

2012 Annual Report

City of Wooster
Development Department
Building Standards Division
538 N. Market St.
Wooster, Oh



The mission of the Building Standards Division is to protect the public from hazards incidental to the design, erection, repair, demolition or use and occupancy of all buildings or structures and to ensure the safe and sanitary maintenance of existing buildings using effective code enforcement while providing open communication, courtesy and respect.

Building Standards Division Staff:

Tim Monea, Chief Building Official
Floodplain Administrator

Laurie Hart, Administrative Assistant
Building Standards Division
Planning and Zoning Division

Kim Fahrni, Electrical Inspector
Commercial Building Inspector

Scott Davis, Plumbing and HVAC Inspector
Backflow Program Coordinator

Mark Nussbaum, Building/Zoning/ Inspector
Property Maintenance Inspector



Building Standards Division Mission

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Goal:

Promote building safety so that Citizens will be safe in their homes, workplaces, schools, and places they visit.

Objectives:

- 1.** Keep staff trained and updated on new laws, codes, and construction practices, while complying with the state continuing education requirements for maintenance of certification. Cross-train staff in order to enhance consistency in application of the codes and promote internal cooperation.
- 2.** Provide public education regarding building safety and code compliance.
- 3.** Develop cooperation between Development Department Divisions: Engineering, Planning and Zoning and Building Standards. Enhance the operation of the Development Department so that our customers, contractors and developers receive consistent information and communication, concurrent reviews and timely approvals.
- 4.** Continue to improve the Division in order to provide remote access to information about our services, and simpler, easier, and quicker processing of permit applications, plan reviews, and inspection requests.
- 5.** Support Utility Division by maintaining Backflow Valve Testing and Grease Trap Maintenance Programs and support Fire Division's fire prevention bureau programs.
- 6.** Provide effective floodplain management and education.

Goal:

Work closely with the Administration and Finance team to ensure financial stability of the City and responsible use of City funds.

Objectives:

1. Review receipts, revenue, expenses and trends on a regular basis.
2. Analyze fee collection against budget appropriations to make policy recommendations.
3. Work to eliminate unnecessary expenses and use City funds wisely.
4. Provide efficient facilities management for City Hall.

Goal:

Enhance the community atmosphere and livability of the City.

Objectives:

1. Work closely with the Director of administration to support special projects: Downtown initiatives such as consolidated rubbish hauling and increased parking.
2. Work with PPM Division, Main Street, the Fair Board and others to support downtown events, the County Fair and other community events.
3. Cooperate with other organizations and agencies addressing quality of life issues. Support housing programs, CDGB grant administration, neighborhood improvement strategies, Moving Ohio Forward demolition program, the Housing Coalition and Community Action.
4. Effectively run the City's property maintenance program.

***Nearly \$35 Million of Construction Value in the City...
Wooster continues along the road to recovery.***

2012 construction statistics reveal continued recovery for the City.

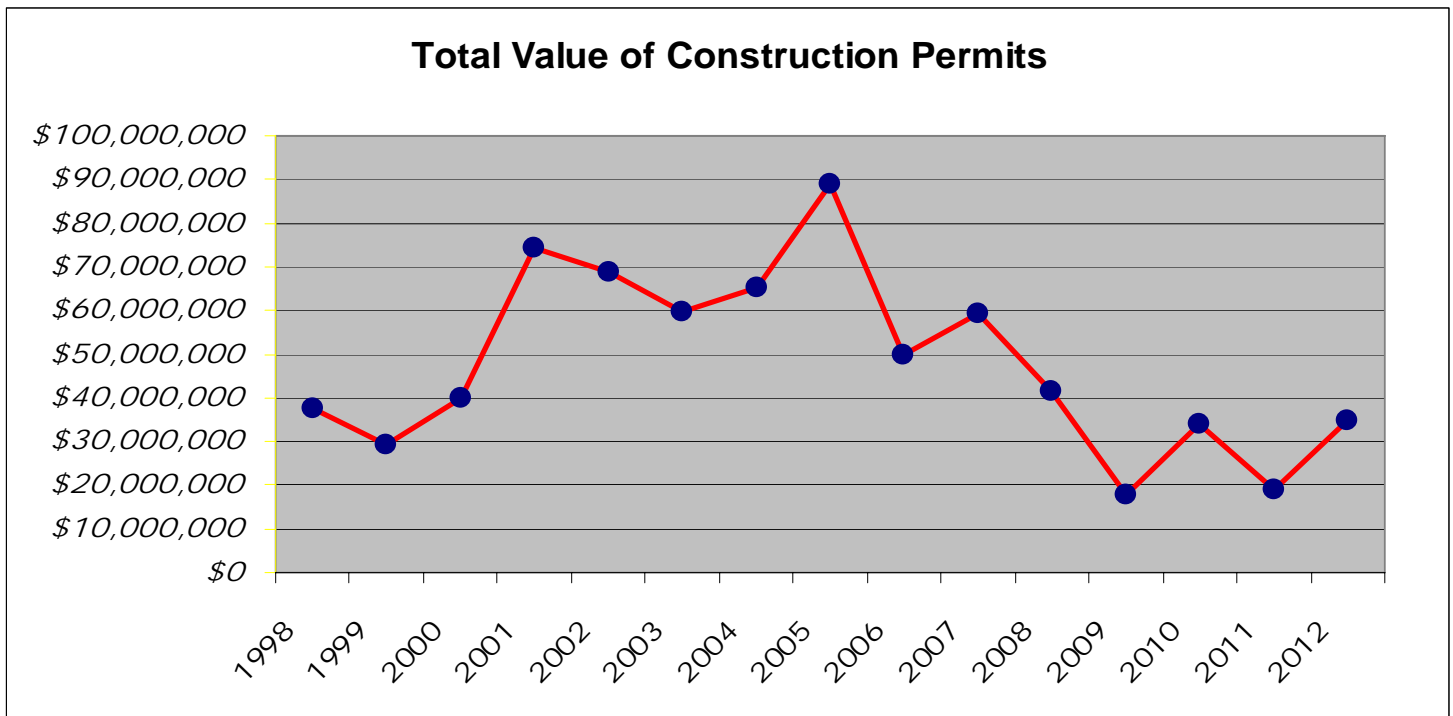
Construction Value Comparison last 5 years:

