



***City of Wooster  
Planning and Zoning Division  
2023 Annual Report***

January 2024

## Summary

---

The City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Division continued to facilitate and guide development in 2023. The Division continued to work efficiently to review and process permits, assist Planning Boards and Commissions, enforce the Planning and Zoning Code, and effectively conduct significant planning projects. Highlights for the Planning and Zoning Division in 2023 include:

- Initiated an update to the Comprehensive Plan. Following the RFQ/RFP process, OHM consultants were retained to assist with the plan update. Following several committee meetings, public open houses, focus groups, and an online survey, a plan was completed. The plan will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council in February 2024.
- In conjunction with Main Street Wooster, continued to implement a Façade grant program within the C-4 (downtown) zoning district.
- Participation on the Wayne County Land Bank, Northeast Four County Regional Planning Organization (NEFCO), Main Street Wooster, and Wayne County Arts District.
- Attended the National Conference of the American Planning Association. (virtually)
- A combined workshop for the Design Review Board, Planning Commission, and Board of Building and Zoning Appeals was held in January of 2024. Several new members started their terms in January of 2024.

## Development Projects

---

There were several significant residential, commercial, and industrial developments initiated in the City of Wooster in 2023. The following projects were assisted by the Planning and Zoning Division and approved by one or more of the aforementioned Boards and Commissions:

- **TWG** – Conditional Use Certificate and Final Development for a multi-family development on Cleveland Rd. (Northside Villas, 42 units)
- **Bell Store** – 220 South Columbus Ave.
- **Fire Station** – Addition at 510 N. Market Street.
- **Sgt. Clean Carwash** – Smithville Western and Burbank.
- **Woodcrest Estates** – 72 lot subdivision east side of Melrose
- **Chipotle** – Beall Avenue and North Street
- **Multi-Family Development** – Conditional Use Certificate granted at Benden Drive and Eagle Pass.
- **Apple Creek Bank** – Expansion at 4500 Cleveland Road. (Planning approved)
- **Wooster Community Hospital** – Planning Commission approved expansion, parking and relocation of helipad.
- **Goodwill** – 10,915 square foot addition at 1034 Nold Avenue.

- **Wayne Center of the Arts** – Conditional Use and Development plans were approved for an outdoor amphitheater and modifications to the parking and playground.
- **Local Roots** – Planning Commission approval for project at 146 West South Street.
- **Daisy Brand** – Zoning Certificate issued for expansion of wastewater pre-treatment.

### Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits

A total of **275 Zoning Certificates** were issued in 2023, up 42 from 2022. Of the issued Certificates, the majority were related to single-family residential projects. Zoning Certificates were issued for **45 new residential units** in 2023. A total of \$8,905.00 in Zoning Certificate fees was collected in 2023.

In 2023, 74 **Sign Permits** were issued in the City of Wooster, which was more than the 59 Sign Permits issued in 2022. A total of \$5,425.00 in Sign Permit fees was collected.

A further breakdown of Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits can be found in the appendix at the end of this document.

### Board of Building and Zoning Appeals

The Board of Building and Zoning Appeals (BZA) heard **19 requests** in 2023, encompassing a variety of topics. Of the 19 applications in which a decision was made, the BZA approved 16 and denied 3 applications. The BZA heard 15 area variance requests, 4 use variance requests, and one appeal was filed in 2023. (Some applications included an area and a use variance and four were withdrawn).

A further breakdown of BZA applications can be found in the appendix at the end of this document.

### Design and Review Board

The Wooster Design and Review Board heard **29 requests** in 2023. The Design and Review Board approved all requests, at times with modifications or conditions.

Of the 29 requests heard by the Board in 2023, 20 were for signs. The remainder of the applications included demolitions, additions, exterior changes to building facades, and miscellaneous changes to features such as lighting, windows, doors, and awnings.

A further breakdown of Design and Review applications can be found in the appendix at the end of this document.

