

# 2013 Annual Report

*Franklin County  
Economic Development & Planning Department*

## **BUILDING SERVICES**



### **Building Services Mission**

*To protect the lives and safety of residents and visitors of Franklin County, preserve quality of life, and contribute to economic development.*

#### **Commissioners**

Marilyn Brown, *President*  
Paula Brooks  
John O'Grady



# OVERVIEW

The Building Services Division of the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department is responsible for the unincorporated townships of Franklin County and six contract jurisdictions.

The purpose of the Building Services Division is to ensure compliance with the Ohio Residential Building Code for 1-, 2-, and 3-family dwellings.

Our services include plan examinations, new construction building inspections, building permits, electrical permits, HVAC permits, building condemnations, court testimonies, preventative inspections, complaint-based inspections, technical assistance, and consultations.

The Building Services Annual Activity Report serves as a community update on the daily activities of this office as we work to ensure building safety.

This report uses specific measures to analyze and report on the work completed by the Building Services Division for 2013. The report also highlights the growth and change our department has experienced in terms of services offered, new staff members, and ongoing initiatives.

## Resources

### Building Services Section

Residential Building Permits  
Franklin County Building Services Division  
614-525-3166

### Community Services Section

The following services and programs are offered by the Community Development division of the Economic Development & Planning Department.

To be eligible for these services, recipients must reside in Franklin County, but outside Columbus city limits, and meet certain income eligibility guidelines.

#### Available services:

- Single Family Rehabilitation Loans
- Accessibility and Minor Home Repair Grants
- Urgent Repair Grants
- Home Buyer Down Payment Assistance
- Women's Employment Services
- Nutritional Services
- Fair Housing Services
- Hearing Enhancement Services
- Employment Services for Developmentally Disabled Individuals
- Sewer Tap-In Assistance

*\*Cover photos provided by Homes on the Hill CDC, MORPC, and Habitat MidOhio. These homes were completed using federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds.*

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## Letter from the Director

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**Jim Schimmer, Director**

**Franklin County Economic Development & Planning**

The Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department is pleased to present its 2013 Annual Building Services Report. More than just an overview of statistics, this publication tells the story of the extraordinary progress that has been made in the past year towards improving our local economy, providing quality inspection services, and creating safer neighborhoods for Franklin County residents. I am happy to report we are making progress through old-fashioned hard work.

In 2013, Franklin County and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission concluded the Township Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program, which used Federal Community Development Block Grant funding to demolish 20 vacant and dangerous homes across five townships. This may not sound like the most dynamic achievement, but you certainly would understand how important this milestone was if you had to live next door to one of these problem properties.

Our building services are delivered by a dedicated staff who oversee renovations and new residential construction. They examine plans, perform on-site inspections, and issue permits – whether

it is 20 below zero or 98 degrees and muggy!

Staff members also serve as an important resource by supporting contractors and homeowners as they go through the sometimes nerve-racking process of building or renovating a home. Building Services staff provide timely and professional response to public complaints, issue building condemnations, provide in-court expert testimony, and offer technical assistance and one-on-one personal consults when needed.

This report outlines the work of the Building Services Division from 2011-2013 and reflects the economic changes our communities have experienced from year to year. I hope you will agree, this publication reveals the significant progress we have made providing safe, affordable, and healthy neighborhoods for Franklin County's residents.

Franklin County Building Services - we're helping build the future now!

Sincerely,



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## SmartGov Updates

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SMARTGov is a browser based online permitting software that allows employees, contractors, and homeowners to process, pay, and schedule inspections for all types of permits. Franklin County currently processes all building, electrical, and HVAC permits as well as contractor registration and code enforcement violations using SMARTGov. We are currently updating the software to process zoning permits, which can be attached to related building permits. The software also provides a degree of user flexibility, as administrators can modify parts of the software to suit the needs of each department or user.

SMARTGov also allows for streamlined record management and reports, since all permits are processed within the software. The software also streamlines planning,

inspection, code enforcement, and citizen request activities. SMARTGov is also compatible with the County's GIS mapping software, allowing for real time tracking of all applications. The software has the ability to track the financial component related to each type of permit, thus making the financial process easier for all parties involved.

Since its installation in late 2012, SMARTGov has proved to be an excellent program in meeting the administrative needs of the department. Staff members are now working on migrating the zoning case management system from the current CATHE system to SMARTGov. This will allow zoning and permitting to be tracked in one place, and also enable e-pay options.

