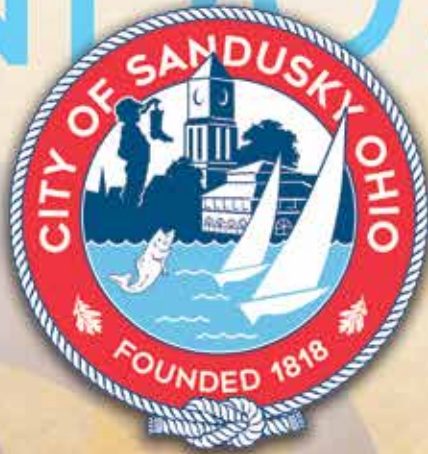


Annual Report 2016

SANDUSKY



VibrantLivableConnectedDestinationCelebrated

Message from Commission President & City Manager

In each of the past three years, commissioners and staff have taken on different but important tasks in the transformation of our community. In 2014, the commission made difficult decisions about the future of the city that led to the Issue 8 coalition and the passage of an income and admissions tax increase that stabilized our finances and rebuilt trust with large sections of the community.

In 2015, with the momentum of Issue 8 behind us, we embarked on developing new comprehensive and strategic plans. This process included stakeholder and community engagement, and the Bicentennial Vision was unanimously adopted by the city commission with broad support from our citizens.

In 2016, we built on the foundation provided by the Bicentennial Vision. We created a 5-Year Capital Improvement process for the first time, so that we could transparently project and plan for the infrastructure that would be necessary to make the vision a reality. Included in the 5-year plan were new programs dedicated to local streets, trees, sidewalks and neighborhood parks.

In addition to building programs for infrastructure, 2016 included creating and formalizing programs for housing, blight elimination and economic development. The implementation of these programs has leveraged significant private investment. In addition, 2016 was the first year we began to implement our Commercial Blight Elimination Program, made possible by dedicating overages in the EMS fund to the demolition of dangerous, vacant structures. Demolition at Sunoco, G & C Foundry and impending demolitions of Wisteria, 425 Warren and American Crayon have been made possible by that program.

We also significantly ramped up our code enforcement programs in 2016. This allowed implementation of a rental registration program, hiring a full-time zoning inspector and policy changes that included expediting our process for abating tall grass, weeds and litter on private property. Consistent progress in this area on a year-to-year basis will lead to significant and incremental improvement over time.

2016 also saw the expansion of our Community Police Program and the creation of a Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator position, both efforts to better serve the community and improve quality of life in our neighborhoods. We

began implementation of our Nuisance Property Legislation and also embarked on a planning effort to target resources to neighborhoods through our Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative. All of this was recommended in the Bicentennial Vision.

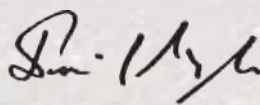
In 2016, we began preliminary work on larger, transformative projects recommended by the Bicentennial Vision Plan. This included supporting Sandusky City Schools' campaign to build new schools which will provide a major boost to the economy and improve the learning environment for our students. We also undertook a slum and blight study and created a Local Landmarks District. This assisted in securing state historic tax credits for the redevelopment of the largest block of vacant buildings in Downtown Sandusky and a potential new home for our administrative offices, which would anchor a mixed-use development that also includes housing and commercial space.

We also entered into significant partnerships that will provide funding and other resources for Sandusky Bay, our neighborhoods, residential blight elimination, downtown revitalization and more. Collectively, over \$5 million in philanthropic, sponsorship, or state and federal support was committed in 2016 toward the implementation of the Bicentennial Vision. These commitments demonstrate the belief in Sandusky's future and our ability to keep moving forward. We are thankful for the support of our partners, particularly a hard-working, committed and talented staff.

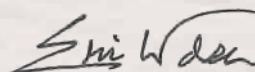
On the eve of our bicentennial, we are enthusiastic about Sandusky's future. We look forward to a continued partnership with the community as we continue the hard and everlasting work of addressing our community's challenges and realizing its potential.

