



# Planning Conditions



Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau



Planning Conditions

The planning conditions of Sandusky County are important to understand as they provide context for the solutions the plan will provide. Once the planning conditions are identified, we can better understand how existing land use patterns came to be and how to accommodate future trends and needs. The following are the key planning conditions important to understand to maximize the plan’s impact.

1) Population and Demographics

This portion of the Planning Conditions section is based upon a separate Demographics Benchmarks Report that was prepared as a part of the planning process. At the guidance of the steering committee members, Sandusky County was benchmarked to 20 other counties in Ohio, the state of Ohio, and the United States. Some notable benchmarks that are favorable to Sandusky County include:

- There are fewer people in Sandusky County who own their house that are spending more than 30% of their income on their mortgage than compared to the other benchmarks, a good sign of economic stability.

Some demographic areas of concern include:

- The median age of Sandusky County is increasing at a faster rate than the other benchmarks and a

greater percentage of the population is reliant on retirement and social security.

- The population has decreased 2.8% from 2010 – 2017.
- There is a smaller percentage of individuals 25 or older that possess a bachelor’s degree or higher than the other benchmarks.

Population Trends

- Since 1990, the population in Sandusky County has been steadily decreasing. The lack of growth in Sandusky County parallels the State of Ohio as a whole and many other rural communities throughout the country. The current population is estimated at 59,195.

Population Projections

- According to projections prepared by Ohio Development Services Agency’s Office of Research, the population in Sandusky County is expected to drop to 58,670 in 2020 and 52,640 by 2040. This population decline is on par with most of Northwest Ohio.

Age and Gender

- Age is perhaps the most important demographic element in a community because changes in age cohorts can have significant implications with regard to delivery of services. Sandusky County has

been getting older with a median age of 41.7 and 27.7% of the population representing the ‘Baby Boomer’ generation.

Household Incomes

- Median household income is an important characteristic as income may determine what goods and services a household can and cannot afford to purchase. In 2017, the median household income in Sandusky County was \$50,370. This is 3.9% less than the state of Ohio and a 12.6% below the United States.

Housing Characteristics

- Housing costs, as a percentage of household income, are less burdensome to residents of Sandusky County. The percentage of owner-occupied homes where occupants spend more than 30% of their income on their mortgage is 19.9%, nearly 10% less than the percentage in the United States. The median household value was \$111,900.

Educational Attainment

- Of the residents in Sandusky County aged 25 or older, 16.0% have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher, per the 2014-2018 American Community Survey. This is somewhat less than the State percentage, 27.8%, and roughly half of the national proportion, 31.5%.

## 2) Existing Land Use Trends

Of the 260,000+ acres that comprise Sandusky County, approximately 214,000 acres are utilized for agricultural purposes (See Map: Existing Land Uses). Of the remaining acreage used for developed purposes, residential uses comprise the largest land use (53%). Land dedicated for public and commercial uses account for 23% and 14% respectively. Approximately 10% of land in Sandusky County is allocated for industrial purposes.

Land use changes in Sandusky County over the few decades can be best explained as slow, incremental and follow several patterns:

- ➔ The Route 53 corridor north of the US 20 bypass in Fremont has continued to grow as a location for retail business, restaurants, and manufacturing.
- ➔ The US 20 corridor throughout the county has continued to witness the incremental growth of new businesses, with health care and other facilities somewhat closing the gap between Bellevue and Clyde, new businesses dotting Route 20's McPherson Highway in Clyde, and Woodville and Bellevue's central business districts capturing some new business from through traffic.
- ➔ Most existing industrial parks have reached or are nearing full capacity, resulting in a perceived need to develop new fully "shovel ready" industrial parks.

➔ Most of the residential development that has occurred since the last comprehensive plan was written has taken place either as a continuation of growth outward from the county's established cities or villages, or along township and county roads in manner widely labeled as "sprawl." Because lot splits are not recorded by any of the county's agencies, it is difficult to ascertain the intensity by which rural residential growth has occurred.

## 3) Environmental Considerations

Promoting countywide growth and development should occur in coordination with the various environmental considerations (See Map: Environmental Considerations). These constraints pose a threat to the general welfare of residents and the environment if they are not mitigated

through "best management practices" and engineering and other technical endeavors.

### Critical Resource Areas

Approximately 35,500 acres of Sandusky County are located in flood-prone areas. Incorporated areas most prone to flooding include the portion of Clyde along the Raccoon Creek, Fremont along the Sandusky River, and areas of Woodville located along the Portage River. Seasonal flooding also occurs along the low levels of the

*In 2018, the Ballville Dam was demolished as it was no longer being used for power generation. Although controversial, the project allowed for the return of Walleye to their spawning grounds. This project is an example of past planning efforts in Sandusky County and the corresponding environmental considerations.*





Portage River, and locations on the Swan and Muddy Creeks as they flow north into Ottawa County.

- Over 16,600 acres of various types of wetlands are scattered across the County and Sandusky Bay in Riley Township, with the largest percentage of them being shallow marshes with emergent vegetation and wetlands comprised of shrub or scrub vegetation.
- Sandusky County has two major drainage basins: the Sandusky Bay Watershed and the Portage River Basins. Major streams that drain other parts of the County include: Green Creek, Muddy Creek, Muskellunge Creek, Pickerel Creek, Pike Creek, Sugar Creek, Wolf Creek, and Toussaint Creek. Over 75% of the county's acreage drains to the Sandusky Bay which is one of the world's most unique Bay systems complemented by unique habitats not found anywhere else in the world.



Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County

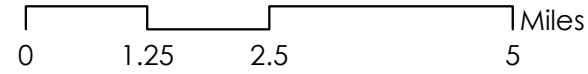
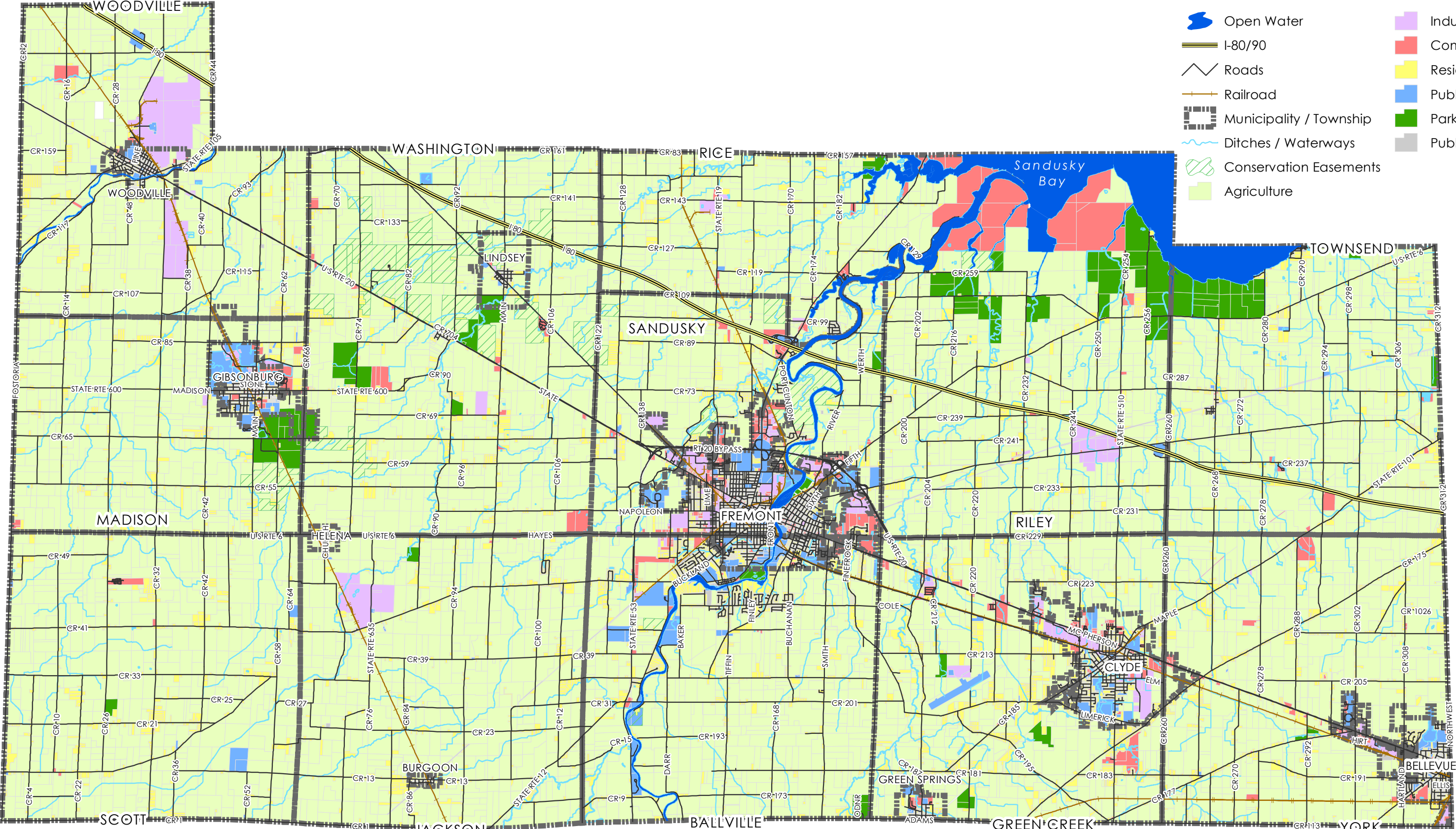
*The Wilson Nature Center located in Lindsey is a family-focused facility that is integrated into the landscape and invites visitors of all ages to connect with the natural world. A Nature Center such as this is important in ensuring residents are aware of some of the environmental considerations of the County, such as its floodplains and wetlands.*





### LEGEND

- Open Water
- I-80/90
- Roads
- Railroad
- Municipality / Township
- Ditches / Waterways
- Conservation Easements
- Agriculture
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Residential
- Public / Institutional
- Parks / Preserves
- Public Utilities



Source: Sandusky County Auditor, Engineer, Ohio Development Services Agency, Reveille  
Note: Land uses as established by the Sandusky County Auditor in September 2019.



Soil Conditions

Sandusky County is located in the former Black Swamp, with over 85% of the County’s soils classified as “prime” by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). However, while considered prime, Sandusky County’s soil poses certain limitations to activities such as building development, parks and recreation, and sewage systems when not drained properly. According to the USDA-NRCS, over 90% of Sandusky County has severe limitations for septic tanks and homes with basements, while 70% of the County’s acreage has severe soil constraints for park and recreation facilities.

Water Quality Considerations

Ground Water Resources

Roughly 40% of all county households receive their water from wells. While some areas in the County provide groundwater yields in excess of 500-1000 gallons, a high degree of hardness, dissolved solids, hydrogen sulfide and sulfates is evident with a majority of the County’s groundwater that requires conditioning treatment before consumption.

Ground Water Pollution Potential

While all of Sandusky County has the potential for groundwater contamination, the risk is higher in some areas. These include the Karst areas in eastern Sandusky County (primarily in York and Green Creek Townships), the southern half of Washington Township, and small

dispersed pockets throughout Woodville, Scott, and Jackson Townships.

Source Water Protection Areas

A variety of areas in Sandusky County have been identified as Source Water Protection Areas (See Map: *Water Quality Considerations*). These areas are sources of water (such as rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, springs, and groundwater) that provide water to public drinking water supplies and private wells. Drinking water utilities that meet the definition of a public system are responsible for meeting the requirements of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) state drinking water programs under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Protecting these areas from contamination helps to lower treatment costs and may avoid or defer the need for complex treatment.

There are many additional benefits associated with source water protection, such as protecting water quality for wildlife and recreational use and protecting the availability and quantity of water supplies. To this end, the Ohio EPA designated a portion of Sandusky River from US 30 (RM 82.1) to the Rodger Young Park in Fremont as an Outstanding State Water with exceptional ecological value and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) designated it a state scenic river. Four types of source protection zones/areas exist in Sandusky County:

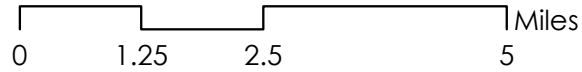
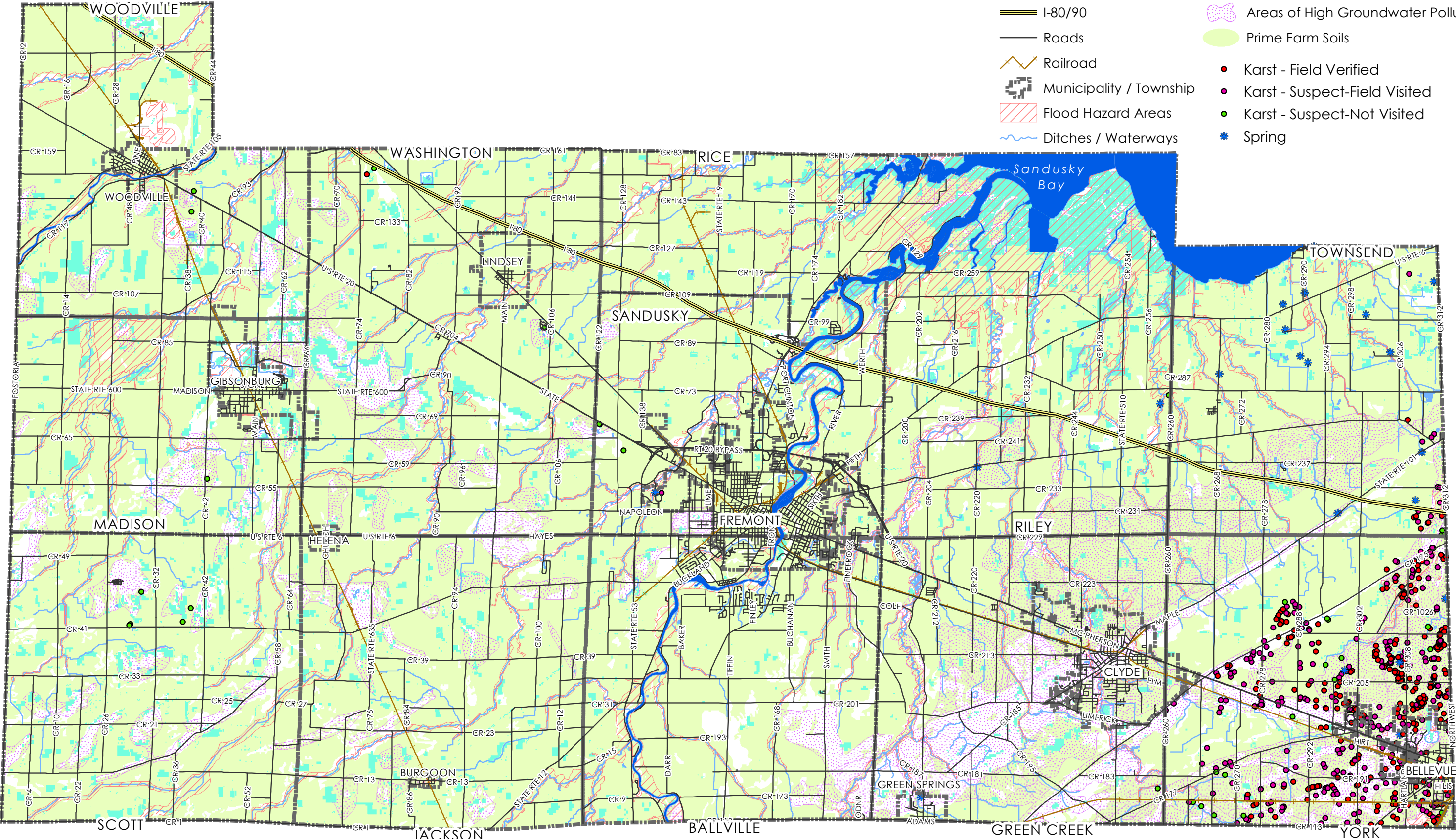
- Inner Management Zones – The Inner Management Zone is the surface and subsurface area surrounding a public water supply well(s) that will provide water to the well(s) within one year as delineated or endorsed by the agency under the wellhead protection program and the source water assessment and protection program.
- Drinking Water Source Water Protection Area – Surface and subsurface areas surrounding a public water supply well(s) which will provide water from an aquifer to the well(s) within five years as delineated or endorsed by the agency under Ohio's Wellhead Protection and Source Water.
- Assessment and Protection Programs - At the present time, Fremont and Woodville operate public water systems with endorsed drinking water source protection plans.
- Corridor Management Zones – This area is located in Ballville and Jackson Township within the Sandusky River and SWAP watershed where the potential for drinking water contamination warrants delineation, inventory, and management because of its proximity to Fremont’s public water system intake.





