

## ORDINANCE NO. 23-106

**AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE SOUTH SIDE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF SANDUSKY; AND DECLARING THAT THIS ORDINANCE SHALL TAKE IMMEDIATE EFFECT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 14 OF THE CITY CHARTER.**

**WHEREAS**, in 2016 the City's Bicentennial Vision / Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Plans were adopted in which recommendations were made for investments into the neighborhoods to make them more vibrant, livable, and connected and inspired the creation of the Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Commission approved and adopted the Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative Plan by Ordinance No. 17-135, passed on July 10, 2017, which aimed at improving residential neighborhoods within the City, and focused on six (6) neighborhoods including the South Side neighborhood; and

**WHEREAS**, this City Commission approved an agreement for Professional Services with the SmithGroup Architects & Landscape Architects, PLLC (d.b.a. SmithGroup, PLLC) of Ann Arbor, Michigan, for the South Side Neighborhood Plan by Ordinance No. 22-017, passed on February 14, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, this City Commission approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Erie County Board of Health for the reimbursement of costs for the design and revitalization of Churchwell Park as part of the South Side Plan by Ordinance No. 23-048, passed on February 27, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the South Side Plan includes three components: the Plan, an Executive Summary, and an Appendix and the Plan is built on six (6) pillars each with a set of policy, programmatic, and land use recommendations and are as follows: Housing & Neighborhoods, Connectivity & Infrastructure, Parks & Open Spaces, Access & Services, Economic Prosperity, and Branding & Beautification; and

**WHEREAS**, this Ordinance should be passed as an emergency measure under suspension of the rules in accordance with Section 14 of the City Charter in order to proceed with the implementation of the projects and allow for the reimbursement of funds granted by the Erie County Health Department in a timely manner and in accordance with the MOU; and

**WHEREAS**, in that it is deemed necessary in order to provide for the immediate preservation of the public peace, property, health, and safety of the City of Sandusky, Ohio, and its citizens, and to provide for the efficient daily operation of the Municipal Departments, including the Department of Community Development, of the City of Sandusky, Ohio, the City Commission of the City of Sandusky, Ohio finds that an emergency exists regarding the aforesaid, and that it is advisable that this **Ordinance** be declared an emergency measure which will take immediate effect in accordance with Section 14 of the City Charter upon its adoption; and NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANDUSKY, OHIO, THAT:



Section 1. This City Commission approves and adopts the South Side Plan, a copy of which is marked Exhibit "A" and is attached to this Ordinance and is specifically incorporated as if fully rewritten herein.

Section 2. If any section, phrase, sentence, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof.

Section 3. This City Commission finds and determines that all formal actions of this City Commission concerning and relating to the passage of this Ordinance were taken in an open meeting of this City Commission and that all deliberations of this City Commission and of any of its committees that resulted in those formal actions were in meetings open to the public in compliance with the law.

Section 4. That for the reasons set forth in the preamble hereto, this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure which shall take immediate effect in accordance with Section 14 of the City Charter after its adoption and due authentication by the President and the Clerk of the City Commission of the City of Sandusky, Ohio.



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RICHARD R. BRADY  
PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COMMISSION



ATTEST: 

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CATHLEEN A. MYERS  
CLERK OF THE CITY COMMISSION

Passed: May 8, 2023



**CITY OF SANDUSKY**

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# **SOUTH SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

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DRAFTED APRIL 2023







"I'm looking forward to the change coming to the South Side for the generations underneath mine."

Brittanya Churchwell  
South Side Neighborhood Kickoff Meeting

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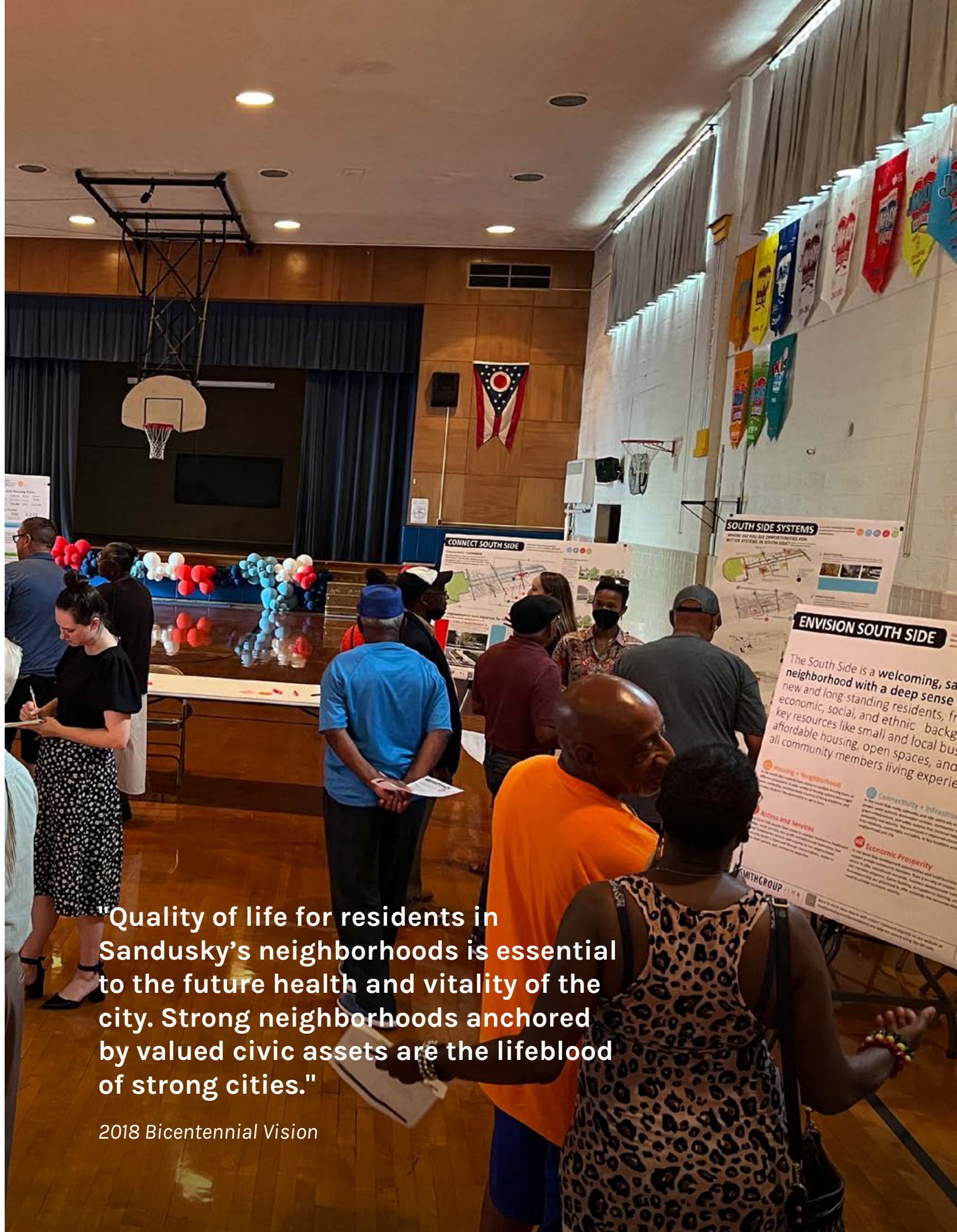
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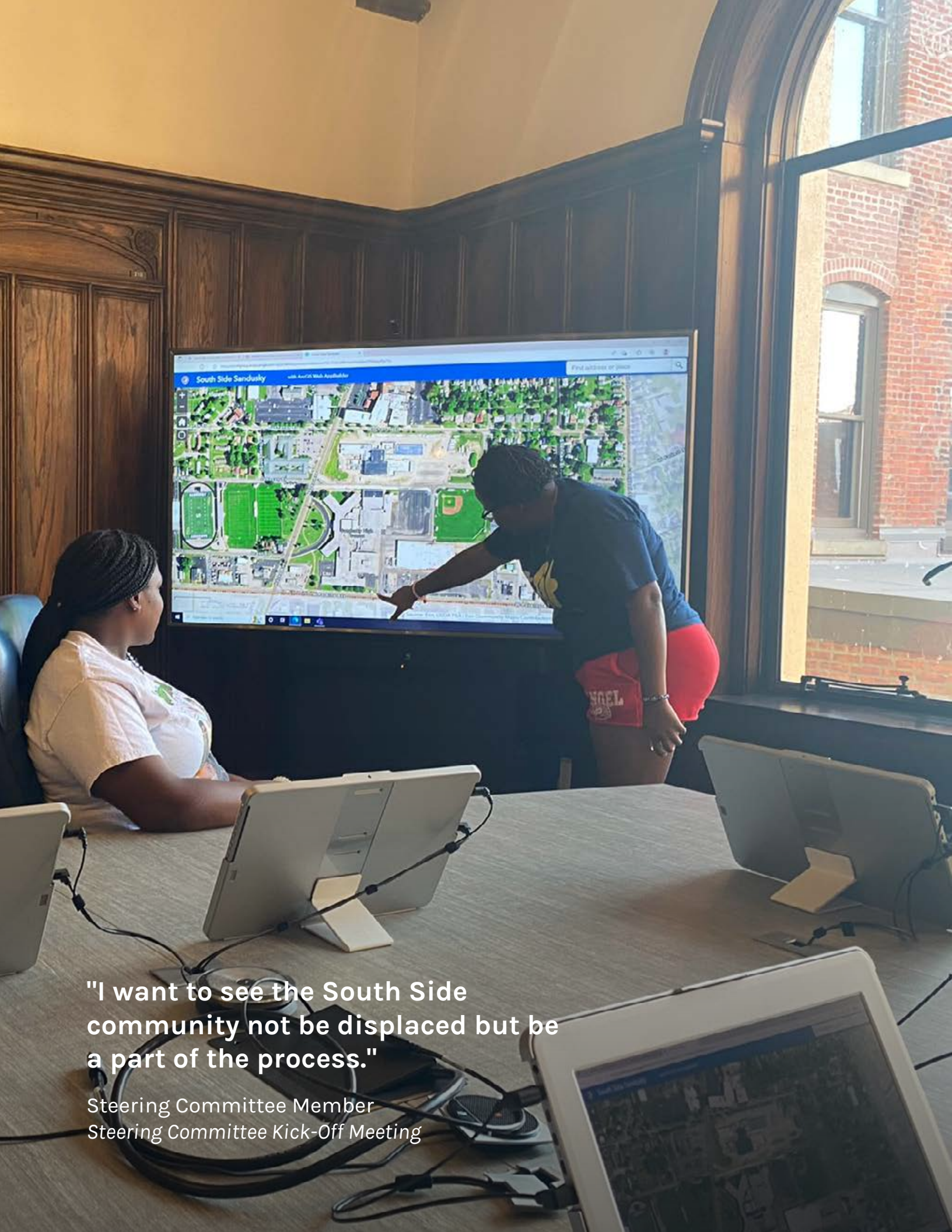
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"Quality of life for residents in Sandusky's neighborhoods is essential to the future health and vitality of the city. Strong neighborhoods anchored by valued civic assets are the lifeblood of strong cities."

2018 Bicentennial Vision





"I want to see the South Side community not be displaced but be a part of the process."

Steering Committee Member  
Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks to all the community members, elected officials, and others who contributed their time, energy, and enthusiasm. Their voices ensured this plan reflects who South Side was, is, and desires to be.

## SOUTH SIDE STEERING COMMITTEE

- Alberta Brown, Resident
- Daryl Murphy, NAACP Sandusky Chapter
- Dave Waddington, Sandusky City Commissioner
- Dora Grant, Community Leader
- Dru Meredith, Firelands Health
- Isiah Johnson, SS4L Resident
- James Zeeland, Resident
- JaMarcus Hampton, Property Owner
- Janice Warner, Community Action Committee
- Jennifer Ashburn, Resident
- Jim Seiling, Resident
- Kendra Faulkner, OhGo
- Larry Brown, SS4L
- Matt Ames, Resident
- Melonie Caffey, Resident
- Pam Whiley
- Pastor Clayton Howard, Ebenezer Baptist Church
- Pastor Curtis Johnson, New Jerusalem Church
- Pastor Tony Robinson, Father's Heart Church
- Stephanie Brown Mayfield, Business Owner
- Tracy Reed, Sandusky School District

## STAKEHOLDERS & FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

- Cable Steinemann, Sandusky Cultural Center
- David White, Firelands Forward
- Dr. Richard Koonce, Resident
- Erica Johnson
- Heidi Schlesselmann
- Joe Roman, Greater Sandusky Partnership
- Katherine Jaegly, Office of Public Health
- Madeline Davies, Office of Public Health
- Molly Carver, Sandusky Library
- Nico Samaniego, Erie County Economic Development Corporation
- Pete Schade, Office of Public Health
- Ralph Chamberlain, Metro Housing Authority
- Student Focus Group, Sandusky City Schools

## SOUTH SIDE RESIDENTS

Thank you to the South Side residents who contributed their lived experience, time, and selves to the development of this plan.

## CITY OF SANDUSKY STAFF

- Arin Blair
- Tondra Frisby
- Marcus Harris
- Nicole Grohe
- Jonathan Holody
- Thomas Horsman
- Eric Wobser\*

## CONSULTANT TEAM

- SmithGroup
- JIMA Studios



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Side Neighborhood Plan is a comprehensive approach to address the needs and aspirations of the South Side community. The South Side community is located at the southernmost edge of Sandusky City limits, adjacent to Perkins Township. The community serves as a gateway to the city and is home to Sandusky city schools, public facilities, and small retail and commercial areas. The South Side community has a rich history that is reflected in the care and commitment of its residents, who are racially, socially, and economically diverse. The community is multi-generational, with a significant senior population and several intergenerational households, and has a strong focus on family and community.

However, the South Side community has faced challenges in terms of outdated housing, inadequate infrastructure, lack of investment, and issues related to crime, employment, literacy, and mental health. To address these challenges and build a brighter future for the community, the South Side Plan was initiated, drawing on previous planning efforts such as the 2018 Bicentennial Plan for the city. The plan focuses on building a relationship between the city and its residents, expanding and deepening community engagement, enhancing street aesthetics, and upgrading community infrastructure.

Meaningful community engagement was a cornerstone of the planning process, with the planning team conducting numerous engagement sessions and providing various opportunities for input, including community dinners, canvassing, workshops, and visioning sessions with local Sandusky teens.

Through this engagement, six key focus areas, or pillars, were identified by the community:

- Housing and Neighborhoods,
- Connectivity and Infrastructure,
- Parks and Open Space,
- Accessibility and Services,
- Economic Prosperity,
- and Branding and Beautification.

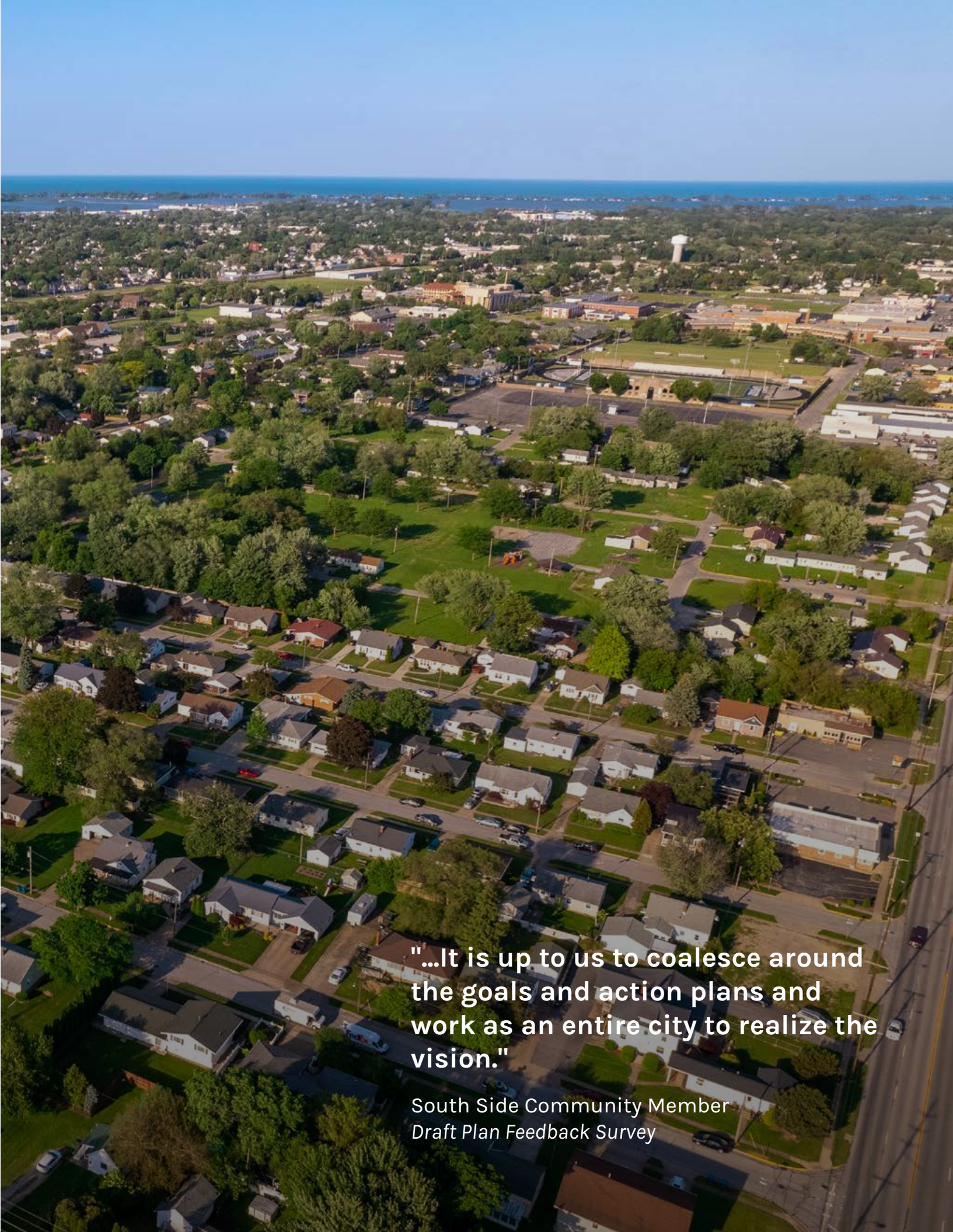
Each pillar has its own chapter in the plan, outlining goals, strategies, actions, and supporting data. The South Side Plan aligns with ongoing city initiatives and identifies 5 priority areas for implementation, including:

- transforming Churchwell Park,
- strengthening the neighborhood,
- improving connectivity and transportation,
- addressing infrastructure challenges,
- and fostering growth and thriving of individuals through strategic partnerships
- and economic development.

The plan reflects the wants and needs of the South Side community and provides a realistic and implementable vision for the future, aiming to create a welcoming, safe, and family-focused neighborhood with access to key resources for all community members. The South Side Plan is a true reflection of the potential and aspirations of the South Side community and the city of Sandusky.

**"...It is up to us to coalesce around the goals and action plans and work as an entire city to realize the vision."**

South Side Community Member  
Draft Plan Feedback Survey







# INTRODUCTION

OVER THE COURSE OF 2022, THE SOUTH SIDE COMMUNITY COLLABORATED TO CREATE ONE UNIFIED VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD. THIS PLAN PROVIDES A PATH TO MAKING THAT VISION A REALITY.

The South Side is a welcoming, safe, and family-focused neighborhood with a deep sense of community pride; where new and long-standing residents, from a diversity of economic, social, and ethnic backgrounds, have access to key resources like small and local businesses, well-paying jobs, affordable housing, open spaces, and social services that enhance all community members' living experience.



# WELCOME TO SOUTH SIDE!

The core of a strong city is strong neighborhoods. Located just south of the Amtrak line, South Side is more than just a place. It is a source of pride for residents with deep roots in the City of Sandusky. With federal housing projects such as MacArthur Park built following World War II, South Side was known as an affordable community for families to settle and grow. With many third and fourth generation residents remaining in the area, South Side grew over time to be a community rooted in service. It is now home to several churches, parks, the Sandusky City Schools campus, Firelands Regional Medical Center, and Firelands Family Health Services. While South Side can be interpreted to have many different borders, for the purposes of the South Side Neighborhood Plan, the neighborhood was defined as the area between the Amtrak line, Perkins Avenue, Sanford Street and Campbell Street.

475  
ACRES

2,800+  
RESIDENTS

ENDLESS  
OPPORTUNITIES

This neighborhood plan is a long-term guide for the future of South Side and was created with extensive input from the community. It will guide city staff, community leaders, and residents as they make decisions about the following:

- How to address key concerns and priorities of the residents and property owners
- What types of development the community wants and where they want it
- How the city should allocate resources to help implement the vision of the plan

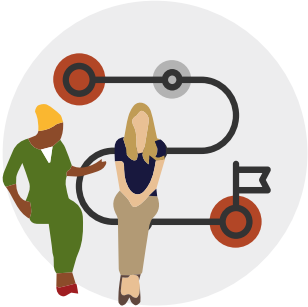
This plan achieves the following initiatives:



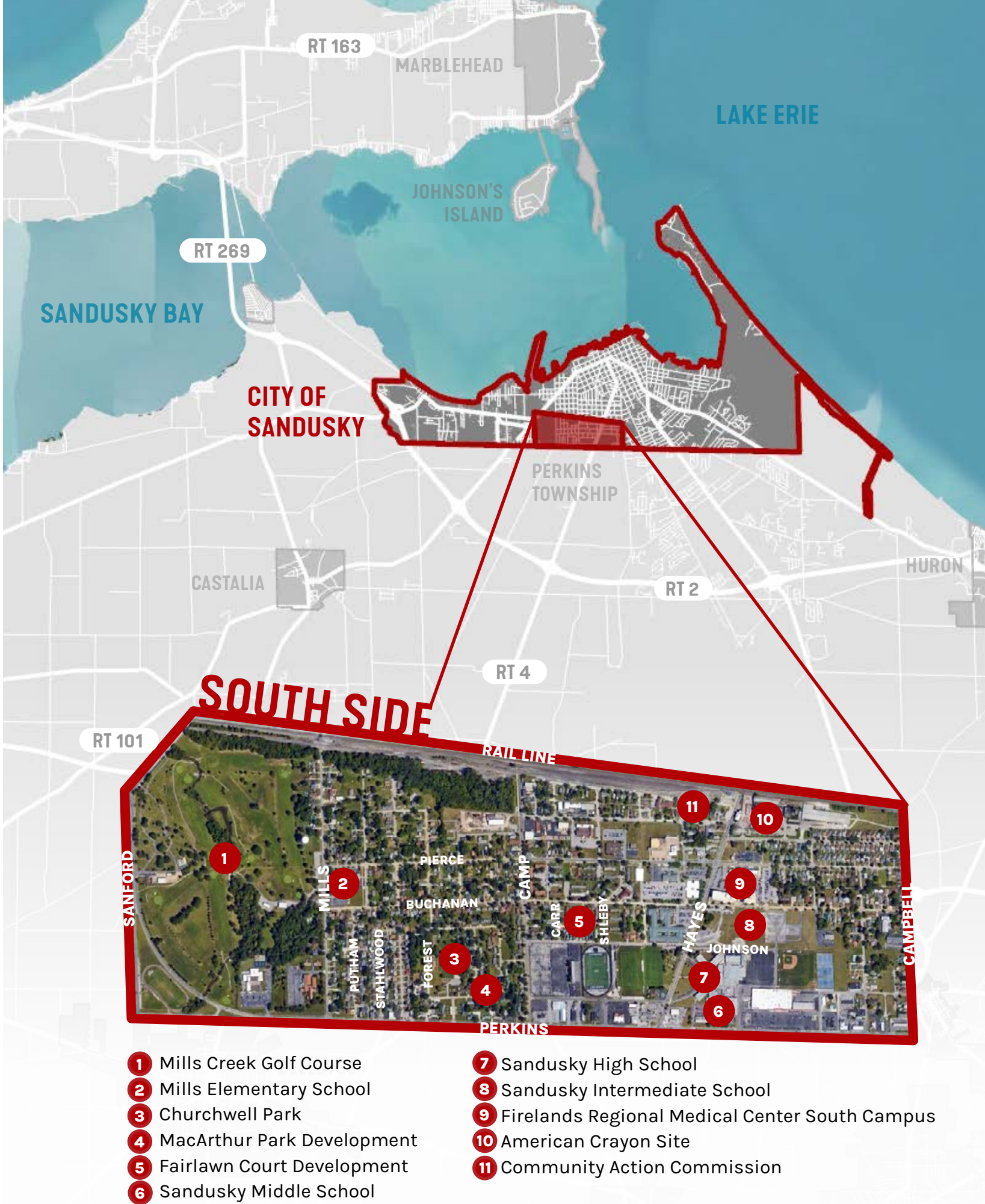
Documents existing conditions in the community



Amplifies community identified goals to foster growth and positive transformation in South Side



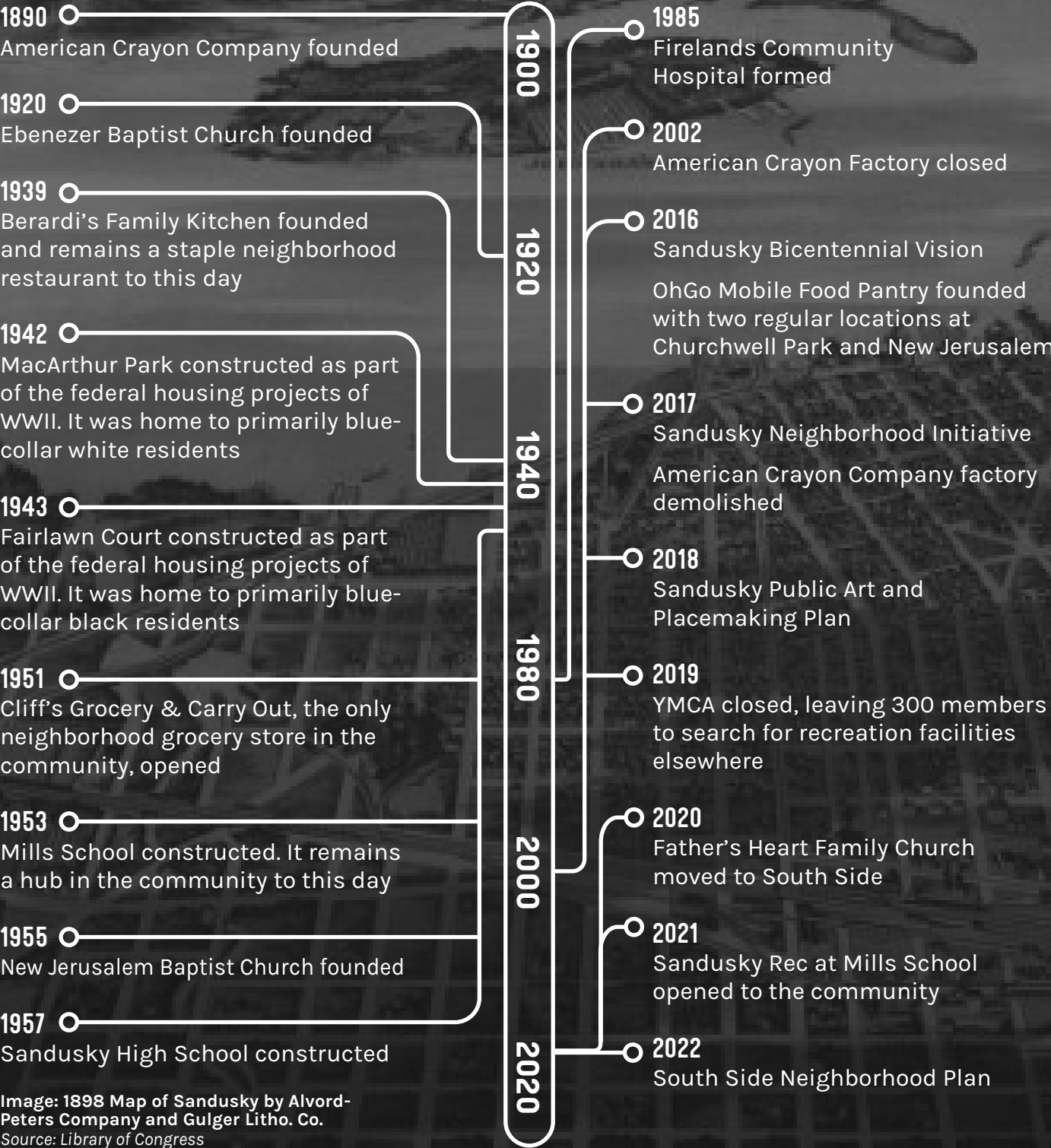
Contains strategies to achieve goals, including recommendations related to zoning, policies, and physical design





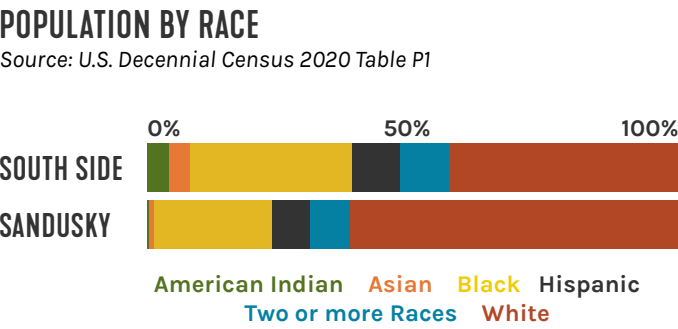
# CONTEXT

## SOUTH SIDE HAS STRONG ROOTS



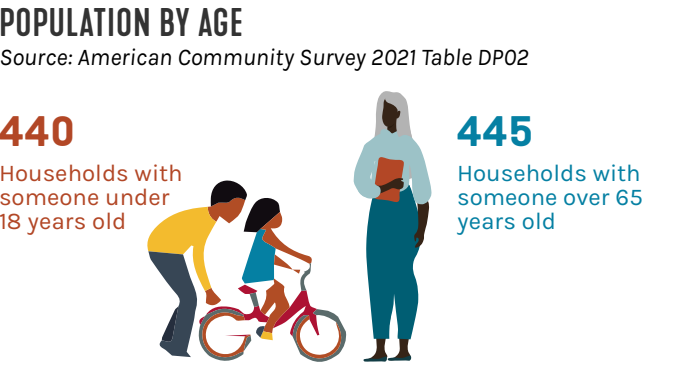
## SOUTH SIDE IS DIVERSE

With a community of over 2,800 residents, South Side is more racially diverse than most Sandusky neighborhoods and the city overall. In 2020, over 50% of South Siders were some race other than white compared to approximately 38% in the City of Sandusky.