Sincerely,

Dennis Murray, Jr., Commission President



Eric Wobser, City Manager





City Commission & Administration

All of the accomplishments listed in the 2016 annual report were made possible by the support of the City Commission and Administration.

City Commission

In 2016, voters approved charter changes which extended the amount of years that a Commissioner can consecutively serve from 8 to 12 years.

Finance

Received awards from Auditor of the State of Ohio and from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States & Canada (GFOA).

IT

Migrated the City email service to Microsoft Exchange Online for Government to enable collaboration between users and the community.

Implemented a City GIS (geographic information system) solution to investigate resident concerns and to interact with residents more effectively.

Law

Successfully negotiated contracts with all three of the city's collective bargaining units.

Human Resources

Implemented the city's first employee wellness program.

A Special Thank You to the City of Sandusky Employees Who Retired in 2016:

Mark Gilliam
Carol Harris
Don Icsman

MaryAnn Leone
Steve Ritzenthaler
Todd Schoen

Glenn Szatala
Dave Trent

Grant Funding

During the course of 2016, more than \$5M in grants were awarded for nearly 20 projects. Thank you to our local, state and federal partners for making this possible:

- Buckeye Broadband
- Cedar Fair
- Civista Bank
- Dorn Foundation
- Erie County Community Foundation
- Firelands Regional Medical Center
- Lake Erie Shores & Islands
- Mylander Foundation
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Ohio Department of Public Safety
- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Ohio Development Services Agency
- Ohio Housing Finance Agency
- Ohio Public Works Commission
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Wightman/Wieber Foundation





Focus on a Regional Economy

The strength of the regional labor market, as well as the quality of its infrastructure and natural resources will dictate whether companies or individuals choose to invest in and make Sandusky their home.

- In 2016, the City partnered with entities such as The Firelands Partnership and the Erie County Economic Development Corporation (ECEDC), strengthening the regional economy. Focus areas included regional infrastructure and increased educational programs to support entrepreneurs.

Develop and Attract a Talented Workforce

Higher education and advanced training and skills are critical to securing sustainable employment in the 21st century.



In 2016, the City was a strong partner to Sandusky City Schools in their campaign to build new schools. The new schools will create **\$70 million** in **capital investment** and provide a 21st century learning environment for students.

Revitalization of Vacant Buildings and Blighted Land

With targeted investment in vacant buildings and blighted property, Sandusky can make large sites available for industrial and commercial investment and also take advantage of increased demand for downtown office and living space.

Cleared **20 acres** of land for development

Attracted approximately **\$1.28 million** in public and private investment

Identified **13 properties** in need of demolition



demolished or transferred to beneficial owner and undergoing rehabilitation



currently in process of being demolished or under contract to be demolished

Used creative funding mechanisms such as re-allocating EMS fund surpluses and applying for state grants to more efficiently tackle blighted and high risk structures.

Vibrant City strategies are designed to strengthen Sandusky's regional economy by leveraging existing assets, partnering to create new opportunities, and supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Support Entrepreneurs & Small Business

The best economic development tactics focus on support and growth of existing businesses and creating a culture of entrepreneurialism.

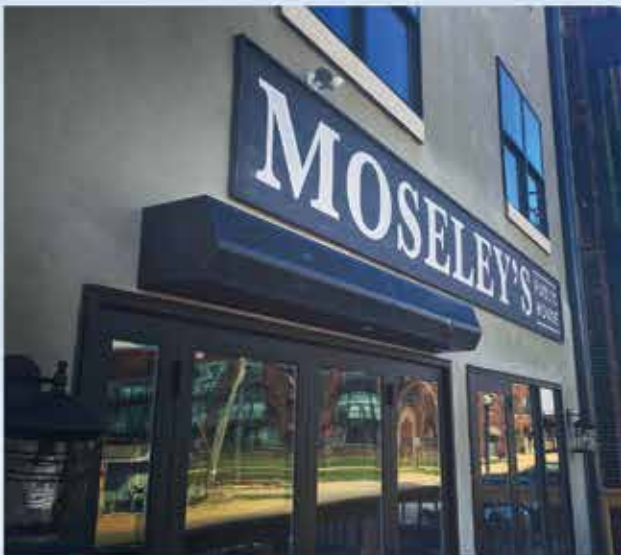


In 2016, the City created new economic development programs that:

