



2014 Annual Report
City of Wooster
Building Standards Division

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City Mission:

To partner with our community to deliver services, conserve resources, protect the quality of life, and plan for the future. We will endeavor to accomplish this mission in the most efficient and fiscally responsible manner possible, and in accordance to the core values listed below.

Building Standards Division Mission:

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.

**Citywide Core Values
supported by the Division:**

- Accountability
- Continuous Improvement,
- Concern for our Shared Environment
- Honesty & Integrity
- Respect
- Safety
- Trust

Building Standards Division Staff:

“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 often just take building safety for granted.”

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 Valve Program Coordinator

Mark Nussbaum, Building/Zoning Inspector

Justin Reed, Property Maintenance/Zoning Inspector

Significant 2014 Accomplishments

- Managed the project to transfer the administration of the City's backflow valve testing program from a paper system to an on-line system. This includes the online registration for tester certification and recording of mandatory annual tests. The City has over 1200 registered valves.
- Managed the building security project.
- Served on the Comprehensive Plan steering committee.
- Completed 1st year of periodic inspections in the RT district.
- Initiated prosecution of 32 property maintenance cases.
- 1,450 permits were issues (an all-time high) with a construction value over \$80,000,000 (this level was reached only one other year – 2006).
- Initiated 42 structure demolitions during a 30 month period ending during 2014.
- The Division began permitting and inspecting home improvements such as roofing, window and siding replacement and kitchen and bath remodeling.

Significant Prior Accomplishments

- Worked with Cleveland State University School for Professional Studies to streamline the plan review process. Used software updates and concurrent plan reviews to reduce the average review time to 21 days for complex projects.
- Began large format scanning and electronic archiving of all commercial plans since 2002.
- Developed “mutual consent” appeal process for commercial building code appeals for downtown businesses.
- Developed system of updating and coordinating all lot information and address information with the Wayne County Auditor’s records. This allows accurate identification of current owners, lot/parcel information and addresses.
- During 2002-2005 initiated the discontinuance of the citywide “radio alarm box” fire alarm systems. These were unreliable and non-code compliant. This resulted in 220 commercial buildings upgrading to code compliant fire alarm systems and the City no longer monitoring fire alarm systems with outdated equipment.
- Co-managed municipal building \$1.7 million remodel project in 2002, the exterior bicentennial project in 2007 and the 2008 Schellin Park bicentennial monument project.
- Created the full-time position of Property Maintenance inspector during 2002. Created new RT District periodic inspection program during 2013/14.

- Serve on the WC Housing Coalition representing the City of Wooster since 2003.
- Ordered and/or worked with property owners on 42 structure demolitions during a 30 month period ending during 2014 with 16 using Moving Ohio Forward funds provided by the State. Served on the county-wide MOF committee.
- Serve on the Board of Directors for Community Action Wayne Medina representing the Mayor and presently serve on the executive committee and ad hoc construction committee and chair the finance committee.
- N. Buckeye St: Served on the Howey House committee that worked in the neighborhood renovating 3 houses and demolishing two houses. Assisted Habitat for Humanity with acquiring one lot for building in this neighborhood. Worked to save the “Black” century home by relocating the owner and working to secure funding for complete renovation. Initiated the replacement of sidewalks in the area and street tree trimming and replacement.
- Began partnership with the local Homebuilders Association to provide members with code updates and education.
- Elected during a statewide election to serve as a director for the Ohio Building Officials Association.
- Awarded Building Official of the Year in 2005 by the Five County Building Officials Association representing 15 counties in NE Ohio.
- Received certification from the State of Ohio for Residential Building Department and all personnel during 2010.

2014 Business Activity Report

Business Environment:

The Division maintains certification as a State Certified Building Department with Certified personnel. As such, the Division deals directly with private architects, developers, contractors, property owners and others in carrying out the mission. We also work with appointed boards such as the Design and Review Board, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals, State of Ohio Board of Building Appeals, State of Ohio Board of Building Standards and others. Also, the mission requires involvement and participation with organizations such the Wayne County Housing Authority, the Wayne County Housing Coalition, Community Action Wayne/Medina as well as various neighborhood groups and others. We address and respond to requests from the County government due to agreements to provide back-up services. Within the City we maintain a close working relationship with various divisions including Planning and Zoning, Engineering, Fire, Police, Utilities Division, PPM, Economic Development and Law.

- *Over \$80 Million of Construction Value in the City*
- *Wooster's Construction Activity up 76% in 2014*
- *2014 construction statistics reveal increased activity for the City higher than in any of the previous 7 years.*

Construction Value Comparison last 7 years:

