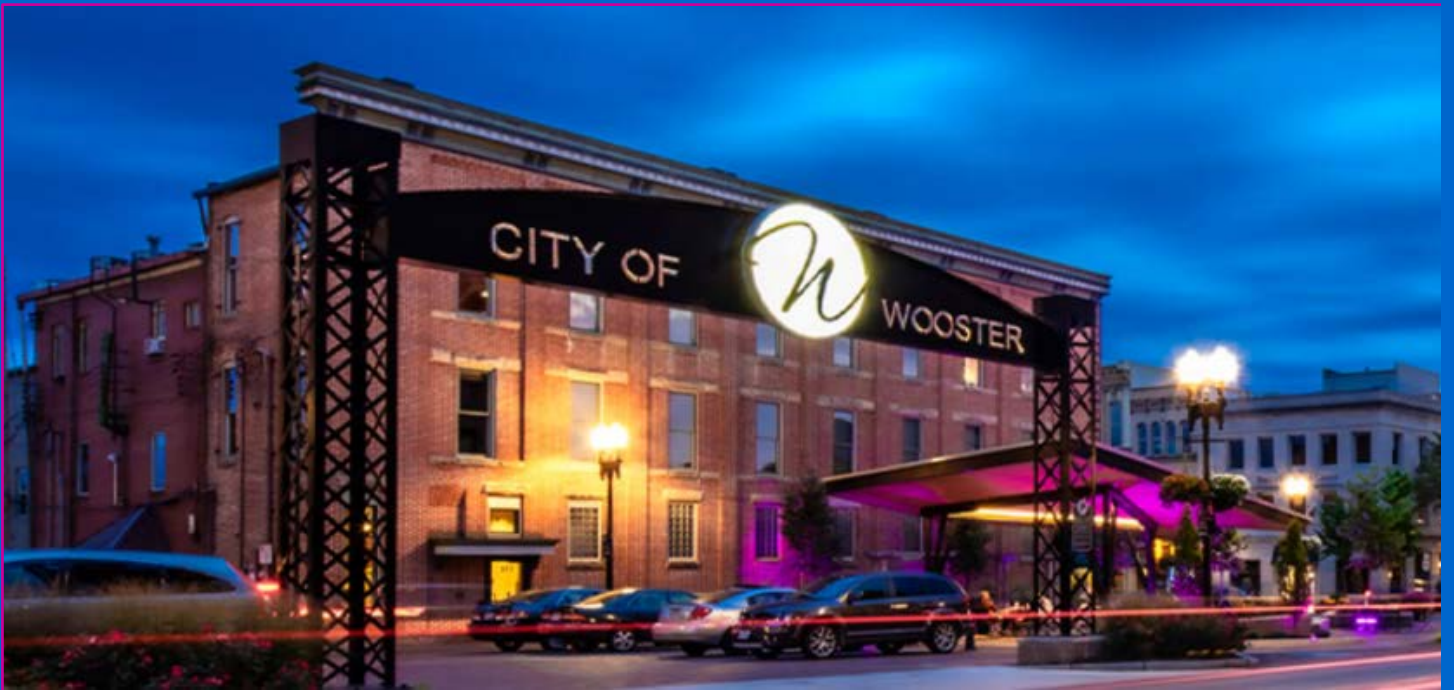


2024

Report



Building Standards Division

Message from the Chief Building Official



When you think about it, we spend most of our lives inside of buildings. Because of this, building safety is a key ingredient of a safe and prosperous community. We work every day to ensure buildings are safe and code compliant, whether it's our homes, places of worship or work, or where we shop, eat or play. Building Safety defines our purpose and we are committed to it.

The Building Standards Division interacts with citizens, business owners, developers, contractors, and others in an effort to assist each person with their specific building project or question. This annual report serves to provide a summary of those interactions and explain how they add value to the community as a whole. As expected, I will provide a report of activity by the numbers. But I will also provide a brief synopsis of what these numbers mean, how they support our values, and show how we engage with our customers and stakeholders. I will also describe our staff's accomplishments, the goals we achieved and our new goals for the upcoming year.