Assisted **17 businesses** with **21 projects**

Leveraged **\$427,093** in private investment

Contributed to an increase of **70 jobs**



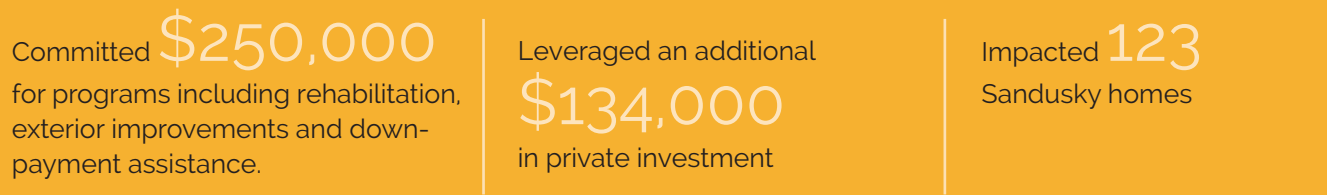


Livable City

Implement Housing Programs to Maintain Supply & Stimulate Demand

The quality of housing in Sandusky is an asset that must be maintained, preserved, improved, and protected.

In 2016, the City rolled out programs for residential investment and nuisance abatement and ramped up demolition and code enforcement programs. New residential incentive programs in 2016 included:

