



City of Othello  
 Planning Commission Meeting  
 February 17, 2026  
 Zuleica Morfin

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Rob Simmons called the meeting to order at 6:04pm

**ROLL CALL**

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Rob Simmons, Ruth Sawyer, Jose Garza, Maria Martinez, Daniela Voorhies, Donald Burks MD, Chad Robbins

**Staff:** Community Development Director Anne Henning

**Attendees:** Council member Chris Dorow, Council member Alma Carmona, Council member Kelli Camp, Bob Carlson

**PUBLIC INPUT**

None

**MINUTES APPROVAL**

January 20, 2026, minutes approved. M/S Voorhies/Sawyer

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – EVENT AND TOPIC SCHEDULE**

Date	Event	Topic
3/16/26	PC mtg	Public Workshop: Goals & Policies
4/20/26	PC mtg	Public Workshop: Goals & Policies, continued
5/2/26	Little League Opening Day	Public engagement: Survey flyers, interactive boards, vision
7/4/26	4 <sup>th</sup> of July Celebration	Public engagement: Survey flyers, interactive boards, maps (Land Capacity Analysis, Land Use), policies
7/20/26	PC mtg	Public Workshop: Future Land Use Map
10/19/26	PC mtg	Public Workshop: Review findings/direction
12/5/26	Miracle on Main Street	Public engagement: Draft Plan rollout/feedback

Ms. Henning went over upcoming events and asked planning commissioners to consider participating in some of the public engagement events.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – COMMUNITY PROFILE (UPDATED)**

At the January meeting, the Commission reviewed the Draft Community Profile prepared by our consultant, SCJ Associates. This document summarizes characteristics of Othello, such as population growth trends, demographics, economic indicators, and housing. The Commission had some questions about Table 5, Job Counts by Places Where Othello Residents are Employed, such as whether the figures included those working in unincorporated areas and those working remotely. Staff and the consultant have dug deeper into this topic and determined that the numbers presented did not include people working in unincorporated areas. New information has been gathered, by county, to better capture where

Othello residents are working. 2023 data for this topic has also become available since the report was first drafted, so the most current data was used. The updated Community Profile with revised Table 5 was provided in the agenda packet.

### **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – DRAFT COMMUNITY SURVEY**

With input from staff, the consultant for the Comprehensive Plan Update has drafted a proposed community survey. Before it is released to the public, the Planning Commission should review it to determine if any changes need to be made. Note that the section about “Community Vision” (starting with #9) has placeholders for now since it can’t be finalized until after the Commission works on the Vision tonight. The draft vision statement will be included in this section of the survey when it is released to the public.

Commissioners went over the community survey. Vice Chair Daniela Voorhies felt like the survey was too long. Council member Kelli Camp also thought the survey was long and suggested it be broken down into 4 surveys with a QR code for each. For upcoming events, Commissioner Chad Robbins suggested having a paper survey. Council member Alma Carmona and Council member Chris Dorow remembered surveys that were done in the past, one was sent with utility bills, and the other was an online survey. Both received good responses. Council member Camp felt that the survey would miss young adults who live with parents so don’t get the utility bill. She also suggested working with the library as a place where people could answer the survey.

## **Character and Growth**

### **1) Which aspects of Othello's atmosphere are most important to you? *Select your top 3.***

- Size and population
- Pace of life
- Local events and traditions
- Family-oriented
- ~~Community identity~~ - Commissioners didn’t feel this answer would be useful
- Access to nature and green spaces
- Business friendly
- Housing affordability
- Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

### **2) What are your biggest concerns regarding growth in Othello? *Select up to 5.***

- Strain on city services and infrastructure
- Change or loss of small-town character
- Increased traffic congestion
- Water shortages
- Environmental impacts (reduced wildlife or wildlife habitat, etc.)
- Increased traffic collisions
- Rising housing costs and affordability
- Loss of farmland
- ~~Wildfire risk~~ - Remove and replace with jobs. Commissioners thought wildfire risk wasn’t worth taking up a place on the survey list.
- Increased crime
- Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

**3) What industries would you like to see expanded in Othello? *Select any that apply.***

- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- Education
- Food Processing
- Healthcare & Social Assistance- **These are different, would be better separated.**
- Retail Trade- Needs to be explained better. Replace with shopping and restaurants.**
- Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

**Add Tourism- Hotels & recreation**

**4) What can the City do to improve the living experience in Othello? *Select up to 5.***

- Increased access to jobs
- Increased access to childcare
- Increased access to arts and culture
- Increased access to affordable housing types
- Increased access to shopping
- Increased access to healthcare
- Increased access to green space/parks/nature
- A centralized, walkable city center
- More local businesses to work and shop at
- Better facilities for walking or biking
- Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissioner Jose Garza would like to see another survey specifically for young people that is shorter and more focused.