## SOUTH SIDE IS MULTIGENERATIONAL

Established as an affordable neighborhood for the working class in the 1940s, South Side has been home to multiple generations of Sanduskians. 1 in every 2 South Side households has a person living there who is either over 65, under 18, or both.



## SOUTH SIDE IS RESIDENT FOCUSED

South Side land is used primarily for either housing or public facilities. The majority of the activities and services in the South Side are oriented around resident needs.

"When we talk about South Side pride, there are lots of us that are 3rd and 4th generation South Side." *Steering Committee Member*

### HOUSING IS AGING

Source: American Community Survey 2021 Table B25034

69% of homes were built before 1960. Residents need a clear process to make improvements to their property so structures remain secure, residents can age in place, and South Side has a stable housing stock.

### VACANT LAND IS ABUNDANT

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2020 Table H1

The City of Sandusky and Erie County Land Bank have been acquiring vacant property for the past five years as a direct result of recommendations from the Bicentennial Vision (see Chapter 1 for recommendations on how to best use vacant land).

### AFFORDABILITY SHOULD BE DEFINED

Source: American Community Survey 2021 Table S2503

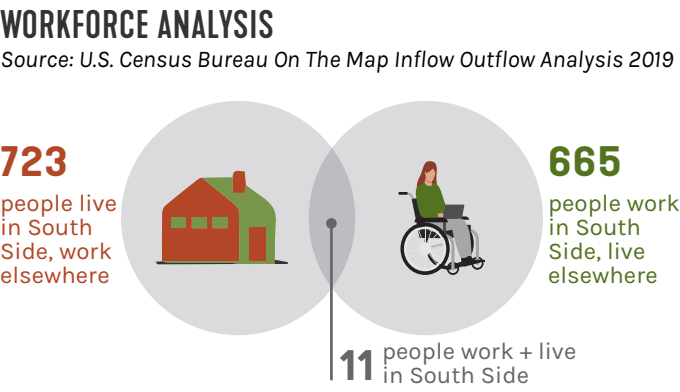
An affordable rent is up to 30% of your income, while an affordable mortgage is up to three times your income. Paying more than 30% on housing costs is considered to be a cost burden.





SOUTH SIDE IS OPEN TO BUSINESSES

South Side was historically home to several major industries and still sees a large segment of workforce employees entering the neighborhood daily. In 2019, South Side had over 650 people entering the neighborhood on a daily basis for work, most of whom work for the larger employers along Hayes Avenue.



SOUTH SIDE IS COMMUNITY ORIENTED

South Side is a community built on the philosophy of serving others. The churches, neighborhood groups, and corner stores of the neighborhood have fostered this sense of care and pride for generations. Some of the most prominent services in Sandusky are housed on these blocks.

"The reason why I love the South Side is because of the community. It's always had a community aura about it...Growing up in Sandusky and going to Ebenezer Baptist Church you always felt the community."  
*Janice Warner, South Side Neighborhood Kickoff*

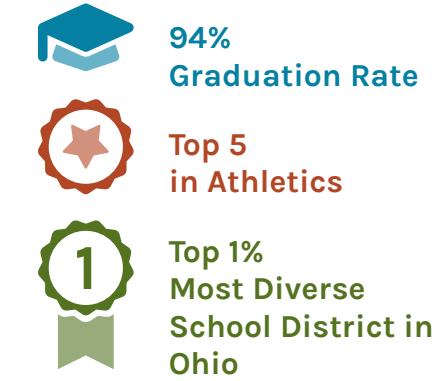
COMMUNITY HEALTH IS A PRIORITY

Source: American Community Survey 2021 Table K201803  
Firelands Family Health Services, various church groups, and government agencies focus on the physical and mental health of South Side residents. Physical adaptations and programming are vital to ensure all residents receive the care they need.



EDUCATION IS AN ASSET

Source: Sandusky City Schools, 2021  
South Side is home to a high school, two middle schools, and the local football stadium. While Mills Elementary School is no longer an operational school, the community has expressed a desire to have it remain as a community asset in some way.



SOUTH SIDE SERVES SANDUSKY

South Side is home to many services.



PROCESS

BUILDING ON PRIOR WORK

This neighborhood plan was created in coordination with the many other projects happening across the City of Sandusky and Erie County. In particular, this plan is built on the work residents and the city have done through prior community-wide plans.

Leading up to and through the 2018 Bicentennial Celebration, the City of Sandusky undertook an extensive planning process; the 2018 Sandusky Bicentennial Vision adopted in February of 2016, the 2021 Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative completed in January of 2017 and the Sandusky Public Art and Placemaking Plan completed in October of 2018. In 2021, the City of Sandusky released a summary of the improvements completed since 2016, which are reflected in the goals and visions of this planning process. The impressive list highlights important initiatives including park improvements, public art, infrastructure, neighborhood beautification, blight removal, homeowner assistance, and downtown revitalization. The previous planning initiatives pointed to the list of specific needs of South Side (including infrastructure, recreation, housing, vacancy) and its cohesion as a neighborhood. These factors indicated the need for a South Side-specific plan to focus investment and opportunity in this unique Sandusky neighborhood.

A number of recommendations included in this neighborhood plan build upon the ideas and values outlined in these earlier plans. While a summary of these recommendations are provided below, a detailed list of how these plans were included in each chapter of the South Side Neighborhood Plan can be seen in the appendix.



"South Side has a special meaning to me because some of my best friends grew up over here....I'm always interested in what's going on, particularly in new projects, new development and I want to know more because I'm not quite sure. But I'm in support of anything that would uplift the community."

Dr. Richard Koonce  
*South Side Neighborhood Kickoff*



# RECENT PLANS



**2016**  
**2018 BICENTENNIAL VISION**  
The 2018 Bicentennial Vision created an overarching vision for the City of Sandusky by engaging rigorously with several Sandusky neighborhoods, including the South Side. This process showcased opportunities for improvements at Churchwell Park and on Hayes Avenue. It also emphasized the need for improvements to programs and services for housing, recreation, and community safety.



**2017**  
**SANDUSKY NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE**  
This plan studied the South Side as one of six key Sandusky neighborhoods. While the plan touched many recommendations mentioned by residents, including enhancements to signage, public art, underpasses, vacant lots and Buchanan Street, the focus was on potential improvements to Churchwell Park as a community anchor (see how this concept was built upon for Churchwell Park using the latest input from South Side residents in the appendix).



**2018**  
**SANDUSKY PUBLIC ART AND PLACEMAKING PLAN**  
Public art and community beautification were top topics mentioned throughout the planning process. The 2018 Sandusky Public Art and Placemaking Plan provides a guide for both traditional installations (such as monuments and murals), as well as non-traditional programming including pop-up installations and interactive art. Some key projects mentioned in this plan that occur specifically within the South Side include art installations in railroad underpasses and a public plaza at the former American Crayon Company site.

# ENGAGEMENT

The core of this process was the community. To create a comprehensive and resident-driven plan, community members were given a wide array of ways to participate from the onset. This neighborhood plan focused on the need to build trust, deepen relationships, and encourage an open dialogue between community members, city staff, and elected officials through an inclusive and diverse engagement process. The process followed five key steps:

- STEP 1 FOUNDATIONS**  
At the onset of the South Side Neighborhood Plan, work was done to establish the planning process, the role of this plan, the importance of residents' voices, and to build trust.
- STEP 2 VISIONING**  
This stage focused on building consensus on the vision and goals for the future of the South Side.
- STEP 3 EXPLORATION**  
The community was given alternative ideas and solutions for the topics most mentioned in the visioning stage to decide on next steps for the city to take.
- STEP 4 CHOICE**  
Feedback from the Exploration phase was used to prioritize key actions and set a future direction for South Side.
- STEP 5 ACTION**  
The neighborhood plan was developed with key steps for the community to implement actions and achieve community goals.





Information shared through community conversations, working sessions, and surveys were all used to directly form this neighborhood plan.

Each strategy is related to something South Siders want to protect, enhance, and transform in the neighborhood.

PROTECT

Residents wanted to protect the assets they love and believe contribute to the neighborhood culture.

Protect our...  
**AFFORDABILITY**

**COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

**COMMUNITY PRIDE**

**LONGSTANDING RESIDENTS**



ENHANCE

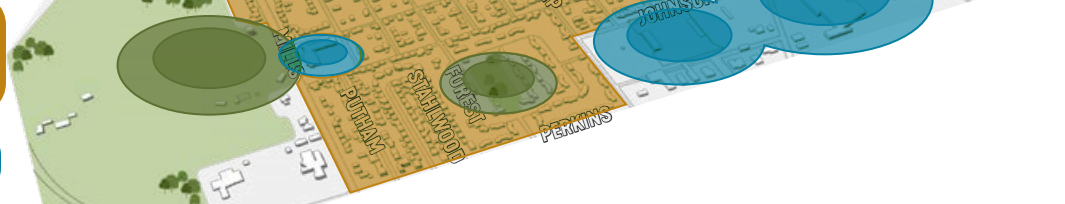
Community members want to enhance certain areas in the neighborhood that are in need of repair.

Enhance our...  
**HOUSING QUALITY**

**FAMILY FRIENDLY**

**GREEN SPACES**

**PROPERTY MAINTENANCE**



TRANSFORM

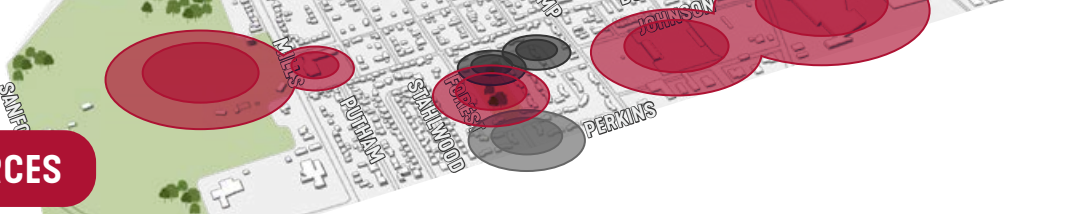
Areas to be transformed could see major changes in the coming years, from a new building to an entirely new use.

Transform our...  
**UNUSED LAND**

**ACCESS TO RESOURCES**

**GATEWAYS**

**VACANT LAND**



300+  
FLYERS HANDED OUT

4 COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

6 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

3 ROUNDS OF INTERACTIVE POSTERS LOCATED AT SANDUSKY REC



38  
COMMUNITY TOUCH POINTS



1 YOUTH WORKSHOP

3 ONLINE SURVEYS

1 VISIONING WORKSHOP

47  
PERCEPTION SURVEY RESPONDENTS



20  
LETTERS FROM SOUTH SIDE RESIDENTS



30+  
PERSON STEERING COMMITTEE

1 COMMUNITY DINNER

120+  
COMMUNITY EVENT ATTENDEES

8 CITY STAFF MEETINGS

10+ SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS





# SIX PILLARS OF SOUTH SIDE

Throughout the engagement process, six key pillars were repeatedly mentioned as core to the foundation of South Side. The neighborhood plan is organized by these six pillars.



# HOW TO NAVIGATE THE PLAN

**1** This document is a guide for the future of the South Side. It is organized by six community pillars.

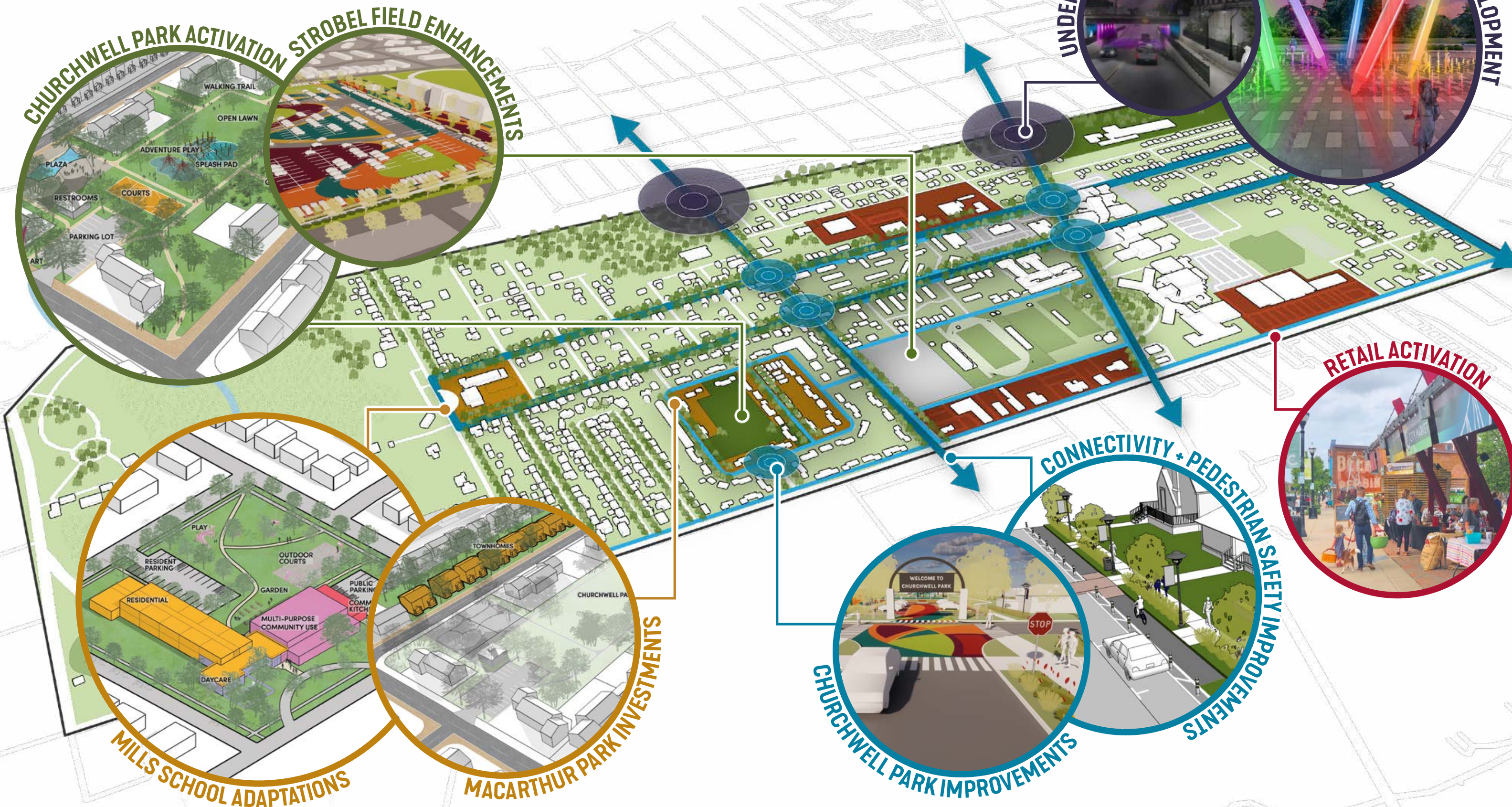


**2** Each pillar has its own chapter. In these chapters you will find...





# TOP RECOMMENDATIONS







## PILLAR 1

# HOUSING + NEIGHBORHOODS

In the South Side, residents will have access to multiple housing types at different price points. A wide variety of housing options will encourage home ownership, accommodate a variety of living situations, and provide residents the opportunity to age in place.

A complete neighborhood contains a variety of homes, community amenities like parks, libraries, grocery stores, and is accessible to health care, schools, and jobs. The neighborhood should contribute to the health, safety, and wellbeing of its residents. South Side Sandusky is a thriving neighborhood, with many assets that people want to preserve.

In recent years, South Side has seen above average home demolitions to address blight, the closing of the Mills School and American Crayon Site. The YMCA has left the neighborhood and the MacArthur Park development has not seen new housing permits since its initial development.

South Side has the opportunity now to address these challenges by setting goals for new development, bringing new businesses to the neighborhood, expanding affordability for new residents, outlining policy recommendations to expand housing choice, fostering economic opportunity, and by offering multi-generational recreation opportunities.

## KEY TERMS

**ADAPTIVE REUSE** | The redevelopment and change of use for a building that has not reached its lifespan. Adaptive reuse can revitalize communities and preserve significant structures for decades.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING** | A home whose costs does not burden the household that lives there. Typically, housing costs (rent/mortgage and utilities) would be at or below 30% of a household's income.

**COST BURDENED** | A household is considered cost burdened when the resident(s) pay more than 30% of the household combined income on housing related costs.

**INFILL HOUSING** | Housing that is developed on currently vacant lots in established neighborhoods.

**MIXED-USE** | Buildings that contain more than one use. Uses may be separated by floor for convenience such as a three story structure with ground floor retail and two floors of housing above.

**AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI)** | Area median income is the average yearly gross income for an entire household as calculated by the U.S. Census.



GOAL 1

Expand housing assistance for current residents and maintain overall housing affordability.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Side is a neighborhood with longstanding residents who preserve the history of the area and carry great pride in the culture and beauty it holds. South Side is the home of Sandusky’s only public high school, most of the land in the neighborhood is publicly-owned, and there are several long-standing businesses. South Side is a neighborhood where generations are raised and return to stay.

A rising number of residents are having difficulty aging in place. The cost of accessible retrofits, minor repairs, and taxes are raising housing costs for households.

The biggest priority for South Side residents is maintaining affordable housing in the neighborhood. Financial and physical assistance is needed for older adults who own their homes so they can age in place. People who leave South Side for education or employment want the opportunity to move back to South Side. However, there are limited opportunities to own homes that meet the needs of these households.

There is a lot of publicly-owned vacant land that needs to be returned to productive use. South Siders would like to see more quality affordable housing developed in the area and want to have a say in the guidelines that inform that development.

GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Department of Community Development

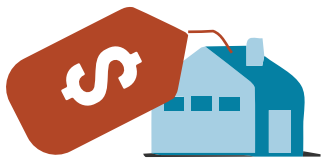
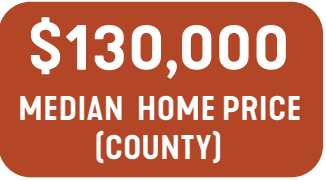
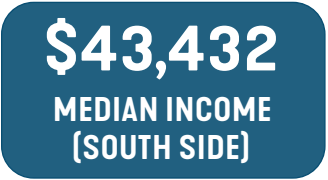
POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City Sandusky Divisions of Building and Code Compliance
- Sandusky Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Area Council on Aging
- Firelands Health
- Public Health Department
- Homeless resources
- Non-profits
- Local Financial Institutions
- Serving Our Seniors



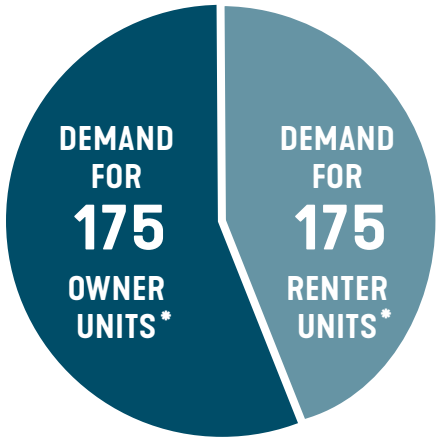
SUPPORTING DATA

Nearly half of South Side residents cannot afford market rate housing.



Housing production and assistance have not kept up with the demand in Sandusky.

While Erie County and Sandusky have been hard at work to remove blight, and some inhabitable homes, those homes have not been replaced at the same rate. This contributes to the typical housing lost in a year. In addition to providing homes to meet population changes, there is a need to find attainable homes for those who are cost burdened. To meet the demands of the population change, housing solutions for 132 households would be needed through new construction, rehabilitation, or down payment assistance. To account for the 260 cost burdened households, additional housing solutions are needed for those households through new housing, rehabilitation programs, or supportive services. These services may be through the expansion or development of housing programs that serve South Side residents.



\*Future demand for the South Side neighborhood is a combination of new housing needed (192) and tools needed to prevent or mitigate displacement due to cost burden, home repair, aging.. Source: Housing Analysis by SmithGroup.

\*\*Homes developed across Sandusky

Data Sources: 2021 American Community Survey, City of Sandusky (homes developed)



## WHAT WE HEARD

**"South Side raised me and taught me about family and community."**

South Side Resident  
2022 Community Kick-Off Dinner



## UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY ASSETS

Three schools and a golf course take up a large amount of the land in South Side, with 46% of the land zoned for public and civic uses. However, the actual land use does not always correspond to the zoning, as South Side has seen an increase in residential demolitions and vacant land.



**Source: OhGo Mobile Pantry, 2022**





EXISTING RESOURCES | HOUSING PROGRAMS



The City of Sandusky and Erie County receive funding from Federal and State sources to support homeownership and mitigate blight. People interested in transitioning into homeownership and staying in their homes can take advantage of these programs. This may include down payment assistance, homebuyer education classes, financial support, minor and major repair programs, and rehabilitation programs for owners of under four units.

COMMUNITY HOUSING IMPACT & PRESERVATION (CHIP) PROGRAM

The city partners with Great Lakes Community Action Partnership to provide a program for major and minor repairs including ADA modifications. This program has limited funding.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND BEAUTIFICATION GRANTS

These first come first serve grants provide \$5,000 redevelopment grants, assistance for exterior repairs, and home purchase assistance. There is no income restriction on the program, but the program is restricted to buildings with three units or less.

LAND BANK PROGRAM

The land bank program provides for the disposition of land owned by the city. There is no income limit on who may apply for the program or for prioritization of land bank disposition.

LEAD HAZARD & HEALTHY HOMES PROGRAM

This program is administered through Erie County to remediate the hazards lead can cause to homes with children. The program includes testing and abatement provided by a licensed contractor, as well as full abatement for low income households.

MOW TO OWN

The goal of this program is to transfer small vacant, abandoned, and tax delinquent land to adjacent property owners.

RESIDENTIAL TAX ABATEMENT

This program reduces the amount property owners pay on new construction, rehabilitation, and major improvements. Through this program, property owners/ developers can reduce their tax abatement at a rate of 75% for 10 years over the improved value of the home.

RENTAL REGISTRATION

The City of Sandusky administers a rental registration of all rental properties to ensure compliance with local regulations. Rentals, for the purposes of this program, are considered those available for more than 30 days.

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

1.1 Expand housing assistance programs that prioritize low to moderate income households and people with disabilities.

- a. Develop equity criteria to prioritize the distribution of public funds.
- b. Expand current housing programs to include home purchase assistance and homebuyer education courses for those earning up to 120% AMI.
- c. Develop policies to preserve affordability following the distribution of public funds.
- d. Develop an online repository for housing services, resources, and affordable homes and assistance programs.
- e. Encourage Erie County to expand housing choice voucher programs to include project-based vouchers.
- f. Expand tenant rights resources and services including partnerships with fair housing and eviction prevention services.

1.2 Increase education and access to resources about housing and homeownership for low to moderate income households.

- a. Expand the definition of homeownership beyond single-family detached housing to include single-family attached and condominiums.
- b. Market housing assistance programs through multiple channels including special events, neighborhood associations, non-profit partners, and digital and print methods and social media.

- c. Train neighborhood ambassadors and non-profits to communicate and distribute information about city programs and processes.
- d. Develop funding for programs that provide workforce development, financial, and social services, and permanent supportive housing in the South Side.

1.3 Preserve and maintain naturally occurring affordable housing.

- a. Develop a program to support redevelopment of small and medium sized apartments (up to 15 units) and maintain their affordability.
- b. Identify bad actor landlords and education on property maintenance requirements, tenant rights, and fair housing laws.
- c. Establish landlord resources, funding, and education programs to encourage good actors.
- d. Require property owners who utilize public funding or incentives to maintain affordability for the life of the building.

1.4 Strengthen partnerships between city, county and non-profit agencies for a regional approach to affordable housing.

- a. Explore gaps in services between what the city and county offers and partner on potential new programs and solutions.
- b. Partner with the county, state, and non-profits to develop and implement a homebuyer program with an educational component.



GOAL 2

Enhance existing housing conditions and diversify housing options in the South Side.

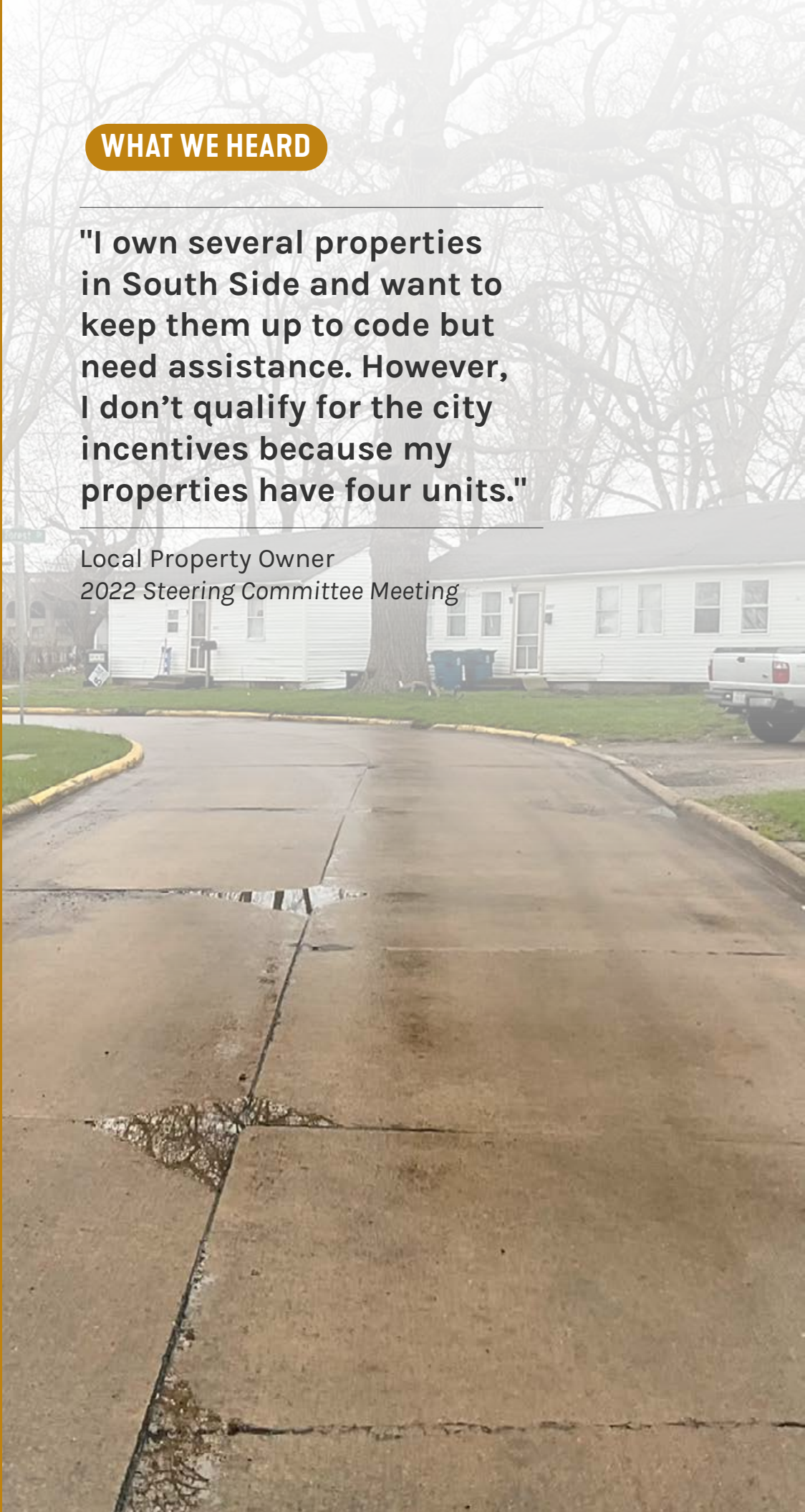
WHY IT MATTERS

The vision for South Side is one that provides a healthy future for all residents by making appropriate transitions in land use from industrial to residential, retains the strong culture of the neighborhood, and is a place where all can live, play, and engage with their neighbors in a safe, healthy, and economically stable community.