Year	Construction Value
2008	\$41,697,523
2009	\$17,627,718
2010	\$34,083,742
2011	\$19,126,273
2012	\$34,933,255

This table reveals the up and down nature of the industry since the tumult began in 2008 with 2012 activity showing the recovery trend with three of the last 5 years showing expected activity.

Over the years, construction in the City of Wooster has certainly had its ups and downs. Prior to 2001 construction values remained fairly constant in the \$30 - \$40 million range. The years between 2001 through 2007 saw construction activity levels peak in the City with 2005 seeing nearly double the norm with \$90 million in value. However, one apparent trend based upon this history shows that between \$30 and \$40 million in construction seems to be the sustainable norm for our City and it is apparent we are returning to this norm. In fact two of the last three years show almost identical values of around \$35 million.

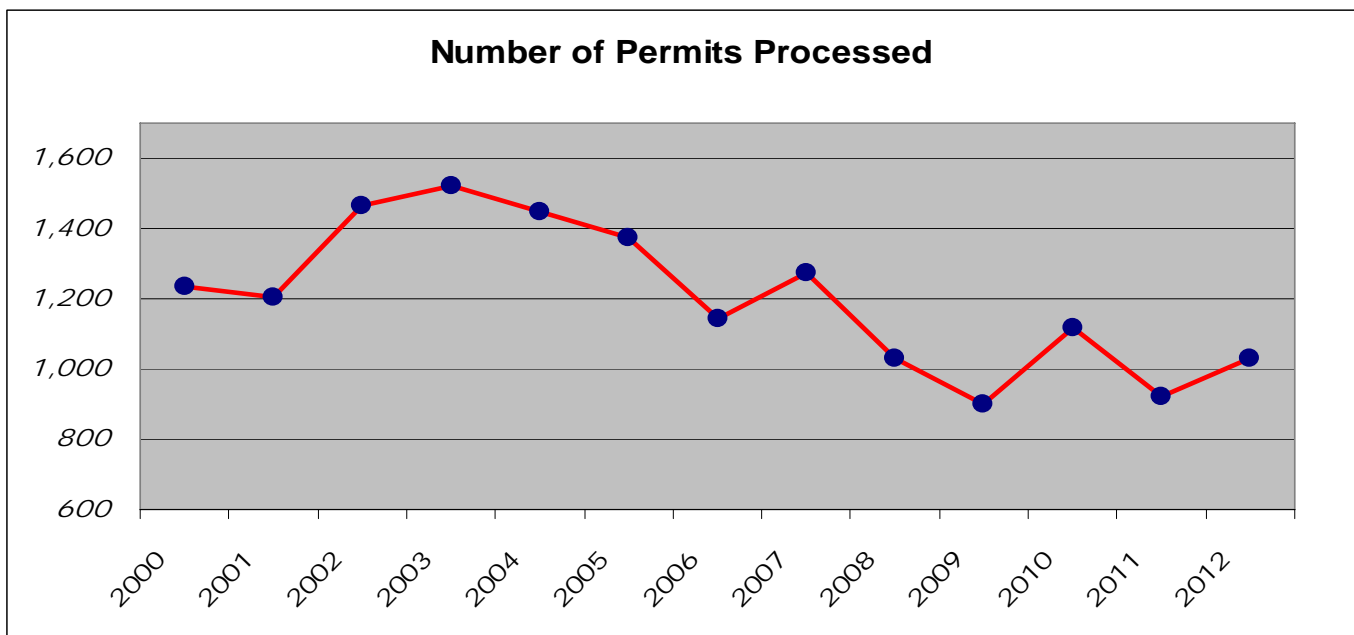
In the next three years, planning is taking place for some large commercial projects. We have a new major industrial building planned and a large industrial expansion along with projects at Wooster Community Hospital and the College of Wooster. Also, a large residential apartment (82 units) and assisted living (55 units) development has been approved by the planning commission. These will have an effect on these values pushing them above the \$30 - \$40 million range. But again, we expect the normal construction activity to return to this sustainable range.



