

2015

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

Amy Craft
Grants Administrator

Jeff Brown
Intern

Message from the Director

The Portage County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) had another productive year in 2015. We were able to receive additional grant and special project funding to complete the year better than we had forecast. Funding as always 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 the commissioners funded a part-time grant writer 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 2015:

RPC wrapped up 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.

We began several new projects including the City of Streetsboro Subdivision Regulations, the stormwater septic tank program. We received grant funds to process a feasibility study for a potential Portage County Food Hub and we assisted in the *Celebrate Portage!* program. We also provided planning and meeting assistance for the Portage County Land Bank.

RPC is updating the Subdivision Regulations which will be completed in 2016. 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 2016, we seek to build on the accomplishments of last year. The County Commissioners have funded for 2016 a full-time grant writer to actively seek grant funds to 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

- Conditional Uses for Mulching Facilities
- Fences and Walls
- Damage and Destruction
- Two-family Dwelling Units
- Shipping Containers
- Temporary Facilities
- Principal Buildings
- Shared Parking Facilities
- Agricultural Uses
- Permitted Uses in Neighborhood Commercial District
- Area, Yard, and Height Requirements in General Commercial District
- Side Yard Width in R-1 Residential District
- Windham Township Zoning Resolution Update
- Swimming Pools
- Agriculture Exempted Properties
- Shalersville Township Zoning Resolution Update
- Nuisances Prohibited
- Certificate of Occupancy



Zoning District Amendments

- Changed C-1 District (Round Up Lake and Robin Trailer Park) to Commercial Development, Conservation District, CDCD.

Quarterly Zoning Inspector (QZI) Meeting

The RPC continued the Quarterly Zoning Inspector (QZI) meetings in 2015. 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 two meetings with guest speakers in 2015, which included Assistant County Prosecutor Chris Meduri and Kevin Watson and Mary Helen Smith from the Portage County Health Department. Topics for the meetings this year included Zoning Case Law, and how the Health Department processes septic tank permits and how the Zoning Inspectors could assist with identifying potential problems. 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 Regulation Update Committee continued to meet throughout the year to review proposed updates to assure requirements reflect current needs for residential and commercial developments and the improvements associated with them. Changes to the existing Open Space regulations were discussed at length. When the committee finishes its review, a copy of the proposed regulations will be forwarded to the County Prosecutor and Board of Commissioners.

Subdivisions

Major subdivision activity remained low throughout 2015 with most new lots being created in latter phases of existing subdivisions platted in the mid-2000's. 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 2015

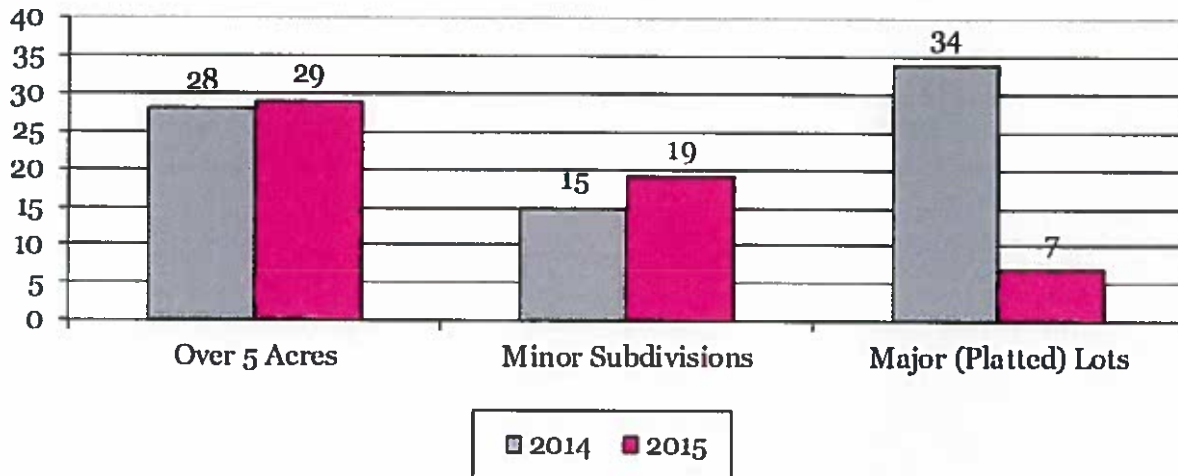
There were 41 subdivision applications and divisions of land to create 55 lots. There was 1 variance from the Subdivision Regulations.

