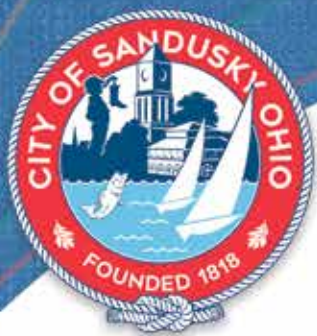


# Annual Report 2017





# 2 Message from Commission President & City Manager



Dennis Murray, Jr.



Eric Wobser

Sandusky's Bicentennial is finally here! When the Bicentennial Commission was created in early 2014, the City had just made the biggest and most painful budget cuts in its history, with worse still on the horizon. All of that changed over the next four years with the passage of Issue 8, followed by the creation of a Bicentennial Vision and strategic plan with unprecedented public involvement and input. Ever since then, the city has aggressively executed that plan.

But the real difference here is all of you. As the city's vision came into focus, it was all of you who volunteered and invested. You have invested in your homes as code enforcement and city housing programs have made that a smarter investment. You have invested in our schools with the largest building project in Blue Streak history. You have invested in your businesses, keeping jobs and creating new ones. You have volunteered your time to clean up Sandusky and guide planners as we polish existing parks and public spaces and dare to dream of new ones. You make the difference between a collection of buildings and a real community.

Sandusky is a special place, with proud and diverse history and culture. Even as we celebrate our

past and present success, we are tackling new challenges. We are half way through the Bicentennial Vision with much already accomplished, and this time next year it will be time to dream big again.

For now, take a moment to soak it all in. The Bicentennial Commission has exceeded our wildest hopes and has planned an incredible set of large and small events throughout the rest of the year. And even as we continue to plan for and rebuild this great city, take time to learn about our past. 2018 is a time to celebrate Sandusky's amazing past, present and future.

Cheers to 2018 and Sandusky's future!

Dennis Murray, Jr.  
Commission President

Eric Wobser  
City Manager

# City Commission & Administration<sup>3</sup>

All of the accomplishments listed in the 2017 annual report were made possible by the support of the City Commission and Administration.

## City Commission

- Increased opportunities to interact with the community they serve through Coffee with a Commissioner and the organization of Community Clean-ups.

## Finance

- Implemented Phase 1 of the Financial Software Upgrade Project.
- Supported the Village of Milan in assisting in processing payroll, issuing W-2s, and paying vendors until they hired a new Village Treasurer.
- Received awards from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) and the Auditor of the State of Ohio.

## IT

- Implemented an emergency installation of a new phone system. This was done without interruption between the community and city offices.
- Began the development phase of a new website for the City of Sandusky which will greatly improve the users' ability to find information, complete forms and pay bills online.
- City GIS published a total of 462 items to ArcGIS Online. The 462 items include 132 individual feature layers, 75 maps, 30 web apps. Remainder were service definitions and operational files.
- Our GIS work was showcased three times including an ECGISAB presentation to state representatives, an Ohio GIS Conference presentation, and our Tree Inventory App was featured on the Ohio URISA website.

## Law

- Prepared 234 Ordinances and 59 Resolutions.
- Completed a thorough review of the City's 46 Boards & Commissions which resulted in the elimination of four committees, two commission, and one board, modifications to 12 different committee, boards, and commissions, and the creation of one new board and one new commission.
- Amending Zoning Code and Property Maintenance Code to help administer and regulate "transient rental."

## Human Resources

- In 2017, the city hired over 100 employees. This included full-time, part-time, and seasonal positions.

## Grant Funding

Various grants were awarded for projects during the course of 2017. Thank you to our local, state, and federal partners for making this possible:

- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Erie County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Ohio Public Works Commission
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
- Lake Erie Shores & Islands
- Firelands Regional Medical Center
- Cedar Fair
- Active Transportation Fund
- Civista Bank
- Mylander Foundation
- Dorn Foundation

## A Special Thank You to the City of Sandusky Employees Who Retired in 2017:

- Dave Degnan
- Jonathon Huffman
- Penny Randleman
- Daniel Wood







# Vibrant City

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.