WHAT WE HEARD

"I own several properties in South Side and want to keep them up to code but need assistance. However, I don't qualify for the city incentives because my properties have four units."

Local Property Owner  
2022 Steering Committee Meeting



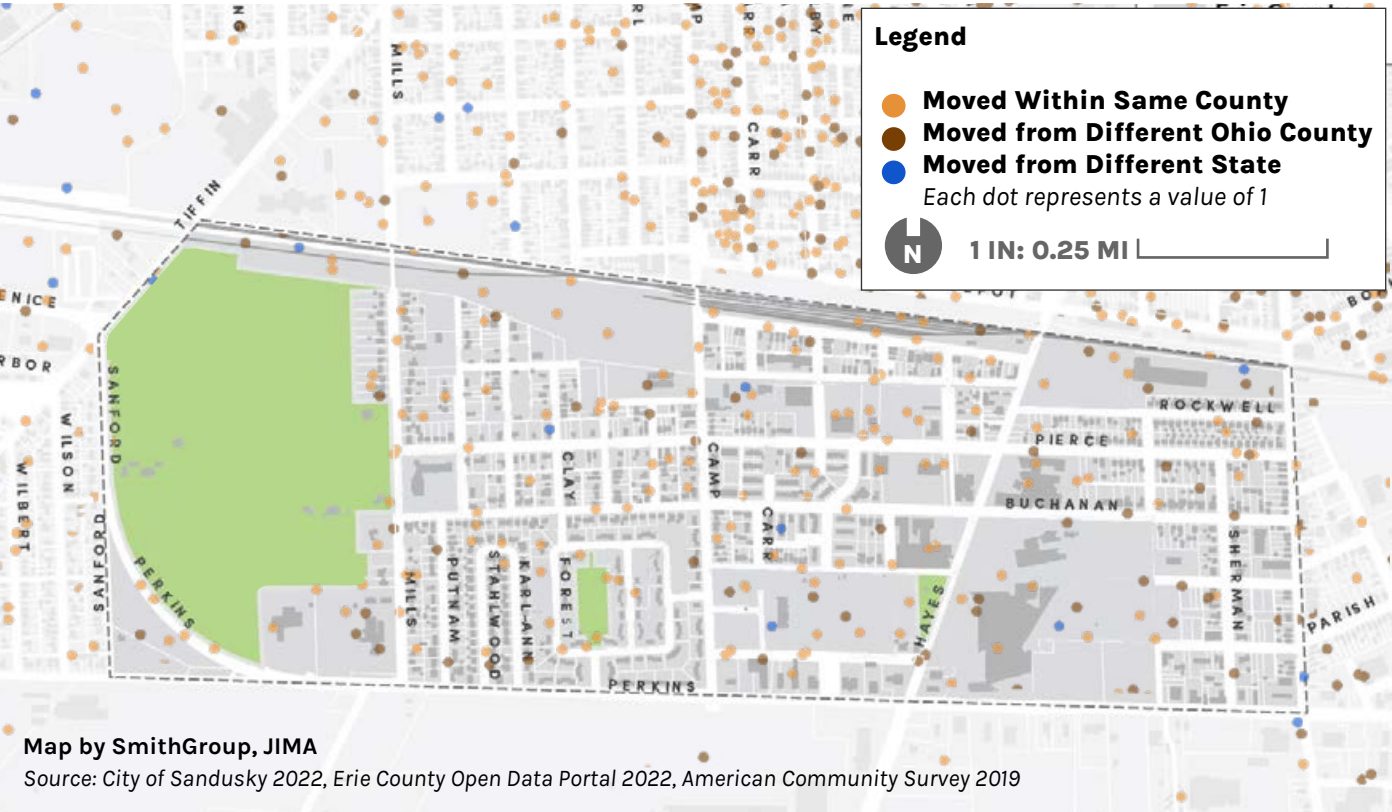
EXISTING CONDITIONS

South Side households are becoming younger and smaller.



People are moving to the South Side.

South Side shows healthy migration patterns which impact the composition of households in the neighborhood. Young adults are returning to the South Side.





## EXISTING CONDITIONS

South Side welcomes a variety of housing types.

South Side has 1,365 homes of diverse typologies including single-family detached, attached, duplexes to fourplexes, and multi-family homes. However, many of the duplexes and fourplexes were not constructed to be permanent. South Side is also home to some subsidized homes and group homes.

Vacant land is common in the neighborhood.

## 228

### VACANT STRUCTURES

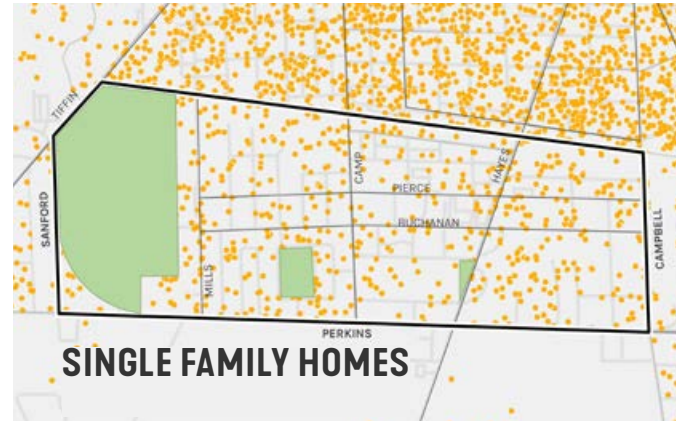
**77**  
**ACRES OF**  
**UNDEVELOPED LAND**

[illegible]

The housing stock is aging.

South Side housing is overall an older housing stock, much of which is owned by landlords or homeowners who have not maintained their properties. More than 88% of the homes (single- and multi-family) in the neighborhood are over 50 years old.

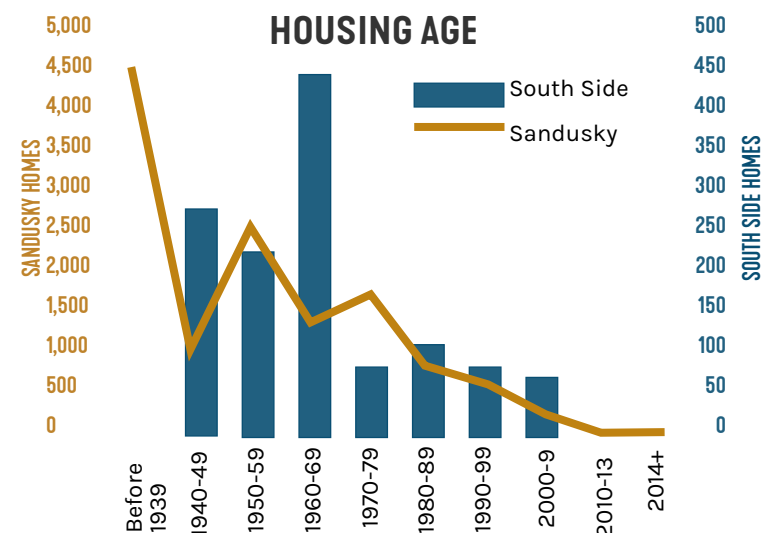
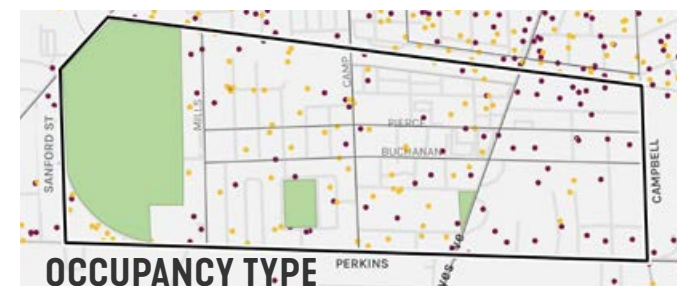
Data Source: American Community Survey 2022, Social Explorer



South Side is balanced  
between owners and renters.

**587**  
**OWNER-OCCUPIED**  
**HOUSEHOLDS**

**550**  
**RENTER HOUSEHOLDS**



## BEST PRACTICES | UPDATING LAND USE

In the South Side, 32% of the actual built structures are single-family homes. Historically, single-family zoning has been a tool to discriminate against minority communities. Single-family housing has been out of reach for many due to lack of generational wealth, discriminatory lending and appraisal practices, and historically racist deed restrictions. With the community describing a feeling of two south sides, recommendations are to increase inclusivity of zoning to incorporate more housing types. Zoning is one tool, of many, that can address the need for diverse types of housing. The Sandusky Planning and Zoning code protects public health, safety, and welfare through the regulation of land development. This includes zoning districts, setback requirements, and parking requirements.

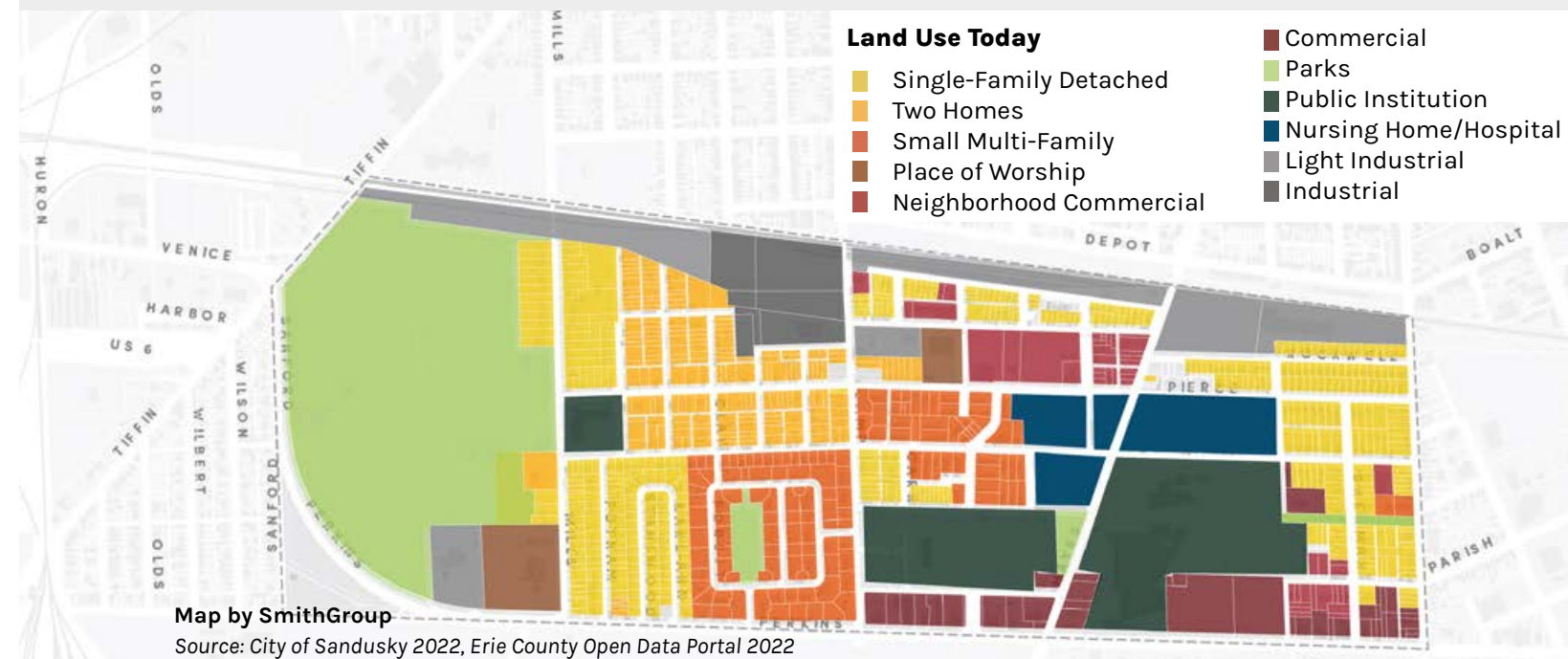
The bulk of the zoning code was adopted in 1980, with a moderate update in 2003 to select sections. This is after much of the housing was developed in the South Side. Since then, housing production in the neighborhood has stalled and federal and state laws, policies, and best practices for

both development and open space have changed drastically. The current code contains many barriers to the development of a variety of housing types and options. Specifically, there is great demand for a range of housing options beyond what exists today, greater clarification and transparency in city policies and processes is needed. To ensure a diverse range of housing types can be built to meet the demands of the South Side residents, it is recommended that the city explore the following changes to the code:

**Permitting accessory dwelling units (ADUS)**  
in all residential districts.

**Revisiting lot size and setback requirements:** While there are multi-family districts in South Side, lot size restrictions and setback requirements limit the actual use of that land to single-family housing.

**Allowing a mix of uses:** Particularly along neighborhood commercial corridors, a mix of uses benefits residents and business owners, allowing smaller lots, a variety of housing types, and a mix of uses.





BEST PRACTICES | EXPANDING HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

SEVERAL TYPES OF HOUSING CURRENTLY MAKE UP THE HOUSING MARKET IN SOUTH SIDE.

**TYPE 1**



**SINGLE-FAMILY**  
2 to 3 beds, 1-1.5 baths  
650 to 1,000 square feet  
1 to 1.5 stories

**TYPE 2**



**SINGLE-FAMILY**  
3 to 4 beds, 1 to 2 baths  
1,000 to 1,400 square feet  
1 to 2 stories

**TYPE 3**



**DUPLEX**  
3 to 4 beds, 2 to 4 baths  
1,000 to 1,400 square feet  
2 stories

**TYPE 4**



**TRIPLEX**  
Each homes is  
2 bed/1 bath  
625 square feet  
1 story

**TYPE 5**



**FOURPLEX**  
Each homes is  
2 bed/1 bath  
925 square feet  
1 story

**TYPE 6**



**MULTI-FAMILY**  
2 bed/1 bath  
925 square feet  
2 story

CONSIDER ALLOWING THE TYPES OF THAT HOUSING ARE MISSING FROM SOUTH SIDE.

**TYPE 7**



**ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS**  
1 to 2 beds/1 to 2 bath  
Up to 800 square feet  
1 story

**TYPE 8**



**TINY HOMES**  
1 bed  
up to 1,000 square feet  
1 story

Cottages on Vaughn  
Source: MicroLife Institute

**TYPE 9**



**TOWN HOMES**  
2 to 3 beds/1 to 2 bath  
1,200 to 1,500 square feet  
2+ stories

**TYPE 10**



**MIXED USE**  
1 to 2 beds  
1st floor commercial  
square feet varies  
2+ stories

Great Scott Trio  
Source: Guerilla Development

SUPPORTING DATA

The existing zoning code's zoning districts limit smaller lots because of large lot area requirements.

Smaller home sizes, needed by smaller households, are not currently permitted in a variety of forms.

Overlays are useful to encourage density in desired areas.



Zoning revisions should accomplish four main goals.

**INCREASE HOUSING OPTIONS**  
Remove minimum lot sizes for non-conforming lots and allow a wider variety of housing options in all residential districts.

**CREATE MIXED-USE DISTRICTS**

**ELIMINATE INCOMPATIBLE USES**  
Protect public health by moving industrial uses further from homes.

**REDUCE PARKING REQUIREMENTS**  
Reduce parking requirements in commercial and mixed-use districts to promote right-size developments for the neighborhood and increase transit use.



## CONCEPT DESIGN | MACARTHUR PARK INFILL HOUSING

South Siders would like to see more housing built throughout the neighborhood, specifically around MacArthur Park, which was never fully developed. It was originally developed to meet a temporary housing need but became permanent. Significant infrastructure is located under private property that should be located within the public right-of-way and the previously mentioned zoning limitations has tied the hands of would be developers seeking to make the land productive and build housing.

### MACARTHUR PARK

The traditional single-family detached house no longer meets the needs of South Side's changing demographic—smaller and younger households. The vision for MacArthur Park includes developing more attached housing, smaller homes, tiny homes, and apartments around the perimeter of Churchwell Park. This density fits with the desired housing types and supports a residential density that could support more businesses in the neighborhood.



## CASE STUDIES | HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND VACANT LOT PROGRAMS



### LUCAS COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

The City of Toledo and Lucas County offer a suite of programs aimed at assisting residents in a variety of life stages with funding from federal and state sources. These programs include emergency assistance programs like the Emergency Rental Assistance program and the Family Self-Sufficiency Program which provides job support and assistance in stabilizing incomes. Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority (LMH) administers these programs in partnership with the City of Toledo with online and in-person services to meet people where they are. Annually, LMH produces reports on the people they serve providing accountability and transparency about the use of funds.

Services and Programs offered include the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Housing Choice Voucher Program, Low-Income Public Housing Units, and landlord resources including funding and training events.



### CHICAGO VACANT LOT PROGRAM

Chicago offers below market and market rate programs for vacant lot disposition. Below market rate is offered to adjacent homeowners whose primary residence is near a vacant lot to help build community equity. The market rate program is offered to other entities and individuals interested in purchasing city owned parcels.



### FEE WAIVERS, CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

San Antonio Neighborhood & Housing Services administers city fee waivers for eligible commercial and housing projects. The applications are first-come-first served. The FY2023 budget includes \$1.6 million for affordable housing fee waivers which are set aside for owner-occupied and new affordable housing projects. Non-profits, like Habitat for Humanity, are major users of these affordable housing fee waivers, along with low-income homeowners. They also recently implemented equity criteria into the application and review process to ensure those most in need of fee waivers are given a fair chance to receive them.



WHAT WE HEARD



Many South Side homes are in disrepair.

In an effort to mitigate blight in South Side, the City of Sandusky begun a demolition program in partnership with Erie County Land Bank with funding from the Sandusky Neighborhood Initiatives program. However, programs still need to address the other side of the issue—low income homeowners need help repairing their properties.



Vacant land needs to be returned to productive use.

South Side has over 77 combined acres of vacant residential, commercial, and industrial land. Ownership of the land is a combination of public and private ownership. Many of the properties are newly vacant, acquired by Erie County Land Bank in partnership with the City of Sandusky as a result of demolitions to mitigate blight. However, the development of these lots will face barriers due to lot size and zoning restrictions. The average size of a vacant residential lot is just under 7,000 square feet and the zoning code prohibits the development of anything but single-family development on a lot of that size. In today's market, increasing costs of construction and supply and demand mismatches has pushed the construction of the typical single-family house out of reach for most without some type of public subsidy.



Most housing in South Side is single-family detached.

Of the 1,365 housing units in the neighborhood, 69% of them, 938 homes, are single-family detached units. However, single-family zoning is not the largest zoning district in the neighborhood. This means that some land is designated with a zone different from the use. An example of this is the MacArthur Park area, which is zoned residential multi-family, but built as a mix of multi-family and single-family. This discrepancy is because of zoning code limitations on the use of smaller lots.

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

2.1 Streamline the development process for affordable housing.

- a. Reduce off-site infrastructure improvement requirements for affordable developments.
- b. Catalog and prioritize infrastructure needs near vacant publicly-owned property.

2.2 Support the expansion of Erie County Land Bank programming and acquisition of land for affordable housing.

- a. Develop and deliver a set of policy and process recommendations to expand programming and funding for Erie County Land Bank.
- b. Increase coordination between Erie County and City of Sandusky regarding disposition of public land within South Side.
- c. Develop and codify process to sell land to private developers in a way that aligns with Sandusky plans.

2.3 Remove zoning barriers to affordable housing choice by allowing smaller lots, a variety of housing types, and a mix of uses.

- a. Research ordinances that restrict the development of affordable housing by-right.
- b. Review lot size and lot coverage limitations for single- and multi-family zoning districts.
- c. Support the development of a Sandusky future land use plan and zoning code update.

2.4 Develop mixed-use districts within the South Side to expand housing options.

- a. Strengthen short-term rental ordinance to restrict investment rentals and allow more flexibility for full-time residents to rent out a part or their entire home as supplemental income.
- b. Research mixed-use best practices and applicability to the South Side.




**GOAL CHAMPION**

- City of Sandusky Department of Community Development

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

- Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Sandusky Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Area Council on Aging



**DID YOU KNOW?**

Strategy 2.4 Aligns with the Sandusky Bicentennial Vision goal to create mixed-use districts across Sandusky.



### GOAL 3

## Retain and adaptively reuse the Former Mills School building.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Mills Elementary School was constructed in 1953 and functioned as a community school for 58 years. In 2021, the school ceased operations and reopened as the temporary base of the City of Sandusky Division of Recreation.

Although functioning at a lower capacity, the building is in great condition and there are opportunities to redevelop it so that the school retains its use as a community serving asset.

In both the large forum engagement sessions and via online survey, residents have expressed an interest in seeing Mills School redeveloped as housing, a neighborhood services building (with programs such as a daycare or recreation), or for business uses such as meeting space, event space, co-working spaces, or commercial kitchen. Three scenarios were developed to highlight programmatic options with a preference to incorporate all these programs into the building.

The resulting proposal for Mills Elementary School is a community hub that offers mixed-income apartments, community and small business development spaces that maintain Mills School as a neighborhood hub. Mills School can host as many as 20 apartment units, while the community wing can serve as an asset to the neighborhood and an attractive amenity for building residents. Improved grounds including walking paths, garden space, playgrounds and outdoor athletic facilities provide opportunities for additional public programming.

### STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

#### 3.1 Refine concept design for the Mills School.

- a. Perform financial feasibility study to determine approximate cost of redevelopment.
- b. Perform general maintenance and upkeep for the property to mitigate hazardous conditions.

#### 3.2 Identify and secure developers and anchor tenants for community resource programs.

- a. Solicit developer interest through a Request for Information (RFI) process.
- b. Research and identify federal and state funding opportunities to assist with the redevelopment of Mills School.

### WHAT WE HEARD

"I grew up going to Mills School. It's so great to see the community is still using it."

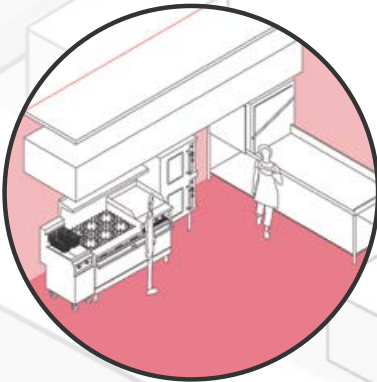
South Side Resident  
2022 Community Kick-Off Dinner

"Mills School should still serve the community."

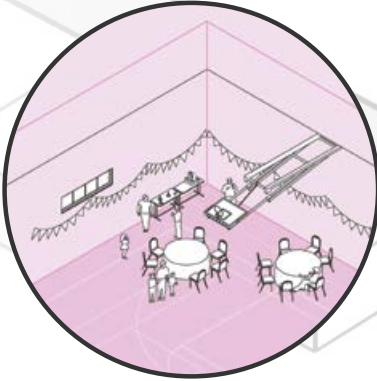
South Side Resident  
2022 Visioning Workshop



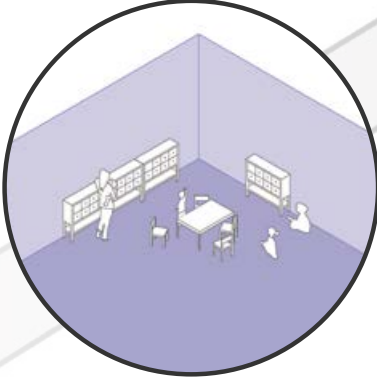
CONCEPT DESIGN | REPURPOSING MILLS SCHOOL



**COMMERCIAL KITCHEN**  
The building’s existing cafeteria can be renovated to serve as a commercial kitchen, a valuable business incubator space for caterers and food entrepreneurs. This space could be linked to existing small business assistance programs.



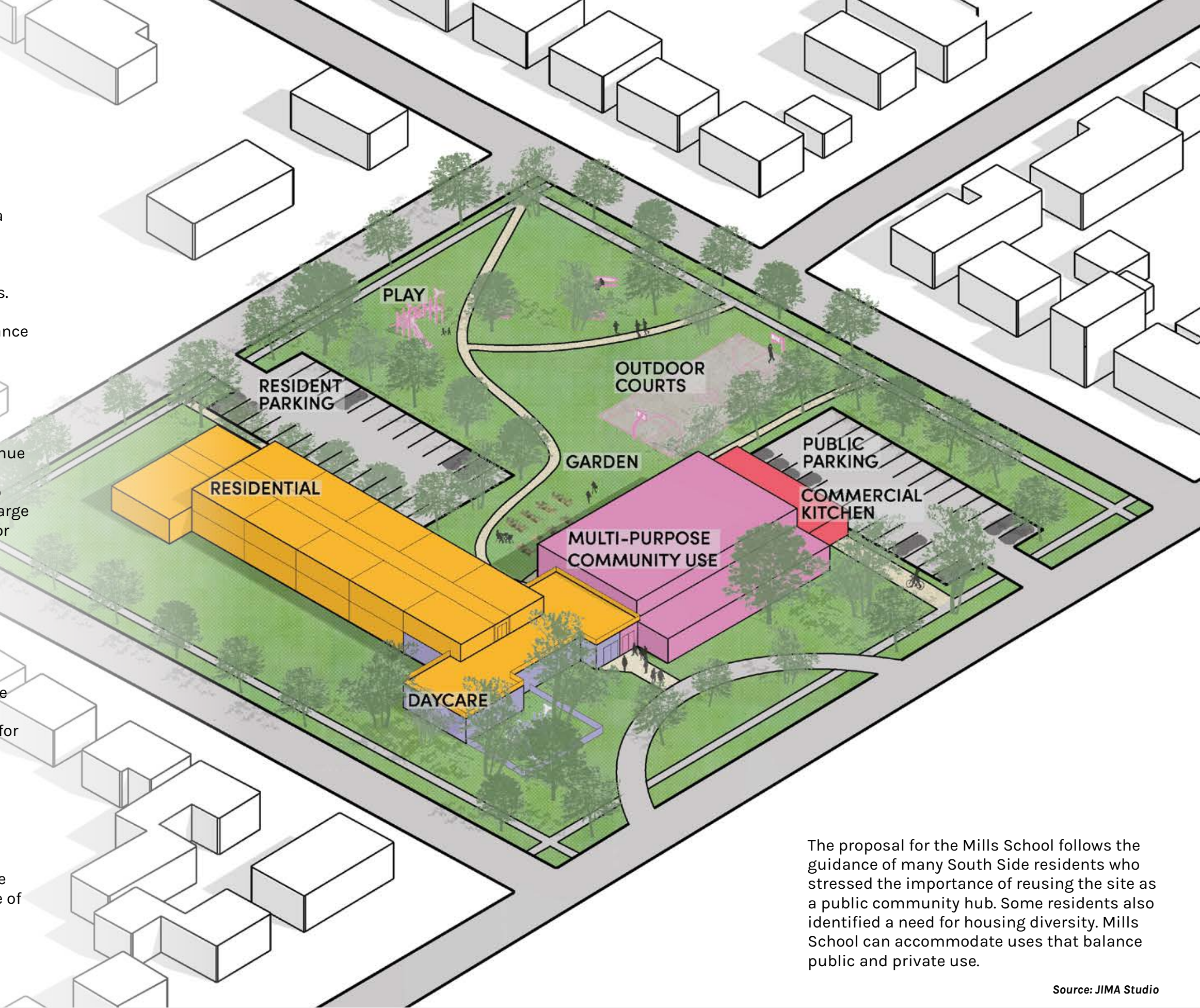
**MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY USE**  
The renovated gym would continue to serve as a recreation space, while improvements would also allow for it to transform into a large event space, or be subdivided for smaller gatherings.



