



April - June 2026

Volume 63 Issue 2



Planning Progress

RPC Annual Dinner



Nearly 170 guests attended this year's Annual Dinner at Tozzi's on 12th on March 11th. The guest speaker was Executive Director of the Canton Palace Theatre, Georgia Paxos. The title of her presentation was "100 Years of the Canton Palace Theatre."

Georgia shared the incredible story behind the theatre's 100-year legacy. This historic venue hosts over 300 events annually, including movies, concerts, comedy shows, and private parties. From its opening in 1926 to its continued role as a centerpiece of arts, culture, and community in Canton, the Palace Theatre has remained a beloved landmark for generations.



Governmental Law Seminar

On Saturday, February 28th, RPC and the Stark County Prosecutor's office hosted their biennial Governmental Law Seminar at R.G. Drage Career Technical Center. Just under 100 people were registered for the seminar. Session topics included: Ethics & Conflicts of Interest (keynote session), Basics of Zoning, RPC Grants & Programs, Levies and Election Law, Land Bank, Public Records & Records Retention, Stark Economic Development Board & the Housing Strategy, Nuisance Abatement, Fair Housing & Zoning, Cybersecurity Requirements, Property Tax Valuations, and the Sunshine Law. Power point presentations for all of the sessions can be found on our website – www.rpc.starkcountyohio.gov – resources – seminars and workshops.

Thank you to all of those in attendance and our presenters from the Stark Economic Development Board, Stark County Combined General Health District, Stark County Auditor's Office, Stark County Prosecutor's Office and RPC. The collaboration from all of those involved helped put on another successful event.



Side Lot Program Turns Vacant Land Into Neighborhood Assets



Visit the
Land Bank's website
for more info



As spring arrives, are you starting to notice vacant lots around your neighborhoods where the grass is growing—but not being cut?

The Stark County Land Bank offers a program to assist interested neighbors in acquiring these types of properties.

The Side Lot Program is available to qualified contiguous property owners who may have already been taking care of a vacant lot and wish to extend the size of their yard.

To inquire about whether a property is eligible through the Side Lot Program, please contact us!

Jennifer Young, Planning Clerk – 330-451-7743
Sarah Peters, Land Bank Manager – 330-451-7387

Lot Qualifications

- Certified tax delinquent (*1-year minimum*)
- Vacant, unimproved property
- 15,000 sq.ft. or less in size

New Program Pricing (effective 1/1/2025)

Side Lot – Owner Occupant	\$100/lot
Side Lot – Investment	\$500/lot

Since 2013, the Land Bank has transferred over 1,400 side lots to new ownership.



Fair Housing



APRIL IS *FAIR HOUSING* MONTH

Fair Housing is the Law!

This year marks the 58th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (also known as the Fair Housing Act). On April 11, 1968, one week after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex
- National Origin
- Disability
- Familial Status

The law protects individuals in all housing-related transactions, including obtaining loans, purchasing insurance, renting or buying a home, appraisals, advertising, land-use, development, and zoning.

58TH

*Anniversary
Fair Housing Act*

1968-2026

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION IS ILLEGAL!

Report discrimination to Stark County Fair Housing Department at (330) 451-7775!

HISTORY OF FAIR HOUSING LAW

1866

- **Civil Rights Act of 1866** - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race and color. All citizens of the United States shall have the same right as white citizens to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property.

1964

- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act** - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

1968

- **Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act** - Also known as the Fair Housing Act. Prohibits discrimination concerning the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, color, religion, and national origin.

1973

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act** - Prohibits discrimination based on disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

1974

- **Section 109 of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act** – Law was amended. Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

1988

- **Fair Housing Amendments Act** - On September 12, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed this law (FHAA) to include familial status and handicap as a protected class.

1990

- **Title II of the Americans with Disability Act** - Prohibits discrimination based on disability in any program provided or made available by public entities.

1995

- **Housing for Older Persons Act** - Exempts “housing for older persons” from the Fair Housing Act’s prohibition of discrimination against families with children.



2026 National Community Development Week



What is National CDBG Week and why is it relevant?

40 years ago, National Community Development Week was created by the [National Community Development Association](#) and other partners to bring attention to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, create awareness and educate Congress about the significant impact of the program. National Community Development Week occurs

annually during congressional appropriations and can serve as a mechanism to draw attention to the program and convey the message to elected officials.

History of CDBG

The Community Development Block Grant program was enacted when President Ford signed the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The Act was a response to the rigid federal programs and provided more flexibility to local communities. In 1975, Stark County became an Urban Entitlement County and began receiving CDBG funds directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Entitlement communities are permitted to establish their own goals and initiatives which are described in the form of Consolidated Plans and Annual Action Plans. These plans must be developed with public participation and are tools for assessing performance and tracking results. For more information on Stark County's plans, click [here](#).

Why is CDBG important?

