



***City of Wooster***  
***Planning and Zoning Division***  
***2017 Annual Report***

January 4, 2018

## Summary

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The City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Division continued to facilitate development in 2017. The division worked to efficiently review and process permits, assist various boards and commissions, enforce the regulations of the Planning and Zoning Code, and effectively conduct significant planning projects. Highlights for the Planning and Zoning Division in 2017 include:

- The implementation of an online permitting system for all Planning and Zoning Division applications. The permitting system was a joint effort between the Planning Division and Building Standards Division.
- The initiation of a major update to the Planning and Zoning Code and Map.
- The completion of a Sign Survey to document nonconforming freestanding signs.
- The coordination of a number of significant projects reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals and Design and Review Board, including:
  - A 110,000 sq. ft. expansion of the Daisy facility on North Geyers Chapel Road
  - A 45,000 sq. ft. AEP service center on Long Road
  - A 51,000 sq. ft. tennis court facility on Venture Boulevard
  - A preliminary subdivision for 32 lots in the Crooked Creek development
- Continued assistance to the Planning Commission, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals and Design and Review Board in their review of applications. The number of applications for the Boards and Commission was the second highest in the past ten years.
- The continued allocation of staff time to the enforcement of the Planning and Zoning Code.
- The attainment of the majority of the division's Goals for 2017.

## Planning Projects

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The Planning and Zoning Division worked on the following Planning related projects in 2017:

1. **Online Permitting** – In 2016, the Planning and Building Standards Divisions selected ViewPoint Cloud to implement online permitting in the City of Wooster. The cloud-based system allowed all Planning and Building applications to be submitted and paid for online from any device. The versatile system resulted in the elimination of numerous paper documents and permitted inspectors to access permits and plans on site. After an extensive setup and testing process, the system went live on January 1, 2017.

In 2017, the Planning and Zoning and Building Standards Divisions devoted significant effort to assisting users

with the online based permitting system. To aid users without internet access, a public Kiosk was set up in the Planning and Zoning and Building Standards Division office. Throughout 2017, adjustments and changes were made to the permitting software as processes were refined and feedback was received from users.



In addition, the City's Engineering, Recreation, and Utility Divisions also utilized ViewPoint Cloud to process permits and applications.

- 2. Planning and Zoning Code Update** – In early 2017, the division initiated the process of completely updating the City’s Planning and Zoning Code and Zoning Map. Such a process, which is commenced every ten years, is a significant undertaking. Due to the scale of the project, the city employed a consultant for the project, Compass Point Planning, to develop the updated Planning and Zoning Code and Map.

For the project, a Steering Committee was created to guide the process and provide input. The Committee met six times in 2017 and provided valuable insight and recommendations on changes to the Planning and Zoning Code and Map. In addition, multiple meetings were held by City Council’s Laws and Ordinances Committee, the Planning Commission, and for the public to gather input on changes and receive feedback on draft chapters.

Throughout 2017, the division worked with the project consultant to complete numerous draft chapters of the Planning and Zoning Code and Map. Draft chapters for approximately half of the Planning and Zoning Code were created in 2017. The division and project consultant will continue to work with the Steering Committee, Council, the Planning Commission, and the public in 2018 to adopt a complete update of the Planning and Zoning Code and Map.

- 3. Sign Survey** – The Planning and Zoning Division conducted a survey of all freestanding signs within the city in 2017. The purpose of the survey was to determine the number of freestanding signs which were not in compliance with the Planning and Zoning Code. This information was necessary as a clause in the *current* Planning and Zoning Code requires that all sign must comply with regulations by 2022.

The survey and subsequent report found that 171 freestanding signs, or 39%, did not comply with the Planning and Zoning Code. Information attained by the Sign Survey will be considered when evaluating the existing Sign Regulations during the Planning and Zoning Code update.

