

## City of Wooster

### HOUSING & COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

How the City of Wooster is working to Support Housing Opportunity

#### Key Considerations:

- City of Wooster is a Home Rule community of 27,232, created by its residents to provide services that improve safety and quality of life. (Police, EMS, Roads, Parks, and Policy, such as facilitating planning.)
- Investments by Wooster's residents (23% of Wayne County's 116,000 residents) have created infrastructure responsible for 50% of the county's employment payroll and 80% of all retail space.
- City is funded mostly by its 1.5% income tax (among the lowest for a city of our size) and user fees. It relies on and partners with a strong network of independent-sector social services providers to support our residents.
- Housing and homelessness is a county and regional issue that requires a county and state approach
- The City has taken steps to help support housing and economic opportunities for **all** of its residents.
- Wooster's residents are less wealthy, but younger and growing (45% LMI vs. 36% county).
- Wooster has the greatest concentration of housing and historic structures in our region.

#### Making Gains on Housing in Wooster

- To help expand housing opportunities, the City has supported developers with **site selection, data, grant application assistance, public infrastructure, and for strategic reinvestments**, along with projects involving rent-control (affordable housing), **tax incentives** (i.e. Community Reinvestment Area tax exemption).
- Tax incentives impact the rate **we all pay** over time, and must be **very strategic and discretionary**. In Wooster, these are limited to reinvestment in our oldest neighborhoods and for basic-sector job creation (which has a **multiplier** effect, as opposed to retail, etc)
- New housing is the **most expensive** type of housing, **but it stalls** increases in rents and can lower tax burdens for all other properties long-term. It can also open up existing units and homes for others.

#### Housing Landscape

- Wooster has **11,065** occupied units
- Up to **905** new units are possible in next 24-36 months (+8% increase)

##### Under Construction

- 234 Units

##### Proposed

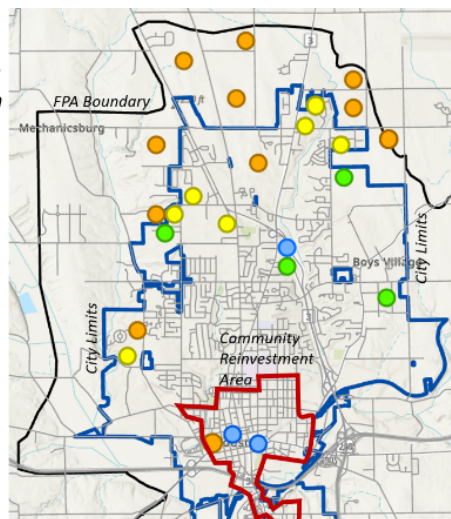
- 671 Units

##### Recently Completed

- 28 Units

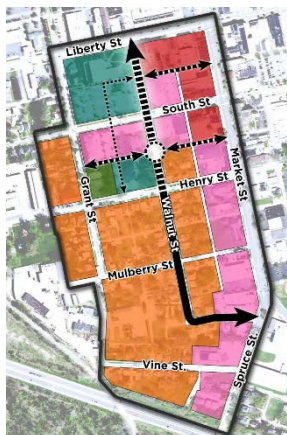
##### Future Opportunities

- Developable with utilities



#### Facilitating Planning

- Read Wooster's community-survey-based plan here: [www.woosteroh.com/planning](http://www.woosteroh.com/planning).
- Wooster **regularly** invests in **citizen outreach** to update its comprehensive plan, **uncovering opportunities** for reinvesting in our City and to **thoughtfully** grow in order to welcome new residents and businesses.
- Top citizen priorities in '24: (1) Encourage range of housing options, (2) Infill development, (3) Workforce development, (4) Maintain & enhance park network, (5) Expand Greenspace, (6) Transportation, and (6) Community Identity.



