

Roadway Safety Workshop



Mike Rehfus, Stark County Engineer, and Bob Nau, Executive Director of the RPC, discuss safety

The SCRPC/SCATS teamed up with the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Ohio Department of Public Safety on September 13, at a Roadway Safety Workshop to discuss high-crash areas in the county. Community leaders took advantage of this opportunity as they worked together identifying local high-crash areas, discussed potential solutions and learned more about new state funding available to address local priorities.

Stark County Engineer Mike Rehfus used the intersection of Portage Street and High Mill as an example of how the county crash report is used to prioritize a specific improvement project. In 1998, after four fatalities in two years, this was identified as the highest-rated hazardous intersection in the county. Improvements to this area were made, including lowering

a hill on Portage Street, new signals, turn lanes, and adding a curb and gutter, at a cost of \$1 million. This is now one of the safest intersections in the county.

Workshop participants identified the following locations as areas that could benefit from safety improvements:

City of Canton:

- 12th St. & Market Ave. NW
- 12th St. from Cherry Ave. NE to Fulton Dr. NW

Jackson Township:

- I-77 ramps at Whipple Ave. & Belden Village St. NW

Lawrence Township:

- SR 21 & Butterbridge Rd. NW

Perry Township:

- SR 172 from Whipple Ave. to Jackson Ave. NW

Plain Township:

- 30th St. NE & Harrisburg Ave.

Canton/Louisville:

- US 62 from 30th St. NE in Canton to Broadway Ave. NE in Louisville

Canton/Lake Township:

- SR 43 (Market Ave. N) from 55th St. in Canton to State St. in Lake Township

Join us in celebrating the RPC's
50th anniversary at the

Annual Dinner Meeting
Friday, March 23, 2007

Trees and Vegetation Important for Stormwater Management

The average annual precipitation in Stark County is 37 inches. Every time it rains, dirt and pollutants are washed into streams and rivers. How that runoff is managed impacts streams and building costs.

Trees and vegetation intercept rain, thereby slowing and reducing stormwater runoff. The resulting runoff requires less treatment and minimizes downstream impacts. Preserving, protecting, and planting trees and vegetation help to...

- absorb and filter pollutants from soil and water
- shade and cool air and water and filter dust and airborne particles
- stabilize soils and prevent erosion, reduce wind velocity and insulate buildings
- provide habitat for fish, birds, reptiles, mammals, insects and amphibians
- provide mental and physical health benefits for people in the urban environment, and can increase property values and marketability

It has been determined that mature canopy trees can block up to 90% of solar radiation. Three well-placed shade trees around a house can cut energy needs by 10-50%. Roots loosen soil, increasing rainfall infiltration, which reduces overland flows. A study of a once-forested area of the Puget Sound region concluded that if a tree canopy lost in 1973 had been preserved, the region would have saved \$95 million in air pollution services and \$2.4 billion in stormwater containment services over a 25-year period.

Trees muffle noise, provide a sense of place and stability, and help reduce stress. Research at Texas A&M University has shown that most people relax mentally and physically when surrounded by gardens or parks. Mature trees add value to neighborhoods. Studies indicate people may pay as much as 20% more for a home landscaped with mature trees.

A mature coniferous forest in the Northwest has been shown to retain up to one inch of rainfall before any runoff occurs. In contrast, a Maryland study found that when lands were stripped of trees for construction, 25,000-50,000 tons of sediment were released, which amounts to 500-1,000 times more sediment that is released in a typical forested area.

Mature and native trees reduce irrigation costs because they need less water. It is also estimated that corporate landowners can save \$270-\$640 per acre in annual maintenance costs when open areas are managed as natural areas rather than landscaped with exotic plants.

(Ref: Environmental Services, City of Portland)

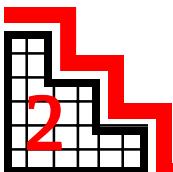


TSP Spearheads Reuse Consortium

The Stock Pile tries to focus its inventory on items for home upgrades and remodeling. Some donations do not fit into this category and are better served by other agencies.

Therefore, a consortium of nonprofit groups concerned with reuse of other types of materials is being formed. The group will meet periodically at various reuse businesses in the county to share ideas, pass on tips and appropriate donations, and plan cooperative ventures. They are currently gathering information to compile a reuse guide which will be added to The Stock Pile website at www.thestockpile.org later this fall.

TSP receives its inventory as donations from businesses and private individuals. It currently boasts an inventory of 17,000 sq. ft. of new and nearly new materials for sale to low-to-moderate-income families. Look for a one-day shopping pass on your Belden Village Marc's receipt in the near future.



