



Stow Kids' Playground

State of the City

Mayor John Pribonic



2023



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Stow Residents,

I am pleased to present the State of the City Address for our esteemed community. As the Mayor of Stow, I am honored to share the progress, achievements, and plans that shape the current state of our dynamic city.

Quality of Life: Stow boasts exceptional recreational resources, and we have made significant improvements that directly enhance the lives of our residents, resulting in an improved quality of life. A highlight project of 2023 is the rebuild of Skip Playground, which has become a treasured community amenity situated at the heart of Stow's City Center Complex.

In addition to successful hands-on projects, our programming and community events have been exceptional. It is heartening to witness our community unite and enjoy various events, large and small, fostering a sense of unity and strength within our community.

We are excited to embark on the renovation of the recently acquired Cornerstone Church in 2024, which will establish the new Stow Senior Center/Community Center. This facility will have a positive impact on our community, enabling us to enhance and expand our recreational programming for seniors and individuals of all ages.

Economic Growth and Development: Stow continues to thrive economically, with new businesses contributing to our community's prosperity. The past year has witnessed increased investments and job opportunities, fostering a strong local economy. Our commitment to creating a business-friendly environment has played a crucial role in this success. In 2024, Haydon Corporation, Wilson Companies, and Suncrest Gardens will establish their headquarters in Stow, adding to our thriving business landscape.



FOGG Industries' investment in "spec" buildings on Seasons Road has been another key contributor to Stow's success. Their commitment to developing and building structures without securing tenants beforehand signifies a positive outlook for continued growth in the industrial sector within Stow.

Furthermore, an impressive number of new businesses have established themselves in Stow in 2023, bringing significant growth and opportunities to our community. We are ready to embrace 2024 with renewed enthusiasm and determination.

Financial Management: With the commitment, support, and collaboration of all elected officials and department heads, the City of Stow has maintained its strong financial standing in 2023. We concluded the year with sufficient reserves in all primary funds, positioning us favorably for the future. Additionally, robust economic growth has attracted numerous commercial and retail enterprises to our community. Moreover, the residential sector has witnessed significant expansion.

Infrastructure and Public Services: Investing in our city's infrastructure remains a top priority. The City is dedicated to delivering superior public service to our residents while maintaining our infrastructure in an efficient and cost-effective manner. In 2023, we successfully implemented substantial enhancements and upgrades in multiple sectors, including roads, sidewalks, stormwater management, parks, and our water system. Our ongoing commitment to essential services such as ice and snow removal and leaf collection ensures the well-being of our residents throughout the year. These notable projects and services have enhanced the overall quality of life for our residents. Our dedicated public service teams continue to provide excellent services, ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone in Stow.

Community Engagement and Inclusivity: Stow is a community that values diversity and inclusivity. We have taken deliberate steps to promote community engagement through various initiatives, events, and outreach programs. By fostering a sense of belonging, we strengthen the fabric of our community, making Stow a place where everyone feels welcome and respected. Our giving programs and the implementation of the #YOUMATTER initiative exemplify our solidarity in the face of challenges.

Public Safety: Ensuring the safety of our residents is our top priority. Our police and fire departments work tirelessly to maintain a secure environment. We continually invest in resources to enable them to carry out their duties effectively, including top-notch training and hiring practices. The successful transition of Stow's Dispatch Center to the Summit Emergency Communications Center in 2023 was a notable achievement. This center brings together essential emergency response services in one centralized location, equipped with state-of-the-art dispatch facilities to serve not only Stow but also neighboring communities, including the Summit County Sheriff's Office and Summit Metro Parks. This collaboration allows us to maintain a high standard of service, improve our equipment, and reduce costs.

Our Human Resources: Our exceptional workforce is the backbone of our city. They contribute to various crucial aspects of our community, including quality of life, resident services, law enforcement, and safety. The unwavering dedication of our staff sets us apart. To further enhance our ability to recruit and retain outstanding employees, we have welcomed a full-time human resources director to our managerial team. This addition will enable us to attract top-notch professionals now and in the future.

Looking Ahead: As we reflect on our achievements of the past year, we approach the future with optimism and determination. Stow's potential is limitless, and together, as a united community, we will continue to build a city that we can all be proud to call home.

I extend a warm thank you to every resident, business, organization and employee that has made a difference in 2023!

ECONOMIC GROWTH



Commercial Development

In the year 2023, an impressive number of new businesses have established their presence in Stow, which has brought significant growth and opportunities to our community. The City of Stow is poised to navigate 2024 with a renewed sense of enthusiasm and an unwavering commitment to achieving remarkable success with an emphasis on more economic development opportunities for small business.