Number of Permits Processed

Another interesting trend that has become apparent is that during the years the valuation of construction peaked (2001 - 2007), the number of permits processed by the Division peaked as expected. In the other years when the activity is in the \$30 - \$40 million range, the permitting activity is in the 1,000 permits issued range. However, when the activity falls below this range (as in 2009 and 2011) the activity stays in this 1,000 permits issued range remaining very stable as shown in this table. This is indicative of the number of projects, reviews and inspections being very stable but the value of the projects being smaller. For example, smaller commercial and residential alterations, additions and repairs are performed and less new structures were built in these down years but the number of permits processed does not decline below this range. Again, the sustainable activity appears to be about 1,000 permits processed each year.

During 2012, the Division reviewed, processed and issued just over 1,000 permits. This permitting level has been very consistent for the last four years (2008 – 2012). Of these 1,008 permits, 158 were building permits – half residential and half commercial, 218 electrical, 149 plumbing, 298 HVAC, 32 fire sprinkler and alarms, 99 residential zoning (the division issues residential zoning permits), and 54 other misc. permits.



Process: Plan Approval, Permits, Inspections, Certificate of Occupancy

- **Reduce the City's review time and**
- **Get permits issued as quickly as possible**

These objectives are obtained by the collaborative efforts of the Divisions of Fire, Building Standards, Planning and Zoning, Utilities, and Engineering. Instead of passing plans from one department to another, reviews are concurrent. Construction documents and plans are submitted and scanned for an electronic record. The Building Standards Division will distribute the plans to other divisions for approval (when required). Instead of passing plans from one department to another, all start at the same time and perform plan reviews concurrently. For example, one site plan will be distributed to the Engineering Division for a review of the storm water management and erosion control provisions. One site plan will be delivered to the Planning and Zoning Division for zoning review. One site plan and one set of construction documents will be delivered to the Fire Division for review of the fire department connections and access, etc. Plan review software is used to collect comments from all building code reviewers. When the Building Official finds that plans submitted for approval conform to the applicable provisions of the OBC, he shall stamp such plans as approved (OBC 106.301). A certificate of plan approval will be issued and according to the OBC 105.7.2, it shall be posted at the job site until the completion of the job. Along with various types of approvals (phased, partial, etc), an adjudication order will be issued that details what will be required to obtain complete approval. This will also contain information on how to appeal the decisions of the Chief Building Official. An appeal may be made to a State of Ohio Board of Building Appeals. Once permits are obtained, construction inspections will take place by the Division staff such as: soils and footings, foundations, building structure, energy efficiency, electric, plumbing, HVAC, water meter configuration, backflow, grease trap, fire suppression, fire alarm, etc. After all inspections are complete and approved, the Chief Building Official will issue a final inspection report or Certificate of Occupancy as required by the Ohio Administrative Code. Other approvals issued by the Division include: Concrete placed in the Public-Right-of-Way, Day Care Centers, Tents and Temporary Structures, Change of Use, Temporary Certificates of Occupancy and others required by the State.

Top 10 permitted projects in 2012 according to estimated value:

Address: Hospice 1900 Akron Rd.
Project: **New 34,000 sq. ft. Hospice Facility**
Contractor: BCMC, Inc.
Estimated Cost: \$10,000,000

Address: Bailey Veterinary 2752 Cleveland Rd.
Project: **New 14,185 sq. ft. Vet Clinic and Animal Hospital**
Contractor: Campbell Construction
Estimated Cost: \$1,704,980

Address: Wooster Community Hospital 1761 Beall Ave.
Project: **Skilled Nursing Unit Renovation**
Contractor: Hammond Construction
Estimated Cost: \$1,150,000

Address: Miller Industries 275 W. Wayne Ave.
Project: **11,632 sq. ft. new home**
Contractor: Miller Homes
Estimated Cost: \$1,000,000

Address: Wooster Growth Corp.1909 Old Mansfield Rd.
Project: **Lab and Manufacturing area Renovation**
Contractor: Freeman Building Systems
Estimated Cost: \$900,000