Changes Proposed to Subdivision Regulations

Chapter 711 of the Ohio Revised Code provides authority for the Stark County Commissioners and the Regional Planning Commission to adopt subdivision regulations for the unincorporated areas of the county and to approve subdivisions of land. Substitute Senate Bill 115, which became effective in 2005, amended the statute and granted some permissive authority to the individual counties.

The current Subdivision Regulations were adopted in 1978, with several changes since that time. However, for the past year, RPC staff members have been reviewing and revising these regulations. A draft copy is now complete and is being reviewed by RPC staff and other county departments and agencies. It is also available for viewing on the Subdivision page of the RPC website. Comments and questions are welcome and can be emailed to rjbuttera@co.stark.oh.us. After this informal review process, final modifications will be made, and it will be reviewed for legal sufficiency. Public hearings on the proposed regulations may be held later this year.

Some of the proposed revisions are general and of a housekeeping nature, while numerous definitions were added or modified and the purpose was expanded. Major changes include:

Definition of "original tract": Sub. S.B. 115 gave permissive authority for planning commissions to amend their subdivision regulations to define original tract differently than was previously defined by the Attorney General.

Minor subdivisions (lot splits): All subdivisions of land will be required to meet health, sanitary, access management, and building code regulations, in addition to zoning and subdivision regulations, as currently required. Other laws have been passed that require these additional reviews.

Exempted subdivisions: Increases the size of exempted tracts from 5 acres to 20 acres.

Large lot development: Subdivisions between 5 and 20 acres must meet some rules. Tracts within this acreage requirement that are only to be used for agricultural or personal recreational purposes are exempted.

Sketch plans: The submittal of a sketch plan and a sketch plan review meeting with staff is encouraged prior to submittal of a preliminary plan, to help minimize development planning costs and address some concerns, such as street arrangement, topography, drainage and variances.

Lot design: Increases lot area and frontage requirements and established setbacks in unzoned areas.

Site development plans: A complete procedure for site development plans is being established. Currently, staff reviews site plans, based on a prosecutor's opinion in 1988. Under 711.001 (B), the proposed revisions will clarify the procedure.

Administrative waiver: This will allow planning commission staff to review small projects that will not create new accesses to public streets or impact storm water management, and not require approval by the full Planning Commission. Multiple requests for administrative waiver reviews in an attempt to circumvent the requirements of a site plan review will not be permitted.

Street classifications: They are being updated, based on the Federal Functional Classifications developed by the Federal Highway Administration.

Construction standards: Modifications are proposed to strengthen requirements which will result in longer lasting roads, as well as other related public improvements.

Design standards: Revisions are proposed to provide uniform procedures for implementing design decisions, assuring quality and continuity in the design of roads, as well as other related public improvements.

Formatting: Reformatting to make more user friendly.

Stark County Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report - FY '05 (CAPER)

FY '05 CAPER covers the period of July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

Budget Information - 81.18% of the total CDBG funds expended benefited low-to-moderate-income (LMI) persons; 100% of the projects undertaken benefited LMI persons

- Total funds available for use - \$4,069,076.23
(FY '05 entitlement grant was \$1,638,193.00)
- Total CDBG funds expended - \$1,666,689.39

3 projects were completed

- Hartville - East Jefferson Street Storm Sewer
- YWCA - "New Beginnings" Geothermal Conversion
- Canton Township Allenford FEMA Project - Phase I

6 projects were in progress

- Louisville Downtown Revitalization
- LMI Reuse Center - The Stock Pile
- Plain Township - 26th/Harmon Area Storm Sewer
- Stark County Park District - ADA of Electronic Education Gateway
- Waynesburg Pedestrian ADA Improvement - Phase II
- Washington Township - Beechwood Sanitary Sewer

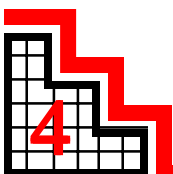
10 Public Service projects were provided CDBG funding during FY '05

- Canton Negro Oldtimers - served 780 persons
- Salvation Army - Homeless Motel Voucher Program - housed 1,538 persons
- KSU Micro Business Development Program - served 104 business owners/potential owners
- Pyramid Incubator Program - served 80 business owners/potential owners
- Community Services Massillon Homeless Shelter Program - assisted 203 persons
- Alliance Emergency Residence - housed 118 persons
- The Stock Pile - served 896 households
- Domestic Violence Project - Therapeutic Services - served 538 persons
- Mercy Medical Center Hospice Program - served 2 families
- Western Stark Medical Van - served 641 persons

CDBG funded Single-Family/Owner-Occupied Housing Rehab

- 42 units were completed (21 regular rehab, 21 emergency rehab)
- 5 more units under contract

Stark Development Board (SDB) - Economic Development - no businesses funded during FY '05 with CDBG funding. SDB requested to cancel the CDBG funded program and return all revolving loan fund monies to the CDBG office once final payments on the outstanding loans are completed in September 2006. The SDB will fund additional Stark County economic development requests with other funding sources.



