

Planning Progress

July - September 2009

Volume 47

Issue 3

Stark County Receives Millions In Stimulus Funds

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As part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Stark County is eligible to receive \$2.7 million dollars as part of the Department of Energy's (DOE) Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program. The purpose of this program is to help communities reduce fossil fuel emissions and total energy use, and improve energy efficiency in the building and transportation sectors while creating and/or retaining jobs and stimulating the economy. The County has 18 months to obligate the funds and three years to spend the grant money, and has identified several projects to which the grant money will be directed.

A majority of the funds will go towards energy efficient retrofits for county buildings, which were cited in a previous energy audit undertaken by the Board of Stark County Commissioners over a year ago. Until now, the County has not had the opportunity to proceed with these retrofits. Tentatively, there will also be a revolving loan program set up to provide assistance with energy efficient upgrades for homeowners and small businesses, in addition to a rebate program for homeowners who purchase programmable thermostats. Transportation-related programs may include covering the additional costs related to the purchase of hybrid vehicles for some of the County offices, as well as a rebate program for diesel retrofits or other energy saving measures for neighboring townships, cities, and villages. The grant was due on June 25 and the DOE expects to make awards within 120 days.

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The Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS) received \$6,591,495 in stimulus funding and it was distributed to the following projects:
(these amounts went toward the total project costs)

Hills & Dales widening	4,800,000
Wooster Bridge	850,000
153- Main Street- Louisville (right of way)	330,000
Deer Creek Pedestrian Bridge (Stark Parks)	<u>611,495</u>
	6,591,495

The Stimulus funds allowed SCATS to reallocate Surface Transportation Program (STP) monies so that these additional projects could be funded:

Hills & Dales widening	1,000,000
Deerfield Bridge	264,000
Kemary Avenue Bridge	367,200
Cleveland Avenue - reconstruct - Canton	1,440,000
Main Street resurface - North Canton	960,000
MLK Viaduct - Alliance	618,400
Main Avenue - reconstruct - Massillon	392,000
Deer Creek Pedestrian Bridge (Stark Parks)	<u>110,804</u>
	5,152,404

The Community Development Department has been extremely busy determining the appropriate placement of the many stimulus funds received. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has various programs with funding available. On the federal level, Stark County will receive a one-time grant allocation of \$589,412 for the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) to be utilized over a three-year period. The County will also be a sub-recipient on the state level and receive an additional \$340,100 of HPRP funding. Rapid Re-Housing is for homeless persons that need short-term assistance to get back into a home. Homeless prevention funds will be used to keep individuals/families at the risk of becoming homeless in their rental units. Funds may not be used for foreclosure prevention. Financial assistance includes the following activities: short-term rental assistance, medium-term rental assistance, security deposits, utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and motel or hotel vouchers. Housing relocation and stabilization services include the following activities: outreach, housing search and placement, legal services, mediation, and credit repair. The goal is to work with the local homeless service providers and assist community organizations operating homeless shelters and services, including those programs providing supportive services to assist households in making the transition from homelessness to independent living. The City of Canton is eligible to receive \$1,183,577 in HPRP funds and has been meeting with RPC to collaborate on the program design for use of these funds.

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HPRP Estimated Budget - Stark County (Direct Federal Allocation)

	Homelessness Prevention	Rapid Re- housing	Total Amount Budgeted
Financial Assistance	\$ 265,235.40	\$ 88,411.80	\$ 353,647.20
Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services	\$ 110,514.75	\$ 36,838.25	\$ 147,353.00
Data Collection and Evaluation-			\$ 58,941.20
Administration - (up to 5% of allocation)			<u>\$ 29,470.60</u>
Total			\$ 589,412.00

CDBG-R (Community Development Block Grant- Recovery)

Funding available under the Recovery Act has clear purposes – to stimulate the economy through measures that modernize the nation’s infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, and expand educational opportunities and access to health care. HUD strongly urges grantees to use CDBG-R funds for hard development costs associated with infrastructure activities that provide basic services to residents or activities that promote energy efficiency and conservation through rehabilitation or retrofitting of existing buildings. Priority must be given to projects that can award contracts based on bids within 120 calendar days from the date the funds are made available. Stark County will use its allocation of CDBG-R funds for the following:

