

BLUE ASH CITY COUNCIL

August 13, 2026

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1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Blue Ash, Ohio, was held on August 13, 2026. Mayor Jill Cole called the meeting to order in Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was video recorded and viewable on the City of Blue Ash website and WatchBlueAshOhio.com.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Cole led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councilman Jeff Capell, Councilman Jim Friend, Councilman Brian Gath, Councilman Pramod Jhaveri, Vice Mayor Katie Schneider, and Mayor Jill Cole,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman Marc Sirkin

ALSO PRESENT: Assistant City Manager Kelly Harrington, Solicitor Bryan Pacheco, Clerk of Council Jamie Eifert, Police Chief Roger Pohlman, Public Works Director Gordon Perry, Parks & Recreation Director Brian Kruse, Executive Assistant Julie Kipper, Communications Coordinator Rachel Murray, and interested citizens

Councilman Gath moved, Councilman Friend seconded to excuse Councilman Sirkin from the meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Vice Mayor Schneider moved, Councilman Gath seconded to accept the agenda. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried.

1. *MEETING CALLED TO ORDER*

2. *PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE*

3. *ROLL CALL – Clerk of Council Jamie K. Eifert*

4. *ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA*

5. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES*

a. Regular Meeting of July 9, 2026

6. *COMMUNICATIONS*

a. Communications to Council – Clerk of Council Jamie K. Eifert

b. Reports From Outside Agencies

c. Mayor's Court Report – July 2026

d. Financial Report – Motion to accept the report for July 2026

7. *HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS*

8. *COMMITTEE REPORTS*

a. Finance & Administration Committee, Marc Sirkin, Chairperson

1. Resolution No. 2026-61, Providing for amendments within the 2026 annual appropriation Resolution No. 2025-71

2. Motion to appoint Matt Sanders as the Blue Ash City Council representative to the Suburban Communities Energy Special Improvement District, Inc.

b. Public Works Committee, Katie Schneider, Chairperson

1. Resolution No. 2026-62, Authorizing a contract for the Cornell Road Sidewalk Repair Program

9. *MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS*

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a. Summit Park Phase 4 Presentation – Brian Kruse, Parks & Recreation Director

10. ADJOURNMENT

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Friend moved, Councilman Gath seconded to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 9, 2026. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Communications to Council

There were no communications presented to Council.

b. Reports From Outside Agencies

There were no representatives from outside agencies present at the meeting.

c. Mayor's Court Report – July 2026

RECEIPTS COLLECTED:

(Cash Book Total/Restitutions/Bond Surcharge/Bond Forfeitures/Bond Returned: \$6,611.00

DISBURSEMENTS:

To the City of Blue Ash

(Fines/costs/Expungements/forfeitures/NSF check charges, vendor permits) \$4,690.00

To the State of Ohio: \$1,849.00

To Hamilton County Municipal Court \$72.00

Refunds Issued/Overpayment (not included in receipts collected) \$0.00

Bonds Returned \$0.00

Restitution payment \$0.00

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$6,611.00

TOTAL IN BOND ACCOUNT (not yet applied included in receipts collected) \$0.00

Mayor's Court Traffic/ Parking citations issued 60

Court Criminal/Building citations issued 1

OVI Citations Issued 0

Seatbelt (Click it or Ticket Campaign) 0

Total Mayor's Court Citations Issued 60

BLUE ASH REVENUE FROM MAYOR'S COURT CASES.....

\$4,690.00

d. Financial Report – July 2026

Vice Mayor Schneider moved Councilman Jhaveri seconded to accept the Financial Report for July 2026 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion carried.

CITY OF BLUE ASH FINANCIAL POSITION STATEMENT- MONTH ENDING JULY 31, 2026

MONTH TO DATE	2025	2026
START OF MONTH FUND BALANCE:	\$91,915,943.61	\$96,804,429.84
Revenues:		
Earnings Tax Collections:	\$2,582,517.58	\$3,161,768.06
Debt Financing (long term)	-	-
Debt Financing (short term)	-	-
Other Revenue Received:	\$2,319,534.36	\$3,002,313.46
= Total Monthly Receipts	\$4,902,051.94	\$6,164,081.52
Expenditures:		
Long term Debt Payments	1,250,000.00	1,250,000.00
Short term Debt Payments	-	-
Other Expenditures:	\$3,990,092.83	\$5,721,407.26
= Total Monthly Expenditures:	<u>\$(5,240,092.83)</u>	<u>\$(6,971,407.26)</u>