HOME Program

Budget Information - 89.97% of the expended funding benefited low-to-moderate income (LMI) persons; 100% of all projects undertaken utilizing HOME funding benefit LMI persons with their housing needs.

- Total funds available for use - \$1,992,921.80
(FY '05 entitlement grant was \$938,798.00 + \$35,825.00 in ADDI)
- Total HOME funds expended - \$913,177.37

HOME funded Single-Family/Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation

- 8 units completed and brought up to Housing Quality Standards or CABO
- 4 more units under contract

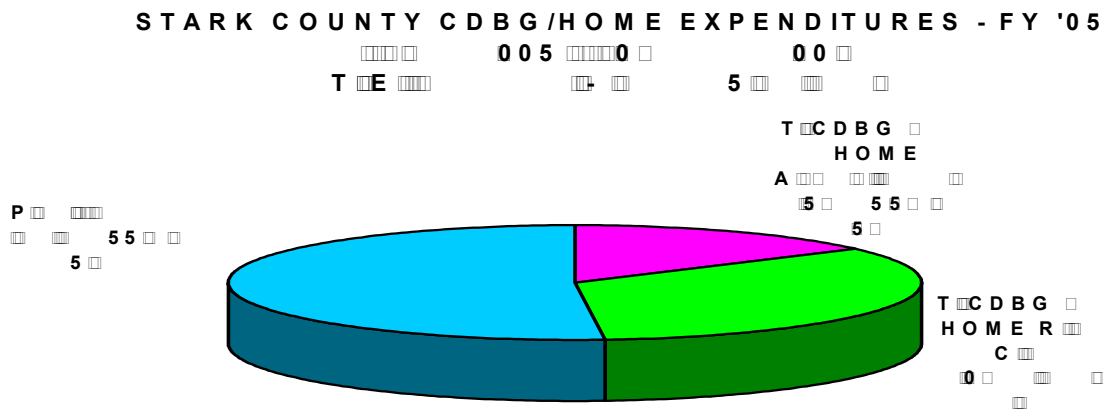
Under ADDI program, 7 low-to-moderate-income (LMI) first-time homebuyers received down payment assistance, totaling \$32,628.62 in funding and leveraging another \$525,200.00 in new mortgages. Five (5) of the ADDI projects were completed within the City of Massillon; 2 within Stark County.

6 projects completed

- Freed Housing Corp. - Alliance Affordable Housing - FY '04 CHDO
- Freed Housing Corp. - Alliance Affordable Housing - FY '05 - CHDO
- East Alliance Neighborhood Development Corp. - Alliance Homeownership - FY '04
- Project REBUILD - Renovation of Alliance House - FY '04
- Massillon HOME NRP - Rent-to-Own Housing - FY '05
- North Coast CHDO Homes - MR/DD Housing - FY '05 - Stark County

6 projects underway

- SMHA Tenant Based Rental Assistance
- Freed Housing Corp. - Lake Senior Center housing garages
- City of Massillon's Rehab/Homebuyer Program
- City of Alliance's Rehab Program
- East Alliance Neighborhood Development Corp. - Jennings Country Village - Phase III - Stark County
- Freed Housing Corp. - Stark County Affordable Housing - FY '05



New Bicycle Laws

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has released a memo describing changes to the Ohio Revised Code's Bicycle Laws that will be effective September 21, 2006. A number of these changes may require communities to alter their regulations. Some of these changes are summarized as follows:

Driving on a Sidewalk - Local authorities may not prohibit the use of bicycles on any public street or highway, but can prohibit (but not require) bicyclists from riding on sidewalks.

Slow Speed - Current Ohio law prohibits operating a vehicle at such an unreasonably slow speed as to impede or block the normal flow of traffic. Courts must now take into consideration the capabilities of the vehicle and its operator in deciding if an infraction has been committed.



Lanes of Travel upon Roadways - The changes remove references to the curb or edge of road and instead require slow moving vehicles to remain far enough right to allow others to pass if passing is safe and reasonable. Bicyclists are now allowed to ride out of the curb lane when preparing for a left turn, when continuing straight when a right-turn-only lane is present, when the curb lane is blocked, and when overtaking and passing another vehicle traveling in the same direction. It clarifies that operators of slow moving vehicles are not required to compromise their safety in order to allow a faster vehicle to pass.

