



***City of Wooster
Planning and Zoning Division
2024 Annual Report***

January 2025

Summary

The City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Division continued to facilitate and guide development in 2024. The Division continued to work efficiently to review and process permits, assist Planning Boards and Commissions, enforce the Planning and Zoning Code, and effectively conduct significant planning projects. Highlights for the Planning and Zoning Division in 2024 include:

- The Planning Commission adopted the Comprehensive Plan. The plan is available on Wooster’s website and was presented to the following groups/organizations: City Council, Chamber Board, Rotary, Kiwanis, Wayne County Realtors Association, Leadership Wayne County, Citizens Government Leadership Academy, and Wooster High School A.P. students.
- Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, OHM Consultants was retained to guide Wooster through the completion of an update to the Wooster Planning and Zoning Code. The update will focus on the necessary changes to accomplish the goals and objectives within the Comprehensive Plan. It is expected to be completed by mid-2025.
- Along with Main Street Wooster, continued implementing a Façade grant program within the C-4 (downtown) zoning district.
- Participation on the following boards/committees;
 - Wayne County Land Bank
 - Northeast Four County Regional Planning Organization (2024 and 2025 Chair)
 - Main Street Wooster
 - Wayne County Arts District
- Attended the National Conference of the American Planning Association. (virtually)
- A combined workshop for the Design Review Board, Planning Commission, and Board of Building and Zoning Appeals was held in January of 2024 and 2025. Several new members started their terms in January of 2024, with several more throughout the year.

Development Projects

Several significant residential, commercial, and industrial developments were initiated in the City of Wooster in 2024. The following projects were assisted by the Planning and Zoning Division and approved by one or more of the aforementioned Boards and Commissions:

- **Oasis of Wooster** – 19 lot subdivision on the north side of Smithville-Western Road
- **Mixed-use–Residential Development—The Grove on Melrose Subdivision was modified to include a skilled nursing/personal care facility. The modifications** required a conditional use certificate and new development plan.
- **Clear Creek Subdivision** – 108 lot subdivision on the northwest corner of Silver and Mechanicsburg. This involved a map amendment and subdivision review.

- **Wooster City Schools** – Conditional Use Certificate to use 955 Oldman Road for educational purposes.
- **Dairy Queen** – Map amendment and final development plan at the southeast corner of Cleveland and Smithville-Western Road.
- **Counseling Center of Wayne and Holmes Counties** – Conditional Use Certificate and development plan for a new facility at 1785 Akron Road.
- **Multi-Family Development** – Conditional Use Certificate for Wayne Metropolitan Housing to complete a multi-family development on Noble Drive.
- **Transitional Housing** – Conditional Use Certificate for transitional housing facility at 981 Grossjean Road.
- **Wayne County Justice Center** – Final Development Plan at 201 West North Street.
- **Crooked Creek No 2** – Renewal of a 32-lot subdivision west of Settlers Trace.
- **Take 5 Oil Change** – Development Plan approval at 3953 Burbank Road.
- **Text Amendments** - Approved amendments to the Planning and Zoning for the following: recreational marijuana, fence material, alternative energy (solar and wind), environmental protection, smoke and tobacco shops, drive-through design, and sign regulations.

Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits

334 Zoning Certificates were issued in 2024, up 59 from 2023. Of the issued Certificates, the majority were related to single-family residential projects. Zoning Certificates were issued for **72 new residential units** in 2024. A total of \$10,950.00 in Zoning Certificate fees was collected in 2024.

In 2024, 69 **Sign Permits** were issued in the City of Wooster, 5 less than the number permitted in 2023. A total of \$5,625.00 in Sign Permit fees was collected.

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

Board of Building and Zoning Appeals

The Board of Building and Zoning Appeals (BZA) heard **21 requests** in 2024, encompassing a variety of topics. Of the 21 applications in which a decision was made, the BZA approved 19, some with conditions, and denied 2 applications. The BZA heard 20 area variance requests, 8 use variance requests, and one appeal was filed in 2023. (Some applications included both an area and a use variance).