**DAYCARE**  
A small daycare facility would provide child care for South Side residents, providing both new jobs and an attractive amenity for families.



**RESIDENTIAL**  
Homes would be fully accessible and accommodate a wide range of household types.



The proposal for the Mills School follows the guidance of many South Side residents who stressed the importance of reusing the site as a public community hub. Some residents also identified a need for housing diversity. Mills School can accommodate uses that balance public and private use.

Source: JIMA Studio



CASE STUDIES | ADAPTIVE REUSE OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS



The Pryde Senior Housing  
Source: Boston Globe



Image: Ochoco School Crossing  
Source: Pinnacle Architecture

The Mills School offers an exciting opportunity to address community needs and desire at a site with a proven record of community accessibility and use in the heart of the South Side.

Reuse of the building offers an affordable and sustainable option for increasing housing options and maintaining the site’s success as a neighborhood recreation center.

As educational facility needs have shifted over the past several decades, communities across the country have adapted creative strategies to convert underutilized school buildings into valuable community assets. These projects have ranged from minor cosmetic changes to full building redesign.

The cases shown here offer real world examples of potential outcomes.

THE PRYDE SENIOR HOUSING | BOSTON, MA

The overhaul of a former Boston middle school created the first senior housing complex targeted towards LGTBQ elders. It includes 74 mixed-income units with indoor and outdoor community spaces. The project was a partnership with city and state government, a non-profit and a private developer.

OCHOCO SCHOOL CROSSING MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT | PRINEVILLE, OR

In Prineville, Oregon, a former elementary school was transformed into 29 units of affordable housing with a new early child care education facility. The project was financed with assistance from Oregon Housing and Community Services Department.

CASE STUDIES | HOUSING AND DAY CARE CENTERS



Senior housing & community housing  
Source: Pinnacle Architecture



Senior housing & community housing  
Source: Pinnacle Architecture



Glacier Hills Care Center  
Source: Trinity Health, Ann Arbor YMCA



Glacier Hills Care Center  
Source: Trinity Health, Ann Arbor YMCA

Housing for older adults can be a great fit for adaptive reuse and paired with other supportive services. Communities have been looking at intergenerational villages on college campuses, adaptive reuse, and a natural pairing of housing for older adults with child care facilities. Both services have been in decline, and the need for child care outside of the home has been skyrocketing since the beginning of the pandemic. Below are a few examples of how communities have met these needs.

SENIOR HOUSING & COMMUNITY CENTER | RICHLAND, OR

An abandoned elementary school was converted into ten affordable senior units allowing opportunities for residents of the community to age in place. The remainder of the building was transformed into a meeting hall and library.

GLACIER HILLS CARE, REHABILITATION CENTER & YMCA CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER | ANN ARBOR, MI

On a sprawling transit accessible campus, sits Glacier Hills Care Center. This campus boasts nursing beds, rehabilitation care, and a child development center. The campus has several walking trails, ponds, and community gardens, along with play equipment for the children. Prior to the pandemic, older adults would have dedicated activities to do with the children.



# NEIGHBORHOOD + HOUSING STRATEGY SUMMARY

## COORDINATE

South Side residents have many opportunities to expand and enhance neighborhood parks. To successfully achieve these three goals, the City of Sandusky and South Side residents will have to closely collaborate with the partners identified.



**3**  
GOALS



**10**  
STRATEGIES



**14**  
PARTNERS

## IMPLEMENT

Thirty actions are specified throughout this chapter to achieve the goals for South Side housing and neighborhood character (see Chapter 7 Implementation for the full list). These actions are categorized into near-, mid-, and long-term actions.



**30**  
ACTIONS

**9**  
NEAR-TERM  
ACTIONS

**18**  
MID-TERM  
ACTIONS

**3**  
LONG-TERM  
ACTIONS

## PRIORITIZE

Out of the 30 total actions listed in this neighborhood plan, two key actions were identified as top priorities by the City of Sandusky and South Side residents.

**GOAL**  
Expand housing assistance for current residents and maintain overall housing affordability.

**STRATEGY**  
Expand housing assistance programs that prioritize low to moderate income households and people with disabilities.

**ACTION**  
Develop an online repository for housing services, resources, and affordable homes and assistance programs.

**COMPLEXITY**  

Low

High

**CITY ROLE**  

Lead

Partner

Advocate

**KEY PARTNERS**  

Residents

Metro Housing Authority

**TIMEFRAME**  

Near

Mid

Long

**GOAL**  
Enhance existing housing conditions and diversify housing options in the South Side.

**STRATEGY**  
Streamline the development process for affordable housing.

**ACTION**  
Catalog and prioritize infrastructure needs near vacant publicly-owned property.

**COMPLEXITY**  

Low

High

**CITY ROLE**  

Lead

Partner

Advocate

**KEY PARTNERS**  

Sandusky Public Works

**TIMEFRAME**  

Near

Mid

Long

50 South Side Neighborhood Plan

South Side Neighborhood Plan 51





## PILLAR 2

# CONNECTIVITY + INFRASTRUCTURE

In the South Side, roads, sidewalks, and shared use paths will be enhanced by proper water systems, wastewater services, storm water drainage, and safety systems that increase neighborhood walkability and security. The community's improved connectivity link residents, comfortably and safely, to key locations across the neighborhood and city.

Image Source: SmithGroup

Connectivity is a vital aspect of a thriving community. Residents should enjoy safe, accessible, and comfortable streets and roads that allow for multiple forms of transportation. Neighborhoods that are walkable and bikeable promote active living, foster social interaction, reduce crime, and create a strong sense of place. Access to public transit routes that allow residents to move efficiently around the community are critical to well connected communities. Quality roads, sidewalks, and supporting infrastructure are necessary to creating a safe and walkable community for all residents.

South Side's existing street and public transit network lends itself to strong pedestrian walkability and multimodal accessibility. Residential roads with primarily neighborhood traffic are calm and allow for residents to enjoy their community and access amenities on foot and by bike. While a myriad of infrastructure and safety improvement projects have been completed in the South Side in recent years, there is much work to be done. Communities within the South Side such as MacArthur Park are dominated with post-war infrastructure and housing that has lasted far beyond its originally intended lifespan. Water and wastewater infrastructure are inconveniently located under existing structures, limiting the city's ability to provide long-term fixes for persistent infrastructure challenges. Outdated infrastructure is limiting the communities capacity for growth and development.

The Connectivity and Infrastructure Pillar focuses on ways to promote walkability and encourage growth across the South Side by highlighting critical infrastructure improvements.

### KEY TERMS

**CONNECTIVITY** | The quality, state, or capability of a series of networks to link people and places.

**INFRASTRUCTURE** | A series of interconnected systems that provide basic physical and organizational structure and facilities (ex. buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a community. This includes green infrastructure, which is addressed in the Branding and Beautification section.

**COMPLETE STREETS** | A method of street design that enables safe access for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

**RIGHT-OF-WAY** | A legal right of passage that allows someone the right to travel across property owned by someone else. Land within the right-of-way is reserved for public use. This may be used for public streets, sidewalks, alleys, public and private utilities, etc. Right-of-way width varies by location.



GOAL 1

Upgrade neighborhood infrastructure including wastewater and stormwater systems.

WHY IT MATTERS

Much of the infrastructure across the South Side, particularly in the MacArthur Park area, is outdated and no longer meets the needs of the community. In MacArthur Park, water, wastewater, and utility lines are currently not located within the right-of-way (ROW). In MacArthur Park and other nearby residential areas, water and wastewater lines run underneath existing built structures and individual properties. This makes addressing system repairs difficult, and in many instances temporary. In addition to outdated infrastructure, road conditions along primary connectors. The community identified Pierce and Buchanan Street as high priority areas that need repaving. In order to support future growth and development, as well as an enhanced public realm within the South Side, major infrastructure overhauls are imperative.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- 1.1 Upgrade underground wastewater, utilities, and stormwater infrastructure systems to meet current standards, specifically within the MacArthur Park community.
  - a. Relocate all underground utility systems into the ROW within MacArthur Park.
  - b. Upgrade wastewater and stormwater infrastructure within the MacArthur Park community.
- 1.2 Improve road conditions along primary neighborhood connectors.
  - a. Prioritize repaving roads in the South Side. The community specifically mentioned Pierce and Buchanan.
  - b. Identify areas in need of greatest road and curb repairs.
  - c. Pursue infrastructure funding to upgrade roads and curbs throughout the South Side.



GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Department of Public Works

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Erie County Regional Planning Commission Metropolitan Planning Organization

WHAT WE HEARD

"Driving Pierce is like riding the penny pony at Meijer. Sidewalks are broken or heaved up. Storm sewers are collapsing into themselves and smell like sewage."

Perception Survey 2022

Image Source: SmithGroup

DID YOU KNOW?

Green infrastructure can add measurable stormwater quality improvements and support biodiversity in neighborhoods. See recommendations in the Branding + Beautification Chapter.





## GOAL 2

### Improve neighborhood connectivity and enhance pedestrian and bike infrastructure.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

South Side has a strong existing network of roads that connect residents throughout the community. Bus stops are within walking distance for most residents and are located along major corridors. With some slight enhancements South Side has great potential to be a more walkable and bikable community. Currently, majority of residents get around by car. Throughout the engagement process many residents expressed a desire to make the area more bike friendly for families, students, and residents of all ages. South Side can use a mix of bike amenities and enhanced sidewalk networks to provide safe multimodal routes for all. Implementing sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, and shared use paths helps to enhance pedestrian safety, and can be used along specific corridors to elevate the cycling and walking experience. Additionally, train crossings and underpasses that link the South Side to key areas around the city are ill lit and dangerous. These undesirable conditions create physical barriers for residents walking or biking.

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### 2.1 Enhance sidewalks by addressing critical gaps in the network.

- Prioritize sidewalk implementation in communities like MacArthur Park and others with no existing sidewalks.
- Combine infrastructure improvements with future development opportunities.
- Research and pursue county wide funding for sidewalk and stormwater infrastructure improvements.

### 2.2 Develop a pedestrian and bike network that connects residents to schools and other public amenities.

- Pilot bike infrastructure projects on local neighborhood connectors such as Pierce Street and Buchanan Street.
- Implement short term bicycle infrastructure in coordination with ongoing streets improvements projects such as shared lane markings (also known as sharrows), painted bike lanes, and bollards.
- Continue to promote bike safety and etiquette through educational campaigns and initiatives like Safety Town.
- Implement city wide bike share program to promote cycling throughout the community.
- Connect future bike lanes within the South Side to existing bike network.
- Develop a bike and pedestrian connectivity plan to link South Side to Downtown.

### 2.3 Prioritize enhanced pedestrian and bike infrastructure along major roads.

- Implement a complete streets program along major corridors.
- Increase sidewalk widths along major corridors such as Hayes Avenue, Perkins Avenue, and Camp Street to provide enhanced pedestrian and bike infrastructure.
- Pursue grant funding for infrastructure improvements.

## WHAT WE FOUND

Throughout the South Side pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, intersections, curbs, and road are in need of some significant upgrades, including public and private investment. In 2022, the city committed over 100,000 dollars to repairing and replacing roughly 10,000 square feet of sidewalk throughout the city. While some funding exists for sidewalk repairs, the responsibility of maintaining and repairing sidewalks ultimately falls to the abutting property owner. This can be a costly venture for many South Side residents, placing an increased demand on city funding to improve sidewalks. This has prompted a significant backlog of repair request and complaints for the city to address. Additionally, no citywide road repairs had been completed in the 25 years prior to 2014. Ultimately, deferring road maintenance all across the city. However, the city has begun strategically repaving roads and working to make improvements where they can. Perkins Avenue, one of the major thoroughfares within the South Side is scheduled to be resurfaced in 2023 as an example of implementation.

The photos highlight some of the areas where missing and cracked sidewalks, curbless roads, and poor road conditions are prevalent.



Image Source: SmithGroup



## GOAL CHAMPION

- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Erie County Health Department
- Sandusky City Schools

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Private Property Owners
- City of Sandusky Department of Public Works
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Erie County Regional Plannin Commission Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Developers/Builders

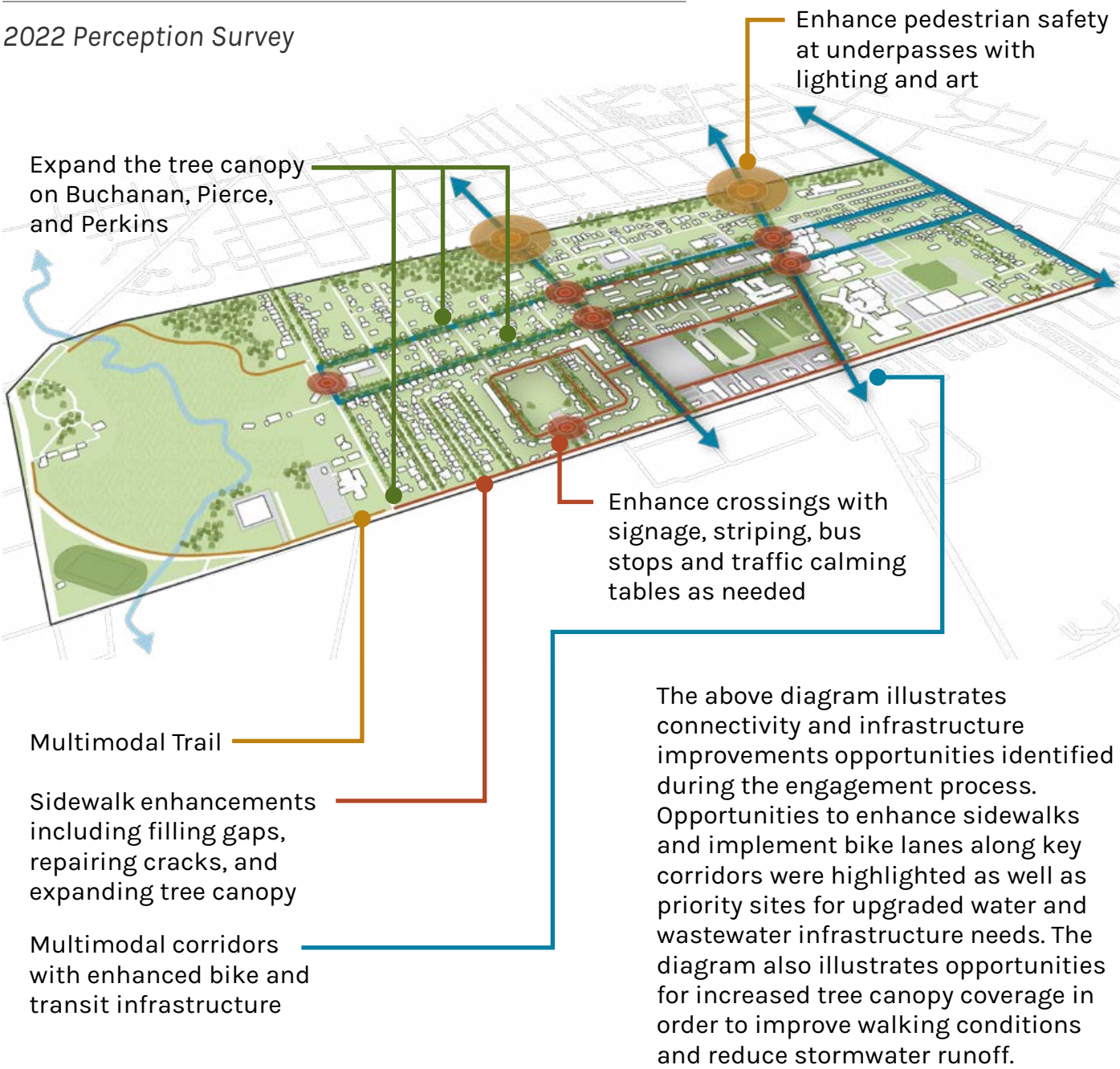




WHAT WE HEARD

"Multi- modal pathways going north south along main corridors and east west possibly parallel to the train tracks to connect the schools to the neighborhoods."

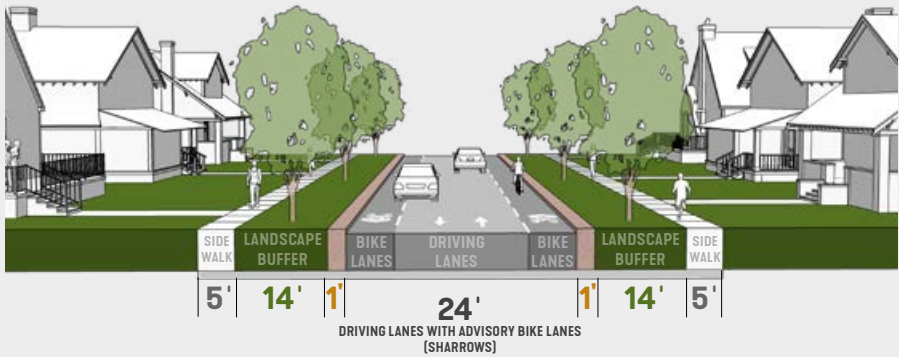
2022 Perception Survey



BEST PRACTICES | BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMPLETE STREETS

MILLS STREET

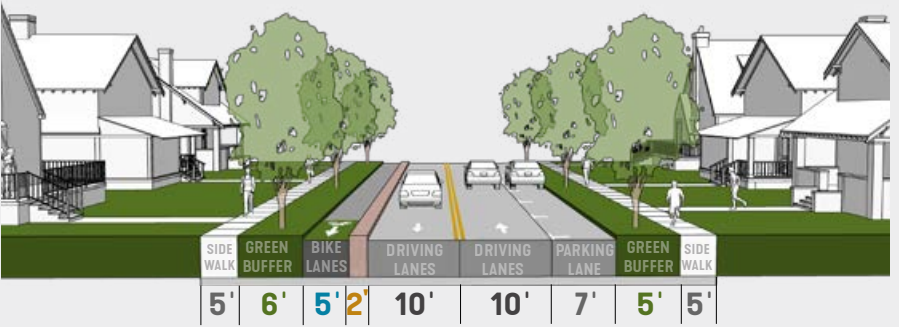
Building on the strong neighborhood feel of this street, advisory bike lanes and enhanced landscape areas should be considered here to connect people to future walking loops and shared use trails around the Mills Golf Course. Future public and private projects should strive to maintain the connected sidewalks and existing tree canopy within the community.



Example 45' R.O.W with advisory bike lanes and enhanced landscape buffers.

CAMP STREET

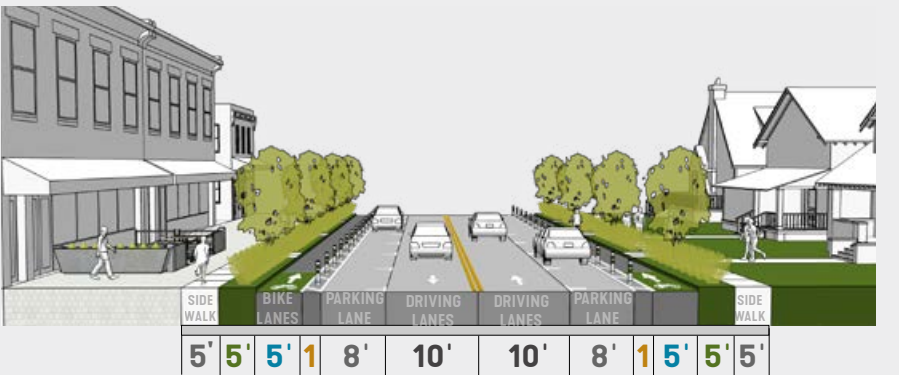
On neighborhood streets, such as Buchanan or Camp Street, biking infrastructure can be added on one side of the street or with sharrows to maintain on-street parking. The use of different materials or painted lanes for bicyclists enhances safety, add character, and tie together major routes throughout the South Side.



Example 55' R.O.W with dedicated bike lane, on street parking, and landscape buffers.

PIERCE STREET

Pierce provides a unique opportunity to expand neighborhood services by providing small scale neighborhood retail close to Hayes Avenue, creating a seamless transition from neighborhood homes to the busier traffic on Hayes.



Example 65' - 70' R.O.W with dedicated bike lanes, on street parking, and landscape buffers.



## GOAL 3

**Implement traffic calming strategies, enhanced lighting, and improved public spaces to enhance community safety.**

### WHY IT MATTERS

Traffic calming is a combination of physical road and street interventions that can reduce the negative impacts of motor vehicles and alter user behaviors to improve conditions for all. Major corridors such as Hayes Avenue, Perkins Avenue, and Camp Street have wide roads with larger shoulders and narrow sidewalks. There are broad distances between crossings that encourage speeding and impede pedestrians ability to safely cross. Enhanced cross walks, and additional pedestrian crossings have the potential to make streets safer for all users. Safety across the neighborhood was a major priority for South Side residents.



### GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky  
Department of Public Works
- Sandusky City Schools

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Erie County Health Department
- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Erie County Regional Planning Commission & Metropolitan Planning Organization

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

**3.1 Focus traffic calming strategies such as speed tables, high intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) signals, and enhanced crosswalks along major roads and at key intersections.**

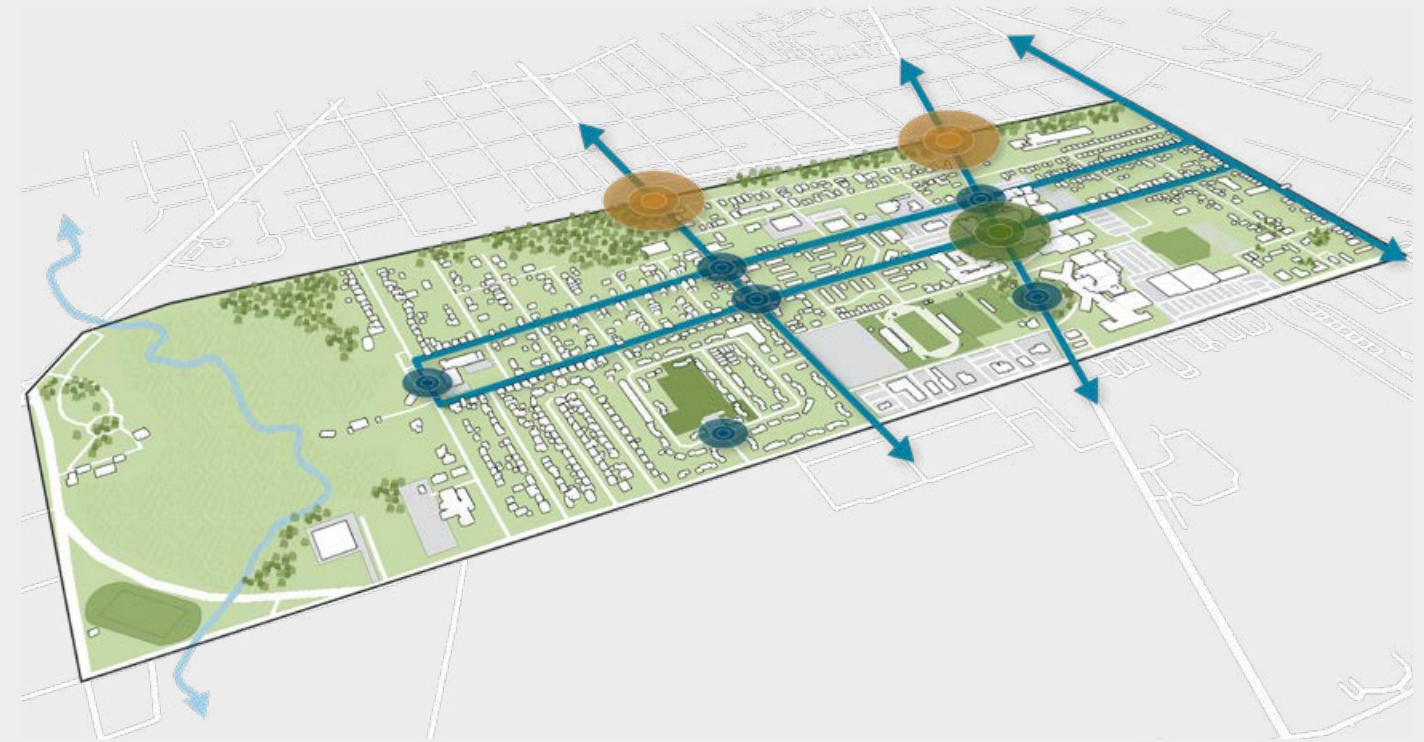
- Implement HAWK signal and enhanced crosswalk along Hayes Avenue to provide a controlled school crossing.
- Narrow drive lanes and widen sidewalks to reduce speeds along major roads in enhance pedestrian safety.
- Enhance existing crosswalks with reflectors, lighting, and crosswalk art to increase visibility.
- Implement speed tables at school crossings along Hayes Avenue and at major crossings along Camp Street.

**3.2 Enhance lighting along major corridors and in public open spaces to increase visibility.**

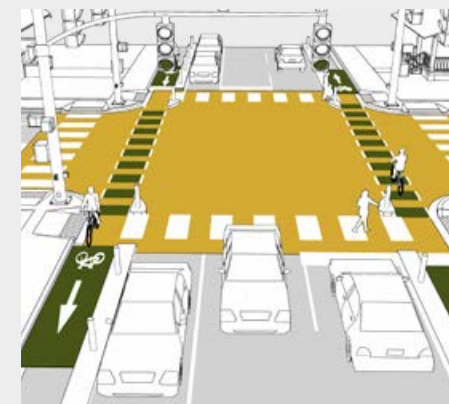
- Improve lighting in public spaces throughout the South Side.
- Increase lighting in and around underpass areas and training crossings.



## BEST PRACTICES | TRAFFIC CALMING FOR HEALTHY HAYES



**1 | IMPLEMENT HAWK SIGNALS, RAISED TABLES, OR ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS AT KEY INTERSECTIONS**



**2 | USE SIGNAGE AND TACTICAL URBANISM AT PRIMARY CROSSINGS**



**3 | ENHANCE UNDERPASSES WITH LIGHTING AND ART**



Source: 2017 Neighborhood Initiative



# CONNECTIVITY + INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY SUMMARY

## COORDINATE

South Side residents have many opportunities to expand and enhance neighborhood parks. To successfully achieve these 3 goals, the City of Sandusky and South Side residents will have to closely collaborate with the partners identified.



3  
GOALS



7  
STRATEGIES



14  
PARTNERS

## IMPLEMENT

23 actions are specified throughout this chapter to achieve the goals for South Side parks and open spaces. See Chapter 7. Implementation for the full list. These actions are categorized into near term, mid term, and far term actions.



23  
ACTIONS

10  
NEAR TERM ACTIONS

14  
MID TERM ACTIONS

10  
LONG TERM ACTIONS

## PRIORITIZE

Out of the 23 total actions listed in this plan, 2 key actions were identified as top priorities by the City of Sandusky and South Side residents.

### GOAL

Upgrade neighborhood infrastructure including wastewater and storm water systems, streets, sidewalks, lighting, and public spaces.

### STRATEGY

Upgrade underground utilities, wastewater, and water infrastructure systems to meet current standards, specifically within the MacArthur Park community.

### STRATEGY

Improve road conditions along primary neighborhood connectors.

### ACTION

Relocate all underground wastewater and water systems into the ROW within MacArthur Park.

### ACTION

Prioritize repaving roads in the South Side. Specifically, Pierce and Buchanan.

### FEASIBILITY

Actionable  Aspirational

### CITY ROLE

LeadPartnerAdvocate

### KEY PARTNERS

Sandusky Parks and RecreationSandusky Public Works

### TIMEFRAME

NearMidLong

### FEASIBILITY

Actionable  Aspirational

### CITY ROLE

LeadPartnerAdvocate

### KEY PARTNERS

Sandusky Public Works

### TIMEFRAME

NearMidLong





### PILLAR 3

# PARKS + OPEN SPACES

In South Side, accessible parks and open spaces serve as community hubs that provide increased opportunities for recreation and physical activity. These neighborhood destinations are walkable and offer a variety of activities for visitors of all ages.

*Image Source: Sandusky Register*

Parks and open spaces are vital to strong communities. They offer opportunities for residents to play, exercise, and engage with each other, while enhancing the overall beauty and character of a neighborhood.

Compared to other areas in Sandusky, South Side has several unique open spaces that make South Side an ideal location for families looking to live within immediate access to greenspaces.

