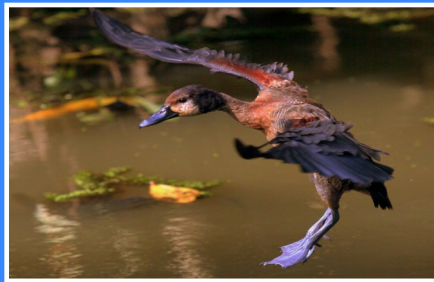
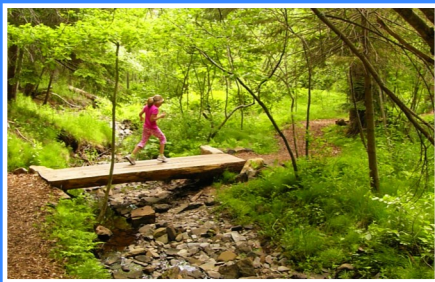


2014 | Annual Report



**Portage County
Regional Planning Commission**



Mission Statement

Our mission is to improve the quality of life in Portage County by helping communities turn vision into action in order to equitably achieve sustainable communities in harmony with the natural environment.



PCRPC Staff

Todd Peetz, AICP
Director

Claudia James
GIS Specialist/Planner

Evelyn Beeman
Office Manager

Lisa Reeves
CDBG Specialist

Pamela Friend
Administrative Assistant

Jeff R. Brown
Intern

Message from the Director

The Portage County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) had an active and productive year in 2014. We were able to receive additional grant funding for a variety of projects which helped our funding improve from past years. Funding will continue to be challenging, but we are working to find more consistent funding sources that we can rely on year to year. The RPC continues to make strides in community collaboration and guiding member communities to meet their needs. We continue to provide zoning and mapping needs for our members, process countywide subdivision reviews, administer CDBG grants on the behalf of the Portage County Commissioners, and write multiple grants for our member communities. Other activities included fair housing calls, attending member zoning commission meetings per their request, and assisting with mapping data as requested. We also sit on several boards representing Portage County in the regional setting.

Some exciting projects that occurred in 2014:

RPC completed the work on the **Asset Mapping** project for the entire county, per a Local Government Innovation Fund (LGIF) grant. We identified all the commercial, industrial and other non-residential parcels and then converted the data into an easy-to-use Excel format. This conversion greatly improved the availability of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data. The information about the project can be found on our website and at the Portage County Auditor's website.

The **Moving Ohio Forward** grant has allowed communities to remove abandoned and blighted residential buildings. We demolished over 130 abandoned residential buildings throughout the county per the grant's phases 1, 2 and 3. The amount expended on the grant was over \$1.2 million. Studies have shown that removing abandoned and blighted buildings can increase neighboring property values by as much as \$10 for every \$1 spent, depending upon the circumstances. This project is adding value to those participating communities.

RPC is updating the **Subdivision Regulations** which will be completed in 2015. The Subdivision Regulations have not had a major amendment in more than a decade and those agencies that implement the subdivision regulations, including the Greater Akron Homebuilder's Association and others, have provided valuable insight into the process.

Looking ahead to 2015, we seek to build on the accomplishments of last year. We are actively seeking grant funds on behalf of our communities and for projects that will benefit our communities. We continue to seek membership gains in the RPC. We believe that our services exceed the cost to our members and we want to strive to increase those benefits. On behalf of our hard working staff, I would like to thank all of our community members for their support and for their desire to make their communities and Portage County a greater place for us all to enjoy.

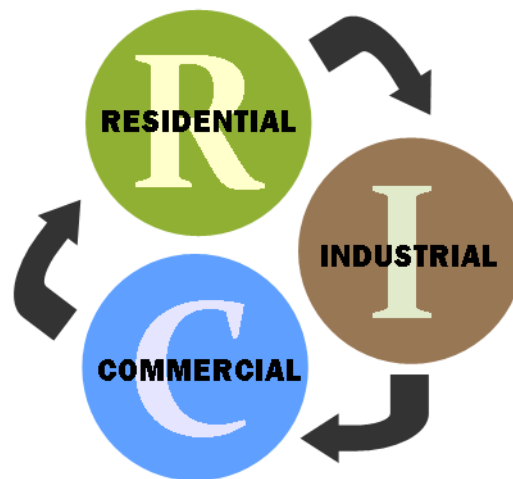
Sincerely,
Todd Peetz, AICP, Director
Portage County Regional Planning Commission