New Businesses in 2023

Absorbent Minds Montessori School
Action Sports Massage LLC
API Athletics LTD. Marconi Baseball Academy
Arcana Tattoo Studio
Better Plays Gaming
Cha Li Tea Shop
Eastern Metal Supply of MO
Empower Me Wellness
Glow 'n Grow 3D/4D Ultrasound Studio
Graze Craze
Haydon Corporation
Living Dead Tattoo Company LLC

Lu Cha
Ohio Low Vision LLC
Parsons Homescapes LLC
SCOR Performance and Recovery LLC
T-Bubbles
Teammates Center LLC
The Basement
The Hair Specialists
Trust & Heal Pharmacy
Twisted Tomato Pizzeria
VanHo Law
Wilson Companies

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Residential Developments in 2023

- Continuance of Quail Creek Subdivision
- Approval of repurposing Stow Glen Retirement Facility to Apartments
- Approval of Miller's Landing Subdivision



Permits Issued

Engineering Permits	9
Right of Way Permits	102
Building Permits	217
Electric Permits	394
HVAC Permits	538
Plumbing Permits	211



PUBLIC SAFETY

STOW POLICE



Summit Emergency Communication Center

After meticulous planning and strategic efforts spanning eight years, the Stow Dispatch Center successfully completed its transition to the Summit Emergency Communications Center on October 17th. This modern facility serves as a centralized hub for crucial emergency response services, catering to Boston Heights, Cuyahoga Falls, Fairlawn, Mogadore, Munroe Falls, Silver Lake, Stow, Tallmadge, the Summit County Sheriff's Office, and Summit Metro Parks. The consolidation of these services allows for improved efficiency, enhanced service quality, equipment upgrades, and cost savings. Through this collaborative approach, the communities involved are better positioned to provide exceptional service to their constituents.



Grants

- Flock Safety – pending approval December 2023
- Walmart Grant – Evolution Fingerprint Scanner --\$4,140.00
- DARE/SRO Grant -- \$15,119.00
- SYS Juvenile Court Funding -- \$22,000.00
- Bulletproof Vest Grant -- \$2,957.00
- WatchGuard Body Worn Camera Grant -- \$16,265.00
- Law Enforcement Recruiting Grant -- \$5,800.00

Staffing

- Recruited a new officer to address a vacant position, resulting in internal promotions.
- Maintained a staff of 44 sworn officers, in compliance with the approved strength level.
- Employed a part-time Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS) Terminal Agency Coordinator (TAC) to uphold the maintenance and auditing of our LEADS terminals.
- Welcomed Dr. Amy Pfeiffer to our Stow Youth Services Staff, where she will focus on assisting juvenile offenders dealing with alcohol and drug addictions. Her salary has been funded through various opiate lawsuit settlements awarded to the city.
- K-9 RIP commenced his career alongside his K-9 Handler.

STOW POLICE

Ohio Collaborative

The Stow Police Department has successfully met all the necessary standards outlined by the Ohio Law Enforcement Collaborative. These standards were established on August 28, 2015, by a panel of 12 law enforcement experts and community leaders from across the state. Their aim is to create a framework of policies and procedures that promote accountability and foster greater public confidence. The Collaborative actively engages with partners, including the community and law enforcement agencies, to ensure the smooth implementation of these standards. Additionally, the Collaborative provides model policies to serve as a helpful resource for agencies, and the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) is readily available to provide assistance and support in the implementation process.

Continuing Professional Training (CPT)

As part of Attorney General Dave Yost's initiative to establish standardized training for police officers throughout Ohio, the city of Stow has successfully completed the newly implemented Continuing Professional Training hours for the second consecutive year. The topics for this training were carefully selected by the Attorney General's office. This transition was seamless for the Stow Police Department, as they had already been conducting similar training for many years prior to it becoming mandatory. Stow opted for in-person training sessions to facilitate practical learning, while online training was kept to a minimum. The training sessions included valuable insights from external experts, interactive role-play scenarios, collective analysis of body camera footage, and engaging discussions. The 24 hours of training required this year are eligible for reimbursement by the State.

Crisis Intervention

This year, our department has made the valuable addition of five new officers who are trained in Crisis Intervention. With these new members, our department now has 57% of its officers certified in effectively responding to mental health encounters. Furthermore, all officers receive regular training in the field of mental health crisis. The results of an in-house survey conducted among Stow PD officers this year showed that a large majority of them feel confident in their skills and abilities to effectively engage with individuals experiencing a crisis. Additionally, for the past seven years, our department has been gathering statistics on mental health encounters to evaluate our performance in this particular area.

New Software

The police and fire departments worked with Information Services to integrate a new scheduling software system allowing a paperless system that is accessible to the employees and supervisors virtually.





PUBLIC SAFETY

FIRE DEPARTMENT

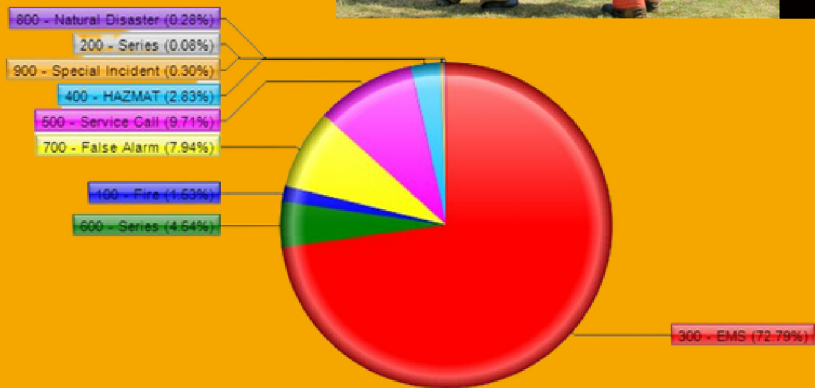
Stow Fire Department provides service to the City of Stow residents, its businesses, and on occasion, neighboring communities. A steady growth in calls for service has become the norm, with 5,307 calls for service provided in 2023. The 52 members of the Stow Fire Department continue to answer the calls and train daily for the ever-changing arena we operate in. Total number of training hours for 2023 exceeded 13,000 hours, including fire, EMS and technical rescue trainings (another record).