Hazardous Zones - Motorists are now allowed to cross a double yellow line in instances when drivers are approaching a slower vehicle (bicycles, horse-drawn buggies, farm vehicles, etc.) proceeding at less than half of the posted speed, as long as the faster vehicle is capable of passing without exceeding the speed limit and as long as there is sufficient clear space.

Turning and Stop Signals - Bicycle riders must now make a turn signal at least one time, but it need not be continuous. The bicyclist is not required to signal if the bicycle is in a designated turn lane or when the operator's hands are needed for the safe operation of the bicycle.

Bicycle Operation - A bicycle operator who violates any section of the motor vehicle traffic or equipment law applicable to bicycles may be issued a ticket by a law enforcement officer. The law now states that no points can be assessed against the bicycle operator's driver's license except in instances of operating under the influence. However, a motor vehicle or bicycle operator may be required to successfully complete a bicycling skills course approved by the court in addition to, or in lieu of, any penalty for the violation.

Operators of bicycles are allowed to stand up on the pedals when riding. Bicyclists are still required to ride as far to the right as practicable on the roadway, but can ride to the left of hazards or when it is unsafe or otherwise impractical to do so.

Signal Devices on Bicycles - Reflectors are no longer required on the front bicycle wheel and a white light may now be mounted on the bike or rider (ouch). A red light is still required to the rear, but it may now be steady or flashing and in addition to a red reflector. A separate reflector is not required if the light can be seen as distinctly as the required reflector. A horn or bell is no longer required.

Comment Period Begins for SCATS' Public Involvement Process

The public comment period for SCATS' draft Public Involvement Process (PIP) was approved at the Policy Committee meeting August 26. The PIP is the document that describes SCATS' procedure for involving the public and interested parties in its planning process. The PIP is periodically updated to reflect changes in federal law and refinements that SCATS makes as it seeks to improve the plan.

SAFETEA-LU, the latest highway funding bill, advised and mandated several changes that have been incorporated into the PIP. These include a new emphasis on informing the public via electronic means, expanding the list of those contacted and consulted regarding SCATS' long range transportation and other plans, and expanding the methodology of presentations to include additional visualization techniques.

The following dates will be followed in approving the PIP. The official 45-day public comment period will begin October 2 and end on November 15. The draft PIP will be available at the SCATS office and on the SCRPC/SCATS website at www.rpc.co.stark.oh.us. A discussion of the PIP and public comments will be taken at the October 23 SCATS Policy Committee meeting and the October 26 Citizens' Advisory Council meeting. Comments received up until the end of the comment period will be reviewed, and if significant changes are recommended, a SCATS Technical Advisory Council meeting will be held to consider adopting changes. If no major changes are adopted, the SCATS Policy Committee will consider the PIP for adoption at its November 27 meeting.

For questions regarding the PIP or to receive a copy of the document (either electronic or hard copy), contact Karl Lucas at 330-451-7386.

2006 Specialized Transportation Program

The application process for the 2006 Specialized Transportation Program, which helps fund vehicles to provide transportation for elderly and/or disabled citizens, is now underway. This year's program has been delayed for several months due to the implementation of numerous program modifications. SCATS has received word from the Ohio Department of Transportation that it again will be administering this program of the Federal Transit Administration for 2006.

The program is limited to private, nonprofit social service agencies in Stark County, which are

organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. These federal funds provide for 80% of the cost of capital items used to transport the disabled and the elderly; the remaining 20% is provided by the grantee agency and must be from non-federal sources. The program gives special selection preference to agencies that provide multi-agency coordination with two or more agencies on a continuing, contractual basis.

The Specialized Transportation Program (Section 5310) Criteria, Application and Instructions for Federal Fiscal Year 2006 are now



available on the Office of Transit website at www.dot.state.oh.us/ptrans under "What's New." The new Vehicle Catalog and Selection Guide is also available on the website. All agencies wanting to apply can download the application and materials directly from this website. For more information, contact Rick Keyes at 330-451-7389 or email rekeyes@co.stark.oh.us.





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Stark County Area Transportation Study
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What's INSIDE

Roadway Safety Workshop
Changes to Sub Regs
New Bicycle Laws in Effect

Upcoming EVENTS

October

2	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
3	SCRPC	7:30 PM
23	SCATS	1:30 PM
26	Citizens' Advisory Council	1:30 PM

November

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

December

4	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
5	SCRPC	7:30 PM
14	Citizens' Advisory Council	1:30 PM

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