Zoning

RPC reviewed and provided recommendations to townships on zoning resolution text amendments and zoning district amendments. The following are the zoning amendments in which RPC assisted:

Text Amendments

- Non-Conforming uses and structures – Brimfield Township
- Rootstown Township Zoning Resolution Update
- Flag Lots – Brimfield Township
- Lot Frontage; Demolition Bond – Freedom Township
- Chapter 6, Regulations Applicable to All Districts – Ravenna Township
- Section 410.02, Uses – Mantua Township
- Off Premise Billboards – Suffield Township
- Section 310.09.F, Parking/Storage of Recreational Vehicles and Schedule 310.09.B – Rootstown Township
- Windham Township Zoning Resolution Update



Zoning District Amendments

- Rezoning from R-1 to R-3 on Summit Road – Brimfield Township
- Rezoning from O-C to R-3 on Howe Road and Estes Drive – Brimfield Township
- Rezoning from R-1 to R-3 on Summit Road – Franklin Township
- Rezoning from L-1 to R-2; L-1 to C-1 and C-1 to R-2, Richard Bonner, applicant – Nelson Township
- Rezoning from C-1 and R-1 to R-3 on East Main and Sixth Avenue – Franklin Township

Quarterly Zoning Inspector (QZI) Meeting

The RPC continued the Quarterly Zoning Inspector (QZI) meetings in 2014. The QZI meetings are at no additional cost to our member communities. The QZI is also open to representatives from our members' Zoning Commissions and Boards of Zoning Appeals. We had four meetings with guest speakers in 2014, two of which included Assistant County Prosecutor Chris Meduri and Jim DiPaola from Ravenna Township and Randy Roberts, Portage County Building Official. Topics for the meetings this year included Agricultural Use, Zoning Case Law, Property Maintenance Code Ravenna Township and building permit collaboration. The meetings are meant to be informal and to give zoning commission members an opportunity to learn how other zoning commissions have handled similar issues.

Portage County Subdivision Regulations

The Subdivision Regulations Update Committee continued to meet throughout the year to address needed updates to the regulations. Significant updates are proposed to the County Engineer's and Water Resource's requirements to reflect current needs for new residential and commercial developments in Portage County. Changes to the existing "Open Space" regulations are also proposed. The committee hopes to forward the complete set of proposed revisions to the County Prosecutor and Board of Commissioners in 2015.

Subdivisions

With the exception of two major subdivisions that platted new phases and one revised preliminary plan for a major subdivision, review activity was limited to replats in existing subdivisions.

Land Divisions and Subdivisions in Portage County 2014

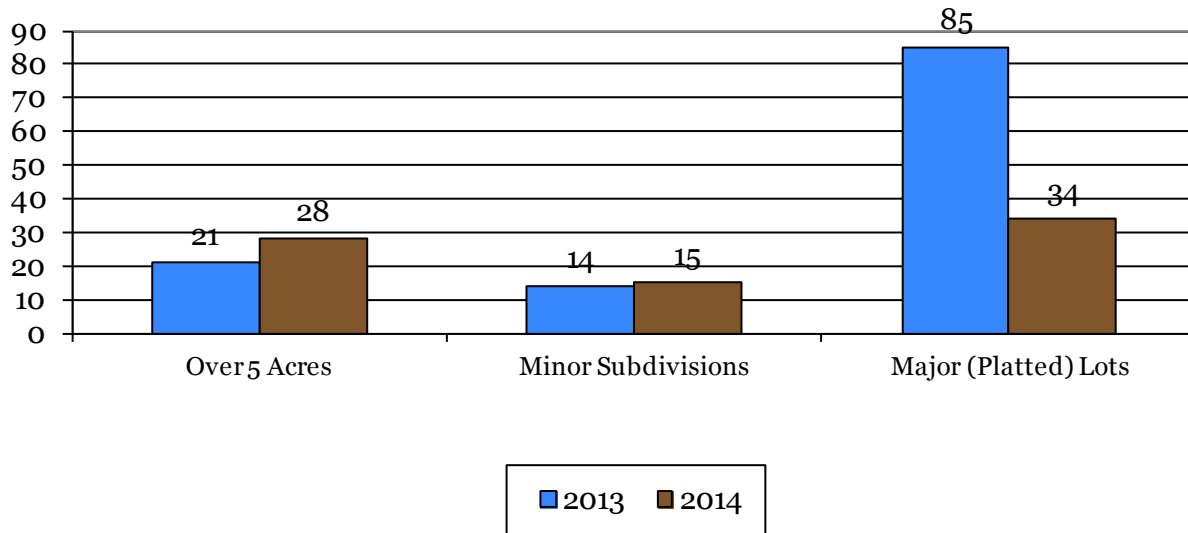
There were 39 subdivision applications and divisions of land to create 77 lots. There were 0 variances from the Subdivision Regulations.