Thank you for reading our annual report and I sincerely hope it helps you better understand our purpose and commitment to the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Monea". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tim Monea, Chief Building Official
Building Standards Manager/Floodplain Manager

1,592

Permits issued

Up 5% from last year and continues trend of record activity

4,009

Total Inspections

Down 7% from last year

\$94,589,091

Value of construction in Wooster dropped 27% from last year and 9% from 2021. 2021 and 2022 were the highest values ever recorded and 5 of the last 6 years numbers were the highest on record. The 2023 number still ranks high on the list.

45

New Single Family Homes built up 350% from last year. This is analyzed further in the report.

779

Property Maintenance and Zoning Code Inspections down 7% from last year.

Activity Summary

- **1,592 permits** This is up 5%. Six of the last seven years had the highest permit numbers in the last 20 years. These numbers are impressive given the circumstances of the pandemic.
- **4,009 Total Inspections** Down 7% from last year. Of these, 779 were property maintenance or zoning code inspections.
- **The total value of permitted construction was nearly \$95 million.** This was down 27% from last year although 6 of the last 7 years have been some of the highest values on record for the last 25 years and the 2022 values were the highest ever recorded.
- In 2023, we **collected \$338,224 in fees**, down 40% from 2022 which saw the most fees ever collected in a single year because of several large projects (Wooster Brush, FedEx, etc.) Fee collection in 6 of the last 7 years has been the highest on record and line with our revenue policy discussed further in report.
- **45 new single-family houses** were approved, and this is up 350% from last year. This is analyzed further in the report.

The top 10 projects in 2023 by value of construction

1. Shaeffler Addition	\$11,000,000
2. College of Wooster Douglass Hall	\$10,000,000
3. City of Wooster Fire Station #1	\$ 5,091,000
4. Daisy Brand additions	\$ 4,356,000
5. Merit Drive medical office building	\$ 3,000,000
6. WC Public Library Main	\$ 1,750,000
7. New SF Dwelling	\$ 2,000,000
8. WCH Medical Office 1685 Cleveland Rd.	\$ 1,444,000
9. JAZ Automotive 4688 Cleveland Rd	\$ 1,350,000
10. Daisy Expansion	\$ 1,300,000

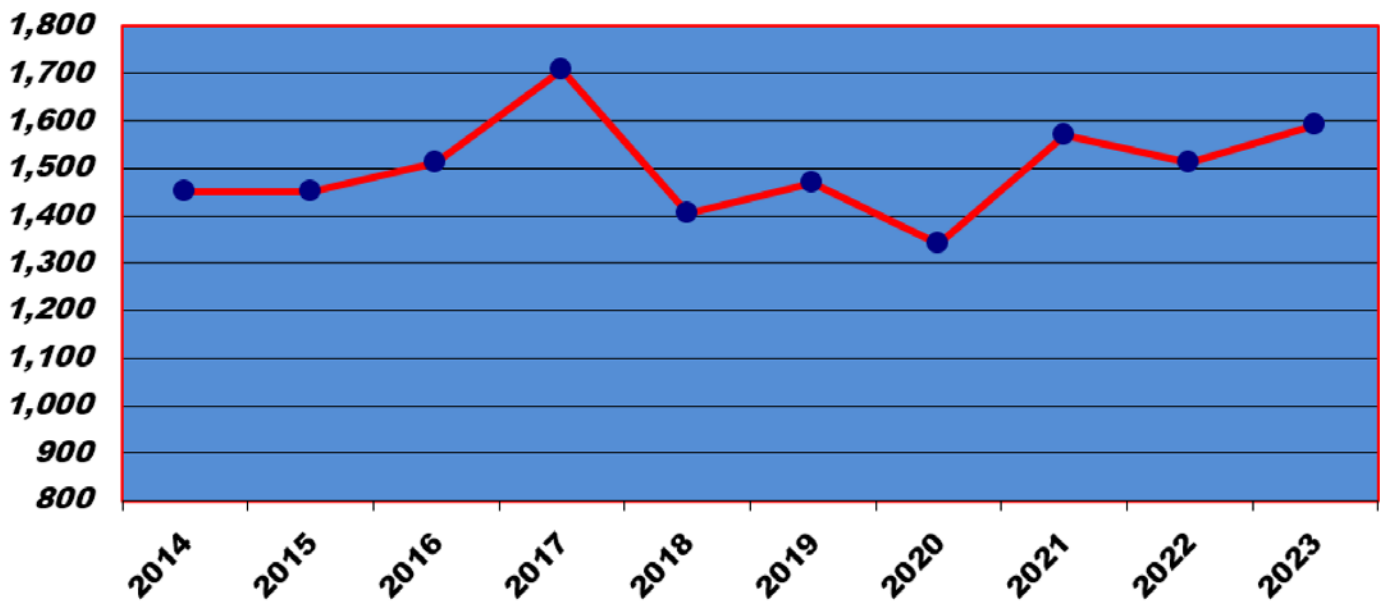
This total represents 43% of all construction \$41,291,000