Fire Incident Type Call Breakdown

Incident Type Group

- 100: Fire - 80
- 200: Overpressure/Rupture - 4
- 300: EMS - 3862
- 400: HAZMAT - 150
- 500: Service Call - 516
- 600: Good Intent - 240
- 700: False Alarm - 420
- 800: Natural Disaster - 17
- 900: Special Incident - 15



Smoke Alarm Installations

This year we installed 64 smoke alarms within 24 homes. During these visits, we educate the residents on different hazards that may be present in the home, and encouraged them to create a home escape plan with their family.

Car Seat Checks

Car seat checks are back this year after a long drought. Most car seats that are brought in to be checked are either uninstalled or installed incorrectly. Family members are educated on how to correctly install the car seat, tips and tricks to get the right fit, recalls, expirations, airbags, unused seat belts, projectiles, premature transition, heatstroke, next steps, best practice vs. state law, safety in and around cars, car seat recycle programs, bulky clothing, and safe sleep. 19 car seat checks were completed in 2023.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Safety Education

Fire Safety Educator, Firefighter Mel Gammell partnered with the Allison Rose Foundation to become an instructor and provided anaphylactic shock training to our middle school students. The information given to students includes what is anaphylactic shock, identifying the signs/symptoms, treatment, types of food allergies, and more. Firefighter Mel taught eight classes in the fall of 2023 and plans to continue this important program.

This year we reached about 9051 individuals through 322 programs (an increase of 2,680 people from the 2022 outreach).

Age Breakdown: Preschool Age (0-4): 731
School Age (5-17): 6239
Adult (18-60): 1775
Seniors (60+): 306

CPR/AED Classes

The Stow Fire Department also offers CPR/AED training to the community. These classes teach individuals CPR/AED and choking for adults, children, and infants. Groups trained in 2023, included our Rotary Club, senior center members and staff, Boy Scout Troops, and Stow Parks and Recreation camp counselors.

Grant Awards:

In 2023, Stow Fire Department was awarded the 2022 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for \$179,800.00 to replace three high pressure self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) air compressors. These compressors were installed at the three fire stations and will let firefighters refill their SCBA bottles after a fire. This award also marks a milestone for grant writer, Lieutenant Jeff Cochran, who has successfully acquired \$2,218,042.46 in federal and state grants since 2009. Lieutenant Cochran was recognized by Mayor Pribonic at the October 26, 2023 city council meeting, where he received a much-deserved gold pen.



SERVICING OUR CITY

Storm Sewer Improvements

District 1 Trunk Storm Sewer Replacement Phase 1: \$378,186

Removal and replacement of an existing 81"x59" corrugated metal storm sewer with an aluminized 81"x59" storm sewer. Replacement began just south of Graham Road and terminated north of Marhofer Road and was necessary due to the heavily deteriorated storm sewer system.

Charring Cross Storm Sewer Improvements: \$468,636

The project upsized an existing storm sewer system in the 3400 block of Charring Cross Drive to alleviate residential and roadway flooding in this area.

2425 Silver Springs Drive Storm Improvements: \$69,156

The project included the installation of Flex-mat Plus concrete ditch matting in an existing storm easement and three 12" culverts under the Bike and Hike Trail. The concrete matting was installed to eliminate erosion of residential property and ground cover over two Energy Transfer pipelines and the culverts were installed to alleviate flooding during large rain events.

Meadowbrook Lake and Dam Study: \$100,000

Consulting firm EMH&T completed a study to evaluate and recommend recreational improvements of the Lake and performed a hydrologic and hydraulic study to determine the adequacy of the Dam's discharge/storage capacity to satisfy ONDRs dam safety requirement.



Storm Sewer Maintenance

- Repaired, rebuilt or replaced 48 catch basins
- Cleaned and vacuumed out 485 catch basins
- Replaced 28 driveway culverts
- Replaced approximately 1800 feet of storm sewer

Leaf Pick Up

- 21,912 cubic yards of leaves picked up
- 876 loads of leaves

Salt

- 5,600 tons of salt
- 28,000 gallons of brine

The City is responsible for 417 lane miles of streets as well as 24 lane miles on State Rt 8.

Street Repairs / Sweeping

Numerous street repairs including patching, full depth asphalt repair, concrete street repair and berm work. Replaced failing sidewalks throughout the City. Swept over 2500 lane miles of road.