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END OF MONTH FUND BALANCE:	<u>\$91,577,902.72</u>	<u>\$95,997,104.10</u>
END OF MONTH GENERAL FUND BALANCE:	<u>\$81,931,926.50</u>	<u>\$85,517,549.81</u>

YEAR TO DATE	2025	2026
START OF YEAR FUND BALANCE:	\$88,817,299.72	\$90,783,045.41
Revenues:		
Earnings Tax Collections:	\$25,492,097.28	\$27,719,141.81
Debt Financing (long term)	–	30,000,000.00
Debt Financing (short term)	20,055,907.25	–
Other Revenue Received:	<u>\$17,705,615.77</u>	<u>\$18,102,108.75</u>
= Total YTD Receipts	<u>\$63,253,620.30</u>	<u>\$75,821,250.56</u>
Expenditures:		
Long term Debt Payments	\$2,497,922.95	\$3,637,322.43
Short term Debt Payments	20,719,786.11	20,670,111.98
Other Expenditures:	<u>\$37,275,308.24</u>	<u>\$46,299,757.46</u>
= Total YTD Expenditures:	<u>\$(60,493,017.30)</u>	<u>\$(70,607,191.87)</u>
YEAR TO DATE FUND BALANCE:	<u>\$91,577,902.72</u>	<u>\$95,997,104.10</u>
YEAR TO DATE GENERAL FUND BALANCE:	<u>\$81,931,926.50</u>	<u>\$85,517,549.81</u>

YTD Interest rec'd: (incl. in Other Rev.) \$2,007,219.48 Receipt and Eexpenditure figures do not include interfund transfers or advances. All debt includes principal and interest.

BLUE ASH INCOME TAX DIV. INCOME TAX RECEIPT SUMMARY - MONTH ENDING JULY 31, 2026			
MONTH TO DATE	2025	2026	
Business Net Profit	\$164,732.20	\$323,223.99	
Resident Net Profit	\$56,681.71	\$69,750.42	
Non-Resident Net Profit	\$28,578.28	\$15,297.59	
Subcontractor Net Profit	<u>\$2,040.48</u>	<u>\$1,213.26</u>	
Net Profit Total	\$252,032.67	\$409,485.26	
Withholding	\$2,254,887.59	\$2,645,852.11	
Subcontractor Withholding	<u>\$75,597.32</u>	<u>\$106,430.69</u>	
Withholding Total	<u>\$2,330,484.91</u>	<u>\$2,752,282.80</u>	
Monthly Collection Totals	<u>\$2,582,517.58</u>	<u>\$3,161,768.06</u>	22.43%

YEAR TO DATE:	2025	2026	
Business Net Profit	\$4,560,804.20	\$5,290,301.74	
Resident Net Profit	\$1,568,380.78	\$1,575,179.84	
Non-Resident Net Profit	\$316,149.29	\$294,115.20	
Subcontractor Net Profit	<u>\$328,508.59</u>	<u>\$112,701.88</u>	
Net Profit Total	\$6,773,842.86	\$7,272,298.66	
Withholding	\$18,077,578.65	\$19,796,675.99	
Subcontractor Withholding	<u>\$640,675.77</u>	<u>\$650,167.16</u>	
Withholding Total	<u>\$18,718,254.42</u>	<u>\$20,446,843.15</u>	
Year-To-Date Collection Totals	<u>\$25,492,097.28</u>	<u>\$27,719,141.81</u>	8.74%
Withholding Refunds	\$731,262.13	\$619,504.23	
Net Profit Refunds	\$932,264.43	\$444,257.03	
Year-To-Date Refund Totals	<u>\$1,663,526.56</u>	<u>\$1,063,761.26</u>	-36.05%

7. HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS

Rekha Sharma, 4224 Fox Hollow Drive, addressed some of the misunderstandings and stereotypes surrounding Hinduism, saying they often come from limited exposure or social

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media. She explained that Hindu families share many familiar values, such as honesty, respect for family and elders, helping the community, personal responsibility, gratitude, and respect for different beliefs.

Rajni Harsh, 8581 Sturbridge Drive, addressed common misconceptions about Hindu worship, symbolism, and the caste system. She highlighted Hindu families' contributions to their communities and encouraged understanding through conversation rather than stereotypes.