Township	Over 5 Acres	No. of Lots Created by Minor Subdivisions	No. of Lots Created by Major Subdivisions	Total
Atwater	0	2	0	2
Brimfield	3	2	3	8
Charlestown	0	0	0	0
Deerfield	2	4	0	6
Edinburg	1	0	0	1
Franklin	0	0	0	0
Freedom	0	0	0	0
Hiram	0	0	0	0
Mantua	7	0	1	8
Nelson	0	0	0	0
Palmyra	2	0	0	2
Paris	0	0	0	0
Randolph	2	3	0	5
Ravenna	0	4	1	5
Rootstown	5	2	2	9
Shalersville	1	2	0	3
Suffield	6	0	0	6
Windham	0	0	0	0
Total	29	19	7	55

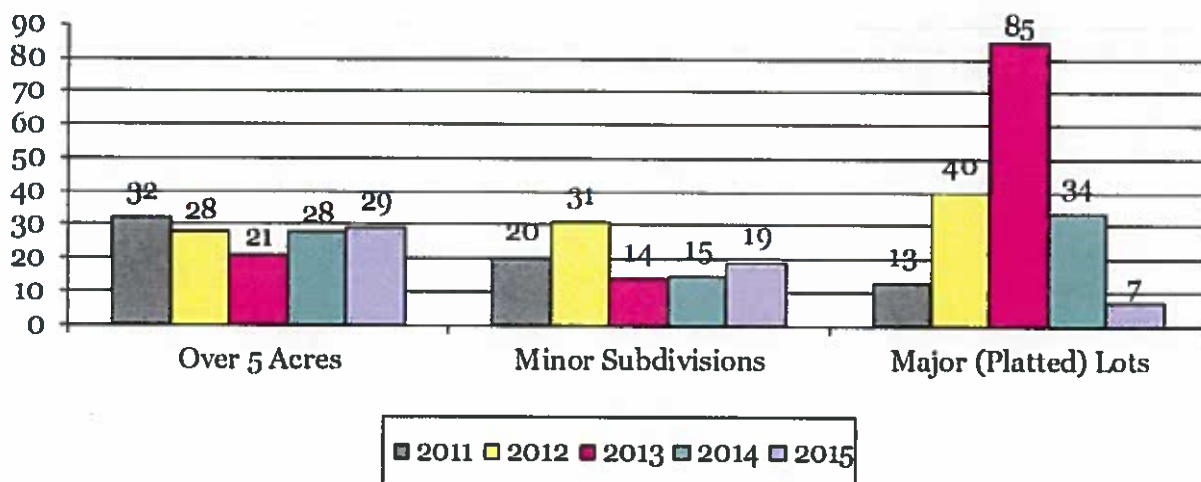
*Transfers to an adjoining property owner=38. (Not included in table).

Land Divisions and Subdivisions Lots Approved

Land Divisions and Subdivisions
Lots Approved
2014-2015



Land Divisions and Subdivisions
Lots Approved
2011-2015



2015 | PCRPC ANNUAL REPORT

Community Development

PCRPC administered \$607,405.46 CDBG Community Development Grant Program funds for the Portage County Board of Commissioners with the following results:

2012 CDBG Discretionary Targets of Opportunity Grant



*Historic Phoenix Building in
Downtown Ravenna*

- Rehabilitated 105, 107, and 109 East Main Street in the Historic District of downtown Ravenna. The rehabilitation allowed for the development of 10 units of permanent supportive housing for adults with mental health disabilities and development of 3 retail spaces intended to be both income generating as well as job creation and skills experience for the residents. The remainder of the building is divided into independent living units.

2013 CDBG Allocation Grant

- Completed demolition of the former Smith & Cowan Concrete Batch Plant and several buildings located at 127 Pittsburgh Street in the City of Ravenna.
- Removed architectural barriers at the public library located at 8990 Kirby Lane in the City of Streetsboro by installing handicap accessible automatic doors in order to achieve ADA compliance.