Concrete Curb, Street, Sidewalk and ADA Ramp Improvements

- 5,217 linear feet of combination curb and gutter removed and replaced
- 71 ADA ramps removed, replaced or installed throughout the City
- 80,112 square feet (4,005 blocks) of sidewalk removed, replaced or installed throughout the City
- Over 7,000 square yards of concrete street removed and replaced

Over 140 trees planted in City parks, cemeteries and Fox Den Golf Course.

Transportation Projects

Completed the Graham/Fishcreek Intersection Improvements - Included replacing all traffic signals, improving vehicle safety with lane delineators and driveway improvements, and removing traffic islands providing visually impaired and pedestrian safety improvements to the crosswalks.

SR 91- Darrow Road Reconstruction Project - Surveying, environmental clearance, and right of way plans have been completed. Right of way will be purchased in 2024 and the project bid out late 2024..

SR 59- Kent Road Signal Improvement Project - Surveying and engineering is underway. Signal warrant analysis has been approved and the project is on schedule to be bid out late 2024.

SR 59 Kent Road Resurfacing Project - Awarded to Ronyak paving by ODOT. Reconstruction of curb ramps and paving will take place in 2024.

Pedestrian/Bike Connector - Kings Mill to Stow-Munroe Falls High school was designed and built.

CMAQ grant received to upgrade Graham Road traffic signals from Bailey Road to Newcomer Road. (\$2,860,000).



LAW DEPARTMENT



In 2023, the City Law Department had a productive and active year. We started the year by implementing a new approach to assist the City's volunteers. We provided training sessions on Ohio's Open Meetings Act, Ohio's Sunshine laws, ethics, and city trademarks to all the members of our Boards and Commissions.

In May 2023, we had the opportunity to participate in the first annual Wills for First Responders Event. This event, organized in collaboration with Community Aid and the Akron Bar Association, offered free legal services related to probate matters to our local first responders.

Throughout the year, we continued our partnership with the Police Department to raise awareness about important topics such as bullying, scams, and public safety. We published Safety in Stow videos on Facebook as part of our efforts.

We also made significant advancements in the City's planning and zoning procedure. The Law Department worked alongside the Planning Department to establish the Administrative Review Board, which allows us to address zoning violations as civil issues rather than criminal offenses. This approach enables us to resolve violations administratively, focusing on cleaning up the violation rather than punishing residents criminally. Additionally, we introduced a new process through the Reasonable Accommodation Review Board to handle requests for reasonable accommodations that do not comply with our Zoning Code. This ensures privacy for requestors and guarantees the City's compliance with all FHA laws. The Reasonable Accommodation Review Board comprises the Law Director and the Planning and Development Director.

Over the course of the year, we addressed significant changes to state laws that necessitated training for various City departments. These changes included revisions to Ohio's Victim's Rights protections (commonly known as Marsy's Law), which granted crime victims meaningful and enforceable constitutional rights equivalent to those of the accused. To comply with these changes, we promptly developed a new policy, created a checklist, and provided training to our officers. Moreover, Issue 2 passed in the November general election, legalizing marijuana and requiring our officers to be trained on the updated laws regarding marijuana.

In addition to our professional duties, we actively participated in community events and programs. We engaged with the Citizen's Academy, where we educated citizens about the importance of our 4th Amendment rights. We also took part in Law Enforcement's National Night Out to promote crime prevention and raise awareness.

Lastly, our Criminal Division tirelessly prosecuted all misdemeanor criminal cases connected to Stow and the multiple townships we represent at the Stow Municipal Court. We remain committed to delivering dedicated service in the pursuit of justice for our community.

HUMAN RESOURCES

In 2023, the City of Stow demonstrated its commitment to its employees by hiring a full-time Human Resources Director. This appointment aimed to streamline all processes related to the employee life cycle, from hiring to termination or retirement.

The HR department plays a significant role in talent acquisition, effectively recruiting and onboarding individuals. Moreover, HR takes responsibility for fostering a positive work environment through employee relations initiatives, conflict resolution, and promoting a healthy workplace culture.

Additionally, the City of Stow's HR Department manages employee benefits, risk management programs, and policies. It is equally important for HR to ensure compliance with legal regulations and ethical standards.

Ultimately, the HR department serves as the guardian of the city's most valuable asset – its employees. Looking forward to 2024, the HR Department will continue collaborating with all departments to enhance employee engagement, address emerging workplace challenges, and adapt to the evolving needs of the workforce. By engaging in strategic planning and collaboration, the City of Stow's HR Department remains dedicated to fostering a workplace where employees can thrive, ensuring the city's continued success and growth.



FINANCE

Accomplishments

With the assistance and cooperation of all elected officials and department heads, and the dedicated work of the Finance Department staff, the City has maintained its excellent financial condition during the past five years, including 2023.

