



***City of Wooster
Planning and Zoning
Division
2025 Annual Report***

January 2026

Summary

The City of Wooster Planning and Zoning Division continued to facilitate and guide development in 2025. 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 2025 include:

- The Planning Commission reviewed a set of zoning code and map amendments prepared with the assistance of a steering committee. The Planning Commission forwarded the amendments to the City Council with a recommendation for approval. The amendments are available on Wooster's website. The amendments are expected to be in affect the first quarter of 2026.
- 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 2025.

Development Projects

Several significant residential, commercial, and industrial developments were initiated in the City of Wooster in 2025. The following projects were assisted by the Planning and Zoning Division and approved by one or more of the aforementioned Boards and Commissions:

- **Planned Development (Weaver)** – 84 mixed-residential units, with clubhouse and recreation areas, west side of Burbank, south of Buehlers.
- **Jarrett Warehouses** — two, 408,240 square foot warehouses with phased development, northwest corner of Daisy Way and N Geyers Chapel.
- **Radiant Shine Carwash** – 2695 Cleveland.
- **Bell Store** – Southwest corner of Cleveland and Smithville Western Roads.
- **Texas Roadhouse** – North of Meijer's.
- **Wayne Center for the Arts** – Cultural facility with a performance pavilion, 246 S Grant.
- **Grace Church Addition** - 32,279 square foot addition and parking, 4599 Burbank Road.
- **Chick-fil-A** – 4147 Burbank.

- **Seaman Corp.** – 10,223 square foot office addition, 1000 Venture Blvd.
- **Text Amendments** – Comprehensive set of amendments to the code and map were reviewed by the Planning Commission and forwarded to City Council.

Zoning Certificates and Sign Permits

302 Zoning Certificates were issued in 2025. Of the issued Certificates, the majority were related to single-family residential projects. Zoning Certificates were issued for **63 new residential units** in 2025. A total of \$9,575.00 in Zoning Certificate fees was collected in 2025.

In 2025, 71 **Sign Permits** were issued in the City of Wooster. A total of \$5,375.00 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 **25 requests** in 2025, encompassing a variety of topics. Of the 25 applications in which a decision was made, the BZA approved 13, some with conditions, denied 8 and 4 were withdrawn. The BZA heard 16 area variance requests, 5 use variance requests. (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 **29 requests** in 2025. The Design and Review Board approved all requests, at times with modifications or conditions.

Of the 29 requests heard by the Board in 2025, 20 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 **26 requests** in 2025. Planning Commission applications included:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • 16 Development Plan applications | • 2 Zoning Code or Map Amendments |
| • 7 Conditional Use applications | • 1 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 **190 Planning and Zoning Code violations** were addressed in 2025. There are many instances where the same property received multiple violations.

Most of the issues addressed in 2025 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.

During 2025 the department had limited enforcement personnel due to cross training of current enforcement officer for a different position. In 2025 a replacement enforcement person was hired to replace the outgoing staff member.

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

2025 Goals and Objectives

In 2025, the Planning and Zoning Division continued to guide development and sensibly regulate land use. The following goals and objectives for 2026 and the next five years through 2030 will allow the Division to better serve citizens and business owners, operate more efficiently, refine responsibilities, and update planning documents.

2025 Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 – Complete 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.
(Completed)

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

Objective 1C – Present recommendations to City Council for action. *(In Progress)*

Goal 2 - Continue to work with Main Street Wooster.

Objective 2A – Work with façade grantees and complete projects that were awarded funds. *(On-going)*

Objective 2B – Assist Main Street in the use of remaining funds and 2025 funds awarded by City Council. *(On-going)*

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. *(On-going)*

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. *(On-going)*

Objective 3B – Provide technical assistance to the Land Bank as needed. *(On-going)*

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

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. *(Completed and On-going)*

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. *(On-going)*

Objective 5B – Encourage development plans that support the goal statements of the identified focus areas. *(On-going)*

2026 Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 - Continue monitoring the progress of the goals and objectives in the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 1A—Evaluate effectiveness of the text and map amendments.

Objective 1B – Prepare needed amendments.

Objective 1C – Present recommendations to Planning Commission and City Council.

Goal 2 - Attend the National and State Conference of the American Planning Association.