### Legend

- Open Water
- I-80/90
- Roads
- Railroad
- Municipality / Township
- Flood Hazard Areas
- Ditches / Waterways
- Wetlands / Hydric Soils
- Areas of High Groundwater Pollution Potential
- Prime Farm Soils
- Karst - Field Verified
- Karst - Suspect-Field Visited
- Karst - Suspect-Not Visited
- Spring



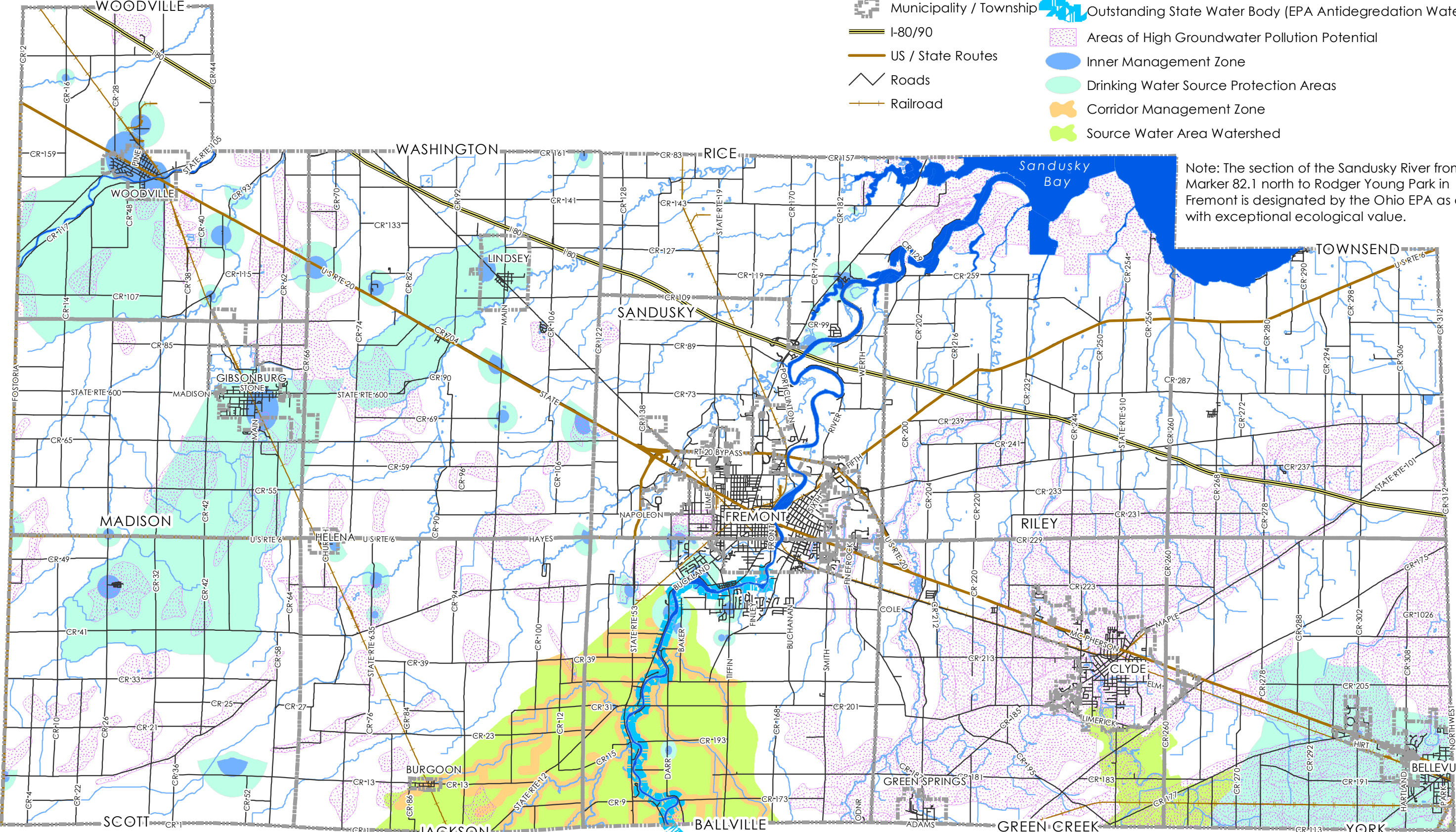
Source: Sandusky County Auditor, Sanitary Engineer, NORW, PUCO, Ohio EPA, Reveille  
Note: Map to be used for general planning, not scientific, purposes.





### Legend

- Open Water
- Municipality / Township
- I-80/90
- US / State Routes
- Roads
- Railroad
- Ditches / Waterways
- Outstanding State Water Body (EPA Antidegradation Waterbody)
- Areas of High Groundwater Pollution Potential
- Inner Management Zone
- Drinking Water Source Protection Areas
- Corridor Management Zone
- Source Water Area Watershed





- ➡ Source Water Area Watershed – A watershed and drainage basin area that feeds into a body of water that eventually feeds into a water supplier’s intake. This area is primarily located in Ballville and Jackson Township and feeds into a segment of the Sandusky River currently designated by the Ohio EPA as an antidegradation waterbody and “Outstanding State Water” due to its ecological value.

Sandusky County Facility Planning Areas

Sandusky County presently has eight main Facility Planning Areas (FPAs) and 4 minor FPAs (Elmore, Genoa, and Risingsun) that are located primarily in other counties (See *Map: Infrastructure Considerations*). Sandusky County’s FPAs are guided by Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments’ (TMACOG) Areawide Water Quality Management Plan, called the 208 Plan from that section of the Clean Water Act. The plan outlines Sandusky County’s framework for managing wastewater and associated infrastructure as well as best management practices (BMPs) for urban stormwater, agricultural runoff, and septic system management.