Address: Chesterland 1825 Enterprise Pkwy
Project: **105,600 sq. ft. Warehouse Addition**
Contractor: Freeman Building Systems
Estimated Cost: \$900,000

Address: Wooster Growth (Brasfond) 1785 N. Geyers Chapel Rd.
Project: **New 8,700 sq. ft. R&D Building**
Contractor: Ivan Weaver Construction
Estimated Cost: \$633,000

Address: Cleveland Clinic 1740 Cleveland Rd.
Project: **Reception, Restroom and Corridor Renovation**
Contractor: Infinity Construction
Estimated Cost: \$600,000

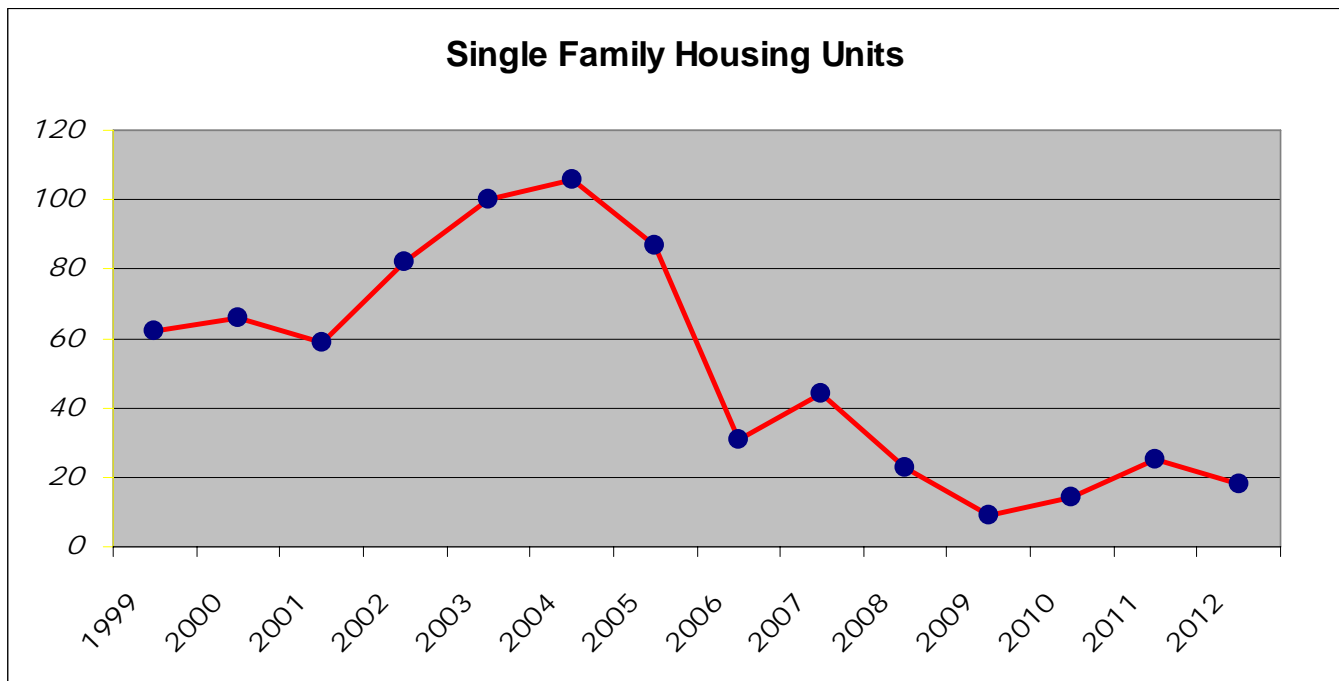
Address: Andrews/Gault Library 1140 Beall Ave.
Project: **Lower Level, Office Renovation**
Contractor: BCMC, Inc.
Estimated Cost: \$533,000

Address: McDonalds USA 540 Beall Ave.
Project: **Interior/Exterior Renovation**
Contractor: Lend Lease (US) Construction
Estimated Cost: \$450,000

Single Family House Construction

New single-family dwelling construction stayed at a consistent level in 2012. Eighteen new single-family dwellings were constructed. This is down seven units from 2011, but up 4 units from 2010. Housing units have remained at this level for the last 5 years. Housing units averaged 64 units for the 10 years before 2008 (1999 – 2007). This is over 3 times the average of 18 for the last 5 years (2008 – 2012). So while residential construction did mirror commercial activity in some respects, it presented a slightly different story.