### **Development Projects**

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There were a number of significant residential, commercial and industrial developments initiated in the City of Wooster in 2017. The following projects were assisted by the Planning and Zoning Division and approved by one or more of the aforementioned Boards and Commissions:

- 1. Daisy Facility Expansion** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a 110,000 sq. ft. addition to the Daisy facility on North Geyers Chapel Road. The project is currently under construction.
- 2. AEP Facility** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a 45,000 sq. ft. AEP service center on Long Road. Construction of the project is anticipated in 2018.
- 3. Tennis Court Facility** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a 51,000 sq. ft. tennis court facility on Venture Boulevard. Construction of the project is currently underway and should be completed in early 2018.
- 4. Crooked Creek** – A Preliminary Subdivision Plan was approved for Phase II of the Crooked Creek subdivision including 32 lots off of Settlers Trace. A Final Subdivision application is anticipated in early 2018.
- 5. Shoppes at Burbank** – A Final Development Plan was approved for a 3,600 sq. ft. retail building on Burbank Road. Construction of the project is anticipated in 2018.
- 6. Downtown Projects** – Noteworthy projects in downtown include the following:
  - A significant addition to the St. James Episcopal Church on North Market Street.
  - Renovations and the expansion of a parking area at Cornerstone Elementary.

- A building facade restoration on South Market Street adjacent to Westfield Bank.
- Renovations to Broehl Law Office on North Market Street.
- The location of a number of new businesses including Holcombs Classics Popcorn, Westfield Bank, Gouda, Roots Yoga, Meg Bowman Photography, Oak Hill Auto Sales, Wooster Chocolate Company, Studio Irie, and Nouvell Ere Arts and Wines.

Projects approved in 2016 that were under construction in 2017 include The Avenue at Wooster (nursing home on Smithville Western Road), the City of Wooster Safety Center, an addition to LUK, an expansion of Summit Motor Cars (Cleveland Road and Smithville Western Road), a Comfort Suites Hotel (Dover Road), Wooster High School locker room facilities, and a Taco Bell (Burbank Road).

### **Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits**

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A total of 229 Zoning Certificates were issued in 2017, which was similar to the 216 issued in 2016. Of the issued Certificates, the majority were related to single family residential projects. Zoning Certificates were issued for 23 new residential units in 2017 including 15 new single family homes and 8 condominium units. A total of \$7,085 in Zoning Certificate fees was collected in 2017, slightly down from \$7,580 in 2016.

In 2017, 100 Sign Permits were issued in the City of Wooster and a total of \$7,200 in Sign Permit fees was collected. There were 102 Sign Permits issued in 2016.

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

### **Board of Building and Zoning Appeals**

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The Board of Building and Zoning Appeals (BZA) heard 56 requests in 2017 encompassing a variety of topics. In 2016, the BZA heard 43 requests. Of the 52 applications in which a decision was made, the BZA approved 43 applications and denied 9 applications. There were 48 area variance requests and 10 use variance requests heard by the BZA in 2017 (some applications included both an area and a use variance).

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



## Status of 2017 Goals and Objectives

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The following indicates the status of the Planning and Zoning Division's goals and objectives established for 2017:

### Goal 1 – Attend available training and complete American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification requirements

- Objective 1A – Complete training to meet AICP maintenance requirements for the current two-year session by the end of the year
- Objective 1B – Attend training throughout the year including the American Planning Association National Conference and training provided by the Ohio and Akron Chapters of the American Planning Association

*Status – Training and education maintenance requirements were met to maintain AICP status. The American Planning Association National Conference and American Planning Association State Conference were attended and various other training opportunities were completed.*

### Goal 2 – Complete an update to the Planning and Zoning Code

- Objective 2A – Send out an RFP for the project by February
- Objective 2B – Select a consultant and initiate the update the process by April
- Objective 2C – Adopt the updated Planning and Zoning Code by October

*Status – An update to the Planning and Zoning Code was initiated and a consultant was selected in April of 2017. Due to the complexity of the updates and significant reorganization of the code, approximately half the chapters were drafted by the end of 2017. Adoption of the updated Planning and Zoning Code is projected in 2018.*

