



Planning Progress

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Farewell!

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Every day for the last 42 years, Ken Ogden came to Regional Planning ready to work. Although he held the title of Cartographer, he was really a “jack of all trades.” Staff knew what office to go to when they needed assistance in any area. Kenny was always there and always found a solution. To work at only one place for that many years, shows a loyalty and dedication that for the most part is unheard of these days. On June 30th, he made his way to work at the RPC for the last time. He is now enjoying a more than well-deserved retirement.

Jeff Brown, RPC’s Historic Preservation Administrator, retired as well on the 30th. He served 32 years. He spent 22 years with the state before joining the RPC staff. Brown was responsible for Historic 106 Compliance Reviews and mine reclamation projects for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the state Historic Preservation Office.



Staff gathered to celebrate and express their best wishes for both retirees. Congratulations to Kenny and Jeff! You will be deeply missed.

Consolidated Plan FY 2009-2013

The Stark County Regional Planning Commission (RPC), on behalf of the Board of Stark County Commissioners, is working on the Consolidated Plan for FY 2009-2013. The Consolidated Plan identifies needs and solutions regarding safe, decent, and affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households, infrastructure improvements as well as improving housing opportunities and revitalizing deteriorated neighborhoods. It also addresses the need for increasing accessibility to public facilities, services, and economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. The Plan will be prepared and published by the RPC to meet the requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership funding.

An important initial step in the consolidated planning process is identifying current and future housing and community development needs throughout our county. To solicit input for the Plan, our office sent questionnaires to all of the participating political units and CDBG and HOME subrecipients and applicants within Stark County. Meetings were held as well with all of the various groups to discuss the community development and housing needs as they see them. A total of 44 surveys were returned with comments, and 42 people attended the meetings. Some of the recurring concerns include flooding, foreclosures, permanent supportive housing, senior housing, affordable rentals, housing for ex-offenders, and housing for those leaving foster care.

In late summer and early fall, staff will be analyzing all of the data collected and begin their strategic planning.

The Clean Ohio Fund

The Clean Ohio Fund will be on the ballot in November. Governor Strickland has committed to investing \$400 million into the fund should voters pass it. The monies will greatly help to preserve and protect greenspace, farmland, streams and water, and create recreational trails, and clean up brownfields.

Since 1999, the program has protected over 30,995 acres of farmland, developed more than 200 miles of recreational trails, and cleaned up nearly 150 brownfield sites.

The funding, part of a job stimulus package, encourages redevelopment and smart growth while creating more than 80,000 new jobs and investing in advanced technology, infrastructure, and industries.

(League of Conservation Voters)

Stark County Requalifies for Community Development Block Grant Funding

The Stark County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program has requalified as an urban county for the next three years. With this requalification, Stark County is guaranteed to receive CDBG funding during Fiscal Years 2009, 2010, and 2011 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2012).

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that entitlement counties requalify every three years as urban counties in order to receive a formula allocation of CDBG funding. An entitlement urban county is one that automatically receives CDBG funding for use in the community; an entitlement urban county does not need to submit a yearly application to HUD to receive this funding.

To qualify for CDBG funding, HUD regulations state a county must meet certain population thresholds. Stark County qualifies because it has a



total combined population of 200,000 or more, excluding the entitlement cities of Canton, Massillon, and Alliance.

If Stark did not requalify, local municipalities, non-profits, etc., would be forced to submit applications to the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) to receive State of Ohio CDBG funding. The ODOD receives hundreds of CDBG applications each year and only has enough available funding to provide monies to just a portion of the applicants; thus many worthy Stark County projects may not receive the needed CDBG dollars.

Over the next three fiscal years, all of the municipalities in Stark County (excluding *Canton, *Massillon, *Alliance, and **Hills & Dales) will be participating in the CDBG program. During these three years, the county can expect to receive over \$ 4 million dollars of CDBG funds to be utilized to benefit local citizens.

[Community Development dollars at work]



- * municipality receives CDBG funding from HUD, independent of Stark County's CDBG program
- ** community chooses not to participate in Stark County's CDBG program

RPC Begins Homeownership Education Program

Members of the Community Development Department will present a series of classes to help county residents realize the American dream of owning their own home. Purchasing a home in today's housing and financial market can be at least problematic, if not impossible, for some area residents. The education program will be a new activity for staff. It will operate in conjunction with The Homebuyers Assistance Program that has been available through the RPC to county residents since 2006.