## Revitalization of Vacant Buildings and Blighted Land

- Cleared **23.5 acres** of land for development.
- **\$1.5 million** in public and private investment in environmental remediation and commercial and industrial blight removal.
- **44 properties demolished** through the Erie County Land Reutilization Corporation, privately, and City Contract.
- **17 properties** are currently in process of being demolished or under contract to be demolished.
- The Vacant Property Registration Program, managed by the Sandusky Fire Department, has **helped reduce the number of vacant commercial buildings** from 115 in 2012 to 12 in 2018.

# Develop and Attract a Talented Workforce

**Collaborated** with **Bowling Green State University** and **Cedar Fair** to establish a bachelor's degree program in Resort and Attraction Management. This will bring classes and student housing to downtown Sandusky and offer students the opportunity to work with local

businesses to gain experience. The project received \$710,000 in state funding in 2018 and is scheduled to break ground in 2019 and open in 2020.



## Support Entrepreneurs & Small Businesses

Over  
**\$600,000**  
committed to  
27 projects and  
20 distinct  
businesses

Leveraged  
**\$4+ million**  
in private  
funds

Contributed  
to an  
increase of  
almost **90**  
**new jobs**

Almost  
**\$300,000**  
in Signage  
and Facade  
projects

Over **\$2**  
**million** in  
Small Business  
Assistance  
projects

### Notable projects:

Kasper Collision, Bait House Brewery, renovation of the space for CrossFit Sandusky, Hobbs Lock and Key exterior, Barra, Derrick's Diner, Tim Dorsey Fitness, American Colors, Inc., Sandusky Wine Merchant







# Livable City

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

**Replaced sidewalks at 29 locations** city-wide, including several locations downtown that were reported as inaccessible by the City ADA Board.

**Forestry planted 125 trees**, trimmed 159 trees and removed 129 trees. The City was also recognized as a **Tree City USA** for **27 consecutive years**.

The **Neighborhood Park Program** saw numerous improvements including:

- New scoreboard at AMVETS/Erie Blacktop field
- New basketball hoops at Orlando Pace Park
- Rebuild of Wilber Park
- New play equipment and addition to existing play structure at Lions Park
- Repaired the shelter roof at Shoreline Park
- Improved landscaping at the Cholera Cemetery Memorial Statue
- Planted a monarch pollinator garden at the Cholera Cemetery
- Planted 4,800 plants on each of the 8 floral mounds in Washington Park

Completed the **second phase of Lions Park improvements**, that included

reconstruction of the parking lot and improving the green spaces, both of which include "green" infrastructure, such as rain gardens, tree plantings, greenways, and bio-infiltration.

**Reconstructed Venice Heights Boulevard**, and portions of LaSalle Street and Winnebago Drive. Resurfaced portions of Olds, Shelby, Wayne, North Depot and Washington Court. In addition, the following streets were treated with an asphalt sealer proven to extend service life: Hayes, Columbus, W. Madison, Poplar, Fulton, Shelby, W. Adams and Huntington. Routine maintenance of alleys and potholes was drastically improved.

Installed and utilized a **new carbon feed system at BIWW**, demonstrating that the water plant is now capable of effectively responding to a large Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB), if necessary.

Completed several **wastewater storm water projects** allowing for reduction of combined sewer overflows, including increasing capacity of the wastewater treatment plant from 42 MGD.



# Implement Housing Programs to Maintain Supply & Stimulate Demand

## Committed nearly \$360,000

of new funds across all four programs (rehabilitation, exterior improvements, down payment assistance, landscaping), including in model blocks.

## 245 total houses were

assisted (126 in 2016) –

NOTE: some overlap due to landscaping being used with other programs.

