

**Development Coordination**  
**Concluding 2024 Annual Report**  
 Department of Community Service and Development  
 City of Wooster – DRAFT 4/2025

Provided by:  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Creating Opportunities for Prosperity for Wooster Residents, Businesses & Start-Ups*

**Development** is responsible for supporting **Economic and Community Development** under the direction of the Administration. Development pursues various grants to support City quality-of-life infrastructure projects and housing, provides assistance to businesses with expansion and retention needs, supports major development projects with analysis, and manages local tax incentive programs to encourage reinvestment and basic-sector job creation. Development also performs Project Management for **Wooster Growth**, the City’s community improvement corporation, interfaces with multiple not-for-profit and partner governmental economic development organizations, and offers a direct city resource major development projects.

### *Major Development Highlights*

City of Wooster welcomed **Welch Packaging** with its expansion to Wooster in creating a corrugated sheet plant. This basic-sector project served to create supply-chain materials to a network of other factories in a multi-state area. The win was financially support with a JobsOhio grant, a State Job Creation Tax Credit (JCTC) and a matching local Job Creation Tax Credit (L-JCTC) along with the City’s Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program.



### *Silver Road Economic Development Plan*

Economic Development assisted with the creation of the Silver Road TIF Incentive District to support the reconstruction of Silver Road, a necessary requirement to support a proposed 108-home subdivision and growing businesses along Venture Boulevard in need of improved access. Secured supporting Development Agreement. The project will also establish new sanitary sewer and new bike trails, linking the proposed subdivision to Clear Creek Park.

**Seaman Corporation** affirmed Wooster for its expansion as it seeks to add **53 jobs** to its Wooster workforce of 189 employees. Seeking sites among different states, the project was supported with a JobsOhio Grant, a State JCTC, a matching-JCTC, and a CRA. Additionally, the City of Wooster secured a \$250,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation for the project to assist with the reconstruction of Silver Road for its required industrial needs, allowing the project to move forward in 2025.



# Wooster Economic Statistics

2024 Available Metrics

<b>27,232</b> Residents (55th Largest City in Ohio) <sup>1/1a</sup>	<b>\$65,888</b> median household income <sup>1a</sup> (vs. \$61,608 Oh)
<b>1,232</b> establishments JobsOhio (GISplanning)firms <sup>2</sup>	<b>10.0%</b> in poverty <sup>1</sup> (vs. 13.2% Ohio) <sup>5</sup>
<b>51%</b> in labor force <sup>1a</sup> (vs. 50.2% Ohio) <sup>3</sup>	<b>47.5%</b> Low-to-Moderate Income <sup>4</sup> (+2.2%)
<b>3.7%</b> unemployment <sup>3</sup> (vs. 4.5% Ohio) <sup>4</sup>	<b>42.34%</b> Free/Reduced Lunch (WCSD -2.16) <sup>6</sup>
	<b>94.2%</b> (+0.45%) high school graduate <sup>7</sup> vs. <b>89.1%</b> (+1%) Ohio)

1. Population uses decennial census. 1a. 2023 American Community Survey estimate is 27,013 (-0.7%, however, margin of error is greater) Income (-1.3% from year prior). 2024's estimate will be released in late second quarter.

2. Figure from gisplanning (JobsOhio sites database platform)

3. 2024 Ohio Labor Market Information System labor force population versus total population. (This figure includes minors and elderly).

4. Ohio Labor Market Information System as of 12/2024. Wooster unemployment grew from previous year, returning to a more typical rate from a historic 2.3% low, while Ohio remained steady at 4.5%. A rate of 5% or less is generally considered full employment.

5. Wooster's poverty rate fell from 13.4% (2022 to 2023), while the State poverty is up from 10.8% year prior.

6. Housing and Urban Development Calculation (2023-adjusted from 2015 American Community Survey) This is a lagging indicator.

7. Ohio Department of Education FY2023-2024 Data

## New Funding Secured:

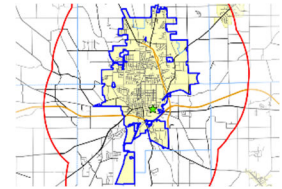
The City of Wooster actively participates in several State of Ohio grant programs as an important avenue to helping our residents maximize their federal tax dollar investment.

**\$150,000**  
CDBG Flex GRANT



**\$192,500**  
CDBG Flex GRANT

Development obtained a Community Development Block Grant (Allocation Grant) securing **\$150,000** to support the City's expansion of its transportation program into a full public system.



Development secured a **\$250,000** ODOT Jobs and Commerce grant to support the reconstruction of Silver Road to industrial grade standards.

**\$250,000**  
J&C GRANT

Development partnered with the Wooster Police Department and Admin to secure **\$192,500** to support Viola Startzman Clinic with launching a mental health service for the community, with a focus on assisting homeless and at-risk residents.