Peter Nord, 10527 Kenridge Drive, expressed his appreciation for the utility crews who worked through the difficult weather conditions to restore power after the storms earlier in the week. He suggested that Council consider passing a resolution thanking the crews for their hard work in getting electricity back on quickly for Blue Ash residents.

Hearings from Citizens was declared closed at 7:07 p.m.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Prior to the Council meeting, Council members received the following report describing agenda items:

This memo offers a brief description of the topics included on the August 13, 2026 Council Meeting agenda.

8.a.1. Resolution No. 2026-61 – Providing for amendments within the 2026 annual appropriation Resolution No. 2025-71

Resolution 2026-61 provides for the following 2026 budget amendments:

Our newest restaurant tenant, Alcove, will be taking over the former Community Room space within their leased premises. One anticipated impact of this transition was the need to identify an alternate location to house the seasonal Ice Rink operations and point-of-sale area. As a temporary solution for the 2026–2027 ice rink season, staff plans to rent a heated event tent to serve as the operational headquarters and point-of-sale location. This budget amendment will provide funding for the seasonal tent rental, propane heaters, and the associated fuel costs for the 2026–2027 operating season.

Please direct any questions regarding this resolution to the Treasurer/Administrative Services Director or Parks and Recreation Director.

8.a.2. Motion to appoint Matt Sanders as the Blue Ash City Council representative to the Suburban Communities Energy Special Improvement District, Inc.

Matt Sanders is replacing Sherry Poppe who retired in 2025 on the Suburban Communities Energy Special Improvement District, Inc. board. This board is responsible for the oversight of PACE (property assessed clean energy) projects within the region.

8.c.1. Resolution No. 2026-62 – Awarding a contract for the Cornell Road Sidewalk Repair Program

The Public Works Administration advertised for bids for the Cornell Road Sidewalk Repair Program in the Cincinnati Enquirer and the Bid Express website on Thursday, July 16, 2026. Bids were opened and made public on Friday, July 31, 2026. Administration is recommending Council authorize a bid award to the apparent low bidder, Adleta Construction, Inc., for the unit prices as shown in the bid summary. Staff recommends the award include the Base Bid and Alternate. The work consists of the following:

Base Bid: Remove and replace all damaged and deteriorating sidewalk, curb, and storm water catch basins along Cornell Road, starting at Kenwood Road heading east to Grooms Road. Work will take place on both the north and south sides of Cornell Road.

Alternate: Remove and replace a section of deteriorated sidewalk, and curb on Cooper Road at Monroe Avenue.

Please direct questions regarding this Resolution to the Public Works Director.

9.a. Miscellaneous Business – Summit Park Phase 4 Presentation

Parks and Recreation Director Brian Kruse will present several options for additional enhancements at Summit Park.

a. Finance & Administration Committee, Pramod Jhaveri, Committee Member

Councilman Jhaveri asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2026-61 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

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RESOLUTION NO. 2026-61

PROVIDING FOR AMENDMENTS WITHIN THE 2026 ANNUAL
APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION NO. 2025-71

Councilman Jhaveri moved, Councilman Gath seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2026-61.

Councilman Capell questioned the additional \$60,000 expense for the ice rink and expressed his concern about its overall cost compared to the number of residents who use it. Mr. Kruse explained that the additional funding is needed for a temporary heated tent because with the recent opening of Alcove, the community room will no longer be available, and staff will explore other options for future seasons. Councilman Capell said the ice rink and other City events should be reviewed more broadly for their overall value and indicated he would continue to oppose the additional spending.

Council members discussed the ice rink's cost and overall value, with some members noting that the ticket sales don't fully reflect the number of people who visit the area and support nearby businesses. Some members acknowledged the additional \$60,000 expense is significant, while others noted that the rink adds energy and activity to the park during the winter months and brings people in to help support the businesses there. The majority of Council expressed support for continuing it this year while staff looks for a more economical option in the future.

There being no additional discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Councilpersons Councilman Friend, Gath, Jhaveri, Vice Mayor Schneider, and Mayor Cole voted yes. Councilman Capell voted no. Resolution No. 2026-61 passed.

Councilman Jhaveri moved, Vice Mayor Schneider seconded to appoint Matt Sanders as the Blue Ash City Council representative to the Suburban Communities Energy Special Improvement District, Inc. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted yes. Motion passed.

b. Public Works Committee, Katie Schneider, Chairperson

Vice Mayor Schneider asked the Clerk to read Resolution No. 2026-62 by title only.