These activities will assist interested home buying residents on two levels. Level one is The Homebuyers Assistance Program (HAP). This program provides one-time only down-payment assistance and/or closing costs to qualified low- to moderate-income households, in purchasing a single-family home within Stark County. The home must be outside of the cities of Canton, Massillon, and the Village of Hills & Dales. HAP is administered by the Planning Commission on behalf of the Board of Stark County Commissioners. One criteria of eligibility for HAP is successfully completing the newly developed homebuyer education program.



Level two, the new education program, will address the many issues involved with purchasing and owning your own home. The sessions will include budgeting, understanding credit, and the process of obtaining a mortgage loan. Shopping for a home and keeping it properly maintained will be covered as well.

The first class (orientation) in the series of six classes will be held on Thursday, August 21, 2008 from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. in the RPC Conference Room. Reservations are required.

If you know someone who is looking to realize the American dream of owning their own home and would like more information about the program, please contact Mary Crombie at 330-451-7485.

Nimishillen Creek Watershed

Draft TMDL Report

What is a watershed? A watershed is the land area from which surface runoff drains into a specific body of water. The Nimishillen Creek Watershed drains 188 square miles in Stark, Summit, and Tuscarawas Counties. This area is highly populated, and urban and industrial land uses are prevalent. The watershed covers the cities of Canton, North Canton, and Louisville. The mainstem of Nimishillen Creek is about 25 miles long and ultimately flows into the Tuscarawas River.

The Nimishillen Creek Watershed is included on Ohio's list of impaired waters. Under the Clean Water Act, a cleanup plan is required for each impaired watershed. This cleanup plan, known as a total maximum daily load (TMDL) report, calculates the maximum amount of pollutants a water body can receive and still meet standards (goals). The TMDL report specifies how much pollution must be reduced from various sources and recommends specific actions to achieve these reductions. This report will provide specific numeric goals for reducing pollutants, including pathogens, phosphorus, and sediment, as well as ways to improve habitat. Ohio EPA can address some of Nimishillen's problems through regulatory actions, such as permits for wastewater and storm water dischargers. Other actions, such as committing to proper manure management and reduced home sewage system failures, will be up to local residents.

The Nimishillen Creek Watershed Draft TMDL Report is a tool that will include local ideas from the endorsed watershed action plan to help improve and maintain water quality and

habitat in the watershed. The Ohio EPA studied the Nimishillen Creek Watershed and found water quality problems at most of the locations measured. Stream surveys were conducted in 2003, 2004, and 2005; impairments were found for biological communities as well as elevated phosphorus and bacteria. The watershed's conditions were compared with state water quality goals to determine which stream segments are impaired, and how much needs to be done to restore good stream habitat and water quality.

Ohio EPA's study of 33 sites on 10 streams in the watershed showed that it continues to be severely impaired. Biological communities have been impacted over the years by a number of sources including discharges from industrial and municipal wastewater treatment plants, agriculture, and septic systems. The modification of natural drainage patterns through dredging and ditching is also a significant issue in the Nimishillen Watershed.

Several actions are required to improve the current condition and protect the watershed in the future. The recommendations should focus on reducing pollutant loads and/or increasing the capacity of the streams to handle the remaining pollutant loads. Implementation of this report's recommendations will be accomplished by state and local partners, including the voluntary efforts of landowners.

The Ohio EPA report containing the findings of the watershed survey, as well as general information on TMDL's and water quality standards, is available online at <http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/index.html>

Sanitary Sewer Connection/ Septic Improvement Deferred Loan Program



Stark County Regional Planning Commission's CDBG Program has recently begun administering the Stark County Sanitary Sewer Connection/Septic Improvement Deferred Loan Program on behalf of the Board of Stark County Commissioners, utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The purpose of the program is to make funds available to qualified applicants for connection to the Stark County Sanitary Sewer System, where available, and for repairs or replacements of septic systems where sanitary sewer does not exist.

This program is available to all eligible applicants residing in the villages and townships of Stark County and the cities of Canal Fulton, Louisville, and North Canton; this does not include the cities of Alliance, Canton, and Massillon, or the Village of Hills & Dales. To be eligible to apply, these homeowners must meet the current HUD income guidelines, and be the owner/occupant of their single-family residence for a period of at least one year. The 100% assistance provided will be in the form of a 0% deferred loan which is due and payable when the property transfers ownership.

For those qualified homeowners in need of connection to the sanitary sewer, assistance in the amount necessary to connect from the house to the Stark County Sanitary Sewer System will be provided. This does not include payment for the sewer connection fee; arrangements for this fee must be made through the county sanitary sewer department. For those qualified homeowners in need of repair or replacement of their septic systems, assistance in the amount necessary to repair or install a new septic system will be provided.

