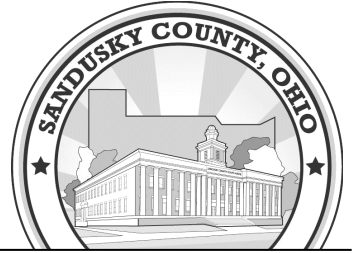


Sandusky County Comprehensive Plan 2020



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SANDUSKY COUNTY



Commissioners, **H**uman **R**esources, **R**isk **M**anagement

Board of Commissioners:

Kay E. Reiter

Russ Zimmerman

Scott Miller

County Administrator:

Theresa Garcia

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The Sandusky County Comprehensive Plan has been reviewed and updated every three to five years. The Sandusky County Commissioners along with Sandusky County Regional Planning and Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation have collaborated on this project. Sandusky County Commissioners retained Reveille LTD for the planning and developing of the Comprehensive Plan. A Steering Committee was formed to provide input on the review. The Steering Committee and many county agencies and groups provided suggestions and information to make this project a success.

The intent of the Plan is to serve as a document by which public officials and county residents can make more informed decisions concerning overall community and economic development and the best utilization of county resources. The plan presented meets this objective. The Plan created is easy to follow and easy to locate specific information individuals would be interested in researching.

The Sandusky County Commissioners approve this plan representing the Communities and Organizations in Sandusky County.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Kay E Reiter

Commissioner Russ Zimmerman

Commissioner Scott Miller

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgementsii

Executive Summary1

1) Discussion of Plan Themes / Major Findings 2

Plan Participation 5

1) Steering Committee6

2) Community Survey.....6

3) Student Survey..... 7

4) Community Outreach Efforts.....8

5) Past Comprehensive Planning Efforts.....8

Planning Conditions 9

1) Population and Demographics 10

2) Existing Land Use Trends 11

3) Environmental Considerations 11

Existing Land Use Map.....13

Environmental Considerations Map.....15

Water Quality Considerations Map 16

Infrastructure Considerations Map 18

4) Historic Assets..... 19

5) Community Services20

6) Water and Sewer Services 24

7) Zoning.....26

8) Transportation Systems 27

Functional Classification / ADT Map29

9) Transportation Improvement District (TID)31

Transportation Safety Considerations Map 32

Plan Themes.....33

1) Prosperity and Renewal..... 34

Economic Development Incentive Areas Map 44

2) Connectivity 50

Development Plan for Active Transportation Map 51

3) Land and Resource Management 59

Future Land Planning Areas Map61

Plan Implementation 67

1) Land Use Planning and Zoning68

2) Plan Review.....68

3) Updating the Plan.....68

Plan Implementation Table69

Plan Implementation Tools72

Acknowledgements

Sandusky County’s Comprehensive Plan was developed under the guidance of a steering committee comprised of the following individuals and the organizations they represent:

This document was also prepared with the information gathered from numerous public and private organizations.

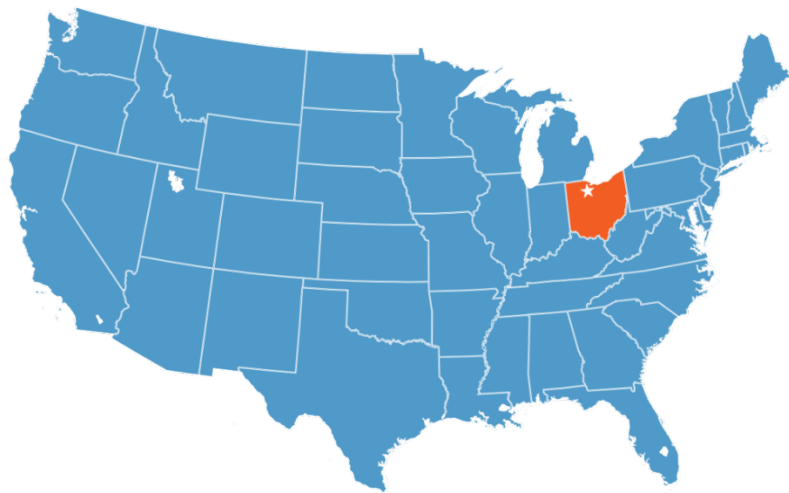
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Bill Auxter	Director	Ohio Small Business Development Center
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Peggy Courtney	Executive Director	Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Paul Fiser	City Manager	City of Clyde
Lisa Kuelling	Director	Sandusky County Emergency Management Agency



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The 2020 Sandusky County Comprehensive Plan is a product of a year’s worth of an interactive dialogue with stakeholders of all sorts, from local and county officials to residents and students from every county school district. While the Plan, due to Ohio Revised Code, is primarily intended for the unincorporated portions of the county, it presents an opportunity to promote collaboration and cooperation among all local governments in the county in matters that impact areas beyond jurisdictional boundaries. Industrial location decisions, workforce “labor sheds”, transportation corridors, utility service area planning, and recreational trail extensions can all take place beyond a single jurisdiction, requiring several localities to be at the table.