### Related Links:

SmartGov website:

<http://smartgovcommunity.com>

Franklin County Building Services:

<http://development.franklincountyohio.gov/building/>

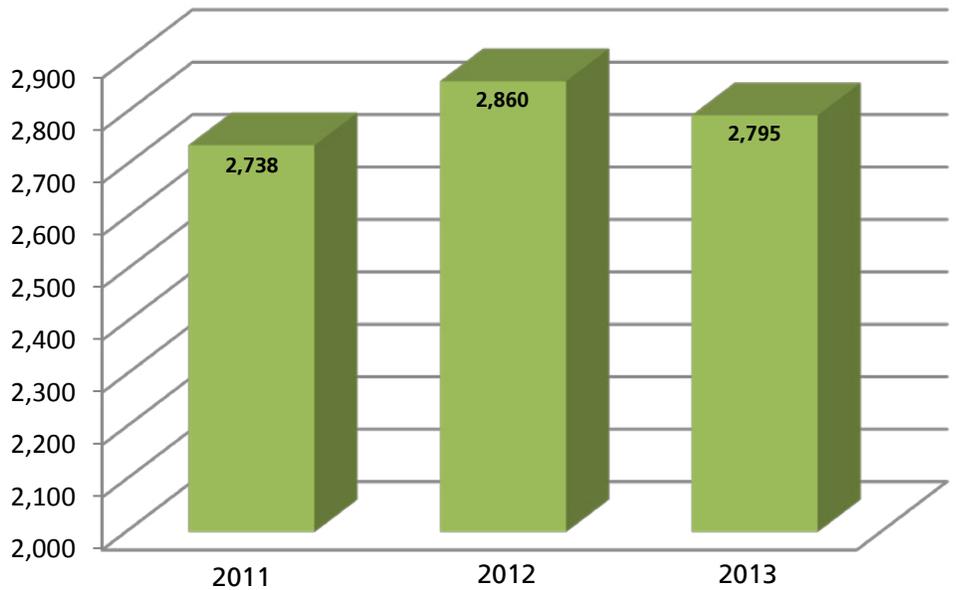


# Inspections Completed

The Building Services division has adopted the 2013 Residential Building Code of the State of Ohio. This statute requires that inspections be done to ensure an acceptable level of safety, property and equipment value, and energy efficiency.

Inspections include site, foundation, footers, structural, electrical, air conditioning, ventilation, heating, insulation, windows, and doors.

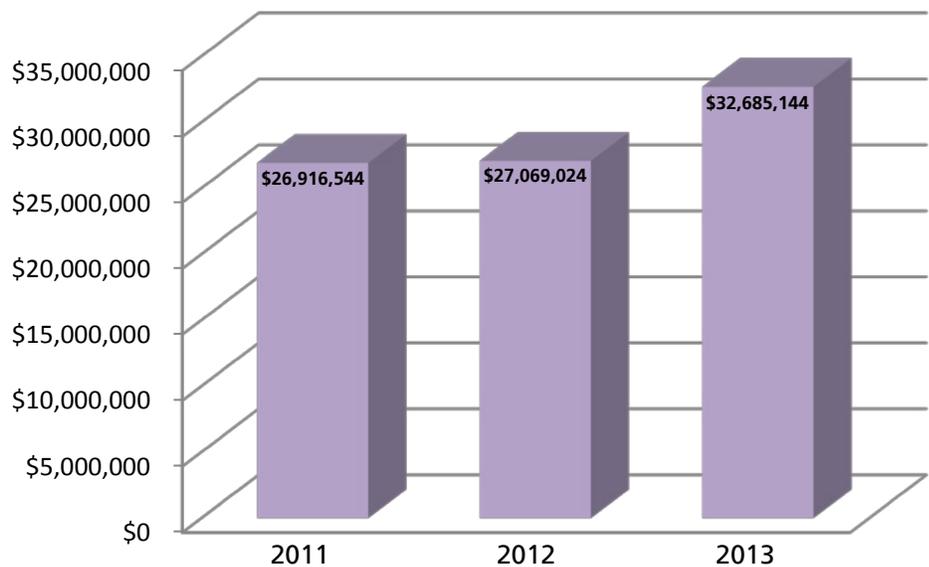
Inspections are carried out periodically throughout all construction phases until a certificate of occupancy is issued.



# Estimated Cost of Construction

The estimated cost of construction is the amount of money expected to go toward construction projects for which Franklin County has issued permits. This includes new builds, reconstruction, repairs, upgrades, additions, and alterations.

The estimated cost of construction for 2013 was approximately 20% higher than in 2012. This reflects an improving economy and correlates with the increase in new home permits as well as an increase in homeowners who are investing in home improvements again after the recession.