**Ohio**  
Department of  
Development

**Ongoing:** Development finalized work on a set of CDBG grants totaling **\$650,000** to support the expansion of Fire Station 1, conducting ongoing management of a **\$775,000 Brownfield Remediation Grant** through Wooster Growth to remediate 517 E. Liberty Street, and continued work on its **\$1,045,000 Community Housing Impact and Preservation Grant** on behalf of the Wayne County, City of Wooster, and City of Orrville CHIP Partnership. Additional funding approved included the formal award of a 2023 **Transportation Improvement District Grant** of **\$330,000** for new entrance lanes into the Schaeffler Wooster campus along State Route 585, which will commence in 2025.

## Development by the Numbers

### Community Reinvestment Area <sup>1</sup>

**21** Active CRA Agreements managed through 2024 with an impact of:

**135 / 737** jobs created / retained

**\$50,078,168** in payroll achieved

**Two** CRA agreement actions

*1 New Agreement Established, 1 Initiated*

*For 2024, total 40-Project Portfolio Resulted In:*

**\$89 MM** in new property investment

**\$722,477** in new community revenues <sup>2</sup>

1. Based on 2024 figures (TIRC approval pending) \$590,477 in property taxes from all projects, and \$132,000 in income taxes from newly created jobs among active agreements. Note, a portion of these funds are shared with local schools.

### Enterprise Zone <sup>1</sup>

**9** Active EZ Agreements managed through 2024 with an impact of:

**395 / 2,228** jobs created / retained

**\$178,237,611** in payroll achieved

*Two EZ assignment amendments in progress*

*For 2024, Total 22-Project Portfolio Resulted In:*

**\$285 MM** in new property investment

**\$1.76 MM** in new community revenues <sup>2</sup>

1. Based on 2024 figures (TIRC approval pending) \$939,746 in property taxes, \$821,112 in income taxes. Note, a portion of these funds are shared with local schools.

### Community Development

**26** Private Business Consultations<sup>4</sup>

**5** Real Estate Site Studies / Reports<sup>5</sup>

**13** Community/Government Relations Events<sup>6</sup>

4. Consultations include meetings, usually several per project, with businesses to assist with information to aid a launch, expansion, or retention effort. Efforts range from general consultation on local ecosystem resources to assistance with fiscal impact analyses to support grant applications to comprehensive expansion proposals and inter-agency site visitations.

5. Most real estate site studies involve assessment

6. Formal inter-governmental / agency relation events (e.g. Hosting Ohio Development Tour, Conference Presentation, OhioMeans Jobs)

### Managed Reporting

Local Job Creation Tax Credit Program (L-JCTC)  
*Four projects with +353 new / future basic-sector jobs*

PY2023 CHIP Program (Countywide Grant)  
*Home Repair, Rental Rehab, and Private Rehab grants*

CDBG Grants (Critical, Flex, Allocation)  
*\$150,000 Public Transportation Expansion  
\$650,000 Fire Station 1, Viola Startzman Clinic  
\$192,500 Viola Startzman Mental Health Expansion*

Tax Incentive Review Council  
*As required for EZ, CRA, and TIF programs*

Ohio Brownfield Grant  
*517 E. Liberty Street Site Remediation*

## Tax Increment Financing

**Oak Hill Tax Incentive Financing District:** 100%-30 year (Effective 10-Yr 75% Schools) **\$8.5 MM** new roadway and sewer infrastructure | Five Districts | 1 Development Agreement for 91 homes  
2023: 0 Homes Complete, \$4.7 MM total valuation: (Private investment ~\$5 MM): \$0 Net PILOTS  
2024: 23 Homes Complete, 8 Partial, \$10.5 MM total valuation: **\$106,120 Net PILOTS** (Pay 2025)

**Silver Road TIF Incentive District:** 75%-10 year **\$877 K** new roadway, sewer and trail infrastructure  
| One District | 1 Development Agreement for 108 Homes  
2024: Grading started, \$429 K total valuation: **\$0 Net PILOTS** (Pay 2025)