Activity: North Canton - North Main Street Waterline/Sewer Replacement

Replacement of 2200 linear feet of 39 year old 6” sanitary sewer line and 41 year old 12” waterline which serves approximately 325 households. The waterline has reached the end of its useful life, restricts flow and discolors the water. Engineering and design work has been completed and paid for by the City of North Canton. The City will pay for partial construction costs. \$375,000

Administration

Payment for the pre-award costs, administration of the above activity,
reporting and grant close-out costs \$ 10,259

\$385,259

As part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) was created. Through the program, \$4,181,376 in funding has been allocated to the County. The monies will be used for the redevelopment of abandoned and foreclosed upon homes and residential properties in targeted neighborhoods within the County’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) jurisdictions.

Permanent Supportive Housing	\$ 348,473	1-2 units	2-4 households
Special Needs Housing	348,473	2 houses	8 clients
Public Housing Inventory	<u>348,473</u>	2-3 units	2-3 households
	\$1,045,420		
Acquisition/rehab/resale	1,902,660	10-15 residential units	
New construction of owner occupied housing	407,713	4 units	
Demolition of residential properties	217,447	20-30 units	
Down Payment Assistance/Single Family	135,904	14-20 clients	
Housing Counseling	<u>54,362</u>	14-20 clients	
	\$2,718,086		

New Employee Hired



Staff welcomes Dan Morganti who joined the RPC on June 1st. Dan is a planner for the Community Development Block Grant and HOME programs. This position was added because of the additional programs that the department has recently undertaken. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Geography from Bowling Green State University and this past spring completed his Masters Degree in Urban Planning, Design and Development from Cleveland State University. He previously worked as an engineering technician for a civil engineering and land surveying company.

Dan is excited to be working in Stark County and hopes to work on and create initiatives that have a positive impact in Stark County and its communities. He lives in Seven Hills with his new bride, Jenny and enjoys sports, reading, and music.

RPC Starts Second Year With House Numbering

The Stark County Regional Planning Commission completed its first full year administering the House Numbering program on May 29th. After a year, the RPC has issued 292 house number. In the first year, staff also worked with the Stark County Health Department staff to cut down the number of trips that customers with sewage treatment systems (STS) had to make to the two agencies. Now those customers with STS only have to apply at the Health Department, and return to that agency to file their STS design. At that time they collect the house numbering fee, contacts the RPC for the official number, issue the number and deposit the fee into the house numbering account.

As the second-year with the program begins, new procedures will hopefully cut down the number of customers having to come in to get house numbers. On May 27th, the new electronic house numbering form went online. Customers may now fill out the form online and email it or mail it to the house numbering department. The number can be issued at the time the fee is received, either by mail or with the customer coming in to pick up the official number.

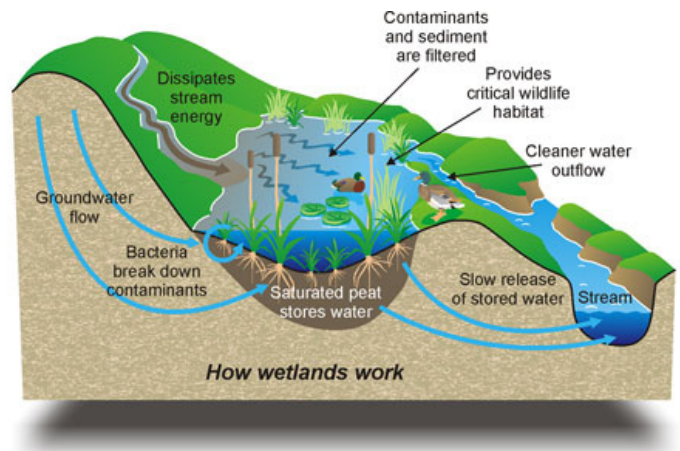
The Stark County Auditor's Geographic Information Systems Office continues to prepare to digitize the process using new software and the old maps. It is a large project and a final completion date has not yet been determined.