### Goal 3 – Complete an update to the Planning and Zoning Map

- Objective 3A – Coordinate the update of the Map with the Planning and Zoning Code update
- Objective 3B – Identify areas of the Map to be changed by June
- Objective 3C – Adopt the updated Planning and Zoning Map by October

*Status – An updated draft Planning and Zoning Map was created to correspond with updates to the Planning and Zoning Code. Adoption of the updated Planning and Zoning Map is projected in 2018 along with the updated Planning and Zoning Code.*

### Goal 4 – Implement and adjust the ViewPoint Cloud permitting system

- Objective 4A – Implement the system on 1/1/17
- Objective 4B – Migrate historical data into the system by February
- Objective 4C – Complete all major adjustments and changes to the system by April

*Status – ViewPoint Cloud was implemented on 1/1/17 and all available historical data was migrated. All major adjustments and changes to the system were completed by April.*

### Goal 5 – Conduct a survey of permanent signs to determine nonconformance with current regulations

- Objective 5A – Conduct a survey of all signs for compliance by July
- Objective 5B – Complete a report of the survey by August

*Status – A survey of all freestanding signs for compliance with code regulations was conducted in June and a report was prepared in July of 2017.*

## 2018 Goals and Objectives

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In 2018, the Planning and Zoning Division will continue to guide development and sensibly regulate land use. The following goals and objectives for 2018 and in the next five years through 2022 will allow the division to better serve citizens and business owners, operate more efficiently, refine responsibilities, and update planning documents.

### **One Year Goals and Objectives**

#### Goal 1 – Attend available training and meet AICP certification requirements throughout the year

- Objective 1A – Complete training to meet half of the AICP maintenance requirements for the current two-year session by the end of the year.
- Objective 1B – Attend training throughout the year including the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Conference and training provided by the Ohio and Akron Sections of the American Planning Association.

#### Goal 2 – Become proficient utilizing the updated Planning and Zoning Code By June

- Objective 2A – Thoroughly review all proposed chapters of the updated code prior to the anticipated adoption in June.
- Objective 2B – Test various mock applications prior to the adoption of the code.
- Objective 2C – Become proficient at utilizing and applying the code prior to the adoption of the code.

#### Goal 3 – Complete an update to the Planning and Zoning Code by June

- Objective 3A – Complete Steering Committee meetings by March.
- Objective 3B – Initiate the adoption process by bringing an amendment to the Planning Commission by April.
- Objective 3C – Adopt the updated Planning and Zoning Code by June.

#### Goal 4 – Complete revisions to twenty percent of the city’s Ohio Historic Inventory Forms by the end of the year

- Objective 4A – Send out an RFP for the project by April.
- Objective 4B – Select a consultant and initiate the form update process by July.
- Objective 4C – Complete twenty percent of the revised forms by the end of the year.

#### Goal 5 – Work with the Building Standards Division and Police Department to shift permit parking to ViewPoint Cloud

- Objective 5A – Create a process and workflow for online permitting by February.
- Objective 5A – Train staff on the permit parking processes by February.
- Objective 5B – Transition expiring permits and new permits to ViewPoint Cloud by the end of the year.
- Objective 5C – Conduct a parking survey to assist in evaluating the parking permit program by August.

## **Five Year Goals and Objectives**

### Goal 1 – Continue attendance at training and certification opportunities

- Objective 1A – Maintain AICP certification, which includes yearly training requirements in specific areas such as Law and Ethics.
- Objective 1B – Attend training including regional, state, and national conferences.

### Goal 2 – Coordinate with other agencies

- Objective 2A – Work with other area governmental agencies to forward city goals, share resources, and facilitate intergovernmental coordination.
- Objective 2B – Work with non-governmental agencies and nonprofits agencies to benefit the community.