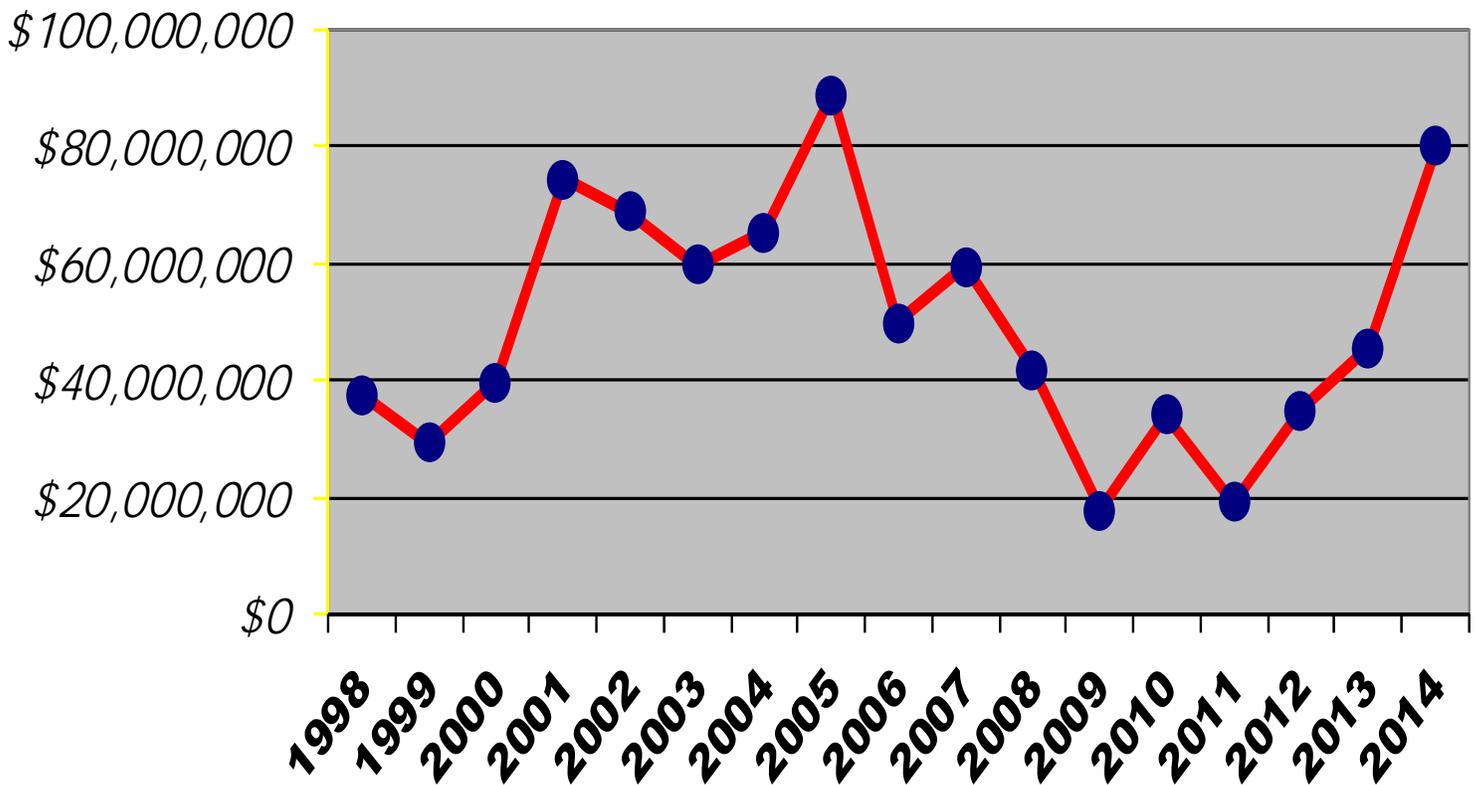
Year	Construction Value
2008	\$41,697,523
2009	\$17,627,718
2010	\$34,083,742
2011	\$19,126,273
2012	\$34,933,255
2013	\$45,484,208
2014	\$80,020,000

- This table reveals the up and down nature of the industry for the 5 years from 2008 - 2012.
- 2013 represents a “normal” level of activity and 2014 an unusually high level.

Construction Activity Historically:

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. Last year we issued building permits on construction valued at over \$45 million. During 2014, it jumped up to over \$80 million – a 76% increase from 2013 (2013 saw a 30% increase from 2012). With this increase came about the same increase in the number of permits (1,450) and fees earned were up over \$430,000. Because this year the Daisy plant was permitted, the numbers were skewed a bit although without this project the numbers still indicate a substantial jump in activity.

