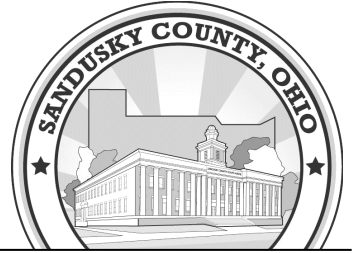


Sandusky County Comprehensive Plan 2020



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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

garcia.theresa@co.sandusky.oh.us



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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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.

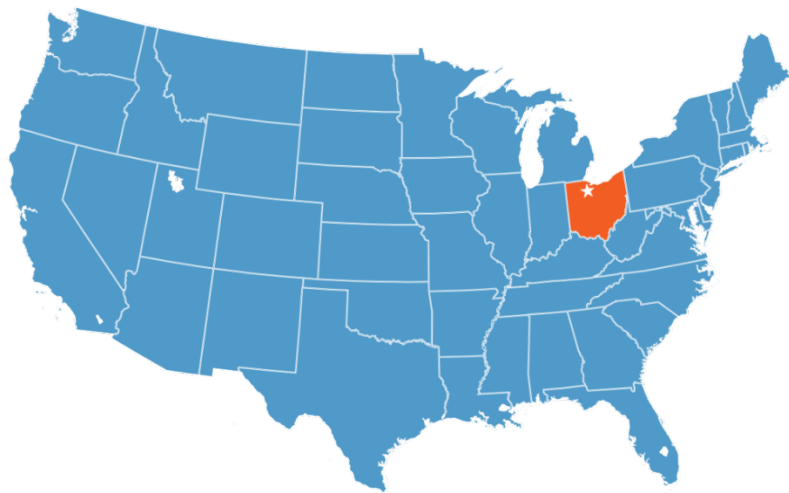
Consulting Team



Steering Committee Member	Title	Organization
John Willey	Executive Director	Sandusky County Regional Planning Commission
Beth Hannam	Executive Director	Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation
Bill Auxter	Director	Ohio Small Business Development Center
Theresa A. Garcia	County Administrator	Sandusky County
Scott Miller	County Commissioner	Sandusky County
Greg Edinger	Superintendent	Vanguard-Sentinel Career & Technology Centers
Ron Schumacher	President	Terra State Community College
Dave Sabo	Economic Development Director	City of Bellevue
Kristen Flowers	Organization Director	Ohio Farm Bureau
Andrew Brown	Director	Sandusky County Park District
Bob Kusmer	Trustee	Ballville Township
Ty Tracy	Mayor	Village of Woodville
Keith Kruse	Administrator	Village of Woodville
Bob Gross	Economic Development Director	City of Fremont
Marc Glotzbecker	Administrator	Village of Gibsonburg
Kerrie Carte	Planning and Development Coordinator	Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
Carlos Baez	County Engineer	Sandusky County
Bethany Brown	Health Commissioner	Sandusky County Board of Health
Rachel Wynkoop	CEO	Chamber of Commerce of Sandusky County
Bill Brown	Director	Clydescope
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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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Plan Participation

Plan Participation

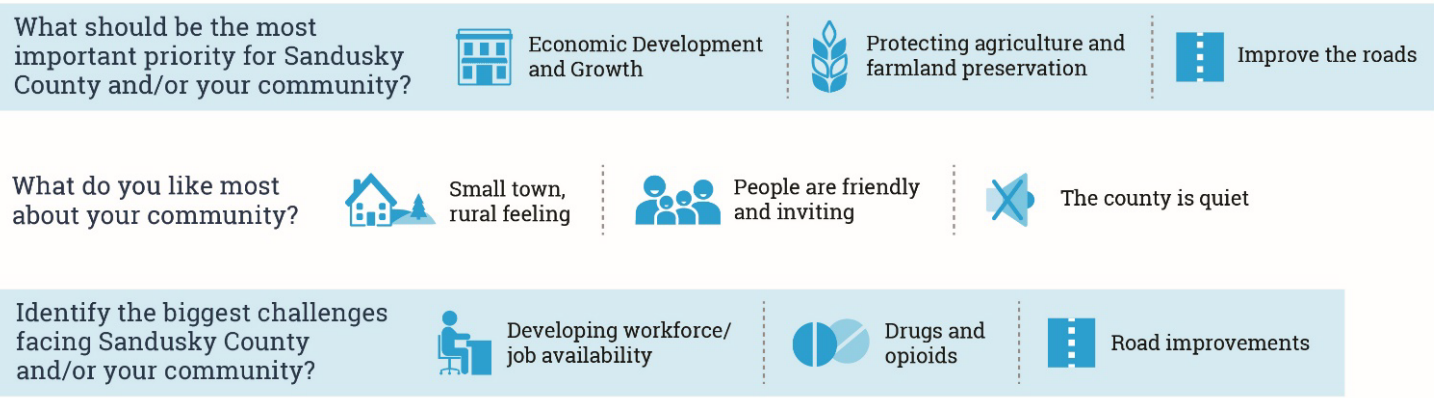
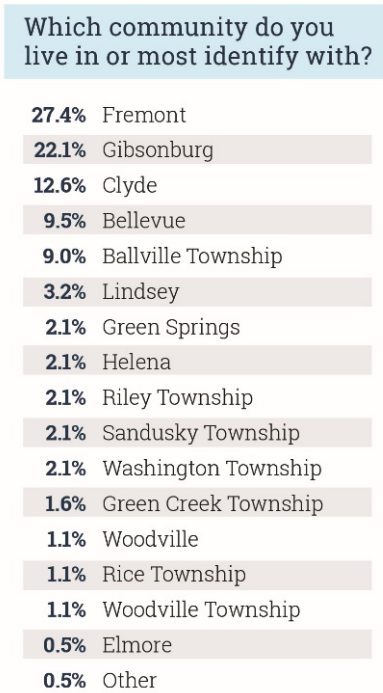
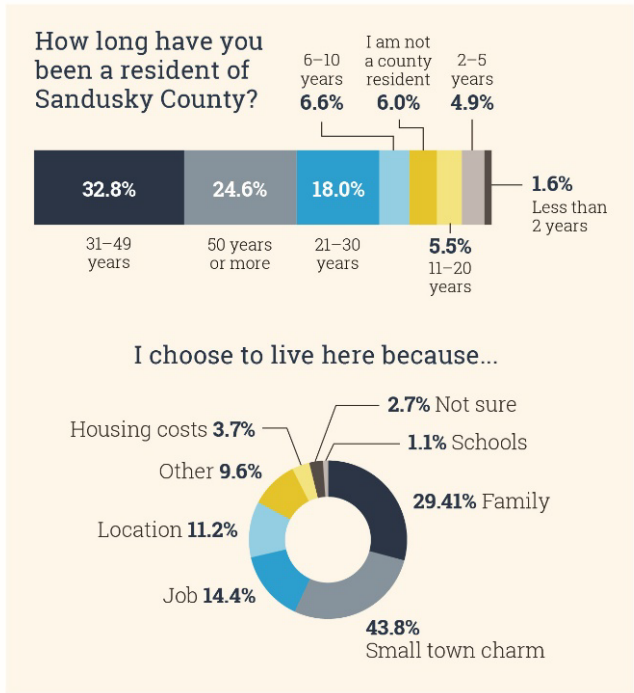
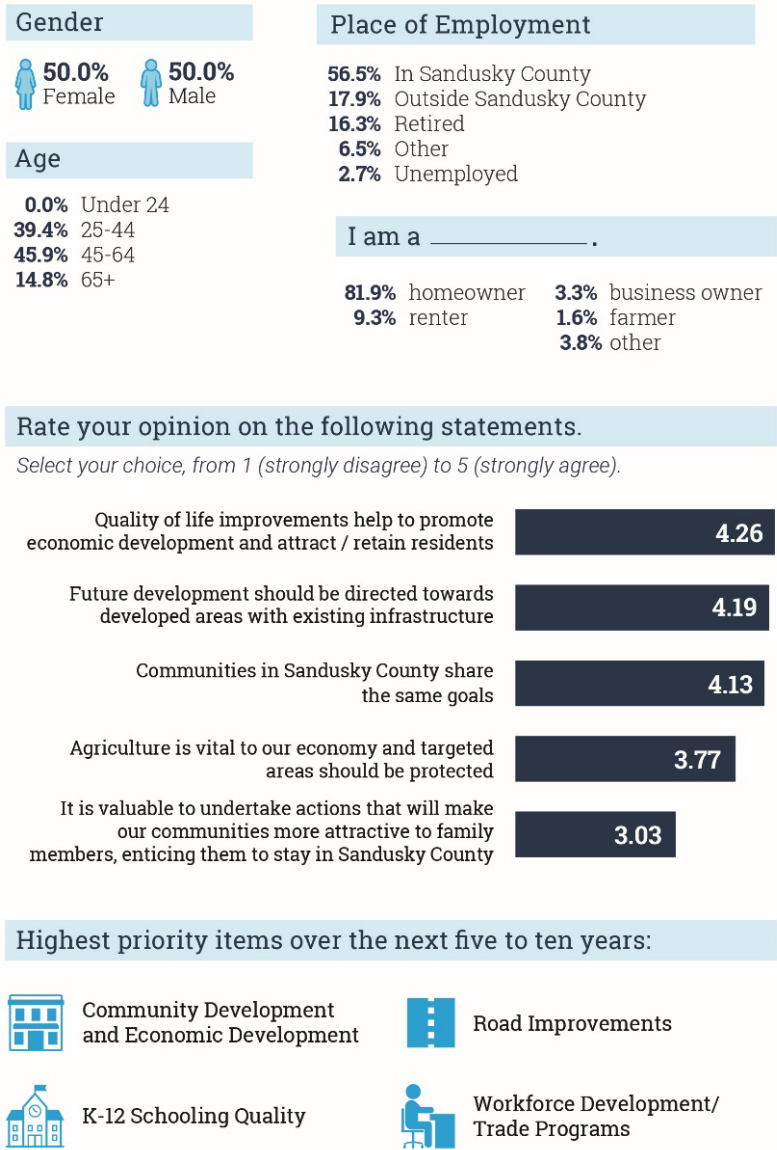
1) Steering Committee

The 2020 Sandusky County Plan was developed under the guidance of 22 community officials. The Steering Committee’s task is to guide the planning process through input from the community and recommend solutions to the issues presented.

2) Community Survey

The community survey was created in May 2019 and is meant to gather resident input through a variety of related questions. The responses the residents give provide us with the first opportunity to understand the community through the eyes of those who live there. The priorities of the residents will often overlap with those of the community officials, but when they do not, we are alerted as to what may be a point of disagreement between the priorities of the officials and the priorities of the residents. This can be of great use during the planning process and deciding what is best for the community going forward. The following infographic provides a detailed outline of the results.

Sandusky County Comprehensive Plan Survey

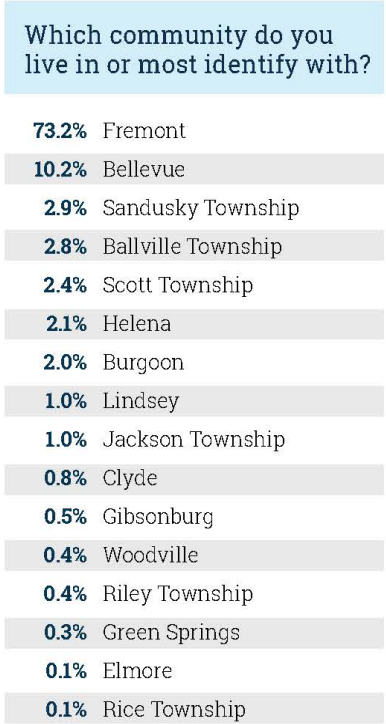
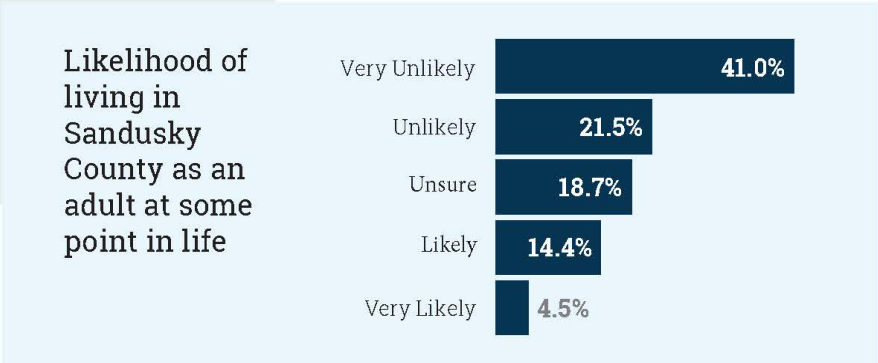
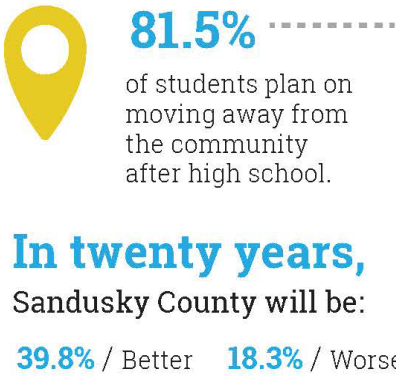
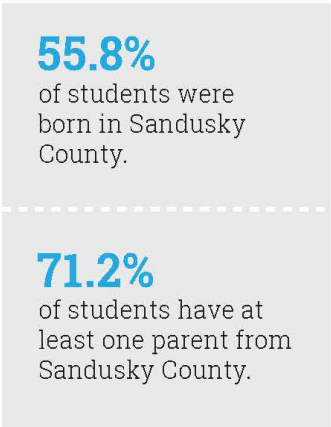
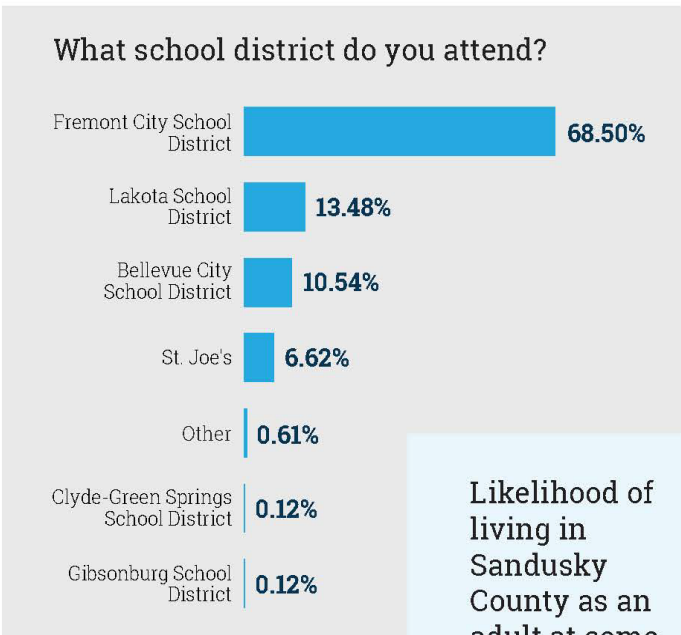
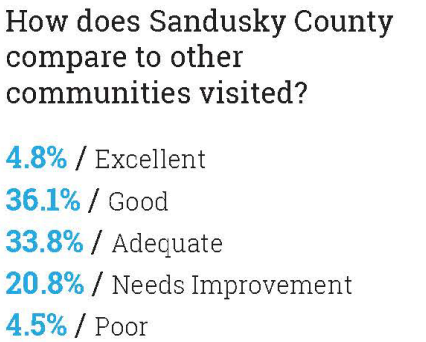
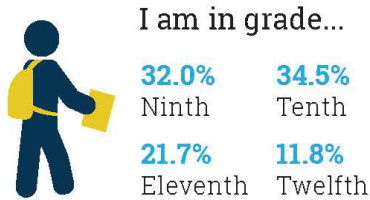


3) Student Survey

The student survey was designed and released to high school students throughout the county in November 2019. The goal of the student survey is similar to the community survey in that we can identify the priorities of the students and what they hope the county will look like in the future. The priorities of the students appear to be new retail opportunities and restaurants, improved schools and school programs, additional youth/ teen programs, drug intervention programs, and road improvements. The following infographic provides a detailed outline of the results.

Sandusky County Comprehensive Plan Survey

Student Survey Results



4) Community Outreach Efforts

The authors of this plan have made numerous efforts to engage the public and gather ideas and concerns from residents who may not otherwise be part of the planning process. This started with a presence at the Sandusky County Fair, where information, surveys, and other materials were displayed in the County Commissioners’ tent. Commission staff or the planning consultants were on site most days, and the Commissioners also assisted.

The SCRPC also maintained a tent at the Clyde Country Fair, and attended two Fremont Farmers’ markets. These events were very successful and they allowed for interaction with many people who would otherwise not be aware of this process. It is the intention of the SCRPC to continue attending some of these events in the future, after this plan is completed.

5) Past Comprehensive Planning Efforts

A review of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan indicated many carryover Plan Goals and Objectives that include:

Infrastructure

- Adequacy of infrastructure in areas targeted for growth/development
- Safe, efficient transportation system, efficiently connecting major traffic generators
- Support and capacity for advancement in new telecommunications technologies

Land Use / Design/Neighborhoods/Resiliency

- Success in preserving prime farmland
- Identification of areas targeted for infill, reuse, and rehabilitation; and barriers to those areas’ development
- Enhancing homeownership
- Demand-responsive housing stock: ranging from affordable entry-level to executive housing
- Enhanced capability for elderly to successfully “age in place”
- Enhanced “curb appeal” within communities and neighborhoods, including property maintenance incentives and enforcement
- Best use of land use planning tools to achieve desired outcomes
- Countywide protocol for safety, resilience, disaster prevention/mitigation

Economic / Downtown / Workforce Development

- Downtown preservation and enticement of highest and best uses of downtown resources
- Activities that capture outside dollars: regional retail, tourism, manufacturing
- Accommodating innovation and small business/entrepreneurship

Quality of Life

- Seamless provision of health care throughout the county
- Seamless delivery of K-12 education; alignment with present/future employer needs
- Coordinated effort to create an attractive, exceptional quality of life for all that includes: Bicycle/walking trails, greenway parks, incorporating natural features (Sandusky River), healthy communities, aligning with institutional planning with Terra Community College, county parks, health care systems, schools, United Way, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP), Chamber, CVB, and Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC).

Intergovernmental Relationships

- Continued and enhanced coordination between entities
- Opportunity for collaboration between communities



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.



