

2013 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 Valve Program Coordinator

Mark Nussbaum, Building/Zoning/ Inspector

Justin Reed, Property Maintenance/Zoning Inspector



***Over \$45 Million of Construction Value in the City...
Wooster's Construction Activity up 30% in 2013***

2013 construction statistics reveal increased activity for the City higher than in any of the previous 6 years.

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
2013	\$45,484,208

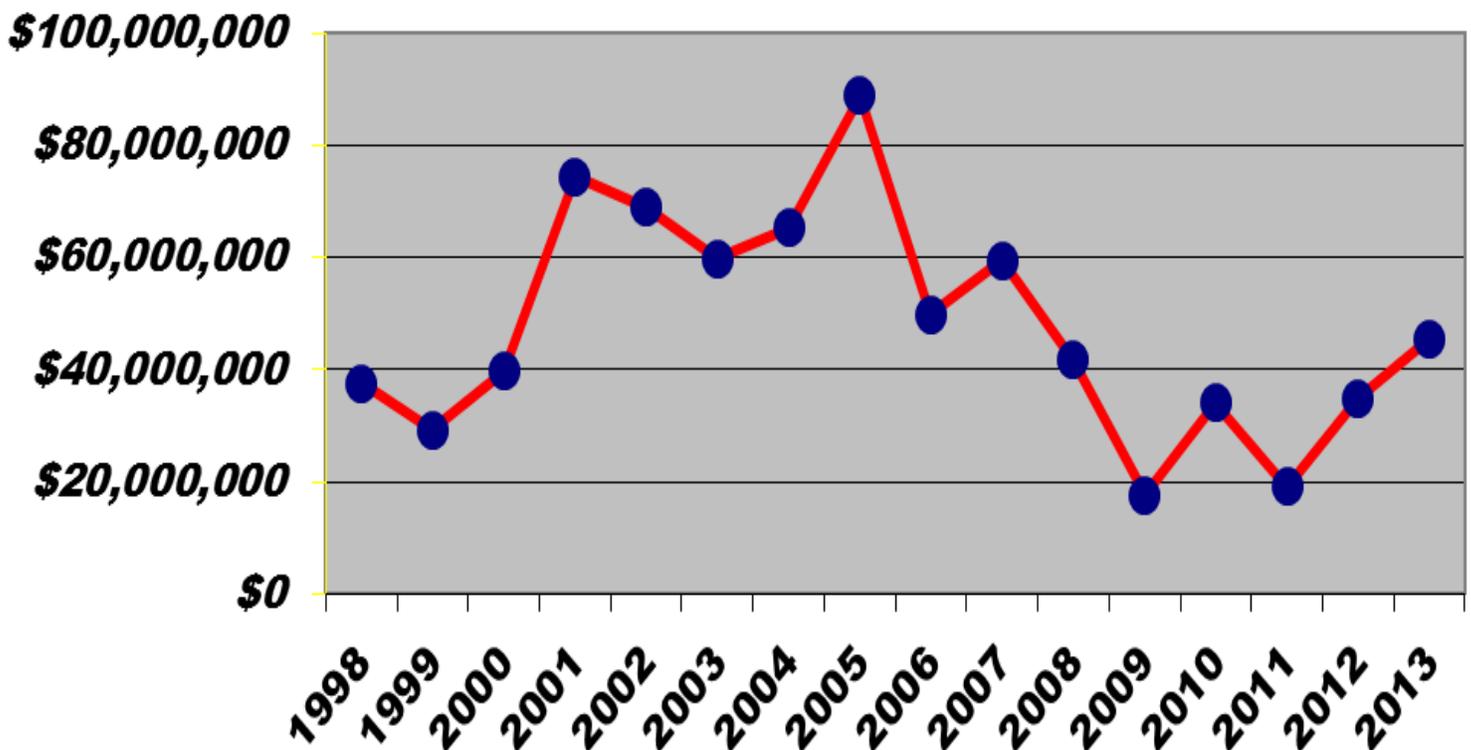
This table reveals the up and down nature of the industry since the tumult began in 2008 with 2013 activity showing the highest values in the last several years.