Township	Over 5 Acres	No. of Lots Created by Minor Subdivisions	No. of Lots Created by Major Subdivisions	Total
Atwater	1	2	0	3
Brimfield	2	0	6	8
Charlestown	0	0	0	0
Deerfield	1	2	0	3
Edinburg	0	0	0	0
Franklin	1	0	0	1
Freedom	0	0	0	0
Hiram	0	0	0	0
Mantua	1	0	26	27
Nelson	8	5	0	13
Palmyra	0	0	0	0
Paris	0	0	0	0
Randolph	4	4	0	8
Ravenna	5	0	0	5
Rootstown	2	2	2	6
Shalersville	3	0	0	3
Suffield	0	0	0	0
Windham	0	0	0	0
Total	28	15	34	77

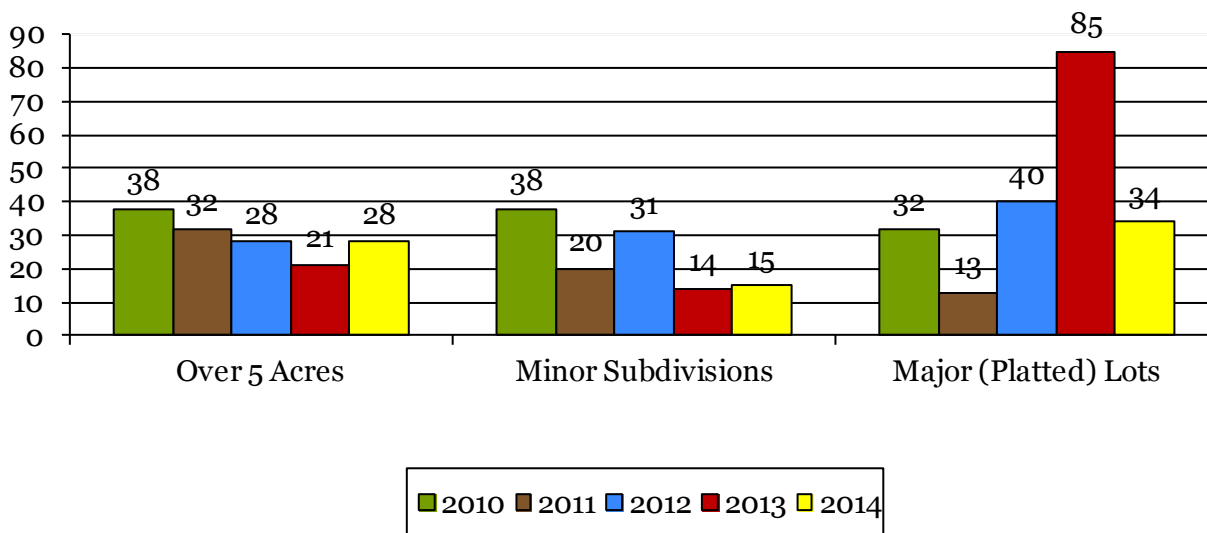
*Transfers to an adjoining property owner=23. (Not included in table).