### Goal 3 – Refine 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 – Revise rules and procedures for Board and Commission by the end of 2019

- Objective 4A – Identify any existing rules and procedures documents for the Planning Commission, Board of Building and Zoning Appeals and the Design and Review Board.
- Objective 4B – Review current documents with the respective boards, research similar rules documents and consult with the City Law Director.
- Objective 4C – Adopt new or revised rules and procedures documents.

### Goal 5 – Address the current Planning and Zoning Code requirement for all nonconforming signs to conform to current regulations by the end of 2020

- Objective 5A – Evaluate the costs and benefits of requiring all nonconforming signs to conform to current regulations by 6/21/22 per Section 1171.10(d)(4).
- Objective 5B – Create a plan to contact property owners and tenants or adjust current requirements.
- Objective 5C – Evaluate the possibility of removing the amortization requirement from the Planning and Zoning Code.

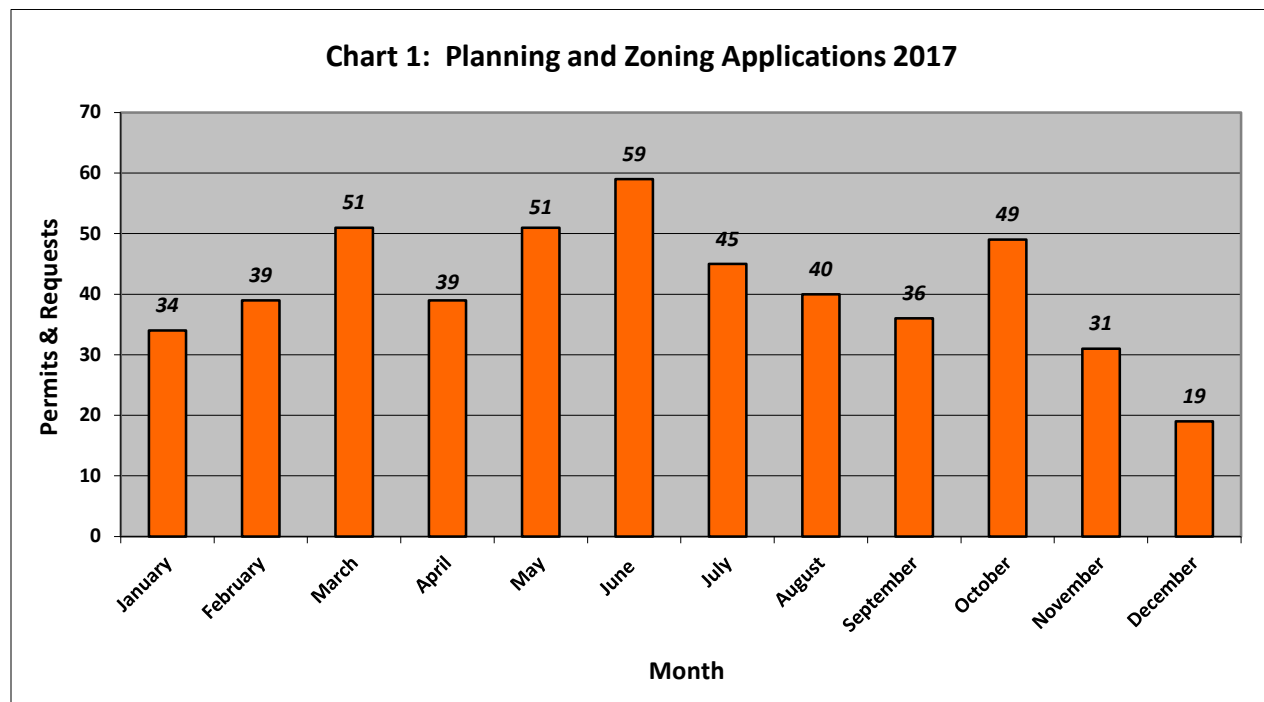


**Appendix – Tables and Charts**

**Table 1: Planning and Zoning Applications 2017**

Month	Zoning Certificates	Sign Permits	Minor Subdivisions	Building & Zoning Appeals	Design & Review	Planning Commission	Total
January	12	7	7	3	2	3	34
February	15	8	1	7	7	1	39
March	20	12	3	6	6	4	51
April	21	9	0	4	4	1	39
May	26	10	4	2	3	6	51
June	31	11	4	7	4	2	59
July	23	8	4	7	1	2	45
August	27	7	2	2	0	2	40
September	16	6	2	4	7	1	36
October	27	6	6	6	0	4	49
November	7	10	2	6	6	0	31
December	4	6	0	4	4	1	19
<b>Total*</b>	229	100	35	56	41	25	493
<b>Total Fees</b>	\$7,085	\$7,200	\$875	\$5,800	\$0	\$2,550	\$23,510
<b>2016 Total</b>	216	102	26	42	60	31	477
<b>2016 Fees</b>	\$7,580	\$6,950	\$650	\$4,200	\$0	\$2,750	\$22,130
<i>*Some applications were heard at multiple meetings</i>							

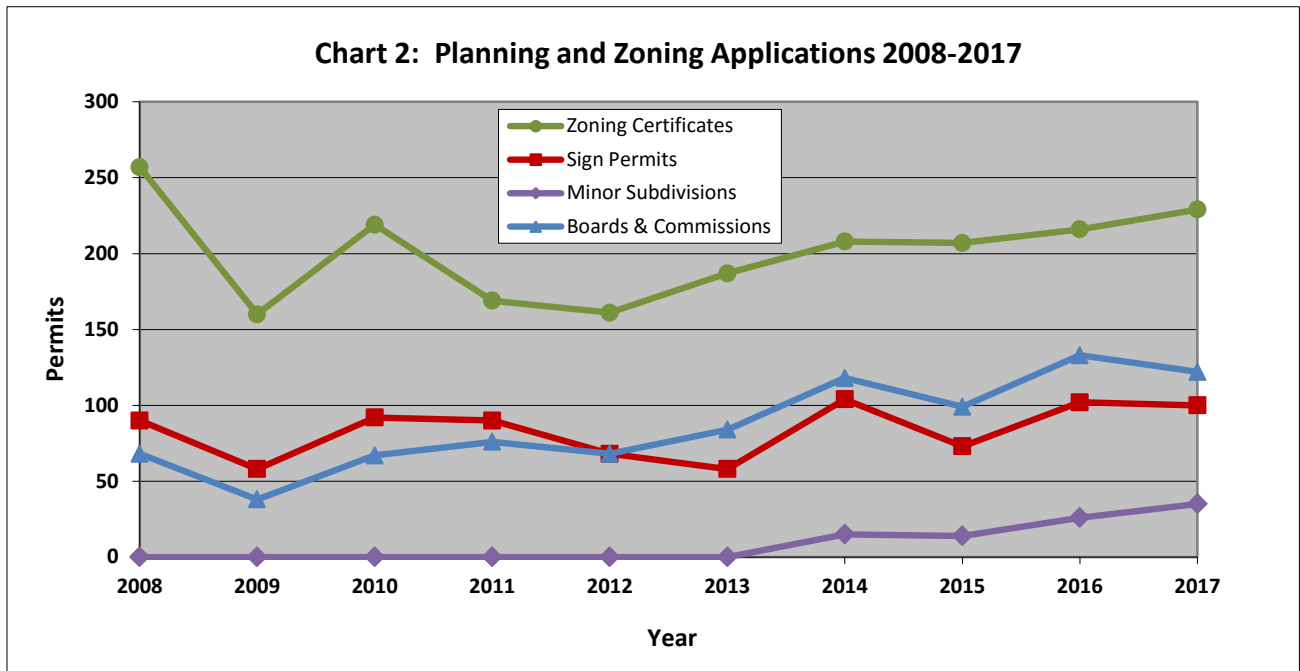
**Chart 1: Planning and Zoning Applications 2017**