THEN WAS PRESENTED AND READ BY TITLE ONLY:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-62

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A
CONTRACT FOR THE CORNELL ROAD SIDEWALK REPAIR
PROGRAM FOR THE UNIT PRICES AS SHOWN ON THE
ATTACHED BID SUMMARY

Vice Mayor Schneider moved, Councilman Gath seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2026-62.

Councilman Capell questioned the wide range between the highest and lowest bids and asked whether the low bid had been carefully reviewed. The Public Works Director confirmed the bid was carefully reviewed and verified against current state pricing. He noted that it is a benefit to the City that it is currently an aggressive, competitive bidding environment. He added that the City has worked with the contractor before and considers them a dependable contractor.

There being no additional discussion, the Clerk called the roll. Vice Mayor Schneider, Councilpersons Gath, Jhaveri, Capell, Friend, and Mayor Cole voted. Six yes votes. Resolution No. 2026-62 passed.

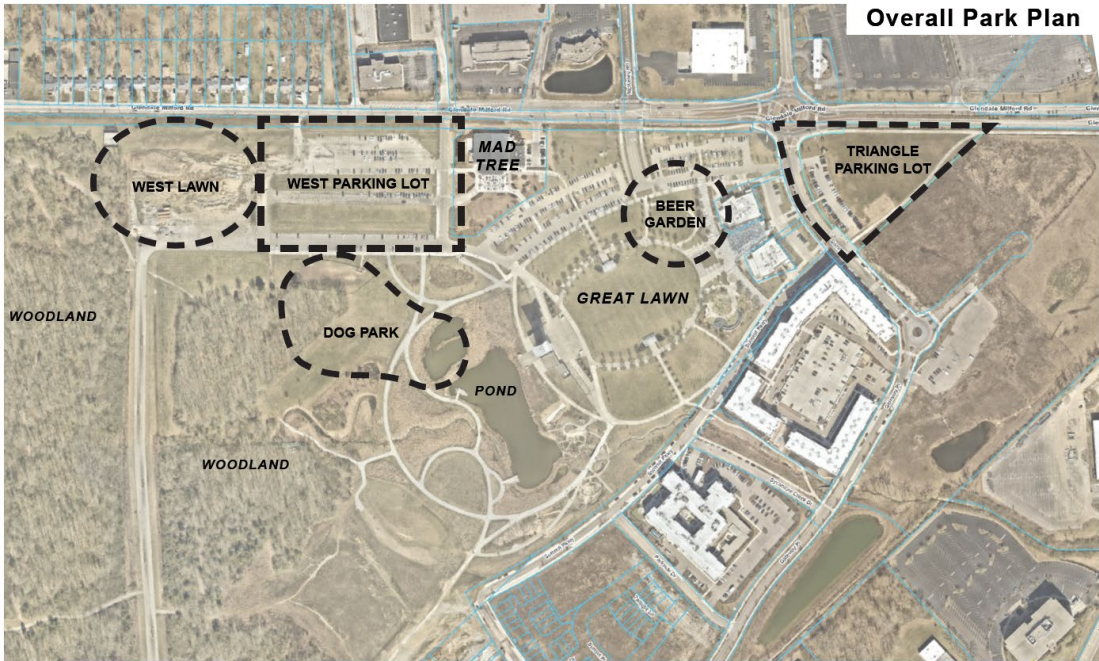
9. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Kelly Harrington commented that as previously discussed during last year's budget presentation and the January Council retreat, staff has been working on concepts for the next phase of Summit Park. Parks and Recreation Director, Brian Kruse presented the conceptual "Phase Four" of Summit Park, which includes expanding and improving the west parking lot and exploring additional parking in the triangle area. He noted that these are still conceptual and could change as the project develops. Currently, the City has budgeted about