### Planning Commission

The City of Wooster Planning Commission received **36 requests** in 2023, up from 30 in 2022. Planning Commission applications included:

- 17 Development Plan applications
- 6 Conditional Use applications
- 5 Zoning Code or Map Amendments
- 8 Plats/ Major Subdivision applications

The Planning Commission approved all development, conditional use, and subdivision requests.

A further breakdown of Planning Commission applications can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document.

### **Zoning Enforcement**

---

A total of **389 Planning and Zoning Code violations** were addressed in 2023. There are many instances where the same property received multiple violations.

The majority of the issues addressed in 2023 were related to the parking of recreational vehicles/trailers/ commercial vehicles, parking surfaces, construction without a Zoning Certificate, and illegal or unpermitted signs. In addition, staff also removed numerous signs located in the public right of way. As there was no formal notification or inspection logged in such instances, the removal of signs in the public right of way was not captured in the above figures.

A further breakdown of Zoning Enforcement can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document.

### **2023 Goals and Objectives**

The following indicates the status of the 2023 Goals and Objectives.

#### **Goal 1 – Attend the National and State Conference of the American Planning Association (APA)**

Objective 1A – Stay current and discuss with peers best practices and trends.

*Status - Attended Virtually*

#### **Goal 2 – Update to the Comprehensive Plan**

Objective 2A – Create a Steering Committee

Objective 2B – Identify priorities from input and guidance from the steering committee, focus groups, and public opinion for the city to address for the next 7-10 years.

Objective 2C – Create a plan to address the identified priorities.

Objective 2D – Build consensus and have the plan adopted.

*Status- A Steering Committee was established, and following several committee meetings, public open houses, an online survey and several focus group discussions, a final draft was prepared. The Plan will be presented to Planning Commission and City Council in February 2024.*

#### **Goal 3 – Continue to work with Wayne County to advance the County Land Bank and review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster.**

Objective 3A – Attend regular Land Bank meetings throughout the year and advance the acquisition of qualifying properties in Wayne County and the City of Wooster.

Objective 3B – Provide technical assistance to the Land Bank as needed.

Objective 3C – Work with the Wayne County Planning Department to review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster, as needed.

*Status – Attended and participated in all meetings of the Wayne County Land Bank.*

Goal 4 – Continue to work with Main Street Wooster.

Objective 4A – Work with façade grantees and complete projects that were awarded funds.

Objective 4B – Assist Main Street in the use of 2023 funds awarded by City Council.

*Status – Continued to work closely with Main Street Wooster in funding façade improvement grants. Provided the necessary assistance to applicants to move their projects towards completion.*

Goal 5 – Examine options for sharing information with the public

Objective 5A – Improve reporting data from viewpoint to be shared with public.

Objective 5B – Review best practices for public notice for hearings.

*Status – Reviewed notice requirements of other political subdivisions. Found that Wooster actually provides more notice, specifically for development plans. Will continue to monitor.*

Goal 6 – Complete work sessions with the following boards and commissions; Design Review, Planning Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals.

Objective 6A – Work with Law Director to schedule a work session with each of the boards to discuss questions the boards and commissions may have and to review protocols and responsibilities.

*Status – A joint workshop was held on January 4, 2024. The Boards and Commission had multiple members who were term-limited at the end of 2023. The joint work session was held following the appointment of several new members.*

**2024 Goals and Objectives**

---

In 2024, the Planning and Zoning Division will continue to guide development and sensibly regulate land use. The following goals and objectives for 2023 and the next five years through 2028 will allow the Division to better serve citizens and business owners, operate more efficiently, refine responsibilities, and update planning documents.

Goal 1 – Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, examine the zoning code and map for potential amendments.

Objective 1A – Prepare an RFQ/RFP for a consultant to formulate needed zoning code and map amendments.

Objective 1B – The administrative team and consultant identify opportunities for amendments that meet the identified objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 1C – Prepare amendments to be forwarded to Planning Commission.

Goal 2 - Continue to work with Main Street Wooster.

Objective 2A – Work with façade grantees and complete projects that were awarded funds.

Objective 2B – Assist Main Street in the use of remaining funds and 2024 funds awarded by City Council.