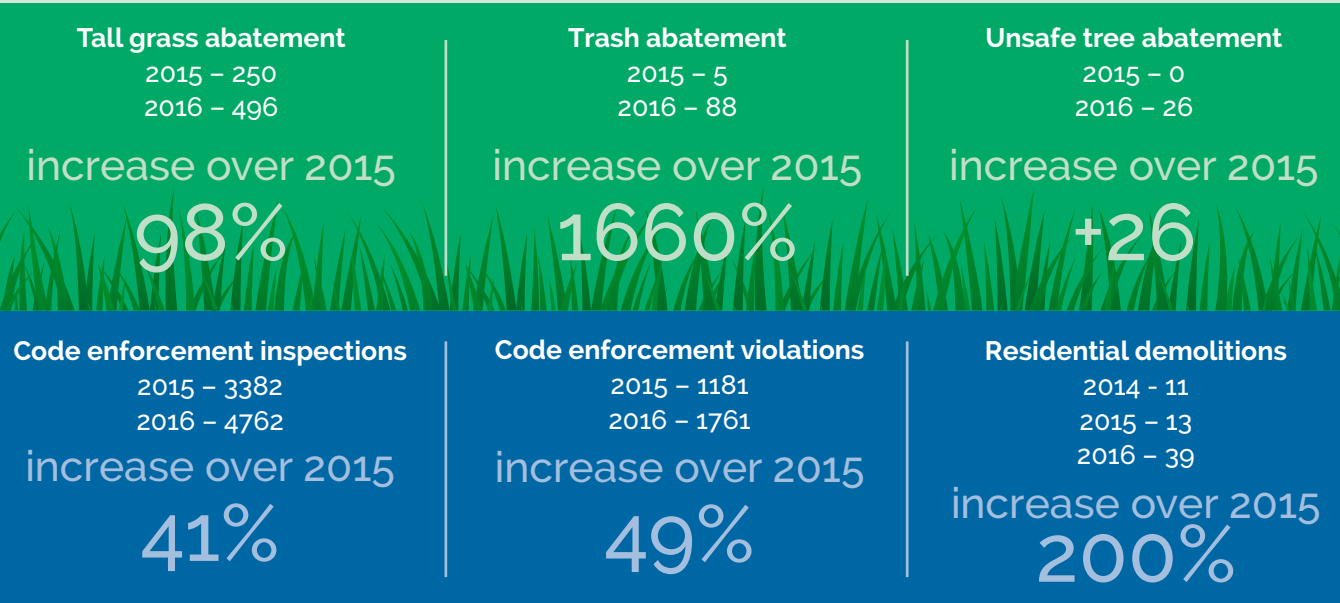


Down-payment Assistance Assisted **32 new homes.**



Blight Elimination & Code Enforcement

The City dramatically ramped up code enforcement efforts, added new staff and rolled out rental registration and nuisance abatement programs. Programs included:



Partnered with Erie County and the Erie County Land Reutilization Corporation to take over the day-to-day management of the Erie County Land Bank. This partnership made it possible to receive over **\$1 million in funding** from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency for residential demolition.

Sandusky's neighborhoods will benefit from a comprehensive approach that improves housing stock, eliminates blight, invests in neighborhood amenities and builds strong safety programs.



Focus on Improving Neighborhood Infrastructure

2016 included the adoption of a new 5-year Capital Plan that guided the creation of new neighborhood infrastructure programs. These programs included:

Neighborhood Park Program

As part of the Bicentennial Vision process, the City has committed to improving one park per year. Over the past two years, the city has completed or funded to improve Shoreline Park, Orlando Pace Park, Wilbert Street Park, and Lions Park.

Tree Program

Continued investment in tree maintenance and efforts to sustain our urban forest by removing 233 dead, dying or nuisance trees, trimmed 150 trees and planted 145 trees.

Sidewalk Program

To create a more walkable city, the sidewalk program was created. In 2016, the City repaired 282 sidewalk and driveway slabs.

Local Street Resurfacing & Reconstruction Program

Paved sections or entirety of city streets: Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Ogontz, Erie, Caldwell, McKelvey, Franklin, Neil, Bell and the Meigs Street Pier parking lot and turn-around.

Build Community & Target Neighborhood Investment

Hosted community building events and partnered with community members and Sandusky anchors to host the first city-wide cleanup.

Programmed a winter festival in a tennis court turned ice skating rink. The family-friendly event attracted more than 100 people.

Commenced with the Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative which initially identified six diverse neighborhoods to target investments.



Support Neighborhood Safety

All efforts to revitalize Sandusky will fail if the city is not perceived as safe. The Bicentennial Vision places a priority on all of the diverse factors that will make Sandusky a safer place, particularly the efforts of our police and fire.



Purchased a new Horton ambulance with powered transport stretchers that automatically lift and load patients weighing up to 750 lbs.

Implemented nuisance billing for excessive consumption of police services in January of 2016.
42 properties were notified of nuisance activities.



Added a second Community Impact Officer. One officer focuses east of Hayes Avenue to the east end of town. The second officer focuses west of Hayes Avenue to the west end of town, as well as downtown.



Kg **Onur** (pronounced: Honor) arrived in country in October 2016 and was certified on December 20, 2016. Kg Onur's handler is Officer Ed Ohlemacher.



Photo courtesy of Sandusky Register

Implemented three key community watch modules including completing 723 business walks, 865 park walks and 751 neighborhood walks. During these walks officers removed themselves from their cruisers and engaged with businesses, citizens and visitors.

Police department personnel trained **1,977.5 hours** to keep officers current on continuing education. Classes included crisis de-escalation with a focus on mental illness, community-police relations, and human trafficking.



Purchased and received a new Sutphen SPH100 Aerial Ladder Truck to replace a 21-year-old ladder truck.



Photo courtesy of Sandusky Register

Sandusky Fire trained 1897.5 hours as a department, covering topics from medical to hazmat awareness to rescue training.