Total Value of Construction Permits

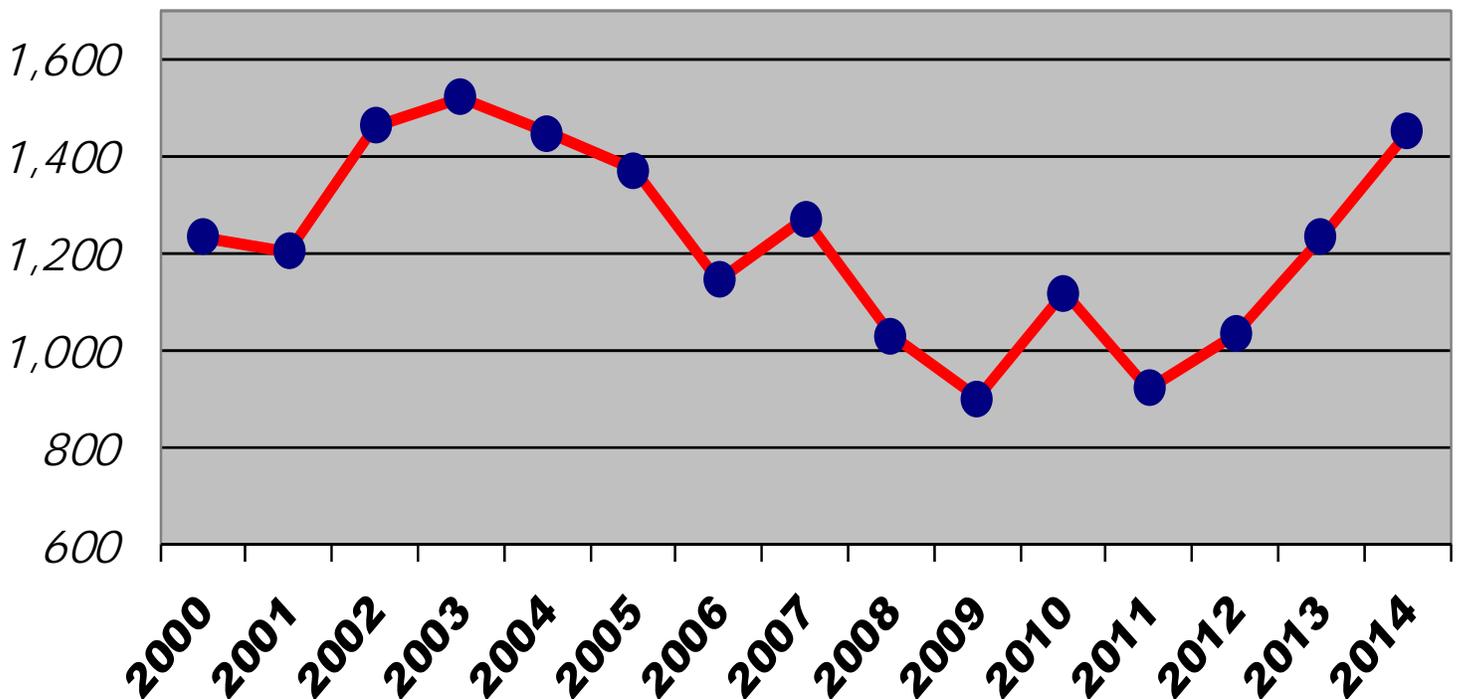


Number of Permits Processed

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 the 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

During 2014, the Division reviewed, processed and issued 1,450 permits. Permitting increased over 30% during 2013 and 2014 saw another increase of 21%. These 1,450 permits include residential and commercial building, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, fire sprinkler and alarm permits. Included are 128 residential zoning permits (the division issues residential zoning permits).

Number of Permits Processed



Top projects in 2014 according to estimated value

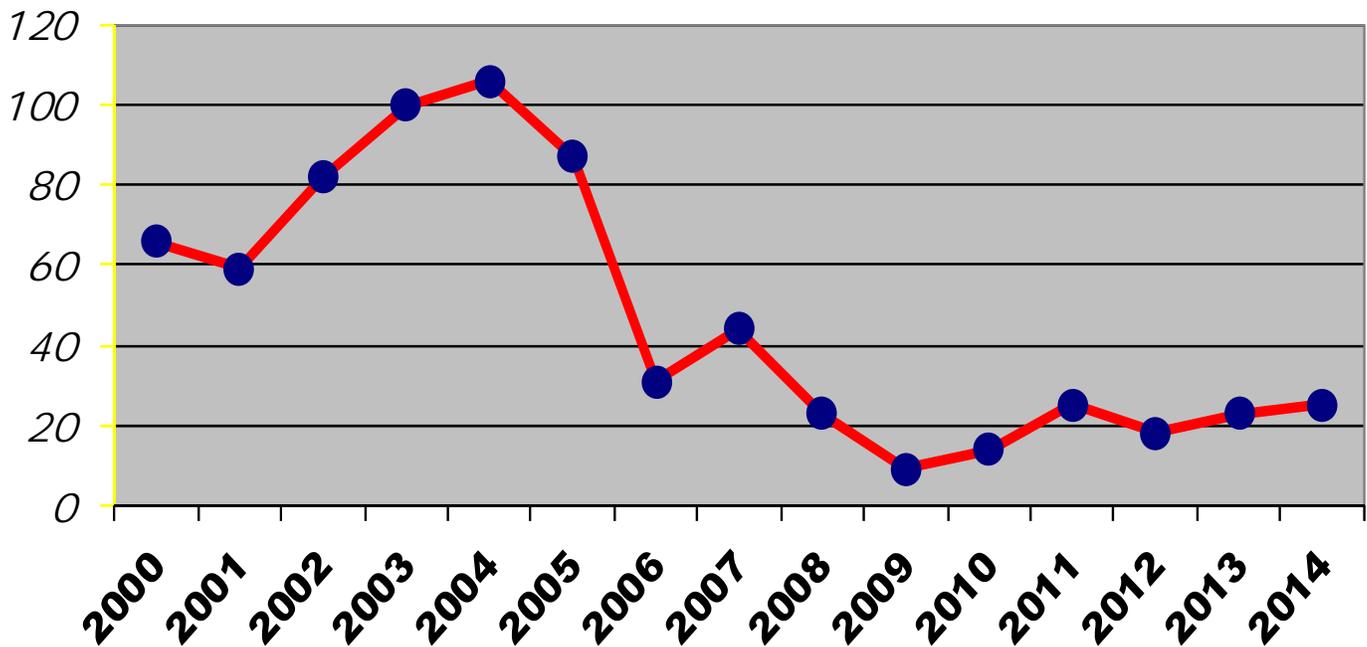
Project:	Daisy new food processing and distribution facility
Address:	3600 Geyers Chapel Rd. N.
Cost:	\$24,000,000
Contractor:	The Dennis Group LLC
Project:	New memory care assisted living facility
Address:	1516 Beall Ave.
Cost:	\$5,992,000
Contractor:	Parkes Construction, Inc.
Project:	Hospice and Palliative Care project completion
Address:	1900 Akron Rd.
Cost:	\$1,800,000
Contractor:	Albert M. Higley Co.
Project:	Community Action Wayne/Medina alteration of LW Elementary
Address:	905 Pittsburgh Ave.
Cost:	\$1,450,000
Contractor:	Simmons Brothers Corporation
Project:	ALDI Inc. Addition
Address:	2249 Akron Rd.
Cost:	\$750,000
Contractor:	Deerfield Construction
Project:	New Dental Office
Address:	3582 Cleveland Rd.
Cost:	\$730,000
Contractor:	Stark Development Inc.
Project:	West Hill Baptist Church 15,000 sq. ft. Children's Wing Remodel
Address:	2241 Mechanicsburg Rd.
Cost:	\$628,000
Contractor:	Ivan Weaver Construction
Project:	Spurgeon Dealership remodel
Address:	1119 West Old Lincoln Way
Cost:	\$608,500
Contractor:	Star Inc. Amhurst, Ohio
Project:	Walmart interior remodel
Address:	3883 Burbank Rd.
Cost:	\$594,000
Contractor:	Quantum General Contractors

