

Subject: Fw: Strategic Plan Charter Amendment - Thoughts?
Sent: 4/14/2026, 10:26:44 AM
From: Ethan Barnhardt<ethan.barnhardt@gahanna.gov>
To: Jeremy VanMeter
Cc: Carrin Wester
Attachments: [ARTICLE XI. PLANNING COMMISSION Redline.docx](#)

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Jeremy -

Could you please attach this email and the attached redline to our proposal folder?

This is the Administration's response to the proposed language I distributed last week for the Strategic Plan and the Planning Commission, and I'd like it referenced for drafting purposes if the commission decides to move forward with these amendments.

Best,

Ethan C. Barnhardt, MPA
Chair, City of Gahanna Charter Review Commission
ethan.barnhardt@gahanna.gov
(864) 934-0657 (cell)

From: Miranda Vollmer <miranda.vollmer@gahanna.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2026 10:23 AM
To: Ethan Barnhardt <ethan.barnhardt@gahanna.gov>
Cc: Michael Blackford <Michael.Blackford@gahanna.gov>; Laurie Jadwin <laurie.jadwin@gahanna.gov>
Subject: Re: Strategic Plan Charter Amendment - Thoughts?

Chair Barnhardt,

As requested, please find information below on the proposed changes for Section 11 and Strategic Planning.

Section 3 Strategic Plan

The Administration recommends adding this to the Charter to ensure continuity in planning efforts and forward movement of the city. PlanningNEXT and Professor Zimomra also shared that this was a best governmental practice. We recommend the original redlines we sent for section 3.04, listed below:

"The Mayor shall cause to be prepared and submitted to Council a strategic plan for the City that provides the public an opportunity to comment on the plan. Annually, the Mayor shall issue a report of the progress made in achieving the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. The strategic plan shall be updated as needed by the Mayor, and such updates shall be submitted to Council for review, public comment and adoption."

We recommend this language to ensure the charter remains flexible for changes in economic conditions and planning efforts. Adding timelines reduces the flexibility to meet governmental best practices as they continue evolve. The additional language surrounding appropriation of money is redundant as the Mayor would need to budget properly for any additional dollar spends on strategic planning efforts. In addition, the plan can be updated without spending any city dollars by staff members. Strategic planning language in the Charter will ensure that efforts are always ongoing and resident voices are continually heard throughout the process.

Section 11 - see attached redlines

Changes to Section 11, Planning Commission, are to align attendance and removal requirements with other appointed boards and commissions by removing from Charter and placing within their Rules of Procedures. Currently, Charter provides for a fixed number of absences and vague language regarding removal for just cause. The proposed language provides guidance and clarifies responsibility on these matters while mandating Planning Commission's Rules of Procedures to be reviewed and adopted annually. The change from Charter to Rules of Procedures allows for clarity and flexibility while ensuring fairness and accountability.

Thank you for all of your efforts and please reach out with any questions.

MIRANDA VOLLMER

Senior Director
Administrative Services
she/her/hers
City of Gahanna

From: Ethan Barnhardt <ethan.barnhardt@gahanna.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 10:46 AM
To: Miranda Vollmer <miranda.vollmer@gahanna.gov>
Subject: Re: Strategic Plan Charter Amendment - Thoughts?

Thanks, Miranda -

I actually made a couple of changes after mulling it over further, removing some of the more prescriptive timeline I originally put in.

Let me know your thoughts when you have the chance. I hope you enjoyed your time away!

Talk soon.

Best,

Ethan C. Barnhardt, MPA
Chair, City of Gahanna Charter Review Commission
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From: Miranda Vollmer <miranda.vollmer@gahanna.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 9:54 AM
To: Ethan Barnhardt <ethan.barnhardt@gahanna.gov>; Laurie Jadwin <laurie.jadwin@gahanna.gov>
Cc: Corey Wybensinger <corey.wybensinger@gahanna.gov>; Kevin Schultz <kevin.schultz@gahanna.gov>
Subject: Re: Strategic Plan Charter Amendment - Thoughts?

Hi Ethan,

I am just returning from vacation and will review as soon as I am able. Thank you!

MIRANDA VOLLMER

Senior Director
Administrative Services
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City of Gahanna

From: Ethan Barnhardt <ethan.barnhardt@gahanna.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2026 11:50 AM
To: Miranda Vollmer <miranda.vollmer@gahanna.gov>; Laurie Jadwin <laurie.jadwin@gahanna.gov>
Cc: Corey Wybensinger <corey.wybensinger@gahanna.gov>; Kevin Schultz <kevin.schultz@gahanna.gov>
Subject: Strategic Plan Charter Amendment - Thoughts?

Director Vollmer & Mayor Jadwin -

I've been thinking through the strategic plan charter amendment the Administration submitted in March, and I wanted to share a revised draft with my thoughts before I submit it formally for commission consideration.

A few things came out of our meetings that I wanted to address. Councilmember Schnetzer raised a legitimate concern about the cost of a full strategic plan and the rigidity of embedding a mandate in the charter without a workable update mechanism. I've also been mindful that the city just completed and adopted a plan last year, and any charter language should account for that rather than implying that a new plan is immediately required.

The draft I've attached tries to accomplish a few things: it acknowledges Council's appropriation authority so the Mayor is not holding a charter obligation without the resources to fulfill it; it grandfathers the current plan as the operative document under the new provision; it establishes a 36-month review cycle that requires the Mayor to assess whether the plan needs targeted amendments or a comprehensive update and present that assessment to Council; and it reserves the full public comment process for targeted plan and comprehensive.

I think this operationalizes the strategic plan in a durable way — keeping it visible, building accountability, and subject to regular review — without creating an unfunded mandate or locking the city into a six-figure expenditure on a fixed schedule.

I'd appreciate your thoughts (and you can rip it apart - won't hurt my ego!) before I formally submit this to the group, as we prepare for deliberations and drafting.

Best,

Ethan C. Barnhardt, MPA
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