- 55 Down payment assistance
- 59 Landscaping
- 14 Substantial redevelopment
- 117 Exterior improvements

## Leveraged an additional

**\$1,000,000+** (\$134,000 in 2016) in private construction investment and 55 home purchases. Of the 55 homes purchased using the Down Payment Assistance Program:

- 26 were previously vacant (12 in 2016)
- 48 were purchased by first time home buyers (29 in 2016)
- 22 were purchased by residents moving from outside the City of Sandusky (9 in 2016)



# Blight Elimination & Code Enforcement

- Increased weed and abatement internal capacity in 2017
- Increased part-time seasonal staff from 2 employees to 4 employees
- Began implementing revised transient rental and inspection program

## Inspections

2015 – 3,382

2016 – 4,762

**2017 – 4,429**



## Tall grass abatements:

2015 – 350

2016 – 496

**2017 – 314**

(decrease due to public services maintaining Cold Creek)

## Nuisance tree abatements:

2015 – 0

2016 – 26

**2017 – 21**

## Trash abatements:

2015 – 5

2016 – 88

**2017 – 88**

## Execution of search warrants for property clean-ups:

2016 – 10

**2017 – 26**

## Violations:

2015 – 1,181

(35% of inspections)

2016 – 1,761

(37% of inspections)

**2017 – 1,523**

(34% of inspections)





## Build Community & Target Neighborhood Investment

### *Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative*

**The Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative** targeted six neighborhoods focusing on anchor projects, place making investments, and a designated model block area for each neighborhood. Through the course of the five year initiative, funding includes \$600,000 for neighborhoods and \$600,000 for model block areas. Funding is a combination of general city dollars and a generous donation from the Dorn Foundation.

**First through Fifth Street Neighborhood** – worked with the County Land Bank to obtain the parcel at 1321 Cleveland Road which will be used to create a passive pocket park for the supporting neighborhood. The neighborhood will also feature identity signs and “McKelvey Plat” signs around the boundaries of the neighborhood highlighting the historical significance of the neighborhood, and the former Sandusky resident and architect who platted the neighborhood, and went on to form the Harvard Law Review.

**South of Kilbourne** – revived the Hancock Community Garden, added trash cans and planters at select locations, and supported programming of the Hancock Block Party.



**Cove District** – completed public neighborhood meetings to present and receive feedback for neighborhood-wide public art and two public access areas on the waterfront.

**Garden District** – identified and approved improvements to Central Park including, sidewalks, new playground equipment, a shade structure and picnic tables.



**West End District** – improvements were identified for the Venice Road Connector, near George Street. This will help make drivers aware of the curve. Improvements will include lighting and landscape.



**Southside District** – provided funding toward neighborhood programming. The Southside Enrichment Program (formerly the Conestoga Program) will provide programming and access to services for neighborhood residents. Plans also call for a portable splash pad to be installed for summer 2018.





Police department personnel trained 2,795 hours

- Filled a newly created **Nuisance Office position**. This position was created to work closely with Code Enforcement for nuisance activities and assistance for junked vehicles, search warrants, condemned properties, or any other assistance that is needed to remove nuisances from neighborhoods. In addition, he will work on animal complaints to include barking or loose dogs or any other type of animal complaint.
- Hired **5 new police officers** in addition to the nuisance officer.
- Revealed the new **K9 cruiser S8 in honor of Andy Dunn**. The cruiser was left blue at the request of Caleb Dunn, Andy's son.

- Replaced the entire audio/video systems in the cruisers.
- Continued getting officers out of their cruisers to engage with the public:

**Park Walks**  
2016 – 865  
2017 – 1,450  
**Neighborhood Walks**  
2016 – 751  
2017 – 1,158  
**Business Walks**  
2016 – 723  
2017 – 1,881



- Police department personnel trained **2,795 hours** (1977.5 in 2016) to keep officers current on continuing education. Classes included trauma informed policing, practical application of force, blue courage, legal updates and general law enforcement topics.