Single Family House Construction

New single-family dwelling construction was higher in 2014 with 25 new single-family dwellings. 2013 saw 23 new single-family dwellings constructed and this was up from 18 houses constructed in 2012. Housing units have remained at this level for the last several years. In contrast, housing units averaged 64 units for the each of the 10 years before 2008 (1999 – 2007). This is over 3 times the average of 22 for the last 6 years (2009 – 2014). So while residential construction did mirror commercial activity in some respects, it presents 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 subdivisions have been brought to the City for development. There have been only two substantial residential sub-divisions in the last 5 years: Tartan Ridge and Crooked Creek. There are some smaller developments and scattered site lots available. It appears that 20 housing units/year may be the sustainable number in the City for the next several years.

Single Family Housing Units



Property Maintenance and Zoning Code Enforcement

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

“With the addition of a full-time property maintenance inspector, over 2,400 property maintenance inspections were conducted during 2014. This is more than double this type of inspection at any time in the City’s history.”

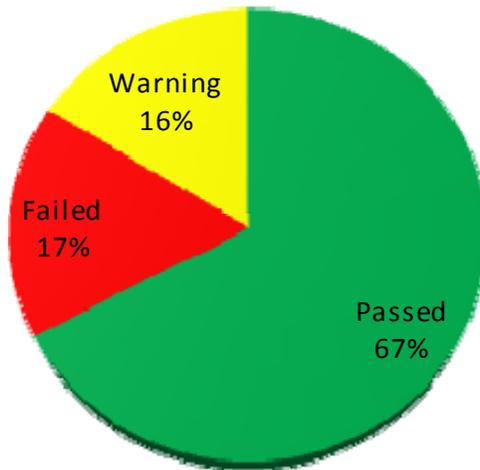
It is clear that an effective code administration program enhances the quality of life for the residents of Wooster in many ways. To do this, the program must include effective enforcement of the maintenance and zoning codes.

Since issues are both property maintenance and zoning code violations, a single inspector handles both types of inspections. These included: tall grass, unlicensed or inoperable vehicles, rubbish and garbage, cockroaches/bedbugs and other infestations, illegal sign complaints, line of sight issues, trash out early, and parking in lawn.

RT Periodic Inspection Program

2014 saw a full year of the new, “**RT Periodic Inspection Program.**” This program focuses on the Traditional Residential zoning district - the residential area surrounding the downtown. Most of these houses are pre-1935 and require increased maintenance. The Division will systematically inspect every house in this district in the three years from 2013 – 2015. Inspections are performed from the right-of-way with emphasis on the exterior structure and property. Although regular periodic inspections are focused in the R-T District, the Division still responds to complaints throughout the city.

R-T District Initial Inspection Results

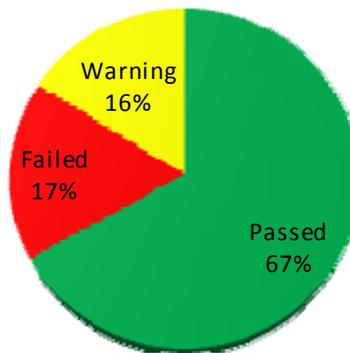


Owner Occupied vs Rental Property

These charts display the results of initial inspections in the R-T district. The first chart shows owner occupied properties while the second shows rental properties. There are approximately 50% rental properties in the R-T District.

Note: Owner occupied was determined from W.C. Auditor information.

