

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
Monday, June 16, 2025**

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. (Citizen's Budget Committee held 5:30–5:35 pm)

Council Present: Mayor Graham, Councilors Bloom, Dahle, Hansen, Kaplan and Sherrell.

Council Absent: DuQuenne

Staff Present:

Sabrina Cotta	City Manager
Johan Pietila	City Attorney
Alissa Kolodzinski	City Recorder
Tighe O'Meara	Police Chief

I. Call to Order

II. Reports and Presentations

a. APD Annual Report

O'Meara presented the Ashland Police Department's annual report (see agenda packet). The update included use of force incidents, crime clearance rates, and recent statistical information:

- There was a notable increase in use of force incidents from 11 to 43 due to changes in data capture methods, such as now recording incidents where firearms were displayed but not used. Increased staffing levels and jail lodgings also contributed to the increase. Despite this, use of force incidents occurred in less than 2% of cases. All incidents involved suspects identified as white, with approximately 30 males and 13 females.
- There was a slight increase in Part 1 Crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, auto theft, arson, and larceny) from 342 to 387, and violent crimes (homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault) rose from 29 to 40. However, the clearance rate for violent crimes remained high at 80%, well above the national average of 42–43%.
- The Enhanced Law Enforcement Area (ELEA) downtown and the new ELEA on the Ashland Street business corridor showed a steady to slightly decreasing trend in quality-of-life issue calls for service downtown. In 2024, there were 204 ELEA violation convictions in the municipal court, with 8 people expelled from the downtown area.
- Data on officer-initiated stops showed demographic data generally in line with Ashland's population, but there were limitations in data collection methods, such as not identifying individuals as multiracial. There was a slight decrease in calls for service in parks, with ordinance-related complaints most common in Garfield Park and Lithia Park.

Council members sought clarification on use-of-force incidents, crime rates, and enforcement in the night lawn area. Discussions highlighted the need for more detailed information on specific issues

like the night lawn program. Staffing levels were also discussed as currently the Police Department is two positions short of being fully staffed—an improvement from recent years.

Public comments were heard from two individuals regarding concern about an increase in prohibited camping citations in the night lawn area and a request for increased transparency and opportunities for direct engagement between city officials and residents, such as an annual town hall.

Council members acknowledged the police department's work and the annual report's comprehensive nature, and discussed potential areas for future focus, including enhanced incident tracking and improved data collection methods.

b. Strategic Planning Processes & Next Steps

Cotta presented an overview of the proposed strategic planning process for the City (see attached):

- \$80,000 is allocated in the budget for this process that includes both public engagement and document drafting pieces.
- Goals for the process include defining community goals and priorities, guiding resource allocation, addressing challenges, promoting coordination within the community and among major institutions, and enhancing quality of life.
- Ideas for focus areas include climate resilience, economic development, homeless services, and city service levels.

Council members suggested additional areas for consideration such as transportation, housing affordability and diversity, and organizational structure.

There was extensive discussion about the scope and timeline of the strategic plan. Cotta proposed a 10–15 year timeframe for the plan, with annual check-ins to allow for adjustments. Council members considered how to address both the long-term vision and immediate fiscal concerns. The council discussed the community engagement aspect of the process including partnering with local schools and the university to reach diverse demographics, holding neighborhood-based focus groups, and leveraging existing community organizations.

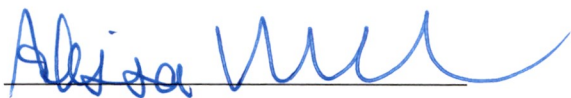
Cotta suggested a timeline for the process with public engagement occurring in fall and winter followed by drafting and adoption in spring and summer of 2026. Council members generally agreed with this timeline, emphasizing the importance of thorough community engagement. The council also discussed an implementation process for the strategic plan and suggested regular progress reviews and the formation of a community-based implementation committee.

Cotta noted that the city was interested in finding a local consultant to assist with the strategic planning process, and some council members suggested prioritizing affordability to maximize the budget for community engagement activities. Council members expressed general support for the

strategic planning process with suggestions for its execution, including leveraging social media for community outreach and ensuring a balance between visioning and practical implementation.

III. Adjournment of Study Session

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.



City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski



Mayor Tonya Graham



Strategic Planning Process

June 16, 2025

Background

Strategic Planning

Budget

- 25/27BN \$80,000
- Public Engagement & Drafting

Process

- Defines Goals & Priorities
- Guides the allocation of resources
- Addresses challenges
- Promotes coordination
- Enhances the quality of life of the community





Quality of Life

- Climate Resilience
- Economic Development
- Homeless Services
- City Service levels to include:
 - Police
 - Fire
 - Parks

What topic area is missing?



Fiscal Sustainability

- Revenue versus Service levels
 - Future of Food and Beverage Tax
- Regional opportunities for collaboration
 - Police
 - Fire
- Future of City Facilities

What topic area is missing?

Partners

Partners

Community
Elected & Appointed Officials
SOU
ASD
OSF
Chamber
Travel Ashland
City Staff
Major Employers & Businesses

Who are we missing?



Timeline

Timeframe	Step
Summer 2025	Contract with consultant
Fall/ Winter 2025	Public Engagement
Spring/ Summer	Drafting & Adoption
Post adoption	Performance measures
Annually	Check-ins

Any issues with the timeline?



Additional Questions

- Any qualities of the consultant you are interested in?
- What outcomes are you looking for with this process?
- Anything else staff should know?