To ensure this occurs in a cost effective and expeditious manner, it is recommended that the Sandusky County Regional Planning Commission (SCRPC) and county agencies work in close coordination with local

municipalities. To this end, this Plan touches upon some of the current and planned activities of local governments, individually and collectively, throughout Sandusky County.

1) Discussion of Plan Themes / Major Findings
During the creation of this Plan, several overarching themes emerged.

Tactical Infrastructure Upgrades



Having infrastructure that is ready to accommodate local and global demand is a primary responsibility for local and county agencies. Keeping these assets, from roads and bridges to water and sewer systems, functional today is a challenging prospect. Grant funds are limited, and trying to generate additional local resources is just as difficult because of the slackening tax base.

Because resources are limited, costs for infrastructure improvements like rehabilitation and new sanitary sewer and water construction in unincorporated areas are often passed on to the benefiting property owners, and this can be unpopular. But as unpopular as this cost recovery approach may be, it will be necessary in the age where tactical infrastructure spending will be required so that County officials can be nimble enough to capture and leverage opportunities that may arise in many of the

growth areas identified in the *Future Land Planning Areas Map*.

Proactive Residential Development Efforts



From countywide and localized discussions, stakeholders and residents identified a need for a comprehensive approach to revitalize neighborhoods and improve housing opportunities.

Respondents pointed to a number of gaps from upscale “executive housing” and market rate apartments that would help attract and retain young professionals and management. Accessible, downsized housing units, including maintenance-free condominiums, they noted, would better serve a growing senior sector. Finally, the existing housing stock presents an opportunity, through individual property improvements to upgrade from within housing units already in existence. According to local realtors, much of this demand emanates from in-county households ready to move up or down into their next home.

As households get smaller and residents get older, it’s extremely important that residential opportunities reflect this demographic transition to provide the optimal workforce base for its employers.

Any larger scale construction effort will require the concerted, incentivized effort of multiple entities

operating out of mutual benefit. Such is the case of a small housing development on Bellevue’s west side, adjacent to the Bellevue Hospital, developed by the hospital and linked entities in response to a real need for housing for hospital employees and health care workers.

Property Maintenance



Property maintenance was a commonly identified issue during the planning process. Reasons for maintenance can range from real health and safety dangers to more subtle matters of aesthetics and a desire for community “curb appeal”. Residents indicated a desire to see their neighborhoods engaged with a proactive property maintenance and code enforcement approach to help reduce nuisance and maintain property values. To improve this situation, local officials could pursue the adoption of ordinances that require all vacant and/or rental properties to be registered and inspected, as well as adopt the International Property Maintenance Code.

Connectivity



As the global economy has become more complex, local officials have turned to collaboration among their peers and those from other disciplines to confront issues. Sandusky County has proven to be uncommonly adept at forming such collaborations. Countywide

collaborations exist to address such topics as emergency management, economic development, homelessness, drug addiction, agriculture, and health issues.

But connectivity reaches far beyond organizational collaboration on issues. It is manifested physically through improvements in transportation, telecommunications, and the linkage of multiple destinations to create a viable tourism experience “package”. The county’s 2017 Active Transportation Plan proposes a number of extensions and branches of the North Coast Trail and others to connect communities and points of interest such as Terra State Community College and county park district attractions. Connecting these activity “nodes” will require additional due diligence between the public/private sector groups.

Investing in “Quality of Life”



Developing an engaging “Quality of Life” is critically important for the future of Sandusky County for several reasons. For example, investments in quality of life can add sufficient marketability and value to an area. Over the last several years, county and local officials have made progress in many areas that include:

- **Education:** Sandusky County is fortunate to possess a number of newly constructed school facilities and campuses, including new investments in the

Fremont, Bellevue, Gibsonburg, and the Woodmore schools in Woodville.

- **Health Care:** Quick, local access to quality acute and specialized health care is an important consideration when investing in “Quality of Life”. For example, investments in a relatively new Bellevue Hospital and renovated ProMedica Memorial Hospital in Fremont have been complemented with new medical offices and facilities in Bellevue. These efforts are extremely valuable marketability elements that help to retain and attract new residents.
- **Downtown Revitalization:** A community’s downtown is often a window into its overall vitality. Sandusky County, Clyde and Bellevue have worked to focus on their downtown, welcoming new businesses. In fact, the regional Firelands Credit Union made a recent major investment in a new corporate headquarters on the east side of Bellevue’s downtown district.
- **Leisure Pursuits and Recreation:** Sandusky County has an abundance of county, municipal, and township parks, natural areas, and trails. The rise in interest for passive recreation is not likely to fade away and will be of continued importance to attract and retain residents.

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