Importance of Wetlands

A wetland is an area of land whose soil is saturated with moisture either permanently or seasonally. Such areas may also be covered partially or completely by shallow pools of water. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, and bogs, among others. The water found in wetlands can be saltwater, freshwater, or brackish-containing some salt.

They are considered valuable because they clean the water, recharge water supplies, reduce flood risks, and provide fish and wildlife habitat. In addition, wetlands provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, sites for research and education, and commercial fishery benefits.

Wetlands are some of the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world, comparable to tropical rain forests and coral reefs in their productivity and the diversity of species they support. Abundant vegetation and shallow water provide diverse habitats for fish and wildlife. Aquatic plant life flourishes in the nutrient-rich environment, and energy converted by the plants is passed up the food chain to fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife and to us as well. This function supports valuable commercial fish and shellfish industries.



Did you know?

In 1991 wetland-related ecotourism activities such as hunting, fishing, bird-watching, and photography added approximately \$59 billion to the national economy.

According to the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, almost \$79 billion per year is generated from wetland-dependent species, or about 71 percent of the nation's entire \$111 billion commercial and recreational fishing industry in 1997.

An acre of wetland can store 1–1.5 million gallons of floodwater.

Up to one-half of North American bird species nest or feed in wetlands.

Although wetlands make up only about 5 percent of the land surface in the contiguous United States, they are home to 31 percent of our plant species.

Ohio EPA, June 2009

2030 Transportation Plan

At the May 26 meeting, the Policy Committee of the Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS) approved the 2009 update of the 2030 Transportation Plan. The Plan shows proposed road, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle trail projects for Stark County through the year 2030. Projects must be listed in the plan in order to qualify for Federal funding. Included in the Long Range Transportation Plan is the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that identifies projects scheduled for construction over the next four years. The following projects have been included in the current TIP:

