to see funded in 2027. She stated that she had not yet heard Council identify a missing priority, an item that needed immediate action, or an item that Council wanted delayed until 2028 or 2029. Councilmember Bowers reiterated that she did not see affordability for residents reflected in the priorities and said she might not

understand where that issue fit. Mayor Jadwin explained that the objectives came from the strategic plan and that affordability did not appear as a specific goal or objective because the strategic plan did not expressly identify it that way. She stated that she believed affordability remained embedded within the work represented by the priorities. Councilmember Bowers noted that the list represented only part of the priorities identified in the strategic plan and did not include every priority. She referenced aging in place and becoming an age-friendly community as an area that she believed incorporated some level of affordability. Mayor Jadwin agreed that affordability could fit within those objectives even if the plan did not specifically name it. Councilmember Bowers stated that she believed other areas of the strategic plan also addressed affordability. She added that, if the City developed the strategic plan that year, she believed the community would probably raise affordability more prominently. Senior Director Vollmer stated that Council could address issues such as affordability during the annual retreat because the City would not leave the strategic plan untouched for 10 years. She said that if Council collectively wanted affordability identified as a specific objective, the City could add it to the plan at an appropriate time, though not during that meeting. Senior Director Schultz stated that affordability presented a challenge because it covered multiple distinct issues. He identified housing affordability, utility affordability, water affordability, electric affordability, tax relief, and property tax relief as different considerations. He said the City needed to determine how to make meaningful progress on each area. He compared the process to the Capital Improvement Plan, where priorities could receive annual review and adjustment. He explained that the current discussion occurred at a higher strategic level rather than at a tactical level that prescribed exactly what the City would do for a specific issue such as housing affordability. Senior Director Schultz stated that the administration needed to identify the next meaningful step and that Council needed to discuss its priorities as a collective body rather than as seven individuals. He referenced affordability as a priority for Councilmember Bowers, sustainability as a priority for Councilmember Renner, and other individual priorities among Council members. He explained that the administration also debated and weighed priorities internally before bringing a budget to Council and said Council did not see the full complexity of that internal budget process. Councilmember Bowers thanked Senior Director Schultz and stated that she understood the administration also wanted Council members to respond to one another's comments. Senior Director Vollmer confirmed

that understanding.

Councilmember Bowers stated that she heard common themes among Council members regarding conservation and stewardship, even when members used different terminology or emphasized different aspects. She referenced Councilmember McGregor's prior comments about soil erosion, Creekside bank erosion, and stormwater management and stated that those issues connected to resiliency. She said Council had discussed those themes for years and believed the administration could confidently conclude that more than a majority of Council members supported them. Councilmember Bowers also stated that she understood Councilmember McGregor's concern about needing to understand what a sustainability plan would actually deliver for the community. She said Councilmember Renner understood the subject because of his experience, but she did not believe the broader community necessarily understood the meaningful impacts. She stated that additional information about how a sustainability plan would benefit the community would help her feel more comfortable supporting budget funding for it. Councilmember Bowers referenced Vice President Jones's comments regarding accessibility for people who use mobility devices and stated that the issue fit within the strategic plan and connected to walkability and community access. She said she could not speak for all Council members with the same confidence that she could regarding conservation issues but stated that she personally supported the accessibility concern. She also stated that she and President Weaver appeared aligned on identifying economic development priorities related to affordability and missing-middle housing.

Councilmember Renner thanked the participants and stated that Senior Director Schultz had accurately described sustainability. He said that resiliency included affordability and the other issues discussed, including urban forestry, soil health, waste, and recycling. He stated that those elements formed part of a sustainability plan and would help make the community more resilient. He expressed appreciation for the discussion among his colleagues and the administration.

Councilmember Schnetzer asked Senior Director Schultz to discuss the street sweeping program, referencing a response Senior Director Schultz had recently helped him provide to a resident. He stated that the response addressed cost recovery, protection of other community assets, and how the program kept debris out of Big Walnut Creek, which

he described as the community's greatest natural resource running through the center of the City. Senior Director Schultz stated that the street sweeping program illustrated the complexity of City operations. He explained that purchasing a street sweeper improved service quality and served purposes beyond improving the appearance of streets. He stated that debris left on streets would otherwise enter storm sewers and could ultimately reach Big Walnut Creek. Senior Director Schultz explained that street sweeping also supported maintenance by keeping debris out of the stormwater system, reducing the need for staff to unclog infrastructure, and helping prevent potential flooding issues. He stated that City operations involved interconnected systems, including both ecological and man-made systems. Senior Director Schultz also discussed the program's staffing and financial impacts. He stated that the City eliminated a six-figure contract that had not provided a high-quality level of service and instead paid for and operated its own street sweeper. He explained that the program's operating cost included the employee driving the routes while also reducing the need for other staff to maintain and manage clogged infrastructure. He stated that City programs served functional purposes even when residents might see only the most visible benefit, such as cleaner streets. Senior Director Schultz connected the example to the objective of expanding communications with the public. He stated that the City needed to better explain why it provided certain services and what additional benefits those services produced. He noted that a street sweeper might only travel a particular street two or three times a year and said property owners also had a civic responsibility to participate in maintaining their community. He cited attending Council meetings and cleaning gutters in front of one's property as examples of civic participation and stated that such participation mattered. Councilmember Schnetzer agreed with Senior Director Schultz and explained that he raised the issue in connection with the third priority, Quality of Place: Safe, Sustainable and Strong. He referenced the sustainability plan and Councilmember Bowers's earlier comments about identifying where the City could achieve the greatest impact. He stated that, as a layperson, he viewed energy as something generated largely off-site and delivered to the City, while waste was collected locally and transported elsewhere. In contrast, he said the City's water and stormwater systems existed directly within the community. Councilmember Schnetzer stated that, within the previous two weeks, nearly every detention basin in the City had developed neon green scum following heavy rain, hot weather, and unnecessary lawn