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 almost \$35 million and this year in 2013 it jumped up to over \$45 million – a 30% increase. With this came about the same increase in the number of permits (1,235) and fees earned were up to almost \$300,000. I think these figures over the last two years represent the new normal range of activity that we can expect from year to year. Because this year and last year saw no really large projects that skewed the numbers, it is a pretty good representation of the low (2012) and high (2013) activity range.

Some large projects are scheduled for the coming year – like the Daisy plant that will skew the statistics and cause a spike in activity – fees, inspections, permitted values, etc and this will happen from year to year. However, 2013 provides an accurate picture of the normal construction activity in the City.

Total Value of Construction Permits

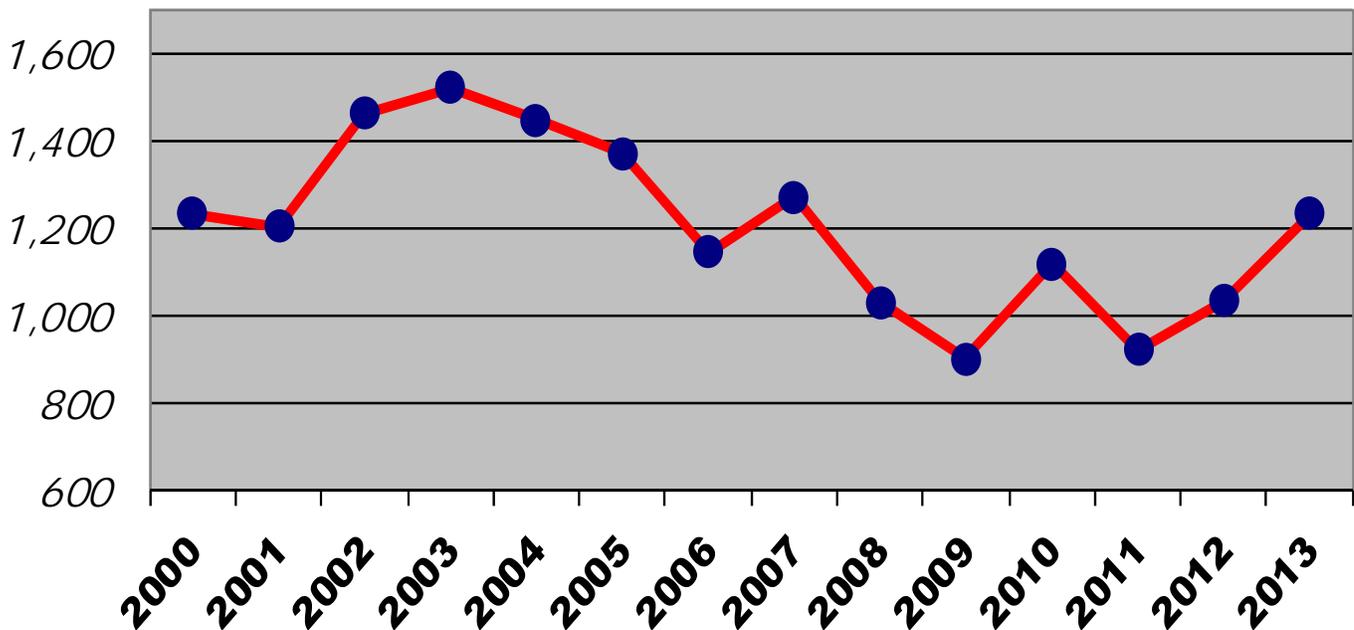


Number of Permits Processed

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. Again, the sustainable activity appears to be about 1,000 permits processed each year as happened in 2012.

During 2013, the Division reviewed, processed and issued just over 1,235 permits. This permitting level had been very consistent for the last five years (2008 – 2012) but increased over 30% during 2013. Of these 1,232 permits, 191 were building permits – 55% residential and 45% commercial, 286 electrical, 187 plumbing, 351 HVAC, 52 fire sprinkler and alarms, 135 residential zoning (the division issues residential zoning permits), and 33 other misc. permits.