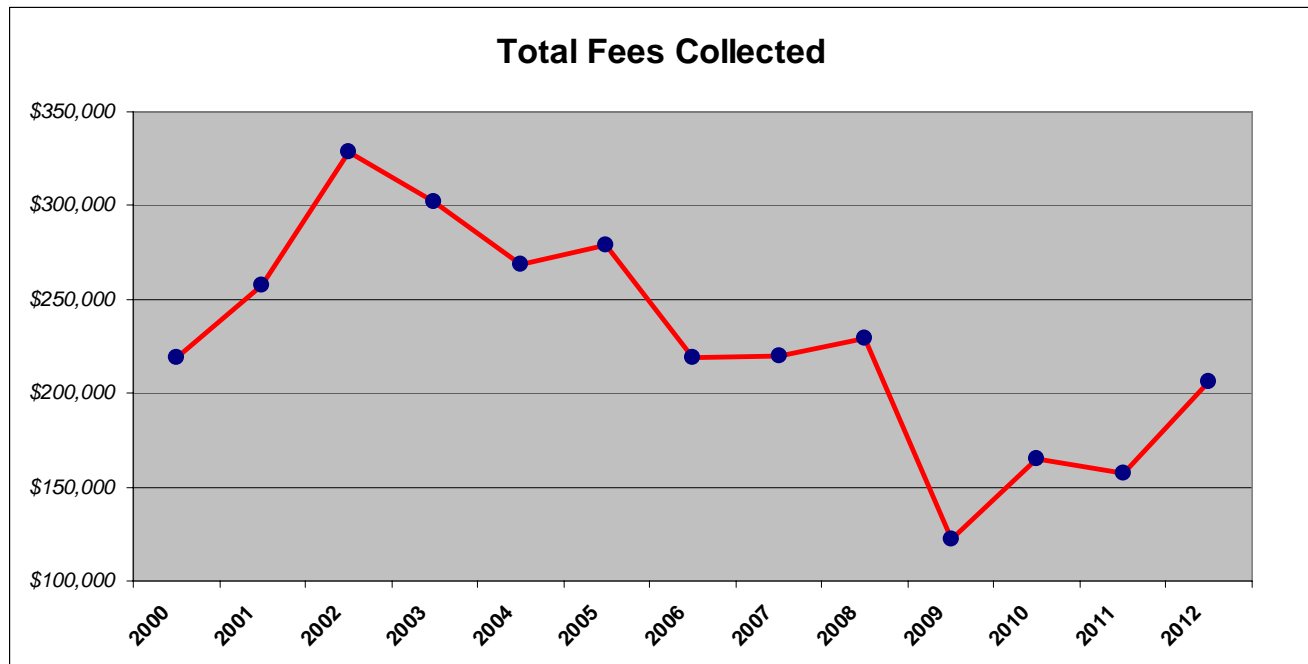
Housing unit growth paralleled the growth of the North End of the City. These new subdivisions were built out at the same time as the North End developed and very few new subdivision have been brought to the City for development. There have been only two substantial residential sub-divisions in the last 5 years. Tartan Ridge has about 20 building lots available and Crooked Creek has about 35 lots available. There are some smaller developments and scattered site lots available. Therefore, it appears that 20 housing units/year may be the sustainable number in the City for the next several years.