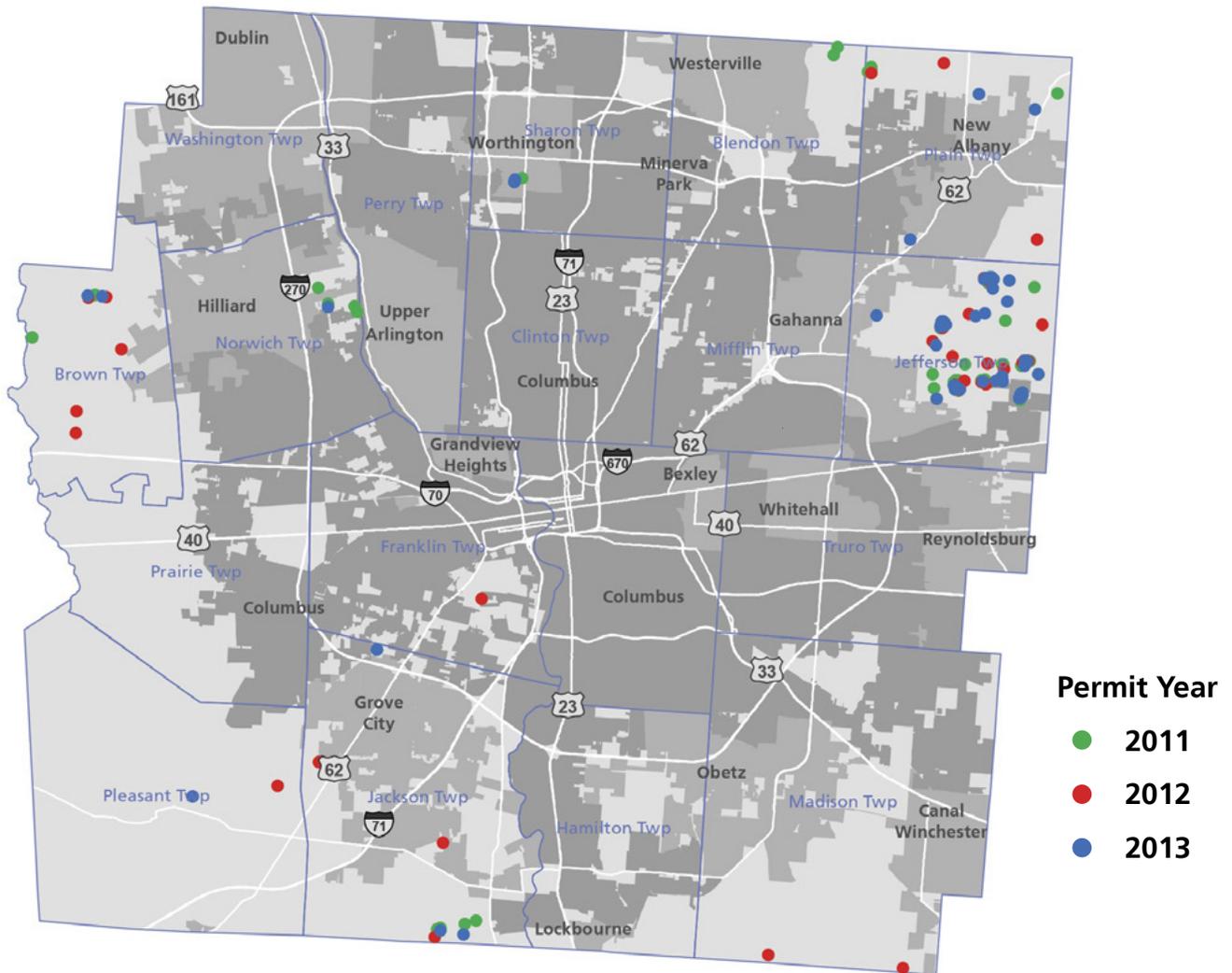
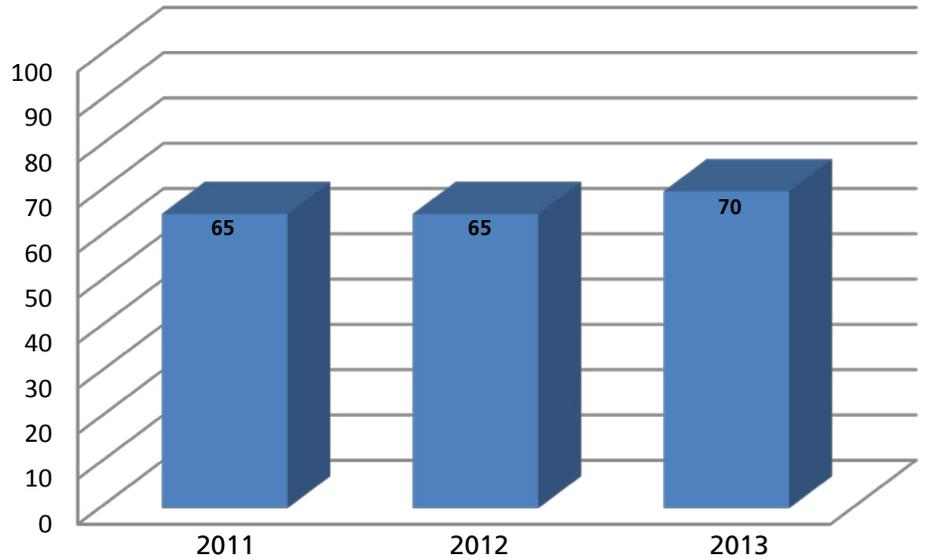