For more information regarding this program, please contact Mary Crombie at 330-451-7485.

Traffic Counts

Each year, from late April to early November, SCATS Transportation Planner Rick Keyes spends a good portion of his time collecting traffic counts on the roadways throughout the county. Excluding the state highways, which the Ohio Department of Transportation counts, Stark County has approximately 1650 count stations that Keyes maintains on a rotating basis. Averaging about 325 counts per season, it takes five years to complete the list, and then the process begins all over again.

The count data collected is an important segment of the overall transportation planning process. It is used by SCATS and various city, township, and county agencies to identify future traffic and land use needs. To find traffic counts for streets in your area, log onto the SCRPC website at www.rpc.co.stark.oh.us. Click on the Transportation tab at the top of the page, then scroll down to the *I Need a Traffic Count* heading and follow the directions. For questions or additional information on the traffic counting program, call 330-451-7389.

SCATS Hosts PCR Training

On May 29, 2008, the Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS) hosted an all day Pavement Condition Rating (PCR) training session presented by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The training was designed for road superintendents, city engineers, and other officials responsible for maintaining roadways throughout Stark County. Each local community within the county will now be responsible for updating the pavement condition ratings for their own jurisdictions.

Earlier in May, SCATS provided each local jurisdiction with a CD of the Stark County Pavement Condition Reports and Rating Manual. The documents provide detailed pavement condition maps and data tables for the entire county.

The PCR training seminar included a review of pavement distresses, the rating process, the installation and operation features of the Local Pavement Access Database, and a pavement rating field exercise.

Perry Township is the first in Stark County to utilize the new system. With the help of Joe Underwood, RPC's Subdivision Engineer, this pilot project will help the township road department rate the streets in several categories and enter the data into the computer program. This will allow officials to facilitate the prioritization of needed road improvements and to determine which improvement methods are most effective. Underwood's assistance will be offered to other jurisdictions as well.

Subdivision Regulations

Proposed revisions to the Stark County Subdivision Regulations are in process by the Planning Commission and the Board of Commissioners. Public hearings have been scheduled by both boards and if adopted, the revisions will become effective August 6, 2008.

The major revision to the Subdivision Regulations will provide the option to allow the developer to guarantee construction of sidewalks in new subdivisions under a separate Performance Bond and Maintenance Bond, of five years and one year respectively. Under current regulations, there is one Performance Bond with a two-year time period, and one Maintenance Bond with a one-year time period, for all of the public improvements in a new subdivision. This revision would allow a developer more time to complete installation of the sidewalks after construction of most of the homes, potentially resulting in less damage to the sidewalks during home construction. It is believed that the five-year time frame for completion of the sidewalks should not be too excessive for the initial homeowners to be without interconnecting sidewalks.

Other proposed changes are minor and of a housekeeping nature that staff became aware of while working with the new regulations since their adoption in 2007, and include:

- * modify some language in accordance with recent changes to the Ohio Revised Code
- * correct inconsistencies within the regulations for uniformity
- * allow for flexible plan sizes for site improvement plans, no smaller than 18" x 24" or larger than 24" x 36" (preliminary plans and final plats will remain at 22" x 34", same size as improvement plans)
- * standardize procedures to require endorsements on the plat by cities, villages, or utility companies, prior to filing in the RPC office
- * clarify that field staking of all proposed driveways intersecting with existing public roads is required for site improvement plans
- * change number of required copies to three for Administrative Waivers
- * replace "Erosion/Sediment Control Regulations" with "Storm Water Quality Regulations", which is the new title of those regulations

If you have questions, please call Subdivision Engineer Joe Underwood at 330-451-7403 or Reva Butera, Chief of Planning Administration, at 330-451-7390.



RPC Assumes House Numbering Duties

RPC entered into a contract with the Stark County Commissioners to administer the House Numbering Department for the unincorporated areas of the county, beginning on May 29, 2008. All of the maps and records were moved to the RPC offices, and responsibilities of existing staff have been expanded to include house numbering duties. The telephone number for House Numbering remains 330-451-7843.

Work is underway to digitize the house numbering process in the near future. Emmett Boyd, previous administrator of the department, retired after 35 years of service with the county.

Upcoming Events

August

4	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
5	SCRPC	7:30 PM
25	SCATS	1:30 PM
28	CAC	1:30 PM

September

8	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
9	SCRPC	7:30 PM
22	SCATS	1:30 PM

October

6	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
7	SCRPC	7:30 PM
23	CAC	1:30 PM
27	SCATS	1:30 PM

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