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

Design and Review Board

The Wooster Design and Review Board heard **42 requests** in 2024. The Design and Review Board approved all requests, at times with modifications or conditions.

Of the 42 requests heard by the Board in 2024, 26 were for signs. The remainder of the applications included demolitions, additions, exterior changes to building facades, and miscellaneous changes to features such as lighting, windows, doors, and awnings.

A further breakdown of Design and Review applications can be found in the appendix at the end of this document.

Planning Commission

The City of Wooster Planning Commission received **27 requests** in 2024, down from 36 in 2023. Planning Commission applications included:

- 10 Development Plan applications
- 6 Conditional Use applications
- 5 Zoning Code or Map Amendments
- 6 Plats/ Major Subdivision applications

The Planning Commission approved all development, conditional use, and subdivision requests.

The appendix section at the end of this document provides a further breakdown of Planning Commission applications.

Zoning Enforcement

A total of **362 Planning and Zoning Code violations** were addressed in 2024. There are many instances where the same property received multiple violations.

Most of the issues addressed in 2024 were related to the parking of recreational vehicles/trailers/ commercial vehicles, parking surfaces, construction without a Zoning Certificate, and illegal or unpermitted signs. In addition, staff also removed numerous signs located in the public right of way. As no formal notification or inspection was logged in such instances, the above figures did not capture the removal of signs in the public right of way.

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

2024 Goals and Objectives

In 2024, the Planning and Zoning Division continued to guide development and sensibly regulate land use. The following goals and objectives for 2025 and the next five years through 2029 will allow the Division to better serve citizens and business owners, operate more efficiently, refine responsibilities, and update planning documents.

Goal 1 – Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, examine the zoning code and map for potential amendments.

Objective 1A – Prepare an RFQ/RFP for a consultant to formulate needed zoning code and map amendments. *Completed*

Objective 1B – The administrative team and consultant identify opportunities for amendments that meet the identified objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. *Completed*

Objective 1C – Prepare amendments to be forwarded to the Planning Commission.
Ongoing

Goal 2 - Continue to work with Main Street Wooster.

Objective 2A – Work with façade grantees and complete projects that were awarded funds. *Completed and Ongoing*

Objective 2B – Assist Main Street in using the remaining funds and 2024 funds awarded by the City Council. *Ongoing*

Objective 2C – In conjunction with Main Street Wooster, evaluate the program's effectiveness and recommend revisions or the possibility of increasing the scope of eligible activity. *Reviewed and modifications made to expand project eligibility*

Goal 3 – Continue to work with Wayne County to advance the County Land Bank and review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster.

Objective 3A – Attend regular Land Bank meetings throughout the year and advance the acquisition of qualifying properties in Wayne County and the City of Wooster. *Ongoing*

Objective 3B – Provide technical assistance to the Land Bank as needed. *Ongoing*

Objective 3C – Work with the Wayne County Planning Department to review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster, as needed. *Ongoing*

Goal 4 – Attend the National and State Conference of the American Planning Association (APA)

Objective 4A – Stay current and discuss best practices and trends with peers. *Attended virtual American Planning Association Conference*

Goal 5 – Complete an update to the Downtown Parking Plan

Objective 5A – Retain an intern who has knowledge of GIS, mapping, and Microsoft Excel.
Completed

Objective 5B – Update the 2019 parking study. *Completed*

2025 Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 – Compete the Planning and Zoning Code update

Objective 1A—With the committee's assistance, prepare a draft of amendments supporting the recommendations of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 1B – Receive an approval recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Objective 1C – Present recommendations to City Council for action.

Goal 2 - Continue to work with Main Street Wooster.

Objective 2A – Work with façade grantees and complete projects that were awarded funds.