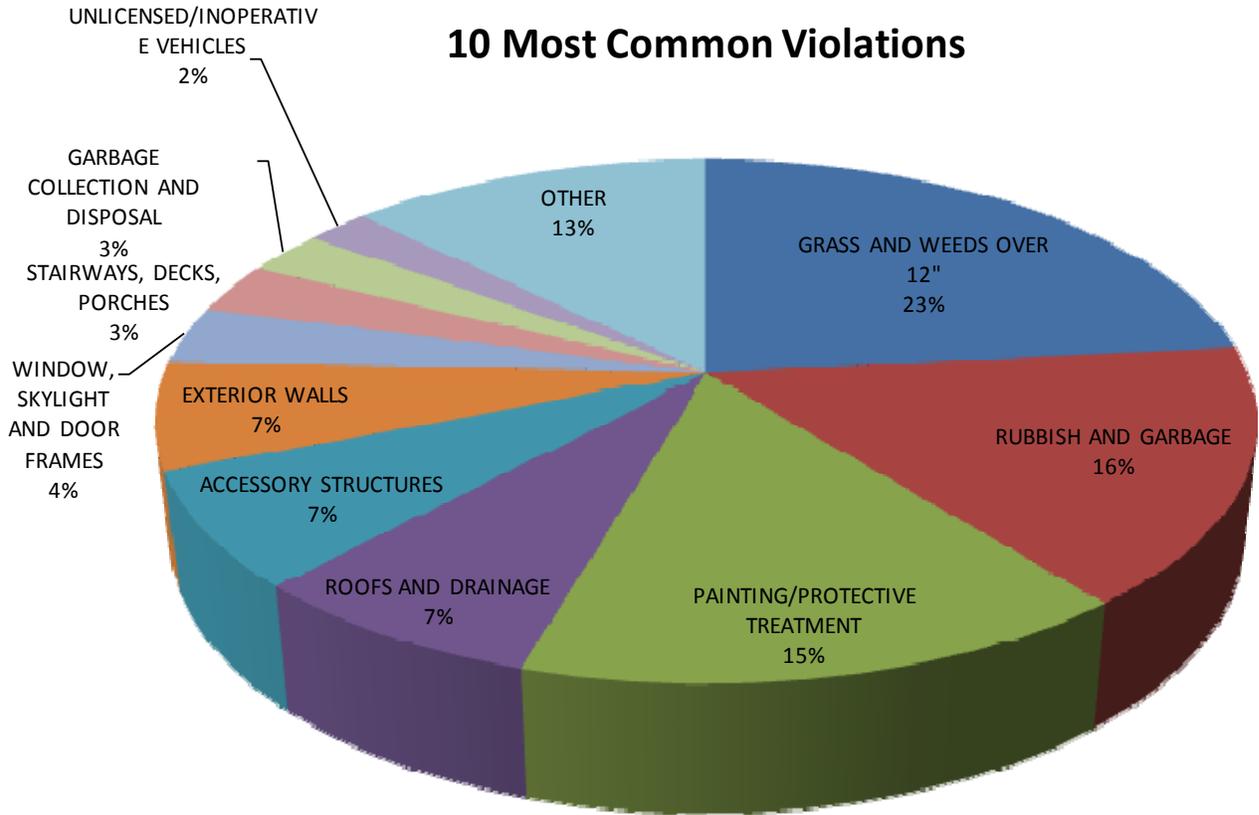
R-T District Initial Inspection Results Appears to be Owner Occupied Structure