Land Divisions and Subdivisions Lots Approved

Land Divisions and Subdivision
Lots Approved
2013-2014



Land Divisions and Subdivisions
Lots Approved
2010-2014



Community Development

PCRPC administered \$341,051.25 in CDBG Community Development Grant Program funds and New Horizons Funds for the Portage County Board of Commissioners with the following results:

- Rehabilitated the former “One Stop Building” located at 1034 West Main Street in the City of Ravenna for the Center of Hope.
- Constructed an addition on the former “One Stop Building” located at 1034 West Main Street in the City of Ravenna to relocate the Best Choice Senior Meals Program at the Center of Hope.
- The façade was cleaned and painted and windows were replaced with historically accurate windows at the historic Phoenix Building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places located at 105 – 109 East Main Street in the City of Ravenna.
- Completed asbestos abatement and demolition of the former Smith & Cowan Concrete Batch Plant and several buildings located at 127 Pittsburgh Street in the City of Ravenna.
- Prepared application for the 2014 CDBG Community Development Grant Program to provide services for low and moderate income Portage County households and/or eliminate a slum and blight.
- Provided fair housing assistance for 68 households within Portage County, excluding the City of Kent. Provided educational materials regarding fair housing to 10 agencies/organizations and provided training to 5 agencies/organizations.
- Provided fair housing assistance in the City of Aurora to 3 households. Provided training to one agency/organization.
- Provided fair housing assistance in the City of Streetsboro to 10 households. Provided training to two agencies/organizations.



Phoenix Building before renovation



Phoenix Building after renovation

Committees

Visioning in Portage (VIP)

The RPC is a core participant in Visioning In Portage (VIP), which is a grassroots effort to prepare a countywide vision plan. This project was kicked off in 2011 and has approximately 200 participants that includes all the major regional, county, and city agencies. Collaboration and understanding each other's goals for our communities is a key to success that will establish a direction from which all of us can work. VIP has attended the Randolph Fair, the Ravenna Balloon A-Fair and Art in the Park in Kent. VIP is also coordinating with Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium (NEOSCC), which is devoted to creating a 12-county regional vision plan. The emphasis is on the 6 largest populated counties in Northeast Ohio and Portage County is not one, but the NEOSCC has accepted the idea of using VIP as Portage County's representative in the NEOSCC process. VIP is important to make sure our voices are heard in this larger process.



*Babies in Black
perform at the First Annual
Portage County Celebration Dinner*

In August 2014, VIP held the first annual "Portage County Celebration Week." Celebration Week is a part of the Visioning in Portage mission to educate and invigorate the vision for a vibrant and exciting Portage County. The event included five days of community activities, including the premier of high school bands, a car cruise-in, volunteer day, and an Oscar-style awards dinner, "Look to the Stars."

Festivities concluded with the Kent State University football home opener, fireworks, and the presentation of a

Celebration Week video, sponsored by AMETEK, highlighting the week's events. Plans for Celebration Week 2015 are in the works as VIP continues to recognize and celebrate the great accomplishments in our county.



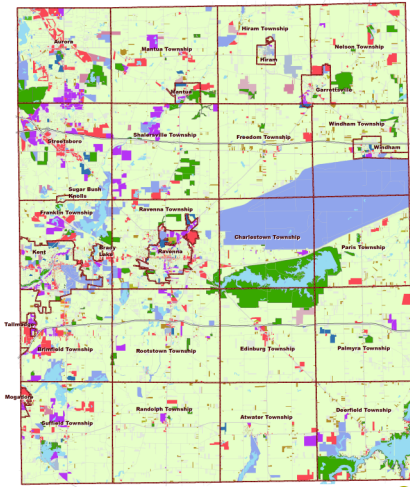
*Volunteers gather for the
Mantua Clean Up Project on
Volunteer Day*

Portage Revitalization and Economic Planning (PREP)

We continue the **Planning, Revitalization, Economic Planning (PREP)** meetings, which include economic development directors, city planners, zoning inspectors, chambers of commerce, and commercial and industrial realtors. The idea is to have an informal collaboration between the cities, villages, and townships. The days of competing against one another for business opportunities are gone. The big picture: through collaboration, we will attract more business opportunities, as well as retain current business. Ravenna City's PREP representative suggested that PREP members seek out and encourage business owners to first consider communities in Portage County, and then follow up by passing on business owners' information to those communities. PREP meetings are held on the 1st Wednesday of each month at noon and are open to anyone who is interested in attending. PREP is also the group who will be fine-tuning the LGIF Asset Mapping project.