Critical Sewage Areas (CSAs)

Twenty-two areas in Sandusky County have been designated as CSAs due to a concentration of failed or failing onsite sewage systems (See *Map: Infrastructure Considerations*). These system failures have resulted in known or suspected cases of surface water

contamination, ground water contamination, and/or public health nuisances.

According to Ohio EPA and County health officials, existing system upgrades/replacements in these CSAs may not solve the problem or are not an optimal solution because of a high rate of failure due to soil conditions, bedrock, and seasonally high groundwater.

CSAs are:

- ➡ Priority areas for Ohio EPA and health departments to conduct sanitary surveys.
- ➡ Priority areas for inspection and increased maintenance of onsite systems until a central public sanitary sewerage system is in place.
- ➡ Priority areas for public sanitary sewers or innovative community STSs to replace concentrations of individual systems. For CSAs where a public sanitary sewerage system is the best alternative, the priority order for construction may be affected by the availability of financial assistance.
- ➡ Priority areas for financial assistance to homeowners for installing public sanitary sewers.

**Karst Areas**

Pockets of areas exist around Sandusky County where the conditions for groundwater contamination are high (See *Map: Environmental Considerations*). Many of these areas are clustered in York Township and Bellevue, where a high content of porous limestone, sinkholes, and karsts are present. These low-lying karst features are subject to flooding during periods of unusually high precipitation when the water table rises above the land surface. With water so close to the surface and because of the limited natural water filtration process, the potential for groundwater contamination is high.

In the spring of 2008, severe karst-related flooding in the Bellevue area became a “tipping point” event for future action over these geohazards. In 2013, the Ohio Geological Survey began mapping the known and suspected karst areas in eastern Sandusky County to provide a reference for future planning and best management practices. In total, there are 997 known or suspected karst features, including 29 springs.



## Infrastructure Considerations





There are four types of karst features identified on the Environmental Considerations Map:

- 1. Red circles indicate field-verified features, i.e., those that have been visited in the field and confirmed as karst.
- 2. Orange circles indicate sites that were visited but could not be verified at the time, for example a suspicious depression that is flooded or that lacks an active sink throat and cannot be clearly classified.
- 3. Yellow circles represent areas with suspect characteristics, such as a distinct LiDAR depression, but where access to the property could not be gained or where there was not enough time to check the point.
- 4. Blue stars represent springs, including “blue holes,” where water was found flowing from the subsurface, primarily to the north.

Superfund Non-NPL Sites

A Superfund site is any land in the United States that has been contaminated by hazardous waste and identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a candidate for cleanup because it poses a risk to human health and/or the environment. The National Priorities List includes the most hazardous waste sites that have been identified by Superfund/CERCLIS where long-term remedial response actions can be conducted. The

following are the seven non-NPL sites in Sandusky County:

- Clyde Paint and Supply Company (435 West Mulberry Street Clyde, OH 43410)
- Ohio Liquid Disposal Vickery Division (3959 State Route 412 Vickery, OH 43464)
- Shaw Road Drums (2648 East County Road 181 Green Springs, OH 43410)
- County Line Ind Inc. (1680 Co Road 157 Fremont, OH 43420)
- American Welding and Tanker (721 Graham Drive Fremont, OH 43420)
- Greiners Lagoons (Gr 181 Near Tiffin Rd Fremont, OH 43420)
- Clyde Dump (State Route 510 Clyde, OH 43410)

4) Historic Assets

Sandusky County is well endowed with history and historic points of interest. Historic sites are publicized and information is provided for visitors and interested persons by the Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Bureau promotes a county-wide, forty mile “historic barn mural driving tour” featuring six commemorative murals depicting historic events and people. Also of interest is US 20, which has traversed the county from east (Bellevue) to west (Woodville) since it was authorized by Congress, as a pathway for settlers from Erie County to the Maumee River in Perrysburg, in

1823. Several buildings along the Route 20 corridor likely served as inns and taverns dating from a time when settlers made their way across the Great Black Swamp of which much of the county was a part.

Aside from these corridors and routes of interest, several historic places and sites also attract interest. Foremost among these sites is the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library and Museums at Spiegel Grove, in Fremont. The estate is a popular walking destination with paved trails, tours of the 31-room Victorian mansion are available, and the museum contains an extensive number of items of historical interest. Special events and rotating exhibits are planned year-round. A presidential library and museum such as this is a regional and, indeed, national/international attractor for those with an interest in presidential history.

Other sites and sources of information include the Birchard Library system, anchored in Fremont with an historically significant location on the hill, overlooking the Sandusky River, that was the site of Fort Stephenson during the War of 1812 (a cannon that defended the fort is on display on the grounds); the Victorian structure housing the Sandusky County Historical Society on Birchard Avenue in Fremont, housing War of 1812 and Civil War artifacts and other memorabilia; the Mad River and NKP Railroad Museum in Bellevue, commemorating the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad, founded in 1832; the Public Safety Service Memorial, made from over 7,000



pounds of steel recovered from the New York World Trade Center and dedicated to the nation’s first responders, and the North Coast Veterans Museum, both located in a park setting in Gibsonburg; and Clyde Museum, with a wealth of local Clyde-based information and featuring an extensive collection about author Sherwood Anderson, who wrote the short stories in “Winesburg, Ohio”, loosely based on his observations growing up in Clyde.

## 5) Community Services

Sandusky County is home to various agencies and departments that work to improve the county’s built and social environments. As a part of the planning process, these entities help to identify issues in the community that become the basis of the plan’s recommendations.

### Aviation and Airport Facilities

Sandusky County is home to two general aviation airports: The Sandusky County Regional Airport located between Fremont and Clyde, and the privately owned Fremont Airport, located south of Fremont adjacent to SR 53.



*Fremont is home to the 19th President of the United States, Rutherford B. Hayes. His Presidential Museum and Library located at Spiegel Grove provides residents and visitors of Sandusky County with an opportunity to engage with the illustrious history of the region. The Museum staff regularly gives demonstrations, tours, and informational sessions on President Hayes.*



The Sandusky County Regional Airport allows corporate aircraft access to the area. The airport has a 5,500 by 100-foot asphalt runway and is currently managed by the Sandusky County Regional Airport Authority, a five-member Board of Trustees appointed by the County Commissioners. Within the past decade, a strategic business plan was developed for the Sandusky County Airport. The plan intends to build on the airport's strengths of location, infrastructure, and newer buildings and grounds, as well as aviation, strategic, and commercial and industrial opportunities. The marketing plan includes consideration of target markets and the northwest Ohio area, positioning of the airport for corporate and business flying, pricing, and a promotion strategy that includes community outreach and attending aviation events and human resources.

Health Care Providers

Sandusky County Public Health (SCPH) has 30 employees including nurses, registered sanitarians, health educators, health professionals and home visitors and has an 8 Member Board of Health. Recently, the organization has been awarded funding grants to address issues stemming from opiate abuse. SCPH's three priorities are infant mortality, mental health and addiction, and chronic disease. A continual focus on the opioid crisis through their Prevention Partnership Coalition is a main focus for SCPH moving forward. The Community Health Assessment (2016-17) surveys residents in the county and identifies the most preeminent public health issues facing

the county and the Community Health Improvement Plan (2017) identifies a health plan for the community based on resident survey.

ProMedica also operates in Sandusky County and staffs roughly 400 employees. Their focus in Sandusky County has shifted to providing more chronic disease management to lower the cost of total care and keep people out of the hospital for extended periods. Recently, they have partnered with Community Fortress on an immediate intake homeless shelter and have also partnered with Community Health Services on physician recruitment. ProMedica tends to cater their priorities to those identified in the Community Health Assessment. Their primary facility is on Fremont's west side in ProMedica Memorial Hospital; it also operates an outreach facility in Clyde and a cancer center on Fremont's north side.