Objective 2B – Assist Main Street in the use of remaining funds and 2024 funds awarded by City Council.

Objective 2C – In conjunction with Main Street Wooster, evaluate the effectiveness of the program and recommend revisions or the possibility of increasing the scope of eligible activity.

Goal 3 – Continue to work with Wayne County to advance the County Land Bank and review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster.

Objective 3A – Attend regular Land Bank meetings throughout the year and advance the acquisition of qualifying properties in Wayne County and the City of Wooster.

Objective 3B – Provide technical assistance to the Land Bank as needed.

Objective 3C – Work with the Wayne County Planning Department to review major subdivisions within 3 miles of the City of Wooster, as needed.

Goal 4 – Attend the National and State Conference of the American Planning Association (APA)

Objective 4A – Stay current and discuss best practices and trends with peers.

Goal 5 – Continue to monitor the progress of the goals and objectives within the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 5A – Continue communication with other departments and partner organizations.

Objective 5B – Encourage development plans that support the goal statements of the identified focus areas.

Five-Year Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 – Continue training and applicable education for staff and myself.

Objective 1A – Stay current on required certifications.

Objective 2A – Stay up to date on best practices.

Goal 2 – Continue to coordinate with other agencies and participate in regional issues

Objective 2A – Work with other area governmental agencies to forward community goals, share resources, and facilitate intergovernmental coordination.

Objective 2B – Work with non-governmental and nonprofit agencies to benefit the community.

Objective 2C – Participate and assist the Wayne County Land Bank and Wayne Trails.

Goal 3 – Continue to refine the 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 OpenGov permitting system in future matters, when advantageous. Incorporate input from staff regarding the use of OpenGov and possible improvements or revisions.

Goal 4 – Work with partners in the implementation of the City of Wooster Comprehensive Plan

Objective 4A—Address the city's goals and priorities using the strategies identified in the comprehensive plan.