One example is the Mills Creek Golf Course, which is one of the city's largest green spaces and is revered as a community resource where many residents spent their childhood summers learning to golf or caddy.

While South Side hosts a diverse array of open space types, the quality and distribution of amenities can be enhanced. Locations like Churchwell Park play a significant role in the everyday experience of South Side residents and thus, could be transformed to match the desired use and quality residents deserve.

There are also other opportunities to expand the city's trail system to better connect to Downtown and the waterfront, as well as improve the overall experience of parks and open spaces within South Side. This also includes the demand for new recreation opportunities.

The Parks and Open Spaces Pillar aims to identify key opportunities to expand equitable access to greenspaces for South Side residents, improve existing assets, and explore opportunities to meet the needs of South Side residents looking for quality open space and recreation amenities.

## KEY TERMS

**NEIGHBORHOOD PARK** | Parks are created at different scales to accommodate different needs. Regional parks are larger and draw in visitors from further distances, whereas neighborhood parks are smaller and serve just the residents in the immediate area.

**OPEN SPACE NETWORK** | An open space network is the connection between various parks, green spaces, and recreation facilities.



GOAL 1

Transform Churchwell Park into a neighborhood serving park.

WHY IT MATTERS

Churchwell Park is named after the late Captain Floyd C. Churchwell, a longstanding community leader from the South Side neighborhood. Located on Forest Street, Churchwell Park encompasses approximately 3 acres of greenspace with open fields for baseball and softball, a basketball court, picnic shelters with public outdoor grills and two playground structures. Churchwell Park is uniquely positioned in the middle of the MacArthur Park development, completely surrounded by residences.

Today, Churchwell Park does not have much to offer residents. The existing playfields, playgrounds and picnic shelter are in disrepair, and there is limited city programming at the park to activate these spaces. Moreover, the location of housing enclosing the park deter community use and limit the sense of privacy. These conditions present a great opportunity for the transformation of Churchwell Park that considers a diversity of site programs to support current use and promote new residential engagement with the park. This investment will improve the overall quality of Churchwell Park, as well as the experience living, playing, and visiting South Side.

The Churchwell Park of tomorrow can offer beautiful landscapes, inspiring play spaces, and a variety of amenities that support everyday use and special events. The vision upgrades the park to provide South Side families with a high-quality experience, enhancing a key neighborhood anchor.

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

- 1.1 **Design and build a state-of-the-art park with new play equipment and amenities inclusive of resident ideas.**
  - a. Confirm site design and proposed park features.
  - b. Secure funding for improvements.
  - c. Identify recreation partners for park programming.
- 1.2 **Expand park footprint to accommodate future capacity.**
  - a. Investigate the feasibility of a property swap program to exchange privately-owned land around the park for publicly-owned land to expand the footprint of Churchwell Park.
- 1.3 **Identify a local champion to support park maintenance and programming.**
  - a. Pair a Friend through Friends of Sandusky Parks with Churchwell Park to steward the site after redevelopment.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Churchwell Park today is under-utilized and under-resourced. To contribute to a vital neighborhood, this park’s transformation is key in establishing quality outdoor family-friendly spaces.



GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Divison of Planning
- City of Sandusky Division of Recreation

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City of Sandusky Public Works Department
- National Recreation and Park Association
- Erie County Metropolitan Parks
- Erie County Department of Health
- Friends of Sandusky Parks
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Erie County Master Gardeners



**CONCEPT DESIGN | REIMAGINING CHURCHWELL PARK**

The new vision for Churchwell Park includes new play equipment with a splash pad, restrooms, play courts, community gardens, covered plaza, public art, and a walking loop along the perimeter. The vision also includes upgrades to existing playfields, lawns, and parking areas.

**WALKING TRAIL**  
**PARKING LOT**  
**OPEN LAWN**  
**ADVENTURE PLAY**  
**SPLASH PAD**  
**PLAZA**  
**RESTROOMS**  
**COURTS**  
**GARDEN**  
**GATEWAY ART**

Source: JIMA Studio

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**PLAZA**  
**RESTROOMS**  
**COURTS**  
**GATEWAY ART**

Source: JIMA Studio



CONCEPT DESIGN | REIMAGINING CHURCHWELL PARK



**ADVENTURE PLAY AND SPLASH PAD**

Churchwell Park can feature high-quality equipment that inspire adventure and problem solving for children with year-round landscapes. A splash pad provide family-friendly fun and cool relief during hot summer days.

**COMMUNITY GARDEN AND WALKING PATHS**

A community garden can add another representation of “South Side 4 Life” pride. Walking paths can support passive recreation with beautiful low-impact loops around Churchwell Park.



**PLAZA**

A plaza can upgrade the existing pavilion and barbecue grills with a dynamic canopy—a great way to engage a local artist.

**OPEN LAWNS**

Preserving open lawns are critical for free play or organized sports. This may invite local leagues to play—or families to enjoy an outdoor meal.



**COMFORT STATION**

A new facility will bring restrooms to Churchwell Park, making it easier for families to enjoy the park for longer periods of time.

**COURTS**

Athletic courts offer organized team sports opportunities in Churchwell Park, providing a safe place to hang out, especially for South Side youth and teens.





STRATEGIES | 1.1 EXPAND CHURCHWELL PARK’S FOOTPRINT TO EXPAND FOR FUTURE CAPACITY

There are a number of publicly owned parcels surrounding Churchwell Park. This presents an opportunity for more public investment for that park that expands the existing footprint and capacity for more amenities and programs. The City of Sandusky can evaluate the feasibility of a property swap program,

that exchanges privately-owned land along the park’s perimeter for publicly-owned land within the MacArthur Park neighborhood or in other parts of the city. This can present an opportunity for more quality housing around Churchwell Park as described in the Housing + Neighborhoods chapter.



STRATEGIES | 1.2 IDENTIFY A LOCAL CHAMPION TO SUPPORT PARK MAINTENANCE AND PROGRAMMING

The City of Sandusky relies on volunteers and community groups to keep parks and playgrounds clean and safe. There is presently a need to expand the city’s reach to keep all of the parks beautiful.



Volunteers with the parks  
Source: Anne Arundel County, MD



GOAL 2

Enhance South Side recreational facilities and access.

WHY IT MATTERS

With new parks and green connections proposed for South Side, it is important to keep up with the facilities that are a mainstay in the South Side landscape. The Erie County Health Department Community Health Center identifies recreation as a clear need across the county, as a means to support both physical and mental health. This is an aligned goal for South Side.

There are some park equipment and amenities that are in different life cycles, and others that were installed more recently but could offer better placemaking. Improving the overall parks and recreation opportunities will keep South Side an attractive place to live for families. This type of maintenance can be developed through key partnerships that elevate residents as stewards for the open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

Presently, the retired Mills Elementary School is being used as a temporary recreational facility, hosting programs and camps for the neighborhood’s youth. Its presence and avid use as a recreation center presents a clear opportunity to expand or establish a permanent center for residents of all ages to use.

With a focus on improving the quality and accessibility of South Side’s parks and recreational facilities, residents can continue to enjoy and utilize the spaces that have already been serving South Side, with enhancements that keep them moving and healthy.

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

2.1 Conduct a feasibility study to locate a new citywide recreation center.

- a. Assess the feasibility of centrally accessible sites for a citywide recreation center, including the American Crayon Site.
- b. Confirm partners to engage leagues, schools and groups across the city.
- c. Identify funding for implementation.

2.2 Regularly assess park quality for safety compliance.

- a. Hire a playground specialist to inspect all equipment annually.
- b. Use high-quality weather resistant materials.
- c. Regularly remove garbage and any vandalism.

2.3 Establish walking trails that connect to larger green spaces and other key destinations.

- a. Investigate the feasibility of a linear park or trail along the Amtrak rail corridor to connect Mills Creek to Hayes Avenue.
- b. Execute the proposed trail at Mills Creek Golf Course.
- c. Establish a Safe Route to School between Sandusky High School and Mills Schools.
- d. Provide design guidelines and small grants for local businesses looking to activate their sites for public use.

2.4 Support ongoing improvements at Mills Creek Golf Course, with specific emphasis on flooding response.

- a. Expand Mills Creek conservation efforts to beautify and enhance the riparian zone.
- b. Utilize planned projects, like the proposed walking trail, to examine topography and its effects on site drainage and flooding.
- c. Engage with summer youth jobs to provide hands-on experience with green infrastructure.

SUPPORTING DATA

In the latest Community Health Assessment, Erie County Health reported low numbers for regular exercise among youth and adults. Access to more recreation can help South Side residents live healthier.

Objectives

Nearly three quarters (73%) of Erie County adolescents did not get the CDC recommended 60 minutes of physical activity every day, and 70% of adults did not get the recommended 30 minutes of exercise five days per week, according to the 2019 Erie County CHA. Erie County will use the following objectives to monitor progress in improving physical activity.

DESIRED OUTCOME	INDICATOR (SOURCE)	BASELINE (2019)	TARGET (2022)
Increase physical activity	Percent of youth, grades 6th-12th, physically active for at least 60 minutes per day on every day in past week. (Erie County Youth Health Assessment)	27%	32%
	Percent of Erie County adults who exercise for at least 30 minutes, five days per week. (Erie County Community Health Assessment)	30%	35%

Source: 2022 Erie County Community Health Assessment Report

GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Department of Community Development
- City of Sandusky Planning Division
- City of Sandusky Recreation Division

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Erie County Health Department Community Health Center
- Erie County Metropolitan Parks
- Amtrak
- Sandusky City School District
- Ohio Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program





STRATEGIES | 2.1 CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO LOCATE A NEW CITYWIDE RECREATION CENTER

There are a number of publicly-owned parcels that could support a new location for a citywide recreation center. This presents an opportunity for more public investment around recreation that can serve South Side and the City of Sandusky at large.



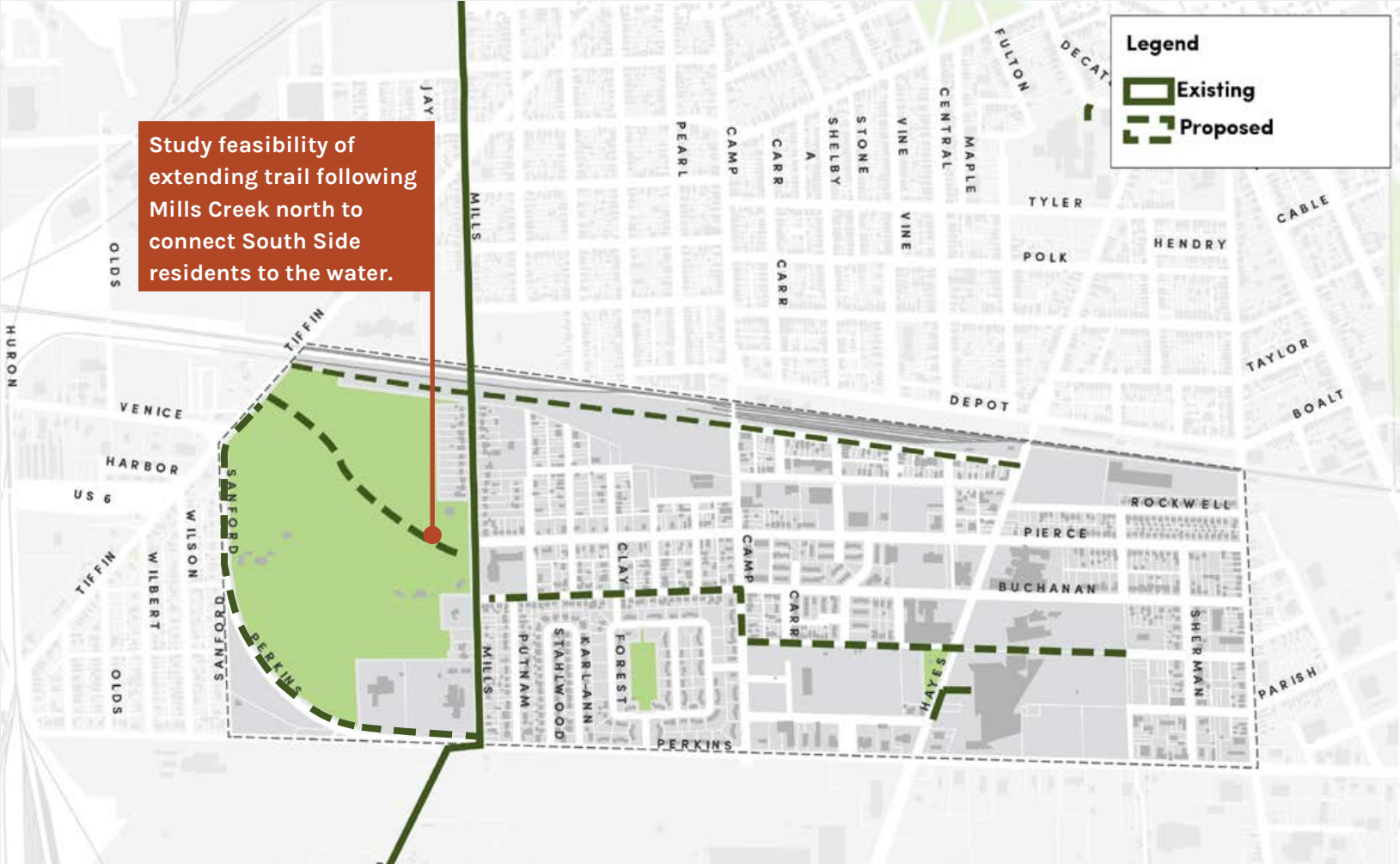
STRATEGIES | 2.2 REGULARLY ASSESS PARK QUALITY FOR SAFETY COMPLIANCE

Parks with play or exercise equipment need consistent maintenance to avoid becoming harmful to users. Having a clear understanding of equipment lifelines can help the city prioritize which parks need funding and other types of support.



STRATEGIES | 2.3 ESTABLISH WALKING TRAILS THAT CONNECT TO LARGER GREEN SPACES AND OTHER KEY DESTINATIONS

Direct links to green spaces and key destinations will enhance recreation and transportation in the South Side. This is an opportunity to build trails and greenways that establish clear routes and loops to neighborhood locations.



Map of Existing and Proposed Trail System in South Sides by JIMA Studio  
Source: City of Sandusky 2022, Erie County Open Data Portal 2022



STRATEGIES | 2.4 SUPPORT ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS AT MILLS CREEK GOLF COURSE, WITH SPECIFIC EMPHASIS ON FLOODING RESPONSE

Mills Creek is a beautiful asset within the Mills Creek Golf Course, but it also floods during major storm events. In fact, most of the Golf Course is within a floodplain or floodway. Maintaining the site improvements that help mitigate site flooding will ensure that residents can enjoy the golf course as often as possible throughout the year.



Mills Creek During a Flood  
Source: Mills Creek Golf Course



### GOAL 3

## Enhance all parks and recreational programs and services.

### WHY IT MATTERS

Parks and open spaces can contribute to healthy lifestyles by putting exercise and recreation at the center of community activity. Without adequate access, residents may have limited opportunities nearby to walk, bike or play sports. This may mean traveling to other neighborhoods or forgoing the activity altogether. Limited exercise can lead to health concerns and complications, like heart disease. Access to recreation is critical to providing residents with safe options for healthy living.

Local programs help to respond to these challenges. Group exercise and events can build community, while achieving health goals. Because of this, it is pertinent to support how residents get involved with South Side parks and recreational facilities.

Similarly, residents are encouraged to initiate programs and events that keep South Side parks clean, beautiful, safe and friendly. Volunteerism can be a great driver to expand programs beyond the city's offerings, as well as help with the maintenance of the key public areas. It also establishes a sense of pride as residents take care of the spaces they share together.

Healthy living means longer and fuller lives for all South Side residents



### STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

#### 3.1 Expand all in-park programming to engage residents.

- Expand recreation staff to add programs for youth, teens, adults and seniors.
- Establish a neighborhood-scale home base in South Side (Mills School).
- Partner with Sandusky Public Schools to train teens for camp leadership roles.
- Expand offerings by leveraging community partners and instructor volunteerism (i.e. yoga and movement classes, sewing programs, music programs etc.).

#### 3.2 Utilize short-term activation strategies at Strobel Stadium parking lot during off-seasons.

- Collaborate with local artists to develop murals or pavement graphics.
- Program family-friendly events to encourage year-round use (i.e. food truck festival, carnival, music series, mini drive-in theatre).
- Identify funding sources for implementation.

#### 3.3 Partner with Erie County Health Department to expand the Healthy Hayes Initiative and promote healthy recreation.

- Identify Erie County initiatives and funding opportunities for Sandusky.
- Partner with Firelands Healthy Hayes Corridor Project to add recreation programming to South Side.

#### 3.4 Expand Friends of Sandusky Parks programs to offset park and trails maintenance costs.

- Pair a Friend through Friends of Sandusky Parks with newly established parks and open spaces.
- Support volunteers with Community Development Block grant federal programs and maintenance equipment.

#### 3.5 Support local groups in building and maintaining gardens on underutilized land.

- Leverage Community Development Block grant federal programs to support community groups with garden establishment and maintenance.
- Connect local organizations with available land bank parcels.

### GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Department of Community Development
- City of Sandusky Planning Division
- City of Sandusky Recreation Division

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Erie County Health Department Community Health Center
- Sandusky City School District
- Firelands Health
- OHgo!
- OSU Extension
- Erie County Metropolitan Parks
- Friends of Sandusky Parks





## STRATEGIES | 3.1 EXPAND ALL IN-PARK PROGRAMMING TO ENGAGE RESIDENTS

The Parks & Recreation Division is a big success in South Side. The youth programs are widely used by South Side residents and beyond, and is a source of pride for the neighborhood. It also provides residents opportunities to exercise, volunteer, and engage with parks and open spaces. Building on the momentum of this strong program will continue to serve South Side residents for years to come.



**Sandusky Parks and Recreation Department Summer Camp**  
Source: Sandusky Register

## STRATEGIES | 3.2 UTILIZE SHORT-TERM ACTIVATION STRATEGIES AT STROBEL STADIUM PARKING LOT DURING OFF-SEASONS

Pop up planning is a form of activating public spaces with temporary or semi-permanent interventions that test the viability of long-term investment. During the off-season, the stadium parking lot is largely underutilized and offers an opportunity to activate a large vacant space.



Pop Courts Community Plaza  
Source: City of Chicago

## STRATEGIES | 3.3 PARTNER WITH ERIE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO EXPAND THE HEALTHY HAYES INITIATIVE AND PROMOTE HEALTHY RECREATION

In the 2022 Erie County Community Health Improvement Plan, the Erie County Health Department identified strategies to support exercise amongst youth and adults. South Side may be able to benefit from this county-level agenda.



Senior Exercise Class  
Source: Haves Senior Health Center



**STRATEGIES | 3.4 EXPAND FRIENDS OF SANDUSKY PARKS PROGRAMS TO OFFSET PARK AND TRAILS MAINTENANCE COSTS**

The City of Sandusky relies on volunteers and community groups to keep parks and playground clean and safe. With newly introduced parks, trails and open spaces, there will need to be more volunteers, including agencies and community groups who take the lead as stewards, to support South Side’s green space network.

Existing examples of this work in Sandusky includes stewardship, volunteerism, and financial support from groups such as Kiwanis Club of Sandusky, Lion’s Club, Peace Through Understanding, Mylandar Foundation, Wightman-Wieber Foundation, Dorn Foundation.



Park Clean-up Volunteers  
Source: Sandusky Register

**STRATEGIES | 3.5 SUPPORT LOCAL GROUPS IN BUILDING AND MAINTAINING GARDENS ON UNDERUTILIZED LAND**

Community and resident groups can help contribute to the overall greening of South Side. Adding gardens help to offset stormwater runoff while establishing a sense of place in areas that are locally important.



Victory Kitchen in Sandusky, OH  
Source: Sandusky Register



Mills Creek Golfers  
Source: Mills Creek Golf Course



PARKS + OPEN SPACE STRATEGY SUMMARY

COORDINATE

South Side residents have many opportunities to expand and enhance neighborhood parks. To successfully achieve these three goals, the City of Sandusky and South Side residents will have to closely collaborate with the partners identified.



IMPLEMENT

Over 40 actions are specified throughout this chapter to achieve the goals for South Side parks and open spaces (see Chapter 7. Implementation for the full list). These actions are categorized into near-, mid-, and long-term actions.



PRIORITIZE

Out of the 40 total actions listed in this neighborhood plan, two key actions were identified as top priorities by the City of Sandusky and South Side residents.

GOAL

Transform Churchwell Park into a neighborhood serving park.

STRATEGY

Design and build a state-of-the-art park with new play equipment and amenities inclusive of resident ideas.

ACTION

Confirm site design and proposed park features.

ACTION

Secure funding for park improvements

FEASIBILITY

ActionableAspirational

CITY ROLE

LeadPartnerAdvocate

KEY PARTNERS

ResidentsErie Co. Health Dept.

TIMEFRAME

NearMidLong

FEASIBILITY

ActionableAspirational

CITY ROLE

LeadPartnerAdvocate

KEY PARTNERS

National Recreation & Parks Assc.

TIMEFRAME

NearMidLong





## PILLAR 4

# ACCESSIBILITY + SERVICES

In the South Side, people will have access to essential businesses, healthcare facilities, social services, non-profits, and faith-based institutions that provide fundamental care and supplies to the neighborhood. Community health will improve through connectedness, access to healthy food options, and community amenities.

Image Source: SmithGroup

The ability for people to access key resources and services, such as quality healthcare, healthy food options, essential businesses, and social services, within their neighborhood is vital to creating complete communities and ensuring that ALL residents, no matter their age, income, education, or race, have equal access to quality goods and services. However, for many South Side residents, critical services and essential resources can feel inaccessible. Nevertheless, the South Side has a deep community-wide commitment to supporting each other and celebrating the people and multigenerational families that make the neighborhood special. This long standing commitment amongst residents to serving their neighborhood can be seen through its numerous faith-based organizations, local non-profits, and dedicated community champions. Residents often turn to these groups for support with vital resources.

The Accessibility + Services pillar identifies areas where the city can play a greater advocacy role in improving residents' access to information, facilitate stronger connections to existing resources, and actively build trust by strengthening networks of collaboration between the city, residents, and stakeholders.

## KEY TERMS

**ACCESSIBILITY** | The practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful and usable for as many people as possible.

**COMPLETE COMMUNITIES** | Seeks to locate as many services and amenities within walking distance of the center of a neighborhood to serve all residents daily needs.

**MENTAL HEALTH** | Encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

**MULTIGENERATIONAL** | Including two or more generations.



GOAL 1

Build trust and improve the relationship between the City and South Side community.

WHY IT MATTERS

Historically, the relationship between city government and South Side residents has been strained. South Side residents have expressed on several occasions, during this process, a deep distrust for local government. However, both the city and resident community groups have made significant strides during this and previous planning efforts to address systemic inequities and empower residents to effect change in their community. Throughout the engagement process there has been a significant focus on creating more equitable and inclusive engagement process in order to build community trust. The city and South Side community must work together to make progress towards a thriving South Side.

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

- 1.1 Increase transparency of city processes and accountability to the public.
- a. Host community meet and greets with city staff and officials to establish a consistent rapport with the community.

b. Expand how information is shared using social media platforms, community canvassing, mailers, and local resident communication networks.

c. Develop a frequently asked questions web page for residents to get information on specific projects and city procedures.

d. Develop a neighborhood advisory committee.
- 1.2 Prioritize equitable community engagement in civic processes.
- a. Track all community engagement efforts using several forms of data collection.

b. Use data from previous engagement efforts to identify gaps in outreach.

c. Target underrepresented populations through focused engagement efforts.

d. Establish community kiosk or message boards at local businesses or public facilities throughout the South Side to share information.

e. Report engagement findings and comments to the public following community events and meetings.
- 1.3 Identify and empower local community champions and advocacy groups.
- a. Work with community partners to provide information sessions on community organizing and civic procedures.

b. Document and respond to community feedback through official public facing community message boards that are both digital and physical.

c. Work with local youth to develop a youth community ambassador program to share information and connect with younger generations of South Side residents.

WHAT WE HEARD

"This is the lowest hanging fruit to accomplish. It just requires the will from City Hall to want to connect."

Steering Committee Vision and Goals Review

GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Community Advocates
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Neighborhood Leaders
- Local Businesses





## GOAL 2

### Strengthen partnerships with local community associations, social service organizations, non-profits, and faith based groups.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

Partnership with local organizations is critical to reestablishing relationships within the community and providing resources to residents. Several faith-based organization call South Side home and have for some time. They are essential fixtures in the community and serve the community in a much greater capacity than just worship services. Local non-profits and community groups work to increase food access, support residents in need of housing and financial aid, along with functioning as unofficial connectors between South Side residents, local government, and service-based organizations. Organizations such as OhGo (a local non-profit providing residents with access to affordable food), are essential to the community and have worked hard to establish trust with South Side residents. While these organizations do what they can to fill the gaps in resources and information it is important that the City of Sandusky leverage these groups and the relationships that they have established within the community to begin to build back trust with the city.

## STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

**2.1 Develop strategic partnerships with local organizations to increase residents access to critical resources for job training, child care, and funding support.**

- Work with local organizations working in the South Side to create alignment around specific neighborhood initiatives.

**2.2 Identify and document effective programs that are currently being offered by the city or county.**

- Have the city support with existing community resource pages, such as Erie County Cares, to better document existing programs and organizations that provide educational services, training, and funding resources to residents.
- Work with local non-profits, social services groups, county agencies, and faith-based organizations to establish a community calendar/message board to connect residents to events and programs.

#### GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Sandusky City ADA Advisory Board
- Community Advocates
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Neighborhood Leaders



**2.3 Increase awareness of existing programs and offerings provided by the city and local non-government organizations using a variety of outreach strategies.**

- Continue to host community open house events to connect community members to city and county departments and social services.
- Establish quarterly community pop-ups to showcase offerings in collaboration with local non-profits and faith-based organizations.
- Collaborate with established community advocacy groups, including faith-based and non-profit organizations, to meet residents where they are.
- Offer community office hours for residents to speak with city staff one-on-one about programs, processes, and resources.

**2.4 Conduct targeted outreach to better connect with marginalized groups and those with greatest need.**

- Meet residents where they are by attending and supporting community hosted events.
- Work collectively with residents to connect with local leaders and community organizers within marginalized communities.
- Make information available through various platforms and mediums to spread information more broadly.
- Purchase targeted social media ads to connect with the demographics most in need of resources.



## GOAL 3

# Improve community health through increased access to mental health support, healthy food options, and quality community spaces.

## WHY IT MATTERS

While there are some locally owned and family-run businesses that are fixtures within the South Side, access to affordable healthy food options are limited. The nearest grocery store to the South Side is just over a mile away and is primarily accessible by car due to uncomfortable pedestrian conditions along Perkins Avenue. Multiple franchises and fast food chains along Perkins Avenue and Hayes Avenue do not currently provide healthy and convenient food options for South Side residents.

The ramifications of the pandemic are still impacting residents as challenges with accessing affordable food and mental health support persist. Local faith-based organizations and non-profits help to provide access to affordable quality food for residents. Additionally, South Side has experienced some severe community traumas that have had a deep effect on mental health community-wide. The South Side neighborhood has endured a lot over the years and yet maintains a resilient spirit.

## STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

### 3.1 Work with local healthcare organizations and trauma support groups from around the city and county to connect residents to mental health services.

- Host community listening sessions with mental health professionals.
- Establish a mental health support line for residents to learn of the different options for mental health resources.
- Offer a mental health support page on the city website to connect residents to existing programs offered by groups such as Erie County Cares and the health department.
- Partner with local healthcare organizations to connect residents to resources.
- Offer Sandusky Recreation programs that support positive mental health (e.g. yoga, meditation, art therapy, etc.).
- Foster further partnership between Parks and Recreation and the health department to facilitate a local mental health campaign.

## POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Bayshore Counseling Services
- Firelands Regional Health Center
- Erie County Health Department
- Local Faith-Based Organizations
- OhioGuidestone
- Sandusky Parks and Recreation Division



### 3.2 Increase access to healthy food options in the South Side.

- Partner with local organizations to host farmers markets at neighborhood serving facilities to provide healthy food options.
- Work with local stores along Hayes and Perkins to establish healthy corner store initiative.
- Connect with local health care organizations, health department, and non-profits to sponsor healthy food and health screening events at the school or local businesses along Hayes Avenue.
- Prioritize healthy food options and grocery stores in new development projects across the South Side.
- Work with the health department and Firelands Health to formalize the Healthy Hayes initiative.
- Support and promote existing food pantries and soup kitchens.
- Connect with local health care organizations, health department, and non-profits (e.g. Firelands Health and OhGo) to sponsor healthy food and health screening events at the school or local businesses along Hayes Avenue.
- Host healthy eating and cooking sessions using commercial kitchens at public facilities like the Mills School
- Implement community garden program at Mills School or Churchwell Park with a specific focus on seniors and youth programming to encourage intergenerational knowledge exchange.