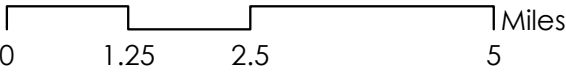
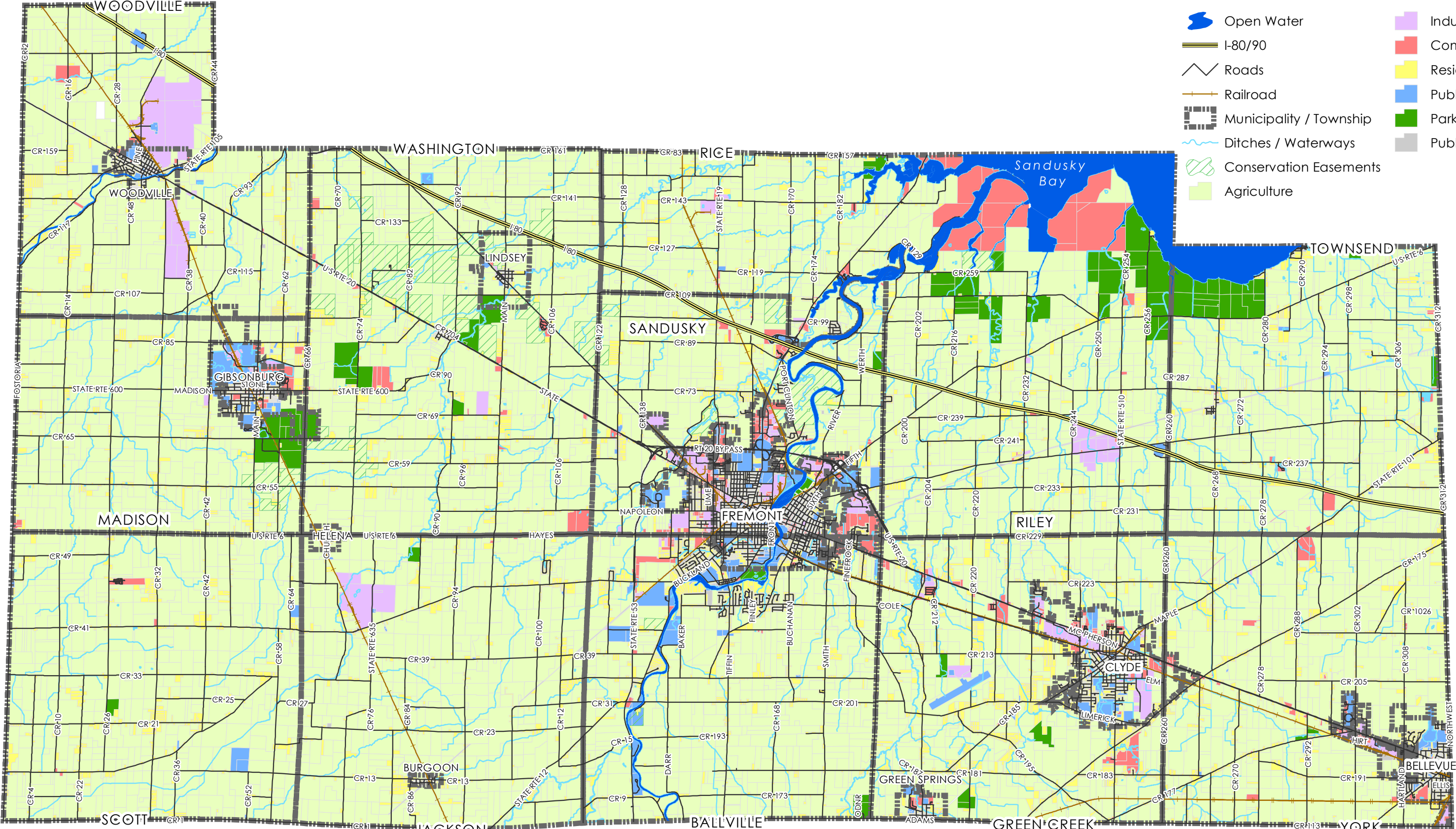
Photo Credit: Dave Thornbury, Sandusky County

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.

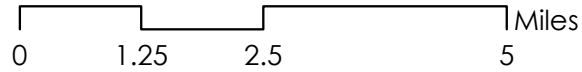
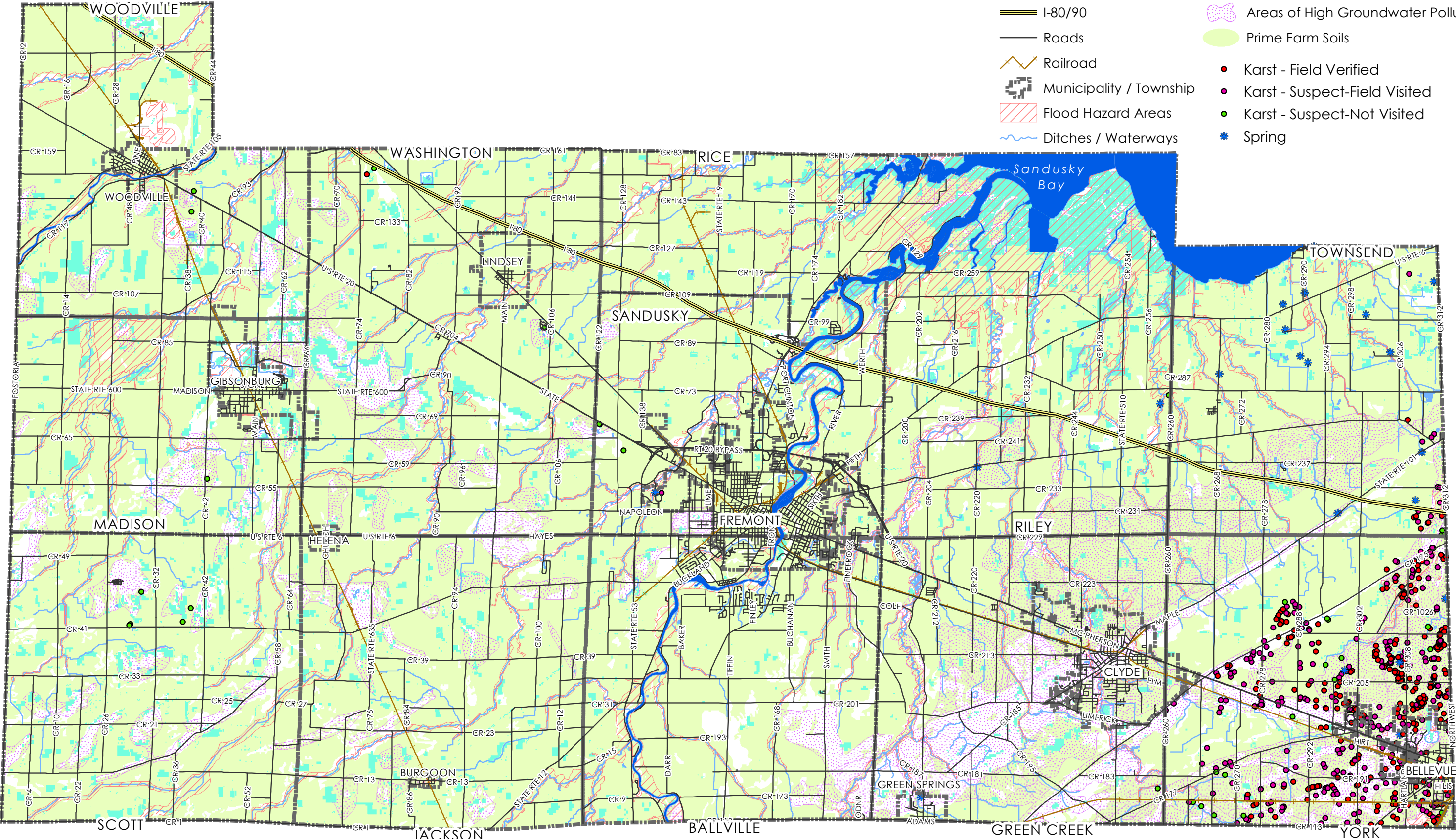
There are many additional benefits associated with source water protection, such as protecting water quality for wildlife and recreational use and protecting the availability and quantity of water supplies. To this end, the Ohio EPA designated a portion of Sandusky River from US 30 (RM 82.1) to the Rodger 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

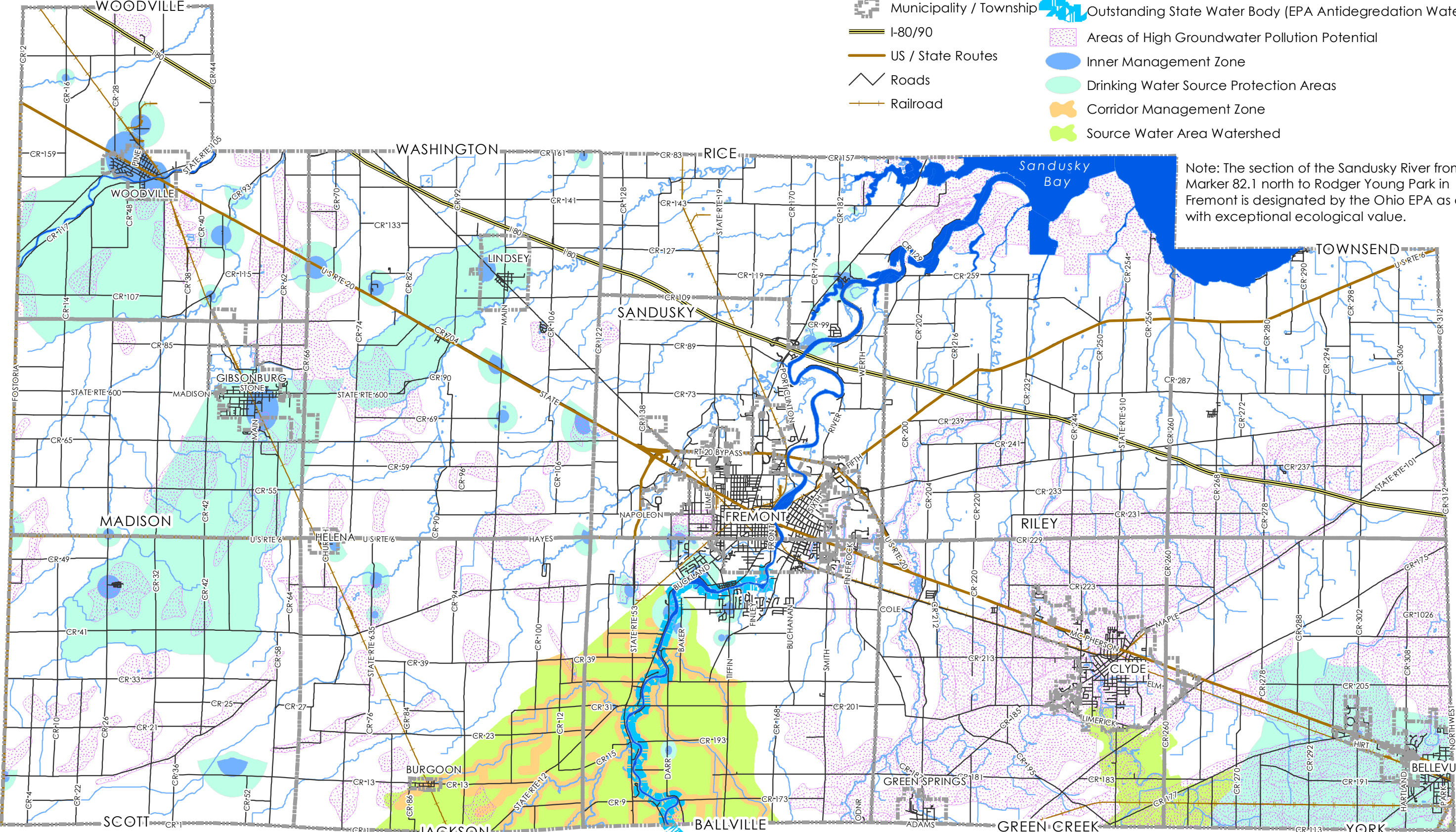


Source: Sandusky County Auditor, Sanitary Engineer, NORW, PUCO, Ohio EPA, Reveille
Note: Map to be used for general planning, not scientific, purposes.



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

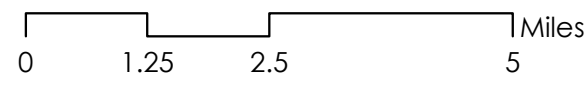
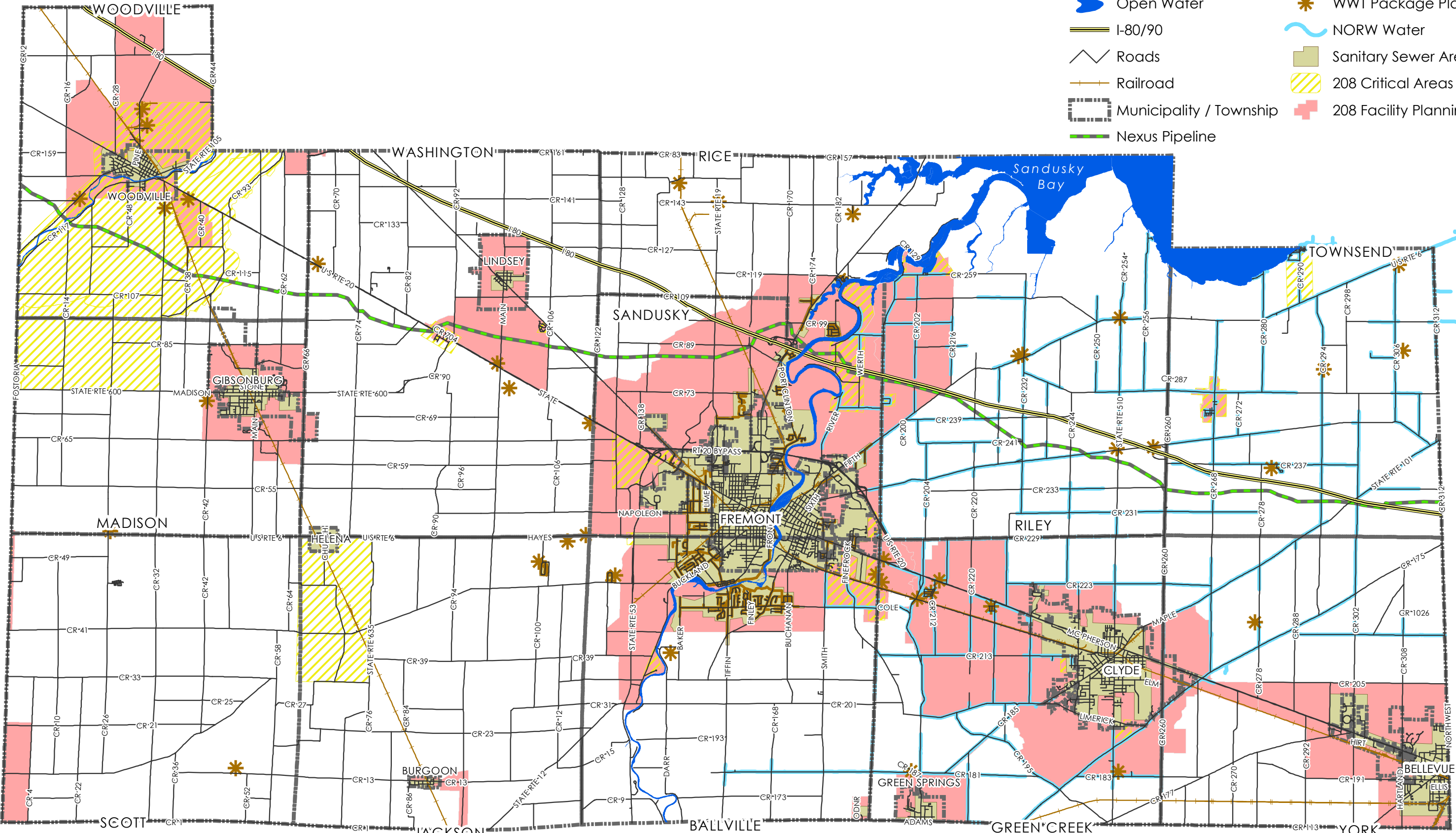
Pockets of areas exist around Sandusky County where the conditions for groundwater contamination are high (See *Map: Environmental Considerations*). Many of these areas are clustered in York Township and Bellevue, where a high content of porous limestone, sinkholes, and karsts are present. These low-lying 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.



Legend

- Open Water
- I-80/90
- Roads
- Railroad
- Municipality / Township
- Nexus Pipeline
- WWT Package Plants
- NORW Water
- Sanitary Sewer Areas
- 208 Critical Areas
- 208 Facility Planning Areas



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



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.



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.

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,

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*).