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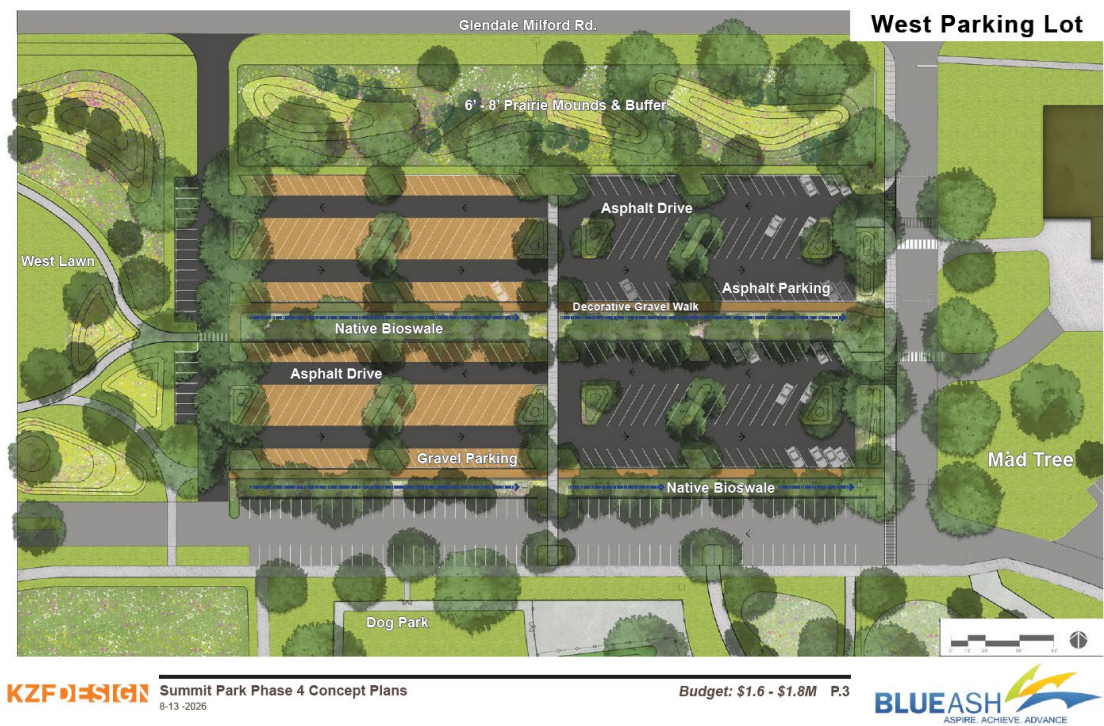
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\$1.5 million for the project and also received a \$350,000 state grant. He’s looking for Council’s feedback in helping to determine the final scope and direction of the project.

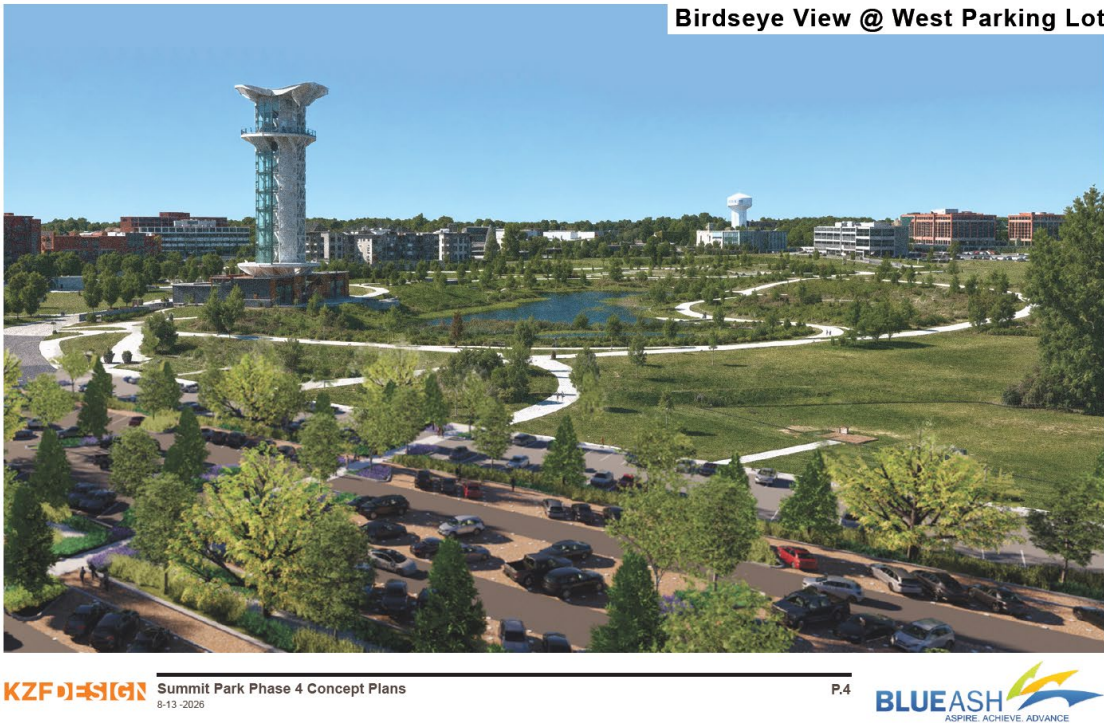


This graphic shows an overall layout of several areas being considered as part of the next phase of Summit Park improvements. These include adding parking in the triangle area, improving the heavily used west parking lot, turning the west lawn into a more attractive green space, studying a possible expansion of the dog park, and creating a beer garden/picnic area near D’Oro. The west parking lot and west lawn improvements are intended to work together and include features such as landscaping and bioswales.