Bellevue Hospital operates from a relatively new (first patient accepted in 2005), 70 bed facility, and employs some 450 persons with 119 physicians on their active and courtesy staffs. The hospital provides acute and a variety of specialty services, including cardiac and pulmonary rehab, family birthing, pain management, behavioral health, respiratory therapy, and wound reconstruction. Recently, they opened their new rehab center, offices, and fitness center across from the main campus on the south side of Historic US Route 20. Bellevue Hospital also manages an Urgent Care center in Clyde.

Northern Ohio Medical Specialists (NOMS) constructed a major facility in addition to the facility in Fremont on the far eastern edge of Clyde along route 20, to house a number of medical specialists, including audiology, behavioral health, ear-nose-throat, family practice, internal medicine, orthopedics, and physical therapy.

Eden Springs Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 401 N. Broadway in Green Springs, provides a rehabilitation program for physical, occupational, speech, cardiac, pulmonary, neurological and orthopedic services. This facility provides both short term rehabilitation and long-term skilled nursing care, and includes a respiratory unit providing ventilator care.

Parks and Recreation

Sandusky County's larger municipalities own and manage extensive park systems serving the needs of their residents for active and passive recreation, as does Ballville Township. These parks are supplemented with features such as Fremont's exceptional indoor Recreation Complex, which includes a gym, walking/jogging track, fitness room and weights, swimming pool, classroom, and ice arena, and Bellevue's indoor Jungle Junction, billed as Ohio's largest indoor play area. Fremont's stretch of the Sandusky River is also noted and celebrated regionally as a prime location for fishing during the spring walleye and white bass runs.



A staffed Sandusky County Park District operates from resources provided by a 1 mill property tax that generates approximately one million dollars annually. The Park District’s facilities cover 2,500 acres with annual attendance of approximately 150,000 visitors, and with over three hundred programs and presentations annually.

Among the Park District’s facilities is White Star Park in Gibsonburg, featuring a swimming beach and a popular SCUBA diving opportunity at White Star Quarry, as well as nature, mountain bike, and horse trails, a boat ramp, camping, an accessible fishing platform, and other features. Wolf Creek Park, south of Fremont along the Sandusky River, owned by the State but managed by the County, offers nature trails, river access for canoeing and fishing, and primitive camping. Creek Bend Farm is home to the Wilson Nature Center which includes an indoor “Window on Wildlife” and library, and a venue for children’s activities and meetings in an attractive, natural rural setting. Other parks and properties include the 160-acre Blue Heron Reserve in Vickery; the 360-acre Ringneck Ridge Wildlife Area near Gibsonburg; River Cliff Park (a former nine-hole golf course converted to a nature preserve) on the Sandusky River in Fremont; The 55-acre Woods at the Luscombe Farm near Clyde, and the Mull Covered Bridge on County Road 9 near Fremont, built in 1851 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Another important feature spanning the county is a 28-mile segment of the North Coast Inland Trail, an inactive rail line that has been converted to a paved hiking and biking path, with funding from ODOT. The path is open year-round for walking, jogging, bicycling, in-line skates, and strollers, and with no motorized vehicles permitted except handicap assistance vehicles. The trail extends from Bellevue through Clyde and Fremont, before turning

northwesterly to Lindsey and Elmore. A section of the trail in Fremont uses a system of city streets. This trail provides healthy, passive recreational opportunities for county residents, as well as attracting ambitious bicyclists passing through the county.



*The Clyde Community Park includes baseball and softball diamonds, volleyball courts, tennis courts, open shelter houses, a covered bridge, fishing locations, playground equipment, restrooms and concession stands. Especially in the summer months, the park has become a vibrant community center. Residents particularly enjoy the little league games and feeding the ducks at the pond.*



**Safety Services & Emergency Management System (EMS)**

The Sandusky County Emergency Management System (SCEMS) is a full-time advanced life support EMS provided in Sandusky County. SCEMS recently partnered with Adult Protection Services to address the issue of providing services to those who are in need of help but do not contact EMS. The priority for SCEMS moving forward is to continue providing a high level of care and addressing in greater detail non-emergency calls.

**Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC)**

The SCEDC works to help improve Sandusky County’s economy by focusing on workforce development, business retention, and expansion, and business recruitment for Sandusky County. The organization promotes a number of economic development programs throughout the County. In 2017, the organization raised \$1.42 Million for 5 years (2018-2022) from its private/public sector members and beneficiaries to promote and market Sandusky County.

**Sandusky County Regional Planning Commission (SCRPC)**

The SCRPC was formed in the early 1970’s through the cooperation of the County, Cities, Villages, and Townships of Sandusky County. Enacted under ORC 713, the Commission provides Sandusky County with Land Use Planning and other services.

The SCRPC administers the Sandusky County Subdivision Regulations. This includes review, comment, and approval of plats and plans for residential, commercial, and industrial developments in the unincorporated (non-municipal) areas of Sandusky County. The Commission also provides administrative review and approval of smaller, minor lot splits. All subdivision reviews are coordinated with Township zoning, Environmental Health review and the County Auditor’s office.

The SCRPC is also tasked with administering the County’s participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. It issues permits, answers questions, and enforces flood plain regulations in all unincorporated areas of Sandusky County.

The Commission is responsible for reviewing proposed zoning amendments in the Townships. In addition, the staff of the Commission offers zoning advice and research to member communities. The Commission also helps coordinate the updating and production of zoning maps for Townships.

The Commission is organized under bylaws that dictate membership and representation. The Commission membership is a mixture of elected officials at all levels, community and economic development organizations, and private industry. There are also seats for citizen representatives chosen by the County Commissioners.

The SCRPC elects officers each year and is funded by assessments charged to member entities.

**Sandusky County Land Bank**

County land banks were authorized in Ohio in 2010, under sections 1724 and 5722 of the Ohio Revised Code to facilitate the return of vacant, abandoned and tax-foreclosed properties to productive economic use, by taking clear title and ownership of properties, assembling properties, and managing those properties until redevelopment can begin.

During the term of its existence to date, the Sandusky County Land Bank has facilitated the demolition of twenty-three homes that had fallen into disrepair. They have acquired over seventy parcels, and in early 2020 they had thirteen in possession. In most cases, foreclosed property has been converted to tax paying property, thereby returning revenues to the county. The largest number of impacted properties have been in Fremont, followed by Clyde and Bellevue. Additional properties have been improved in Gibsonburg, Burgoon, and Hessville.

The Land Bank’s limited budget poses a challenge; its lone employee is charged with inspecting all owned properties on a frequent basis to ensure they are properly maintained. The director also works routinely with Fremont’s code enforcement official, and with zoning officials in Bellevue, Clyde, and the villages.



The Land Bank is attempting to identify resources for the clean-up of commercial properties as well as housing. The land bank has assisted in the cleanup of two gas stations and a vacant commercial building.

Transit Services

Public transportation in Sandusky County is provided by TRIPS, a demand response rural public transit system operated through the GLCAP, based in Fremont. Individual rides must be reserved 24 hours in advance of the scheduled time, and the trip must originate in Sandusky County. Fares are based on a zone system; rides within Fremont cost \$2, into adjacent Sandusky or Ballville Townships cost \$3, and rides beyond these zones into the remainder of the county cost \$4. This curb-to-curb service is offered from 5:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. weekdays and from 5:00 a.m. until noon on Saturdays. Vehicles with wheelchair accessibility are available, and caregivers and children under seven years old can ride for free; there are reduced rates for seniors age 60 and over.