Objective 2A – Stay current and discuss best practices and trends with peers.

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

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 - With Main Street, monitor the effectiveness of the Downtown Grant.

Objective 4A – Work with façade grantees and complete projects that were awarded funds.

Objective 4B – Assist Main Street in the use of remaining funds awarded by City Council.

Objective 4C – 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 5 - Strive to be more deliberate about involving coworkers and team members in decisions and analyses.

Objective 5A – Share information on projects with coworkers and team members from other departments.

Objective 5B – Discuss how projects are supported by the Comprehensive Plan.

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

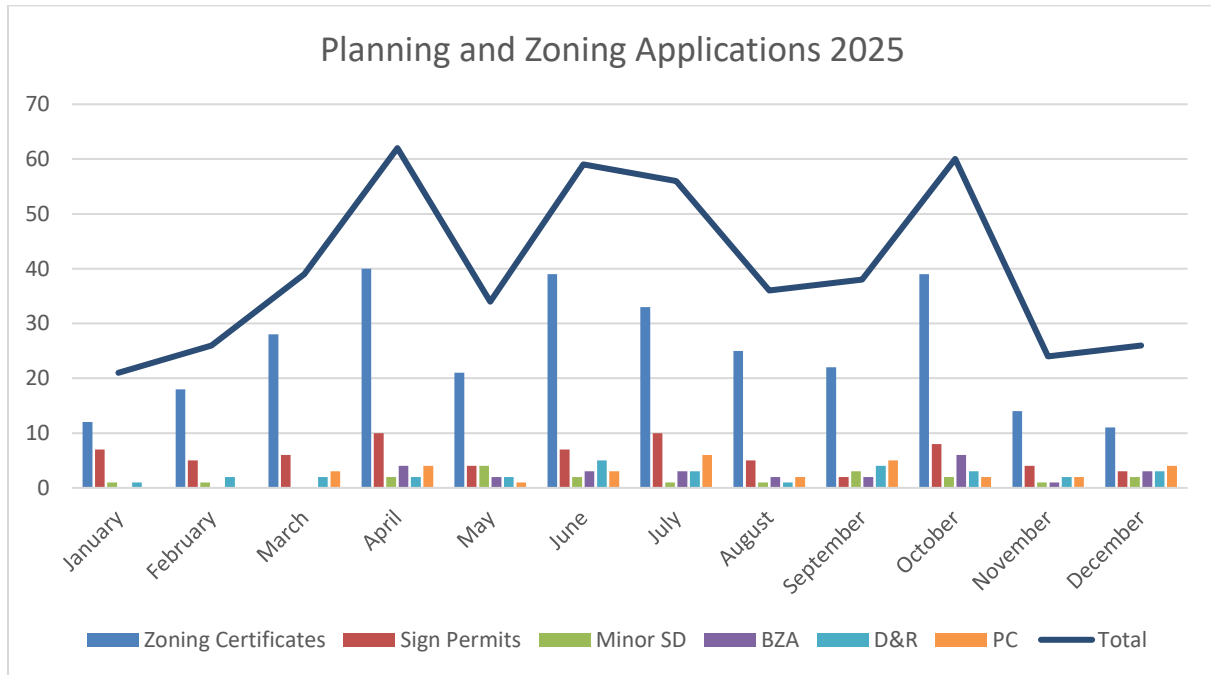
Objective 4A—Address the city's goals and priorities using the strategies identified in the comprehensive plan.

Objective 4B – Develop and recommend updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