CDBG funds benefit low-to moderate-income people and neighborhoods and is a flexible funding source that can leverage other investments. Since the late 1980's, the County has received over \$57 million of CDBG. Throughout the past five program years (2020-2024), Stark County's accomplishments include:



Housing rehabilitation

194 owner-occupied projects



Public improvements

3.2 million dollars invested



Public services

Nearly 17,000 beneficiaries

To learn more about CDBG's impact nationally, review the [2025 CDBG Impact Report](#) prepared by the CDBG Coalition or visit the [HUD Exchange](#). Stark County CDBG related questions can be directed to Lisa Snyder Lcsnyder@starkcountyohio.gov or Diane Sheridan Dmsheridan@starkcountyohio.gov.

ATTENTION CONTRACTORS

The Stark County Regional Planning Commission is searching for contractors who are committed to undertaking quality housing rehabilitation work under federally funded programs.

If you're interested in bidding on upcoming home improvement projects, SCRPC has grant funds available!

Work May Include:

Plumbing	Electric
Heating	Roofs
Siding	Gutters
Insulation	Windows
Doors	...and MORE

Minority, Women-Owned and Section 3 Businesses are encouraged to apply.

To learn more about contracting with the SCRPC on our upcoming home rehabilitation projects, visit, call or email us today!



201 3rd Street NE, Suite 201
Canton, OH 44702

Call Us at 330-451-7302

Email Us at spwilliams@starkcountyohio.gov

Visit Us Online at www.rpc.starkcountyohio.gov

Safety Action Plan Adopted

Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS) envisions a future where every person can travel safely and confidently by any mode—on foot, bike, car, or transit. By 2050, we are committed to achieving zero fatalities and zero serious roadway injuries. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Stark County, SCATS is responsible for transportation planning in Stark County and has released the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP) aligning our county with the "Safe Streets for All" (SS4A) program to support local, regional, and tribal initiatives to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries. The Plan highlights specific policy recommendations, strategies, and projects that will improve roadway safety for all users.

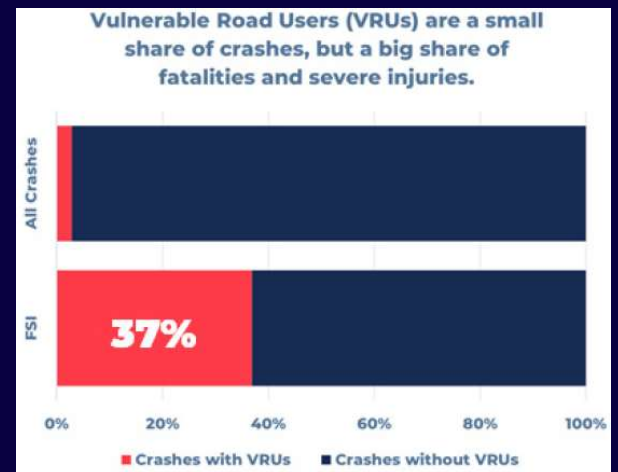
SS4A is founded on the idea of Vision Zero, a powerful initiative that no one should lose their life or be critically injured while traveling. Adopting this policy aligns our goals with creating a transportation system that supports safety and health regardless of the mode of transportation. The Safe System Approach is proactive about safety, emphasizing prevention by acknowledging essential truths about transportation. Roadways must be designed around physical human safety and to reduce the forces that cause death and serious injury. Under the Safe System Approach, prevention is conducted using the five Safety E's: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation. By using data and implementing reduction risk, a future of zero traffic deaths is attainable by 2050.

The CSAP was built by community assessment, engagement, and collaboration. Existing roadway conditions were examined to prioritize specific projects and strategies. Understanding crash history is the key to building a safe transportation system. Crash data from 2020-2024 was compiled into a dataset and analyzed for trends in crashes. There is a disproportionate amount of Fatal and Serious Injury (FSI) crashes occurring in corridors with higher volume and speeds. Approximately 43% of all FSI crashes occur on major collectors and principal arterial roads.

Stark County needs safer roads, better walking and biking connections, and a transportation system that is fair to all users. The most vulnerable road users (VRU) make up a disproportionate amount of FSI crashes. Motorcyclists, pedestrians, and bicyclists have a small number of crashes in a year but represent 37% of the FSI in the county.