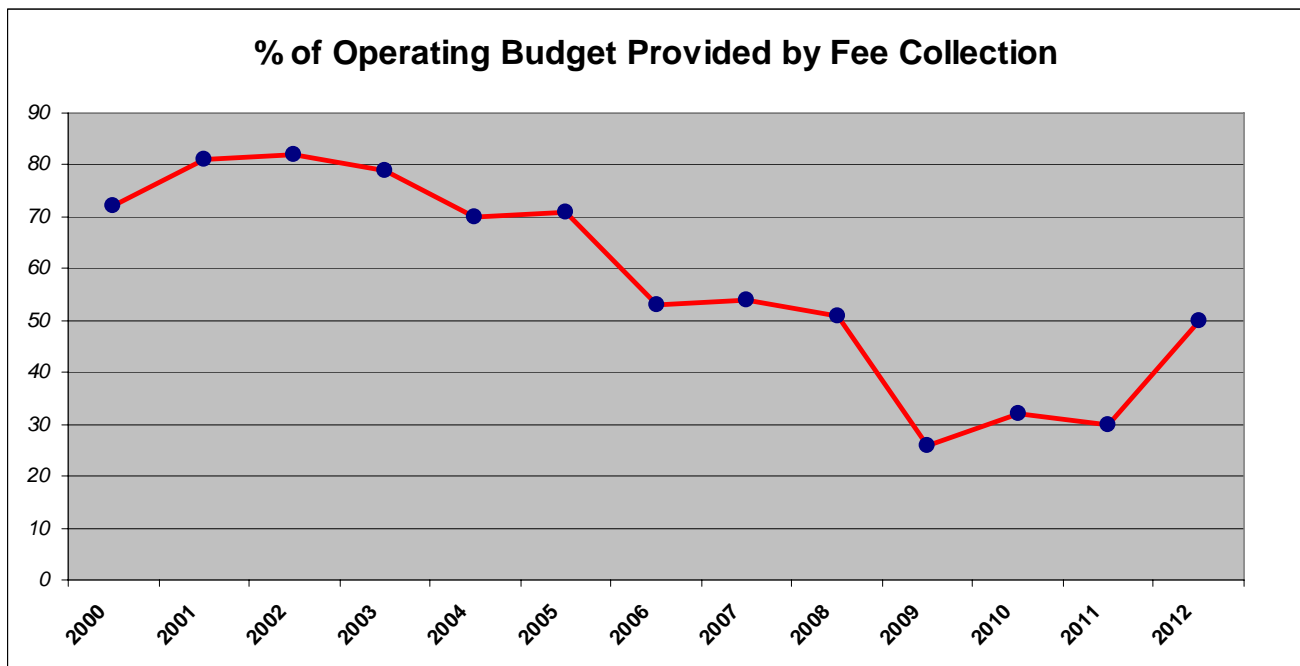
Fee Collection and the Budget

The Building Standards Division is not an Enterprise Fund; however, a significant part of the budget is funded by user fees (developers/contractors). Since much of the work of the division is unrelated to construction inspection, user fees cannot account for all of the expenses.

As expected, the Division fee collection mirrors the construction value graph and the overall economic activity. During the years of high construction value from 2000 - 2007, the Division averaged \$269,000 in fee collection. From 2008 – 2012, the Division averaged \$176,000 with the year 2012 going above the \$200,000 for the first time in 5 years.

