
Building Standards Division

2002 Annual Report



Tim Monea
Building Standards Manager

CONSTRUCTION \$ VALUES & PERMIT ACTIVITY

Permit issuance was very strong again in 2002 and exceeded the record pace of 2001 in number of permits issued. The year 2002 ended up with nearly \$70 million in construction value, approaching the record set in 2001 of \$75 million (the previous record was \$52 million in 1998).

2001 saw many large-scale projects get started during the year. This past year continued this trend including a new medical building for WCH, a Wooster Brush factory addition, the Luk training center, the Wayne county Liberty St. and Vanover St. office renovations, the School Board Market St. office renovation, and a new Lowe's store at the North end of town all getting under way in 2002.

All other facets of permit issuance set new record levels in number of permits: new homes, signs, electrical, heating, plumbing, change of use, day care homes, moving/demolition, sidewalk/driveway, etc.

OPERATIONS

During 2001, the Building Standards Division saw changes in personnel. We replaced the retiring building inspector with a new building inspector in the middle of the year. Since the previous inspector had been with the City almost since the inception of a building department, this called for some evaluation of our practices and written standards and policies. Also, a full time property maintenance inspector was added to the BSD. After some training and an initiation period, great advancement was made in how we respond to these issues. Additionally, the BSD took on the added responsibility of enforcing the City's backflow installation and maintenance program. The BSD also added a part-time architect to assist with our plan review program and work with our part-time engineer. All inspectors were required to enroll in mandatory State of Ohio continuing education training for their respective State licenses. All inspectors completed this training during 2002. Additionally, all inspectors participated in the annual Ohio Building Officials Conference held in Toledo during February. The conference had inspector training and seminars conducted by experts from around the country.

Toward the end of the year, The Division made significant process in the set-up and transition to Hanson software and this process will continue into 2003. Hanson will make communication between divisions and across the City more effective and involves the plan review, permitting, inspection tracking, and property maintenance activities. The BSD will be the first City of Wooster Division to begin using Hanson sometime early in 2003.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

In the fall of 2001, the Building Standards Division contracted with an outside consultant to do "Process Mapping" of our property maintenance enforcement procedures. We held a two-day "brain storming" session with many city employees and managers. This resulted in adding a full-time property maintenance inspector and implementing many of the suggestions.

With the addition of a dedicated property maintenance specialist, the City of Wooster has been able to reach out to the various neighborhood groups and participate in their activities. This increased synergy has helped clean up neighborhoods, address problem properties, and produced better enforcement of our maintenance code. Over 250 inspections were conducted in 2002 with emphasis placed on removing unlicensed motor vehicles and garbage and debris from properties. The Division hired a towing company and a hauling company to clean up the properties when the owners were unresponsive. The abatement costs (including administrative costs) were then assessed to the property owners. This has proved to be an extremely effective enforcement tool.

BACK FLOW VALVE PROGRAM

The backflow valve program is in place to protect public health by guarding the water supply. The program takes on special importance at various special events during the year and during 2002, Independence Day, Woosterfest on the Square, and the Wayne County Fair this proved to be true. Approximately 150,000 visitors used our water during these times through some 407 water taps. By being proactive during these times, these events were safe and successful concerning the water supply.

Additionally, 141 non-testable valves were added to our water system on residential water supplies and 33 testable valves were added to commercial water supplies. 926 valves were tested and test data maintained in our database. Several hundred inspections, surveys, and site observations were made during 2002 by the backflow program coordinator.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Building Standards Division has continued to keep up with the increased construction and permit activity during the last two years with very little overtime and no increased staffing. We have the goal of continuing to increase our efficiency by eliminating unnecessary and duplicative data entry and simplifying procedures and forms. With the change to the Hanson Software, we expect increased efficiency. The Hanson software will allow a central customer service area to handle all money transactions, process permit pick-ups, and answer basic questions. With the assistance in these areas, the inspectors will free up inspection time and time to assist in the property maintenance program.

We are establishing the goal of initiating our periodic exterior property maintenance inspection program during 2003. With this program, targeted areas of the City will have entire streets, blocks, or areas undergoing an exterior inspection for compliance with our adopted property maintenance code. This will be the first proactive approach to property maintenance the City of Wooster has initiated. All inspectors will assist the property maintenance inspector in the site inspections and violation notices.

The Building Standards Division generated revenue to offset budgeted expenses. The revenue policy of “covering” 80% of the expenses through permit sales, fees, and plan reviews was successfully met again this year. 86% of the budget was paid for through permit sales and other fees. This was especially challenging with the addition of the property maintenance inspector. The utilities division paid for the backflow program and offset these expenses. We have the goal of evaluating fees again this year and increasing these as necessary to keep pace with rising expenses and meet our policy guidelines.

We have set goals for the implementation of the Hanson software program. This will eventually be an enterprise software that will be used across City divisions. This will involve streamlining our processes and tailoring the software to our needs. We expect to complete the major transition by the summer of 2003.

As a final note, the municipal building renovation will occur in 2003 and we expect a lot of input and time to be spent by the Building Standards Division in this project. We are excited by the opportunity to participate and look forward to a successful project that will meet the needs of the citizens and employees of the City of Wooster.

**CITY OF WOOSTER
DIVISION OF BUILDING STANDARDS**

**2002 ACTIVITY REPORT
Permits, Fees & Valuations**

Permit Type	# for 2001	# for 2002	Fees for 2001	Fees for 2002	Values for 2001	Values for 2002
1 Family	59	82				
2 Family	3	10				
3 Family	0	9				
Other Res.	107	96				
TOTAL Residential	169	197	\$ 24,725	\$ 42,778	\$ 8,643,446	\$ 15,917,482
TOTAL Commercial	103	94	\$ 80,168	\$ 68,548	\$ 52,795,625	\$ 32,870,850
TOTAL BUILDING	272	291	\$ 104,893	\$ 111,326	\$ 61,439,071	\$ 48,788,332
Electrical	347	458	\$ 47,102	\$ 71,182	\$ 6,023,782	\$ 8,182,863
Heating	289	340	\$ 40,764	\$ 63,150	\$ 4,732,428	\$ 6,379,186
Plumbing	199	248	\$ 38,505	\$ 76,936	\$ 2,188,975	\$ 5,516,390
Signs	73	97	\$ 4,669	\$ 4,891		
Moving/Demolition	12	19				
Sidewalk/Driveway	13	11				
TOTAL All Permits	1,205	1,464	\$ 235,933	\$ 327,485	\$ 74,384,256	\$ 68,866,771
Percent of Change		18%		28%		-8%

Prepared by Laurie Hart on 1/10/03