This activity has been trending up for 10 years.

In 2023, 1,592 permits were issued, up 5% from last year. This level of activity has been fairly consistent for the last 10 years.

Total inspections were down 7% from last year. Generally, these numbers parallel the permit numbers and have also remained consistent for the last 10 years.

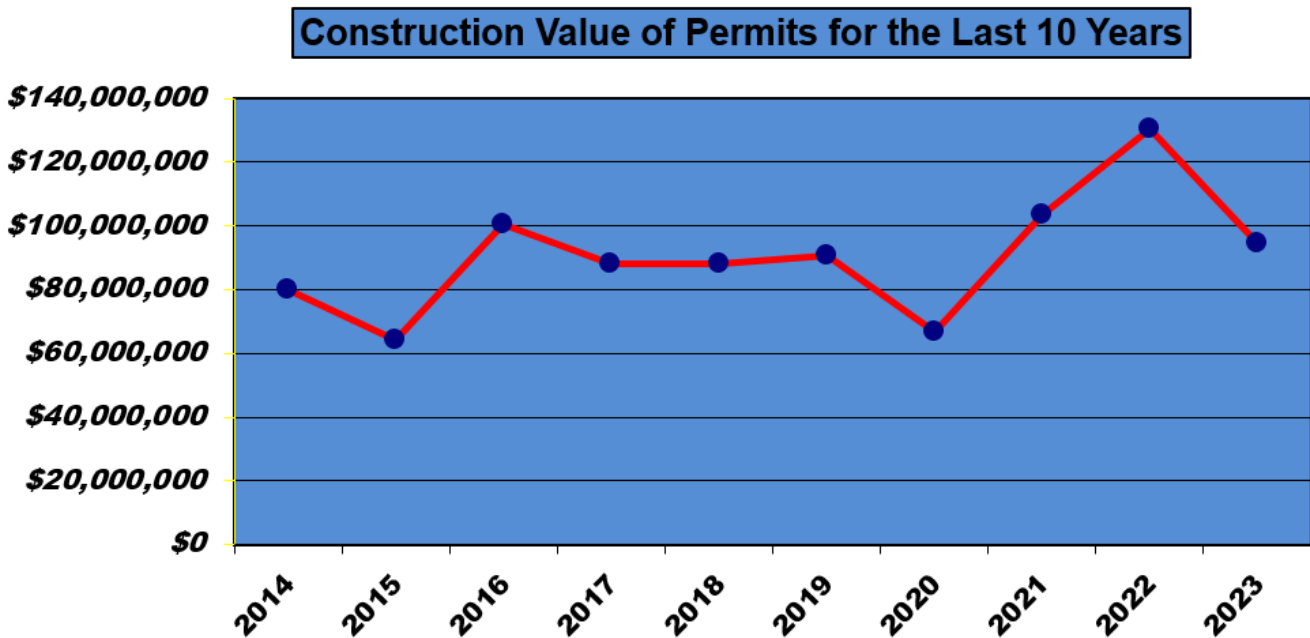
Number of Permits Issued Last 10 Years



During 2022, the Division reviewed and issued 1,512 construction permits. These permits include residential and commercial building, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and fire sprinkler and alarm permits. Not included in the figures are residential zoning permits (the division issues residential zoning permits and these are tracked by the Planning and Zoning Division).