R-T District Initial Inspection Results Appears to be Rental or Vacant Structure



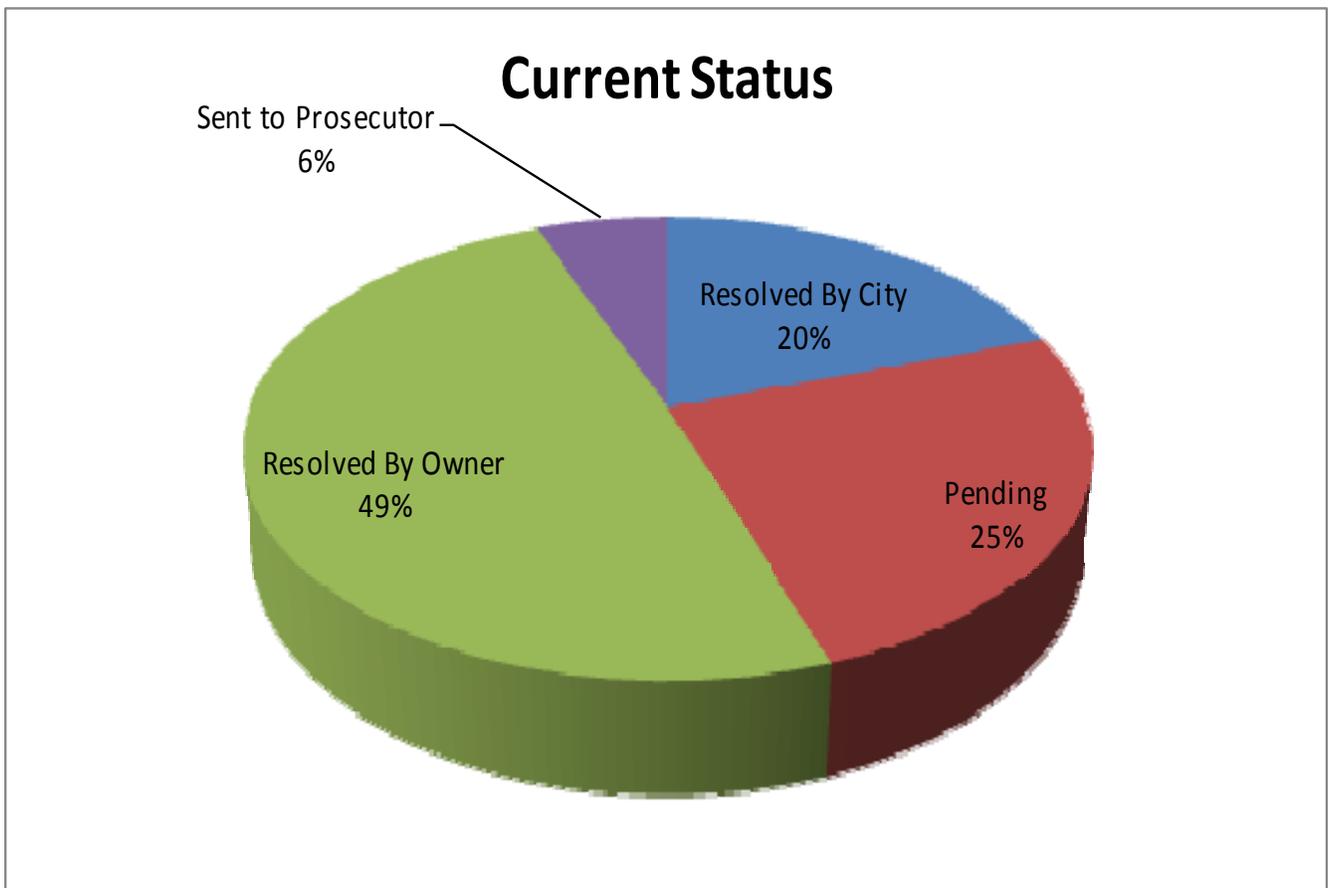
10 Most Common Violations



VIOLATION TYPE	# VIOLATIONS
GRASS AND WEEDS OVER 12"	212
RUBBISH AND GARBAGE	142
PAINTING/PROTECTIVE TREATMENT	139
ROOFS AND DRAINAGE	68
ACCESSORY STRUCTURES	64
EXTERIOR WALLS	59
WINDOW, SKYLIGHT AND DOOR FRAMES	32
STAIRWAYS, DECKS, PORCHES	28
GARBAGE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL	25
UNLICENSED/INOPERATIVE VEHICLES	20
OTHER	115

Resolution of Violations

This chart highlights the majority of violations are resolved by the property owner through voluntary compliance.



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. 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. Projects in the floodplain are required to build to higher standards including: dry-flood proofing, raising the elevation of the lowest floor or other flood resistant methods. By limiting activity in these areas, flood damage risks are properly managed.

During 2014, one permit for work in the floodplain was issued and the division did over 20 flood plain reviews along with assisting property owners determine the base flood elevation of their properties.

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.

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.

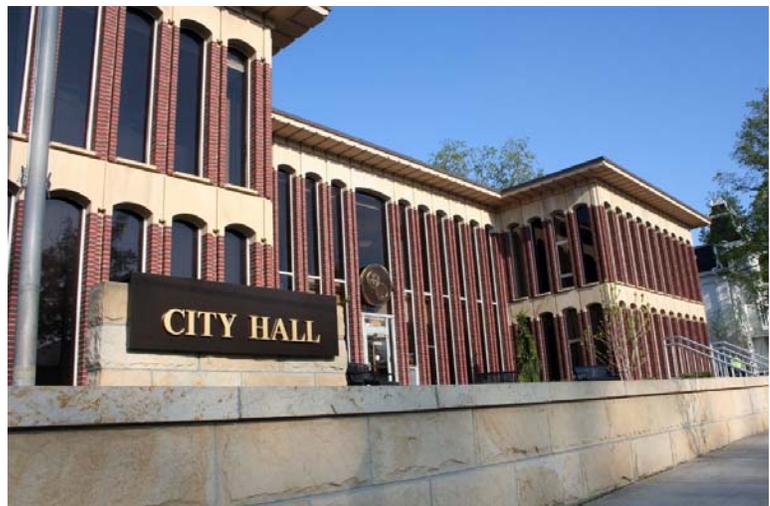
What it means to our customers is that once the potable water passes through the water meter into a facility, premise or home it is uncontaminated from other users and the backflow device will protect all other users from that water supply. While backflow and cross connections (an arrangement whereby 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 an approved backflow device, also some residential site’s may be required to have some sort of protection based on use (for example a residential irrigations system). A survey/plan review is done for all new water connections and may be conducted at an existing site by the Program Coordinator (Scott Davis) 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.

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.

During 2014 one major project was completed: The security access upgrade.



Staff Development

“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 often just take building safety for granted.”

In code administration, the terrain is continually changing. New codes and standards such as the energy conservation code are adopted. 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 whatever is necessary 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 2014 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, State Plumbing Inspectors Organization and State Electrical Inspectors Organization. This continuing education makes the difference between mediocre and excellent.

2014 Fiscal Activity Report

“The Division works hard to be fiscally conservative, accountable, and transparent while striving for continuous improvement.”

Fiscal Environment

The Building Standards Division is not an Enterprise Fund but rather funded primarily by the general fund; however, a significant part of the budget is covered by user fees (developers/contractors).

It makes sense for specific users to pay for services received, however since much of the work of the division is unrelated to construction inspection user fees cannot account for all of the Division’s expenses. For example, the division enforces the property maintenance code, some general city ordinances, the backflow valve program, safety inspections and others. These inspections should not be subsidized by developer’s fees but rather the general fund as it benefits the City as a whole.