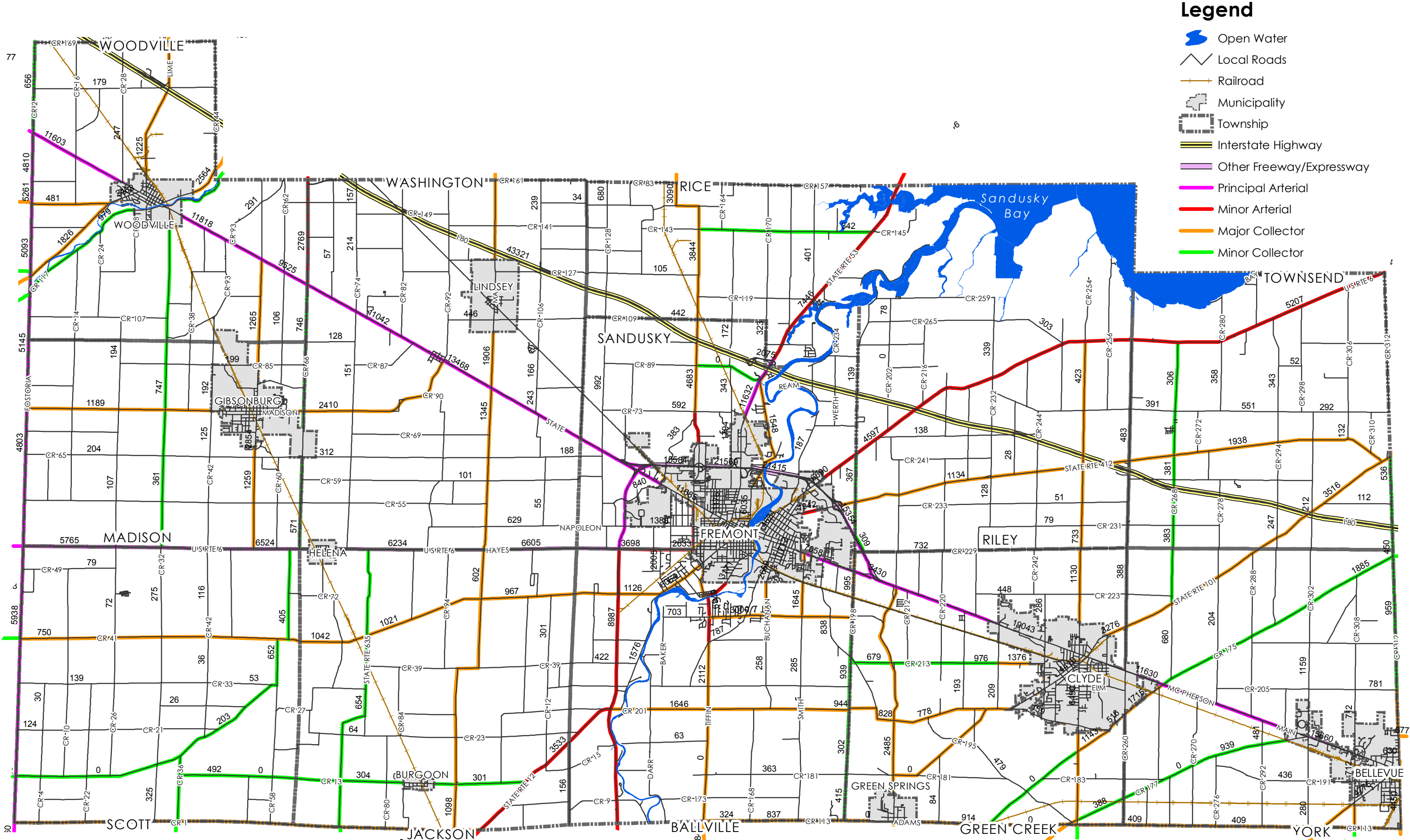
The following roads in Sandusky County are designated in the following manner:

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)

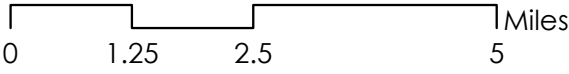
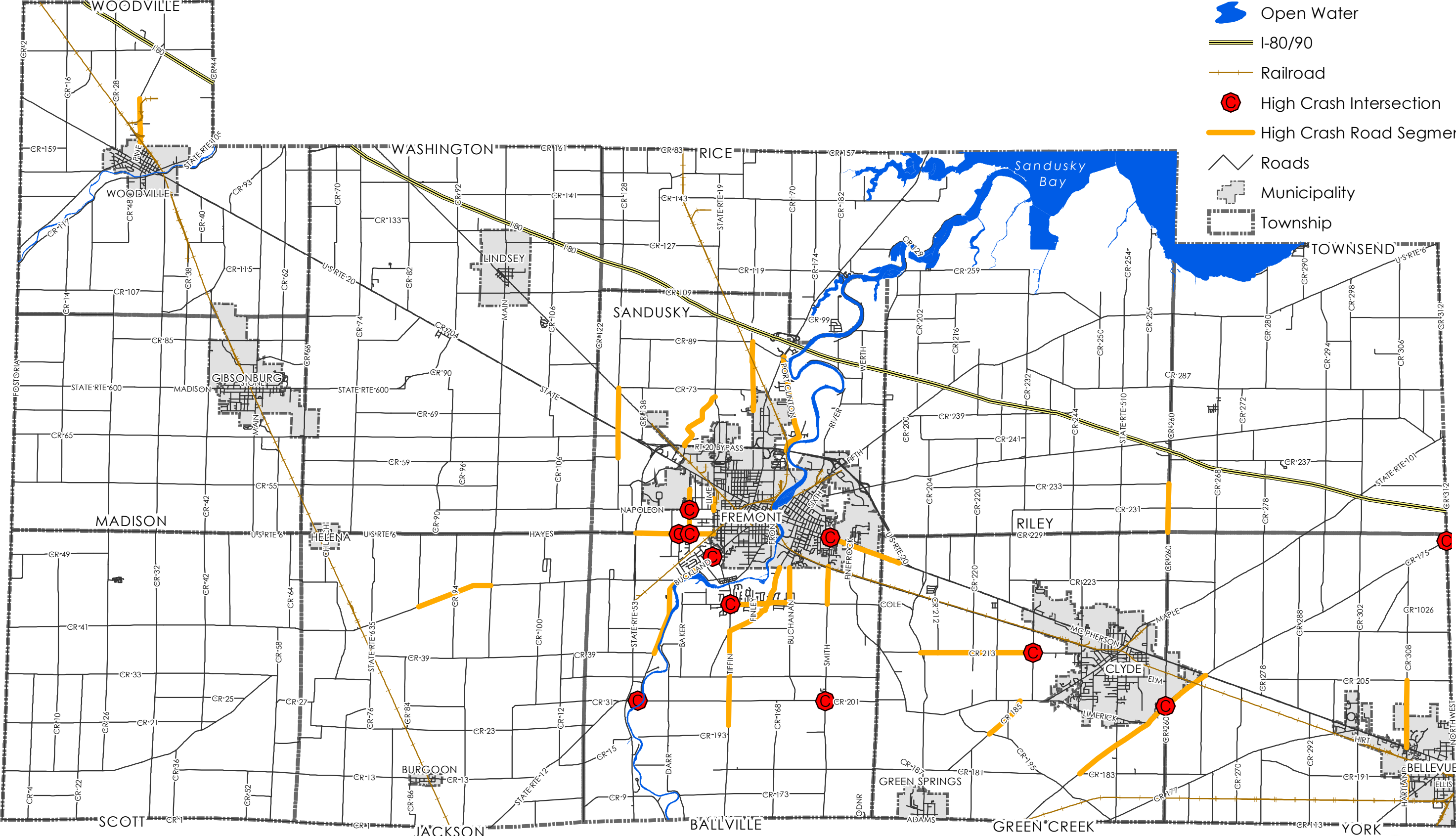
All of Sandusky County is located in a Transportation Improvement District (TID). The TID was created under ORC Chapter 5540 to provide a new source of funding and project implementation for needed transportation projects. Under Ohio law, such a District can purchase or construct transportation projects, 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



Plan Themes

Plan Themes

Over the duration of the planning process and based upon input from the residents of Sandusky County, the steering committee, and a number of public and private organizations, three plan themes were identified. These include Prosperity and Renewal, Connectivity, and Land and Resource Management.

1) Prosperity and Renewal
Overview

Sandusky County has proven to be one of the leaders among “micropolitan” counties in maintaining economic success. A balance has been maintained between an agricultural heritage and resources, where cultivated crops still claim three-fourths of the county’s acreage; a predominant manufacturing sector, with solid supply chains and well-established clusters (plastics and rubber, machinery and equipment, food manufacturing), and a varied retail and service base to retain consumer and business expenditures within the county.

Sandusky County has consistently placed within the top 50 Micropolitan areas in the country over the past five years, as determined by Site Selection magazine. In 2019, Fremont/Sandusky County ranked 14th nationwide, with 48 projects, some \$183 million in capital investment, 1,811 retained jobs, and 262 new jobs created.

Business enterprises already established in the county that have made new investments reflect how growth has impacted all sectors of the county economy: Magretech (magnesium recycling), Firelands Federal Credit Union (new headquarters), Kroger (new super center in Fremont), and Columbia Gas.

A balanced and diverse economy has resulted. Unlike many areas in the rural USA, manufacturing remains a predominant sector, with large parcels of each major community developed as an industrial park, and with suppliers for Clyde’s Whirlpool washing machine manufacturing and distribution center existing with automotive, packaging, food processing, and other businesses. Most of the county’s industry is located in strategic proximity to the busy US Route 20 corridor.

Fremont has grown as a commercial center due to the SR 53 N corridor emerging as a center for big box and specialty stores and restaurants. Renewed efforts to restore and revitalize downtown Fremont as a destination and entertainment district have met with success, with new restaurants and restored venues. Other downtown revitalization efforts in the county have met with varied success, and Bellevue and Clyde have witnessed new commercial development along Route 20. Bellevue has experienced growth along its western edge with new investments in office, retail, and residential development.

Current Momentum

Some notable development trends and issues in Sandusky County are as follows:

- Economic development practitioners have cited the following tools and resources as of importance in fulfilling their development missions: public and private sector resources and investment to assist in developing new industrial parks and sites; new developers and investors for housing projects; and the coordinated use of unified community branding throughout the county.
- A renewed effort has been made to coordinate economic development among the disparate practitioners and contributors. The hub for economic development is the Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC), a membership-driven full-time office that coordinates efforts and hosts collaborative projects and initiatives. The SCEDC schedules regular meetings of practitioners, where information is shared between communities and service providers, and statewide and regional information is disseminated from the SCEDC to each practitioner. Key partners include development or community officials from Fremont, Clyde, Bellevue, Gibsonburg, Woodville, and key townships; representatives from Terra State Community College and Vanguard Career Center; officials from the county Chamber of Commerce

and County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and representatives from the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership, the Department of Job and Family Services, and the Regional Growth Partnership centered in Toledo.

- A targeted goal is to undertake a concentrated effort to create and market new, shovel-ready space for industrial growth. Sandusky County’s larger communities (Fremont, Clyde, Bellevue, Gibsonburg) have established industrial parks, most with available acreage. The need to market these prime locations, as well as augmenting them with new and attractive sites, has come to the forefront in recent development discussions. Key existing locations include Fremont’s Bark Creek, Kessler, North 53, and Riverview parks, most of which are in close proximity to the Route 20 bypass, and many of which are at or approaching full occupancy; Bellevue’s industrial parks along West Route 20 and on Goodrich Road on the near north side; Clyde’s east-side Commerce Park and westerly Norwest Industrial Park; and Clearview Industrial Park in Gibsonburg. Many of these parks are nearly or completely built out, and there is a clear need, especially in Fremont, for the availability of new industrial sites, with a focus on the major intersections along the Route 20 bypass throughout Fremont. There is an immediate need to secure funding assistance from state and local

sources, as well as private investment capital, to develop one or more new industrial parks.

- There is a concerted effort to preserve and protect agricultural resources, based on long-held community culture and interests. Sandusky County has some 178,761 acres in farms. With 768 farms countywide, the average size per farm is 233 acres. Agriculture is a vital sector, with total 2017 cash receipts of \$101 million, of which \$91.8 million were for crops, and \$9.2 million for livestock and their products.
- Local officials are in accord in the need to expand and enhance the county’s available housing stock to entice new residents and employees, in management as well as hourly wage earners, to find attractive and affordable residential options in the county. New housing growth has been relatively stagnant in the county, with 20 single family units constructed in 2014, 98 units in 2015 (with 66 in multifamily projects plus 32 single units), 37 single units in 2016, 48 in 2017, and 44 in 2018. Local housing presents a cost-of-living advantage, as owner occupied units’ median value is a relatively affordable \$113,200 (vs. \$204,900 nationwide).
- While developers and investors have exercised caution in creating new residential subdivisions, based on their perceptions of the housing market, one innovative project has been undertaken on

Bellevue’s west side, with the Bellevue Hospital as the lead proponent and developer. The Prairie Ridge subdivision, a block from the hospital campus, is designed for 45 single family homes and 95 condominiums on 37 acres. The first phase will include ten single family lots and nine condo units. The project is targeted primarily to empty nesters and young families. The hospital and its related foundation provided startup capital to develop the infrastructure of the project, and as lots are sold, the foundation will be reimbursed a portion of their proceeds to offset that initial investment. The project site is annexed into the City of Bellevue, and the City’s Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program offers new residents real estate tax savings. The housing is intended to attract and retain residents who might have moved out of Bellevue with no alternatives in town, as well as newcomers to the city.

Economic Development Priorities

While the SCEDC coordinates a seamless County-wide approach to economic development and produces a unified response to economic development prospects, this concerted effort is the sum of individual, community-level efforts. The county’s three cities have staff devoted to economic development, and the larger villages incorporate development efforts into their work program.

Fremont:

- The current strategic plan for Fremont, “Think Fremont”, cites the following as an industry-based goal: One new industrial park within 3-5 years (100 acres+, railroad access); new spec building of 80,000 square feet, within 4-5 years; and second industrial park within ten years. The optimal location will be in proximity to one of the city’s major intersections along the Route 20 bypass, allowing for easy east-west access, as well as proximity to the SR 53 gate to the Ohio Turnpike.
- Another goal addressing commercial and industrial business states “To compete with larger markets by offering similar shopping experiences and keeping dollars in our local economy.” This is accomplished by assisting developers in the



process to quickly and easily become part of the Fremont market. Goals specific to downtown Fremont include creating a shopping and entertainment destination by helping to improve the historic cinema and surrounding theaters for an after-hours activity hub; fostering the Sandusky River front development with a boat basin; collaborating with the Birchard Public library to redevelop the former Fremont Middle School property; reuse of second and third floor spaces; parking expansion through code enforcement, metering, and employee designated lots; further connectivity and walkability downtown; development of neighborhood associations near downtown; and cleaning up debilitated and vacant sites in the historic district for future redevelopment. Goals related to education include working with schools to shape programs that meet the needs of local manufacturers, while being specific with them regarding which programs are needed by manufacturers; and promotion of vocational and training programs.

- Current projects include an expansion to the Fremont Birchard Library, an overhaul and update of city ordinances and regulations, use of a citywide Community Reinvestment Area as an inducement for development, and preliminary plans to improve the functionality of intersections at the eastern and western edges of the city along the US 20 bypass.

- Currently, some 400 homes in Fremont are not receiving municipal water or sanitary sewer service due to cut-offs, and at least 250 of these, many of which are vacant.

Bellevue:

- Bellevue’s economic development goals include creating jobs, encouraging entrepreneurship, enhancing fiscal sustainability by expanding and diversifying the tax base, and improving the quality of life with new services and amenities. The City was the first in the area to initiate a city-wide Community Reinvestment Area, with property tax incentives of up to 100 percent for real property improvements to existing housing and commercial/industrial buildings, as well as new residential and commercial/industrial buildings. The CRA has essentially replaced the City’s Enterprise Zone program. This incentive is coupled with a Job Retention and Creation Incentive Tax Credit, which provides income tax relief. In the industrial realm, Bellevue has experienced recent expansions for Tower Industries and Magretech, two key manufacturers.
- Like most area communities, Bellevue officials have cited a lack of available workforce to meet the needs of their large community of manufacturers, as well as the issue of drug/opioid abuse in impairing available workers.



- Development in Bellevue has occurred on the western edge of the City along the US 20 corridor. The Bellevue Hospital has been a major player, purchasing a newly constructed strip development and refurbishing it for medical offices and services. More recently, the hospital and its Foundation have undertaken a residential construction project described previously, reacting to a known demand for new housing for professionals associated with the hospital and other community employers.
- Industrial prospects are directed to the city's two industrial parks, one in Huron County north of Goodrich Road, and the other south of Route 20 on the western edge of town. There are also several sites, ranging from 22 to nearly 70 acres, being marketed on the city's south side, in an existing industrial area flanking SR 269. Many of the city's

sites are served by or close to rail lines operated by the Norfolk Southern or Wheeling and Lake Erie railroads. The Norfolk Southern Railroad has recently idled its Bellevue “hump yard” operation, in which a major investment was made in 2012, and has converted to flat switching due to declining traffic and the adoption of Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR). This transition to PSR, which involves running longer trains on tighter schedules with minimized en-route handling, is intended to create greater efficiencies and customer service. Though downsized, the yard remains an important facility within the Norfolk Southern system.

Clyde:

- The City of Clyde works in partnership with a nonprofit economic development entity,

Clydescope, and its Director. The mission of Clydescope is stated as “stimulating growth and development by advancing the retail, commercial, industrial, educational, agricultural, professional, financial, and civic interests of Clyde.” Further, the entity intends to promote integrity, goodwill, and cooperation to accomplish their mission. The public/private partnership is currently marketing eleven sites and eighteen buildings for development.

- One goal for the City is to enhance its available business incentive tools. Several officials have expressed an interest in matching neighboring Fremont and Bellevue with a Community Reinvestment Area offering property tax incentives. The City is also completing a raw water line from the Sandusky River to its reservoir system, providing backup and additional water capacity for growth.
- Key locations for industrial prospects include the Clyde Commerce Park (Premier Drive and environs) on the east side of the city, south of US 20, and Norwest Industrial Park, on the western edge of the city, north of US 20. Both parks are close to the sprawling Whirlpool Corporation manufacturing plant and distribution facility. Indeed, several manufacturers in Sandusky County are in the supply chain for the Whirlpool plant, which specializes in producing washing machines.

Villages:

- ➡ The Village of Gibsonburg is marketing available acreage in its Clearview Industrial Park. A new water line is being constructed to service that park. Officials from the Village of Woodville, at the western edge of the county on US 20, would like to convert a former bowling alley property to a manufacturing use. Woodville has largely been a residential, “bedroom” community, and among its goals are to capture the need for housing for new employees in from expansion projects occurring in Wood County, including a new Amazon distribution facility. Woodville officials aspire to witness new housing and restaurant development capitalizing on the Amazon project.

Employment by Industry

Total employment has remained relatively steady in Sandusky County, with 33,272 jobs recorded in 2018. Manufacturing remains the largest employment source, with growth in employment by 1,334 jobs over the past eight years. Retail trade has remained relatively steady, with 3,303 jobs in 2018. Accommodation and food service have grown by over ten percent since 2010, to 2,339 jobs. Construction continues to play an important role in the local economy, with 1,576 jobs. Also, the public sector contributes greatly to local employment, with nearly ten percent of the workforce in government jobs.

Employment by Industry	2001	2010	2018	Change 2010-2018
Total Employment (number of jobs)	32,749	31,668	33,272	1,604
Non-services related	12,872	10,692	12,294	1,602
Farm	1,095	790	839	49
Forestry, fishing, & ag. services	105	125	129	4
Mining (including fossil fuels)	22	54	56	2
Construction	1,635	1,363	1,576	213
Manufacturing	10,015	8,360	9,694	1,334
Services related	13,396	13,719	14,179	460
Utilities	76	78	51	-27
Wholesale trade	552	656	717	61
Retail trade	3,731	3,351	3,303	-48
Transportation and warehousing	803	846	1,109	263
Information	317	176	172	-4
Finance and insurance	861	842	946	104
Real estate and rental and leasing	602	982	1,254	272
Professional and technical services	700	767	766	-1
Management of companies	174	244	281	37
Administrative and waste services	1,197	1,475	1,041	-434
Educational services	na	na	na	na
Health care and social assistance	na	na	na	na
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	499	501	490	-11
Accommodation and food services	1,854	2,091	2,339	248
Other services, except public admin.	2,030	1,710	1,710	0
Government	3,811	3,358	3,187	-171

All employment data are reported by place of work. Estimates for data that were not disclosed are indicated with tildes (~).

Employment and Wages in 2018

The following table presents data on the number of jobs in each sector in 2018, the portion of total employment represented by each sector, the average annual wage earned in each sector, and the relation of that sector’s average to the overall average wage.

Service jobs account for nearly half (47.9%) of all jobs, while non-service private jobs are 40.5% and governmental jobs are 11.6% of the total. Manufacturing accounts for over one-third (36.5%) of all jobs, with a relatively high average wage. While health and education service, and leisure and hospitality, provide significant employment opportunities, they do not offer as lucrative a paycheck as some other sectors.