# Building Permits for New Homes

The Building Services section issues permits to developers seeking to construct new homes in Franklin County townships.

Building permits for new homes are a key indicator of economic growth and stability, and are reported nationally to gauge the health of the nation's economy.

The number of permits issued for new homes in Franklin County has remained relatively stable over the past three years, rising only slightly in 2013.



# Township Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program

In 2012, the Franklin County Economic Development & Planning Department (EDP) partnered with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) to launch the Township Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program. The program provided all 17 Franklin County Townships an opportunity to address unsafe and blighted residential properties through demolition, and five townships took advantage of this opportunity and identified properties to demolish. Over the course of the program, Franklin County invested \$350,000 of Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) into the program and demolished a total of 20 blighted properties. Demolition expenses totaled approximately \$280,000 and the remaining \$70,000 of the total funding was used for program administration. MORPC administered the program and handled operations on behalf of Franklin County.

## Jobs Impacted

Inspection Contractors	23
General Contractors	20
Abatement Contractors	14
Well Sealing Contractors	2
Police/Traffic Patrol	1
<b>Total Jobs Impacted</b>	<b>60</b>



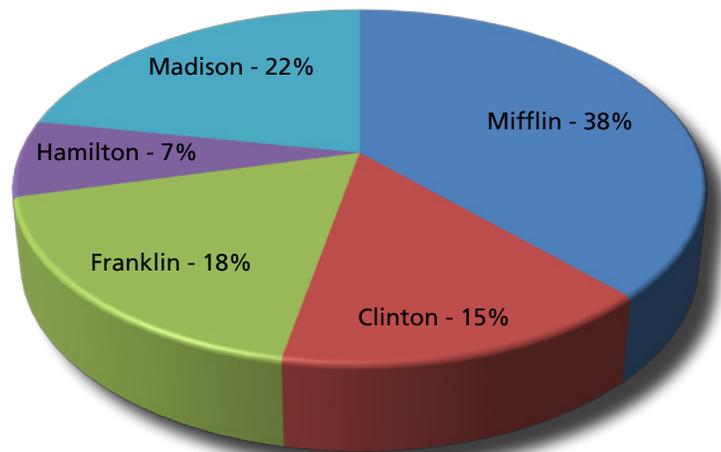
**2029 Eddystone Avenue**

Vacant house before demolition (above) and seeded lot after demolition (below) in August 2012



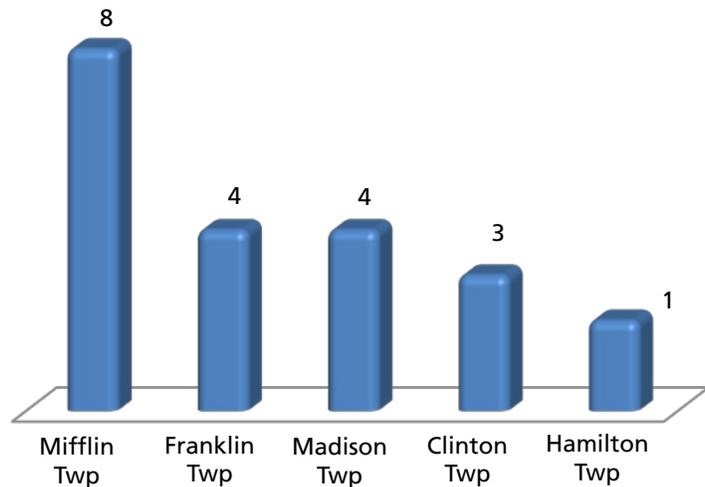
## Participating Townships

### Funding By Township



Franklin County and MORPC demolished 20 blighted properties in five townships across three rounds of CDBG funding.