2014 CDBG Allocation Grant

- Made the following improvements to the Skeels-Vernon L. Mathews Community Center located at 4378 Skeels Street in Ravenna Township:
 - Increased the number of parking spaces from 5 to 27.
 - Installed a walk path around the pond.
 - Cleaned overgrown growth and trimmed the trees around the pond.
- Replaced the roof at the Ravenna Child Development Center located at 4833 Harding Avenue in Ravenna Township.
- Cleaned up and disposed of the concrete block behind McDonald's and on the Osborne property; removed underground fuel tank; filled, graded, and seeded entire site at the former Smith & Cowan Concrete Batch Plant located at 127 Pittsburgh Street in the City of Ravenna.
- Excavated the concrete and put in new sidewalks and new street lighting in the historical commercial district of the Village of Garrettsville.



*New sidewalks and street lighting in the
Village of Garrettsville.*

- Prepared application for the 2015 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 59 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 Streetsboro to 4 households. Provided training to 3 agencies/organizations.

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 others goals for our communities is a key to success that will establish a direction from which all of us can work. VIP held a Portage County Celebration Week in August of 2014. In 2015, the activities and events have grown beyond one week and the name was changed to Celebrate Portage!

In August and September we held a number of events. We had the Ravenna cruise-in which drew over 900 historic cars and thousands of visitors to the City of Ravenna. We had 14 volunteer projects throughout the county with more than 100 volunteers. There were social events including "movie nights" and pot luck dinners. We had 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 Celebrate Portage! video, sponsored by AMETEK, highlighting the year's events. Plans for Celebrate Portage! 2016 are in the works as the VIP legacy continues to recognize and celebrate the great accomplishments in our county.



Celebration Dinner Awards



Celebration Week Cruise-In

Celebrate!
PORTAGE!

Grants

Local Food Promotion Program

In September 2015, the Portage County Regional Planning Commission received a grant from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service to contract with an individual, agency or firm to draft a feasibility study for a food hub in Portage County. A Request for Proposal was released for the feasibility study in late December. The original Food Hub Plan was completed by RPC in 2012 and recommendations from that plan included a feasibility study to take the project to its next level. RPC staff will organize and host steering committee meetings during 2016 to guide the food hub study process. Final recommendations will be completed in September 2016.



County Departments and Agencies

The Regional Planning staff explored a number of grants with Ryan Shackelford, Director of the Portage County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in an effort to set the stage for future grant applications. A state Homeland Security Grant program application was submitted, but not funded. RPC staff also discussed grant ideas with the Sheriff's Department and the Board of Commissioners.

Asset Mapping 2015

Ohio Local Government Innovation Fund–Asset Mapping

We wrapped up the Asset Mapping grant in the first month of the year. New land use data for each community was added to the Asset Mapping website (<http://www.co.portage.oh.us/assetmapping.htm>), enabling users to compare development data from 2014 and 2015.

Farmland Preservation

Regional Planning continues to support farmland preservation by working with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, the designated local sponsor for the state's Agricultural Easement Preservation Program (AEPP). In 2015, Donald Sampson added 50 acres to his already preserved farm in Deerfield Township and the Carrington Farm in Palmyra Township (68.5 acres) was accepted to the AEPP program.



The Sampson family on their Deerfield Township dairy farm.

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–2015 Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant

RPC staff assisted Hiram Village in preparing a grant application for the Land & Water Conservation Fund, "the federal program to conserve irreplaceable lands and to improve outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the nation." It will be used to continue making improvements to the Hiram Village multi-use park on the site of the old elementary school. The village was awarded a NatureWorks grant in 2015 to begin park improvements.

Atwater Township - Ohio 2015 Nature Works Grant

Assisted Atwater Township with writing a grant for a new pavilion in their old school park. The pavilion was is relatively large and is intended to be used by families attending the park.

Freedom Township

Regional Planning worked with the Freedom Township Zoning Commission to evaluate and revise the zoning resolution consistent with identified needs. We carefully reviewed what the Township has been experiencing with regard to a variety of land use issues and processed a series of text amendments to address those issues.



Cyclists and a bird watcher enjoying the Berlin Lake Trail.

Portage Park District

The Portage Park District hired a consultant to create a new Comprehensive Strategic Master Plan for the parks and Regional Planning staff is serving on the steering committee for that process. Regional Planning also shared GIS data with the consultant for maps associated with the plan.

Randolph Township

Regional Planning worked with the Township to address urgent needs regarding the town center zoning. This included numerous community meetings and often very contentious discussions. However in the end the community compromised to what the residents felt implemented their concerns and needs for the historic center of the Township.