Grants

Ohio Local Government Innovation Fund–Asset Mapping



As the Asset Mapping grant moved into its final months, the auditor's parcel data for developed non-residential properties and vacant land were prepared in spreadsheet format for each community in Portage County and posted on the county's website. Maps showing developed land and general commercial and industrial zoning were also posted for each community.

A PowerPoint presentation explaining the Asset Mapping process was created to meet the final requirement for the grant. The presentation was taken on the road in December 2014 to several regional government entities – the Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning & Development Organization (NEFCO) in Akron, the Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) in Cleveland, and the Eastgate Regional Council Governments in Youngstown.

Farmland Preservation

Regional Planning continues to work with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, the designated local sponsor for the state's Agricultural Easement Preservation Program (AEPP), on preserving farms. Regional Planning supplied data on several local farms for the 2014 round of funding. The Barnosky farm in Freedom Township has been preserved through 2013 AEPP funding.

Community Member Projects

Garrettsville

Following the devastating downtown fire, Regional Planning worked with the village to map Community Reinvestment Areas to boost opportunities for economic development.

Hiram Village–Ohio 2014 NatureWorks Grant

NatureWorks grants are funded through the Ohio Parks and Natural Resources Bond Issue and provide up to 75% reimbursement assistance to local governments for the acquisition, development and rehabilitation of recreational areas. RPC staff assisted Hiram Village in preparing a grant application for the Hiram Village Multi-Use Park on the site of the old elementary school. The village was awarded the grant in December 2014.

Paris Township

RPC mapped the current Business Zoning District to aid in decisions about setbacks from that district.

Shalersville Township–Zoning update

RPC's work continued on revising the zoning map and regulations to reflect the recently-adopted Land Use Plan.

City of Ravenna

RPC worked with the city on several mapping projects to provide information for decision-makers. These included maps showing city-owned property in Portage County; existing park locations and possible gaps in residents' access to parks; and the age of housing in the city.

Ravenna Township

Ravenna Township/City of Ravenna JEDD

Regional Planning mapped the western side of Ravenna Township along the State Route 59 corridor and provided addresses of businesses for township-sponsored meetings regarding the formation of the JEDD.

Comprehensive Plan Update

RPC updated maps from the 2004 Comprehensive Plan using current parcel data and other digital mapping data.

Streetsboro

RPC completed the city's master plan and several mapping projects to help inform decision-making on zoning issues in the city.

Mantua Township–Mantua Center School

Regional Planning provided assistance to the township by attending and facilitating several meetings concerning the future use of the Mantua Center School. The school is one of only five one-room schools that remain in Portage County. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is considered a good example of an early twentieth century Neo-Classical Revival educational facility. For this project, RPC staff provided maps of zoning and land use in the vicinity of the school for township use.



Mantua Center School

Windham Township

RPC reviewed the zoning regulation re-write and made recommendations to the township.

Windham Village

RPC created a map to show parcels owned by the village.

Community Development

RPC created environmental review maps for projects receiving grant funding. Our agency also provided mapping support for the Land Bank and Moving Ohio Forward projects.

Special Projects

PARTA

RPC supplied PARTA with demographic maps for several proposed bus stop locations.

Portage County Regional Planning Commission 2014 Financial Report

Beginning Cash Balance **52,868.79**

Revenue

RPC Membership Dues	261,443.44
Subdivisions	9,720.00
Intergovernmental Reviews	100.00
Copies/Miscellaneous/Over Hours	312.52
Publications	—
Rental Income	9,399.10
Contracts	

Aurora City Fair Housing	2,482.74
Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority	1,881.38
Ravenna City Fair Housing	2,427.21
Streetsboro City Fair Housing	1,881.83
Hiram Township Comp Plan Update	1,764.47
Streetsboro City Master Plan Update	4,690.75
Portage Development Board Strategic Plan	7,466.04
Moving Ohio Forward	47,725.47
Ravenna City DISC Grant Contract	1,625.27