- ***\$434,000 in fees***
- ***Fees represent 90% of budget expenses***
- ***Expenses reduced to 2002 levels until full-time property maintenance inspector added late 2013***

The general mix is: 60% user fees and 40% general fund. This mix is part of a revenue policy developed by the Division and Administration and is reviewed periodically. **In 2014 fees accounted for 90% of the operating budget.** Although it varies from year to year between 50% and 90%, 2014 recorded record fee collection due to the high volume of permitting.

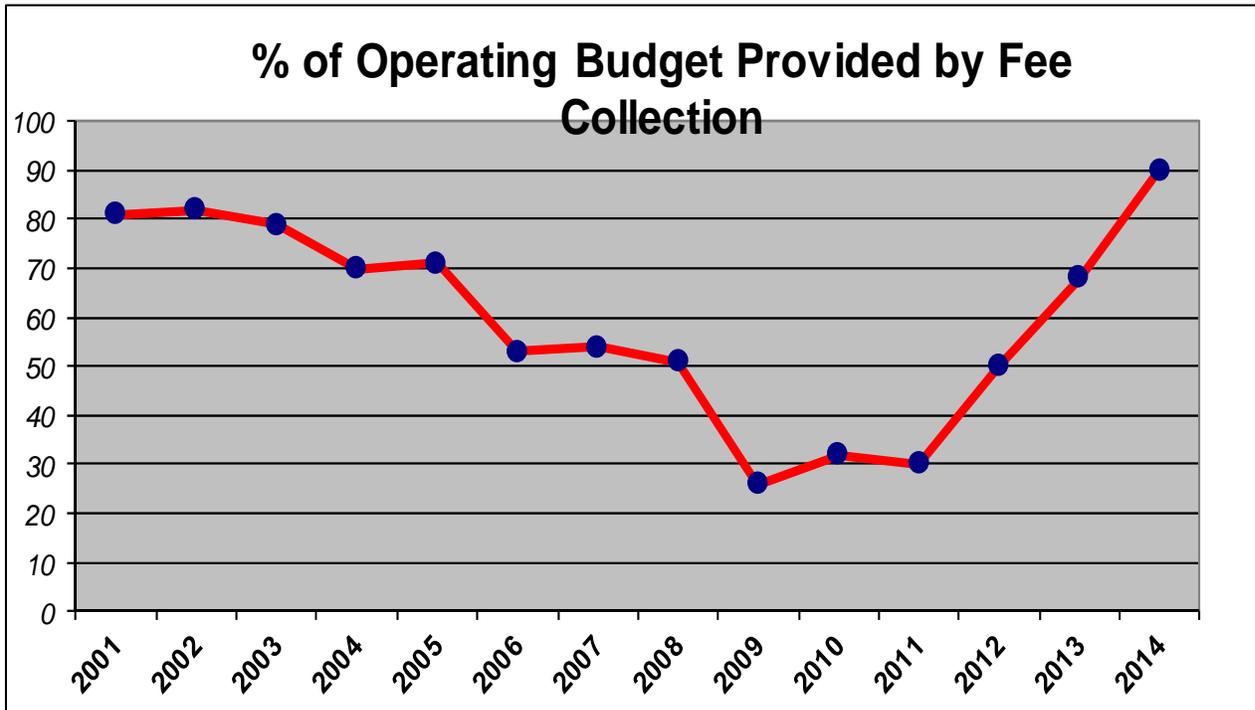
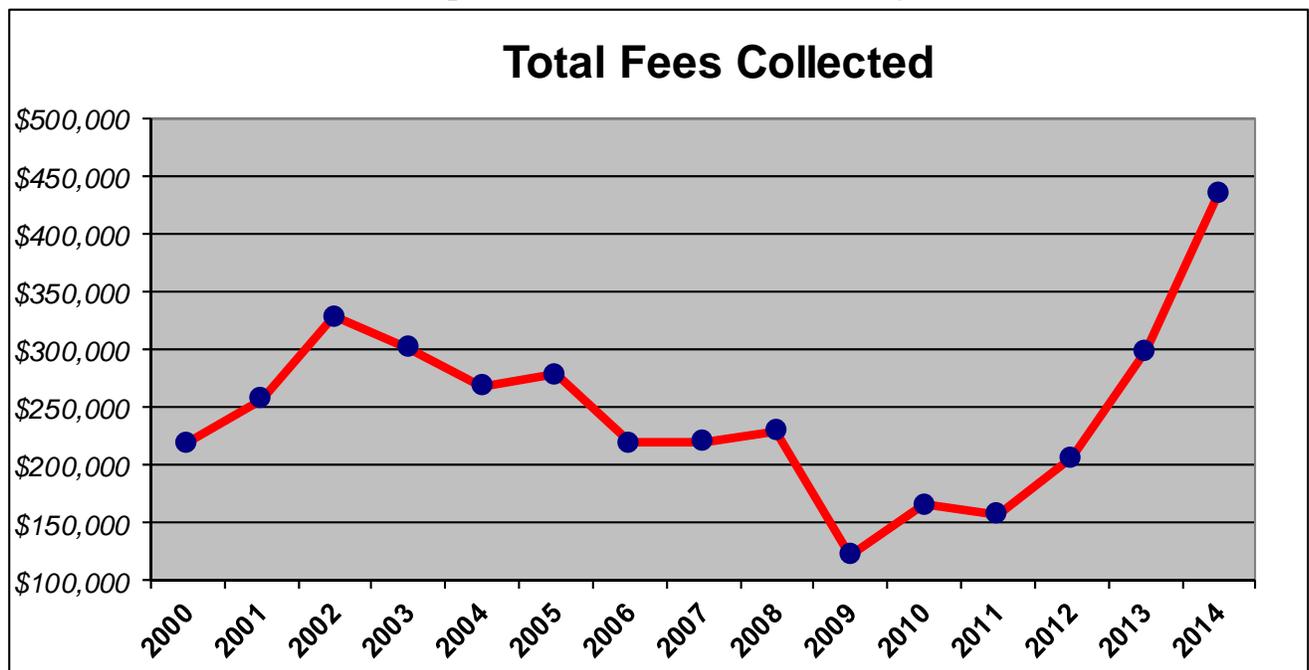