## GOAL 4

### Increase residents access to educational resources that support lifelong learning.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

The ability to access information and quality educational resources can enhance residents' ability to provide for themselves, reach goals, elevate their families, and positively contribute to their community. Helping to establish a greater sense of self-worth and pride. Education and learning can take place in several forms and in several venues, offering people a variety of ways to grow their minds and broaden their experiences. As society shifts into a more technologically driven world, information has in many ways become more accessible than ever. However, generational divides and access to affordable high-speed internet can create significant barriers for senior populations and others with physical and technological challenges. South Side is home to a substantial senior population and many residents do not have access to affordable internet or the technology to take advantage of new forms of digital communication. This digital divide limits residents earning potential, access to information and critical services, and can be a significant barrier to civic engagement. In order to encourage lifelong learning and enhance residents ability to elevate themselves and access critical information, it is important to work strategically with schools, city departments, and local organizations to connect residents to the resources they need to embrace lifelong learning and expand residents ability to access information.

## STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

- 4.1 Enhance access to technology and technology training for residents.**
- a. Work with local internet providers to increase access to affordable internet.
  - b. Work with other city departments such as Parks and Recreation and Sandusky City School District to offer computer and technology education courses.
  - c. Provide WIFI hubs at public facilities to expand internet access.
- 4.2 Support and promote local job training, trade skills, and educational advancements programs for South Side residents.**
- a. Increase awareness of secondary education programs for residents.
  - b. Collaborate with Sandusky High School and local senior citizen organizations to encourage intergenerational learning.

#### GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Sandusky City Schools
- Erie County Economic Development Corporation
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Local Businesses



## WHAT WE HEARD

"There is so much constantly happening here. I just believe South Side is coming up."

Dora Grant  
South Side Steering Committee Member





# ACCESS + SERVICES STRATEGY SUMMARY

## COORDINATE

South Side residents have many opportunities to expand and enhance neighborhood parks. To successfully achieve these four goals, the City of Sandusky and South Side residents will have to closely collaborate with the partners identified.



## IMPLEMENT

Over 40 actions are specified throughout this chapter to achieve the goals for South Side parks and open spaces (see Chapter 7. Implementation for the full list). These actions are categorized into near-, mid-, and long-term actions.



## PRIORITIZE

Out of the 47 total actions listed in this neighborhood plan, two key actions were identified as top priorities by the City of Sandusky and South Side residents.

<div><b>GOAL</b> Build trust and improve the relationship between the city and South Side community.</div>	<div><b>GOAL</b> Increase residents access to educational resources that support lifelong learning.</div>
<div><b>STRATEGY</b> Increase transparency of city processes and accountability to the public.</div>	<div><b>STRATEGY</b> Support and promote local job training, trade skills, and educational advancements programs for South Side residents.</div>
<div><b>ACTION</b> Develop a frequently asked questions web page for residents to get information on specific projects and city procedures.</div>	<div><b>ACTION</b> Collaborate with Sandusky High School and local senior citizen organizations to encourage inter-generational learning.</div>
<div><b>FEASIBILITY</b> <div>ActionableAspirational</div></div> <div><b>CITY ROLE</b> <div>LeadPartnerAdvocate</div></div> <div><b>KEY PARTNERS</b> <div>ResidentsNon-Profits</div></div> <div><b>TIMEFRAME</b> <div>NearMidLong</div></div>	<div><b>FEASIBILITY</b> <div>ActionableAspirational</div></div> <div><b>CITY ROLE</b> <div>LeadPartnerAdvocate</div></div> <div><b>KEY PARTNERS</b> <div>Area High SchoolsBGSU, EHOVE</div></div> <div><b>TIMEFRAME</b> <div>NearMidLong</div></div>





## PILLAR 5

# ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

In the South Side, development opportunities and local business will support community members from all of income levels. There will be expanded access to jobs, educational resources, business development, training, and city-wide programs. Career building, occupational training, and homeownership will be prioritized to offer residents the resources they need to achieve economic security.

*Image Source: Garver Feed Mill*

South Side is home to many small beloved businesses and more regional ones like Firelands Health, public schools, and smaller national retailers. There is opportunity to expand support for longstanding businesses, while filling the gap in demand for services.

A prosperous South Side includes the development of a thriving commercial corridor where small businesses can grow. South Side businesses should be able to provide jobs for neighborhood residents at a livable wage, while supporting a thriving economy.

## KEY TERMS

**ECONOMIC SECURITY** | The ability of a population to meet their financial needs consistently and stably. This often first requires a livable wage with increased disposable income outside of the basic bills (housing, food, utilities, transportation).

**THIRD PLACES** | Locations in a neighborhood that people can gather socially, co-work, or enjoy recreationally without financial costs required.

**MIXED-USE** | Buildings that contain more than one use, uses may be separated by floor for convenience such as a three story structure with ground floor retail and two floors of housing above.



GOAL 1

Support local employment and entrepreneurship across the South Side.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Side has a healthy workforce. Major employment in the area includes manufacturing, healthcare, food services, retail trades and educational services. The loss of a major employer in Perkins Township, just south of Sandusky, has left a noticeable void. South Side residents want to see the return of major employers to their neighborhood, in a sustainable way. In particular, the development of a commercial corridor and the growth of local jobs would be welcome in the neighborhood. In order to achieve this, Erie County and Perkins Township need to collaborate on approaches to attract large, diverse businesses.

GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Community Development Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Greater Sandusky Partnership
- Minority Business Empowerment Team
- Erie County Economic Development Corporation
- City of Sandusky Diversity and Economic Opportunity Manager

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

- 1.1 Increase access to career and business development programs for South Side residents

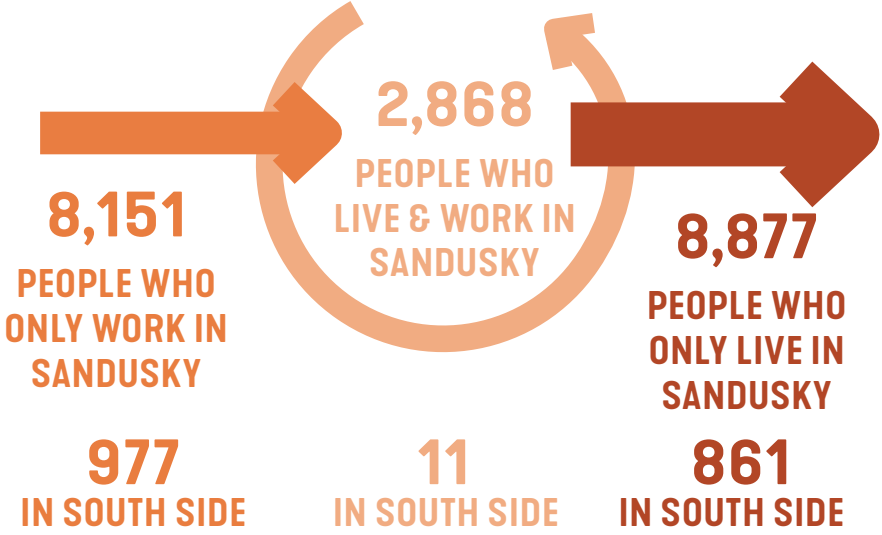
  - Identify viable business sectors suited for neighborhood serving commercial activation within South Side.
  - Identify job gaps in the region that could fit within the South Side neighborhood.
- 1.2 Develop strategic partnerships with existing workforce and business development programs.

  - Catalog regional workforce development actors and programs.
  - Identify a neighborhood location to serve as a workforce resource center.
  - Advocate for employment of South Side residents in Neighborhood businesses.
- 1.3 Explore the creation of a resident and business neighborhood association to advocate for South Side-led development and access to funding

  - Create partnerships with the city to establish this neighborhood association and provide training on its operation.
  - Advocate for equal representation of property owners, business owners, renters among association leadership.

SUPPORTING DATA

Few Sandusky residents live and work in the city.



There are major employment sectors in the area that could activate the workforce.



Data Sources: Live/work Through put from 2019 On the Map (US Census); 2021 Employment Status, American Community Survey Table B23025 for Census tracts 410.2 and 413.1



GOAL 2

Incentivize development opportunities and allow for strategically located mixed-use.

GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Economic Development Department

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Greater Sandusky Partnership



STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

- 2.1 Support the development of mixed-use districts at Pierce and Buchanan and Camp and Hayes corridors.
- a. Work with the residents of South Side to determine desired building form and uses.
  - b. Create design guidelines for mixed-use development.
  - c. Research best practices that support a wide range of neighborhood commercial, office, light industrial, and residential uses.
  - d. Determine how New Market Tax Credits could be leveraged to promote mixed-use in South Side.
  - e. Determine if there are any barriers in the current code to the development of pop-up markets, food trucks, or other non-traditional business structures within the South Side.

DID YOU KNOW?

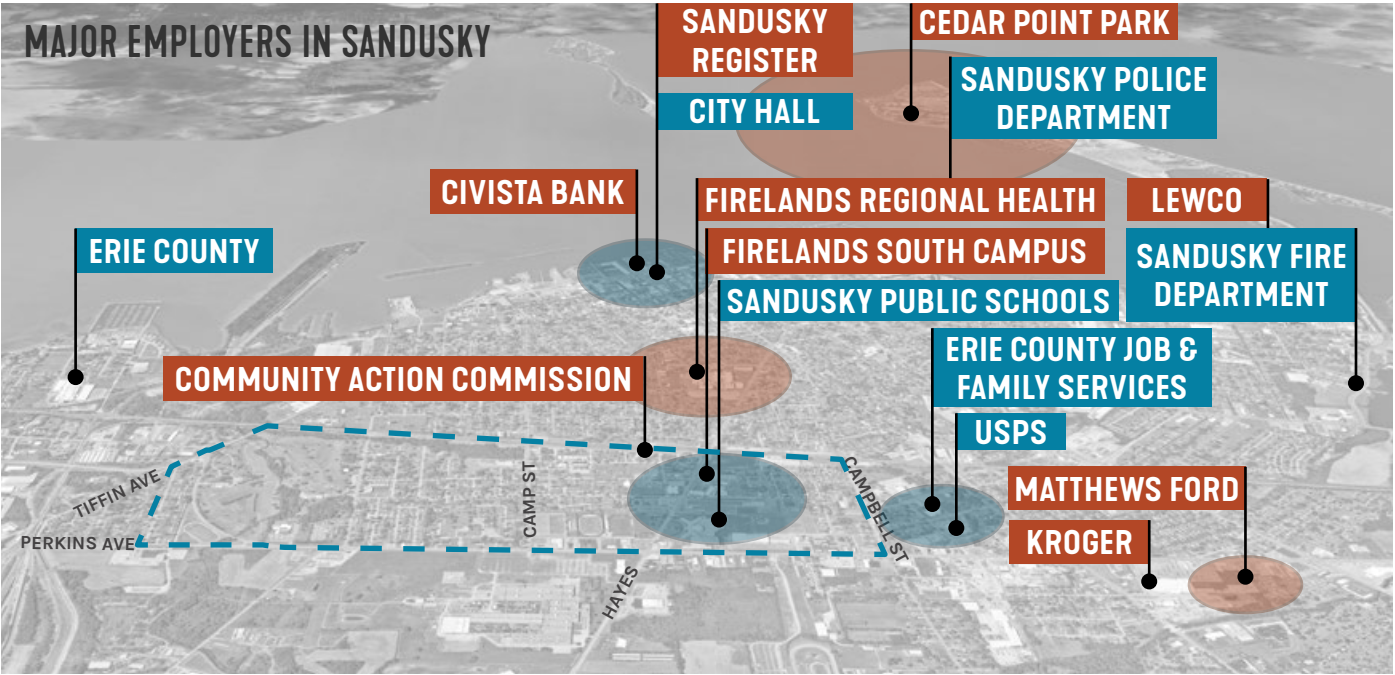
Strategy 2.1 Aligns with the Sandusky Bicentennial Vision goal to create mixed-use districts across Sandusky and with Housing Goal 2.



WHAT WE HEARD

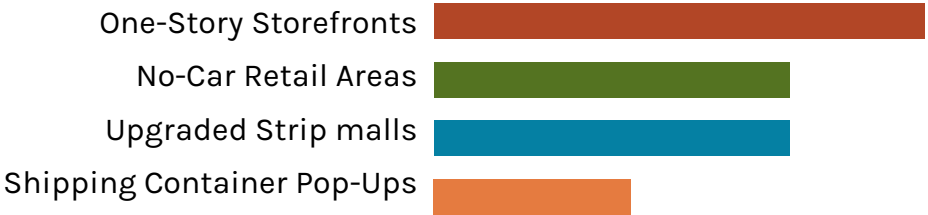
South Side lacks enough businesses to support the demand.

South Side commercial consists of fast food establishments and retail businesses. Some automotive and convenience stores are available, but the current zoning and small parcel sizes within the neighborhood limits potential new establishments from coming to the neighborhood.



South Siders have expressed the desire for more restaurants, day care centers, offices, coffee shops, and a grocery store.

MOST IN DEMAND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Data Source: 2022 Community Perception Survey



CASE STUDIES | MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS



**HISTORIC C-STREET**  
Commercial Street in Springfield, Missouri underwent a rebranding as a neighborhood serving commercial district. The district is six blocks long in an area outside of the main downtown. A formerly disinvested neighborhood has now become a gem for the community and a community services hub for the most vulnerable in the city. This area is home to several supportive services, creative ventures, upscale dining, and outdoor recreation.

Most buildings within Historic C-Street are ground floor commercial with lofts for rent or ownership above. Lofts range in size to fit a variety of life stages and needs and some are fully accessible. The district also offers transitional housing for the formerly unhoused, which is administered by a non-profit who works closely with the city and business district.



Source: Historic C-Street

**MSA ANNEX**  
This mixed-use development in Tucson, Arizona features local businesses, and stores with smaller footprints to serve up and coming local businesses. The development is served by bus and light rail, is bikeable and walkable, and offers a host of shopping destinations for neighborhood residents and city-wide alike. Shops are adapted from smaller size shipping containers, and offer outdoor seating and entertainment.



Source: VisitTucson.org

EXISTING RESOURCES | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND PROGRAM**  
The City of Sandusky provides financial assistance for new or expanding businesses or property owners that will positively impact the economy and employment situation in the city. This assistance can be for new construction, renovation, equipment, or design services.

**SANDUSKY ENTERPRISE ZONE TAX ABATEMENT**  
This tax incentive provides real estate tax relief on the accumulated tax liability that occurs over time on a new acquisition. This abatement, or relief is distributed over a number of years (according to the agreement made) and can be helpful to bring new businesses, support the expansion of a business into an underserved area, or create new jobs. In Ohio, these can be made for non-retail businesses establishing or expanding in an area and can include personal property.

**ERIE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (ECEDC)**  
ECEDC supports all businesses in Erie County with financial assistance, technical assistance, and other services to boost the economy and help businesses thrive. This includes finding new storefronts, storefront repairs, and hiring.

**LORAIN COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SBDC)**  
The SBDC provides access to capital, business counseling, and other services to facilitate growth, job creation and education.

**MINORITY BUSINESS EMPOWERMENT TEAM (MBET)**  
This group of business owners champion and support other minority businesses by collaborating with RISE and providing technical assistance and education.

**OHIO MEANS JOBS (OMJ)**  
This organization provides recruitment and training programs for employers and connects job seekers with resources for finding jobs including short-term experiences, resume writing, and training.

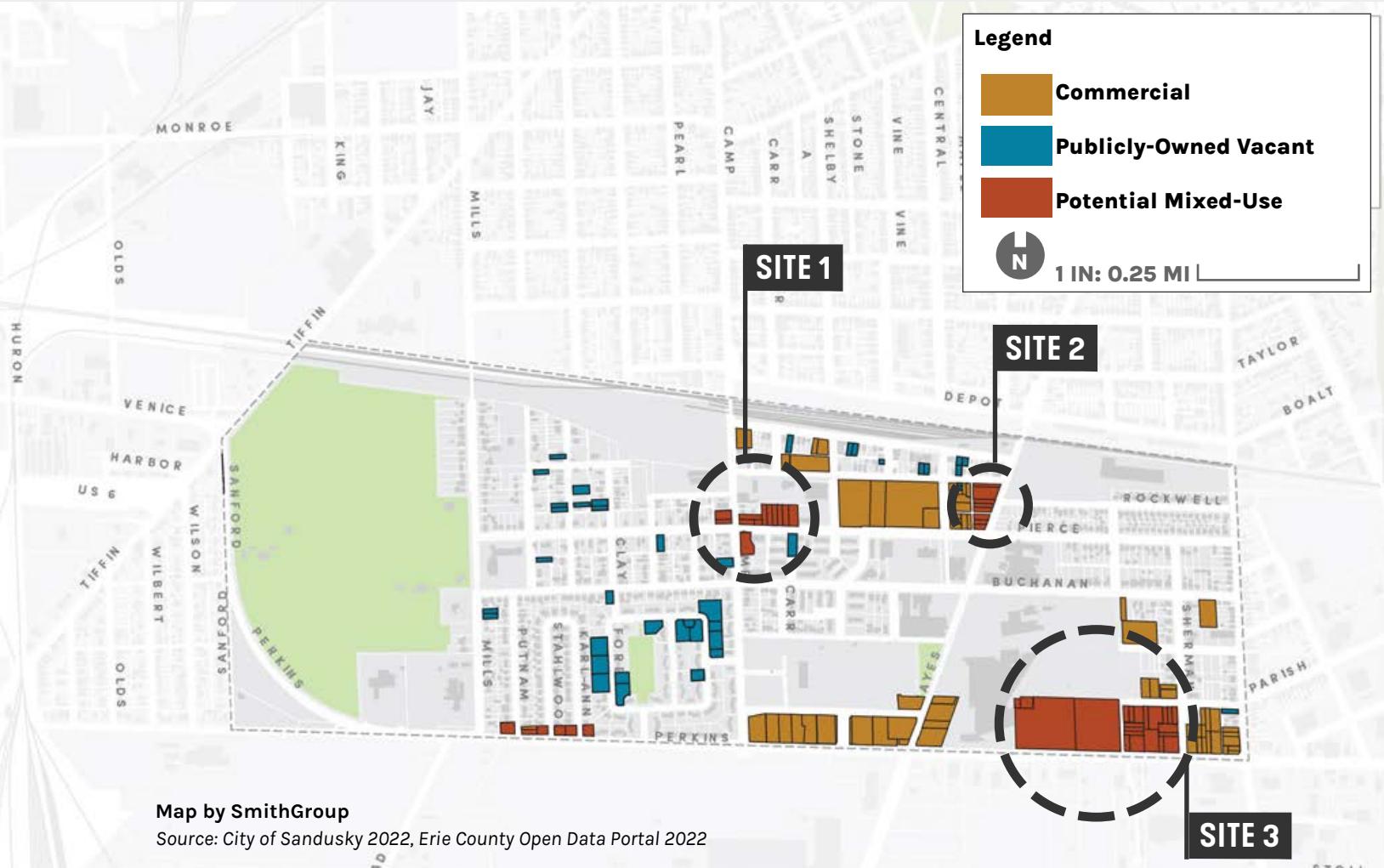
**REGIONAL INCUBATOR FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (RISE)**  
RISE provides free support to smaller businesses in their efforts to scale up or sell their business.

**URBAN LEAGUE OF LORAIN, MINORITY BUSINESS ASSISTANCE CENTER (MBAC)**  
This center provides assistance for small, minority-owned and disadvantaged businesses in Ohio. This support includes accounting, business management counseling, seeking capital support, contract procurement, and developing marketing plans.

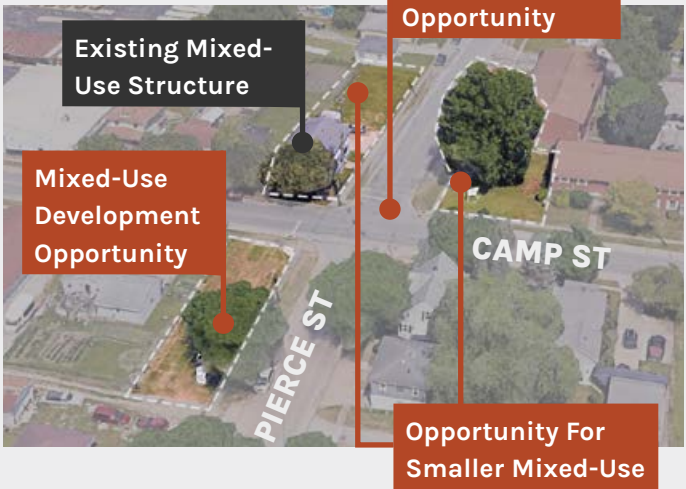


# BEST PRACTICES | MIXED-USE AND NEIGHBORHOOD SERVING COMMERCIAL

A mixed-use area simply allows for more diversity in the types of uses allowed in a building. A mixed-use development often combines live, work, and play opportunities. These places provide more walkable areas and when combined with residential, can create more safety for local businesses. Mixed-use developments can take many different forms and will often be denser developments because they require less parking. Parking is often shared among users, offices taking peak daytime parking, residents using parking during the off-peak hours and shoppers coming and going throughout business hours.



## SITE 1



## SITE 1 | NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE

This corner of commercial land contains residential, multi-family and two lots of recently vacated commercial property. On a moderate sized intersection in a part of the neighborhood that is more dense, this area is prime to be redeveloped as mixed-use.

- Visible
- Walkable
- Existing mixed-use and vacant land

## SITE 2



## SITE 2 | WALKABLE CORRIDOR

This section of land along Hayes and Pierce is between the new middle school and the American Crayon site is already zoned commercial. Surrounded by offices, commercial, and residential, and along a major school route, this section is more appropriate for smaller scale mixed-use with ground floor retail/office and second story residential.

- Used by youth and older adults alike
- Existing businesses like Cliff's Grocery & Carry Out and Firelands South Administrative Offices
- Mixed-use could include retail, offices, restaurants, pop-up shops

## SITE 3



## SITE 3 | NATIONAL RETAIL ANCHOR

The businesses along West Perkins Avenue are mostly strip mall developments built at a time when parking needs were over accommodated. There is also an assemblage of a large amount of commercial lots that are too small to developed without combining into larger parcels. Today, this area has seas of underutilized parking lots with commercial buildings that are not at capacity. The vision for this area is one where infill development on the existing parking, providing right-sized development along Perkins.

- Existing convenience, drive thru and office buildings
- Opportunity to redevelop with infill where abundant parking is located
- Opportunity for up to three story buildings
- Best Uses: national retailers, grocery store, restaurant with outdoor plaza/play area



## GOAL 3

**Work with neighboring jurisdictions to increase local job opportunities and attract new businesses that offer living wages.**

### WHY IT MATTERS

Employment solutions are best served by a regional approach. Partnering with other jurisdictions, learning where regional gaps, hubs, priorities and future plans will go a long way to serve the South Side neighborhood. Sandusky should continue to work with the Greater Sandusky Partnership to identify and pursue partnerships that would best fit the neighborhood and continue to be involved in the planning process to ensure the South Side voice is heard.

#### GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Community Development Department

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City of Sandusky Diversity & Economic Opportunity Manager
- Greater Sandusky Partnership
- Sandusky City Schools



## STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

### 3.1 Expand business financial support through local funding and education mechanisms.

- Establish a Community Development Corporation for the City of Sandusky.
- Set aside some public land for the development of local small businesses.
- Incorporate funding for small businesses that are mission-driven, prioritize local employment, and have minority owners.



**"Our greatest export is the younger generation. How do we show them opportunities here so they stay here."**

*Steering Committee Member*



ECONOMIC PROSPERITY STRATEGY SUMMARY

COORDINATE

South Side residents have many opportunities to expand and enhance neighborhood parks. To successfully achieve these three goals, the City of Sandusky and South Side residents will have to closely collaborate with the partners identified.



IMPLEMENT

175 actions are specified throughout this chapter to achieve the goals for South Side parks and open spaces (see Chapter 7. Implementation for the full list). These actions are categorized into near-, mid-, and long-term actions.



PRIORITIZE

Out of the 15 total actions listed in this neighborhood plan, two key actions were identified as top priorities by the City of Sandusky and South Side residents.

<p><b>GOAL</b></p> <p>Incentivize development opportunities and allow for strategically located mixed-use.</p>	<p><b>GOAL</b></p> <p>Work with neighboring jurisdictions to increase local job opportunities and attract new businesses that offer living wages.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY</b></p> <p>Support the development of Mixed-Use Districts at Pierce and Buchanan and Camp and Hayes corridors.</p>	<p><b>STRATEGY</b></p> <p>Expand business financial support through local funding and education mechanisms.</p>
<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Determine if there are any barriers in the current code to the development of pop-up markets, food trucks, or other non traditional business structures within the South Side.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Establish a Community Development Corporation for the City of Sandusky.</p>
<p><b>COMPLEXITY</b></p> <div><div></div><div>Low</div><div></div><div>High</div></div>	<p><b>COMPLEXITY</b></p> <div><div></div><div>Low</div><div></div><div>High</div></div>
<p><b>CITY ROLE</b></p> <div><div>Lead</div><div>Partner</div><div>Advocate</div></div>	<p><b>CITY ROLE</b></p> <div><div>Lead</div><div>Partner</div><div>Advocate</div></div>
<p><b>KEY PARTNERS</b></p> <div><div>Chamber of Commerce</div><div>EDD</div></div>	<p><b>KEY PARTNERS</b></p> <div><div>EDD</div></div>
<p><b>TIMEFRAME</b></p> <div><div>Near</div><div>Mid</div><div>Long</div></div>	<p><b>TIMEFRAME</b></p> <div><div>Near</div><div>Mid</div><div>Long</div></div>





## PILLAR 6

# BRANDING + BEAUTIFICATION

In the South Side, community pride will be evident through cohesive branding that celebrates the neighborhood's history and established multi-generational lineage. Tree lined streets, well-kept properties, and public art will make South Side a unique and vibrant part of Sandusky's city fabric.

*Image Source: 2018 Public Art and Placemaking Plan*

If South Siders could be known for one thing, it is their South Side pride. A comment heard repeatedly throughout this process was that this is a neighborhood of 3rd and 4th generation residents. People grew up here, stayed here, left and returned here. It is a neighborhood rich in history, culture, and talented individuals. South Side should look to promote this pride through clearly defined branding and a variety of beautification strategies.

## KEY TERMS

**BEAUTIFICATION** | The enhancement and investment in the physical environment to contribute to enhanced safety and well-being for community members. This could include grant funding to help homeowners maintain their lawns, additional street trees, public art, and more.

**BRANDING** | Cohesive imagery and terminology use to refer to the South Side.

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE** | Green infrastructure is an approach to water management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle.

**PERCEIVED SAFETY** | A personal view on a situation which is up to the individual judgment of a person.

**REAL SAFETY** | The actual risk taken by a person.

**VACANT PROPERTY** | Land on which there is no building or land which is currently not being used for residential, commercial, or other purposes.

**WAYFINDING** | A system of signage used to help distinguish directions, as well as enhance the experience and uses of spaces.



GOAL 1

Improve streetscapes and establish gateways to enhance safety and create a sense of arrival.

WHY IT MATTERS

Streetscapes are the entrance to a city and set the tone for a community. As such, South Side streets should receive enhancements that enhance aesthetics and quality of life.

South Side can have a clear sense of arrival through transportation, landscaping, and placemaking improvements at several key intersections:

- Mills School on Mills Street
- Camp Street Underpass
- Hayes Avenue Underpass
- Pierce Street and Forest Drive
- Pierce Street and Hayes Avenue
- Buchanan Street and Hayes Avenue

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

1.1 Improve the coherence of streetscape elements to indicate entrance to the South Side.

- a. Distribute cohesively branded banners and signage at regular intervals to establish a sense of identity
- b. Create and enforce design standards for street furniture along major corridors or near transit stops, including benches and shelters
- c. Create and enforce design standards for street infrastructure including waste receptacles, lighting fixtures, bike racks, and other street features throughout the neighborhood to maintain consistency
- d. Create neighborhood street lighting standards to provide adequate sight while promoting safety based on the context of the corridor

1.2 Create and reinforce landscaping standards along key corridors in the public right-of-way to enhance appearance, shade, and community health.