The Department:

- Ended the 2023 year with more than adequate balances in all of its major funds, with the exception of the Water Operating and Water Capital Funds. Overall, the balances continue to provide a stable financial and budgetary foundation that enables the City to provide excellent services to the citizens of Stow. A goal will be to address the Water Department rate structure and re-establish sound financial standing for the Water System in 2024.
- Assisted the Mayor in preparing and issuing the City's Operating Budget for 2024.
- Continued implementation of the City's long-term debt reduction policy and has resulted in Stow having a very low ongoing debt burden which benefits the taxpayers and the City itself by reducing operating and capital budget costs.
- Enhanced income tax collections for the City. After decreasing due to the pandemic in 2020 receipts increased substantially in 2021, 2022 and 2023. This is also an indication that the City's tax base continues to strengthen and expand as the local economy recovers from the negative economic impact of the pandemic.
- Developed financing methodology to enable the City to steadily increase the size of its annual road resurfacing program over the past five years. The program reached an all-time high of \$3.8 - \$3.9 million in 2022 and 2023.
- Issued a long-term Capital Budget financing plan for the City for the period 2024-2028. The plan will enable the City to more efficiently schedule and undertake needed capital improvements each year.
- In early 2024, the Finance Department is expected to receive its 23rd consecutive annual national award for excellence in financial reporting. The City's annual financial report provides full transparency and accountability to the public for all aspects of the City's fiscal transactions and practices each year.
- In conjunction with the Mayor's office, developed an expenditure plan for \$3.8 million in City American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal grant proceeds.
- Initiated the upgrade of all Finance-related software to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the Department operations. Full installation is expected in April of 2024.
- Represented the City of Stow in the financial aspect deliberations leading to the establishment of the Summit Emergency Communications Center (SECC) which commenced operations in mid-October 2023.
- Has successfully undergone full financial and compliance audits through the State of Ohio Auditor's office.



FOX DEN GOLF COURSE

Year In Review

2023

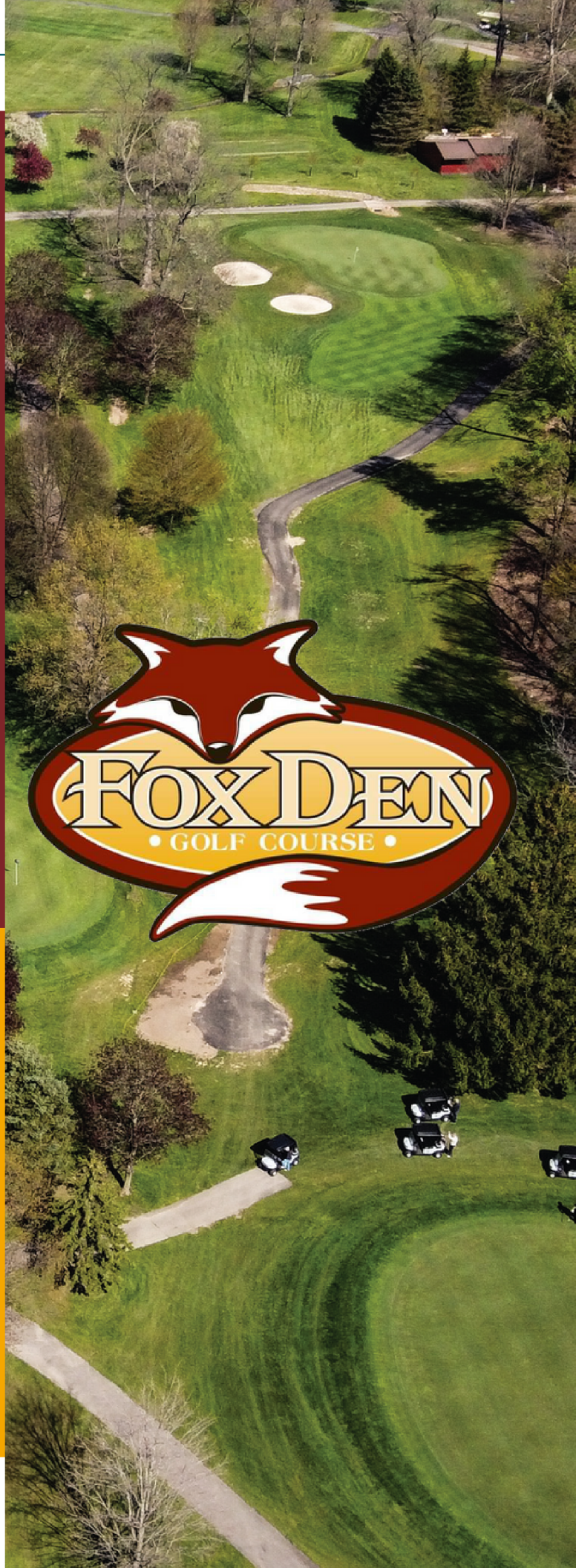
Rounds of Golf	49,276
Total Revenue	\$2,011,055
Green Fee Revenue	\$1,111,907
Food & Beverage	\$320,000

2022

Rounds of Golf	49,166
Total Revenue	\$1,737,000
Green Fee Revenue	\$919,896
Food & Beverage	\$275,000

NEW RANGE AT FOX DEN

The enhanced range now features 15 brand new bays, each equipped with mats that accurately simulate both fairways and rough. Located at 2770 Call Rd., Stow, Ohio, our 18-hole public golf course offers a small practice area, a state-of-the-art driving range, a pro shop, a clubhouse, golf instruction services, the Fox Den Grill providing a variety of food and beverage options, as well as meticulously maintained fairways and greens. Overseeing the course is PGA Head Professional and General Manager, Joe Vojtko.



CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY



Our goal is to ensure that both residents and businesses are well-informed about all the initiatives and activities taking place within our community, including recreational programs, events, facility upgrades, projects, and more. In 2023, the City of Stow offered and continues to offer a variety of communication channels through which residents can stay abreast of municipal and community affairs.

City of Stow Website

Our website lets people find us, is our online presence, engages our audiences, cultivates relationships, and generates use and participation in our programs and services.

A Minute (or so) with Mayor Pribonic Videos

Short, targeted, relatable videos featuring Mayor John Pribonic around town interviewing and promoting our schools, businesses, and community organizations, among others.

The Fun Buzz e-Newsletter & City of Stow e-newsletter

Monthly e-newsletters sent to those who sign up on our website with loads of information about our city, programs, and events.

Community Connection magazine

Collaboration with the City of Stow, City of Munroe Falls and the Stow-Munroe Falls City School District published quarterly and mailed to all residents.

Safety Informational Videos

“Safety in Stow” is a collaboration of our Police Department and Law Department working together to spread awareness on crime prevention and to educate our community on our local laws.



SOCIAL MEDIA

6,686 FuninStow Facebook followers

406 Funinstow Twitter followers

898 FuninStow Instagram followers

8,084 CityofStow Facebook followers



RECREATION FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

These enhancements and improvements aim to create vibrant and inviting recreational spaces that promote health, wellness, and community engagement. By investing in these facilities, we are enriching the quality of life for residents and visitors alike, fostering a sense of pride and belonging in our community.

Playground Installation - SKiP!

- Location: Stow City Center Complex
- Description: Installation of a replacement playground to provide an inclusive and inviting outdoor gathering space designed by the community for the community, that promotes interactive and healthy play.
- Scope of Work: Design, procurement, and installation of playground equipment, safety surfacing, landscaping, and amenities.
- Timeline: Complete. Ribbon cutting held July 2, 2023
- Budget: \$750,000

Playground Installation

- Location: Meadowbrook Lake Park
- Description: Installation of a Replacement playground to provide children with a safe and enjoyable recreational space. The playground features age-appropriate equipment and safety features.
- Scope of Work: Design, procurement, and installation of playground equipment, safety surfacing, and landscaping.
- Timeline: Complete. Ribbon cutting to be held April 20, 2024 at 11:00 AM
- Budget: \$139,400

New Shelter and Replacement Restroom Facility

- Location: Adell Durbin Park
- Description: Addition of new shelter with restrooms and picnic tables to enhance visitor comfort and convenience.
- Scope of Work: In 2023 - Design, fabrication, and installation of the restrooms, shelter and picnic tables, including site preparation and landscaping.
- Timeline: Complete
- Budget: \$134,400

Timelines

Ongoing projects will be implemented over a period of months/years, with specific timelines for each component determined based on funding availability, procurement processes, and construction schedules.

NEW Pickleball Court Complex

- Location: Oregon Trail Park
- Description: Constructing a 5-court pickleball complex to accommodate the growing popularity of the sport.
- Scope of Work: In 2023, Design of courts was completed. Future steps include construction of pickleball courts, including surfacing, fencing, lighting, and amenities such as seating, parking, and equipment storage.
- Timeline: Completion 2024
- Budget: \$690,344 over 3 years

Silver Springs Campground Upgrades

- Location: Silver Springs Park
- Description: Developing a comprehensive plan to improve facilities and amenities at the campground, including camping sites, restroom facilities, electric availability, dump station, new access road.
- Scope of Work: In 2023, conducted site assessments and expert consultations. 2024 will include environmental impact studies to inform the development of the campground plan.
- Timeline: Completion 2025
- Budget: \$517,658 over 3 years

PARKS & RECREATION



SKIP - BACK IN 2023

To create a space where the community gathers for recreation, leisure, and cultural events.

The City of Stow has long been known for its lack of a center of town. A central gathering place for community activities and recreation was a crucial aspect of the vision of the City's administration.

A project emerged with a vision "To create a space where the community gathers for recreation, leisure, and cultural events." Fortunately, there was available space in the center of town at the City Center Complex. This property conveniently houses Stow's City Hall, Safety Building, and the former SKIP (Stow kids Playground.) This space in the heart of Stow also features the Sancturetum, a unique arboretum. Its visibility to motorists traveling along the highly frequented State Route 91 further enhances its appeal. And over 4,000 residents live within a ten-minute walk of this site.

The initial phase of the City Center Project focused on the rebuilding of SKIP. The original community-built wooden playground was dismantled in 2014 due to deterioration. The replacement project aimed to create an even larger and improved version of SKIP – a destination playground!

Community Input

What should the rebuilt Skip be? The Parks & Recreation Department organized a Visioning Workshop to develop an inclusive plan, involving the following City Boards: Parks & Recreation Board, Arts Commission, Senior Citizen Commission, and Commission on Inclusion.

More than 20 residents graciously volunteered to serve on committees. Prior to the COVID pandemic, they regularly convened to shape the project. Subsequently, the committees provided recommendations to the administration, and this played a significant role in shaping the project's development.