Rides can extend up to one mile into adjacent counties. Further inter-county coordination is pursued by a Mobility Manager based at GLCAP, who coordinates transportation services among the area’s county-based transit systems, and who convenes regional meetings of transportation providers.

A fixed-route Fremont Shuttle System was initiated in the summer of 2019; this service follows a fixed hourly scheduled loop, stopping at nine locations within the city, incorporating shopping, social service, health related, and downtown destinations. A one-way shuttle ride costs one dollar.

TRIPS is coordinated with other public and private transportation providers under the auspices of a Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan, following format and content requirements provided by ODOT. The current plan covers the period 2018-2022, and it incorporates six goals related to gaps in services and needs identified through an inclusive input-gathering process. The six goals, derived to address shortcomings and strive for a more coordinated and effective transportation service, include:

- Retention, expansion, and improvement of transportation options to special needs populations, including the disabled, seniors, and low-income persons.
- An increase in flexibility, affordability, and availability of public and private transportation options, including non-traditional times (evening, weekend), improving response time and flexibility, and the introduction of new public options and private providers.

- An increase in county coordination among providers, and regionally with adjacent county providers.
- Promotion of increased ridership across the county transportation network, through a market campaign and travel training.
- Expansion of efforts to promote safe transportation and healthy personal transportation habits, including coordination with Fremont City Schools and the City of Fremont.
- Addressing capital needs to support the county transportation network, including targeted new software upgrades, vehicles, and equipment.

6) Water and Sewer Services

The provision of safe drinking water and adequate wastewater treatment facilities is fundamental to public health and safety and the quality of life in a community. Within development areas, these services are provided through systems operated by the respective political jurisdictions, as well as by several private water systems. In rural areas, where lots are much larger and the intensity of development lower, individual wells and septic systems are utilized.





The Sandusky County Comprehensive Water and Sanitary Sewer General Plan was updated in 2013 and establishes the planned service areas for public and privately-owned community utility systems and sets forth priorities for future service areas. It also identifies facilities necessary to provide services for existing and future customers.

Sandusky County's communities are actively making investments into their public water and sewer systems to promote public health and safety. This includes investments made by the Sandusky County Sanitary Engineer and Northern Ohio Water Authority, the two primary utility service providers to the unincorporated areas.

In 2019 alone, Bellevue addressed inflow/infiltration (I/I) and developed a pilot project planned to remove phosphorus at the WWTP. Fremont planned over \$29.1 million on capital improvements to include improvements at the Sand Road equalization basin. Gibsonburg officials expanded sewer services along Rodriguez Street and built a pump station along Linden Avenue. Over \$700,000 was spent in Woodville to eliminate combined sewer overflows, and another \$2.3 million allocated by the Sandusky County Sanitary Engineer to construct sewers in Wightman's Grove.

## Water Services

The County has a number of political subdivisions that have public water systems. They include Bellevue, Clyde,

*In 2017, voters in the Fremont School District approved a levy for new schools and upgraded technology. The levy will generate \$58.6 million to build four new elementary school buildings and a new Ross High School with an auditorium.*



Fremont, Gibsonburg, Green Springs, Lindsey, and Woodville. In rural areas, where lots are much larger and the intensity of development lower, individual wells and septic systems are utilized.

The Sandusky County Sanitary Engineer’s Office operates public water systems outside municipalities. To overcome the difficulties in groundwater supplies, the County utilizes the Northern Ohio Rural Water (NORW) and the services they provide. NORW services Ballville Township, Green Creek Township, Riley Township, Sandusky Township, Townsend Township, and York Township.

NORW plans to expand in the next 10 years but needs another water source to do so. Currently, the infrastructure utilized by NORW is sufficient to provide water to sprawling and light residential development but in the future, it may not be adequate to meet established fire flow standards for commercial and industrial clientele. Legal and right-of-way issues may also arise in the future as NORW looks to expand into existing municipalities.

There are ten small community public water systems serving mobile home parks or apartment complexes located all around the County. Another 35 or more small semi-public or privately owned water systems are located all around the County. These “non-transient” systems serve hotels, schools, and various commercial and industrial businesses.

For new water improvements, it is hard for the County to invest in speculative improvements without guaranteed connections. Typically, property owners avoid public water service until a well goes bad, but wells within a potential service area typically do not fail simultaneously, which creates a need to service that is sporadic and difficult to plan on a larger scale.

Sanitary Sewer Services

The Sandusky County Sanitary Engineer’s Office operates public sanitary sewer systems outside municipalities. The Sandusky Township Regional Sewer District has a regional sewer district in Sandusky Township. As of 2019, there are a total of 40 package plants, 35 of them in use, and 24 operating with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits.

The balance of the County’s population is served by individual on-site sanitary systems. Many of these areas have failing septic systems and have been identified pollution problems by the Sandusky County Health Department. TMACOG’s 208 Plan recommends the most problematic areas to be serviced in the future by the closest service provider.

Aging infrastructure and aging equipment to address the infrastructure-related issues is a continuing concern in the county. The Sandusky County Sanitary Sewer Department finds difficulty in securing grant funding to resolve the issues that stem from aging infrastructure but has

implemented new technologies to help lower operating costs while improving services. For new sanitary sewer improvements, typical costs per residence are higher than installing a new septic system.

For instance, the Wightman’s Grove Sanitary Sewer Improvement is estimated over \$30,000 per structure. With grants that have been applied for or are available, the costs are still over \$20,000 per structure.

7) Zoning

Zoning is a fundamental planning tool for local governments. In Sandusky County, zoning is handled at the Township and Municipal level. There is no County-wide zoning code. Currently, nine of the twelve Townships in Sandusky County have zoning resolutions. The three unzoned Townships are Townsend, York, and Madison.

The SCRPC is tasked, by law, with reviewing and commenting on any proposed Zoning amendments in the unincorporated areas. The ultimate decision to adopt or reject an amendment always remains with the elected Township officials. The SCRPC has worked with Townships by providing model zoning amendments for emerging issues such as alternative energy generation and changing preferences for housing types and lot sizes.



8) Transportation Systems

It is important to consider transportation systems when planning for the future to ensure these systems can support future goals, such as pedestrian connectivity, changes in land use, and economic development. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) services 412 miles of road in Sandusky County and oversees 94 bridges. The Sandusky County Engineer’s office oversees 307 miles of road and 264 bridges.

The County Engineer regularly reviews and updates its capital improvement plan to upgrade the county’s roads and bridges. Because funding varies every year (to include the gas tax that in 2019 was \$1.4 million), the current capital planning approach taken by the County Engineer is fluid but includes paving and improvement of the most critical roads and bridges. Of 2019’s nearly \$5 million dollar budget, roughly 90% was allocated for roads. The Sandusky County Engineer’s Office currently does not utilize an access management plan.

Active Transportation

Coordinated transportation is developed in concert with the goals and purposes of the county’s 2017 Active Transportation Plan. That document, which promotes provisions for walking and bicycling as healthy means for recreational as well as functional transportation, identified a number of priority destinations and focus areas, including clear signage for routing within Fremont,

and safe and accommodating routes providing connectivity to Terra State Community College, the State Route (SR) 53 shopping district north of the US 20 bypass, Christy Farm Nature Preserve, Hayes Presidential Library, Downtown Fremont, Ballville Township parks, Fremont schools, the Potter Village shopping district, Sandusky County Fairgrounds, Creek Bend Farm nature area in Lindsey, and White Star Park in Gibsonburg.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

According to ODOT’s records and estimates on total vehicle miles have been fluctuating in recent years, from a total of 2,542,430 vehicle miles daily in 2011 to 2,684,140 in 2018.