Number of Permits Processed



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 Ohio Building Code, 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 12 permitted projects in 2013 according to estimated value (\$19M):

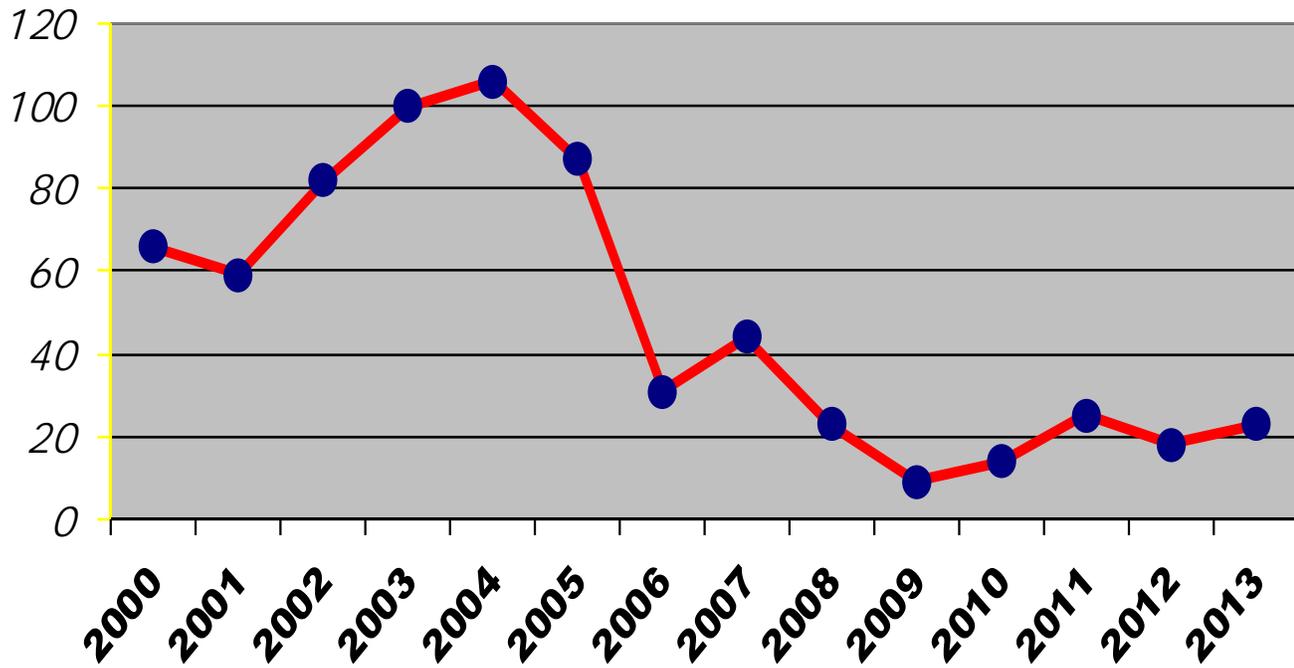
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	4 unit condos 12,551 sq.ft. 2618 Wetherington Ln \$600,000 Weaver Custom Homes, Inc.
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	New Retail Dollar Store 9,100 sq. ft. 5310 Cleveland Rd. \$600,000 JJO Construction, Inc.
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	Addition to Brasfor by Wooster Growth Corp. 14,100 sq.ft. 1785 Geyers Chapel Rd.N \$740,000 Ivan Weaver Construction
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	Palm House Apartments Remodel 1225 Rebecca St. \$787,000 MV Residential Construction
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	LUK USA LLC Press Room Add 23,647 sq.ft. 3401 Old Airport Rd. \$900,000 Freeman Building Systems
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	The College of Wooster Chimney Demo and Boiler Alt 750 University St. E \$982,000 The Smith and Oby Co.
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	Warehouse, Office, Showroom for Condor Pacific 32,576 sq.ft. 2424 Long Rd. \$1,051,350 Campbell Construction, Inc
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	Bauer Corp. new building 54,976 sq.ft. 2540 Progress Dr. \$1,500,000 Freeman Building Systems
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	Danbury Woods of Greenfield Assisted Living 35,255 sq.ft. 939 Portage Rd. \$1,875,000 Winesburg Builders LLC
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	Aspen Grove Investments LLC (Seaman) Add 27,346 sq.ft. 1000 Venture Blvd. \$2,900,000 BCMC, INC.
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	The College of Wooster Gault Dorm Conversion 33,770 sq.ft. 716 Beall Ave. \$3,200,000 Bogner Construction Company
Project: Address: Cost: Contractor:	Buehler Food Markets Inc remodel/new entrance 110,466 sq.ft. 3540 Burbank Rd. \$4,000,000 Bogner Construction Company