Sandusky County Compared to RGP Region

A review of 2017 data for Sandusky County, and its comparison with matching data for the region in which Sandusky County is located - a group of those northwest Ohio counties within the region served by the Regional Growth Partnership, the State-supported regional economic development entity, reveals the following relationships:

- Population decreased at a slightly higher rate in Sandusky County than in the region as a whole: -4.2% vs. the region’s -3.2% between 2000 and 2017.

Employment and Wages in 2018	Wage & Salary Employment	% of Total Employment	Avg. Annual Wages (2018 \$s)	% Above or Below Avg. of Total Wages
Total	26,015		\$41,131	
Private	22,999	88.4%	\$40,834	-0.7%
Non-Services Related	10,546	40.5%	\$50,636	23.1%
Natural Resources and Mining	146	0.6%	\$41,281	0.4%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	na	na	na	na
Mining (incl. fossil fuels)	na	na	na	na
Construction	899	3.5%	\$53,360	29.7%
Manufacturing (Incl. forest products)	9,501	36.5%	\$50,522	22.8%
Services Related	12,454	47.9%	\$32,531	-20.9%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	3,948	15.2%	\$34,888	-15.2%
Information	123	0.5%	\$42,118	2.4%
Financial Activities	848	3.3%	\$46,180	12.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,339	5.1%	\$45,090	9.6%
Education and Health Services	3,152	12.1%	\$35,511	-13.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,371	9.1%	\$14,387	-65.0%
Other Services	672	2.6%	\$24,760	-39.8%
Unclassified	0	0.0%	na	na
Government	3,016	11.6%	\$43,397	5.5%
Federal Government	107	0.4%	\$55,802	35.7%
State Government	103	0.4%	\$55,774	35.6%
Local Government	2,806	10.8%	\$42,470	3.3%

- Employment held relatively steady over this period within the county (-0.1%), while declining more markedly regionally (-5.7%).
- Changes in income and earnings from 2000 to 2017 are consistently less in Sandusky County:
 - Personal income: up 9.8% in the county, up 11.8% regionally;
 - Average earnings per job: up 5.4% in the county, up twice as much – 9.2% - regionally; and
 - Per capita income: up 14.7% in the county, up 15.4% regionally.
- Average earnings per job were \$48,061 in the county and \$53,920 regionally. Per capita income was \$40,546 in the county and \$44,505 regionally. County/regional average annual wages continued

Indicators		Sandusky County	County Benchmark	Ohio	U.S.
Demographics	Population Growth (% change, 2010*-2017*)	-2.8%	-1.8%	0.8%	5.6%
	Median Age (2017*)	41.7	40.1	39.3	37.8
	Percent Population White Alone (2017*)	89.9%	86.0%	81.9%	73.0%
	Percent Population Hispanic or Latino (2017*)	9.7%	5.0%	3.6%	17.6%
	Percent Population American Indian or Alaska Native (2017*)	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.8%
	Percent of Population 'Baby Boomers' (2017*)	27.7%	26.3%	27.3%	24.5%
Income	Median Household Income (2017*)	\$50,370	\$50,527	\$52,407	\$57,652
	Per Capita Income (2017*)	\$25,219	\$25,774	\$29,011	\$31,177
	Percent Individuals Below Poverty (2017*)	13.6%	15.2%	14.9%	14.6%
	Percent Families Below Poverty (2017*)	10.9%	10.9%	10.8%	10.5%
	Percent of Households with Retirement and Social Security Income (2017*)	57.0%	55.4%	52.7%	49.0%
	Percent of Households with Public Assistance Income (2017*)	21.4%	22.9%	23.0%	20.6%
Structure	Percent Population 25 Years or Older without High School Degree (2017*)	10.5%	10.1%	10.2%	12.7%
	Percent Population 25 Years or Older with Bachelor's Degree or Higher (2017*)	15.2%	21.5%	27.2%	30.9%
	Percent Population That Speak English Less Than 'Very Well' (2017*)	1.4%	1.6%	2.4%	8.5%
	Percent of Houses that are Seasonal Homes (2017*)	1.2%	2.3%	1.1%	4.0%
	Owner-Occupied Homes where > 30% of Household Income Spent on Mortgage (2017*)	19.9%	22.1%	23.3%	29.3%
	Renter-Occupied Homes where > 30% of Household Income Spent on Rent (2017*)	37.1%	41.5%	43.1%	46.8%

to follow this pattern, with non-services sectors (manufacturing, construction) paying a significantly higher wage: Services: \$32,087 vs. \$37,693; Non-Services: \$50,315 vs. \$58,429; and Government: \$43,618 vs. \$47,826.

- ➡ The structure of the economy, as indicated by the share of total jobs among sectors, reveals a greater proportion of jobs in the non-service sector: Portion of jobs in services was 42.1% in Sandusky County vs. 63.8% in the region, portion in non-

service jobs was 37.6% in the county vs. 22.9% regionally, and governmental jobs comprised 9.5% of the total in the county, vs. 11.2% in the RGP region.

- ➡ The net inflow of labor earnings (reflecting the relative excess of workers bring income into the county from jobs outside the county) was 2.9% for Sandusky County, as opposed to a much smaller 0.1% regionally.

A similar comparison with the State of Ohio, using 2018 data, shows some differences. While the state experienced population and employment growth, Sandusky County did not. Again, the county’s average and per capita wages and income were consistently beneath statewide norms.

Workforce Issues

The focus in economic development has shifted to an intensified effort to prepare a local workforce that is responsive to the current and projected needs of employers, especially those employers who offer career paths. This effort is led by the county’s two major career-based educational institutions. Terra State Community College offers sixty degrees and certifications in nineteen program areas, and Vanguard Career Center provides 31 programs in thirteen “career clusters”, while addressing noted skills gaps, from its campuses in Fremont and Tiffin. Vanguard’s AIM Industries allows in-school students to run a manufacturing lab in partnership with local businesses.

Recent years have brought a series of activities under the “Think Sandusky County” workforce development banner. These activities, which create improved understanding and facilitate improved and effective coordination between the educational community and the county’s employers, have included:

- ➡ A bus tour for school officials and “coaches of influence” to visit choice local businesses and learn first-hand of career opportunities and workforce needs.
- ➡ An annual Manufacturing Career Showcase for ninth graders from throughout the county, in which students participate in hands-on activities while learning skills that are important to local manufacturers.
- ➡ A Job Fair for high school juniors and seniors, held every spring since 2017.
- ➡ Quarterly meetings of a Business Advisory Council, providing an avenue by which to communicate workforce development programs with school superintendents and business leaders, and providing two-way communication concerning the alignment of career education with business developments.
- ➡ A teachers’ Manufacturing Bootcamp, in which 24 educators toured six county business facilities and obtained first-hand information about good-paying jobs and needed skills.

Entrepreneurial Enterprise

In the table below, the number of proprietors indicates the relative presence of entrepreneurial activity in an area. In Sandusky County, the number and percentage of proprietors has increased from 2000 to 2018 from 4,988 proprietors representing 14.9 percent of the county’s

total employment to 6,057 proprietors comprising 18.2 percent of employees.

	1970	2000	2018	Change 2000-2018
Total Employment	24,902	33,457	33,272	-185
Wage and salary jobs	20,412	28,469	27,215	-1,254
Number of proprietors	4,490	4,988	6,057	1,069
Total Employment				-0.6%
Wage and salary jobs	82.0%	85.1%	81.8%	-4.4%
Number of proprietors	18.0%	14.9%	18.2%	21.4%

Central Business Districts and Downtown Revitalization Efforts

Central business districts contain some of a region’s oldest and most historic structures, and local officials are aware of these important assets. Clyde’s downtown was the target of a revitalization effort in the 1990’s, and individual building owners have maintained the downtown building stock to varying degrees over the intervening years. Some properties have been noted as deteriorating, with diminished amenities over time. Some feel a renewed revitalization effort would be appropriate.

In Bellevue, efforts are underway to restore a landmark historic building, the Tremont House, and a number of buildings have been restored or renovated, especially in the western portion of the district, while several structures in the long block from Northwest to North Sandusky Streets have fallen into disrepair and are in

need of intensive rehabilitation or demolition. In addition to the condition of these properties, downtown issues in Bellevue include out of town building owners and coping with busy traffic on Route 20 through the district.

The downtown districts in the smaller communities of Woodville and Gibsonburg have maintained their role as community service centers, losing some retail outlets, and with them a prevalent position as a retail center, over the years. Woodville, with a downtown district along busy US 20, has some vacancies in the downtown, and leaders cite a parking problem and need for additional restaurants, a reception hall, and a stage for outdoor music and events, all creating reasons to build on the downtown as a destination.

Fremont’s downtown has received significant attention, with the formation, leadership, and community support for Downtown Fremont, Inc. This entity, with a full-time director and two assistants, has been charged with recruiting new businesses, coordinating twenty events every year, and coordinating the planning the future development of businesses and infrastructure. Downtown Fremont officials see a need to remove some dilapidated buildings in the district, but they face few resources to demolish commercial properties. Other needs include increased accessible parking, and a designated area for outdoor theater and entertainment space.

The three top priorities of Downtown Fremont include: growing downtown with new retail businesses, creating new entertainment businesses, and solving parking shortfalls downtown. Fremont’s blueprint, “Think Fremont”, cites as short-term goals the continued search for new quality retail shops, improving signage, continued beautification, with street, parking, and pedestrian/bicycle improvements, and more art installations and façade improvements. Longer term goals include enhancing the downtown as an entertainment destination, fostering the Sandusky Riverfront development with a boat basin and public access, collaborating with the Birchard Memorial Library on development of the former middle school property, development of second and third floor spaces, parking expansion through code enforcement, metering, and employee designated lots, and further connectivity through brick alleyway development, creation of inner ring neighborhood associations, and cleanup and demolition of debilitated and vacant sites throughout the district.

Economic Development Incentive Programs

Various programs exist to help incentivize economic development across Sandusky County (See Map: Economic Development Incentive Areas). These programs are promoted by the Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation and local municipal economic development practitioners in Bellevue, Clyde and Fremont.



This area in Helena located along SR 6 would be an ideal redevelopment opportunity. Buildings such as this can often have a negative effect on the community’s image.

Enterprise Zones

The Enterprise Zone Program provides local officials with the ability to negotiate a tax incentive agreement with a prospective commercial and industrial projects that create and retain jobs and operate in the inside the City of Fremont (Zone #145), Bellevue (Zone #130), Clyde (Zone #130), and Gibsonburg (Zone #204) and in the townships of Ballville, Green Creek, Jackson, Sandusky and York (Zone #142). The program offers the following incentives:

- ➡ Exemption of real and/or personal property assessed values of up to 75% for up to 10 years or an average of 60% over the term of the agreement on new investments.
- ➡ Permits unincorporated areas to offer an exemption of real and/or personal property assessed values of up to 60% for up to 10 years or an average of 50% over the term of the agreement on new investments.

Community Reinvestment Areas

The Community Reinvestment Area program provides eligible residential, commercial, and industrial properties up to 100% - 15-year abatement for new real property valuation in conjunction with residential, commercial and industrial projects, and up to 12 years of abatement for renovation projects. The program is delineated into two distinct categories, those created prior to July 1994 ("pre-1994") and those created after the law changes went into effect after July 1994.

Five Community Reinvestment Area zones exist in Sandusky County. Four pre-94 zones exist; two in Bellevue (Zones 6 & 7) and two in Fremont (Zone 1 & 2). Bellevue officials designated the entire community as a Post-94 CRA in 2018, while Fremont officials expanded the boundaries of one of their pre-94 CRA zones to encourage additional neighborhood revitalization adjacent to their downtown core.

Opportunity Zones

There is one opportunity zone comprised of one census tract (9616) in Sandusky County. The Opportunity Zone Program was enacted as part of the 2017 federal tax reform and the goal is to drive investment in rural and low-income urban communities that have struggled to recover post-recession. The program consists of the three elements:

- ➡ Temporary deferral for capital gains reinvested into an Opportunity Fund
- ➡ Reduction in capital gains through basis adjustment
- ➡ Exclusions for capital gains on the new opportunity zone investment if the investment is held for 10 years.

Job Retention and Creation Program

The City of Bellevue offers a Job Retention and Creation Incentive Program to eligible businesses that are create new, full-time equivalent jobs. The annual grant payment is based on a percentage of the annual payroll withholding taxes generated by jobs that are new to the City.

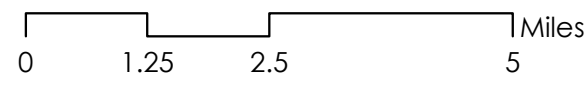
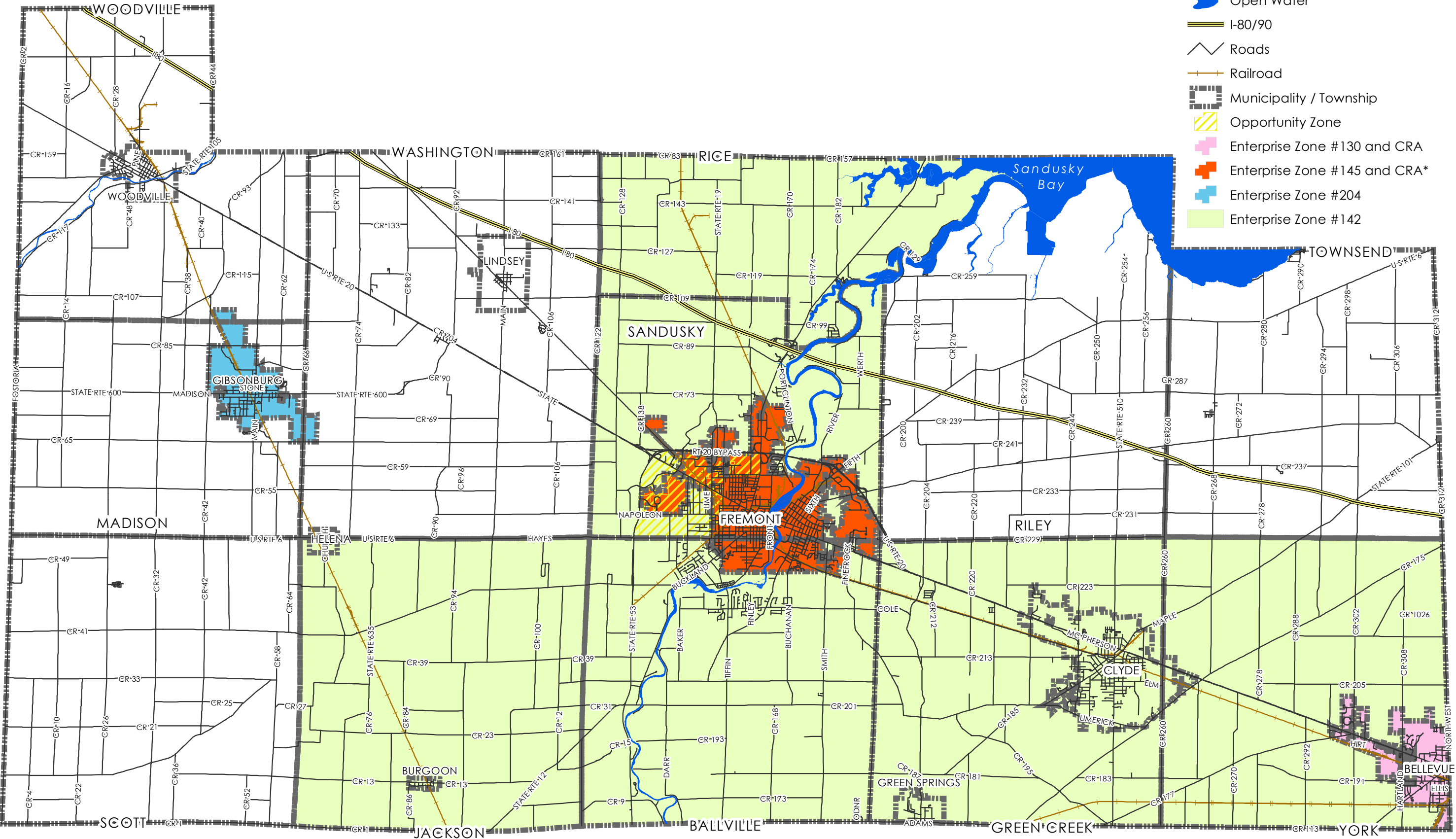
Revolving Loan Fund

The Revolving Loan Fund is a gap financing program to supplement small businesses administration loans and private financing. Loan rates are below prime rate and terms vary in accordance with the project and CDBG guidelines must be met. The City of Fremont administers a Revolving Loan Fund; a small county-wide fund has also been utilized by small businesses.



LEGEND

- Open Water
- I-80/90
- Roads
- Railroad
- Municipality / Township
- Opportunity Zone
- Enterprise Zone #130 and CRA
- Enterprise Zone #145 and CRA*
- Enterprise Zone #204
- Enterprise Zone #142



Source: Sandusky County Auditor, Engineer, Ohio Development Services Agency, Reveille
Note: Incentive Areas as of February 2020. * Not all of Fremont is CRA-eligible.



Strategies

Implementation Timeframe:	
Short Term (S), Less than 2 years.	Medium Term (M), 3-5 years.
Long Term (L), 6-10 years.	Ongoing (O)

1. Develop Effective Nuisance and Property Maintenance Standards

Parties – County Commissioners; Land Bank; Health Dept.; Sheriff; Fire Depts.; Neighborhood Groups; Homeowner Associations; Townships

Timeframe – S

There is a county-wide recognition of the need to address property maintenance and community appearance, promotion of maintenance standards, and elimination of safety and health hazards. When asked about unappealing areas within their jurisdiction, many township officials cited specific areas with cluttered properties, open dump sites, and other areas that were visibly unappealing; every township rated the issue of blight as a “4” or “5” in a survey of issues, in which 5 was “most important”. In addition to Fremont’s recognition of property conditions as critical to moving forward, blight and property maintenance, and the need for continual care for Clyde’s central business district, have come to Clyde City Council’s attention. Bellevue leaders have also promoted infill and adaptive reuse of empty buildings.

Additional remedies to alleviate property maintenance issues could include:

- Identifying sources of financial and other incentive programs (CRA, etc.) that can be used by property owners facing code enforcement actions for major renovations.
- Allocating the appropriate resources to property maintenance and enforcement.
- Develop vacant property ordinances that require the registration of vacant properties, to include residential, commercial and industrial.
- Adopt a property maintenance code, which can be easily adopted from the International Property Maintenance Code.
- Pursuing the feasibility of various forms of inspection programs (exterior and interior) and point of sale inspections in targeted neighborhoods.
- Identifying sources of financial and other assistance that can be used by property owners facing code enforcement actions for major renovations. City officials could increase the fees for new residential and commercial development and allocate a percentage of the new fees towards additional inspection services.
- In order to minimize the conversion of single-family homes into rentals, municipalities could adopt

neighborhood preservation overlay districts along with neighborhood associations.