2023 Value of Construction

In 2023, the total value of construction was nearly \$96 million. This represented the highest value ever.

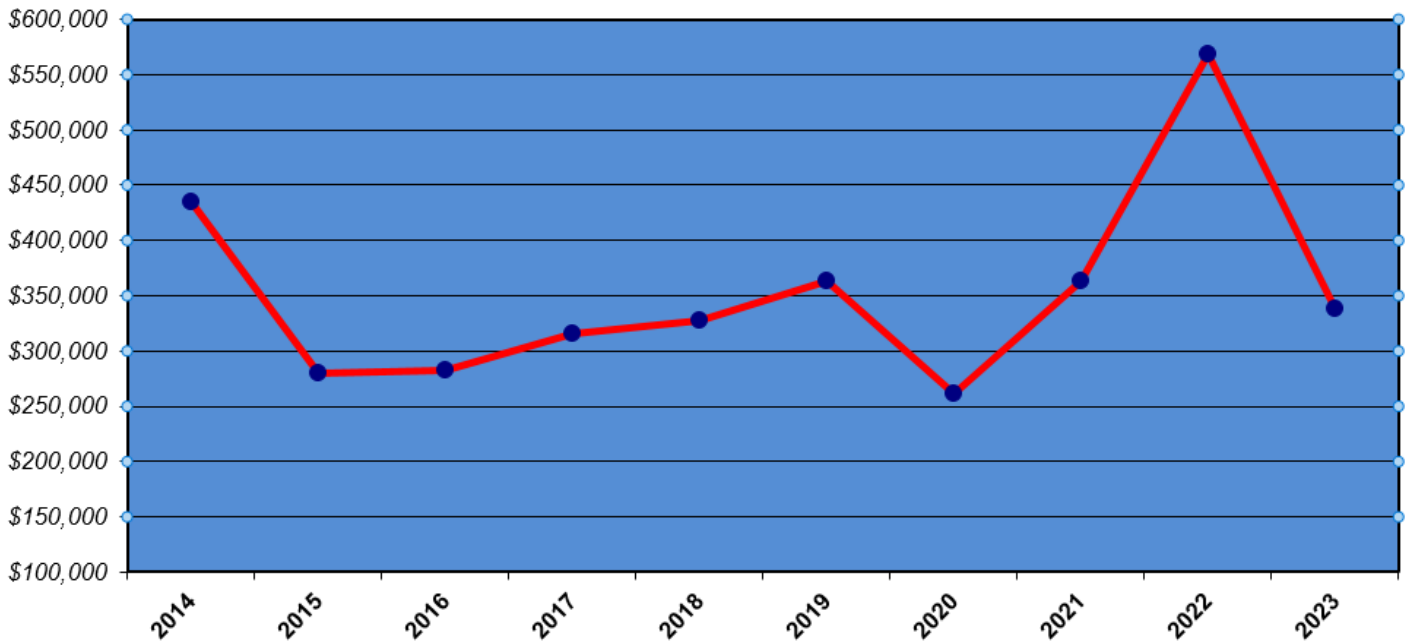


Over the last 25 years, construction in the City of Wooster has certainly had its ups and downs. Before 2001, construction values remained fairly constant in the \$30 - \$40 million range. The years between 2001 through 2007 saw construction activity levels peak in the City with 2005 seeing nearly double the norm with \$90 million in value. The housing crisis and the few years following 2007 represented the low point. Starting in 2014, the last ten years had very high construction activity culminating in the record year 2022. In 2022, we issued building permits on construction valued at over \$130 million – a new all-time high topping 2021’s \$104 million, the previous record. 2023 continued this trend of robust activity with nearly \$96 million, although below the previous two record years.

2022 Fee Collection Up 39% Continuing a 6 year Upward Trend.

In 2023, we collected \$338,224 in fees, down 40% from 2021 but close to the 2021 numbers. The chart shows fees have been fairly consistent for 7 of the last 10 years and in line with our revenue policy.