fertilization in July. He said those materials flowed into detention basins, where heat contributed to algae blooms. He noted that the strategic plan already included specific items related to soil, erosion, and composting. He asked that the sustainability plan place greater emphasis on stormwater and stormwater management and on preserving Big Walnut Creek as a natural resource running through the City. Councilmember Schnetzer stated that, aside from that addition, the administration's broad priority areas largely aligned with what he had heard from the community and what he recalled from the strategic planning process. He specifically referenced Creekside and stated that residents appeared eager to see the district realize its potential.

Vice President Jones asked whether the budget and Capital Improvement Plan would tie individual projects directly to specific strategic plan objectives, such as identifying that a particular project responded to Objective 3B2. Senior Director Vollmer confirmed that the budget book would look somewhat different that year. She explained that departmental budget narratives would use a standardized format and that sections addressing new items or major initiatives would identify the exact strategic plan number and priority associated with each item, along with a description. She stated that the administration was also working to incorporate that approach into other planning documents, including the Capital Improvement Plan, although those changes likely would not appear in the printed document that year. She added that, once the City obtained public dashboarding software, users would be able to see the integration among the various plans. She stated that she would provide demonstration samples on the 17th. Vice President Jones stated that this approach would be helpful. She said the City should continue connecting its communications to the strategic plan and suggested identifying the specific strategic plan initiative associated with programs and updates, such as the community grant program. She stated that some strategic plan items appeared very specific while others remained broader, and that directly connecting City actions to the strategic plan would help explain how individual efforts, including economic development actions related to affordability and aging, fit within the larger plan.

Councilmember Padova stated that she wanted to begin with the Creekside District, noting that Councilmember Renner had focused on sustainability. She said she appreciated that the light blue section of the

presentation referred to the Creekside District rather than only Creekside, although the heading referred only to Creekside. She asked the administration to consistently use the term Creekside District when referencing the area so the City could help change public perception and reinforce that the focus included the entire district rather than only the newer portions of Creekside. Councilmember Padova discussed Objective 1A8, which called for developing streetscape design standards throughout the district, extending them along Granville Street, and providing safer pedestrian crossings. She expressed strong support for that objective and also asked that the reference to extending improvements along Granville Street apply to the objective regarding improved walkability and pedestrian safety within the Creekside District. She stated that Granville Street felt less pedestrian-friendly and less safe than Mill Street and some of the older areas. Councilmember Padova also asked about the objective to reimagine a Creekside District-based organization to align with the district's current needs. She questioned whether the goal involved creating a new organization and noted that the City already had several organizations. Mayor Jadwin stated that the objective arose from discussion about a downtown business district and the former Creekside District Alliance. She explained that reinvigorating that type of organization had emerged from the strategic planning process as a way to create greater connectivity among Creekside businesses, just as other efforts sought to improve walkability and connectivity for residents. Councilmember Padova stated that she did not disagree with the goal but wondered whether existing organizations could achieve the same result. She expressed concern about creating multiple entities that might compete for the same resources. Mayor Jadwin recalled that one of the discussed priorities involved working with community stakeholder organizations to better align them. She stated that this effort might connect with Councilmember Padova's concern and that the City could begin with existing organizations and then determine whether it needed something additional or could accomplish the objective through current resources. Councilmember Padova agreed. She stated that she did not have enough information about Objective 2A, enhancing internal operations, to provide much direction because Council did not participate in the City's day-to-day operations. She said she trusted the administration to determine what to prioritize within that area. Regarding Objective 4C, Councilmember Padova agreed with Councilmember Bowers and others that public communications should tie City actions directly to the strategic plan. She referenced a prior

discussion about Issue 12 signs that communicated how funding was being used and suggested using a similar approach so residents could see how their survey responses and the strategic plan translated into visible City actions.

Councilmember Padova also supported the sustainability discussion and echoed Councilmember Bowers's observation that Council members might focus on different aspects of sustainability but had all shown interest in some form of sustainability throughout the City. She stated that the items beginning with Objective 2B6 appeared somewhat premature and suggested that the City might benefit from first developing the sustainability plan before advancing separate sustainability-related initiatives. She acknowledged that some of those initiatives might already be underway. Councilmember Padova also supported placemaking efforts and gateway improvements. She noted that some entrances into the City appeared more attractive than others and stated that improvements remained important. She agreed with Councilmember Schnetzer that the Creekside District represented a major focus of the strategic plan and one of the topics the City heard about most often. She stated that the City should continue doing what it could to support the Creekside District and help create what residents wanted to see there.

Councilmember Renner thanked the participants and asked whether any other Council members wished to speak. He then asked Senior Director Vollmer whether she had anything further. He stated that he had promised a lively discussion and believed the meeting had delivered one. He thanked everyone.

C. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Finance Committee, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:24 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the Finance Committee, this
day of 2026.*

Stephen A. Renner

DRAFT