- a. Document a tree planting plan and timeline to expand tree canopy coverage on well-traversed blocks and enhance shade coverage and perceived safety.
- b. Pursue funding opportunities to employ green stormwater design on major thoroughfares which will address residential flooding issues while enhancing overall streetscape design
- c. Use native plantings to decrease water and general maintenance costs
- d. Utilize the Community Development Block grant federal program to fund tree plantings on designated corridors
- e. Assist resident establishment of South Side garden or beautification committee

1.3 Enhance the underpasses at Hayes, Camp, Mills and Campbell as northern gateways to the neighborhood.

- a. Add lighting to enhance a sense of safety, especially during darkened hours
- b. Use art installations including mural or interactive displays to establish a sense of place
- c. Ensure design parallels any overall wayfinding and branding strategies for South Side and the City of Sandusky
- d. Promote traffic slowing via road improvements (see [Chapter 2 Connectivity + Infrastructure](#) for more details about the methods of traffic slowing and which roads are in most need of improvements)

1.4 Establish a gateway at the intersection of Hayes and Buchanan to enhance student safety at Sandusky Public Schools and for patients of Firelands Regional Medical Center.

- a. Implement traffic calming measures (including speed bumps and alternative materials) for road crossings to enhance student safety
- b. Identify opportunities for storytelling and showcasing stories of the innovation and work of Sandusky students and residents through public art installations and placemaking elements
- c. Use planters and light pole banners in the public right-of-way to visually enhance Hayes Avenue

1.5 Establish gateways to Churchwell Park off of Forest Drive and Clay Street.

- a. Use right-of-way landscaping, lighting fixtures, and sidewalks consistent with features to be constructed in Churchwell Park on Forest Drive and Clay Street to create a uniform and inviting community space



GOAL CHAMPION  
■ City of Sandusky Planning Division

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Department of Community Development
- Department of Public Works
- Public Arts & Culture Commission
- [Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services](#)
- Ohio Department of Transportation



WHAT WE HEARD

"South Side is not an unsafe area. It just has major deterioration and needs to bring out the rich history and beauty back."

2022 Perception Survey

DID YOU KNOW?

Since 2014, the City of Sandusky Public Works Department studies the condition of all roads and pavement in the city on a continual basis to identify segments in the worst condition and prioritize them in the annual street pavement program.



BEST PRACTICES | ENHANCING STREETSCAPES



Source: 2017 Neighborhood Initiative

1 | ENHANCED CROSSINGS

Alternative materials, accessible signage and bump outs enhance pedestrian safety and slow traffic



2 | LANDSCAPING

Street trees, planters, and landscape beds should be used on both residential and commercial streets



3 | LIGHTING

Use warm lighting and traditional fixtures to reduce light spillage and create a welcoming environment



Source: Lauren Potter, 2019

4 | SIGNAGE

Pole banners, road signs, murals, and brick inlays are all different forms of signage that can enhance wayfinding



5 | SEATING

Fixed seating should be consistent throughout South Side. Movable seating should just be at activity centers



6 | FIXTURES

Other street elements such as bike racks and waste receptacles can be branded and should match the context





### SUPPORTING POLICIES

The entrance to a neighborhood is an opportunity to express its unique identity. These particular entrances were mentioned throughout this planning process, the 2017 Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative, and the 2016 Bicentennial Vision.

### RECOMMENDATIONS | POTENTIAL GATEWAY LOCATIONS



Source: JIMA Studios

**1 | MILLS SCHOOL**  
See Chapter 1 Housing + Neighborhoods to learn more



Source: 2017 Neighborhood Initiative

**2 | CAMP STREET UNDERPASS**  
Use landscaping to screen industrial uses



Source: 2017 Neighborhood Initiative

**3 | HAYES AVENUE UNDERPASS**  
Enhance lighting and sight lines for students crossing



Source: 2017 Neighborhood Initiative

**4 | PERKINS AND FOREST**  
Create a welcoming entrance to MacArthur Park



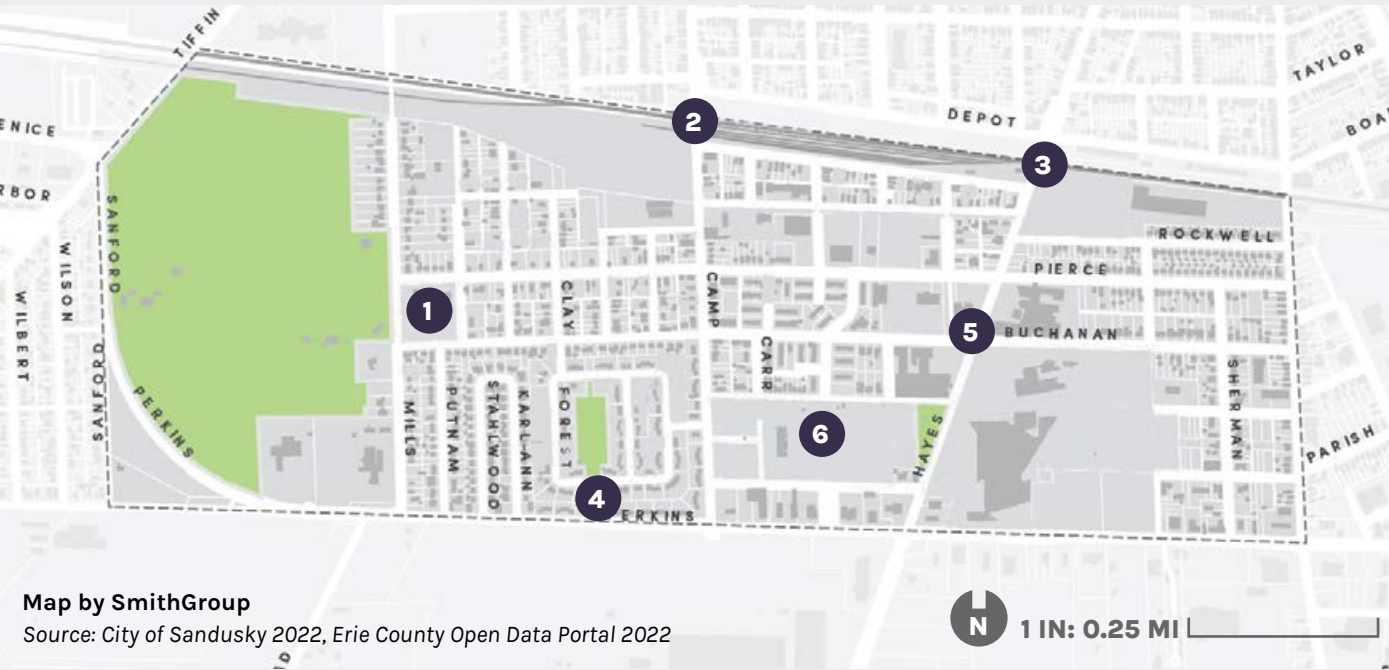
Source: 2017 Neighborhood Initiative

**5 | BUCHANAN AND HAYES**  
Enhance crossings for students and medical staff



Source: 2017 Neighborhood Initiative

**6 | STROBEL FIELD**  
Showcase the history and of Sandusky City Schools





GOAL 2

Enhance, protect, and revitalize existing properties (as needed) to preserve the neighborhood character.

WHY IT MATTERS

In neighborhoods, character refers to the physical design of buildings and public spaces. Character was mentioned often throughout the planning process. Residents expressed a need for both resources to improve existing residences and enforcement when neighboring properties are not meeting neighborhood standards.

GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Department of Community Development

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City of Sandusky Division of Code Compliance
- Erie County Land Bank
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

2.1 Create, sponsor, or support beautification centered community events.

- a. Identify neighborhood associations, business associations, or non-profit community champions that can lead local beautification and street clean-up efforts on an annual or semi-annual basis
- b. Support an annual community event for students, church members, residents, and interested parties to clean, replace, or install new plantings to assist with maintenance
- c. Support a tri-annual neighborhood art event where the city and related community groups assist with funding permanent installations such as murals or monuments, as well as some tactical art installations at community hubs (e.g. Sandusky City School District sidewalk art competition)

2.2 Promote funding sources beyond Community Development Block Grants which can be used for building maintenance and improvements (see Chapter 1. Housing and Neighborhoods for more information).

- a. Lead semi-annual training sessions at community centers (e.g. the Sandusky Rec Center) informing residents of available funding opportunities for property improvements and methods of applying
- b. Create a dedicated web page on the city website showing the variety of funding opportunities available to support building maintenance and improvements
- c. Enhance marketing for the Façade Improvement Program which is dedicated to small businesses that could benefit from a face-lift

2.3 Bolster zoning and approvals process to have character standards, which will ensure new buildings match the existing physical character of the neighborhood.

- a. Create materials standards to maintain a high quality housing stock in the neighborhood

WHAT WE HEARD

We need more than just these community development [block] grants to make necessary improvements.

2022 Community Kick-Off





CASE STUDIES | COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAMS



Source: Paint the Town Cincinnati, 2020

PAINT THE TOWN | CINCINNATI, OHIO

Sponsored by a local non-profit organization, this annual event collects over 750 volunteers annually to help paint 40 homes in one day at no cost to the home owner. Several neighborhoods are selected for the event on a rotational basis and residents send an application with details such as the size of the home and exterior materials. In 18 years this program has improved almost 550 homes and the program is now expanding to help applicants paint interior rooms as well.



Source: City of Detroit

NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM | DETROIT, MICHIGAN

The Neighborhood Beautification Program is funded by the Neighborhood Improvement Fund and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA/ NIF) for \$2.25 Million. It provides small grants to Detroit neighborhood block clubs, non-profits, small businesses and residents to provide new recreational opportunities, home repairs for seniors and the disabled, educational and apprenticeship opportunities, and to finance affordable housing developments.

LOVE YOUR BLOCK | LANSING, MICHIGAN

The City of Lansing awarded 19 mini grants to community groups to transform vacant lots, install public art, and more. A city-wide service plan was also implemented to directly connect these community groups with city officials for support.



Source: Johns Hopkins University

"Once you have created access to power for neighborhood leaders, you can't undo it... Lansing is proof of that."

-Andi Crawford, Director of Neighborhoods + Citizen Engagement in Lansing, Michigan

GOAL 3

Create short- and long-term plans for publicly-owned vacant land and underutilized land.

WHY IT MATTERS

Vacant properties can pose safety hazards, erode the health of surrounding housing markets, decrease property values, and reduce local tax revenues. The City of Sandusky and the Erie County Land Bank have been purchasing vacant land as a result of recommendations from the 2018 Bicentennial Vision and the 2017 Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative with the purpose of clearing and maintaining land to reduce public safety hazards. The community would like a clear vision for how the land can and will be utilized in the future.

Underutilized land, unlike vacant land, is currently being used for a purpose but is not serving the optimal and best use for the community. Underutilized land could include large surface parking or open fields and should also have a vision for future use.

GOAL CHAMPION

- City of Sandusky Department of Planning

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City of Sandusky Division of Code Compliance
- Erie County Land Bank
- Erie Metropolitan Housing Authority
- American Green Bank Consortium Growth Opps

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

- 3.1 Use vacant land for housing, mixed-use buildings, open space or green infrastructure based on the best use of the land and the surrounding context.
- a. Learn more about how to use vacant lots for housing in Chapter 1. Housing + Neighborhoods
  - b. Learn more about how to use vacant lots for mixed-use buildings in Chapter 5. Access + Services
  - c. Learn more about how to use vacant lots for open space in Chapter 3. Parks + Open Space
  - d. Learn more about how to use vacant lots for green infrastructure in Goal 4 of Chapter 6. Branding + Beautification.
- 3.2 Screen and activate large surface parking lots when possible to reduce gaps of activity in the residential neighborhood fabric.
- a. Create a plan for the transitional use and short-term activation of the Strobel Stadium parking lot during the off season
  - b. Create and implement landscaping design standards for large surface parking lots





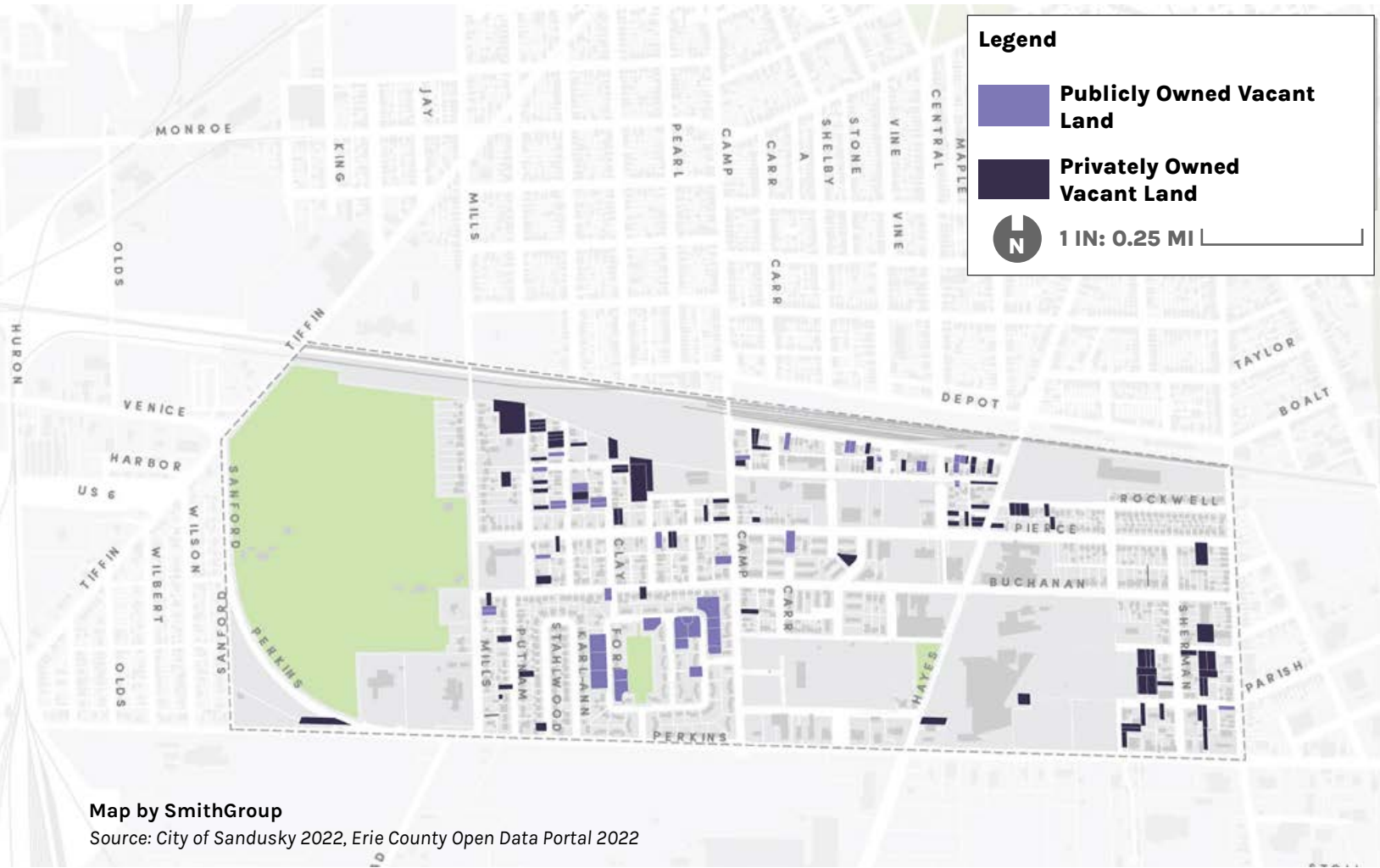
SUPPORTING DATA

Beautification and activation reduces stress, enhances perceived safety, and boosts social determinants of health. Vacant properties are key opportunity areas for community beautification.

228  
VACANT STRUCTURES

42  
CITY AND COUNTY OWNED  
VACANT LOTS

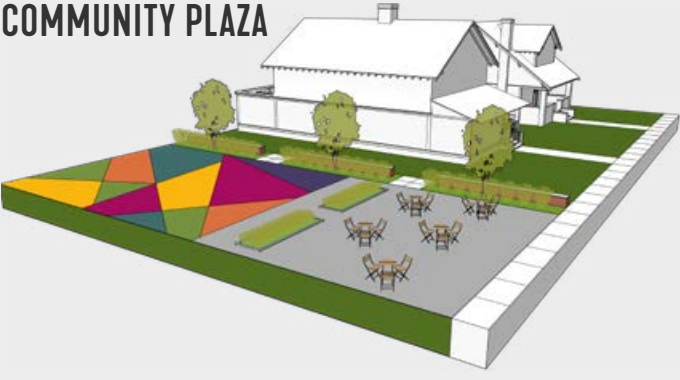
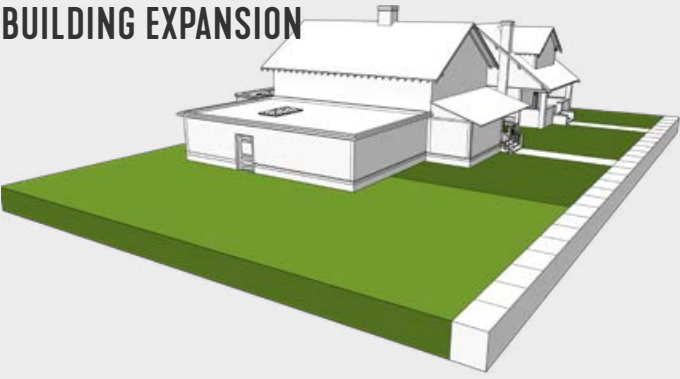
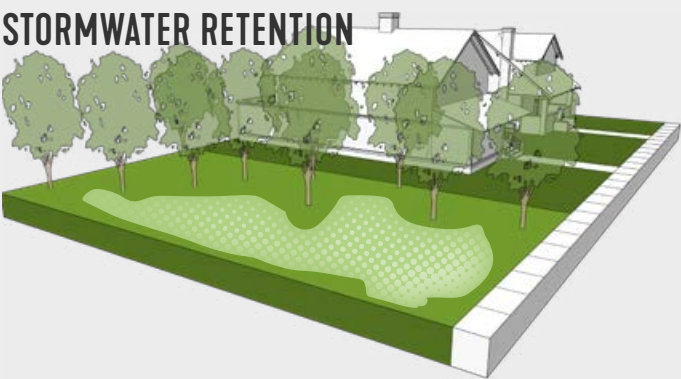
7,000 SQ FT  
AVERAGE VACANT LOT SIZE



Map by SmithGroup  
Source: City of Sandusky 2022, Erie County Open Data Portal 2022

BEST PRACTICES | ACTIVATING VACANT LOTS

Vacant lots can be temporarily and permanently activated for a variety of uses that benefit a community. The best use of the space depends on the surrounding area and the desires of residents. Several other methods for using spaces include:





BEST PRACTICES | REVITALIZING PARKING LOTS



SCREENING

Screening, or hiding, parking lots from the view of motorists and pedestrians enhances the site itself and the homes across the street. Minimize the view of parked cars in lots by:

- Utilizing a landscape buffer of trees, shrubs, and plants from the sidewalk
- Constructing a low wall from materials compatible with the site like brick and stone or use wrought iron fencing
- If a wall already exists but is made from lower quality materials, consider covering it with community art

ACTIVATING

When parking lots are not in use, they become large empty gaps that can disrupt the close-knit neighborhood fabric of South Side. To activate lots:

- Utilize distinctive surface materials and other techniques to accommodate multiple uses such as public gatherings, recreation, and parking
- Allow public gatherings in appropriate locations such as the Strobel Stadium lot
- Encourage temporary art installations such as chalk art from Sandusky City School District students in these lots

ENHANCING

Lots themselves can be enhanced to decrease surface water runoff and enhance safety.

- Define pedestrian walkways in the parking lot
- Use trees and planting islands to maintain character while also considering maintenance impacts
- Utilize traffic-calming measures within surface parking areas



Source: Cate Flanagan



RECOMMENDATIONS | ACTIVATING KEY PARKING LOTS

PERKINS AND FOREST GATEWAY

- Screen parking with vegetation and kneewalls
- Regularly place street lights with banners showing the history of Churchwell Park
- Regularly plant street trees for shade
- Use crosswalk art and landscaping to create a sense of arrival

Image Source: Pavement Art by Eric Waters



STROBEL FIELD

- Screen parking with vegetation and kneewalls to screen parking and match the other side of the street
- Regularly plant street trees for shade
- Temporarily activate the parking lot with tents, chalk art, and food trucks when not in use for games

Image Sources: Amazon Prime South by Southwest Activation Event by Event Marketers and Seniors Paint Parking Spaces at Akron School by Eric Poston





GOAL 4

Utilize green infrastructure in key areas to improve neighborhood resiliency and beautify community landscaping.

WHY IT MATTERS

Green infrastructure is a planned network of natural, semi-natural, and engineered systems that are designed to manage stormwater runoff. These types of systems provide multiple benefits beyond the management of water. Green infrastructure can support improved air and water quality, local wildlife and ecology, and enhance a community's curb appeal. It can be applied at different scales, from the house or building level, to the broader landscape level. Green infrastructure includes rain gardens, permeable pavements, green roofs, infiltration planters, trees, and rainwater harvesting systems. In many cases, it can be a more cost effective approach to managing environmental systems.

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

- 4.1 Enhance existing tree canopy along major roads and corridors.
  - a. Implement Complete Street Initiatives across the South Side
  - b. Expand the right-of-way and tree-pits along major corridors like Hayes Avenue and Camp Street to allow for larger street trees
  - c. Utilize stormwater best management practices in streetscaping and at public facilities
  - d. Partner with Perkins Township to conduct a Complete Streets Study for Hayes and Perkins Avenue
- 4.2 Collocate green infrastructure systems and best management practices within existing parks and open spaces in the South Side.
  - a. Encourage the use of permeable paving in public parking areas and along trails
  - b. Implement best management practices and green infrastructure throughout Mills Creek Golf Course, MacArthur Park, and Mills School
  - c. Incentivize green infrastructure in future developments within the South Side
- 4.3 Implement a community native planting and stormwater program that can provide residents with opportunities to implement rain gardens and best management practices that will elevate the landscape of their property and reduce runoff and stormwater community-wide.
  - a. Research and pursue environmental grants to support green infrastructure implementation across the South Side
  - b. Create informational brochures around the benefits of green infrastructure
  - c. Enhance green infrastructure standards city-wide.
  - d. Research and pursue environmental grants to support green infrastructure implementation across the South Side
  - e. Explore ability to host programs and grow native plants in the Sandusky Greenhouse
  - f.

BEST PRACTICES | MANAGING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Best Management Practices is another way of referencing green infrastructure. They are structural and vegetative practices used to treat and reduce water pollution. There are multiple types of best management practices that can be incorporated through streetscapes, open spaces, and private properties that can enhance neighborhood beauty and stormwater quality.



**1 | STREET TREES**  
Trees are one of the most effective forms of green infrastructure that help to slow down and reduce runoff. Street trees support walkability by providing shade during the summer



**2 | BIO-RETENTION BASINS**  
Bio-retention systems capture and store stormwater runoff and pass it through a filter bed of engineered soil media composed of sand, soil, and organic matter



**3 | RAIN GARDENS**  
Rain Gardens are a type of bio-retention that captures water from surrounding hardscape into a vegetative area. These systems can be scaled to serve residential homes



**4 | GREEN ROOFS**  
Green roofs replace traditional roofing with a vegetated roof system. Green roofs are designed so that rain is absorbed by the plants and other growing media



**5 | PERMEABLE PAVING**  
Permeable pavement, or pervious pavers, allows water to seep around and through paved surfaces and soak naturally into a self-draining system in the ground



**6 | RAIN BARRELS AND CISTERNS**  
Rain barrels and cisterns are watertight receptacles designed to catch and store stormwater



GOAL 5

Tell the South Side story.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Side is a community steeped in local history and a unique living history as multiple generations stay in the area. South Side art, landmarks, and branding should reflect the impact this neighborhood and its residents have had on the City.

GOAL CHAMPION

- Public Arts & Culture Commission

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City of Sandusky Landmark Commission
- City of Sandusky Department of Public Works
- Erie County Health Department
- Firelands Regional Medical Center
- Erie County Historical Society
- Sandusky City School District
- Various neighborhood groups.



Image Source: Greetings Tour, 2020

STRATEGIES + ACTIONS

- 5.1 Prioritize contracting local South Side artists and designers for creative installations and events in the neighborhood.**

  - a. Create and maintain a database of opportunity spaces and property owners interested in hosting artistic installations on their property when interest and funding arises
  - b. Create a publicly available roster of South Side and minority Sandusky artists to be hired for community events, branding, etc. This can be built on existing resources such as the call to artists from the Sandusky ArtBox project of 2022
- 5.2 Create landmarks celebrating places with local historic significance.**

  - a. Coordinate a neighborhood-wide mural project that creatively illustrates the story, history, and values of the South Side
  - b. Create landmark markers for the American Crayon site, Mills School, Churchwell Park, and the historic Firelands facility
- 5.3 Celebrate and promote the multi-generational experience and history of South Side residents.**

  - a. Pursue funds and partnerships to collect the oral history of residents and display via social media
  - b. Create signage markers for properties in the South Side which have transitioned over time to show how the neighborhood has evolved.
  - c. Partner with Sandusky City School District to create yard signage designs for residents to share the story of how they came to live in the South Side

- 5.4 Expand on the brand standards established in the 2017 Neighborhood Initiative.**

  - a. Create a wayfinding plan building off the brand standards established in the 2017 Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative with a variety of signage typologies to match various contexts, including road signs, brick inlays, murals, and other alternative methods to conventional signs
  - b. Earmark funds for new signage
- 5.5 Engage local artists, residents and students to use their work in South Side wayfinding, signage, and landmark development.**

  - a. Host a competition for a public art installation to be included as part of the renovations to Churchwell Park facilities



SUPPORTING DATA

There are currently no formally historically designated properties in the South Side. However, this is a neighborhood with deep roots in Sandusky and the stories of its residents should be shared and celebrated.

100+  
HISTORIC SITES IN  
CITY OF SANDUSKY

0  
HISTORIC SITES IN  
THE SOUTH SIDE

8  
PROPOSED SITES FOR ART  
CELEBRATING SOUTH SIDE HISTORY

- 1 Mills School
- 2 Churchwell Park
- 3 MacArthur Park
- 4 Fairlawn Court
- 5 Strobel Stadium
- 6 Cliff's Grocery & Carry Out
- 7 American Crayon
- 8 Berardi's Family Kitchen



CASE STUDIES | COMMUNITY ART PROGRAMS



**LOOK HERE | COVINGTON, KENTUCKY**  
The Historic Preservation Department of Covington, Kentucky wanted to show the abundant amount of buildings preserved in the city and created a signage campaign placing historic photos in front of the sites where they were taken. Other cities have done this to show just how much change has taken in their neighborhoods. This could be a way for South Side residents to celebrate places with local significance from the Cool Spot to Cliff's Grocery & Carry Out.



**ARTBOX PROGRAM | SANDUSKY, OHIO**  
The Public Arts & Culture Commission announced the ArtBox program in their 2022 annual work plan, with increased funding in 2023 to pay artists \$500 for each completed project. There are four available project locations in the South Side. The commission developed this program to enhance local storytelling in Sandusky neighborhoods with projects done by local artists. Sandusky also has an artist led grant application program that could be used to secure funding for arts projects in the South Side. These processes used to implement public art in the city can be now applied in the South Side.



**ROOSEVELT ROW | PHOENIX, ARIZONA**  
Roosevelt Row is a prominent arts district in the City of Phoenix, known for its many murals created by local artists across the valley. These murals were all created with the intent to either be interactive, be inspired by local art traditions, or to reflect the history of the city.



WHAT WE HEARD

"There is signage but the small size doesn't match the massive amount of pride in this community."

Steering Committee Member

DID YOU KNOW?

The City of Sandusky created neighborhood street markers as a result of recommendations from the Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative. However, there are ways to tell community stories besides from signs like these.