Objective 2C – In conjunction with Main Street Wooster, evaluate the effectiveness of the program and recommend revisions or possibility of increasing the scope of eligible activity.

Goal 3 – Continue to work with Wayne County to advance the County Land Bank and review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster.

Objective 3A – Attend regular Land Bank meetings throughout the year and advance the acquisition of qualifying properties in Wayne County and the City of Wooster.

Objective 3B – Provide technical assistance to the Land Bank as needed.

Objective 3C – Work with the Wayne County Planning Department to review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster, as needed.

Goal 4 – Attend the National and State Conference of the American Planning Association (APA)

Objective 4A – Stay current and discuss with peers best practices and trends.

Goal 5 – Complete update to the Downtown Parking Plan

Objective 5A – Retain an intern who has knowledge of GIS, mapping, and Microsoft Excel.

Objective 5B – Update the 2019 parking study.

**Five-Year Goals and Objectives**

Goal 1 – Continue training and applicable education for staff and myself.

Objective 1A – Stay current on required certifications.

Objective 2A – Stay up to date on best practices.

Goal 2 – Continue to coordinate with other agencies and participate in regional issues

Objective 2A – Work with other area governmental agencies to forward community goals, share resources, and facilitate intergovernmental coordination.

Objective 2B – Work with non-governmental and nonprofit agencies to benefit the community.

Objective 2C – Participate and assist the Wayne County Land Bank and Wayne Trails.

Goal 3 – Continue to refine the responsibilities of Division staff

Objective 3A – Work with the Administrative Assistant, Planning and Zoning Enforcement Inspector, and Residential Zoning Inspector to refine responsibilities based on workload and changing conditions.

Objective 3B – Incorporate the use of the ViewPoint Cloud permitting system in future matters, when advantageous. Incorporate input from staff regarding the use of ViewPoint Cloud and possible improvements or revisions.

Goal 4 – Work with partners in the implementation of the City of Wooster Comprehensive Plan

Objective 4A – Using the identified strategies within the comprehensive plan, address the goals and priorities of the city.