**5) What would best foster economic growth and retain young people in the Othello community? *Select up to 3.***

**Re-word question to "What would attract people from outside of Othello".**

**6) What would best support business development and ~~retainment~~ (retention) in Othello? *Select up to 3.***

- Incubator opportunities- **Needs to be explained better. Replace with business startup hub.**
- Small business training and mentoring programs
- Partnerships between private businesses and the city
- Access to desirable locations for business development (downtown sites, neighborhood commercial sites, etc.)
- Tourism and a customer base for business- **Provide more opportunities for tourism as a customer base.**
- ~~Amenities~~ in Othello that attract business- **Replace amenities with infrastructure (Broadband, natural gas, advertising)**
- Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

**7) Thinking about parks and recreation in our community, what types of improvements or features would most enhance your experience when visiting parks, trails, or recreational facilities? *Select up to 5.***

- More shade (trees, shelters)
- Additional restrooms
- Expanded playgrounds and play areas
- Community gardens
- Improved accessibility for all ages and abilities
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Sports fields/courts
- Gathering spaces- **Replace with open space.**
- More event spaces (for concerts, festivals, etc.)
- More natural areas, habitat restoration, and/or trails
- Nothing - existing parks meet my needs
- Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

Add dog park

**8) If the city were able to acquire funding, which types of recreational amenities do you think would be most beneficial to residents? *Select up to 3.***

Commissioners agreed to combine #7 and #8 with adding lighting, benches, and drinking fountains. Also keeping small neighborhood parks, safe and comfortable ways to walk or bike around town from #8.

## **Community Vision**

**13) Rank these items based on how important they are to you in Othello:**

This question isn't really vision, it's more community character. They asked for it to be moved into the first section.

## **Housing in Othello**

**14) During your time in Othello, have you rented or purchased housing? *Select all that apply.\****

Commissioners didn't see what would be gained by including this question. Ms. Henning will ask the consultant how important it is. Will revisit.

**15) When it comes to rental housing, what specific housing challenges have you or someone you know experienced in Othello? *Select all that apply.***

- Difficulty finding rental housing
- Poor condition or quality of housing
- Difficulty navigating rental applications or credit requirements
- Barriers for seniors or people with disabilities
- ~~Lack of housing near work or school~~ **Everything is close by in Othello**
- ~~Housing not located near transit routes~~ **Transit is so limited, this question isn't relevant**
- Cannot find the housing type I want (e.g., single family home, duplex, apartment, etc.)

- Cannot find the right housing size (# of bed/bath)
- I haven't experienced rental housing challenges
- Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

Add cost with options like not affordable.

**17) Do you believe there are enough rental housing options available in Othello for people with a range of incomes and family sizes?**

**18) Do you believe there are enough housing options for ownership available in Othello for people with a range of incomes and family sizes?**

Commissioners agreed to remove #17 & #18. They felt like they already knew the answer to these questions and didn't feel like they're gaining any information that they already don't know.

**19) How should Othello plan for new housing development in existing neighborhoods? Select one option that best reflects your values. Use the image below for an example of what housing types may look like in a current single-family neighborhood.**

\*ADU: Additional Dwelling Unit

\*\*DADU: Detached Additional Dwelling Unit

Council member Alma Carmona felt like this question would confuse people because the City doesn't have the influence to tell people what to build. Commissioner Donald Burks, MD thinks we wouldn't get good answers because people don't really think about these questions. It could also be a misleading question. Chair Rob Simmons suggested Ms. Henning re-word the question and commissioners revisit it at the next meeting.

## Transportation in Othello

**20) How well do the current transportation options in Othello meet all of your traveling needs?** Commissioners would like to see the paper version as a multiple-choice and not a write-in answer.

## Tell us about yourself

**23) Where do you live?\***

- City of Othello With in
- Adams County, but outside of Othello
- Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissioners would like to see the options to this question as two (in Othello or out of Othello). They are also ok with not keeping this question, they felt many people may not know whether they live inside City limits. Ms. Henning will ask the consultant what is being gained with this question to determine whether to keep the question with two options or remove it entirely.

**24) What best describes your current housing type in Othello?**

- Single-family home
- Apartment or condo
- Duplex
- Unhoused
- Manufactured/Mobile home
- Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

Add ADU/ Back yard cottage/ Apartment

**25) Do you rent or own your housing?**

- Rent
- Own

Add another option (neither option)

**26) What is your age range?**

- ~~Under 19~~ 19 and under or under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70 or older

**28) Do you have dependent children currently living within your household?**

Commissioners questioned what this question adds to the survey. Will revisit.

**29) What ethnic or racial group do you identify with? *Select all that apply.***

Council member Kelli Camp suggested adding "prefer not to say" as an option. Commissioners agreed.

**30) What languages are most often spoken in your home? *Select any that apply.***

Commissioners questioned how this question would be useful.

**SPECIAL MEETING MARCH 2, 2026**

A special meeting will be held on March 2, 2026, to discuss the Comprehensive Plan Update - Vision 2047 and State law updates - New housing in existing buildings & childcare. Commissioners were asked to fill out the Visioning exercise ahead of time if possible.

**BUILDING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Building & Planning Department reports for 2025-year end and January 2026 were provided in the packet.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm. Next meeting is a special meeting Monday March 2, 2026.

Rob Simmons \_\_\_\_\_ Date: Mar 19, 2026  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rob Simmons, Chair

*Zuleica Morfin* \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 3/19/2026  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zuleica Morfin, Building and Planning Secretary

Signature:   
 Robert M Simmons DC (Mar 19, 2026 12:15:52 PDT)

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# 2026.2.17.Minutes

Final Audit Report

2026-03-19

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