Ravenna Township—Comprehensive Plan Update

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

Streetsboro

RPC has prepared several drafts of revisions to the City Subdivision Regulations. We also provided mapping on as needed basis

Zoning Resolutions and Maps

Numerous communities have revised zoning resolutions and updated zoning maps to reflect recent development trends and to prepare their communities for future development. Regional Planning assisted in revisions to zoning text and maps.

Community Projects

Fair Housing

Work on the required Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, due June 2016, was begun. Recent achievements were documented and strategies to promote fair housing were drafted.

Environmental Reviews

Staff continues to provide maps for environmental reviews as needed.

2015 | PCRPC ANNUAL REPORT**Portage County Regional Planning Commission
2015 Financial Report****Beginning Cash Balance** 80,174.88**Revenue**

RPC Membership Dues	223,453.63
Subdivisions	11,130.00
Intergovernmental Reviews	100.00
Copies/Miscellaneous/Over Hours	4,498.95
Publications	—
Rental Income	18,950.00

Contracts

Moving Ohio Forward	2,198.85
Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority	2,087.46
Streetsboro City Fair Housing	2,399.07
LGIF Asset Mapping Grant	5,090.65
Ravenna City DISC Grant Contract	6,600.66
NDS/Land Reutilization Committee Contract	11,316.06
Ravenna Township LUP	45.80
Coleman Professional Services	434.78
Streetsboro City Subdivision Regulations Update	4,302.64
Total Contracts	34,475.97

Grants

2013 CDBG Formula Grant Admin	3,575.49
2014 CDBG Formula Grant Admin	45,928.04
2014 CDBG Formula Grant Fair Housing	7,000.00
2014 CDBG Formula Grant Project Copies/Bid Books	693.60
2015 CDBG Formula Grant Admin	13,520.43
2015 CDBG Formula Grant Fair Housing	1,068.64
Total Grants	71,786.20