The ultimate mission of this project became "To create an inclusive and inviting outdoor gathering space, designed by the community for the community, to promote interactive and healthy play, fostering independence for individuals of diverse ages and abilities."



Fundraising

The committees collaborated closely with the mayor and Stow Parks and Recreation Department to raise funds for the Skip Rebuild project. Together, they successfully secured over \$650,000 in private donations. With the necessary funds in place, PES was ultimately selected as the vendor for the project. The design of the playground underwent meticulous refinement. Finally, in the Spring of 2023, construction of the new playground commenced.

Along the way, Mayor Pribonic and Stow Parks and Recreation Department organized receptions to express gratitude towards the dedicated committee volunteers who generously contributed their time and efforts towards the project.

The NEW Skip was unveiled to the public with a ribbon cutting ceremony on July 2, 2023. That day signified just the beginning of the project's impact. Attendance records have been consistently broken on a daily basis, as both residents and visitors have flocked to experience this NEW Stow amenity.

Skip - For Individuals of All Abilities

Skip was thoughtfully designed and built with everyone in mind. The whole idea behind Skip was to create a wonderful play space that is accessible and enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities. It's a place where everyone can learn valuable life lessons in diversity, acceptance, challenge, courage, and resilience. It's all about creating an atmosphere of inclusivity where families can come together.

Stow Parks and Recreation Department created give-a-ways to promote the NEW Skip.

Our in-house designers created personalized stickers that capture the essence of the playground. They were just the beginning of a movement to commemorate the grand opening of our playground. Bouncy Balls were designed and a plan was concocted by the great minds in Parks Maintenance on how to distribute 1,000 bouncy balls to the crowd.



The balls were gathered in heaping piles in a front-end loader and a dump truck. With a mighty heave, a cascade of bright yellow flooded the playground, bouncing and bounding. Children AND adults were scrambling to get their ball.

A coloring page was created by a local artist who poured her creativity into designing a personalized page for Skip, along with crayons nestled in a small, logo'ed box.

Stow Parks and Recreation Department brought a special touch to Skip's grand opening by coming up with a personalized cheer just for SKiP! Cue cards were used so everyone could join in and chant the cheer together. "Climb, Slide, Spin, Zip - Celebrate Stow, Celebrate Skip!"

There were so many wonderful sponsors who pitched in to make the original Skip a reality in the 1990's. Stow Parks and Recreation Department gave a fresh new look to the original donor board and kiosk. They now perfectly match the vibrant colors of the new Skip. All the names from the original Skip are listed on the donor board. It's a beautiful homage to those who made it all possible back then.

Key sponsors of the NEW Skip have been added to the board as well. Now, all visitors can see and appreciate the incredible legacy of community support that Skip represents.

Bipolar Butterfly Art Installation is also included in the playground. The Bipolar Butterfly Project aims to raise awareness and fight the stigma surrounding mental illness. The project uses beautiful butterfly art to spread its message and educate people about mental health. The artist who created this is right here in Stow. One of her butterfly installations is proudly displayed at our very own Skip.

Stow Parks and Recreation Department and the City's Arts Commission teamed up for an art installation project on traffic signal boxes throughout the city that has carried over to Skip. One talented youth artist was chosen to beautify the electric box at Skip Playground. Another local talented artist was chosen to beautify the Traffic Signal box near Skip.



Stow Parks and Recreation is giving our community a chance to be a part of something special! Anyone can now purchase an engraved brick that will forever be placed at the playground. Proceeds raised from this project will go towards a scholarship fund for recreation programming and allow us to provide opportunities for those in need.

Free Little Art Gallery, art gallery boxes, are under construction and will soon be installed in every single park in our community. Skip is the site of the very first installation. This gallery will serve as a distribution point for take-home arts and crafts kits for kids that are all about nature. Art projects made by youngsters will have the chance to be displayed at the Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library throughout the year.

Another local business wanted to contribute, and Stow Parks and Recreation Department came up with the brilliant idea of installing 3-D art on the sidewalks in the playground. The business's designer created some truly unique art specifically for our project. Unfortunately, unexpected weather conditions prevented installation of the graphics before the grand opening and the goal is for next spring.



We were pleased to have the sponsors of SKiP, the Parks and Recreation Board, the past SKiP Building Committee, and City of Stow leadership and employees take part in the ribbon cutting on July 2, 2023.

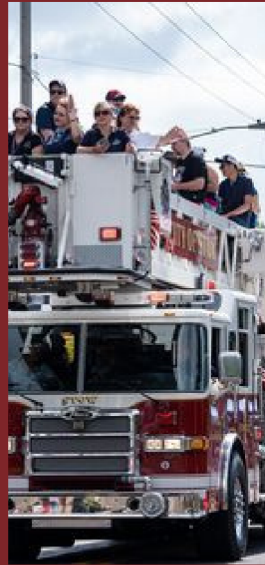


Thank you to Parks Maintenance for the routine maintenance of the park structures and ground coverings.