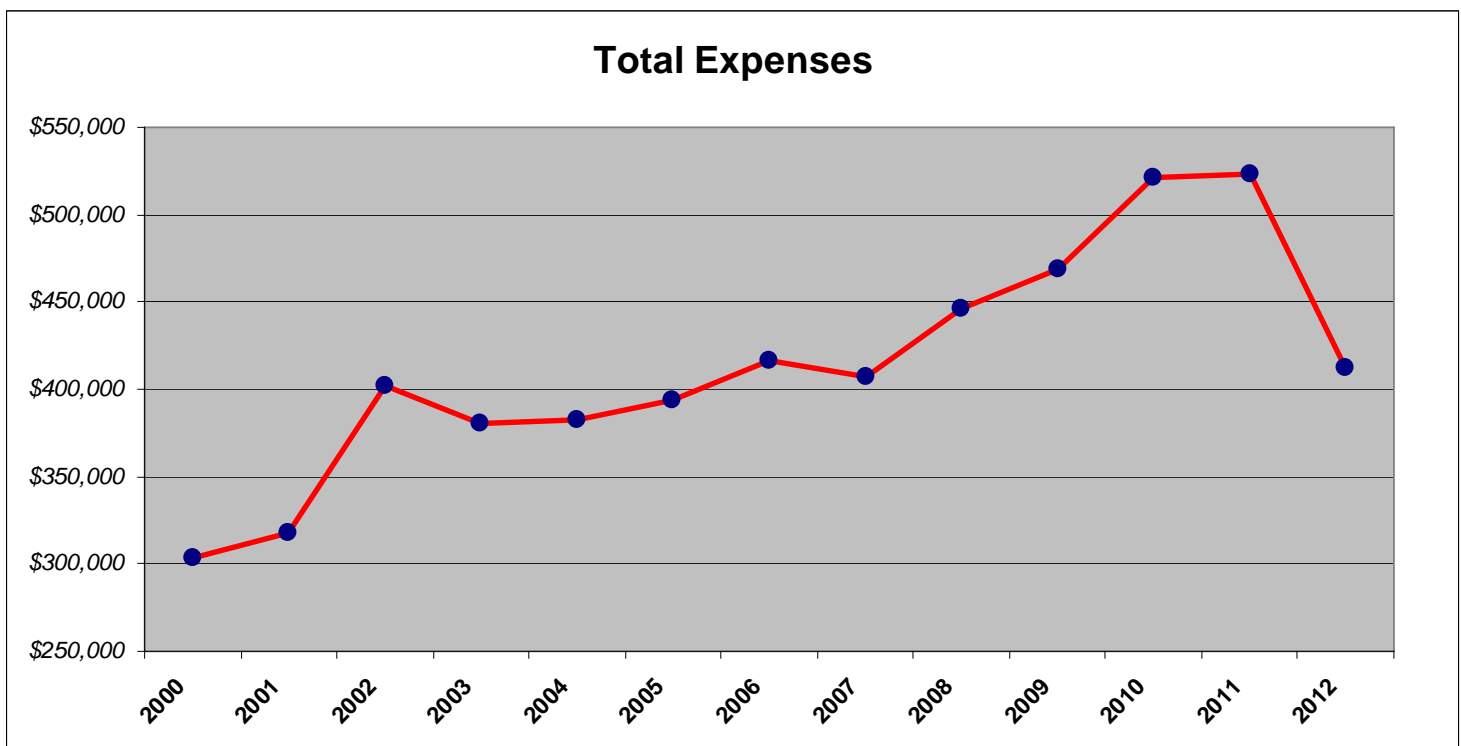


One important measure of fee collection is the ratio of fee collection to overall budget. For example, in 2000 we collected \$219,040 in fees and our expenses were \$303,226. Fees accounted for 72% of our budget. The following graph depicts the percentage of the budget provided by our fee collection. During 2009 – 2011, the Planning and Zoning budget was combined with the Building Standards Budget and skews the numbers for comparison. However, taking that into account, it appears that on average, from 2000 – 2005, fees accounted for about 75% of the budget. Since then (discounting 2009-2011) fees account for about 50% of the budget. This percentage appears to be sustainable with the projected construction activity and the current fee structure. During 2013, a policy regarding fee collection will need to be developed. What is the appropriate level of fee collection?



Expenses and the Budget

After averaging about \$400,000 from 2002 – 2007, expenses began an upward trend. This continued into 2009 – 2011 as the Building Standards Division and the Planning and Zoning Divisions were merged and reflected the added expenses of that Division. In 2011, one employee from the Building Standards Division was eliminated and for 2012, the Planning and Zoning Division functioned as a stand alone division with a separate budget. This gave a more accurate picture of the expenses for the Building Standards Division. With one less employee and other cost savings measures, the expenses were back down to 2002 levels. With the fee collection also up in 2012 and the expenses down to 10 year old levels, the Division collected over half of the expenses in fees for the first time in 4 years.



Property Maintenance and Zoning Code Enforcement

- ascetic and quality of life issues are addressed
- relationships with neighbors are preserved
- property values are maintained

It is clear that an effective code administration program enhances the quality of life for the residents of Wooster in many ways. To do this, the program must include effective enforcement of the maintenance and zoning codes.

310 property maintenance type inspections were conducted during 2012. Since some of the violations are both property maintenance and zoning code violations, we have a single inspector handle both types of inspections.

Complaints initiated by both the public and employees within the division resulted in 148 cases being opened up by the division:

55 tall grass
19 with multiple violations on property
8 unlicensed or inoperable vehicles
25 rubbish and garbage
3 cockroaches
7 illegal sign complaints
3 line of sight issues
5 trash out early
12 letters for repeat misc violations
5 parking in lawn

Of these 148 cases, 133 were closed with compliance obtained. In many of these cases, if the owner did not comply with the order/s, we abated the nuisance and certified the costs to the auditor for assessment. We spent \$6,255 in abatement costs – the entire budgeted amount. We spent \$5,500 in cleaning, hauling and mowing and the rest in exterminating and securing vacant properties.

Floodplain Administration

Since standard homeowners insurance doesn't cover flooding, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) offers flood insurance to homeowners, renters and business owners if their community participates in the program. Participating communities agree to enforce and adopt ordinances that meet FEMA requirements to reduce the risk of flooding. Since many of these requirements are mirrored in State Building Codes, owners of property in the floodplain had to comply with floodproofing requirements in the new State Building Code starting in 2005. But since the City did not participate in the NFIP, owners did not get the benefits of the program. In the spring of 2007, the City began participating in the National Flood Insurance Program with the adoption of the Flood Damage Reduction Ordinances. As if on cue, the City experienced a 100 year flood event in 2009 and another one in 2010.

On average, the City will issue 3 permits per year in the floodplain. By limiting activity in these areas, flood damage risks are properly managed.

During 2012, one permit for filling activity was issued and one enforcement action for illegal filling was initiated.

Grease Trap Installation and Maintenance

As part of the City of Wooster's Utility Divisions industrial pre-treatment program, grease trap installation and maintenance is a critical component.

The discharge of organic grease into the Sewer System has become an important issue in the City. When organic grease solidifies in the sewer mains, it entraps solids and forms a hard deposit that decreases capacity or causes a blockage, creating system overflows or backups that damage user's property. Additionally, this unnecessarily adds organic load to the treatment plant. In an effort to address this problem, our plumbing inspector enforces standards for new grease trap installation and assists the pretreatment coordinator in policing restaurant grease trap maintenance. 91 permits were issued for restaurants in 2012 indicating the activity in these uses. This affords the inspector opportunity to monitor the use of grease traps.

Backflow Valve Program

Backflow can be described as “a reversal of the normal direction of flow within a piping system” or the flow of water or other liquids, mixtures or substances into the distribution pipes of a potable water supply from any source other than the intended source of the potable water supply.