- Partner with local jurisdictions and departments to create a unified and comprehensive property maintenance code enforcement system using the County’s GIS located in the Auditor’s office.

2. Improve Public Infrastructure in Targeted Neighborhoods and Growth Areas

Parties – Commissioners; Land Bank; Sanitary Engineer; Engineer; Local Econ. Dev. Depts.; RGP-Jobs Ohio; Ohio Dev. Services Agency; Consultants

Timeframe – O

A key principle incorporated in this plan is to make best and sustainable use of existing properties, neighborhoods, and other assets within the bounds of the county’s communities. Terms such as “infill” and “adaptive reuse” speak to a push to reimagine and redevelop locations within a community for new development or new uses, rather than breaking new ground on the community’s edge.

Various programs and resources exist to promote growth and neighborhood revitalization, to include tax increment financing, special improvement districts, and community development block grants.

Certain areas in the County may be eligible for community development block grant program funds

(competitive and formula) that help to mitigate slum and blight issues and to assist low and moderate income (LMI) neighborhoods, among other issues. Currently LMI Census Tracts that are eligible include: 9611, 9614, 9616, and 9618.

As a multiplier, local officials should utilize and target the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program to specific neighborhoods to provide for property tax abatement for existing residential property investments (for a better understanding of the location of the CRA areas, see Map: Economic Development Incentive Areas). Bellevue, Clyde and Fremont utilize the CRA program for eligible residential, commercial and industrial projects. CRA programs could also be created in townships and used to help promote residential revitalization in neighborhoods where there is blight and a lack of residential reinvestment, or to promote the development of new subdivisions that help to retain and attract residents in Sandusky County. School district officials should also be part of these discussions.

3. **Heighten Workforce Development and Business Retention and Expansion Efforts**

Parties – Commissioners; SCEDC; Jobs and Family Services; Chamber of Commerce; Area Colleges; Vanguard; RGP-Jobs Ohio; GLCAP; Employers; OSU Extension

Timeframe – O

According to input received, residents, County officials, and economic development practitioners feel one persistent challenge to local economic development and the county's competitive position as a location for employers is a relative skills gap and lack of trained and ready employees. This is affecting certain employers within the County, especially those which rely on continuous learning and improvement as technology, tools, and techniques for production change. One possible way to address this concern is to utilize the Ohio Incumbent Worker Training and Ohio Investment Training voucher programs to provide resources to employers in relevant industries. These voucher programs provide financial support of up to 50% reimbursement for instructional costs, materials, and training related activities. In the case of the OIWT program, the voucher is limited to \$4,000 per employee and up to 50% of the workforce. The business is reimbursed after it pays for full training.

Clearly, the county's workforce development collaboration should continue in a lead coordinating

role, with all appropriate entities represented, and with an inclusive pipeline for input from the county's employers. In a broader context, the findings and recommendations of the multi-county workforce and development initiative recently undertaken should be implemented in concert with neighboring counties. Finally, the presence, expertise, and potential of Terra State Community College and Vanguard/Sentinel Career and Technology Centers should be utilized to best advantage, particularly in identified sectors such as manufacturing, skilled trades, and health care.

4. **Expand Economic Incentives**

Parties – Commissioners; SCEDC; Local economic development depts.; Developers; RGP-Jobs Ohio; ODSA; TLC Port Authority

Timeframe – S

While primary factors in location or expansion decisions, such as location, distance to market, and presence of a supply chain and workforce, are often unchangeable, economic incentives often play a secondary role and can tilt the balance in favor of a locality. One incentive being increasingly used throughout Ohio is the state's Community Reinvestment Area program, ostensibly created as a housing revitalization incentive, but available to any project involving investments in real property. The CRA program has been embraced by Bellevue, where the investment area incorporates the entire city and

was used to spur new residential investments (Countryview and Prarie Ridge subdivisions), and Fremont, whose CRA is citywide.

Coupled with property tax incentives can be income tax relief based on long term job creation, such as Bellevue's Job Creation and Retention Incentive Tax Credits. These can be coupled with State job development incentives described in the preceding strategy.

The county's network of economic development practitioners extend into virtually every community and locality within the county, and this network, fueled with information from the SCEDC and the Regional Growth Partnership (RGP), should strive to match the array of federal, state, and local incentives to specific pending projects. This matchup of resources to specific projects can often be achieved during the county's rigorous pursuit of business retention and expansion (BRE) visitations with county employers, and also through the State's business prospect outreach program conducted through RPG.

The SCEDC and its partners should continuously research available incentives and apply them to specific projects where they can make a positive impact on the realization of that project. Their interaction with RGP, the Toledo Port Authority, and others can help bring a project-based, unique mix of

assistance from the plethora of incentives for workforce, infrastructure, and capital investment to each individual project.

5. Improve the Housing Supply

Parties – SCEDC; Chamber of Commerce; Downtown Businesses; Local ED Depts.; Main Street Groups; ODSA; Heritage Ohio; GLCAP

Timeframe – O

Revitalization of an aging housing stock and the inner-ring built environment in Sandusky County’s historic communities requires a concerted and focused effort, as well as adherence to basic standards of property maintenance and the elimination of nuisances. Fully one third (33.4 percent) of the county’s housing units were built in 1939 or earlier. However, incentives can help catalyze the renovation and rehabilitation of these properties.

Examples of such incentives include the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program actively practiced in Fremont and Bellevue, where new investment in existing and new, residential, commercial, and industrial properties is rewarded with the exemption of property taxes. Several new homes were built in the Countryview and Prairie Ridge subdivisions as many residents of Bellevue took advantage of the city-wide CRA program and the 15-year real estate tax abatement.

Rehabilitation of housing occupied by low- and moderate-income households can be subsidized through the Sandusky County and Fremont Community Housing Investment Program (CHIP) funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Other programs practiced throughout the county, including Weatherization offered through the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership and housing construction offered by Habitat for Humanity, can assist in boosting the value, safety, and affordability of a segment of the county’s housing stock. Further, the relatively newly designated Opportunity Zone on Fremont’s west side offers incentives for investment within that zone.

Incentives should be utilized in conjunction with other strategies. The City of Fremont’s “Think Fremont” plan cites three related objectives concerning housing stock revitalization. The plan cites a widespread housing shortage and encourages the use of incentives to promote and assist the preservation of aging homes, including expanding the Community Reinvestment Area to a citywide reach, education on tax incentives, promotion of creation of neighborhood associations, and a monthly seminar for first time homebuyers. Second, the plan promotes the establishment of a local building department that would handle residential construction, in order to create an easier, faster process. Third, noting that properties needing cleaning and repair negatively

impact property values and project a detrimental appearance. Stronger code enforcement is advocated, with advocacy for being more assertive toward property owners in violation of city codes, increasing the amount of time spent enforcing codes, expediting the process for compelling property owners to correct violations, and working to create and enforce more significant consequences for violations.

One method to help the housing supply is to keep it free of nuisances. In this vein, local officials should work closely with the Sandusky County Land Bank in identifying vacant, foreclosed, or soon-to-be blighted properties and utilize the County’s GIS to map and inventory them. The benefits of the Land Bank will help to:

- ➡ Reduce the time it takes to take control of vacant, abandoned and tax delinquent properties
- ➡ Reduce flipping
- ➡ Repurpose properties through demolition or rehabilitation
- ➡ Put properties back on the tax rolls

6. Heighten Downtown Planning Efforts

Parties – SCEDC; Chamber of Commerce; Downtown Businesses; Local ED Depts.; Main Street Groups; ODSA; Heritage Ohio

Timeframe – O

The county’s central business districts need attention. Downtown areas contain some of the county’s oldest and most vulnerable buildings, requiring special attention to meet fire, safety, and accessibility codes, while accommodating the needs and preferences of modern business. Many downtowns today suffer from business turnovers and a high vacancy rate, which will be exacerbated by the challenges of a post-pandemic world.

The trend for many, including Fremont, has been to supplement the changing retail and office environment with an emphasis on entertainment, dining, and downtown experiences. Investments in a downtown district, as well as other targeted neighborhoods and districts throughout the built community, can also be catalyzed through accelerated government design review, zoning, and permitting processes, coupled with zoning policies that promote compatible mixed uses and innovative and attractive uses of existing properties.

To this end, officials should help preserve their architectural and historical assets through the

adoption of tools such as historic preservation overlay districts and design review legislation. This legislation typically involves the creation of a design change application process, a design review committee that reviews and approves such applications, a set of standards by which design modifications must be reviewed, and an enforcement mechanism. Also, zoning variances that allow for walkable neighborhood businesses in compatible residential areas should be encouraged.

There are many other things the County can do to heighten its downtown planning efforts. For example, the creation of an informal network of downtown promoters within the county that is not competitive but rather cooperative can lead to a more attractive business environment for consumers and investors.

On this theme, the County could also actively promote unified downtowns, through joint promotional advertising; events, contests, and promotions involving as many downtown businesses as will participate. An inventory can also be taken of the County’s central business districts. This inventory could answer questions such as what is the condition of streets, sidewalks, landscaping, signage, parking, and lighting in some of the County’s popular business areas? The County could also consider conducting a survey of customers, downtown property owners, and

merchants within the County’s downtowns to capture the perceptions of the “market”.

7. **Develop One or More Site-Ready Industrial Parks**

Parties – SCEDC; Commissioners; Sanitary Engineer; Engineer; Local ED Depts; RGP- Jobs Ohio; Developers; Private Businesses

Timeframe – S

Many of the county's existing industrial parks, especially in the Fremont area, are reaching full capacity, or can only offer limited acreage. Other communities are marketing individual sites but cannot assemble a large-acreage parcel in an existing park. Gibsonburg's Clearview industrial Park has a number of smaller sites, and that park should continue to be marketed for projects that provide a good match. Indeed, both the SCEDC and local economic development practitioners should continue to market available industrial sites, both in existing industrial parks and existing as isolated sites and match them where practical to state prospects and local business inquiries.

Developers in the Fremont area recognize the need to plan and develop a new industrial park. Preferred locations are at any of a number of interchanges along the US 20 bypass. Fremont's strategic plan, “Think Fremont”, calls for the construction of a local

industrial park within five years, construction of a speculative industrial building also within five years, and development of a second industrial park within the decade.

As noted in Fremont's plan, the realization of one or more new industrial parks involve a number of steps and participating entities. One or more private developers can help promote and develop the park and may be involved more directly through their investment in the park or a spec building. Property owners must be approached, and local government must be involved in the design and construction management of the public roadway and utility extensions as needed, as well as conducting design review and sponsorship of any state or federal project funding applications.

8. **Increase Accessibility to Healthy and Locally-Sourced Food**

Parties – Farm Bureau; Commissioners; Health Dept.; Chamber of Commerce; SWCD; Farmers; Farmer's Markets; USDA-Farm Services Agency; Downtown Business Assn; OSU Extension; Event Planners

Timeframe – M

In order to achieve continued vitality, Sandusky County must cultivate its local food system to reduce food deserts that exist throughout the county. There

are a number of measurable objectives the county can adopt to reach the goal of increased accessibility to healthy and locally-sourced food. For example, the County could partner with hospitals, schools, and other major institutions to create and enhance education programs that provide a better understanding of the benefits of local foods.

This program could be supplemented with a plan detailing community outreach efforts. Perhaps the most visible objective that can be achieved with relative ease is to encourage the creation of a series of regional farm markets located throughout the County and implement an active marketing program to promote them. This will demonstrate to residents Sandusky County’s commitment to locally-sourced food and provides a fun environment for residents to enjoy.



2) Connectivity
Overview

Sandusky County is well connected through the creation and evolution of a number of collaborative, multi-disciplinary efforts to address significant issues: drug addiction, workforce, public health, and others. Organizationally, connectivity is further aided through organizations which bring peers and related interests together. The SCRPC brings municipal, township, and county officials together to examine land use and related issues, projects, and trends. Likewise, the Sandusky County Economic Development Corporation brings local economic development practitioners together in scheduled update meetings to share information, and constantly interacts with combinations of private employers, public officials, workforce and development agencies, and state and federal resource persons to effect positive economic change.

Physical connectivity between people and communities is achieved through a system of US, state, county, and township/municipal roadways. With increased interest in alternative forms of transportation, these highways and streets are augmented by a growing system of trails and bikeways, following the 2017 Active Transportation Plan.

Active Transportation (See Map: Development Plan for Active Transportation) is developed in concert with the goals and purposes of the county’s 2017 Active Transportation Plan.



The North Coast Inland Trail stretching for 28 miles from Bellevue to Elmore was converted into a paved hike/bike path with ODOT funding. The path is open year-round for walking, jogging, bicycling, in-line skates, etc.

Development Plan for Active Transportation



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 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.

- ➡ Connectivity is further facilitated through the operation of the county’s public transit system, TRIPS, which makes special provisions for elderly, disabled, and low-income populations seeking transportation. The transit system operates within a network of public and private service providers, all outlined in the county’s “Getting Around” source book.

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.

TRIPS is coordinating with other public and private transportation providers under the auspices of a Coordinated Public and Human Services Transportation Plan. 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.

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.

The state of connectivity in Sandusky County appears to be secure, but continued efforts are warranted to ensure that the best, most well-informed conclusions, are reached among a diverse group of local stakeholders and leadership in designing optimal solutions to the challenges facing the county.

Because of the direct link between transportation and land use, it is very important that the Sandusky County Engineer’s office, the SCRPC, ODOT, and other related agencies work in unison to promote growth and encourage the conservation of land resources.

Strategies

Implementation Timeframe:	
Short Term (S), Less than 2 years.	Medium Term (M), 3-5 years.
Long Term (L), 6-10 years.	Ongoing (O)

1. Implement the Active Transportation Plan

Parties – Commissioners; Park District; Health Dept.; Terra Community College; Bike Groups; GLCAP; Consultants

Timeframe – O

Sandusky County's Active Transportation Plan was completed in 2017 with participation from a coalition of interested parties, headed by the county's Park District. Other participants included Fremont and adjacent townships, Terra State Community College, Downtown Fremont, and several local tourism and recreation destinations.

The plan's central focus was described as to develop a connected physical network of existing on-road and separated facilities that will serve bicyclists and pedestrians for all trip types, reducing gaps and eliminating barriers.

The plan outlined a number of focus areas pointed out during an input gathering stage that included a survey by the North Coast Inland Trail, a general survey, a public meeting, and an open house, as well as a fact-finding bicycle tour. These areas included a need for signage within on-road Fremont bicycle routes, and

concentration on the SR 53 north shopping area, Christy Farm, Hayes Presidential Library, downtown Fremont, several parks in Ballville Township, Fremont schools, the Potter Village shopping area, Sandusky County fairgrounds, Creek Bend Farm nature center near Lindsey, and White Star Park in Gibsonburg.

Next, several specific routes were outlined as targeted projects for future implementation.

These recommendations included 58.5 miles of new route designations along existing roadways and 42.8 miles of separated routes requiring construction or reconstruction. These routes cover much of the county, including Gibsonburg and Woodville. Fremont to Burgoon, Ballville Township toward Tiffin, Northern Sandusky County to Creek Bend, Green Springs to Castalia, Fremont to Castalia, and several connections in Fremont including access to Terra State Community College. These routes largely make use of existing roads and abandoned rail lines or energy company easements.

Future actions to help implement this Plan include:

- Strategically pursue infrastructure projects and pursue necessary funding;
- Develop a capital improvement plan that evaluates existing infrastructure for all users;

- Develop a public awareness campaign for bicycle safety, including analysis of feasibility for “lane diets” and “road diets” to reconfigure lanes or reduce lane widths to accommodate alternative transportation; and
- Update the Bicycle Development Plan, with routes included in the plan based on safety, public input, transportation benefit, feasibility, and cost.

2. Expand Pedestrian Infrastructure and Mobility Opportunities

Parties – Commissioners; Engineer; Park District; ODOT (SRTS); ODSA; ODNR; Terra; Bike Groups

Timeframe – O

Supporting pedestrian connectivity was a clear expressed interest of the residents surveyed in Sandusky County. There are many things the county can do to promote and encourage walking, biking, and other pedestrian methods of transportation. For example, the county can promote pedestrian safety near schools, exercise quality signal placement, provide continuously linked walkways, and provide illumination for pedestrians approaching intersections.

The Active Transportation Map shows existing multi-use path locations as well as conceptual planned pedestrian and bicycle connectivity routes that are

being explored around Sandusky County. These future facilities involve incorporating pedestrian/bicycle facilities into existing roadways as well as on potential future roadway connections. These connectivity routes would involve a mix of the various types of facilities mentioned above depending on right of way availability.

Additional planning and outreach efforts should be combined with recreational planning to help build a unified approach in planning and funding road improvements. Additional planning initiatives that should be embraced to implement this strategy are:

- Develop a transportation master plan to address vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian mobility, as well as the long-term capital improvement planning of the City’s road and riverfront infrastructure.
- Prepare a sidewalk inventory identifying sidewalk condition and areas where gaps exist in the network.
- Develop a phased repair and replacement plan utilizing a combination of local, CDBG, and private funds from participating homeowners. Some of these county neighborhoods may be located in eligible census block groups that are designated as LMI and therefore eligible for grant funding.
- Enforce existing local codes relative to sidewalk repair.

- Work with interested stakeholders in connecting active trail system promoted in the Active Transportation Plan. Officials should pursue funding sources like Clean Ohio and ODNR’s Recreational Trails Program to extend and connect trails to new destinations locally and regionally.
- Team with local schools in developing a School Travel Plan and participating in ODOT’s Safe Routes to School Program. This program will provide up to \$500,000 in funds for improvements that assist K-8 students bike and walk to school.
- Sidewalk construction requirements should be enforced on all new development.
- Consider timed “walk” signals in key locations, especially new public facilities and schools.

3. **Develop a Complete Streets Policy**

Parties – Commissioners; Engineer; Park District; Health Dept.; ODOT; National Complete Streets Coalition; SCRPC

Timeframe – S

Improving connectivity throughout Sandusky County was a visible theme that emerged during the planning process. This is evident by the efforts that generated the County’s first ever Active Transportation Plan in March 2017. This plan discusses methods on creating a vast network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities through new or existing road and trail networks.



**COMPLETE
STREETS**

To help implement this initiative, County and local officials should consider the developing a Complete Streets Policy. To date, over 1450 agencies at the local, regional, and state levels have adopted Complete Streets policies, totaling more than 1500 policies nationwide.

Complete streets elements can provide for improved sidewalks, lighting and street furniture, better markings and signals at intersections and crosswalks, dedicated bike lanes, and improved landscaping solutions in rights of ways that that better manage storm water.