#CelebrateStow Events

- Concert on the Green
- Splash Bash
- Patriotic Picnic
- SKiP Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting
- Stow Firecracker Run
- Stow Fourth of July Parade



Other Special Events

- An Enchanted Afternoon
- Paint and Pour
- Superbowl Charcuterie
- Stow Community Bunny Hop
- Cocktails & Cottontails Adult Egg Hunt
- Superhero Training
- Playing & Pages Pop Up in the Parks
- Wine & Design: Crafting with Corks
- Yoga on the Green
- Connect with Nature Programs
- Stow Fishing Derby
- Haunted Hayride
- Stow Halloween Decoration Tour
- Glow with Stow Train Rides





Summer Sunset Blast

- Grand Finale Fireworks
- Kid's High Adventure Zone
- Live Music on the Grand Stage
- Food Trucks & Craft Beer
- Businesses and Organizations



Glow with Stow (Holiday Lighting)

- Visit with Santa & Mrs. Claus
- Santa's Workshop
- Train Rides through the Lights
- Ice Sculpture Carvings & Live Reindeer
- Echo Hills Bulldog Pups Singers
- Fun with the Friendly Elf and The Grinch
- SMFPL gave out free books
- Food Trucks
- Pick-Up Stix Stilt Walkers
- Premium Blend Acapella Group

Sports & Activities

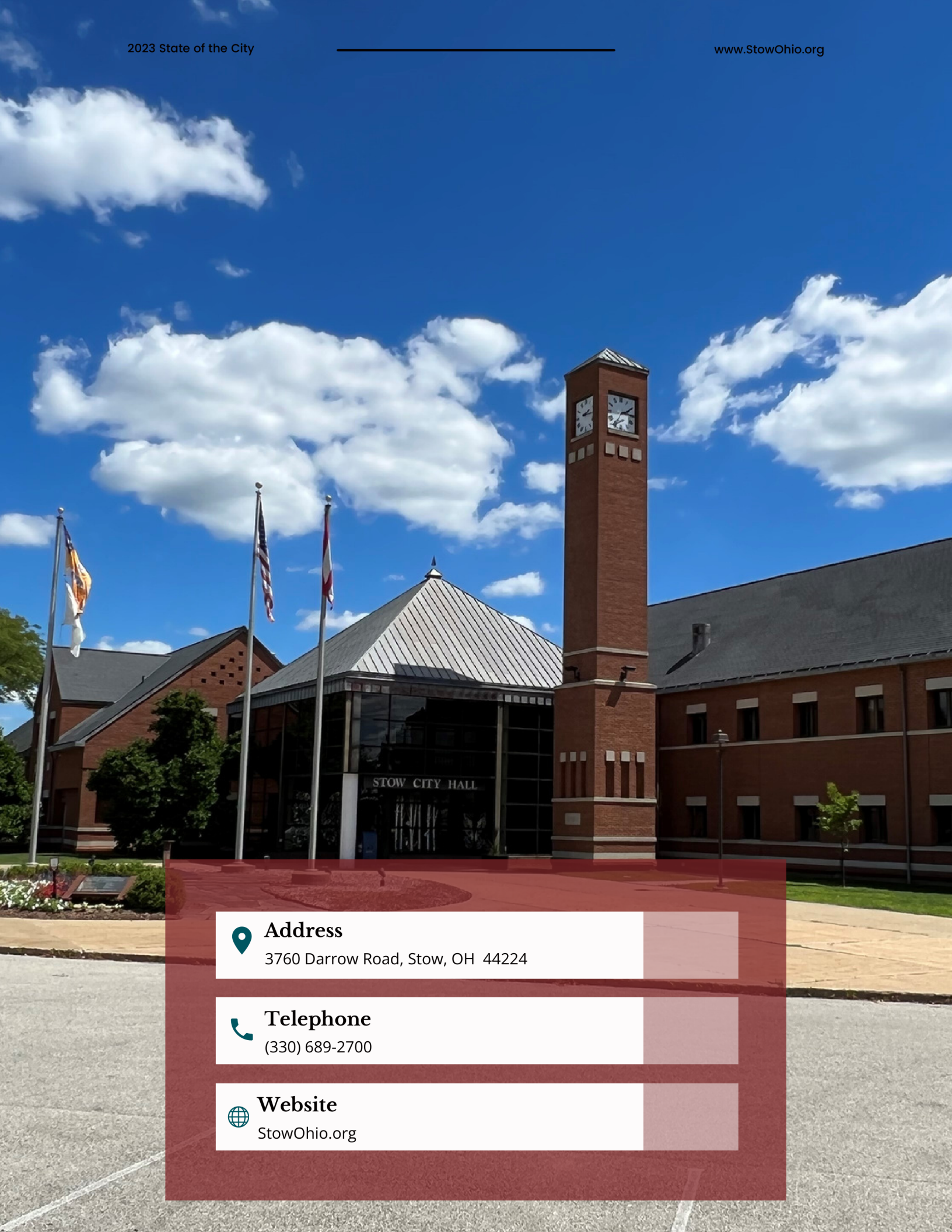
- Pickleball
- Basketball
- Flag Football
- Tennis
- Softball
- Lacrosse
- Volleyball
- Yoga on the Green
- Stow Striders Hiking



Camps

- Silver Springs Day Camp
- Sumer Art Camps





Address

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Website

StowOhio.org