Total Contracts **71,945.16**

Grants

LGIF Asset Mapping Grant	15,366.51
New Horizons	12,409.43
2012 CDBG Formula Grant Admin	12,739.68
2012 CDBG Formula Grant Fair Housing	3,040.83
2013 CDBG Formula Grant Admin	40,040.80
2013 CDBG Formula Grant Fair Housing	7,000.00

Total Grants **90,597.25**

County Contribution

—

Refund/Reimbursement

540.63

TOTAL REVENUE/BUDGET

451,926.89

Expenditures

Salaries	205,714.71
PERS	28,799.96
Medicare	2,854.43
Workers Comp	3,630.36
Health Insurance	46,003.84
Insurances (Bldg. & Bonds)	—
Maintenance/Custodial Contract	3,180.00
Utilities	9,297.49
Telephone	2,097.74
Contract Services	1,266.90
Professional & Technical Services	5,679.00
Audit Services	4,510.00
Computer Services	754.25
Legal Services	10,000.00
Repairs (Equipment, Rental, Bldg.)	1,356.28
Advertising	442.10
Postage	1,228.00
Supplies	2,904.95
Photocopying/Printing	1,572.95
Dues/Periodicals	549.00
Travel/Training	420.40
Furniture	413.44
Equipment	3,007.00
Copier/Postage Meter Rentals	3,703.44
Loan (Multi-Purpose Building)	31,788.77
Building Improvements	350.00
Reimbursement/Refund	227.00

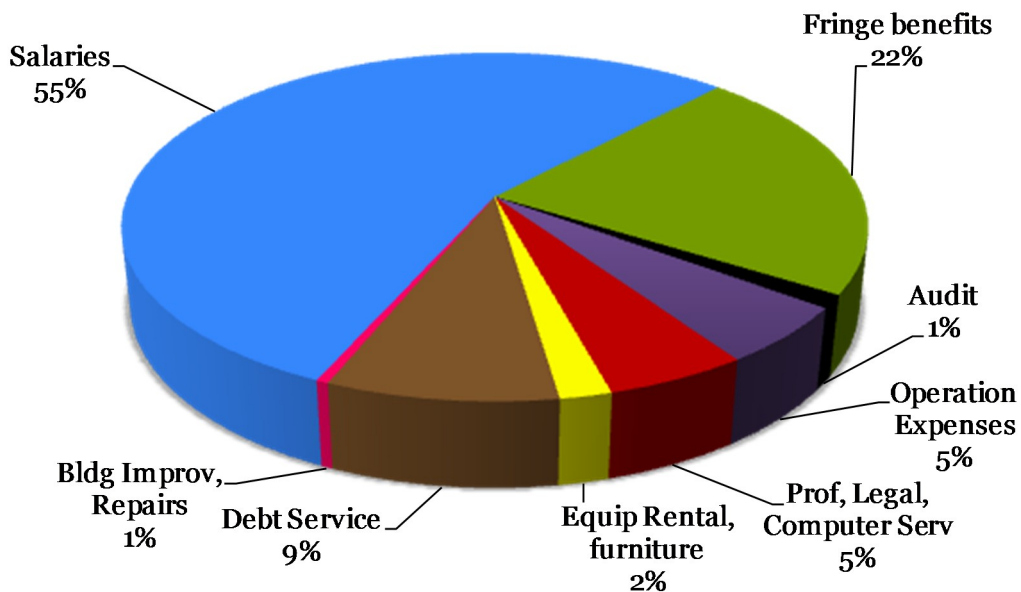
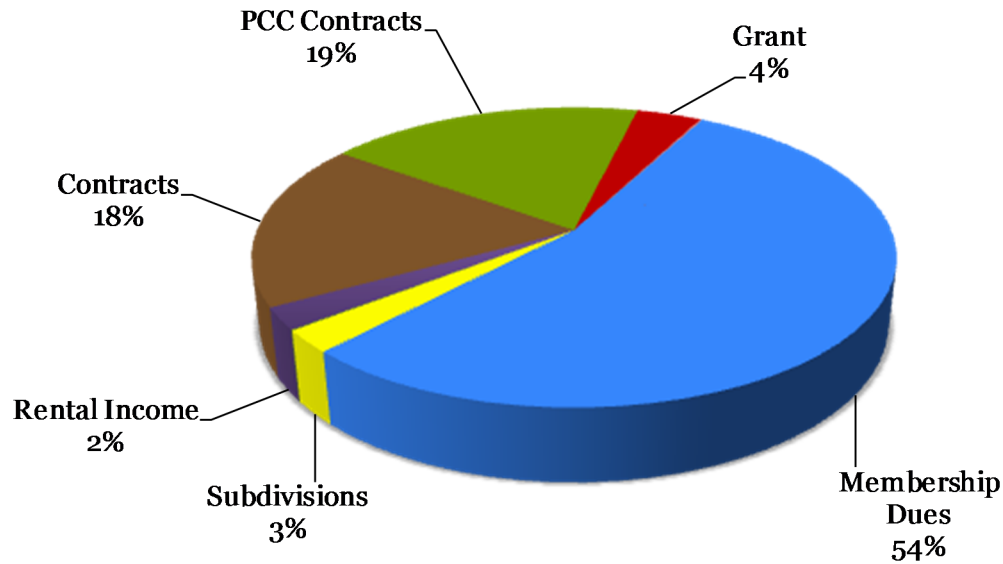
TOTAL EXPENDITURES