Permit Fees Collected in the Last 10 Years

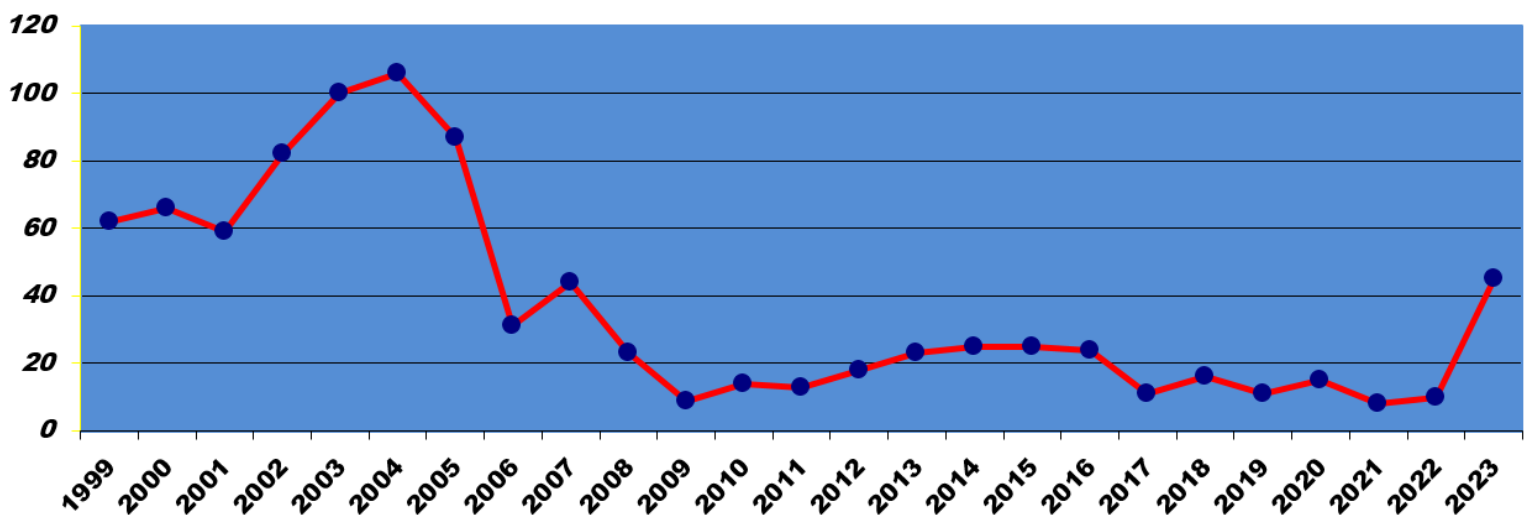


The general mix of department funding is 40% user fees and 60% general fund. This mix is part of a revenue policy developed by the Division and Administration and is reviewed and analyzed periodically. The policy reflects the view that fees from permits should not subsidize code enforcement and other non-development activity as this burden should be placed on the community as a whole. An increase in code enforcement activity and abatement funds (such as demolition) bring this percentage down, as development fees should not fund this activity.

2023 Single-Family Housing Starts Up

In 2023, 45 new houses were approved, up 350% from last year's total of 10. The years 2011 – 2016 saw 20 – 25 houses built each year before it dipped in 2017 and not breaking 20 houses until 2023.

Single Family Housing Units built in the Last 25 Years



Housing averaged 64 new dwellings for the each of the ten years from 1999 – 2007 and even topped 100 units in two of those years. Housing unit growth paralleled the growth of the North End of the City as new subdivisions were built out at the same time as the North End developed. For the years 2012 – 2016, Wooster averaged 23 new single-family houses. However, since then housing starts have not reached 20 units until this past year. In those years until 2023, very few new subdivisions were brought to the City for development. In 2021 the housing industry faced unprecedented obstacles such as shortages of lumber and other supplies. The future looks bright for housing as we now have several hundred new single-family sites approved and other multi-family developments planned. One development with nearly 100 sites sold about ½ of their sites in 2023 and will likely sell out in 2024.