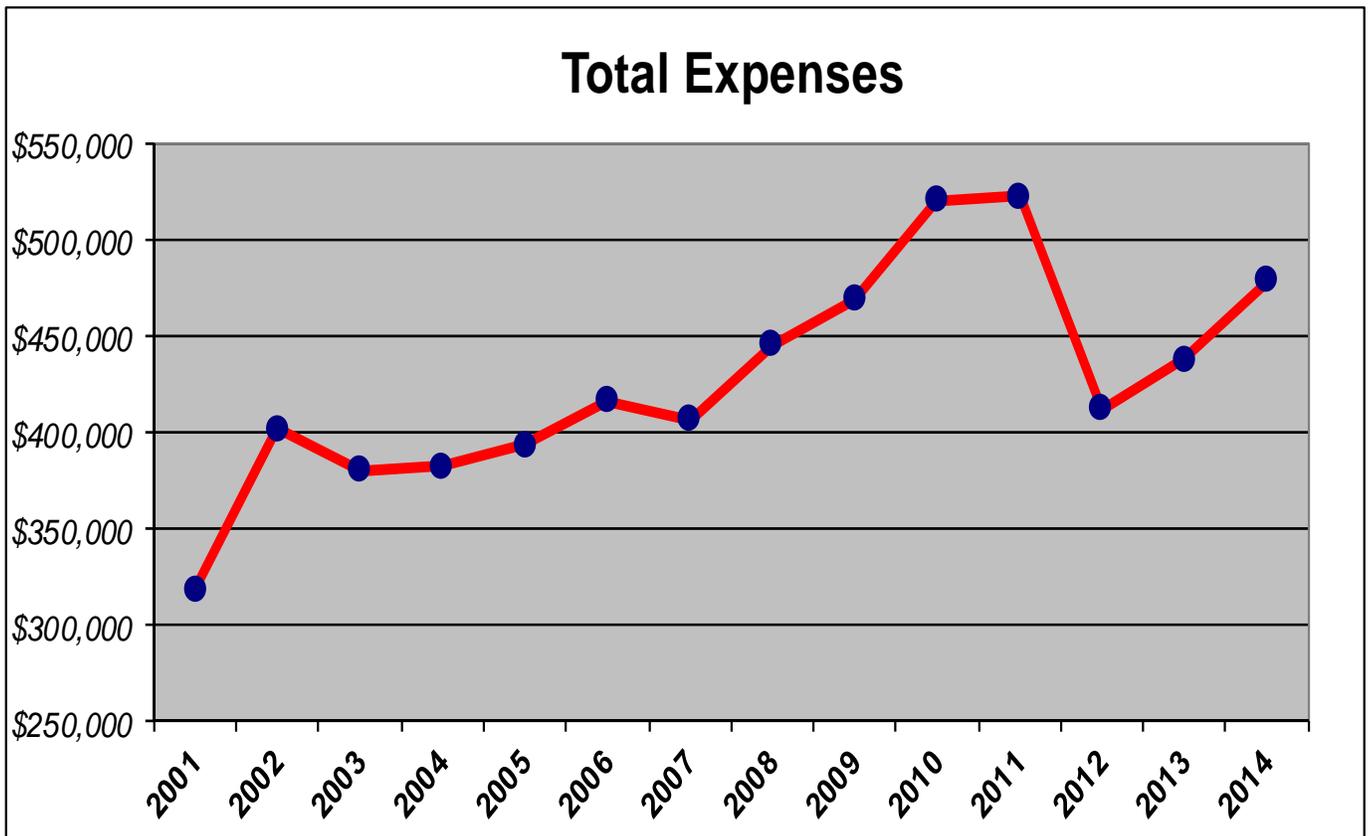
Chart reflects increase in permits sold over the last two years.



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. Expenses were down to 10 year old levels in 2012 and remained in at this level during 2013 rising only slightly. With the addition of a new full-time property maintenance inspector late in 2013, this caused a slight rise in expenses. This was fully realized during 2014 as the inspector worked the entire year.

Chart reflects the increase in expenses in 2013 and 14 primarily due to the addition of a full-time property maintenance inspector.



“The City of Wooster Building Standards Division remains committed to our mission, and looks forward to embracing the challenges that 2015 may bring.”

Respectfully submitted by:
Tim Monea, Chief Building Official