371,752.01

Ending Cash Balance

80,174.88

2014 Revenue Sources



Members

Atwater Township

Danny Derreberry
*Lynn Whittlesey

Brimfield Township

Richard Messner
*Lisa Cotten

Franklin Township

Sam Abell
*Jenny August

Freedom Township

Jim Hammar
*Roy Martin

Garrettsville Village

Rick Patrick
*Becky Harrington

Hiram Township

Steve Pancost
*Jack Groselle

Hiram Village

Robert Dempsey

Mantua Township

Victor Grimm
*Sandy Englehart

Mantua Village

Ben Prescott
*Paul Janson

Nelson Township

Joseph Leonard

Palmyra Township

Sandy Nutter
*Bill Rohn

Paris Township

Tom Smith
*Dorene Spicer

Randolph Township

Susan White
*Dan Kolasky

Ravenna Township

James DiPaola
*Pat Artz

City of Ravenna

Kerry Macomber
*Kelly Englehart

Shalersville Township

Nancy Vines
*Frank R. Ruehr, Jr.

City of Streetsboro

Mayor Glenn Broska

Suffield Township

Mark Frisone
*Adam Bey

Sugar Bush Knolls

Jim Beal

Windham Township

Rich Gano
*Joe Pinti

PARTA

Bryan Smith
*W. Frank Hairston

Portage County

Sabrina Christian-Bennett
Kathleen Chandler
*Melissa Long
Maureen Frederick
*Terry Montz

Portage County Engineer

Mickey Marozzi
*Dan Jendrisak

Portage Park District

Allan Orashan
*Chris Craycroft

Portage County Water Resources Department

Jeff Lonzrick
*Tia Rutledge

Soil and Water Conservation Office

James Bierlair
*Eric Long

Ex-Officio Members

Hiram College
Kent State University
PC Health Department
Habitat for Humanity
Home Builders Association
NEOMED

*Indicates alternate member.

Officers/Executive Committee

Tom Smith, Chairman (3/10/10-5/14/14)
Jim DiPaola, Chairman (5/14/14-Present)
Richard Messner, Vice Chairman (3/10/13-5/14/14)
Tom Smith, Vice Chairman (5/14/14-Present)
Todd Peetz, Secretary
Allan Orashan (4/14/10-Present)
Sandy Nutter (3/10/10-Present)
Sabrina Christian-Bennett (9/10/14-12/31/14)
Maureen Frederick (02/09/11-9/10/14)
Danny Derreberry (1/9/13-Present)

Portage County Regional Planning Commission

**124 N. Prospect Street
Ravenna, OH 44266**

Phone: (330) 297-3613

Fax: (330) 297-3617



Portage County Regional Planning Commission