County and local officials could utilize pedestrian and bicycle checklists throughout its project planning and programming, scoping, and final design processes to ensure improvements to transportation facilities that consider pedestrian and bicycle facilities when roadways are being improved and development projects are being considered.

Complete streets can greatly improve residents' quality of life, as building healthy communities is a primary goal embodied in numerous county department programs and policies. The infrastructure that Complete Street policies help to promote allows residents of all ages and abilities to stay active, safe and comfortable while going about their daily routines.

A Complete Street policy can be developed as a stand-alone policy/guideline, or it can be developed in an Access Management Policy.

4. **Implement the Coordinated Public & Human Services Transportation Plan**

Parties – Commissioners; Health Dept.; SCEDC; GLCAP; Stakeholders

Timeframe – S

Transportation is a critical component in any rural county, as it provides access to jobs, education, health care and human services. To this end, the Coordinated

Public & Human Services Transportation Plan was updated in 2018. Proper implementation of this plan will serve to address many of the transportation-related issues in this plan including increased access to pedestrian connectivity networks and increased signage.

Local officials should work to implement the Plan's six goals that include:

- Retain, expand, and improve transportation options for special needs populations (finding resources for subsidized transportation to disabled, seniors, and low-income Medicaid eligible persons; finding resources for those with developmental disabilities to find transportation especially to work; and resources for seniors, including frail seniors)
- Increase flexibility, affordability, and availability of public and private transportation options (expand choices at non-traditional times; improve response times and flexibility to increase use of public and private transportation, for travel to work; address gaps in meeting needs of the public and developmentally disabled)
- Increase in-County and coordination among providers, and regionally with adjacent county providers (coordinate asset utilization among county providers; coordinate with adjacent counties to provide better options and

- opportunities; produce a “Getting Around” county guide)
- Promote increased ridership across the network (create a marketing campaign to promote use by the general public and special needs groups, and step up travel training for understanding of available transportation and requirements)
- Expand efforts to promote safe transportation and healthy personal transportation habits (Promote the “six E's” with Fremont City Schools and the City of Fremont: education, encouragement, enforcement, equity, engineering, and evaluation; update and review the Countywide Active Transportation Network and plan)
- Address capital needs to support the other stated goals of the Sandusky County transportation network (Promote and facilitate upgrades to software, new vehicles, and equipment)



5. Develop Access Management Policies

Parties – Commissioners; Engineer; SCRPC, ODOT, Township Trustees

Timeframe – M

The Sandusky County Engineer’s Office currently does not utilize an access management plan, although the Engineer supports investigating the development of such a plan. The purpose of access management is to establish uniform and equitable standards and procedures. An access management plan, when administered properly, can reduce highway capacity up to 20% of its design and help to prolong the service life of the county’s roads and reduce public maintenance costs. Most importantly, access management also assists in promoting orderly development while preserving traffic mobility. Some of the reasons to utilize a policy of access management is that an access management policy will provide rules and regulations for managing access to land development from roadways, while preserving traffic flow in regard to safety, speed, and capacity.

The intent of an access management policy is to establish long-range planning for:

- ➡ Functional Class
- ➡ Traffic Volumes
- ➡ Right-of-Way Needs
- ➡ Lane Needs

- ➡ Traffic Control Devices Policies
- ➡ Turn Lane Requirements
- ➡ Traffic Impact and Access Management Studies

In framing the County access management policies, stakeholders should work closely with the SCRPC and township zoning boards to align access management with existing township zoning regulations. In some instances, access management regulations may require the issuance of permits, including interim and temporary permits. If County Commissioners or Township Trustees adopt regulations that require permits, the regulations must include standards that will be used for the approval or denial of a permit. Assess management policies must also be consistent with county zoning regulations and must be coordinated with any existing township zoning regulations.

6. Leverage Grant Resources

Parties – Engineer; Park District; ODOT; CCEO; ODNR; Consulting Engineers

Timeframe – O

County and local officials should continue to pursue transportation funding to provide for safe and active transportation infrastructure. County and local officials could find alternative means of capital financing, private investment, partnerships, and other

available resources for recreational programs. If the county utilized recreation districts, they could pass levies for financial support for new transportation projects. Some programs like ODOT’s Transportation Enhancement program provide up to 80% of the total construction cost for a new project. This includes construction engineering, inspection and testing. Other funding sources like Clean Ohio and Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ (ODNR) Recreational Trails Program can be used to extend and connect trails to new destinations locally and regionally.

In 2015, officials commissioned a study of a new SR 53 entrance for Terra State Community College. In 2019, the Sandusky County Engineer received ODOT Safety Program Funding for improvements to the US 20 Bypass in Fremont. To promote safety in other locations of the county, safety fund requests may be developed for the Intersections of US 20/TR 138, CR 229/198, and CR 175/312 (in coordination with Erie County Engineer)

In addition to the TID and ODOT’s Safety Program, there’s other funding programs that can be pursued to help fund identified transportation improvement needs.

The most common types of funding programs include:

- ➔ CEAO for funds that the County Engineer can apply to for grants to improve County Roads.
- ➔ ODOT’s Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a funding source for pedestrian and bicycle related improvements.
- ➔ ODOT’s Safe Routes To Schools (SRTS) Program is a funding source to improve infrastructure to enhance the safety of students walking/biking to and from school.
- ➔ ODOT’s Job & Commerce is a program that provides money for public roadway improvements associated with jobs coming to a specific site where minor roadway improvements are needed.
- ➔ ODOT’s Small City Program is a program that provides funding for small communities with populations between 5,000 and 24,999 that are outside of Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) jurisdictions. This would include the cities of Bellevue, Clyde, and Fremont in Sandusky County.
- ➔ Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) is a State of Ohio program that allows a governmental entity to apply for funds for infrastructure improvements, including roadways.
- ➔ State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) is a low interest loan program for projects.

7. Deploy Branding Elements (Wayfinding) and Market Community Assets

Parties – Commissioners; Chamber of Commerce; CVB; Engineer; Park District; SCEDC; Terra; Targeted Stakeholders; Private Businesses

Timeframe – M

From the input gathered in the surveys, it is clear that residents of Sandusky County feel that their community has a lot to offer. Deploying wayfinding is a way to ensure that the county is effectively marketing its best assets. The signage that is implemented will serve to link the community together and promote and brand the county. Three types of signage could be deployed: large scale gateway signs, medium, vehicular scale directional signs, and small, pedestrian scale directional signs. The signs should be designed in a way that can be implemented along state highways. The sign types should be innovative but based on uniform guidelines including the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials’ Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (AASHTO), and the National Association of City Transportation Officials’ (NACTO) Urban Bikeway Design Guide.

To help market the tremendous recreational value of the Sandusky River, Sandusky County Regional Planning Commission should consider working with

the Seneca County Regional Planning Commission and other parties to obtain a water trail designation from ODNR. Benefits of the program, aside from the economic value from the tourism, include improved advertising materials like signage and enhanced mapping.

8. Create Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Parties – Commissioners; Sandusky Parks; Engineer; Sanitary Engineer; Local Park Depts; Stakeholders

Timeframe – M

A plurality of the residents surveyed indicated a desire for sustained park quality and diverse recreational and social activities for residents of all ages. Developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan will serve to maintain a high quality of life in the county. Elements such as parks, recreation lands, and preservation of the natural environment are vital to sustaining a high quality of life and should all be discussed in the master plan. The plan will also help address the development of active and passive recreation opportunities such as bike trails, the development of new park programming, and the creation of additional recreational facilities throughout the county.

9. Enhance Public and Private Partnerships

Parties – Commissioners; SCEDC ; Hospitals; Terra; CVB;
Sandusky River Watershed Coalition; TMACOG;
Private Sector

Timeframe – O

Enhancing the relationship between public and private entities serves to benefit the entire community. For example, county planning officials could work with local community leaders to encourage the development of neighborhood associations and organize community forums to address strategies that affect their neighborhoods. Private, more localized, efforts could help make the job of code enforcement a bit easier and result in greater impact and more successful enforcement. These groups could ensure that the rental and other property owners in their neighborhoods are abiding by the law and are reporting all rental properties to local officials.

These neighborhood groups could not only work with local officials and neighborhood associations, but also with the School District; businesses, churches and agencies within their neighborhoods; civic and fraternal groups in the community; the local police, parks, service departments; local banks; and, residents of the neighborhoods.



Sandusky County is ranked by Site Selection Magazine among the best economic development organizations nationally based on the number of business development projects. In 2019, Fremont-Sandusky County has been recognized as one of the top 20 micropolitan regions in the country for business investment and expansion. Sandusky County had a total of 48 projects and \$183M in Capital Investment, resulting in 1,811 retained and 262 new jobs. Out of those projects, nine of them qualified for the Governor’s Cup, including ABC Inoac, CDSF, Crown Battery, Evergreen Plastics, Goodwill Industries in Bellevue, Quality Steel, Revere Plastics, Total Distribution, Tower Automotive and Whirlpool.

3) Land and Resource Management

Overview

Of the 260,000+ acres that comprise Sandusky County, approximately 214,000 acres are utilized for agricultural purposes. 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. Ten percent of developed lands in Sandusky County are used for industrial purposes.

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.

Agricultural Development

Agribusiness in Sandusky County is a multi-million-dollar sector, with the market value of products in 2017 reaching \$101 million (of which \$91.8 million were from crops, nurseries, and greenhouses and \$9.2 million from livestock, poultry, and their products). The unadjusted total in 1997 was \$66 million.

The number of farms and acreage in farming throughout the county diminished slightly, from 795 farms and 199,446 acres in 1997 to 768 farms and 178,761 acres in 2017. This indicates that some 20,000 acres were converted from farm to non-farm use over those twenty years, including sale of frontage property for new residential use.

The average size of a farm decreased from 251 to 233 acres; the median from 115 to 77 acres. However, the number of farms, when categorized by the value of their sales, skewed toward the smaller “hobby” farms (167 farms with sales of less than \$2,500) and the larger ones (209 farms with \$100,000 or more in sales).

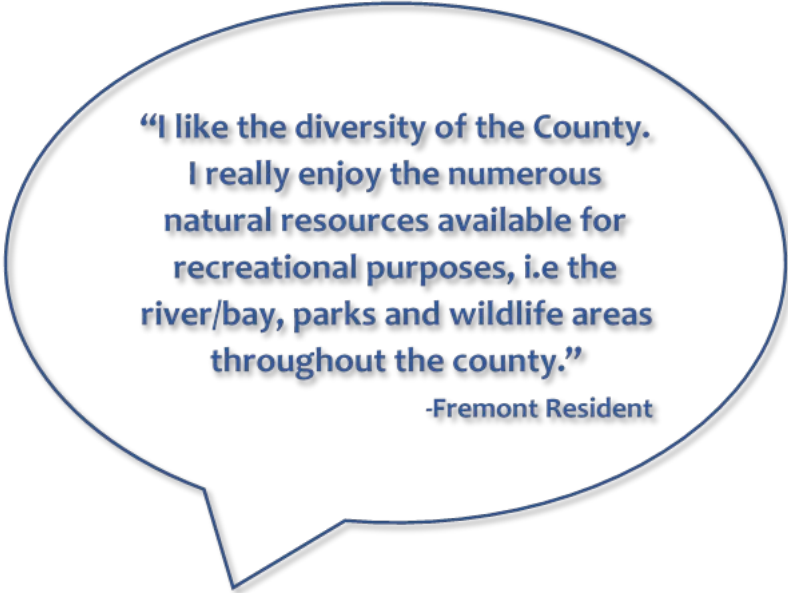
In 1997, 741 farms grew 185,638 acres of crops; this decreased to 696 farms growing 168,414 acres in 2017. Crops occupying the greatest acreage in 2017 included soybeans (89,116 acres; 482 farms), corn for grain (58,248; 378 farms), and wheat (6,504 acres; 157 farms). While the acreage devoted to each was similar in 1997, more farms participated, with 617 growing soybeans, 516 growing corn, and 428 with wheat.

Livestock have taken a relatively smaller role in Sandusky County agribusiness, accounting for just 9.1 percent of total sales. In 2017, 161 farms had 5,036 cattle and calves, 98 had 939 beef cattle, 38 had 10,651 hogs and pigs, 22 had 515 sheep and lambs, 53 had 1,619 laying hens, and just five had 1,619 broiler or roasting chickens.

Most farms in the county rely largely upon family members for their labor needs. However, there were 176 farms employing outside help, with 581 workers employed county-wide, accounting for a payroll of \$4,296,000. Eight farms employed ten or more workers, and of those 581 workers, 187 worked 150 days or more. As farming became more capital-intensive, the need for farm labor diminished. In 1997, 139 farms employed 1,723, with a payroll of \$4,831,000, significantly greater in current dollars than the payroll for 2017.

Future Land Use Planning Areas

Promoting good growth and development patterns at a scale friendly to community character and natural resources is a primary goal of this Plan. To help encourage these patterns, County and local leaders should utilize the most appropriate tool and best practices that are highlighted in the Plan Implementation Toolbox.



A number of assumptions have gone into the development of the five future land planning areas (See *Map: Future Land Use Planning Areas Map*). These assumptions are:

- 1) Intense development should be encouraged within incorporated areas and Potential Growth Areas (and in some cases, Rural Commerce Areas) whenever possible through the use of zoning, available infrastructure and community services.
- 2) Best Management Practices should be implemented in all Future Land Use Planning Areas, but should first be implemented in Environmentally-Sensitive Areas (See *Map: Environmental Considerations*) and areas where additional water quality measures have been adopted like 208 Facility Planning Areas, karst areas, and watershed areas along the Sandusky River (See *Map: Water Quality Considerations*). This Plan assumes a level of local responsibility to ensure BMPs and other sustainable land use techniques are implemented.

Five Land Use Planning Areas were developed to assist the identified stakeholders (See: *Plan Implementation Toolbox*) in utilizing the optimal set of tools to accomplish the Plan’s Strategies and to manage growth, development, and farmland preservation activities. These Land Use Planning Areas are:

➡ Potential Growth Areas

- ➡ Conservation Resource Areas
- ➡ Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- ➡ Rural Conservation Areas
- ➡ Rural Management Areas

Potential Growth Areas (PGA)

These areas represent areas adjacent to municipal boundaries, key corridors, public utility service areas, and township areas zoned for business, commercial, and industrial uses.

While these areas have been selected as Potential Growth Areas, this Plan recommends that development occur in these areas only when the provision of public services and facilities, such as police and fire protection, roads, water and sanitary sewer service, and parks, is suitable enough to accommodate it. Some locations within these Growth Areas also have conditions that will require the proper deployment of best management practices, incentives and other regulatory program to guide growth, and conserve and protect natural and environmental resources.

- ➡ Recommended Land Uses: Single family attached, and detached residential, multi-family residential, commercial, industrial, public and institutional.
- ➡ Development Intensity: 6 DU+/Acre for single family residential in similarly developed areas served with public utilities, with density bonuses

provided for dedicated open spaces and; 0.25 - 0.50 DU/Acre for single family residential land uses in areas not yet served with public utilities, with density bonuses possible where best management practices are utilized and supported by the County Department of Health based on septic suitability considerations and other regulatory agencies.

Conservation Areas

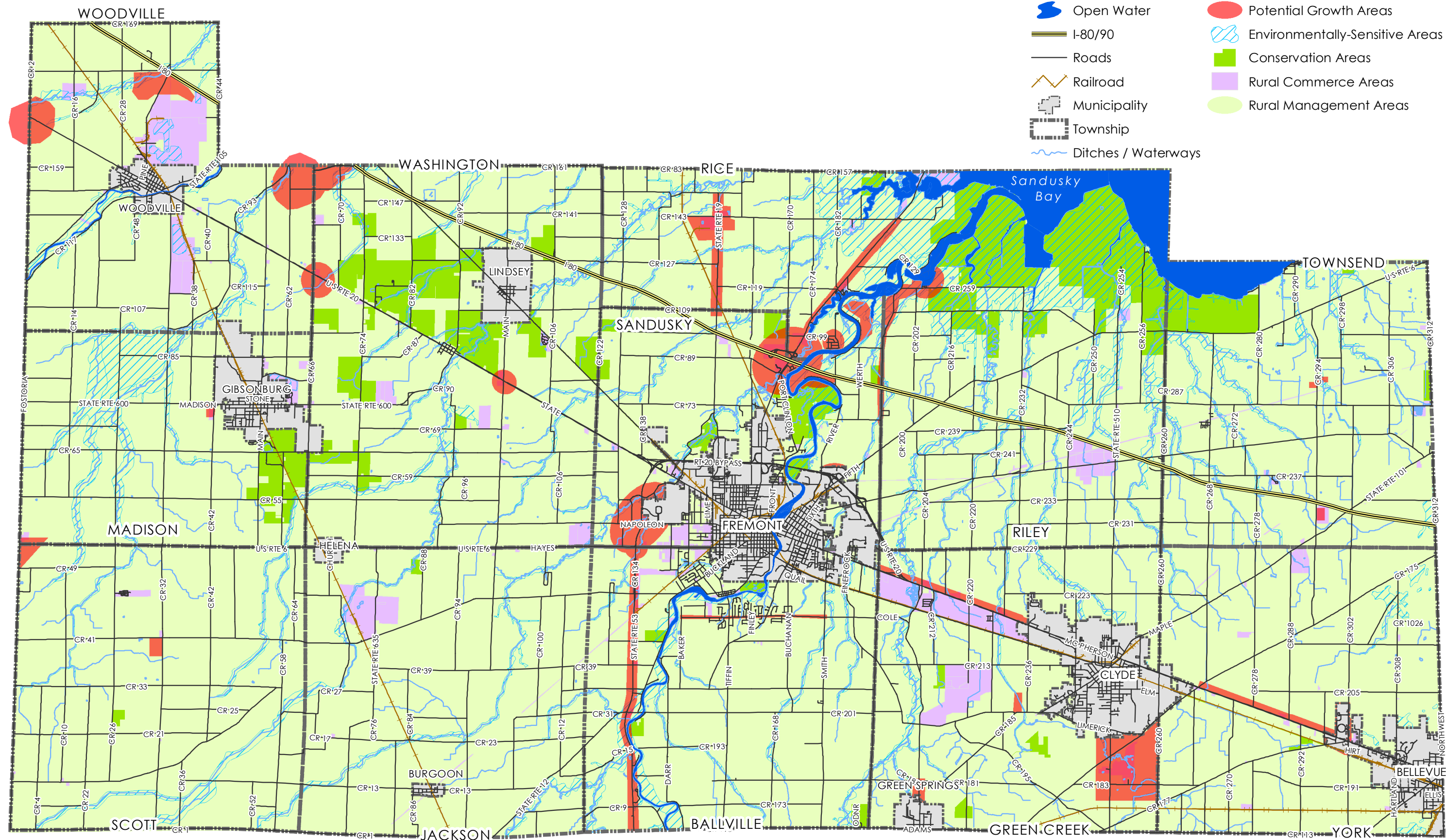
The Conservation Resource Areas represent areas of the county where farmlands have been permanently protected through one or more agricultural preservation program like easement purchase and/or the conservation easement programs through conservancy groups like Black Swamp Conservancy and park organizations. At the present time, roughly 5,000 acres are in conservation easement programs.