County Contribution

Refund/Reimbursement

TOTAL REVENUE/BUDGET

40,000
1,875.89
486,445.52

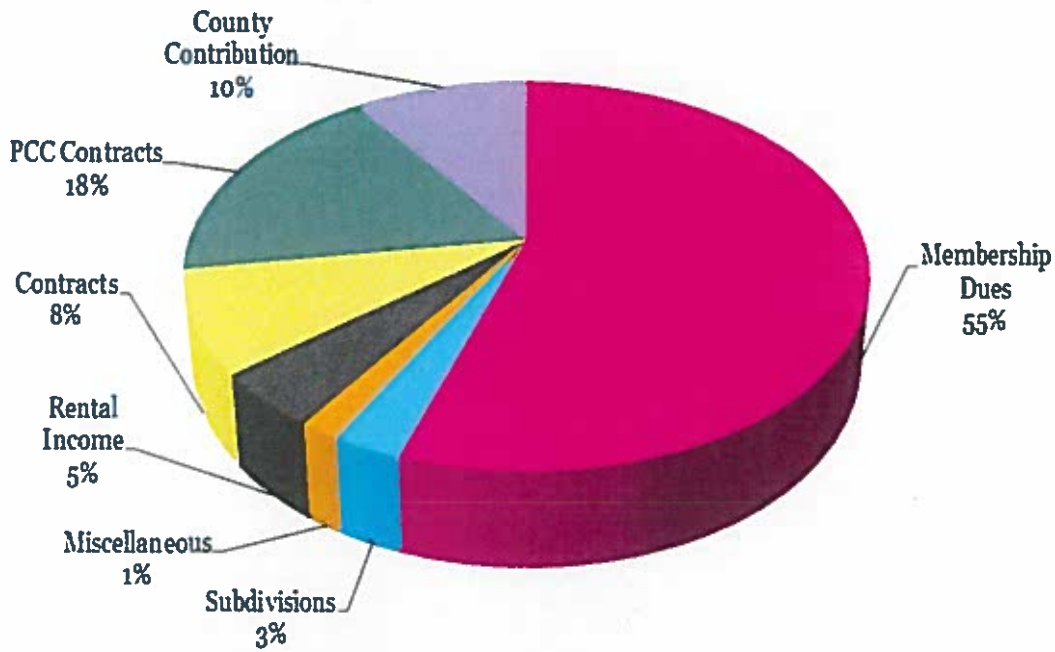
Expenditures

Salaries	237,612.42
PERS	33,266.03
Medicare	3,315.85
Workers Comp	3,497.15
Health Insurance	53,773.00
Insurances (Bldg. & Bonds)	—
Maintenance/Custodial Contract	3,120.00
Utilities	8,052.18
Telephone	2,139.03
Contract Services	1,598.68
Professional & Technical Services	3,356.00
Audit Services	—
Computer Services	1,160.00
Legal Services	10,000.00
Repairs (Equipment, Rental, Bldg.)	2,072.00
Advertising	188.30
Postage	1,580.01
Supplies	3,014.25
Photocopying/Printing	1,499.89
Dues/Periodicals	988.00
Travel/Training	600.80
Furniture	—
Equipment	3,013.63
Copier/Postage Meter Rentals	3,749.63
Loan (Multi-Purpose Building)	31,788.75
Building Improvements	7,926.00
Reimbursement/Refund	—
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	417,311.60

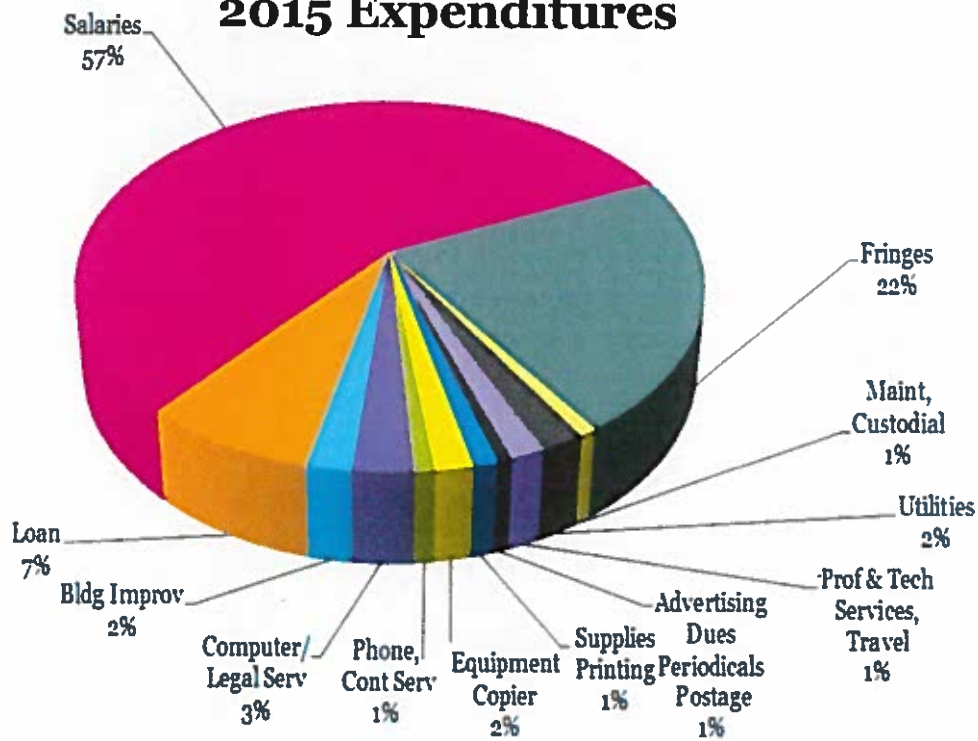
Ending Cash Balance**69,133.92**

*Unaudited Financial Information

2015 Revenue Sources



2015 Expenditures



Members

Atwater Township

Danny Derreberry
*Lynn Whittlesey

Brimfield Township

Richard Messner
*Lisa Cotton

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
*Frank Hemphill

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
*Ralph Graham

Randolph Township

Susan White
*Bruce Wagner
*Erin Myrla

Ravenna Township

James DiPaola
*Pat Artz

City of Ravenna

Kelly Englehart

Rootstown Township

Joseph Paulus

***Linda Hankins**

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

Clayton Popik
*W. Frank Hairston

Portage County

Vicki A. Kline
*Terry Montz
Kathleen Chandler
*Melissa Long
Maureen T. Frederick
*Jim Greener

Portage County Engineer

Mickey Marozzi
*Dan Jendrisak

Portage Park District

Allan Orashan
*Chris Craycroft

Portage County Water Resources Department

Jeff Lonzriek
*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

Jim DiPaola, Chairman
Tom Smith, Vice Chairman
Todd Peetz, Secretary
Richard Messner
Allan Orashan
Sandy Nutter
Maureen T. Frederick
Danny Derreberry
Jim Beal

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