

A. Summary

There are three key components of any comprehensive planning process: gathering and analyzing existing conditions data; development of goals, objectives and strategies; and preparation of the plan. To develop a Plan, existing conditions information is integrated with the goals, objectives and strategies. The Comprehensive Plan is important because it serves as the City's official policy document for City Commission, Planning Commission and the Administration when addressing growth and development issues.

When conceiving the process for updating the Comprehensive Plan, the City made a strong commitment to conduct a completely open and inclusive planning process. This commitment was honored in a way that few communities of Sandusky's size have ever attempted. Throughout the update process, key opportunities for involvement were provided for everyone who lived, worked or played in the Sandusky community.

- **Community Forum 1: Idea Gathering** – On May 29 and June 12, 1997, several hundred ideas were generated by citizens and organized according to elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Community Forum 2: Goal Setting** – On September 18, 1997, citizens worked with ideas generated at Community Forum 1 to prepare draft goals and strategies for the plan.
- **Open House: Draft Plan** – On March 4, 1998, the full draft of the Comprehensive Plan was made available to the community for review and comment.

In addition to these meeting opportunities, the Advisory Committee met four times.

During the Comprehensive Plan update a variety of community processes were used to evaluate the 1999 Plan as outlined below:

- **Interviews** – On November 6, 13, and 18 2003 interviews were conducted with the City Commission, Planning Commission, and administration to review the Plan's goals and objectives.
- **Focus Groups** – On November 6, 13, and 18 2003 focus groups were conducted with the public to identify weaknesses in the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Work Session** – On January 5, 2004 a work session was conducted with the administration to review the Plan's strategies and provide recommendations for modification/deletion. The administration also identified activities that were underway or had been completed since the 1999 Comprehensive Plan.
- **Work Session** – On February 12, 2004 a work session was conducted with the City Commission and Planning Commission to review the recommendations of the administration regarding the strategies and to also provide further input into the update process.

B. Key Recommendations

The 1999 Plan included six goals, 36 objectives and 155 strategies which are outlined in the following elements. Many of the objectives and strategies have been deleted as a part of the 2004 Update. However, the essence of the Plan remains unchanged. The essence of the Plan is to encourage redevelopment and reinvestment within an overall vision of the City. When considering all the strategies together, the following themes emerge:

1. Encouraging redevelopment and reinvestment, and supporting new development.
2. Updating zoning code, sign code and subdivision regulations to include state-of-the-art standards and techniques that implement the Plan, and recommending appropriate downzoning of residential neighborhoods.
3. Resolving water and sewer issues with Erie County.

4. Encouraging health care facilities to remain and expand in the City.
5. Aggressively promoting and assisting local manufacturing business retention and expansion, and expanding City tourism industry activities.
6. Fostering waterfront development that supports desirable tourism growth and new residential living.
7. Encouraging residential development in appropriate locations, maintaining property values, facilitating affordable housing and increasing homeownership.
8. Preparing an update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
9. Providing additional cross-town access, improving the street network, supporting commercial shipping and supporting recreational boating.
10. Continuing aggressive enforcement of the Existing Structures Code to insure that residential and commercial properties are maintained.

C. Goals

For each element of the Comprehensive Plan, the following goals have been developed and adopted by City Commission. These goals establish the policy framework for the future of Sandusky.

1. Community Facilities and Services

Maintain and expand the current level of community facilities and services emphasizing safety, reliability, and affordability.

2. Economic Development

Strengthen the economic base of the community by supporting existing businesses while continuously seeking to expand the number of businesses within Sandusky.

3. Housing

Promote a range of quality housing opportunities for all income levels while encouraging neighborhood revitalization, increased homeownership, and the construction of new single-family housing.

4. Land Use

The goal is to ensure an adequate land base for growth, with emphasis on Downtown and Bayfront mixed uses, neighborhood preservation, new single-family housing, industrial development outside downtown, year-round tourism and sensitivity to historic character and resources.

5. Parks and Recreation

Expand year round recreational activities and cultural events for all ages and backgrounds while maintaining the quality of existing parks and recreational facilities.

6. Transportation

Maintain and improve the existing transportation network as well as the transportation services in order to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and tourists.