The purpose of these programs is to isolate these areas from development conditions that are not mutually-beneficial to the farming community. It is recommended that the SCRPC continue to work with township and county officials, and the farming community to implement the most appropriate tools found in the Plan Implementation Toolbox to limit development in and adjacent to these areas.

- ➡ Recommended Land Uses: Agricultural land uses and Parks and Preserves.

Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Open Water |  | Potential Growth Areas |
|  | I-80/90 |  | Environmentally-Sensitive Areas |
|  | Roads |  | Conservation Areas |
|  | Railroad |  | Rural Commerce Areas |
|  | Municipality |  | Rural Management Areas |
|  | Township | | |
|  | Ditches / Waterways | | |



Source: Sandusky County Auditor, SCRPC, Black Swamp Conservancy, Reville
Note: Map to be used for general planning, not scientific, purposes.

- ➡ Development Intensity: Because development is often limited as a condition of the easement, all future development in these areas should be determined on a case-by-case basis to minimize incompatibility issues.

Environmentally-Sensitive Areas

Environmentally-Sensitive Areas are identified as separate Future Land Use Planning Area to assist county and local officials in delineating where additional development constraints may be warranted, and where hydrological resources may be located. Development that occurs in the 100-year flood plain is subject to the County’s Flood Damage Prevention Regulations that is administered by the SCRPC.

- ➡ Recommended Land Uses: Development is discouraged in these areas, especially in the Flood Hazard Areas. However, in cases where development advances, it should be limited to extremely low density residential that occurs in accordance with conservation design and best management practices at densities deemed appropriate by the County Department of Health and other regulatory agencies. Other potential land uses would include agricultural uses and park and recreational uses.
- ➡ Development Intensity: As determined by the regulatory agencies upon review of specific site constraints.

Rural Commerce Areas (RCA)

Rural Commerce Areas (RCA) are areas outside of designated growth areas but are areas in townships zoned for business, commercial, and/or industrial uses. A primary theme of the 2020 Sandusky County Comprehensive Plan is to support economic development to the fullest extent possible, and several of the county’s economic generators are located in these areas. These areas include, but are not limited to Carmeuse Lime, Area Aggregates, Martin Marietta, Waste Management, private recreational “sportsman’s clubs”, and agricultural-related businesses.

- ➡ Recommended Land Uses: Supportive commercial and industrial land uses, and supportive public/institutional land uses. New residential land uses should be minimized in areas directly adjacent to these commerce areas.
- ➡ Development Intensity: Determined on a case-by-case basis to minimize incompatibility and nuisance issues, and dependent upon best practices, surrounding land uses, and utility needs.

Rural Management Areas (RMA)

Rural Management Areas (RMA) are generally outside of the designated growth areas and generally typified by low or very low density rural residential development. The management of these areas should be supported by the Plan Implementation Toolbox in a manner that promotes sustainable development and other best

practices for issues like access management and combined access drives (CADS), conservation / compact development, and the protection of environmentally-sensitive areas and critical water resources.

Lands in these areas should also be developed at densities deemed appropriate by the County Department of Health based upon septic suitability considerations. However, compact, denser developments, where compatible, could be warranted in these Areas. RMAs also make logical annexation areas and potential long-range economic development areas as many of these areas are adjacent to municipal corporations and the Sandusky County Regional Airport.

- ➡ Recommended Land Uses: Single family residential, neighborhood commercial, planned business park, public and institutional, and park and recreational land uses.
- ➡ Development Intensity: Determined by local zoning standards but should range between 0.20 to 0.50 DU/Acre (single-family residential). Density credits could be warranted in situations where best management practices, like combined access drives and cluster development techniques, are utilized and supported by adjacent property owners.

Strategies

Implementation Timeframe:	
Short Term (S), Less than 2 years.	Medium Term (M), 3-5 years.
Long Term (L), 6-10 years.	Ongoing (O)

1. Utilize Sustainable Land Use Tools

Parties – Commissioners; SWCD; Health Dept.; Black Swamp Conservancy; USDA-NRCS

Timeframe – O

While future growth in Sandusky County will be best accommodated by local communities utilizing density-friendly zoning techniques expanding outward, proper methods should be deployed to minimize the development footprint in the unincorporated areas of the County. Utilizing sustainable land use tools requires a great deal of cooperation among the involved entities. One method in building the bonds and relationships necessary to promote the use of sustainable land use tools is to establish an annual planning and development forum facilitated by county officials or by an outside facilitator. This forum would provide a platform by which all political subdivisions can voice their problems and concerns. It would also allow those concerns to be handled in a timely manner and under professional advice.

This discussion should include the advancement of sustainable land use tools to address the following situations:

- ➡ Discouraging the growth of well and septic systems within critical resource areas and/or areas with identified development constraints. This is especially important in areas with Karst conditions, high groundwater pollution potential, or source water protection areas, especially in the inner management zones.
- ➡ Developing comprehensive plans and working with township and village officials to develop or update their zoning ordinances / resolutions. At the present time, three townships (Townsend, York, and Madison) do not have zoning and many city/village officials expressed a desire to update their zoning ordinances.
- ➡ Developing additional oversight tools are in place to address development that occurs on and near Karst areas.
- ➡ Adopting conservation development zoning practices to strengthen environmental assessment requirements specifically in the four source water protection areas identified on the Water Quality Considerations Map.
- ➡ Updating subdivision regulations to strengthen environmental assessment requirements, minimize minor subdivisions (lot splits), flag lots, and reduce the footprint of exempted 5+ acre development patterns.

2. Create/Update Zoning Resolutions/Ordinances

Parties – Planning/Zoning Commissions

Timeframe – O

Zoning is a fundamental planning tool for local governments. At the current time, 3 of the County’s twelve townships are unzoned: 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.

3. Conserve Prime Farmlands and Environmentally-Sensitive Areas

Parties – Commissioners; Park District; Health Dept.; SWCD; Farmers; Farm Bureau; USDA-NRCS; Black Swamp Conservancy; Land Trusts; Sandusky County Watershed Coalition; TMACOG

Timeframe – O

Agricultural lands can be preserved through programs such as the Current Agricultural Use Valuation Program, Agricultural Districts, Grasslands/Ranchlands Protection Programs, and ASAs.

County officials ought to implement the strategies highlighted in this Plan to increase the awareness of conservation and incentive programs within the farming community. In addition, an agricultural easement is the single most powerful legal tool for the permanent protection of farmland, allowing the owner to permanently protect the land from non-farm development without giving up ownership. Under federal tax law, an agricultural easement is treated the same as a conservation easement. It is a flexible agreement between a landowner and a government entity and is filed with the County Recorder.

The “Fremont-Sandusky Bay Corridor” that runs along the Sandusky River directly to the north of the City of Fremont is an example of a priority conservation area as it contains productive farmland soils and

encompasses the main stem of the Sandusky State Scenic River. Other areas to target for potential conservation easements could include lands adjacent to existing conservation easement area along with key locations along the Sandusky River, Sandusky Bay, and its major tributaries like the Greencreek River.

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 the Sandusky River from US 30 (RM 82.1) to the Roger Young Park in Fremont as an Outstanding State Water with exceptional ecological value.

Regulation and management of development activities within the floodplain is vital to public health and safety, as well as the natural environment. Although federal and state regulations set specific standards for development in designated floodplains, it is recommended that additional alternative development methods be pursued that mitigate future flooding problems.

Over 16,600 acres of various types of wetlands are scattered across the County, with the largest percentage of them being shallow marshes with emergent vegetation and wetlands comprised of shrub or scrub vegetation. To ensure a “no-net-loss”

of wetlands, it is imperative that public and private officials develop additional planning and oversight tools that can expedite the development process and also protect wetlands.

Preservation of undeveloped and functioning wetlands and riparian corridors serves to decrease downstream flooding, improves water quality, preserves soil resources, and provides natural habitat.

4. Expand the County’s GIS Capabilities

Parties – Auditor-GIS Div.; Health Dept.; Sanitary Engineer; Engineer Realtors; Conservation Groups

Timeframe – M

Sandusky County’s Auditor’s Office utilizes GIS and has an online platform that could be expanded to help citizens understand the repercussions of unplanned growth. Impacts of development over time can be significant. By using geographic information system (GIS) applications and analyzing land-use data collected over time, county residents and private and public officials may be more willing to support quality and sustainable planned growth and the necessity for holistic and comprehensive planning.

In particular, data such as utility planning areas (208 FPAs and CSAs), environmental constraints (floodplains, wetlands, groundwater pollution potential, soils, bedrock), and future land planning

areas should be publicly available from the SCRPC in the hopes that residents and future developers can plan for growth while understanding areas where best management practices will be required.

5. **Implement/Update the Water and Sewer Master Plan**

Parties – Sanitary Engineer; Commissioners; Engineer; SCEDC Consulting Engineer; NORW; Developers; Landowners

Timeframe – M

Parties – Sanitary Engineer; Commissioners; Engineer; SCEDC Consulting Engineer; NORW; Developers; Landowners

Timeframe – M

Water and sewer services in the unincorporated areas of the County are guided by Water and Sewer Plan that was updated in 2014/5. Throughout the planning process, various concerns regarding the county’s sewage and water infrastructure arose. To address these concerns, county officials should begin discussions to update and implement the Water and Sewer Master Plan. The plan will act as a guide for tactical infrastructure investments, especially in areas where growth areas overlap with 208 FPAs and CSAs, and the priority improvement areas designated by the Sanitary Sewer Engineer. These areas include:

Wightman’s Grove Sanitary Sewer Collection System & Treatment

Installing sanitary sewers in this area coincide with a 2007 EPA Findings and Orders and the 208 Plan. The continued installation of sanitary sewers to the Wightman’s Grove area will revitalize this area along the Sandusky River, as many homes in this area are in need of public sewers. This will be the first of up to 5 improvements that will improve multiple areas along the Sandusky River, including Barkshire Hills Subdivision, which is designated as a CSA.

District #1 Sewer Rehabilitation

Replacement of aging infrastructure including two lift stations installed in the early 1970s along with a mainline trunk sewer that runs between Sandusky River and Cole Road. Both lift stations are smaller lift stations that are past their design life and need to be replaced.

Shorewood Water Plant Replacement and/or Upgrades

Upgraded the plant for fire protection for the Shorewood Village would improve the infrastructure and also allow for expansion of water service along the SR 53 corridor. Upgrades could also include connection to another entity for water redundancy for both water entities. Expansion of the County Water System would be beneficial to the entire County especially where County sewer customers exist in

order to provide sewage service based on a meter rate. This is difficult to achieve when other outside water entities are providing water service.

Adams Acres Wastewater Plant Replacement

Replacement of the Wastewater Plant as the old plant will be 50 years old in 2026 and is starting to show signs of its age. Added features that are missing from the current plant would be an Equalization Tank, Fixed Media, and UV Disinfection in which would improve the treatment of the sewage for this subdivision.

Merger of the County Sanitary Sewer Districts

The Commissioners originally formed multiple sanitary sewer Districts to represent different areas within the County. This has created multiple budgets to track and purchasing general items are divided amongst the districts based on the number of customers. In recent years, the Countywide District (General) has pulled financially equal to District #1 and is stable with a newer infrastructure. Merging the districts could help District #1 with its aging infrastructure along with streamlining the Sanitary Engineers operation with not tracking multiple sewer budgets.

Some issues this plan should address are:

- ➡ Age of infrastructure and equipment, and lack of equipment like portable generators. Both County portable generators are over 20 years old and

storage is limited for any additional needed equipment (not to mention costly).

- Lack of staff and difficulty in attracting/retaining qualified operators/staff. Trained Licensed Operators are becoming more difficult to find, as individuals need to pass exams along with maintaining the Ohio EPA licenses.
- Maintenance plan. Pump repairs by third parties have become increasingly lengthy.
- Infrastructure security plan. Threats to infrastructure in terms of terrorism and security of each site have been a focus in the past.
- Increased EPA reporting and licensing requirements. Ohio EPA's Asset Management Plan would be an example of the planning that is being required by all water entities.
- Limited grant funding opportunities. Grant funding of rehabilitation and new sanitary sewer and water construction is very limited and/or difficult to obtain which puts most of the costs back on the private property owners.
- Cost/benefit analysis for infrastructure improvements and I/I reduction. For new sanitary sewer improvements, typical costs per residence are higher than installing a new septic system. For instance, 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.

- A public outreach plan to work with homeowners in CSAs / FPAs.
- The adoption of new and alternative sewage treatment technologies such as land treatment, wastewater irrigation, mound systems, and wetlands systems to lower operating costs, reduce energy demand, reuse wastewater, and eliminate pollutant discharges.

Such technologies should be utilized to service problematic areas around the county in designated growth areas and in other rural areas of the County with documented public health emergencies and polluted water supplies.

6. Update the Sandusky County Subdivision Regulations

Parties – Commissioners; Engineer; Sanitary Engineer; Health Dept.; SWCD Local Developers; Consultants

Timeframe – S

Subdivision regulations are an important element in better managing land use patterns. They should include more restrictive minor subdivision provisions to minimize lot splits, flag lots and promote pedestrian connectivity within and between subdivisions. Sandusky County officials, in updating the subdivision regulations, should also encourage bike path connections from major developments to the nearby pedestrian assets, parks, and other residential developments and destinations. Officials should remain firm in requiring subdivisions to connect to adjacent developments and, most importantly, public destinations. Bike lanes could be added to roads in subdivisions where sidewalks are not present and road width allows.



Plan Implementation

Plan Implementation

The updated 2020 Sandusky County Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a blueprint for managing growth, revitalization, and community development efforts, and to create new programs, infrastructure, and assets most desired by residents. Implementation of this Plan will require the proper alignment of County and local jurisdictions.

This Plan is framed around a series of strategies that are given an implementation timeframe and linked to potential actors and agencies that will be tasked with advancing them. To ensure a type and level of growth consistent with the public’s preferences, it is encouraged the Plan is used during the following situations:

1) Land Use Planning and Zoning

Because land use planning in the unincorporated areas is the responsibility of the SCRPC, they will play a key role in implementing this Plan working closely with other key stakeholders.

It will be up to the planning and/or zoning boards within each municipal corporation and township to ensure their specific plans and zoning codes generally compliment this Plan. Because the SCRPC provides an advisory role in connection with township zoning, all development proposals, re-zonings, subdivision plats, variances, and other related programmatic matters, should be reviewed

and weighed against the future land use planning area they are located, and their specific impact and compatibility with this Plan and adjacent surroundings.

2) Plan Review

This Plan was developed with Plan Implementation in mind. Each Plan Strategy was given a specific timeframe for implementation, and the Plan Implementation Table provides planning stakeholders the ability to track and “grade” the progress of the implementation of each strategy. To this end, the SCRPC should have an annual meeting where they review and grade the Plan in light of the past years’ development and governmental activities. In situations where the Plan assisted progress it should be noted. It should also be noted in what areas, if any, the Plan failed to facilitate its strategies and the best management practices highlighted in the Plan Implementation Toolbox.

3) Updating the Plan

To ensure these conditions are being planned for property, it is recommended that this Plan be updated by 2025. While the current Census 2010 numbers are still current, efforts are underway to begin the Census 2020. This process is predicted to be completed by 2022. Once completed, it is recommended that new data be reviewed in specific areas of housing, demographics, and employment, and compared with existing Plan data.

When and where applicable, the Plan should be updated to reflect major changes and data trends.

The process to update the Plan should be similar to the process that originally formulated it. The update process should be one that reestablishes, and if necessary, modifies the vision statements of the Plan through public participation; reaffirms or modifies Plan strategies and implementing parties; and recommends changes to other areas in the Plan appropriate to the changed conditions. Most importantly, the updated Plan should specifically track how well this Plan was implemented.



“Living in a smaller town allows for real participation in the community. Church, local eateries, events, etc. provides opportunity to form strong bonds. Residents who are involved in the community truly believe they are contributing and making an impact.