## Major Projects and Efforts:

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- Site Suitability Analysis and Coordination with Wayne County Planning
- Welch Packaging Wooster Expansion
- Seaman Corporation Expansion Project
- Ongoing “www.woosteroh.com/sites” Service
- Project Coordination with JobsOhio, TeamNeo, OhioMeansJobs, and Dept. of Development
- Economic Development Fund Coordination with independent sector partners
- PY2023 CHIP Grant Management
  - More: [www.woosteroh.com/chip](http://www.woosteroh.com/chip)
- PY2023 CDBG Flex Grant (Mental Health)
- PY2024 CDBG Allocation Grant (Transit)
- NEFCO CEDs Committee
- MSW Economic Development Committee
- Fair Housing Program and Coordination
  - Quinquennial Analysis of Impediments
  - More: [www.woosteroh.com/fair-housing](http://www.woosteroh.com/fair-housing)
- Supported RFIs with WEDC on Wooster Sites
- Wooster Innovation Park Management
- Downtown Brownfield 517 E. Liberty Project
  - \$775,000 Remediation Grant Effort
- Silver Road TIF Incentive District Creation
  - More: [www.woosteroh.com/development](http://www.woosteroh.com/development)
- Continued Business Outreach, Consultation, and Project Management
  - More: [www.woosteroh.com/business](http://www.woosteroh.com/business)
- Tax Increment Financing Management
  - Oak Hill TIF: Net \$92,508 in 2024
- Management of Enterprise Zone Program
  - 9 active projects, 9 graduated, 4 complete
  - 2,623 jobs retained / created (active)
  - \$595,450 property taxes foregone (act.)
  - \$273 K property taxes paid (active)
  - \$939,746 paid on all 22 EZ projects
  - \$349 MM private investment
- Management of Community Reinvestment Area Program (4th largest in Ohio)
  - 21 active projects, 19 complete
  - 737 jobs retained, 135 created (active)
  - \$1,273,351 property taxes foregone (act.)
  - \$428 K paid on all 40 CRA projects
  - \$89 MM private investment
- Coordination on revenue sharing between partner school districts and townships
  - EZ, CRA, TIF revenue share obligations
  - Annexation revenue share obligations

## 2024 Ranks and Notes:

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**SITeseLECTION**

*Wooster #3 McSA in Ohio (Released 3/25)*  
*Wooster #3 McSA in United States*

**bea** | Bureau of Economic Analysis  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

*Wooster #1 Ohio McSA GDP by total: \$8.456 B*  
*#10 Ohio McSA per capita (GDP per Pop.)*  
*of 29 total micropolitans. (BEA Release 11/24)*

## The Year Ahead

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- Intergovernmental Collaboration on Long-Term Future Developable Sites
  - Wooster Innovation Park Development Marketing Update
- Evaluation of Parcel Tax Increment Financing to Advance Comprehensive Plan Goals
  - Evaluation of New Incentives and Supportive Programming for Investment
  - Ongoing Efforts on 517 E. Liberty Street Brownfield Remediation Project
- Economic Development Strategic Plan Working Groups and Update of Tools
  - 2025 CDBG, CHIP, and Additional Grant Pursuits
- Continued Business Outreach, Consultation, and Project Management

## ***DIVISION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES***

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### **2025 Division Goals and Objectives**

- **Wooster Innovation Park & Sites Support:** The Office continues to support business inquiries and site visits to the Wooster Innovation Park and other privately-listed Wooster sites. At the time of publication, a sale is pending for the eastern portion of the park, while the 56-acre western portion of the park remains available for light industrial development. Support includes ensuring marketability of commercial sites and neighborhood-scale residential development opportunities, consultation and research assistance for prospective businesses and developers, and facilitating funding opportunities for certain infrastructure.
- **Future Sites Opportunity Assessment:** As very few sites remain within Wayne County to support development inquiries, this Office is supporting a collaboration of economic stakeholders and neighboring governments in identifying viable sites for future industrial site absorption as well as residential development opportunities. Ongoing contributions include absorption research and geographic analysis to identify feasible opportunities to support future business.
- **Grant procurement and management:** This Office will continue to manage its portfolio of grants with the Department of Development (in 2025, **CDBG, CHIP, Brownfield**) and pursue competitive grants as opportunities become available. Separately, this Office coordinates with the Ohio Department of Transportation on funding opportunities to support economic development projects (TID, J&C, TAP). Project management, often involving the procurement of contracts, tracking, reporting, and monitoring are required for all active grants.
- **Continue to Identify and Pursue Development Opportunities with Independent Sector and Governmental Partners:** This Office partners with other agencies and entities in identifying possibilities for future development, both in terms of responding to inquiries, and in preparing for the future. 2025 efforts will include continued evaluation of an Energy Special Improvement District (ESID) to support reinvestment by offering PACE, or Parcel Assessed Clean Energy funding, Conduit Financing and establishing the interagency partnerships to establish this tool, in Wooster, and strategic use of parcel-based tax increment financing to advance new infrastructure in support of the comprehensive plan.
- **Continue to Expand Outreach and Communication for Business:** Following our Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) and building off our 2024 efforts, this Office will continue to collaborate with partnering agencies and local businesses to expand knowledge of economic development resources and opportunities within the City. The EDSP identified seven strategy areas: 1. Business Retention and Expansion, 2. Market Position and Place Brand, 3. Entrepreneurship and Creative Industries, 4. Workforce Development and Talent, 5. Asset Management, 6. Regulation and Efficiency, and 7. Business Attraction. Specific goals are to refine existing programs to be more user-friendly, establish new value-added services to support the community, and prioritize limited resources. Working groups are stakeholders from partnering entities.