D. Principles

The following general principals are a foundation of the Land Use Element:

1. The downtown will be revitalized as an exciting mixed-use area with retail businesses, lodging, offices, government and cultural arts. The Downtown will be strongly linked to the Bayfront.
2. New investment will create a vibrant residential neighborhood east of Downtown, providing new housing opportunities for residents.
3. All neighborhoods will be strengthened to create safe, lively and stable areas to raise children and own a home. Rehabilitation and infill new construction will occur throughout the City. New single-family subdivisions will occur in the City's far western area.
4. Neighborhood business districts will become stable and will continue to offer local goods and services to nearby residents in a pedestrian-friendly environment.
5. The industrial base will be concentrated on the west side of the City, will be diverse and will continue to offer residents outstanding employment opportunities.
6. Public access to the Bayfront will be extensive and whenever possible, a public open space network will be developed along Cold Creek, Mills Creek, Pipe Creek and the Bayfront, linking the City's various neighborhoods.
7. Tourism will continue to be a vital component of Sandusky's economy.
8. Traffic circulation will be improved and the City will facilitate improved access to Cedar Point, as well as within Sandusky's neighborhoods.
9. A formal neighborhood planning program should be implemented as a follow-up to the Comprehensive Plan, and the City's Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations should be updated.

E. Considerations of the Plan

1. Citywide

Partly due to its age and success as a major port on Lake Erie, Sandusky is nearly fully developed except for the West Planning Area. The City's development pattern and character reflect two centuries of active building, commerce and human activity. As a result the City finds a mix of uses in close proximity to each other, sometimes creating conflicts (especially between residential and nonresidential uses), but also creating neighborhoods of interest and activity.

The land use recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan are respective of the current pattern of development and attempt to consolidate land uses in some cases, support the mix of uses found in other areas and seek to direct new growth and redevelopment in a way that benefits the City, businesses, property owners and residents into the future.

2. West Planning Area

The West Planning Area is the most likely portion of Sandusky that will experience significant new construction over the planning period. This area has been the focus of new development over the past five years and this is expected to continue. The land use recommendations focus on expanding industrial development in this area and directing new residential construction further west in the Bardshar Road area.

A new collector street is proposed linking Venice Road and George Street through the proposed industrial area, with a connection to Edgewater Avenue. This is intended to facilitate truck access throughout the industrial area. The proposed collector street will use the existing Ferndale Drive right-of-way in part and a new right-of-way will be required to connect the existing right-of-way to Venice Road. In addition, George Street should be upgraded south of Venice Road. This is intended to facilitate truck access and development in this industrial area.

3. Central Planning Area

The Central Planning Area contains Sandusky's downtown and working waterfront, its older industrial areas, a significant portion of its neighborhoods and several major public facilities. The land use recommendations seek to focus future public and private efforts to maintain stability and encourage infill development, redevelopment and reinvestment as priorities for this planning area.

An east-west arterial is recommended to connect Milan Road and Camp Street, located directly north of the Conrail rail line. This new arterial would improve cross-town traffic flow which would facilitate local traffic flow, particularly during seasonal high visitor traffic periods.

The Plan also recommends that Warren Street north of Monroe Street be reconstructed as a boulevard with a landscaped median. Warren Street would serve as an aesthetic focal point for the neighborhood east of the Downtown, should serve to attract new investment to the City and would provide improved access to the Bayfront. It would also serve to reroute US 6 through the Downtown and Bayfront. The Warren Street right-of-way is currently sufficient to support this proposal.

4. East Planning Area

The East Planning Area is expected to continue to attract new development and redevelopment along the Bayfront and should see additional infill development within its neighborhoods and commercial areas. This area contains a mix of very different land uses: boathouses, resort and condominium development, suburban scale retail and significant wetlands. The Port Development Plan provides land use recommendations that are supported by the Comprehensive Plan, particularly for redevelopment along First Street. The East Planning Area is bounded by Sandusky Bay, the eastern City limits, Perkins Avenue, and Meigs, Monroe, Hancock, Scott, and Campbell streets.

5. Cedar Point Planning Area

The Cedar Point Planning Area is dominated by Cedar Point Amusement Park and the single-family homes located along the Chausee. Cedar Point Amusement Park is recommended to continue as a commercial land use in keeping with its historical development pattern. The Chausee should continue as a very low density residential area comprised of single-family homes. Two-family and multi-family structures would not be appropriate along the Chausee, nor would nonresidential uses such as restaurants or retail establishments. The Plan acknowledges the existing multi-family development, the Point Retreat project, at the far east end of the Chausee. The strip of land connecting SR 6 and the Chausee is recommended to continue as open space.