While total vehicular traffic on the County’s rural roads decreased slightly from 1,995,820 in 2011 to 1,961,776 in 2018, vehicle miles traveled on urban roads increased from 546,610 in 2011 to 722,362 miles daily in 2018.

A large component of the County’s traffic is on the Ohio Turnpike, Interstate 80/90, where urban and rural Turnpike vehicle miles traveled totaled 1,078,260 in 2011 to 1,132,570 in 2018, for an increase of 54,310 vehicle miles traveled.

Another metric is the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts data collected by ODOT. Some highlights from those counts, which are available and updated when available on the ODOT website, are as follows:

- ➡ **US 6:** 6,030 vehicles counted through Helena in a 24-hour period (1,360 commercial), with a high of 23,350 vehicles (5,420 commercial) at SR 19.
- ➡ **US 20:** A relatively high count throughout the County: 11,880 (2,040 commercial) at SR 105 in Woodville, 12,330 (2,360 commercial) at SR 600 near Gibsonburg, 14,730 (3,800 commercial) at US 6 near Fremont, 17,520 (2,820 commercial) at SR 19 east of Fremont, 13,830 (1,370 commercial) at Main Street in Clyde, and 16,620 (1,400 commercial) at Kilbourne Street in Bellevue.
- ➡ **SR 53:** 5,770 vehicles in 24 hours (660 commercial) at the Seneca County line, 10,320 (1,490 commercial) at SR 12 south of Fremont, 10,180 (1,740 commercial) at Rawson Avenue and US 6 near Fremont, and 6,620 (470 commercial) at the Ohio Turnpike north of Fremont.



Functional Classification System

The Federal Highway Administration created functional classification systems to help allocate funding and promote transportation planning and access management. A functional classification system and map are also the primary components of an access management plan (See *Map: Functional Classification/ Average Daily Traffic Map*).

The following roads in Sandusky County are designated in the following manner:

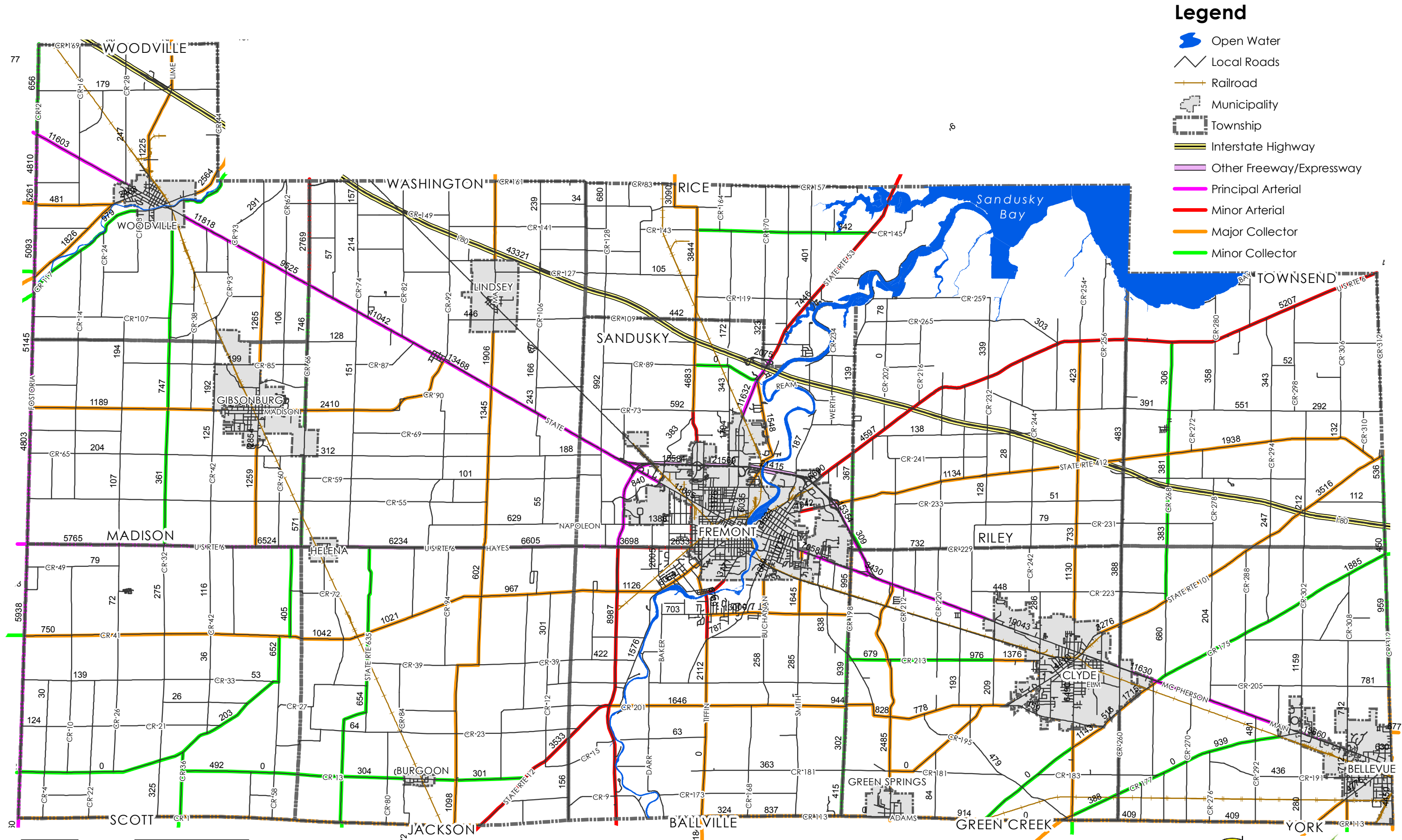
Interstate Highway

Interstates are the highest classification of roadways and are designed and constructed with mobility and long-distance travel in mind. Determining the functional classification designation of many roadways can be somewhat subjective, but with the Interstate category, there is no ambiguity. Roadways in this functional classification category are officially designated as Interstates by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, and all routes that comprise the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways belong to the Interstate functional classification category. In Sandusky County, the Ohio Turnpike (I-80/I-90) is the only Interstate facility.



*This main corridor in Woodville stands to benefit from increased wayfinding and connectivity solutions. Residents who participated in the community survey indicated the need for more crosswalks across this busy street (US 20). ODOT’s Safe Routes to School Program could assist provide these amenities.*





- Legend**
- Open Water
  - Local Roads
  - Railroad
  - Municipality
  - Township
  - Interstate Highway
  - Other Freeway/Expressway
  - Principal Arterial
  - Minor Arterial
  - Major Collector
  - Minor Collector



Other Freeway/Expressway

Roadways in this functional classification category look very similar to Interstates. While there can be regional differences in the use of the terms ‘freeway’ and ‘expressway’, for the purpose of functional classification the roads in this classification have directional travel lanes, are usually separated by some type of physical barrier, and access and egress points are limited to on/off ramp locations or a very limited number of at-grade intersections. Like Interstates, these roadways are designed and constructed to maximize mobility and do not directly serve abutting land uses. The only facility in Sandusky County with this designation are parts of the bypass around Fremont.

Principal Arterial

These roadways usually serve cities and metropolitan areas, but also can provide a high degree of mobility to and throughout rural areas. Unlike Interstates, Freeways, and Expressways, Other Principal Arterials can directly service abutting land uses via driveways and at-grade intersections. These roadways in Sandusky County are shown on the Functional Classification / ADT Map as dark pink colored lines.