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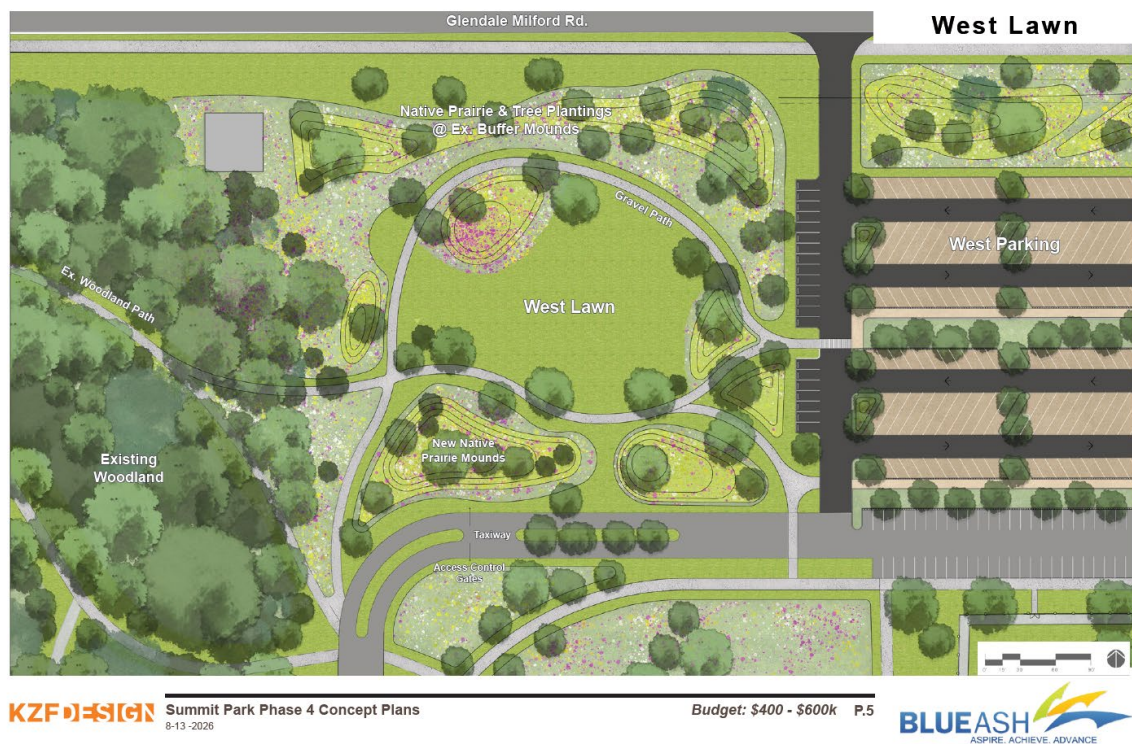
Mr. Kruse outlined plans to improve and expand the west parking lot with more organized parking, lighting, pedestrian connections, landscaping, and extensive bioswales to manage and recycle stormwater. The project could be completed in phases to limit disruptions and would combine asphalt and gravel areas to balance maintenance needs with the park’s green design. Council members inquired about pedestrian access, the number and type of new parking spaces, winter maintenance, and the durability of the proposed gravel parking system. Mr. Kruse explained that the sidewalks and gravel paths will provide access through the area, the expansion will add more organized parking, and the City will handle snow removal as needed. Staff is also testing a gravel-lock system designed to reduce maintenance and keep the gravel in place.



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Staff shared a rendering of the proposed west parking lot, highlighting the planned trees and bioswales, noting that the goal is for the new lot to look and function like the existing parking lot which has worked well.