Photo courtesy of Kyle Roth





Connected City

Ferry Service to Cedar Point

As part of the 2015 Bicentennial Vision Process, residents asked for the return of the ferry service from downtown Sandusky to Cedar Point. In 2016, the Jet Express partnered with Cedar Point and the City to bring back this ferry service. In 2017, they will expand services from 1 trip to **6 trips daily**.



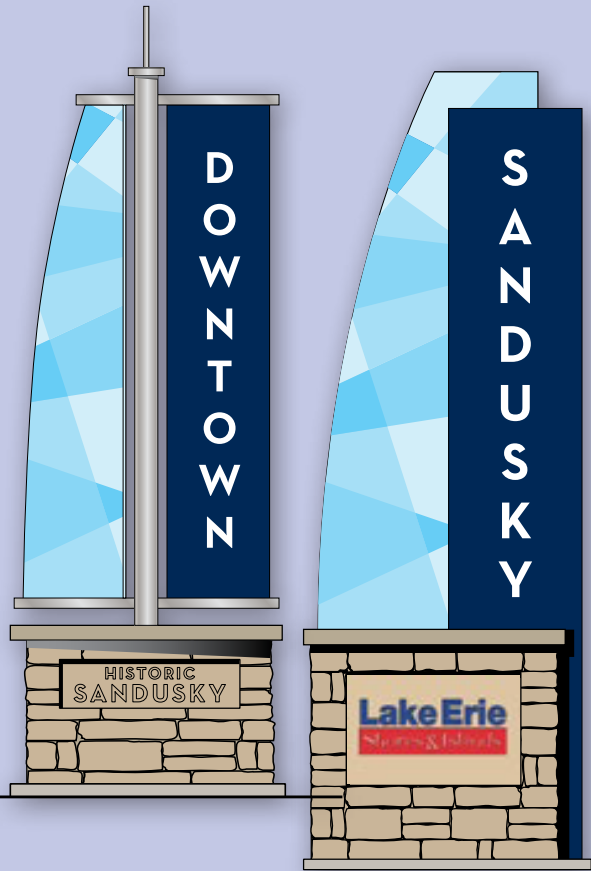
Public Transit

Increased ridership with Sandusky Transit System (STS) by **165%** over 2008.

Launched Mobile Data Tablets (MDT) on our Dial-a-Ride service. These devices allow dispatchers and drivers to communicate without radios, allowing drivers to be routed instantaneously if any issues arise.

Completed a comprehensive fleet replacement plan that identified the need for new and more fuel-efficient vehicles. Delivery of **18 new buses** is expected in 2017.

Sandusky must be connected to the global economy and the region and must work to provide a more seamless connection from its neighborhoods to employment, Sandusky Bay and downtown.



Wayfinding

To make it easier and more pleasant to navigate and find local businesses and attractions, Sandusky will implement wayfinding and gateway projects.

- Created a wayfinding steering committee consisting of institutional partners: Lake Erie Shores & Islands, Cedar Fair, Firelands Regional Medical Center, Erie Regional Planning and Sandusky Main Street.
- Secured private funding, along with a local and state component, to allow the project to be completed in 2017.

Capital Planning

A capital plan assists in prioritizing the city's planned investments in infrastructure over the next five years.

Created a transparent **5-year plan**, the first in the city's history. This plan prioritizes investments in infrastructure and encompasses all facets of the city including **water** and **sewer** infrastructure, **recreation** and **neighborhood planning**.





Destination City



Destination Downtown

Downtown Sandusky is a premier historic downtown of scale on the shores of Lake Erie. It is positioned to serve as the centerpiece of the Lake Erie Shores and Islands region and to draw visitors and investment from throughout Ohio and beyond.

- Started and completed a revitalized Jackson Street parking lot. The parking lot received over \$250,000 in federal and philanthropic funding and is complete with green infrastructure, bioretention swales, and pervious pavement to reduce the runoff entering Lake Erie.

- Began the process of planning Jackson Street Pier and Shoreline Drive, by soliciting RFQs and selecting a design and engineering firm. The ultimate goal is to activate the space and enhance public access to the water.