Appendix – Tables and Charts

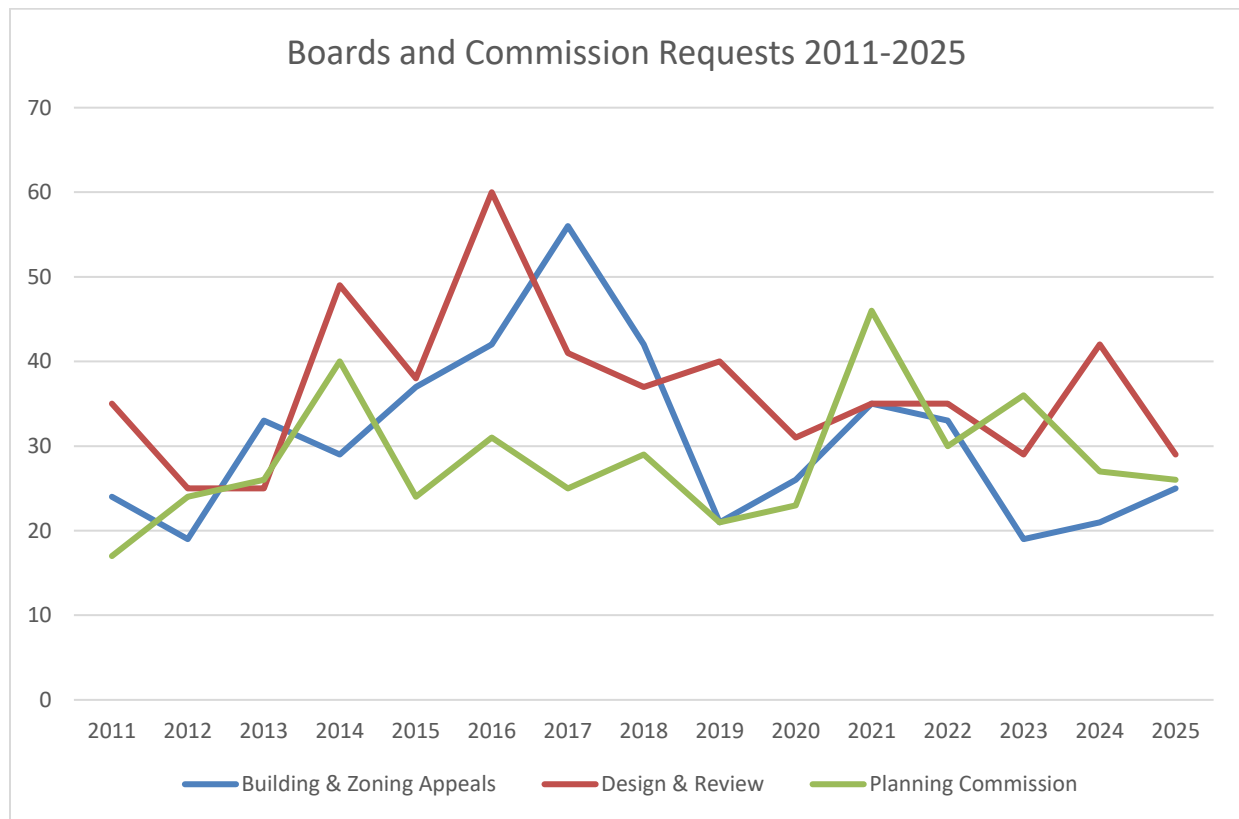
Planning and Zoning Applications 2025

	<i>Zoning Certificates</i>	<i>Sign Permits</i>	<i>Minor SD</i>	<i>BZA</i>	<i>D&R</i>	<i>PC</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>January</i>	12	7	1		1		21
<i>February</i>	18	5	1		2		26
<i>March</i>	28	6			2	3	39
<i>April</i>	40	10	2	4	2	4	62
<i>May</i>	21	4	4	2	2	1	34
<i>June</i>	39	7	2	3	5	3	59
<i>July</i>	33	10	1	3	3	6	56
<i>August</i>	25	5	1	2	1	2	36
<i>September</i>	22	2	3	2	4	5	38
<i>October</i>	39	8	2	6	3	2	60
<i>November</i>	14	4	1	1	2	2	24
<i>December</i>	11	3	2	3	3	4	26
<i>Totals</i>	302	71	20	25	29	26	473
<i>Total Fees</i>	9575	5375	400	2500		2900	20750



Planning and Zoning Applications 2011-2025

Year	Zoning Certificates	Sign Permits	Minor Subdivisions	Building & Zoning	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
2025	302	71	20	25	29	26	473
Total	3,445	1,120	281	462	551	425	6,284
Average	230	75	19	31	37	28	419



Zoning Violations 2025

Landscaping	5
Parking Surface	75
Parking Trailers/RV'S/Commercial Vehicles	35
Signs	7
Zoning Certificate	27
Prohibited Use	8
Chickens/Roosters	2
Other	31
Total	190