2023 Property Maintenance Code Enforcement

Activity Summary

Code enforcement is some of the most challenging work we do. But it is important and satisfying because it protects public health and safety, safeguards relationships between neighbors, beautifies our neighborhoods, and preserves property values.

- We performed **1,288 property maintenance and planning and zoning code inspections during 2023. This is down 12% from 2022.**
- We issued 412 **Code violations**. 88% were closed. They were closed because the owner complied, the City abated the violation, or we prosecuted the case in court. 7 cases were prosecuted in 2023 and many more were resolved before making it to court.
- 76% of the violations were for high grass and weeds, excess rubbish and garbage, and unlicensed or inoperable vehicles.
- Eight houses were **demolished** either by the City or by order. We have averaged 7 houses per year for the last 10 years.

Floodplain Administration

Flooding has been a notorious cause of damage and life loss in the United States, with an average annual damage cost of \$6 billion and loss of 140 people. Floods can occur due to heavy rain, snowmelt, or a body of water overflowing, among other causes. The people and places affected by flooding are located in what is referred to as the floodplain.

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 in 2010.

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 flood prone areas, flood damage risks are properly managed.

During 2022, the division conducted several floodplain reviews and assisted property owners determine the base flood elevation of their properties. Only a few floodplain permits were issued for projects.

City of Wooster Building Standards Division Significant 2022 Accomplishments

- The Division serves as the main professional, technical, and administrative staff for plan review, permitting, inspections, code enforcement, floodplain administration, and enforcement of other local ordinances and requirements.
- The inspectors participated in mandatory training for their respective certifications and training for the updated building codes effective in early 2023. The City participated in a training program for additional inspectors to be certified for commercial building and electrical inspections. This added capability will provide for more flexibility and back-up.
- The staff continued to provide support and back-up to the county inspectors.
- The Chief Building Official (CBO) represented the City as a member of the Housing Coalition and sat on the homelessness ad hoc subcommittee and the City's housing advisory committee. The CBO also represented the mayor as the board chair of Community Action Wayne/Medina (CAW/M) and was a member of the Lyric Theater construction committee.
- The division also continued management of the Residential Waste Contract with Kimble, managed all of the City's off-street parking lots, and expanded the City's downtown dumpster program with a new location. The Division also manages city hall facilities and upgraded the building exterior lighting, prepared the bid specifications for the replacement of the HVAC system chillers and all of the building's windows.

2023 Goal Setting and Action Planning

Goal One: Expand the downtown waste collection program and eliminate non-compliant dumpsters from the district. *Complete with a dumpster site on East Liberty, enforcement continues.*

Goal Two: Assist the Land Bank in identifying properties to return to productive use in Wooster. *Completed as several projects moved forward.*

Goal Three: Remodel Council Chambers, IT, and Finance Division. Produce specifications for the replacement of the chillers at City Hall. *Council Room remodeling completed in 2023. Finance Division and IT Division remodeling completed. Chiller replacement bid documents completed.*

2024 Goal Setting and Action Planning

Goal One: Continue to expand the Downtown Waste Collection Program including enforcement of non-compliant containers scattered around the downtown area.

Goal Two: Evaluate fees for both building standards applications and the City's downtown waste collection program. Work out fee structures and formulas consistent with policy.

Goal Three: Complete work on City Hall including the new HVAC chiller replacement, City Hall window replacement phase I, and the administration office and lobby.

“The City of Wooster Building Standards Division staff is well trained, experienced, and committed to our mission of protecting the public and we are ready for the challenges of 2024.”

Tim Monea	Chief Building Official Floodplain Administrator
Carla Jessie	Administrative Assistant Building Standards Division Planning and Zoning Division
Kim Fahrni	Electrical Inspector Commercial Building Inspector
Scott Davis	Plumbing and HVAC Inspector Residential Building Inspector
Mark Wilson	Building and Zoning Inspector Property Maintenance Inspector
Jeff Mills	Property Maintenance Inspector Zoning Inspector

Respectfully submitted by:

Tim Monea, CBO
Building Standards Division Manager