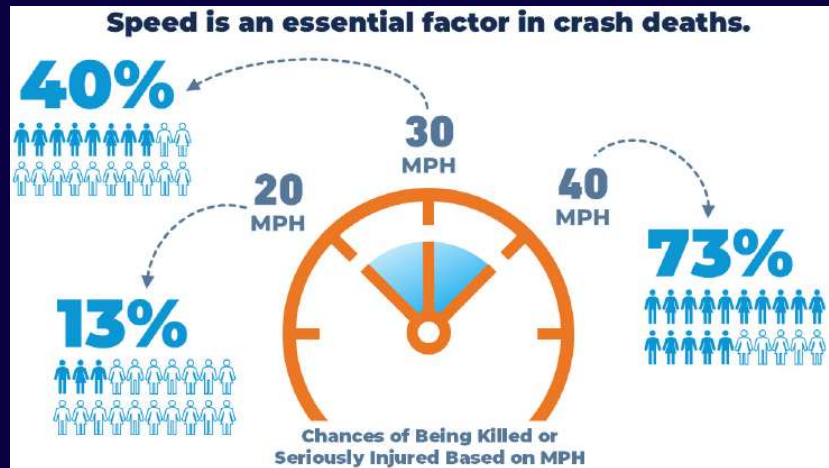
The CSAP identified two networks in understanding crash patterns and planning for a zero-fatality future.

The first network identified is the High Injury Network (HIN) which highlighted the highest crash densities for each road user (drivers, motorcyclists, pedestrians, and cyclists) and their rural and urban distributions. This will help focus



attention to the roadways where people are most often killed or seriously hurt. The HIN showed fatal and serious injury crashes are concentrated on a small share of roads. Risks vary depending on how people travel because the roads where drivers are injured are not always the same roads that people walking or biking are injured. Motorcyclist high injury segments often follow major corridors with higher speeds. Pedestrian and bicyclist high injury segments are predominantly in urban areas.

The second network identified in the plan is the High-Risk Network (HRN). This network shows segments with roadway features that are linked to high-risk areas, not just where crashes have already occurred. The HRN is used to prioritize recommended projects, ensuring that safety investments focus on locations where changes can prevent future crashes and reduce the severity of injuries. This analysis identifies unique combinations of roadway design and contextual attributes associated with elevated potential for crashes such as speed, number of lanes, traffic volume, and surrounding land uses (proximity of schools, parks, etc.) The HRN showed urban widespread priorities across Canton, Massillon, and Alliance. The rural HRN tended to be along high-speed roads that connect communities and carry regional traffic often on State or Federal Routes.



In both networks, the road segments were analyzed separately by different travel modes and for rural and urban areas, because what creates danger on a rural road is not the same as in a town or city.

During the creation process, a steering committee was formed, stakeholder interviews were conducted, in-person events were held, and online engagement transpired. Issues identified include missing sidewalks, unsafe crossings, and barriers that affect residents from traveling safely. The Stark County Bicycle Club identified a need for better signage, education on Ohio's three-foot passing law, and more bicycle infrastructure. The Stark County Farm Bureau identified issues with infrastructure including road size and intersection geometry not accommodating large farm equipment, slow speed, and unsafe driver behavior due to the lack of right-of-way knowledge and the failure to yield.



Input from the community and countywide studies identified high-crash locations that require reactive improvements and corridors that warrant intervention. This framework evaluated crash history, systematic risk indicators, and roadway conditions to create a list of projects prioritized for the county. The plan can be accessed on RPC's website: www.rpc.starkcountyohio.gov – SCATS/Resources/Safe Streets for All

Stark Parks Comprehensive Plan Nearing Completion



A draft of the Stark Parks 10-Year Comprehensive Plan is now open for public comment. Stark Parks contracted with SCRPC to update their existing five-year comprehensive plan for the district to cover a ten-year period. A draft has been completed, and a public meeting was held on March 4th at Sippo Lake's Exploration Gateway. At the meeting, a presentation was provided to go over the public engagement activities and survey results; discuss the different sections of the plan; provide an overview of a proposed mission statement; and detail some of the recommendations for the various parks and trails. The draft is open for public comment through April 4th. Once the public comment period has ended, the comments received will be taken into consideration for edits to the comprehensive plan. After the edits are completed, the Park District can adopt the plan. For more information on Stark Parks 10-Year Comprehensive Plan, please visit starkparks.com/plan.



Stark County Home & Garden Show



The theme for this year's Stormwater Education Program is "From Soil to Sea, Keep It Pollution Free." This year, the Stark County Home & Garden Show was held March 13th and 14th at the HOF Village Dome. We had a booth at the show and handed out a lot of information and giveaways. Several thousand people attended the show.



Keep an eye out! Coming up in late spring is our annual Billboard Coloring Contest. Students K-5 can enter the contest by coloring the official picture that focuses on this year's theme and features Clawd, the stormwater mascot. Four winning entries will have their artwork on billboards throughout Stark County for the month of June. The deadline for the contest is April 17th. For more information or to get the coloring sheet, please contact Malia Burgasser at 330-451-7405 or email mrwatkins@starkcountyohio.gov. Our next newsletter will show the winning entries.

April

6	Subdivision Review	1:30 AM
7	SCRPC	7:00 PM
27	SCATS	1:30 PM

May

4	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
5	SCRPC	7:00 PM
26	SCATS	1:30 PM

June

8	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
9	SCRPC	7:00 PM
29	SCATS	1:30 PM

Visit our website:
www.rpc.starkcountyohio.gov

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