- Fire department personnel** generated 6,547 reports in 2017:

EMS – 77%	Service Calls – 4%
Fire – 3%	Good Intent – 2%
Rescue – 8%	False Alarms – 3%
Hazardous Condition – 3%	
- Sandusky Fire provided mutual aid **62 times** and received mutual aid **36 times**.
- Sandusky Fire Department personnel trained **2,214 hours** in 2017 (1,897.5 hours in 2016).

Sandusky Fire trained 2,214 hours







# Connected City

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

Completed the **city-wide wayfinding signage** program that will guide travelers more efficiently to their destination.



## Walking & Bikeability

Completed the conceptual plan of the Sandusky Bay Pathway from Pipe Creek to the city limits, including the Landing.



## Public Transit

- Implemented route and service changes that were planned and presented in 2016. This transitioned service from a point deviated, demand response service to a fixed route system with paratransit service. This changes routes from one hour loops to 30 minute down and back routes, aiming to provide **shorter ride times** to common rider destinations. The service change included the **addition of one route**.
- On-time performance in 2017, which describes the Dial-a-Ride system's ability to perform trips to their **scheduled time was above 94%** overall.
- STS vehicles traveled over **575,000 miles** within Erie County.
- Almost 50% of Dial-a-Ride trips were for employment.



Received **nine new transit vehicles** using program funding, three new leased vehicles through local partnerships and two used leased vehicles from a private provider.





# Destination City

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.



## Arts & Culture

- Utilized public art to create a **lasting tribute** to the Bicentennial with the Greetings from Sandusky mural.
- Created a **Public Arts and Culture Commission**, creating an ordinance that forms an annual fund dedicated to public art and creating a public art master plan.



# Destination Downtown

- Completed the planning process for the **Jackson Street Pier**, with a goal of creating an improved pier, which maintains and enhances all functional aspects, including but not limited to, parking, ferry services and viewing opportunities, while providing **new opportunities** for use by residents and visitors.
- Shoreline Drive Planning Process** was started with the goal of, not only reconstructing a highly deteriorated and dysfunctional street and sidewalk system, but to also provide traffic calming, improved walkability and bikeability, improve parking functionality, burying of utilities and activation of businesses along Shoreline Drive by creating a “front door” atmosphere.
- The Downtown Sandusky East Bay Plan** creates a vision for increased public access to, and improvement of, the Bayfront parks and public spaces for approximately 30 acres located at the east end of downtown. The plan is intended to balance the City’s land re-use strategies with improved greenspace amenities, both of which will **promote economic development** as a means of increasing the City’s economic resiliency.
- Broke ground on the **new City Hall** which is expected to be completed at the end of 2018.



# Recreation & Waterfront



- Activated Schade Mylander with the help of placemaking projects including the **Battleship of Lake Erie** game board and Adirondack chairs.
- Partnered with Lake Erie Shores & Islands to get a supersized chair and webcam of Schade Mylander Plaza.
- Partnered with North Coast Young Professionals for **Bayfront Bazaar & Brew**, which offered vendors, food trucks and live entertainment.
- Hosted the 4th annual **National Night Out Touch-A-Touch** event at the Paper District Marina. Over 6,000 people participated in the event.



Hosted the inaugural **Dragons & Bacon** festival bringing numerous dragon boat teams to the Paper District Maria along with various vendors boasting delectable bacon offerings.





# Celebrated City

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



## 2018 – The Bicentennial

- Created **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **Instagram** accounts for the Boy with the Boot as a way to bring the iconic statue to life to connect with followers and promote Bicentennial events during the historic year.
- **Launched Sandusky2018.com** to help promote and keep individuals updated on upcoming events, education about Sandusky’s rich history, to recognize our gracious Bicentennial sponsors and generate momentum for Sandusky’s historic year.
- **Raised \$500,000** to help execute the celebration of Sandusky’s Bicentennial Year. Monies raised will go towards putting on the various free or low-cost community events, fund legacy projects and help to attract and invite people to reacquaint themselves with Sandusky.