- Beautified facades of buildings and improved signage by allocating \$159,028 to local businesses. Examples of comprehensive storefront improvements include Daly's Pub, S&H Blinds & Floors, Imagine Baking and Harbor Creek Designs.

- Raised funds for several downtown kiosks as part of the wayfinding project.

- Replaced old corrugated trash cans in downtown with matching black metal cans.



*Photo
courtesy of
Sandusky
Register*



As people choose to live in the same type of places as they visit, investing in projects that benefit both tourists and residents has become paramount.

Recreation & Waterfront

Lake Erie is Sandusky's most precious economic and recreational asset and needs to be protected, activated and leveraged. It's important to improve and prioritize waterfront access of all kinds, as well as to provide enhanced recreational opportunities to enhance quality of life for Sandusky residents.

In 2016, the City incorporated several **green infrastructure projects** including:

- Partnering with advocacy groups such as the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in the fight against algal blooms. These partnerships resulted in funding towards the Sandusky Bay Initiative and cyanotoxin testing equipment.
- Implemented storm water program to begin creation of sustainable water and sewer systems.



Completed planning or secured funding for several **transformational projects**. These projects are designed to enhance public access to the waterfront. These projects included:

- Lions Park
- Jackson Street Pier
- Sandusky Bay Pavilion
- Former Griffing Airport site

These waterfront destinations will be linked in the future by implementing the **Sandusky Bay Pathway Plan**.



Arts & Culture

Making Sandusky a cultural community will enhance the quality of life for existing residents while also helping the city build on its destination status.



Established an Events Advisory Board

to analyze existing cultural programming and locations to ensure consistent and quality programming on a year-round basis.

The Bicentennial Commission voted to incorporate **Public Art** as an important legacy of the 2018 Bicentennial Celebration.



Celebrated City

SANDUSKY 2018

The Bicentennial

The Bicentennial Commission partnered with city staff in 2016 to raise funds and develop a comprehensive plan for the 2018 Bicentennial Celebration.

Partnered to raise over **\$300,000** of private funds to support Bicentennial events and projects in 2018.

Planned signature events such as a **Bicentennial Ball** to take place at the Cedar Point Ballroom and a Tall Ships celebration, **Sandusky Festival of Sail**.

Focused on prioritizing **legacy projects** for the Bicentennial Celebration.



The impending Bicentennial provides an opportunity to redefine Sandusky, celebrate assets and build on the City's proud history.

Brand, Marketing & Storytelling

By choosing to tell its own story rather than letting itself be defined by others, Sandusky is taking control of its destiny by highlighting its assets and people.

The city began a video series, "Be A Pioneer" campaign that launched in November. The series highlights residents, neighborhood activists and entrepreneurs that are investing in Sandusky and leading change in their own neighborhoods. The two videos released in 2016 were viewed 35,000+ times.



Getting Social



City of Sandusky – Government (@Sandusky2018)



@Sandusky2018

Social media provided affordable opportunities to connect with residents and visitors. We created Facebook and Twitter accounts to directly communicate with residents. Over 2500 people now follow the City of Sandusky accounts on Facebook and 500+ people have chosen to follow on Twitter, resulting with 100,000 impressions over Twitter and a reach of 500,000+ on Facebook.

City Commission

Commission President **Dennis Murray, Jr.**

Commission Vice President **Dick Brady**

Commissioner **Nikki Lloyd**

Commissioner **Greg Lockhart**

Commissioner **Wes Poole**

Commissioner **Naomi Twine**

Commissioner **Dave Waddington**

Department Heads

Planning Director **Angela Byington**

Fire Chief **Dave Degnan**

Law Director **Justin Harris**

Public Works Director **Aaron Klein**

City Commission Clerk **Kelly Kresser**

Chief Development Officer **Matt Lasko**

Public Services Director **Brad Link**

Police Chief **John Orzech**

Finance Director **Hank Solowiej**

City Manager **Eric Wobser**