What it means to our customers is that once the potable water passes through the water meter into a facility, premise or home it is uncontaminated from other users and the backflow device will protect all other users from that water supply. While backflow and cross connections (an arrangement whereby backflow can occur) are not new they are most recently covered by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under sections 3745 – 3795 of the Ohio Administrative Code and the City’s Utility Ordinances. Under these ordinances, commercial and industrial facilities are in need of a approved backflow device, also some residential site’s may be required to have some sort of protection based on a on site survey. A survey/plan review is done for all new water connections and may be conducted at an existing site by the Program Coordinator at his discretion. Devices may be required based on this survey.

Annually, backflow valve installation and testing is performed on over 1,000 valves. The program coordinator tracks this required testing documenting successful testing of the devices. In addition, the coordinator undertook 2 major initiatives in 2012:

1. Began a survey of all City owned property with a water supply. This survey is ongoing and will be completed in 2013.
2. Completed a survey of the Wayne County Fairgrounds water system. This survey resulted in recommendations and an implementation plan.

Some 200,000 visitors come to Wooster’s annual festivals and the WC Fair and use City water. These surveys and water system improvements will help protect users from an unsafe potable water supply.

Wooster's Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP)

The CHIP program provides housing rehabilitation for eligible households in the City of Wooster. The program is administered by the Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority and funded by a grant through the Ohio Department of Development.

The current funding cycle ends in September 2013 and ran for two years. The Chief Building Official is a member of the Wayne County Housing Coalition and the City's Housing Advisory Committee (HAC). The Housing Advisory Committee approves the funding applications after input from the County Housing Coalition. Additionally, the HAC approves individual projects in the City.

In the funding cycle during 2012, there have been 18 completed projects in the city of Wooster. These projects consisted of: rental unit rehabilitation, down payment assistance for the purchase of a home, emergency repair to single family homes and single family home rehabilitation

Millions of dollars have been invested in neighborhoods over the years and it has had a significant impact.

217 W. Vine St. - before



217 W. Vine St. – after CHIP



Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

In 2008, the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) received an allocation of funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This one-time allocation was in response to the housing crisis. Funds were allocated to Wayne and Medina Counties for housing rehabilitation. In the City, several houses were rehabbed and sold and the money was put back into the program. During 2012, the last of the NSP funds were put to use on a house on N. Buckeye St. for rehab. The house was finally sold at the end of the year and brought this successful program to a close. The Division worked to select the houses, write construction specifications and facilitate the program. This project was planned and managed by the Building Standards Division. This included relocating the existing owner with the assistance of one of the Community Foundations and Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority.



**516 N. Buckeye St.
Before and After
Partially funded with NSP**



Moving Ohio Forward (MOF) and

As a result of a settlement with some of the nations' largest banks, the Ohio Attorney General's office offered a new grant program to assist communities in their economic recovery by removing blighted or abandoned structures to reclaim our neighborhoods. \$426,000 has been allocated to Wayne County and does not require a match. The Chief Building Official serves on the MOF Committee that approves submittals from the County for approval under the program. During 2012, nine dilapidated or abandoned homes in the City of Wooster were approved for demolition. The demos are slated to take place early 2013.

665 Bever St. Prepared for Demo



Facilities Management

The Division acts as the facility manager for City Hall. Supervising the janitorial and service contracts for the building, providing maintenance and day to day oversight are part of the responsibilities. Also, during 2012, planning security improvements to the building began. These plans should be completed and implemented during 2013. Project planning began in 2012 for numerous maintenance items such as: building humidifiers being rebuilt and the back portico surfacing (roof is leaking). Also, cleaning contracts were reviewed and limited to common areas only as staff was assigned cleaning duties in all office areas.



Staff Development

In code administration, the terrain is continually changing. November 1, 2011 saw a new Ohio Building Code introduced with new Plumbing, HVAC and Electrical Codes. During 2012 the State began the daunting process of reviewing, amending and adopting the 2013 Residential Code including all of the new energy conservation requirements. In addition, new methods, materials and technologies become available.

The training and skills necessary to be a good construction inspector do not come quickly or easily. One must work very hard to gain an acceptable level of expertise in various construction related areas, and be very diligent about staying proficient. Building Division staff is expected to go beyond what is required, and to do what is necessary in order to serve the customer, provide solutions and at the same time get code compliance. What motivates the staff is the realization that building safety is something vital to all who work in buildings, send their kids to school or shop at the local grocery store – we take building safety for granted. During 2012 the staff attended their State Educational Conferences for their respective disciplines to obtain the State mandated training. Additionally, staff receives local monthly training with their involvement in the Five County Building Officials Association. This continuing education makes the difference between mediocre and excellent.

The City of Wooster Building Standards Division remains committed to our mission, and looks forward to embracing the challenges that 2013 may bring.

Respectfully submitted by:
Tim Monea, Chief Building Official

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