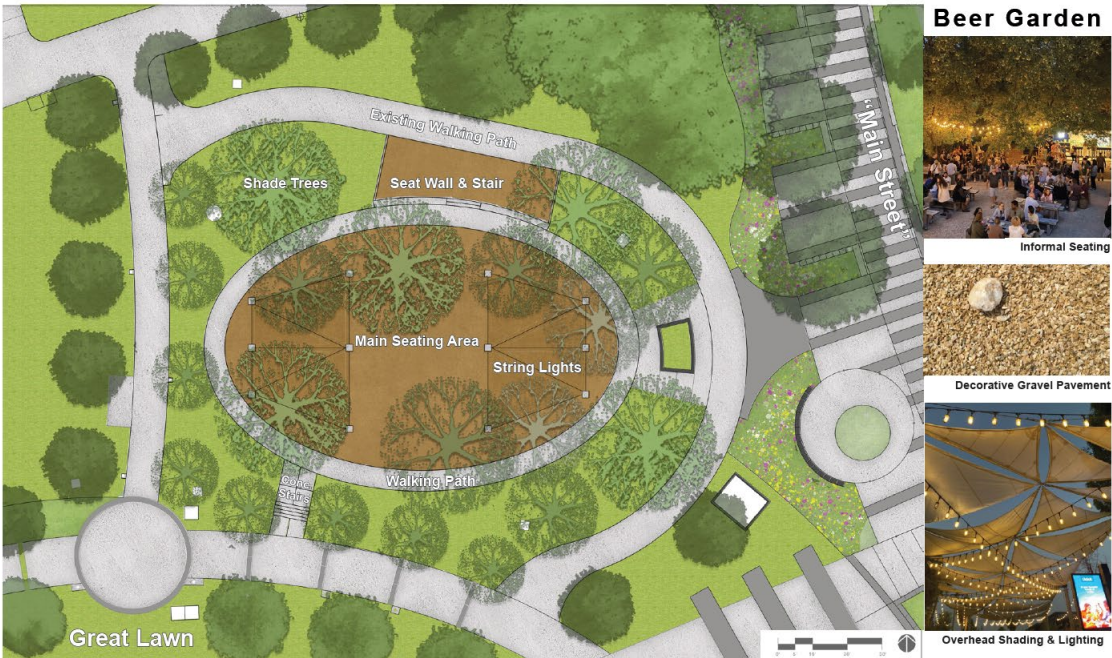


Staff outlined the plans to transform the west lawn area by removing existing pavement, rubble, and debris and creating a mix of prairie and grass with walking paths and landscaping. The area would provide a quieter park space while keeping some grass available for overflow parking, with estimated costs ranging from about \$1.6-\$1.8 million for the West Parking lot and \$400,000-\$600,000 for the West Lawn. Council asked about vehicle access and whether the West Lawn plans would affect any future development. Staff explained that the existing traffic gate will help keep cars out of pedestrian areas, and the plans will keep the space flexible in case the City decides to develop it in the future.

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Staff outlined plans to improve the triangle area at the entrance to Summit Park by more than doubling parking capacity and adding landscaping, walking paths, prairie mounds, irrigation, and a bioswale. The plan also includes improving the entrance landscaping, simplifying the existing LED sign, and replacing some on-street parking with a brick median to help improve traffic flow and visibility. Council and staff discussed several ideas related to the Triangle Parking Lot concept plan, including a larger flagpole, wider pedestrian paths, and keeping areas flexible for potential future restaurants or other development. Staff said the proposed landscaping and parking improvements are designed so they could be changed later if new opportunities come along, and noted that the City is certainly open to potential partnerships. Council also asked that landscaping along Glendale Milford be planned so it doesn't block views into the park.



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This concept illustrates a new beer garden/picnic area that would provide a flexible gathering space with picnic tables, shade structures, lighting, trees, and gravel areas. The space could also support small events, concerts, and food trucks, with an estimated cost of \$300,000 to \$500,000. Council discussed how the proposed picnic/beer garden area would be used and raised questions about ADA accessibility, especially for wheelchairs and strollers on the gravel surface. Staff explained that ADA access would be provided around the space, and that they would look more closely at making the gravel area accessible during the design phase. Staff also clarified that the area would remain flexible for temporary stages, tents, and events.



Staff reviewed the concept for a larger, improved dog park, noting that the current dog park is heavily used but undersized and requires significant maintenance. The proposed design would include separate small- and large-dog areas, rotating the large-dog sections to reduce wear, improved surfaces and shade, and possible water access for dogs, at an estimated cost of roughly \$800,000 to \$1.1 million. Staff emphasized that the concept is still preliminary and expressed some hesitation about recommending the dog park because of its ongoing maintenance needs. Staff indicated that parking improvements and the West Lawn would be higher priorities, followed by the beer garden/picnic grove, while the dog park could certainly move forward as well if there is strong support from Council.