**Appendix – Tables and Charts**

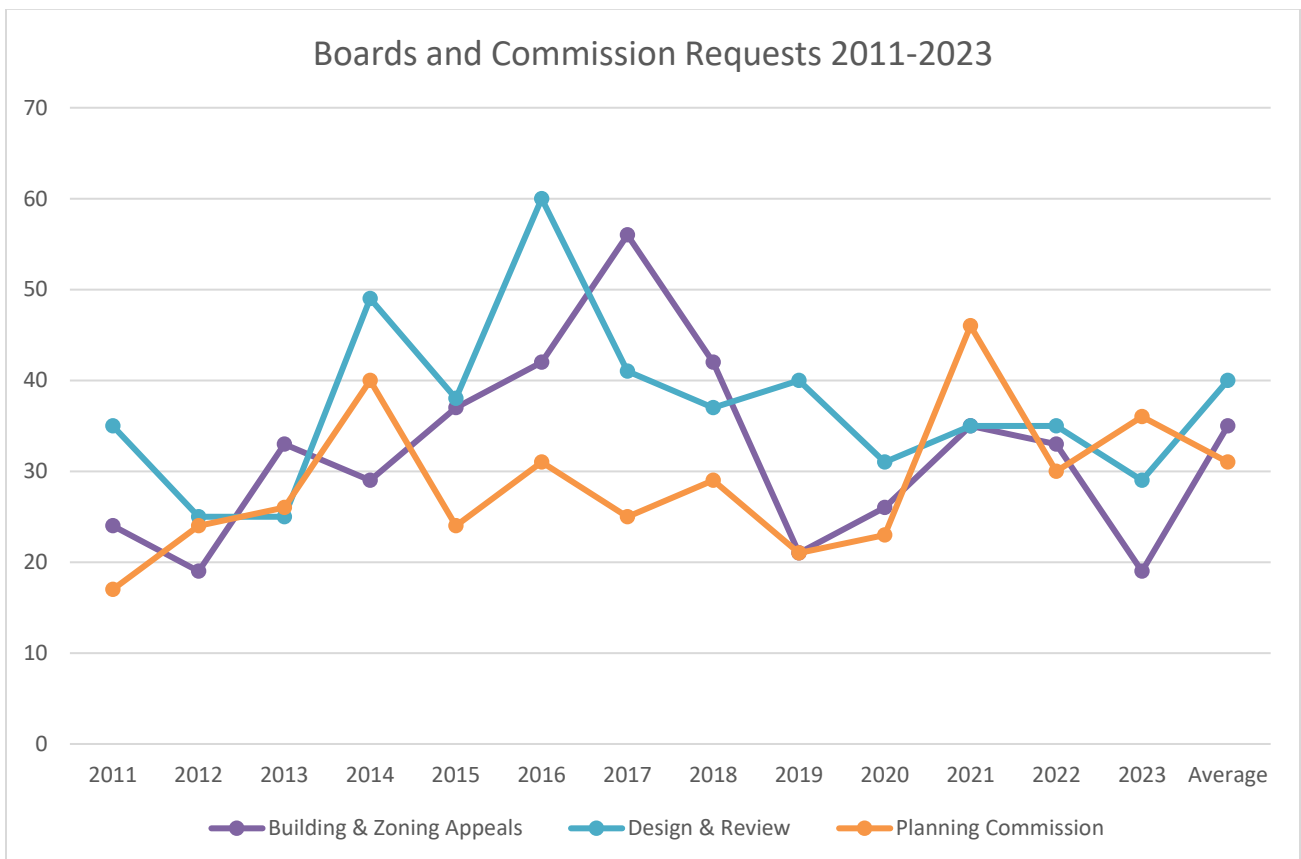
<b>Planning and Zoning Applications 2023</b>							
	<u><b>Zoning Certificates</b></u>	<u><b>Sign Permits</b></u>	<u><b>Minor SD</b></u>	<u><b>BZA</b></u>	<u><b>D&amp;R</b></u>	<u><b>PC</b></u>	<u><b>Total</b></u>
<b>January</b>	7	9	2	0	2	3	23
<b>February</b>	15	2	3	2	0	3	25
<b>March</b>	18	8	1	1	2	3	33
<b>April</b>	20	4	3	0	4	1	32
<b>May</b>	27	7	2	1	4	2	43
<b>June</b>	35	10	5	3	4	3	60
<b>July</b>	26	4	2	1	1	6	40
<b>August</b>	29	5	4	4	4	4	50
<b>September</b>	34	7	2	1	3	3	50
<b>October</b>	29	7	3	1	3	2	45
<b>November</b>	15	5	1	4	2	5	32
<b>December</b>	20	6	3	1	0	1	31
<b>Totals</b>	275	74	31	19	29	36	464
<b>Total Fees</b>	8905.00	5425.00	675.00	2200.00	0.00	3550.00	





### Planning and Zoning Applications 2011-2023

Year	Zoning Certificates	Sign Permits	Minor Subdivisions	Building & Zoning Appeals	Design & Review	Planning Commission	Total
2011	169	90	-	24	35	17	335
2012	161	68	-	19	25	24	297
2013	187	58	-	33	25	26	329
2014	208	104	15	29	49	40	445
2015	207	73	14	37	38	24	393
2016	216	102	26	42	60	31	477
2017	229	100	35	56	41	25	486
2018	230	75	22	42	37	29	435
2019	205	75	34	21	40	21	396
2020	234	47	22	26	31	23	383
2021	255	55	21	35	35	46	447
2022	233	59	26	33	35	30	416
2023	275	74	31	19	29	36	464
Total	2,809	980	246	416	480	372	5,303
Average	234	82	21	35	40	31	408



### Zoning Violations 2023

Landscaping	11
Parking Surface	112
Parking Trailers/RV'S/Commercial Vehicles	98
Signs	35
Zoning Certificate	82
Prohibited Use	5
Chickens/Roosters	11
Other	35
Total	389

### Zoning Violations 2023 - Percentage