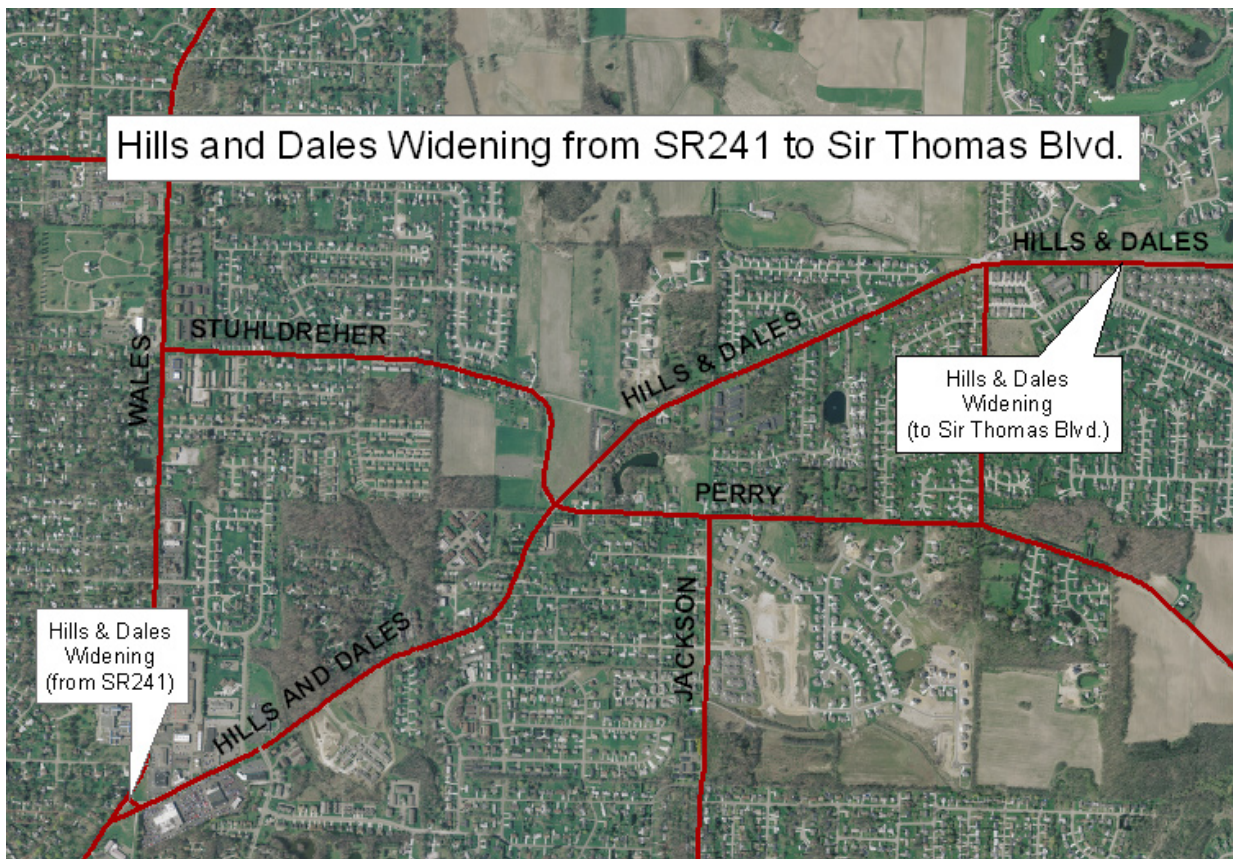
Project Name	Location
Hills & Dales Widening (Wales to Brunnerdale)	Jackson Township
Deer Creek Park Pedestrian Bridge	Lexington Township
Tremont Ave. Bridge Replacement	Massillon
SR 172 Paving	Canton
Belden Village Traffic Signal Replacement	Jackson Township
Paris Ave. at US Route 62 Intersection Improvement	Nimishillen Township
Cleveland Ave. Reconstruction	Canton
MLK Viaduct Rehab	Alliance
Main Ave. West Improvements	Massillon
Main St. Resurfacing - Rose Lane to 7th	North Canton
Deerfield Ave. Bridge Replacement	Lawrence Township
Kemary Ave. Bridge Replacement	Bethlehem Township
Wooster St. Bridge Replacement	Tuscarawas Township
Market Ave. at Lake Center Intersection	Lake Township
Applegrove St. Widening (Marquardt to Market)	Plain Township
Main St. Improvements (California to SR 44)	Louisville
Navarre Rd. SW Traffic Signal Replacement	Canton
Hills and Dales Widening (Dressler to Whipple)	Jackson Township
Cleveland Ave. Paving	Lake Township
Everhard Paving	Jackson Township
Riverland Ave. Bridge Replacement (over Tusc. River)	Bethlehem Township
12th St. Corridor Roadway Improvements	Canton
North Main Streetscape (Applegrove to Orion)	North Canton
Trump/Georgetown Intersection Improvements	Canton
Everhard - Whipple Intersection Improvements	Jackson Township
Mahoning Rd. Corridor Improvements	Canton
Werner Church St. Improvements	Plain Township
55th St. Improvement	Plain Township
12th St. Corridor - Bridge Improvements	Canton

SCATS also approved the Work Program for the 2010 Fiscal Year. This report is a statement of the transportation activities of SCATS and a detailed work program for the next fiscal year. SCATS will utilize this transportation planning work program as an outline for the overall transportation planning process described in the Prospectus. For further information, visit www.rpc.co.stark.oh.us.



Suspension Bridge over Deer Creek Spillway

Deercreek Bridge
Lexington Township



Hills and Dales Widening from SR241 to Sir Thomas Blvd.

Hills and Dales widening
Jackson Township

Kent State Stark to “LEED” the Way



It seems that everyone has jumped on to the Green bandwagon. While it is an easy thing to claim to be “Green,” how can such a claim be measured or verified? There is a huge difference between hanging an Earth Day flag once a year and really committing to reducing carbon footprints. According to [The Daily Green](#), “commercial and industrial buildings in the U.S. are responsible for about 45% of the country’s greenhouse gas emissions and 50% of energy use.” In the United States, 4.8 million commercial buildings and 350,000 industrial facilities expend \$107.9 billion and \$94.4 billion a year on energy costs. Yet EPA’s [Energy Star](#) Program reports that an estimated 30% of that cost is actually wasted because of inefficient energy technologies. If the efficiency of these buildings and facilities could be improved by an attainable 10%, that would result in a greenhouse gas reduction comparable to taking 30 million vehicles off the road!