Single Family House Construction

New single-family dwelling construction was higher in 2013. Twenty Three new single-family dwellings were constructed. This is up 5 units from 2012. Housing units have remained at this level for the last 6 years. Housing units averaged 64 units for the 10 years before 2008 (1999 – 2007). This is over 3 times the average of 20 for the last 5 years (2009 – 2013). 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 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 has about 20 building lots available and Crooked Creek has about 30 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.

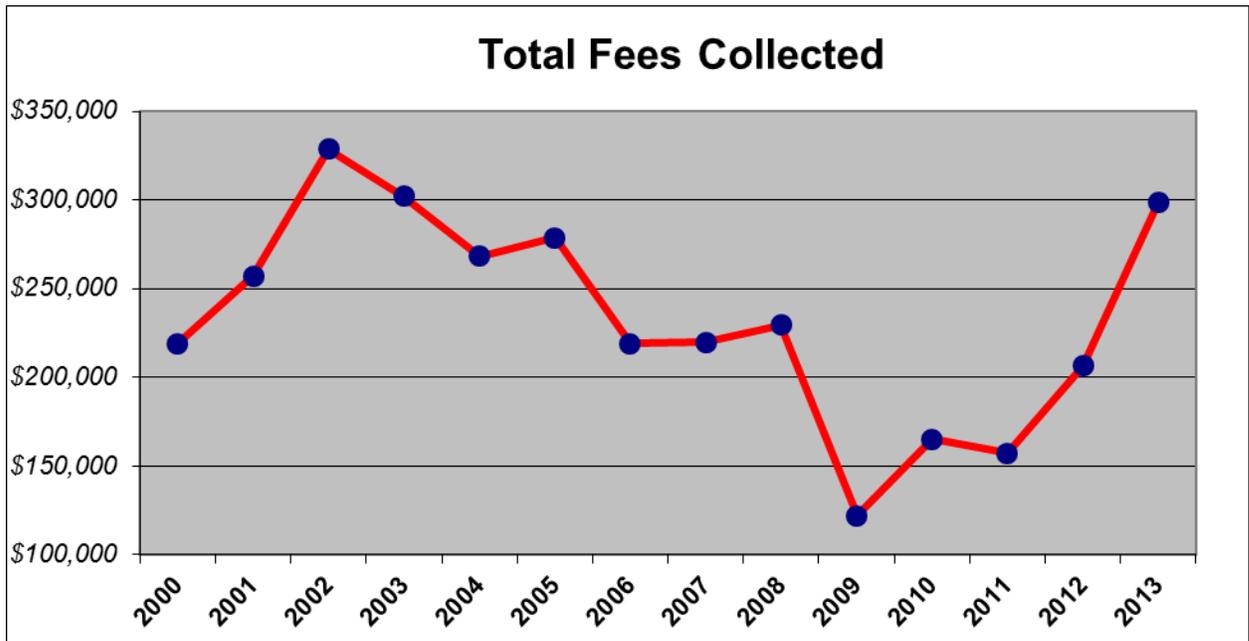
Single Family Housing Units



Fee Collection and the Budget

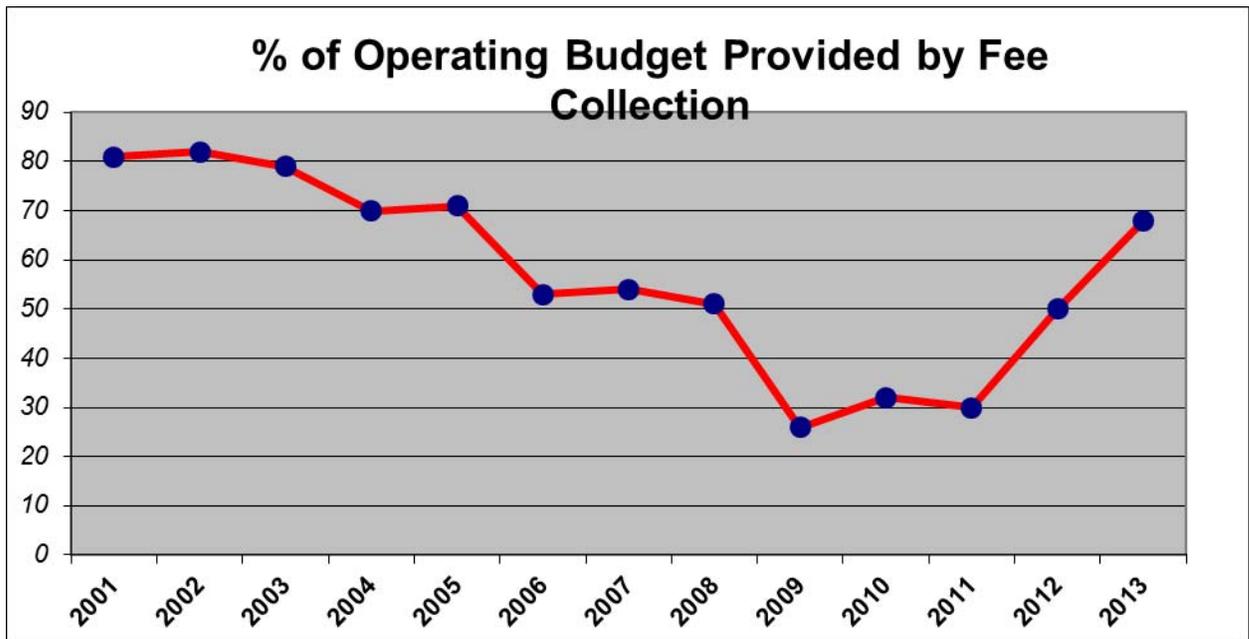
The Building Standards Division is not an Enterprise Fund; however, a significant part of the budget is funded by user fees (developers/contractors). Since much of the work of the division is unrelated to construction inspection, user fees cannot account for all of the expenses.

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. Fee collection was up 57% in 2013 for a total of \$298,755