### Demolitions Completed



# Upcoming & Newsworthy

## Franklin County to Host 2014 NCDCA Conference

Franklin County is preparing to host the 2014 National Community Development Association (NCDCA) Annual Conference, to be held June 25-28, 2014, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Columbus. NCDCA is a national nonprofit organization comprised of more than 550 local governments across the country that administer federally-supported community, economic development, housing, and human services programs, including U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs like Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) funds.

To promote the upcoming conference, EDP Assistant Director Rollin Seward and Grants Coordinator Kate Matheny gave a brief presentation at the recent NCDCA Winter Legislative & Policy Meeting in Washington, DC, January 22-24, 2014. They handed out candy Buckeyes, showed a promotional video created by Experience Columbus that highlights the unique aspects of Central Ohio, and encouraged NCDCA members to register for the 2014 NCDCA Annual Conference in Franklin County. EDP also partnered with Orbit Design, a visual communication design studio located in the Short North, to create an appealing registration postcard advertising the conference and showcasing all that Franklin County has to offer.

We are finalizing a broader marketing strategy, including a 2014 NCDCA Conference website, to boost registration and provide a mobile agenda option to conference attendees.



Artwork by: Orbit Principal Partner Kris Harrison

## New Building Services Fee Schedule

Effective January 1, 2014

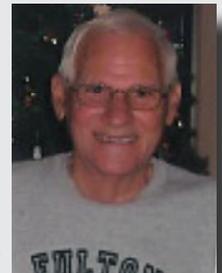
In an effort to improve quality and to monitor performance, the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning

Department added some additional permit requirements and an annual registration fee for all contractors. The full new fee schedule can be found on the Franklin County EDP website at <http://development.franklincountyohio.gov/assets/forms/building/fee-schedule-effectiveJan1.pdf>.

## 2014 Ohio Building Officials Association Annual Conference

The 2014 Ohio Building Officials Association (OBOA) Conference was held February 23-25 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin, OH. OBOA offered more than 25 different classes at the conference on a wide variety of topics. The classes were approved for continuing education credits by the Ohio Board of Building Standards. The Franklin County EDP Building Services staff attended the conference to keep up-to-date on industry best practices.

## EDP Welcomes Back Building Inspector Neil Fulton



Neil Fulton returned to the Economic Development & Planning Department full-time on February 10th, 2014, as a State Certified Residential Building Inspector. Neil previously worked for the department from 1995-2003, and is excited to be back. He enjoys assisting the homeowners and contractors of Franklin County on a daily basis. Neil is a life-long resident of Columbus, and has had a passion for coaching little league football for over forty years. Neil is a long time member of the Westside Alumni Association and coach of the Westside Dolphins.

## Water Quality Partnership Program

Franklin County Public Health offers sewer tap-in financial assistance to qualified Franklin County households through the Water Quality Partnership (WQP) program. This service allows families to remove their homes from failed sewage systems. The program also improves public health and stream water quality by removing pollution from streams and drinking water wells. Franklin County has been working to resolve water pollution and failed sewage system problems for over 20 years under the WQP program. To find out if you qualify for sanitary sewer tap-in assistance, please visit the Franklin County Public Health website: <http://www.myfcph.org/wqp.php>

# Franklin County Board of Commissioners



Commissioner Brown  
*President*



Commissioner Brooks



Commissioner O'Grady

## Jurisdictions We Serve

In addition to the Townships we work with, six other jurisdictions contract with us to conduct building inspections and other essential duties.

### Townships

Blendon Township  
Brown Township  
Clinton Township  
Franklin Township  
Hamilton Township  
Jackson Township  
Jefferson Township  
Madison Township  
Mifflin Township  
Norwich Township  
Perry Township  
Plain Township  
Pleasant Township  
Prairie Township  
Sharon Township  
Truro Township  
Washington Township

### Villages

Harrisburg  
Lockbourne  
Minerva Park  
Riverlea  
Urbancrest  
Valleyview



*Jim Schimmer, Director*  
*Rollin Seward, Assistant Director*

Economic Development and Planning Department  
150 South Front Street, FSL Suite 10  
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Tel. 614-525-3094  
Fax 614-525-7155  
[www.franklincountyohio.gov/edp](http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/edp)

Building Services Team:  
Mike Kelleher, Chief Building Official  
Rick Erbe, Building Inspector  
Neil Fulton, Building Inspector  
Bertram Walker, Building Clerk  
Alyssa Taylor, Planning Assistant