Appendix – Tables and Charts

Planning and Zoning Applications 2024

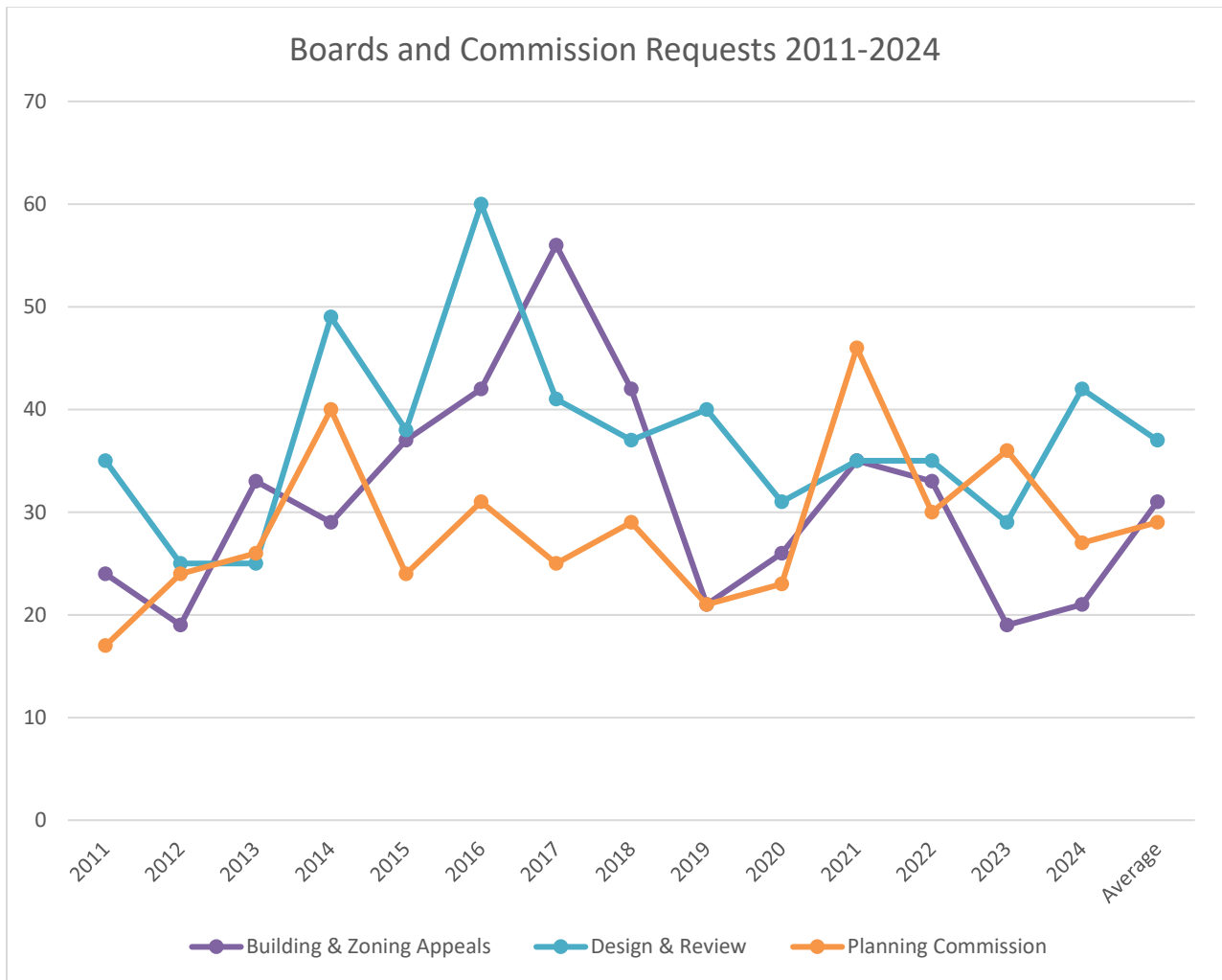
	<u>Zoning Certificates</u>	<u>Sign Permits</u>	<u>Minor SD</u>	<u>BZA</u>	<u>D&R</u>	<u>PC</u>	<u>Total</u>
January	18	4	0	0	3	2	27
February	27	3	2	4	5	0	41
March	19	3	2	1	4	3	32
April	37	6	2	1	4	7	57
May	45	14	1	2	6	5	73
June	35	6	1	4	2	2	50
July	40	6	1	0	3	1	51
August	22	6	0	2	5	2	37
September	35	4	2	2	2	1	46
October	25	4	1	2	2	3	37
November	19	6	2	2	3	0	32
December	12	7	1	1	3	1	25

Totals	334	69	15	21	42	27	508
Total Fees	10,950	5,625	400	2,500		2,500	21,975



Planning and Zoning Applications 2011-2024

Year	Zoning Certificates	Sign Permits	Minor Subdivisions	Building & Zoning A	Design & Review	Planning Commission	Total
2011	169	90	-	24	35	17	335
2012	161	68	-	19	25	24	297
2013	187	58	-	33	25	26	329
2014	208	104	15	29	49	40	445
2015	207	73	14	37	38	24	393
2016	216	102	26	42	60	31	477
2017	229	100	35	56	41	25	486
2018	230	75	22	42	37	29	435
2019	205	75	34	21	40	21	396
2020	234	47	22	26	31	23	383
2021	255	55	21	35	35	46	447
2022	233	59	26	33	35	30	416
2023	275	74	31	19	29	36	464
2024	334	69	15	21	42	27	508
Total	3,143	1,049	261	437	522	399	5,811
Average	225	75	19	31	37	29	415



Zoning Violations 2024

Landscaping	17
Parking Surface	92
Parking Trailers/RV'S/Commercial Vehicles	65
Signs	21
Zoning Certificate	98
Prohibited Use	4
Chickens/Roosters	7
Other	58
Total	362

Zoning Violations 2024 – Percentage