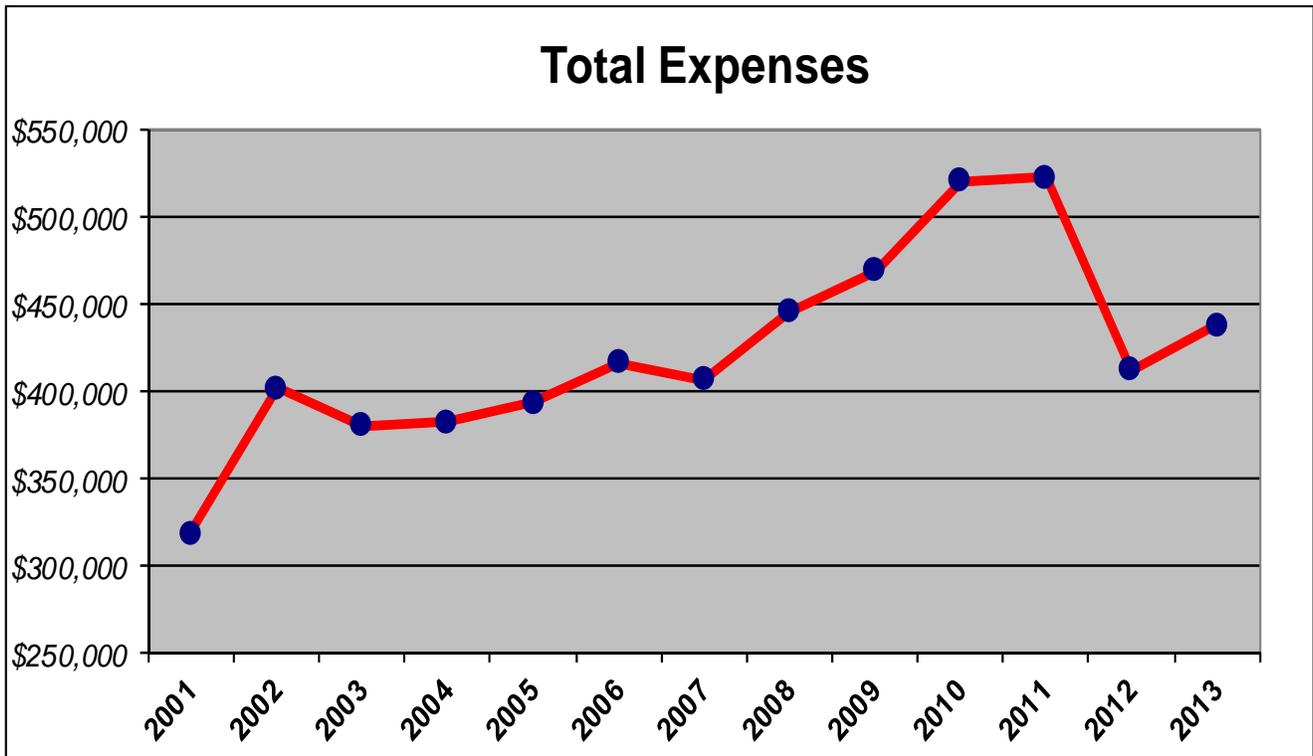
One important measure of fee collection is the ratio of fee collection to overall budget. For example, in 2000 we collected \$219,040 in fees and our expenses were \$303,226. Fees accounted for 72% of our budget. The following graph depicts the percentage of the budget provided by our fee collection. 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 in 2012. In 2013, fees accounted for nearly 70% of the budget. In 2014 fees will increase and we will begin issuing home improvement permits as the State requires and we expect this to have an impact on fees. Part of the fee collection policy is that not all of the expenses of the division should be provided by fees paid by developers, contractors and homeowners. Some of the division activity is for the safety and benefit of the City as a whole and not directly related to developer fees. For example, the property maintenance activity is for the good of the City as a whole and not construction related activity.

This percentage of 50% – 70% of the operating budget provided by fee collections appears to be the sustainable amount going forward.



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 will be fully realized during 2013 as the inspector works the entire year.



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.

Approximately 300 complaint driven property maintenance type inspections were conducted during 2013. Since some of the violations are both property maintenance and zoning code violations, we have a single inspector handle both types of inspections. These included: tall grass, unlicensed or inoperable vehicles, rubbish and garbage, cockroaches, illegal sign complaints, line of sight issues, trash out early, and parking in lawn.

During 2013 we spent a good deal of time researching available data on different proactive property maintenance schemes. As a result, in late 2013 we began the new program, "RT Periodic Inspection Program." This program focuses on the Traditional Residential zoning district as most of these houses are pre-1935 and require increased maintenance. We will systematically inspect every house in this district in the next three years. During 2013 we conducted over 200 of these inspections.

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 2013, two permits for work in the floodplain were issued but the division did over 20 flood plain reviews.

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 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 completed 2 major initiatives in 2013

1. Surveyed all City owned property with a water supply. This survey was completed in 2013.
2. Completed a survey of the Wayne County Fairgrounds water system. This survey resulted in recommendations and an implementation plan that begun in 2013,

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.

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 2013, twenty two dilapidated or abandoned homes in the City of Wooster were demolished as part of the code enforcement process. This was a record number of demolitions as no other year saw double digit demolitions.

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. During 2013 one major project was completed: The back portico roof area had a new membrane and walking surface installed. Also, the plans were finalized for a security upgrade that will take place in 2014.



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 2013 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 2014 may bring.

Respectfully submitted by:
Tim Monea, Chief Building Official

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