One of the best ways to make sure a building is greener is third party certification. The gold standard has been the *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED) program. Recently, Energy Star has expanded their program from electronics and appliances to include whole structures. According to the EPA, Energy Star buildings use 35% less energy and emit 35% less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere compared to average buildings. While energy use is a major consideration, it is important to remember that energy use is not the only factor when determining what makes a building green. Those factors include indoor air quality, water conservation, recycled content, access to transportation, and support for bicycles and hybrid vehicles.

Kent State Stark will be using green building practices in the construction of a state-of-the-art science building. It is expected to obtain LEED Gold Certification. According to Kent Stark’s publication [Encompass](#), “tentative designs and plans for the 45,000 square foot facility will include a wind turbine, (similar to the picture above) solar technology and a partial sod roof with low maintenance plants and water catchments.” The idea behind using these green technologies is multi-facted, according to Kent State Stark Administrators, “The science building will be about saving energy, promoting conservation and lowering costs and maintenance. Our goal is to model best practices for environmental stewardship while creating the best possible learning environment for our students.”

Site Improvement Plan Review

Subdivision review is conducted on all multi-family, commercial, and industrial development in the unincorporated areas of the County, to ensure sites are properly designed for traffic circulation and emergency access and to promote the public health and safety of the citizens.

One of the duties of the Planning Department is the review of Site Improvement Plans for the Regional Planning Commission. The subdivision review process begins with the filing deadline, which is 4 p.m. on the 17th of each month, in order to be placed on the following month's meeting agenda. Items required when filing a site improvement plan include 15 copies of the plan, which have been prepared by a professional architect, engineer, or surveyor, along with the application and the fee.

When all projects have been filed, staff distributes plans to the township zoning official or fiscal officer (unzoned townships only), the local fire department, utility providers, adjacent municipal jurisdictions, and to a variety of county departments that must review the plans which include: the Subdivision Engineer, County Engineer, Sanitary Engineer, Health Department, Stark Soil & Water Conservation District, and our staff, which also includes house numbering. Additional copies are sometimes needed for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), the County Auditor's office, or others. After the plans are mailed out, the Subdivision Engineer and a staff member go out and look at each project. Between the site visit and the Subdivision Review Subcommittee meeting, staff compiles the comments received from the other agencies.

Staff looks for a number of things including: compliance with the Subdivision Regulations where staff reviews the drawings to ensure that all required items can be found and compliance with other agency regulations. After the review is complete and all comments have been received from other agencies, staff prepares one of the following recommendations to present to the Subcommittee:

Approval – Other agencies all recommended approval, and staff has no conditions.

Conditional Approval – Either other agencies have conditions that must be completed before approval can be granted, or staff requires additional information on the site improvement plan.

Denial – One of the following has recommended denial: Subdivision Engineer, County Engineer, Sanitary Engineer, Health Department, Stark Soil & Water Conservation District, ODOT, or township zoning; and/or the plans do not meet the minimum requirements in accordance with the Subdivision Regulations.

The Subdivision Review Subcommittee meets at 1:30 p.m. on Monday of the first full week of the month. The committee is made up mostly of technical experts, such as engineers, soil & water experts, health officials, and others, who review the plans in depth, then make a recommendation to the full Regional Planning Commission.

The RPC, which meets on Tuesday evening of the first full week of the month, acts on the Subdivision Review Subcommittee's recommendation and any comments made at the meeting, and either approves, conditionally approves, or denies the project.

Upcoming Events

July

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

August

3	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
4	SCRPC	7:30 PM
24	SCATS	1:30 PM
26	CAC	1:30 PM

September

8	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
8	SCRPC	7:30 PM
28	SCATS	1:30 PM

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