- Need for housing **across all types** in order to support our changing workforce.
- **Preventing urban sprawl:** Discouragement of expanding utility systems is a **pro-sprawl** county policy. While up to 125 acres are required for 25 single-family homes without utilities, City systems enable **cluster developments**, supporting between 500 and 1,500 units on the same acreage, meeting future demand with **less** farmland lost and at a **lower** taxpayer cost.
- **Preventing slum & blight:** Wooster's oldest neighborhoods are the most in need of modernization to **retain and gain back** residents and economic prosperity. These neighborhoods are losing value and in some cases population at the greatest rate, which threatens to **reallocate** (raise) property taxes on all other homeowners.
- **Arts District & Downtown:** Current zoning rules **prevent** modernization and mixed-use developments. An **overlay** district may be an option to strategically allow reinvestment.

### City Transportation Program

- As with roadways and bridges, the City invests in transportation services (up to \$500,000/yr).
- Between 7% and 9% of Wooster households do not use a car in going to and from work daily.
- Funds taxi-pass and fixed-route transit for low-income residents. About half passes to access **work**.
- Learn more at: [www.woosteroh.com](http://www.woosteroh.com) (See “Community” | “Transportation-Assistance”).

### CHIP (Community Housing Impact Preservation Program)

- City secures and manages grant for all of Wayne County, and fronts ~\$1.1 MM to perform projects countywide.
- Federal grants to repair and rehab homes for low-income residents, including roof replacement, major rehab, and electrical. (Eligibility: Annual income no more than \$46,400 for an individual, or \$66,250 for a household of 4).
- Saves up to 36 homes annually from eventually becoming condemnable, keeping families in place, preserving the value of the home and keeping up values for the whole neighborhood. WMHA manages day-to-day affairs.
- Learn more, refer a friend or neighbor in need, or apply: [www.woosteroh.com/chip](http://www.woosteroh.com/chip)

### City of Wooster Property Maintenance Program

- (Wooster Only) Program has helped to save homes from disrepair and keep neighbors, tenants, and owners protected in cases of disrepair, faulty work by contractors, or violations of the International Property Maintenance Code.
- Performs approximately 800 property maintenance and zoning inspections annually, ensuring safe conditions.
- Complaint-driven system, enforced by prosecution. Interior inspections as tenants or owners may request.
- Learn more or make a complaint at: [www.woosteroh.com/building-standards](http://www.woosteroh.com/building-standards)

### Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program

- CRA is an incentive for property owners to improve and expand their properties in strategic areas, or to construct new housing altogether. Wooster’s strategic area covers its oldest neighborhoods and industrial areas.
- Available in certain areas of all cities and several villages in Wayne County. Open to all incomes and also landlords.
- In Wooster, over 48 homes + 116 apartments have been improved or constructed new in Wooster’s downtown areas and along State Rt 585, sometimes also leveraging other state or federal funds (LIHTC, etc.).
- CRA is a tax exemption granted on the improved value resulting from a construction project. Generally, homeowners gain a \$4,000 benefit per \$20,000 of new valuation in most urban areas, earned over a 10 to 15 year period.
- Contact your local City/Village Hall to learn more. More: [www.woosteroh.com/development](http://www.woosteroh.com/development) (See “Homeowners”).

### City of Wooster Fair Housing Program

- With support of Community Action Wayne/Medina, provides expert consultation and takes complaints on fair housing.
- City conducts research and Fair Housing Analysis of Impediments studies. Most prominent issues include general information for compliance, discrimination around disabilities, and general professionalism within the rental industry.
- Wooster Fair Housing Hotline: 330.263.5200 (Ext. 300), or 330.621.8038 if calling outside of Wooster.
- Learn more at [www.woosteroh.com/fair-housing](http://www.woosteroh.com/fair-housing).

### How Wooster Is Working To Support Housing Development

- Learn more at: [www.woosteroh.com/development](http://www.woosteroh.com/development)
- **Securing grants** for infrastructure, offsets City’s costs to invest in development projects (parks, pools, walkability, etc.).
- **Site selection** support for prospective developers (assistance with data, development suitability, utilities, etc.).
- **Grant application support** for certain strategic developments (i.e. fiscal analysis for low-income housing projects).
- **Facilitation of planning** to support long-term development and public-private developments with public benefits.
- **Civic infrastructure** including parks, walkable connections, roadway, and parking, which serves to support housing.
- **Economic Development Strategic Planning** to support long-term economic opportunities that support residents’ economic mobility.