Minor Arterial

Minor Arterials provide service for trips of moderate length and offer connectivity to the higher Principal Arterial system. In an urban context, they interconnect and augment the higher Principal Arterial system and

provide intra-community continuity. In rural settings, Minor Arterials should be identified and spaced at intervals consistent with population density, so that all developed areas are within a reasonable distance of a higher-level Principal Arterial. Additionally, Minor Arterials in rural areas are typically designed to provide relatively high overall travel speeds, with minimum interference to through movement. These roadways in Sandusky County are shown on the Functional Classification / ADT Map as red colored lines.

Major and Minor Collectors

Collectors serve the critical role of gathering and channeling traffic from Local Roads to the Arterial network. Collectors are broken down into two categories: Major Collectors and Minor Collectors. The determination of whether a roadway is a Major Collector or Minor Collector is frequently one of the biggest challenges in 5 roadway functional classification. The distinctions are often subtle. Generally, Major Collector routes are longer; have fewer connecting driveways; have higher posted speed limits; are spaced at greater intervals; have higher annual average traffic volumes; and may have more travel lanes than Minor Collector routes. The Major Collector roadways in Sandusky County are shown on the Functional Classification / ADT Map as orange colored lines and the Minor Collector roadways are shown as green colored lines.

Local Roads

Local Roads account for the largest percentage of all roadways in terms of mileage. They are not intended for use in long distance travel due to their provision of direct access to abutting land. They are often designed to discourage through traffic. Local Roads are often classified by default. In other words, once all Arterial and Collector roadways have been identified, all remaining roadways are classified as Local Roads. The Local Roads are shown on the Functional Classification / ADT Map in black color.



Traffic Safety

A review of ODOT’s 2019 County Road High Crash Locations for Sandusky County revealed the following ten (10) intersections as locations with higher frequency than expected:

- 1. CR-175 & TR-260
- 2. CR-213 & TR-236
- 3. CR-178 & CR-201
- 4. CR-53 & TR-221
- 5. CR-132 & CR-201
- 6. CR-536 & CR-132
- 7. CR-6 & CR-502
- 8. CR-6 & CR-156
- 9. CR-502 & CR-51
- 10. CR-178 & E. State St.

The Highway Safety Program (HSP) data is updated each year by ODOT, which lists the high crash frequency intersections and segments throughout Sandusky County. These locations are provided herein on the Transportation Safety Considerations map. These locations are sites that could potentially be eligible for ODOT’s Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds, as well as the County Engineer’s Association of Ohio (CEAO) that the County Engineer’s Office can pursue funding for through either program. A detailed safety study would need to be conducted to apply for funding.

In 2019, Safety Funding was received for improvements to the US 20 Bypass in Fremont.

9) Transportation Improvement District (TID)

All of Sandusky County is located in a Transportation Improvement District (TID). The TID was created under ORC Chapter 5540 to provide a new source of funding and project implementation for needed transportation projects. Under Ohio law, such a District can purchase or construct transportation projects, issue TID revenue bonds and other specific bonds, acquire and dispose of property, and obtain revenues to support the cost of a transportation improvement project by receiving funding from the federal, state, or local government, collecting tolls, and levying special assessments against parcels that will benefit from a planned improvement.

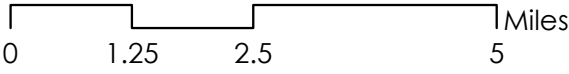
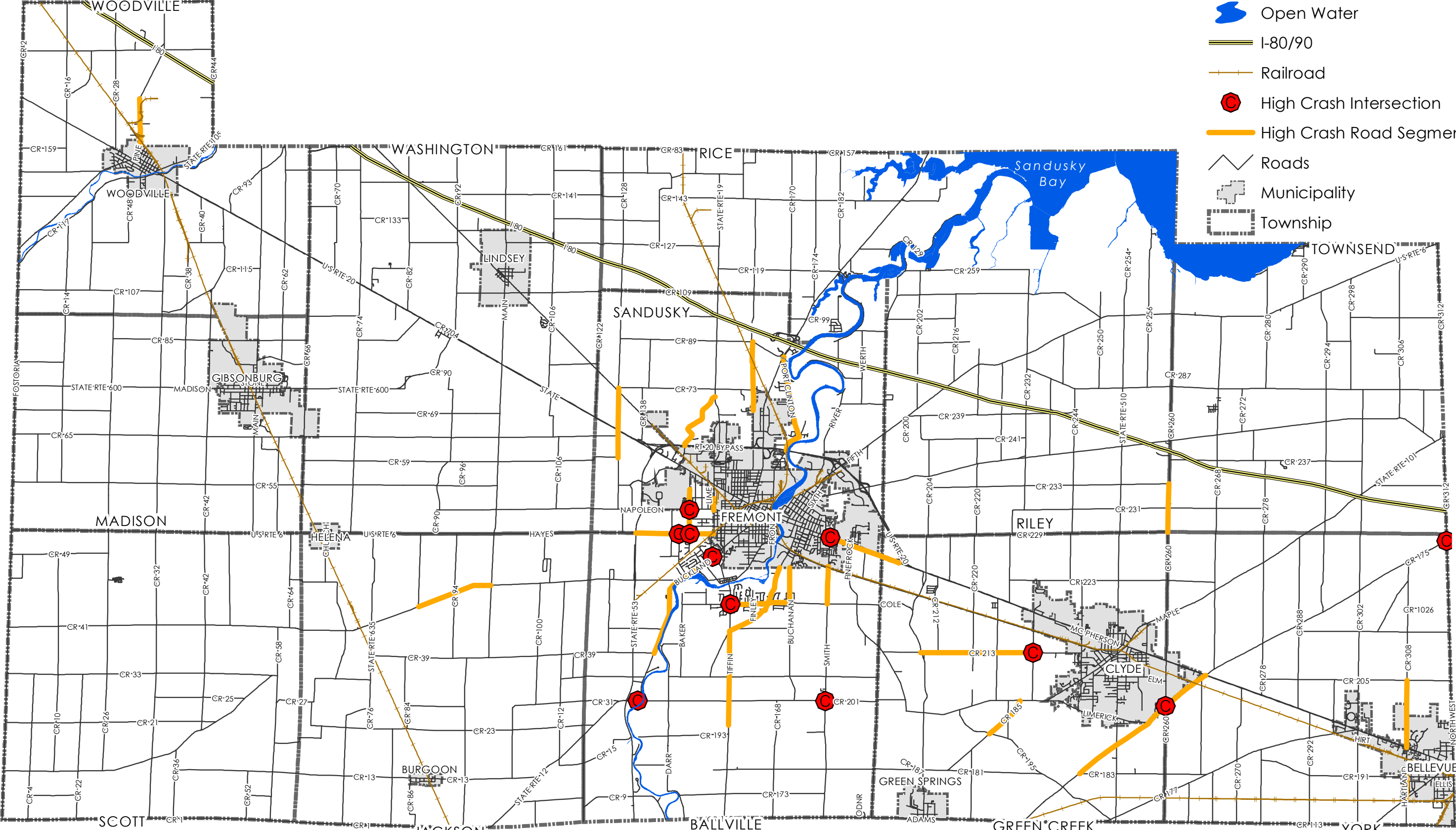
The TID successfully applied for a \$200,000 ODOT grant to study a new entrance for Terra State Community College. At the completion of this grant, ODOT assumed control of the project. In 2015, a roundabout was installed on SR 53.





### Legend

- Open Water
- I-80/90
- Railroad
- High Crash Intersection
- High Crash Road Segment
- Roads
- Municipality
- Township



Source: Sandusky County Auditor, MSG, ODOT, Reveille