Following the conclusion of the presentation, Council discussed the proposed concept ideas. There was strong agreement that parking should be the first priority, particularly improving the west parking lot. Council also generally liked the West Lawn and East Triangle concepts, which would help clean up those areas, improve the look, and feel of the park, and add some additional parking and pedestrian connections. The picnic grove/beer garden area also received positive feedback. Council liked the idea of adding more shade, seating, and gathering space, especially since there are currently limited places for families and other visitors to sit and relax. The dog park had more mixed feedback. Council agreed the existing dog park could definitely use improvements, but there were concerns about the roughly \$1 million cost as well as the ongoing maintenance. There was interest in continuing to look at the idea, possibly with a smaller or less expensive option or as a future project. Overall, Council seemed supportive of the parking improvements, but wanted to take a little more time to consider the other proposed amenities. Staff indicated that moving ahead with the parking design now will not significantly delay the other projects if Council decides to move forward with them later.

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Kelly Harrington referenced a follow-up memo to the discussion of regulating bamboo at the previous Council meeting. Council, staff, and the City Solicitor discussed some options for addressing bamboo that spreads onto neighboring properties. There was general support for a complaint-based approach rather than banning bamboo throughout the City or having staff actively look for violations. The discussion focused on giving residents a way to bring bamboo disputes to Mayor's Court, rather than having to hire an attorney and go to Common Pleas Court. The City Solicitor noted there are still some questions about what remedies Mayor's Court could require. Overall, Council supported moving forward with this approach, and staff will bring back a code amendment for Council's consideration.

Gordon Perry provided an update on the City's paving program, and stated that paving has started on Innovation Center Drive near the Sycamore bus depot, with the work expected to be completed by mid-October. He also noted that the rest of the City's paving program will begin throughout Blue Ash in the next couple of weeks.

Brian Kruse reported that the new pickleball and tennis courts should be opening in the next couple of weeks. He also provided information about an upcoming community dinner at Summit Park in September to benefit the Parks and Recreation Foundation. The event will feature Summit Park restaurants, dinner, drinks, and live music under the canopy. Tickets are \$75 per person, with only 100 spots available, and more than half have already been sold.

Chief Pohlman shared information on several upcoming Police Department activities, including the Police Department Open House on September 15, which will begin with a sensory-friendly hour, and the October 14 charity golf outing, which supports Shop with a Cop and the UC Blue Ash scholarship program. He also thanked Rachel Murray for her work on the new e-bike information cards, noting they were designed to be simple and easy to understand and have received overwhelmingly positive feedback, including interest from other communities.

Councilman Jhaveri welcomed Wawa to Blue Ash, noting the strong turnout for its grand opening event today and added that it is a great addition to the community. He also congratulated the Blue Ash police officers for winning a contest held as part of the event and highlighted some of Wawa's offerings, including free coffee for the weekend.

Councilman Gath thanked the residents who came to share information about Hindu culture and expressed appreciation for their message. He also highlighted Blue Ash's strong economy, noting that withholding tax revenue is up more than 9% and pointed out the recent business openings and groundbreakings as signs of continued growth.

Councilman Capell echoed the positive comments about recent business openings in Blue Ash. He highlighted Alcove and Torque Car Condo as great additions to the city and said he looks forward to visiting Wawa as well.

Councilman Friend recognized several recent small business openings and improvements in Blue Ash including the Pizza Hut on Kenwood Road and the Velvet Oven on Hunt Road. He thanked City staff for all their hard work supporting the community. With school starting soon, he also reminded drivers to be extra careful around students getting on and off buses and riding e-bikes.

Vice Mayor Schneider echoed her fellow Council members' comments and stated that it is always great to see all the activity and business openings in Blue Ash.

Mayor Cole commented on all the positive things happening in Blue Ash and what a great community it is. She also thanked the Blue Ash Chamber of Commerce for being so involved in recent business openings and helping support business growth in the city.

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10. ADJOURNMENT

All items on the agenda having been acted upon, Councilman Friend moved, Councilman Jhaveri seconded to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members voted yes. The Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.

Jill Cole, Mayor

Jamie K. Eifert, Clerk of Council

MINUTES RECORDED AND WRITTEN BY:

Julie Kipper, Executive Assistant

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