Instagram

- Started an **Instagram account** to showcase the beauty and lifestyle of Sandusky and gained

**600 followers** in less than eight months.

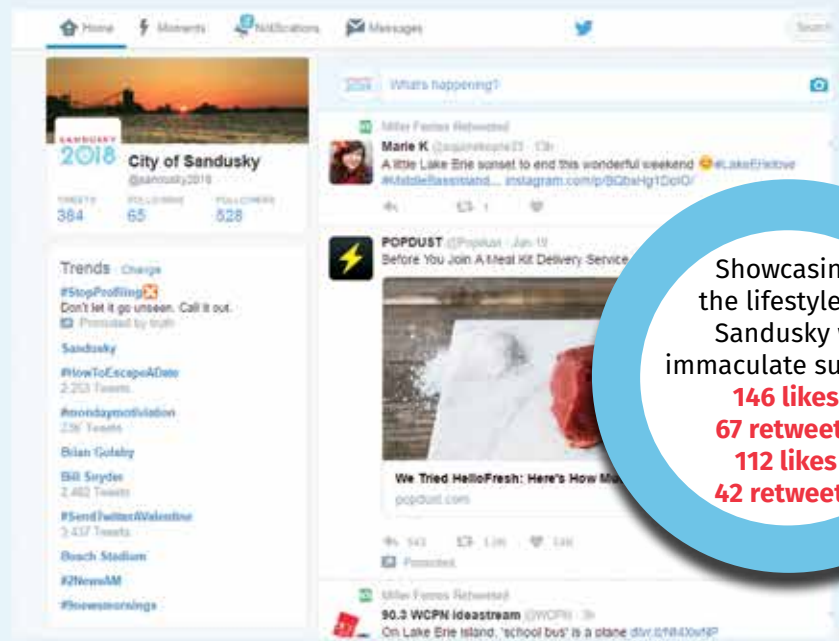


Facebook

- Gained **3,500 new Facebook followers** to surpass 6,000 followers.
- The video welcoming **Governor Kasich** during the State of the State went viral locally with **125,000 views, 1,500 shares** and **867 likes**.
- The **“Be a Pioneer” video** campaign, which encouraged people to live their dream in Sandusky, whether it be to start a business, buy a home, rebuild a neighborhood, home or park received **106,600 views** and started discussions about investing in Sandusky.
- The **State of the City video** conveying the highlights of 2016 and goals for 2017 brought about discussion of love for one’s city, a desire to move home and a sense of pride. It was **viewed 67,000 times, shared 932 times** and was **liked 597 times**.

Twitter

- Hit **1,000 followers** on Twitter.
- “Sandusky” was **nationally trending** on Twitter with the announcement of Governor Kasich’s State of the State Address in Sandusky, meaning “Sandusky” was one of the most popular topics/discussions on
- Twitter on February 13, 2017.
- Top tweet** in 2017 received **16,500 impressions**. The tweet featured Jay Crawford with our Commission as he came to town to create the State of the State video.



Showcasing the lifestyle of Sandusky with immaculate sunsets

**146 likes**  
**67 retweets**  
**112 likes**  
**42 retweets**

The finished Greetings from Sandusky mural

**159 likes**  
**62 retweets**

Other top tweets included:

- Downtown wayfinding signage – **44 likes, 17 retweets**
- Highlight Small Business Saturday – **34 likes, 24 retweets**
- Uniting to protect Lake Erie and our Great Lakes – **50 likes, 20 retweets**
- Return of ferry service from downtown Sandusky to Cedar Point – **40 likes, 17 retweets**





222 Meigs Street • Sandusky, Ohio 44870 • [www.ci.sandusky.oh.us](http://www.ci.sandusky.oh.us)

## 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

**Law Director** – Justin Harris

**Public Works Director** – Aaron Klein

**City Commission Clerk** – Kelly Kresser

**Chief Development Officer** – Matt Lasko

**Police Chief** – John Orzech

**Finance Director** – Hank S. Solowiej, CPA

**Fire Chief** – Richard Wilcox

**City Manager** – Eric Wobser