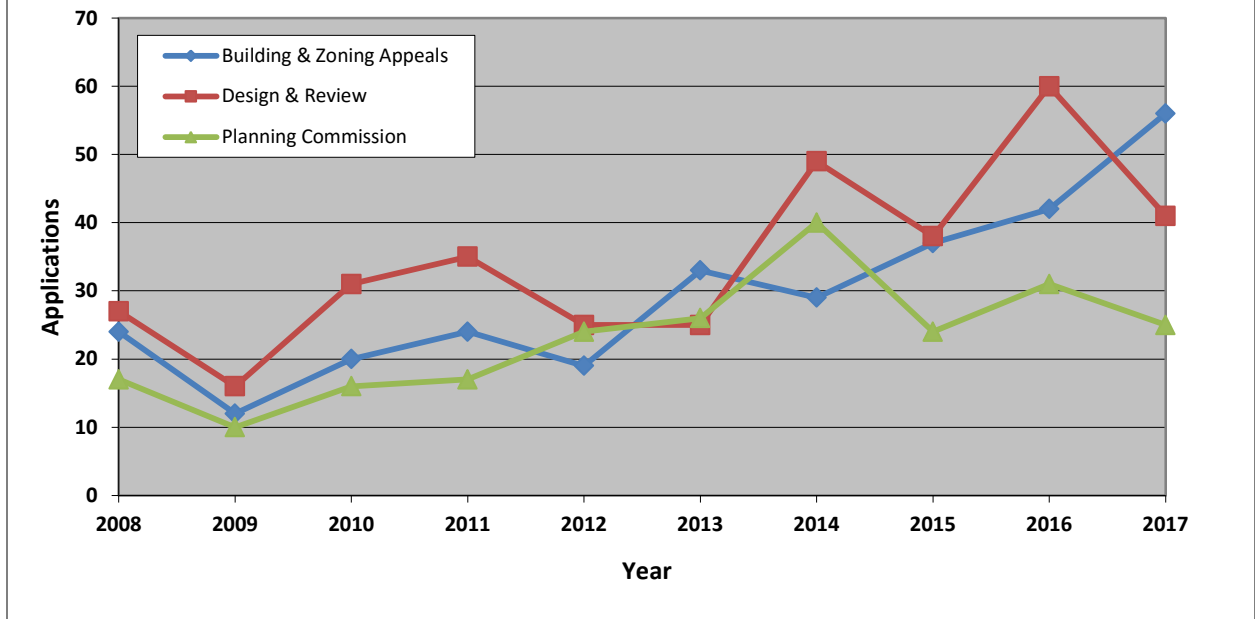
**Table 2: Planning and Zoning Applications 2008-2017**

Year	Zoning Certificates	Sign Permits	Minor Subdivisions	Building & Zoning Appeals	Design & Review	Planning Commission	Boards & Commissions	Total
2008	257	90	-	24	27	17	68	415
2009	160	58	-	12	16	10	38	256
2010	219	92	-	20	31	16	67	378
2011	169	90	-	24	35	17	76	335
2012	161	68	-	19	25	24	68	297
2013	187	58	-	33	25	26	84	329
2014	208	104	15	29	49	40	118	445
2015	207	73	14	37	38	24	99	393
2016	216	102	26	42	60	31	133	477
2017	229	100	35	56	41	25	122	493
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,013</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>3,818</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>382</b>

**Chart 2: Planning and Zoning Applications 2008-2017**



**Chart 3: Board and Commission Requests 2006-2017**



**Table 3: Zoning Violations 2017**

Violation	Number
Signs	82
Recreational Vehicle/Trailer	22
Parking on Lawn	20
Zoning Certificate Required	17
Accessory Structure	7
Off Street Parking	5
Visibility at Intersections	4
Other	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>

**Chart 4: Zoning Violations 2017**