-Woodville Resident

Plan Implementation Table

Plan Element	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization						Time Frame Short Term (S), Less than 2 years. Medium Term (M), 3-5 years. Long Term (L), 6-10 years. Ongoing (O)	Percent Complete
		RPC	County Organizations	City/Village Council	Township Trustees	Area Schools	Local/Other Organizations		
Connectivity	Implement the Active Transportation Plan	X	Commissioners; Park District; Health Dept.	X	X	X	Terra Community College; Local Bike Groups; GLCAP; Consultants	O	
	Expand Pedestrian Connectivity Infrastructure	X	Commissioners; Engineer; Park District	X	X	X	ODOT (SRTS); ODSA; ODNR; Terra; Bike Groups	O	
	Develop a Complete Streets Policy	X	Commissioners; Engineer; Park District	X		X	ODOT; National Complete Streets Coalition	S	
	Implement the Coordinated Public & Human Services Transportation Plan		Commissioners; Health Dept.; SCEDC	X	X	X	GLCAP; Stakeholders	S	
	Develop Access Management Policies	X	Commissioners; Engineer		X		ODOT	S	
	Leverage Grant Resources		Engineer; Park District	X	X	X	ODOT; CCEO; ODNR; Consulting Engineers	O	
	Deploy Branding Elements (Wayfinding) and Market Community Assets	X	Commissioners; Chamber of Commerce; CVB; Engineer; Park District; SCEDC	X	X	X	Terra; Targeted Stakeholders; Private Businesses	M	
	Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan	X	Commissioners; Sandusky Parks; Engineer; Sanitary Engineer	X	X	X	Local Park Depts; Stakeholders	S	

Plan Element	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization						Time Frame Short Term (S), Less than 2 years. Medium Term (M), 3-5 years. Long Term (L), 6-10 years. Ongoing (O)	Percent Complete
		RPC	County Organizations	City/Village Council	Township Trustees	Area Schools	Local/Other Organizations		
Land and Resources Management	Enhance Public and Private Partnerships	X	Commissioners; SCEDC	X	X	X	Hospitals; Terra; CVB; Sandusky River Watershed Coalition; TMACOG; Private Sector	O	
	Utilize Sustainable Land Use Tools	X	Commissioners; SWCD	X	X		Black Swamp Conservancy; USDA-NRCS	O	
	Create/Update Zoning Resolutions/Ordinances	X		X	X		Planning/Zoning Commissions	O	
	Conserve Prime Farmlands and Environmentally-Sensitive Areas	X	Commissioners; Health Department; SWCD		X		Farmers; Farm Bureau; USDA-NRCS; Black Swamp Conservancy; Land Trusts; Sandusky County Watershed Coalition; TMACOG	O	
	Expand the County’s GIS Capabilities	X	Auditor-GIS Div.	X			Realtors; Conservation Groups	M	
	Update the Water and Sewer Master Plan	X	Sanitary Engineer; Commissioners; Engineer; SCEDC	X	X		Consulting Engineer; NORW; Developers; Landowners	S	
	Update the Sandusky County Subdivision Regulations	X	Commissioners; Engineer; Sanitary Engineer; Health Department; SWCD		X		Local Developers; Consultants	M	

Plan Element	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization						Time Frame Short Term (S), Less than 2 years. Medium Term (M), 3-5 years. Long Term (L), 6-10 years. Ongoing (O)	Percent Complete
		RPC	County Organizations	City/Village Council	Township Trustees	Area Schools	Local/Other Organizations		
Prosperity and Renewal	Develop Effective Nuisance and Property Maintenance Standards	X	County Commissioners; Land Bank; Health Dept.; Sheriff	X	X		Fire Depts; Neighborhood Groups; Homeowner Associations	S	
	Improve Public Infrastructure in Targeted Neighborhoods and Growth Areas	X	Commissioners; Land Bank;	X	X	X	Local Econ. Dev. Depts; RGP-Jobs Ohio; Ohio Dev. Services Agency; Consultants	O	
	Heighten Workforce Development and Business Retention and Expansion Efforts	X	Commissioners; SCEDC; Jobs and Family Services (Ohio Means Jobs)			X	Area Colleges; Jobs Ohio; GLCAP; NORED; Employers; OSU Extension	O	
	Expand Economic Incentives (Develop new CRA Areas, formalize job grants)	X	Commissioners; SCEDC	X	X	X	Local economic development departments; Private businesses, Developers; Jobs Ohio; ODSA	S	
	Improve the Housing Supply	X	SCEDC; Chamber of Commerce	X	X	X	Local Econ. Dev. Depts; Hospitals; Developers; Terra; Jobs Ohio; ODSA; Banks; Realtors; Consultants	O	
	Heighten Downtown Planning Efforts	X	SCEDC	X	X	X	Downtown Business Assn; Local Econ. Dev. Depts.; Main Street Groups	M	
	Develop One or More State-Certified Industrial Parks		SCEDC; Commissioners; Engineer	X	X		RGP / Jobs Ohio; Developers; Private Businesses	M	
	Increase Accessibility to Healthy and Locally-Sourced Food	X	Farm Bureau; Commissioners; Health Dept.; Chamber of Commerce; SWCD	X	X	X	Farmers; Farmer's Markets; USDA-Farm Services Agency; Downtown Business Assn; OSU Extension; Event Planners	M	

Plan Implementation Tools

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Access Management	Limits new access points on most roads (except for access to new roads, which may serve major subdivisions). Limits number of lot splits along Major and Minor arterials and may require joint use driveways or cross access easement to meet driveway spacing requirements.	All Planning Areas	Butler County, OH Licking County, OH Lucas County, OH
Agricultural Districts	<p>Provides protection against nuisance suits over farm operations, deferment of tax assessments on land to build sewer and water lines and allows for additional review if land is taken by eminent domain for a public purpose.</p> <p>Land or combination of lands must total 10 acres or more to be included in the district or have generated an average yearly gross income of at least \$2,500 during the past three years.</p>	Conservation Areas Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	Sandusky County, OH
Agricultural Lands Protection	Places extra limitations on uses within the district based on lot size. Use of land for agricultural purposes or construction of structures for agricultural purposes on lots less than 1 acre is prohibited (unless conditional use is approved); Buildings and structures on lots between 1 and 5 acres are prohibited from being used for dairying or poultry husbandry (unless conditional use is approved).	Conservation Areas Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	Harrison Township, Darke County, OH Darby Township, Union County, OH Green Township, Ashland County, OH
Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs)	Agricultural BMPs are tools that help to minimize nonpoint source pollution load in water systems by decreasing the velocity of runoff after storm events. BMP tools include nutrient management, conservation tillage and no-till, contour strip cropping and livestock husbandry. In urban settings, vegetative buffers, filter strips, grassed swales, constructed wetlands and innovative stormwater retention and infiltration systems can be used along with overlay zoning techniques.	Conservation Areas Environmentally-Sensitive Areas Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	Sandusky County SWCD
Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP)	<p>Agricultural easements provide a great tool for farmers to use to not only protect prime farmland from development and receive financial assistance. To be eligible, the farmland must be located in an agricultural preservation area (see Future Land Use Planning Areas Map), must be enrolled in CAUV, and be 40 acres or more (unless adjacent to another farm, then the minimum is 25 acres).</p> <p>All land enrolled in AEPPs are designated as Protected Farmland Areas on the Future Land Use Planning Areas Map.</p>	Conservation Areas Environmentally-Sensitive Areas Rural Management Areas	Black Swamp Conservancy Fairfield County SWCD Fairfield Land Preservation Association

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program	<p>ASA Programs create blocks of at least 500 acres of farmland where agriculture is encouraged and protected and may include multiple farmland owners.</p> <p>Farmlands must be enrolled in Agricultural district and CAUV. Local governments agree to not initiate, approve, or finance development for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes for 10 years while landowners commit to exclusively engage in agricultural activities and related development. The landowners located in ASAs can apply for a real property tax reduction on new ag improvements. ASAs are currently located in Walnut Township.</p>	Conservation Areas Environmentally-Sensitive Areas Rural Management Areas	Fairfield County, OH
Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) Program	<p>The CAUV program allows farmland devoted exclusively to commercial agriculture to have reduced property taxes based on agricultural value of the land, rather than on full development value. Value is based on the soil types on the property.</p> <p>To qualify for the CAUV, the property must be ten or more acres or produce an average yearly gross income of at least \$2,500 and must be devoted exclusively to commercial agricultural use.</p>	Conservation Areas Environmentally-Sensitive Areas Rural Management Areas Growth Areas	N/A
Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)	Authorized under ORC 1724, all political subdivisions can create CICs for the purposes of advancing, encouraging, and promoting economic and civic development. A CIC can also facilitate the reclamation and reutilization of vacant, abandoned, tax-foreclosed, or other real property, and be used to assemble, clear, and clear the title of real property in a coordinated manner.	Growth Areas	N/A
Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program	<p>Provides businesses locating in a designated CRA an exemption of up to 100 percent of improvement value for up to 15 years on real property taxes. A company must make an agreement with the local community prior to going forward with the qualifying project.</p> <p>As of 2019, the entire city of Bellevue is a designated CRA area and two areas in Fremont have CRAs (CRA #1 and CRA #2)</p>	Growth Areas Rural Commerce Areas	Any Post-94 CRA community that requires mandatory school donation agreements and is marketed appropriately.
Conditional Development (Commercial)	This regulation is meant to provide more flexibility for construction site standards for non-residential development, and to encourage enhancement of community character with quality architectural design and aesthetic qualities. Calls for the preservation of significant natural features to the maximum extent possible.	Growth Areas	Delaware, OH Delaware County, OH Rootstown Township, OH Portage County, OH

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Conservation Easements	<p>A conservation easement allows landowners to voluntarily restrict their land to a specific use such as recreation, forestry or farming, or to buffer and protect vital natural amenities, in exchange for certain tax and financial benefits.</p> <p>The primary easement programs used in Sandusky County are: Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (noted above), Conservation Easements, and Flood Easements</p>	Conservation Areas Environmentally-Sensitive Areas Rural Management Areas Growth Areas (for passive recreation only)	Black Swamp Conservancy Fairfield County SWCD
Conservation Development	Model language with an emphasis on creating contiguous open space and protection of steep slopes and riparian areas. Yield plan used as basis for development intensity.	Conservation Areas Environmentally-Sensitive Areas Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP) Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) 21st Century Land Development Code
Compact Development	Promotes a mixture of uses with pedestrian orientation. Sets standards for what types of uses will be on the first and second floors of buildings.	Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	Shaker Heights, OH Cleveland, OH Mantua, OH
Common Access Drives	Allows Common Access Drives to minimize and control access to lots that front public roads.	Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	Union County, OH Van Buren Township, Hancock County, OH
Downtown Revitalization Districts (DRDs) and Innovation Districts	<p>Ohio municipalities can create DRDs and Innovation Districts to encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings and economic development in contiguous mixed-use boundary areas no larger than 10 acres where at least one historic building is located or will be rehabilitated.</p> <p>Municipalities also may designate an Innovation District within a DRD, the purpose of which is to attract and facilitate growth of technology-oriented businesses and to support the economic development efforts of business incubators and accelerators.</p> <p>DRDs may not include any areas used exclusively for residential purposes or any areas exempted from taxation under an existing TIF. As with TIFs, the DRD exemption is not a true real property tax exemption. Property owners within the DRD make service payments in lieu of taxes on the increase in the assessed value of real property. Those service payments are deposited into a special municipal fund and used for designated purposes.</p>	Growth Areas (particularly in Downtown and Central Business Districts)	N/A

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Economic Development Agreements	There are three primary intergovernmental economic development tools that can be used for the purpose of facilitating cooperation between and among local governments to promote economic development or providing appropriate public services to further growth in a local community.		
Annexation Agreements	Annexation Agreements, enabled under ORC 709.192, allow townships and municipalities to enter into an agreement for the purposes of the sharing of improvements and services in designated areas and/or parcels.	Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	Circleville, Circleville Township, OH Powell / Liberty Township, OH
Cooperative Economic Development Agreements (CEDA)	CEDAs are authorized under ORC 701.07 and enables municipalities and townships to enter into agreements governing development activities in designated areas. CEDAs are not taxing authorities like JEDDs, and no income taxes are levied. Violet Township and Canal Winchester currently participate in a CEDA agreement.	Conservation Areas Growth Areas Rural Commerce Areas Rural Management Areas	Canton, Canton Township, OH Medina, York Township, OH
Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD)	A JEDD is an entity formed by contract to create funds for the advancing growth and economic development, typically through the levy an income tax. They are formed through a process of public hearings and public input. JEDDs allow a municipality to expand its tax base without annexing township territory and can produce the additional funds necessary for a township to serve growing commercial areas by receiving a share of income taxes levied in the zone or district. (Joint Economic Development Zones are no longer permitted to be formed.)	Growth Areas	Springfield Township, Hamilton County, OH Sycamore Township, Hamilton County, OH Dayton / Miami Township, OH
Economic Development Programs	Provides economic and community development-related incentives and financial assistance to individuals, businesses and organizations to create and retain employment opportunities. Some of the most utilized economic development agencies / programs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA)Community Development Block Grants (Through FCRPC and ODSA)Sandusky County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)Workforce Training GrantJobs OhioJobs and Commerce Division- ODOT	Growth Areas Rural Commerce Areas Rural Management Areas	N/A

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Energy Special Improvement District (SIDs) and Property Assessed Clean Energy Financing	<p>Political subdivisions are authorized under ORC to create special energy improvement districts that offer property owners financing to install photovoltaic (PV) or solar-thermal systems on real property. Energy SIDs can also be formed as districts including noncontiguous property.</p> <p>Property Assessed Clean Energy financing can be used to establish funding for the improvements in an Energy SID. Rather than pay the projects’ costs up front or as repayment of a loan, PACE allows property owners to pay the costs over time as special assessments due with their property tax bills.</p>	All Planning Areas	Toledo Lucas County Port Authority Columbus Regional Energy SID
Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program	The Ohio EZ Program provides real property tax incentives for industrial-related businesses that expand or relocate. To secure benefits, businesses must apply to the local community, with final approval from the county commissioners. Most areas, with the exception of Townsend, York, and Madison Townships, are located in the EZ.	Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	N/A
Floodplain Overlay District	The purpose of Floodplain Overlay Districts is to reduce the potential for property damage and hazards to life caused by flooding. The regulations implement additional protections deemed locally-important and ensure consistency with the National Flood Insurance Program. Develops standards for locations of development and some additional standards for building integrity methods, and materials used for construction, and utilities standards.	Environmentally-Sensitive Areas Rural Management Areas	Springfield, OH Pittsburgh, PA Nashville, TN Loudoun County, VA
Scenic / Visual Overlay Districts and Protection	Protects and minimizes areas from visual and aesthetic pollution. Main tools are:	All Planning Areas	
Scenic Protection Overlay District:	Creates an overlay district applied to highly utilized corridors. Design standards and regulations apply to uses that designate a permit or review process, also applies to disturbance or construction of certain sizes and time periods.	All Planning Areas	Pittsburgh, PA Scenic Missouri Town of Philipstown, NY Redmond, WA
Model Billboard Ordinance:	Strengthens and clarifies city’s and county’s authority to regulate outdoor advertising. Can stand-alone or be incorporated into local code. Contains permitted, prohibited, and exempted uses along with permit for off-site billboards. Contains design standards.	All Planning Areas	www.scenic.org

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Stormwater Management Overlay District:	A stormwater management overlay is to protect existing properties and water quality by controlling water runoff from developed areas; to protect the environmental integrity of the existing wetlands; to preserve the water quality of wellhead protection areas, and to provide minimum design standards for storm water management facilities.	All Planning Areas	Anderson Township, OH CRWP Hamilton County, OH Geauga County, OH Pittsburgh, PA
Stream, Floodplain and Wetland Protection:	Model Ordinance for the Establishment of Riparian & Wetland Setbacks. Provides stream and wetland setback regulations.	Growth Areas	CRWP TMACOG Licking County, OH Hudson, OH Olmsted Falls, OH Dublin, OH Brecksville, OH Pittsburgh, PA
Tree and Woodland Protection:	Uses tree permits for removal and necessitates a plan for tree preservation and management that accounts for design, protection during construction of new residences.	All Planning Areas, except Environmentally-Sensitive Areas	Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Undermined Area Overlay District:	Undermined Area Overlay District regulations are intended to reduce the risk of property damage and life that may be caused by developing over underground mines.	Growth Areas	
Sandusky County Land Bank (Land Bank)	The Land Bank is a nonprofit corporation whose mission is to reduce property blight by strategically acquiring properties and return them to productive use. The Land Bank is governed by a Board of five directors, including the county treasurer and two of the three county commissioners.	Growth Areas	
Jobs Grants	Provides businesses with a municipal income tax rebate on created and retained jobs. Business eligibility, and the percentage and term of the rebate can be customized by the local government to attract and retain businesses defined as important.	Conservation Areas Growth Areas Rural Commerce Areas	Bellevue, OH Perrysburg, OH Northwood, OH
Property Maintenance Ordinances (and Vacant Property and Point of Sale Inspections)	Property maintenance ordinances ensure that properties remain in a safe, sanitary and attractive condition. These regulations can be locally defined, but the primary goal is to minimize nuisances and issues that create a blighting effect in the community.	Growth Areas (particularly in Downtown and Central Business Districts)	Berea, OH International Property Maintenance Code
Revitalization Districts & Entertainment Districts	A Revitalization District is a tool empowered under ORC 4301.81 (Division of Liquor Control) to provide for more liquor permits within community that is at-quota with D-5L permits. Up to 15 D-5L permits can be permitted in Revitalization Districts and up to 25 D-5L permits can be permitted in Entertainment Districts.	Growth Areas	Lancaster, OH Northwood, OH Middletown, OH Cincinnati, OH Toledo, OH

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Special Improvement Districts (SIDs)	Authorized under ORC 1710, SID is a tool created within the boundaries of any one municipal corporation, any one township, or any combination of contiguous municipal corporations and townships for the purpose of developing and implementing plans for public improvements and public services that benefit the district.	Growth Areas	Lancaster, OH
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	A TIF is an economic development tool available to local governments to finance public infrastructure attributed to a community development-based projects. In certain circumstances, TIFs can be used for residential rehabilitation projects. The incremental and increased property tax revenue generated in the TIF district from the improvements is used to retiring the debt.	Primarily Growth Areas but could be used in other Planning Areas	Fremont, OH Northwood, OH Pickerington, OH
Transportation Improvement District (TID)	TIDs were created to promote intergovernmental and public-private cooperation by coordinating resources in transportation projects. Proposed projects are considered based on their ability to address at least one of the following needs: Economic Development, Safety, Preservation, or Capacity.		Wood County, OH Sandusky County, OH
Transportation and Connectivity Advancement Programs	Provides grant funding for projects that promote and advance active mobility infrastructure. These programs are:	All Planning Areas, except for Environmentally-Sensitive Areas	N/A
Capital Improvement Program:	These are the predominant sources of local funds. Local communities can set aside line items in the capital improvement budget for the construction of bicycle facilities.		N/A
Developer Dedications:	Developer dedications require the developer to construct bicycling facilities as a condition for enabling a project to occur, with a Development Agreement (DA) is usually negotiated with the landowners prior to the project proceeding.		N/A
ODOT Safety Programs			
Safe Routes to School (SRTS)	The purpose of SRTS is to encourage and enable students in grades K-8 to walk or ride their bicycle to school. ODOT provides grant funds for engineering projects (improved crossings, sidewalks, etc.) or non-engineering projects (education and encouragement programs). Eligible school communities must first have an ODOT approved STP to be eligible for funding.	All Planning Areas Conservation Areas Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	See ODOT’s School Travel Plan website

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Programs	Clean Trails Fund: Provides 75% match funds to local governments, park and joint recreation districts, conservancy districts, soil and water conservation districts, and non-profit organizations for community projects that will acquire trail corridors, build and improve trail infrastructure including regional trail systems, links to statewide trails, preservation of natural corridors and connections from urban areas to recreational areas.	Conservation Areas Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	See ODNR’s website for list of past grant awards.
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):	Provides up to 50% reimbursement assistance for state and local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.	Conservation Areas Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	See ODNR’s website for list of past grant awards.
Nature Works:	Provides up to 75% reimbursement assistance for local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) to for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.	Conservation Areas Growth Areas Rural Management Areas	See ODNR’s website for list of past grant awards.
Recreational Trails Program:	Provides eligible entities with up to 80% grant funding for the development and improvement of non-motorized and motorized trails. Projects include the creation and maintenance of trails and trail support facilities, improved access for people with disabilities and education about trail safety and the environment.	All Planning Areas	See ODNR’s website for list of past grant awards.
Water Trails Program:	Stretches of waterway that have been identified as a recreational resource by ODNR can be classified as official Water Trails. Water trails promote public use of waterways and create educational, recreational, and environmentally rewarding opportunities for paddlers and others. These trails support tourism and encourage conservation and stewardship.		Blanchard River Water Trail, Great Miami River Watershed Trail
Zoning Ordinances and Resolutions	Local governments have the authority to develop zoning ordinances and regulations to guide growth and development, preserve natural resources and amenities, and to build community character. Sandusky County does not have county-wide zoning. Instead zoning regulations are adopted by the individual townships, cities and villages in accordance with the ORC. 11 of the county's 13 unincorporated townships have adopted zoning. Townsend, York, and Madison Townships do not have zoning.	All Planning Areas	N/A