BEST PRACTICES | WAYFINDING AND STORYTELLING

Wayfinding is a system of signage to help distinguish directions, as well as enhance the experience and uses of spaces. Wayfinding works best when there is a variety of signs at different scales to better serves pedestrians, motorists, and cyclists. It is just as important to help students get to school as it is for family members visiting for the holidays. Examples of wayfinding include:



Source: Destination by Design

1 | POLE BANNERS

Pole banners are great wayfinding for motorists and should be used on commercial corridors such as Hayes Avenue



Source: Ryan McCarble of LSU Athletics

2 | BRICK INLAYS

Brick inlays work well at historic sites since they typically fit the existing character. Use in places such as Mills School



Source: McComm Group

3 | STREET KIOSKS

Street kiosks help pedestrians and cyclists. Use these at community centers and gateways



Source: Wilkinson Sejour of Miami New Times

4 | STREET SIGNS

The existing South Side markers can be better differentiated by using different colors or fonts



Source: West Windsor Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance

5 | ROAD MARKINGS

Similar to the waterfront trail downtown, use visual cues on roads to help with navigation at key intersections



Source: 2018 Public Art and Placemaking Plan

6 | STORYTELLING

Use markers at sites with local significance to preserve history in the South Side



Great Wall of Legends Rendering  
Source: 2017 Neighborhood Initiative

7 | LANDMARKS

Landmarks can create distinct visual points of interest to connect South Side. Prior plans proposed landmarks at sites including Strobel Stadium and the American Crayon site



American Crayon Plaza Rendering  
Source: 2018 Public Art and Placemaking Plan



BRANDING + BEAUTIFICATION STRATEGY SUMMARY

COORDINATE

South Side residents have many opportunities to expand and enhance neighborhood parks. To successfully achieve these four goals, the City of Sandusky and South Side residents will have to closely collaborate with the partners identified.



IMPLEMENT

Over 40 actions are specified throughout this chapter to achieve the goals for South Side parks and open spaces (see Chapter 7. Implementation for the full list). These actions are categorized into near-, mid-, and long-term actions.

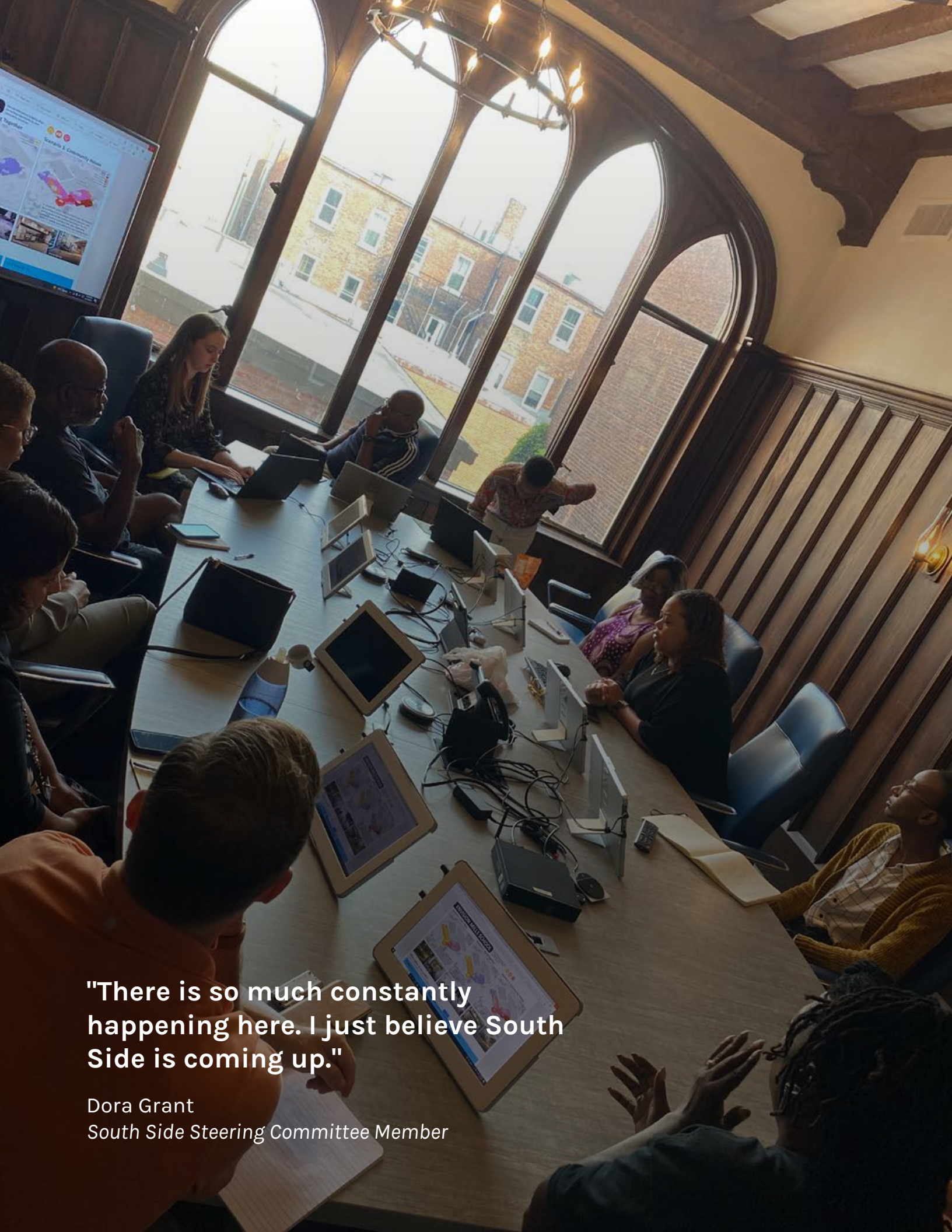


PRIORITIZE

Out of the 50 total actions listed in this neighborhood plan, two key actions were identified as top priorities by the City of Sandusky and South Side residents.

<div>GOAL</div> <div>Improve streetscapes and establish gateways to enhance safety and create a sense of arrival.</div>	<div>GOAL</div> <div>Tell the South Side story.</div>
<div>STRATEGY</div> <div>Create and reinforce landscaping standards along key corridors.</div>	<div>STRATEGY</div> <div>Create landmarks celebrating places with local historic significance.</div>
<div>ACTION</div> <div>Document a tree planting plan and timeline to expand tree canopy coverage on well-traversed blocks.</div>	<div>ACTION</div> <div>Create public art installations or gateway features for the American Crayon site, Mills School, Churchwell Park, underpasses, and the historic Firelands facility</div>
<div>FEASIBILITY</div> <div>ActionableAspirational</div> <div>CITY ROLE</div> <div>LeadPartnerAdvocate</div> <div>KEY PARTNERS</div> <div>ResidentsSandusky Parks &amp; Rec</div> <div>TIMEFRAME</div> <div>NearMidLong</div>	<div>FEASIBILITY</div> <div>ActionableAspirational</div> <div>CITY ROLE</div> <div>LeadPartnerAdvocate</div> <div>KEY PARTNERS</div> <div>Sandusky Parks &amp; Rec</div> <div>TIMEFRAME</div> <div>NearMidLong</div>





"There is so much constantly happening here. I just believe South Side is coming up."

Dora Grant  
South Side Steering Committee Member

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## DOING THE WORK TOGETHER

These ambitious goals will require the collaboration of many individuals and groups across South Side, Sandusky, and the region. Immediate steps will be to develop a process for implementation across partners, research funding opportunities and explore reporting options to share progress with the public.



## TIMEFRAME

Each action is assigned a timeframe based on how it was prioritized. Higher priority actions or more achievable actions are slated to happen earlier than others.

NEAR	1 to 3 years
MID	4 to 7 years
LONG	7 to 10 years and/or ongoing

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

While partnership is necessary, these groups will champion actions which align with their organization or division. Acronyms for the following agencies or departments are seen throughout the action plan.

ACRONYM	AGENCY/DEPARTMENT
ARTS	Public Arts & Culture Commission
BD	Sandusky Division of Buildings
CDD	Sandusky Community Development Department
CC	Sandusky Division of Code Compliance
CDFI	Community Development Financial Institutions/Local Financial Institutions
CM	Sandusky City Manager's Office
DEI	Sandusky Diversity & Economic Opportunity Manager and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Team
EC	Erie County
EDU	Educational Providers (i.e. City and private k-12 schools, vocational educators, higher-education providers)
ECEDC	Erie County Economic Development Corporation
ECHD	Erie County Health Department
ECLB	Erie County Land Bank
ERPC	Erie Regional Planning Commission & Metropolitan Planning Organization
HA	Metro and Erie County Housing Authorities
LC	Sandusky Landmark Commission
NBR	Neighborhood Block clubs, groups, and associations
NP	Local Non-Profits
ODJFS	Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
PRV	Private Sector (i.e. local businesses, employers, developers)
PW	Sandusky Public Works
PZ	Sandusky Planning & Zoning Division
REC	Sandusky Recreation Division
SCS	Sandusky City Schools



# Action Plan

## GOAL 1: EXPAND HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR CURRENT RESIDENTS AND MAINTAIN OVERALL HOUSING AFFORDABILITY.

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Expand Housing assistance programs that prioritize low to moderate income households and people with disabilities.	❑ Develop equity criteria to facilitate the distribution of public funds.	Near	HA
	❑ Expand current housing programs to include down payment assistance and homebuyer education courses for those earning up to 120% AMI.	Mid	CDD
	❑ Develop policies to preserve affordability following the distribution of public funds.	Long	CDD, CM
	❑ Develop an online repository for housing services, resources, and affordable homes and assistance programs.	Mid	CDD
	❑ Encourage Erie County to expand housing choice voucher programs to include project-based vouchers.	Near	HA
	❑ Expand tenant rights resources and services including partnerships with fair housing and eviction prevention services.	Near	CDD, HA
Increase education and access to resources about housing and homeownership for low to moderate income households.	❑ Expand the definition of homeownership beyond single-family detached housing to include single-family attached and condominiums.	Mid	CDD, HA
	❑ Market housing assistance programs through multiple channels including special events, neighborhood associations, non-profit partners, and digital and print methods and social media.	Near	CDD, HA
	❑ Train neighborhood ambassadors and non-profits to communicate and distribute information about city programs and processes.	Near	CDD, CM
	❑ Develop funding for programs that provide workforce development, financial, social services, and permanent supportive housing in the South Side.	Mid	HA, ECEDC
Preserve and maintain naturally occurring affordable housing.	❑ Develop a program to support redevelopment of small and medium sized apartments (up to 15 units) and maintain their affordability.	Mid	CDD, NP, HA
	❑ Identify bad actor landlords and education on property maintenance requirements, tenant rights, and fair housing laws.	Near	CC
	❑ Establish landlord resources, funding, and education programs to encourage good actors.	Mid	CDD, ECEDC
	❑ Require property owners who utilize public funding or incentives to maintain affordability for the life of the building	Mid	CDD, CM
Strengthen partnerships between city, county and non-profit agencies for a regional approach to affordable housing.	❑ Explore gaps in services between what the city and county offers and partner on potential new programs and solutions.	Mid	EC, CDD
	❑ Partner with the county, state, and non-profits to develop and implement a homebuyer program with an educational component.	Mid	EC, NP, CDD

## GOAL 2: ENHANCE EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS AND DIVERSIFY HOUSING OPTIONS IN THE SOUTH SIDE.

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Streamline the development process for affordable housing.	❑ Reduce off-site infrastructure improvement requirements for affordable developments.	Long	PW
	❑ Catalog and prioritize infrastructure needs near vacant publicly-owned property.	Near	PW, CDD
Support the expansion of Erie County Land Bank programming and acquisition of land for affordable housing.	❑ Develop and deliver a set of policy and process recommendations to expand programming and funding for Erie County Land Bank.	Mid	HA, NP
	❑ Increase coordination between Erie County and City of Sandusky regarding disposition of public land within South Side.	Near	CDD, ECLB
	❑ Develop and codify process to sell land to private developers in way that aligns with Sandusky plans.	Mid	CDD
Remove zoning barriers to affordable housing choice by allowing smaller lots, a variety of housing types, and a mix of uses.	❑ Research ordinances that restrict the development of affordable housing by-right.	Mid	CDD
	❑ Review lot size and lot coverage limitations for single- and multi-family zoning districts.	Near	BD, PZ
	❑ Support the development of a Sandusky master plan and zoning code update.	Mid	CM, PZ
Develop mixed-use districts within the South Side to expand housing options.	❑ Strengthen short-term rental ordinance to restrict investment rentals and allow more flexibility for homesteaders to rent out a part or their entire home as supplemental income.	Near	CDD, CM
	❑ Research mixed-use best practices and applicability to the South Side.	Mid	PZ

## GOAL 3: RETAIN AND ADAPTIVELY REUSE THE FORMER MILLS SCHOOL BUILDING.

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Refine concept design for the Mills School.	❑ Perform financial feasibility study to determine approximate cost of redevelopment.	Mid	CDD, PZ
	❑ Perform general maintenance and upkeep for the property to mitigate hazardous conditions.	Long	REC, PW
Identify and secure developers and anchor tenants for community resource programs.	❑ Solicit developer interest through a Request for Information (RFI) process.	Mid	CDD
	❑ Research and identify federal and state funding opportunities to assist with the redevelopment of Mills School.	Mid	CDD



GOAL 1: UPGRADE NEIGHBORHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER SYSTEMS.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Upgrade underground wastewater, utilities, and stormwater infrastructure systems to meet current standards, specifically within the MacArthur Park community.	<div><div></div>Relocate all underground utility systems into the ROW within MacArthur Park.</div>	Mid	PW
	<div><div></div>Upgrade wastewater and stormwater infrastructure within the MacArthur Park community.</div>	Mid	PW
Improve road conditions along primary neighborhood connectors.	<div><div></div>Prioritize repaving roads in the South Side, specifically, Pierce and Buchanan.</div>	Mid	PW
	<div><div></div>Identify areas in need of greatest road and curb repairs.</div>	Mid	PW, PZ
	<div><div></div>Pursue infrastructure funding to upgrade roads and curbs throughout the South Side.</div>	Long	CDD, ECEDC

GOAL 2: IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIVITY AND ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Enhance sidewalk by addressing critical gaps in the network.	<div><div></div>Prioritize sidewalk implementation in communities like MacArthur Park and others with no existing sidewalks.</div>	Long	PW
	<div><div></div>Combine infrastructure improvements with future development opportunities.</div>	Near	PW, CD
	<div><div></div>Research and pursue county-wide funding for sidewalk and infrastructure improvements.</div>	Mid	PW, PZ, ECHD, ERPC
Develop a pedestrian and bike network that connects residents to schools and other public amenities.	<div><div></div>Pilot bike infrastructure projects on local neighborhood connectors such as Pierce Street and Buchanan Street.</div>	Mid	PW
	<div><div></div>Implement short term bicycle infrastructure in coordination with ongoing streets improvements projects such as sharrows, painted bike lanes, and bollards.</div>	Near	PW, PZ
	<div><div></div>Continue to promote bike safety and etiquette through educational campaigns and initiatives like Safety Town.</div>	Near	PW, REC
	<div><div></div>Implement city wide bike share program to promote cycling throughout the community.</div>	Mid	NP, PRV
	<div><div></div>Connect future bike lanes within the South Side to existing bike network.</div>	Near	SCS
	<div><div></div>Develop a bike and pedestrian connectivity plan to link South Side to Downtown.</div>	Long	PW

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Prioritize enhanced pedestrian and bike infrastructure along major roads.	<div><div></div>Implement a complete streets program along major corridors.</div>	Mid	PW, PZ
	<div><div></div>Increase sidewalk widths along major corridors such as Hayes Avenue, Perkins Avenue, and Camp Street to provide enhanced pedestrian and bike infrastructure.</div>	Long	PW
	<div><div></div>Pursue grant funding for infrastructure improvements.</div>	Mid	CDD, PW

GOAL 3: IMPLEMENT TRAFFIC CALMING STRATEGIES, ENHANCED LIGHTING, AND IMPROVED PUBLIC SPACES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY SAFETY.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Focus traffic calming strategies such as speed tables, HAWK signals, and enhanced crosswalks along major roads and at key intersections.	<div><div></div>Implement HAWK signal and enhanced crosswalk along Hayes Avenue to provide a controlled school crossing.</div>	Near	PW
	<div><div></div>Narrow drive lanes and widen sidewalks to reduce speeds along major roads in enhance pedestrian safety.</div>	Mid	PW
	<div><div></div>Enhance existing crosswalks with reflectors, lighting, and crosswalk art to increase visibility.</div>	Mid	PW
	<div><div></div>Implement speed tables at pedestrian crossings along Hayes Avenue and Camp Street.</div>	Mid	PW
Enhance lighting along major corridors and in public open spaces to increase visibility.	<div><div></div>Improve lighting in public spaces throughout the South Side.</div>	Mid	PW, CDD
	<div><div></div>Increase lighting in and around underpass areas and training crossings.</div>	Near	PW



GOAL 1: TRANSFORM CHURCHWELL PARK INTO A NEIGHBORHOOD SERVING PARK.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Design and build a state-of-the-art park with new play equipment and amenities inclusive of resident ideas.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm site design and proposed park features.	Near	REC, PZ
	<input type="checkbox"/> Secure funding for improvements.	Near	CDD
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify recreation partners for park programming.	Near	REC
<b>Expand park footprint to accommodate future capacity.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate the feasibility of a property swap program to exchange privately-owned land around the park for publicly-owned land to expand the footprint of Churchwell Park.	Mid	CDD, CM
<b>Identify a local champion to support park maintenance and programming.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pair a Friend through Friends of Sandusky Parks with Churchwell Park to steward the site after redevelopment.	Long	NBR

GOAL 2: ENHANCE SOUTH SIDE RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Conduct a feasibility study to locate a new citywide recreation center.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Assess the feasibility of centrally accessible sites for a city-wide recreation center, including the American Crayon site.	Near	REC
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm partners to engage leagues, schools and groups across the city.	Mid	SCS, REC
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify funding for implementation.	Near	CM
<b>Regularly assess park quality for safety compliance.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hire a playground specialist to inspect all equipment annually.	Mid	REC
	<input type="checkbox"/> Use high-quality weather resistant materials.	Mid	REC
	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly remove garbage and any vandalism.	Long	REC, NBR
<b>Establish walking trails that connect to larger green spaces and other key destinations.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate the feasibility of a linear park or trail along the Amtrak rail corridor to connect Mills Creek to Hayes Avenue.	Long	CDD, PW
	<input type="checkbox"/> Execute the proposed trail at Mills Creek Golf Course.	Near	CDD, PW
	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish a Safe Route to School between Sandusky High School and Mills Schools.	Near	ECHD, SPS
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide design guidelines and small grants for local businesses looking to activate their sites for public use.	Mid	CDD, PZ

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Support ongoing improvements at Mills Creek Golf Course, with specific emphasis on flooding response.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Expand Mills Creek conservation efforts to beautify and enhance the riparian zone.	Mid	REC
	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilize planned projects, like the proposed walking trail, to examine topography and its effects on site drainage and flooding.	Long	PW, REC
	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage with summer youth jobs to provide hands-on experience with green infrastructure.	Mid	REC

GOAL 3: ENHANCE ALL PARKS AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Expand all in-park programming to engage residents.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Expand recreation staff to add programs for youth, teens, adults and seniors.	Long	REC
	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish a neighborhood-scale home base in South Side (Mills School).	Mid	CDD
	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner with Sandusky Public Schools to train teens for camp leadership roles.	Mid	EDU, REC
	<input type="checkbox"/> Expand offerings by leveraging community partners and instructor volunteerism (such as yoga and movement classes, sewing programs, music programs etc.).	Mid	REC, EDU, NBR
<b>Utilize short-term activation strategies at Strobel Stadium parking lot during off-seasons.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with local artists to develop murals or pavement graphics.	Long	SCS
	<input type="checkbox"/> Program family-friendly events to encourage year-round use (i.e. food truck festival, carnival, music series, mini drive-in theatre).	Long	SCS
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify funding sources for implementation.	Long	SCS
<b>Partner with Erie County Health Department to expand the Healthy Hayes Initiative and promote healthy recreation.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify Erie County initiatives and funding opportunities for Sandusky.	Near	ECHD
	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner with Firelands Healthy Hayes Corridor Project to add recreation programming to South Side.	Mid	REC, ECHD, PRV
<b>Expand Friends of Sandusky Parks programs to offset park and trails maintenance costs.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pair a Friend through Friends of Sandusky Parks with newly established parks and open spaces.	Mid	NBR
	<input type="checkbox"/> Support volunteers with Community Development Block grant federal program and maintenance equipment.	Near	NBR
<b>Support local groups in building and maintaining gardens on underutilized land.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Leverage Community Development Block grant federal programs to support community groups with garden establishment and maintenances.	Mid	CDD
	<input type="checkbox"/> Connect local organizations with available land bank parcels.	Long	ECLB, CDD



**GOAL 1: BUILD TRUST AND IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY AND SOUTH SIDE COMMUNITY.**

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Increase transparency of city processes and accountability to the public.</b>	❑ Host community meet and greets with city staff and officials to establish a consistent rapport with the community.	Near	CM, CDD
	❑ Expand how information is shared using social media platforms, community canvassing, mailers, and local resident communication networks.	Near	CM, CDD
	❑ Develop a frequently asked questions web page for residents to get information on specific projects and city procedures.	Mid	CM, DEI
	❑ Develop a neighborhood advisory committee.	Mid	CM, DEI
<b>Prioritize equitable community engagement in civic processes.</b>	❑ Track all community engagement efforts using several forms of data collection.	Long	CM
	❑ Use data from previous engagement efforts to identify gaps in outreach.	Mid	PZ
	❑ Target underrepresented populations through focused engagement efforts.	Mid	CM, DEI
	❑ Establish community kiosk or message boards at local businesses or public facilities throughout the South Side to share information.	Long	CDD
	❑ eport engagement findings and comments to the public following community events and meetings.	Mid	CM
<b>Identify and empower local community champions and advocacy groups.</b>	❑ Provide information session on community organizing and civic procedures.	Mid	NBR
	❑ Document and respond to community feedback through official public facing community message boards.	Mid	CM
	❑ Work with local youth to develop a youth community ambassador program to share information and connect with younger generations of South Side.	Mid	EDU

**GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS, SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, NON-PROFITS, AND FAITH-BASED GROUPS.**

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Develop strategic partnerships with local organizations to increase residents access to critical resources for job training, child care, and funding support.</b>	❑ Work with local organizations working in the South Side to create alignment around specific neighborhood initiatives.	Near	NBR
	❑ Create a community resource page on the city website to document existing programs and organizations that provide educational services, training, and funding resources to residents.	Long	CM
<b>Identify and document effective program that are currently being offered by the city or county.</b>	❑ Work with local non-profits, social services groups, county agencies and faith-based organizations to establish a community calendar/message board to connect residents to events and program.	Mid	NP
	❑ Continue to host community open house events to connect community members to city and county departments and social services.	Mid	CM
<b>Increase awareness of existing programs and offerings provided by the city and local non-government organizations using a variety of outreach strategies.</b>	❑ Establish quarterly community pop-ups to showcase offerings in collaboration with local non-profits and faith-based organizations.	Mid	CDD
	❑ Collaborate with established community advocacy groups, including faith-based and non-profit organizations to meet residents where they are.	Mid	CDD
	❑ Offer community office hours for residents to speak with city staff one-on-one about programs, processes and resources.	Mid	CM
	❑ Meet residents where they are by attending and supporting community hosted events.	Near	CM
<b>Conduct targeted outreach to better connect with marginalized groups and those with greatest need.</b>	❑ Work collectively with residents to connect with local leaders and community organizers within marginalized communities.	Near	CM
	❑ Make information available through various platforms and mediums to spread information more broadly.	Near	CM
	❑ Purchase targeted social media ads to connect with the demographics most in need of resources.	Near	CDD, PZ



**GOAL 3: IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH THROUGH INCREASED ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT, HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS, AND QUALITY COMMUNITY SPACES.**

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Work with local healthcare organizations and trauma support groups from around the city and county to connect residents to mental health services.</b>	❑ Host community listening sessions with mental health professionals.	Near	ECHD
	❑ Establish a mental health support line for residents to learn of the different options for mental health resources.	Near	ECHD
	❑ Offer a mental health support page on the city website to increase awareness of existing programs.	Mid	ECHD
	❑ Partner with local healthcare organizations to connect residents to resources.	Near	CDD
	❑ Offer Sandusky Recreation programs that support positive mental health (e.g. yoga, meditation, art therapy, etc.).	Long	REC
	❑ Foster further partnership between parks and recreation and the health department to facilitate a local mental health campaign.	Long	ECHD
<b>Increase access to healthy food options in the South Side.</b>	❑ Partner with local organizations to host farmers markets at neighborhood serving facilities to provide healthy food options.	Mid	REC
	❑ Work with local stores along Hayes and Perkins to establish healthy corner store initiative.	Mid	ECHD
	❑ Connect with local health care organizations, health department, and non-profits to sponsor healthy food and health screening events at the school or local businesses along Hayes.	Near	ECHD
	❑ Prioritize healthy food options and grocery stores in new development projects across the South Side.	Near	ECHD
	❑ Work with the health department and Firelands Health to formalize the Healthy Hayes Initiative.	Near	ECHD
	❑ Support and promote existing food pantries and soup kitchens.	Near	ECHD
	❑ Connect with local health care organizations, health department, and non-profits like Firelands Health and OhGo to sponsor healthy food and health screening events at the school or local businesses along Hayes.	Mid	ECEDC
	❑ Work with the recreation department to host healthy eating and cooking sessions using commercial kitchens at public facilities like the Mills School.	Long	REC
	❑ Implement community garden program at Mills School or Churchwell Park with a specific focus on seniors and youth programming to encourage intergenerational knowledge exchange.	Long	REC

**GOAL 4: INCREASE RESIDENTS ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT LIFELONG LEARNING.**

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Enhance access to technology and technology training for residents.</b>	❑ Work with local Internet providers to increase access to affordable Internet.	Near	CM
	❑ Work with other city departments such as parks and recreation and the Sandusky City School District to offer computer and technology education courses.	Long	ECEDC
	❑ Provide WIFI hubs at public facilities to expand Internet access.	Long	ECEDC
<b>Support and promote local job training, trade skills, and educational advancements programs for South Side residents.</b>	❑ Increase awareness of secondary education programs for residents.	Near	ECEDC
	❑ Collaborate with Sandusky High School and local senior citizen organizations to encourage inter-generational learning.		
		Mid	ECEDC



**GOAL 1: SUPPORT LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACROSS THE SOUTH SIDE.**

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Increase access to career and business development programs for South Side residents.</b>	❑ Identify viable business sectors suited for neighborhood serving commercial activation within South Side.	Near	ECEDC
	❑ Identify job gaps in the region that could fit within the South Side neighborhood.	Mid	ECEDC
<b>Develop strategic partnerships with existing workforce and business development programs.</b>	❑ Catalog regional workforce development actors and programs.	Near	ECEDC
	❑ Identify a neighborhood location to serve as a workforce resource center.	Mid	ECEDC, EDU
	❑ Advocate for employment of South Side residents in neighborhood businesses.	Long	NP
<b>Explore the creation of a resident and business neighborhood association to advocate for South Side-led development and access to funding.</b>	❑ Create partnerships with the city to establish this neighborhood association and provide training on its operation.	Mid	NBR
	❑ Advocate for equal representation of property owners, business owners, renters among association leadership.	Mid	CDD

**GOAL 2: INCENTIVIZE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ALLOW FOR STRATEGICALLY LOCATED MIXED-USE.**

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Support the development of mixed-use districts at Pierce and Buchanan and Camp and Hayes corridors.</b>	❑ Work with the residents of South Side to determine desired building form and uses.	Mid	PZ
	❑ Create design guidelines for mixed-use development.	Mid	PZ
	❑ Research mixed-use best practices that support a wide range of neighborhood commercial, office, light industrial, and residential uses.	Near	PZ
	❑ Determine how New Market Tax Credits could be leveraged to promote mixed-use in South Side.	Near	CDD
	❑ Determine if there are any barriers in the current code to the development of pop-up markets, food trucks, or other non-traditional business structures within the South Side.	Mid	PZ

**GOAL 3: WORK WITH NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS TO INCREASE LOCAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES THAT OFFER LIVING WAGES.**

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
<b>Expand business financial support through local funding and education mechanisms.</b>	❑ Establish a community development corporation for the City of Sandusky.	Long	ECEDC, CDD
	❑ Set aside some public land for the development of local small businesses.	Mid	PZ
	❑ Incorporate funding for small businesses that are mission-driven, prioritize local employment, and have minority owners.	Mid	ECEDC



GOAL 1: IMPROVE STREETSCAPES AND ESTABLISH GATEWAYS TO ENHANCE SAFETY AND CREATE A SENSE OF ARRIVAL.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Improve the coherence of streetscape elements to indicate entrance to the South Side.	<input type="checkbox"/> Distribute cohesively branded banners and signage at regular intervals to establish a sense of identity.	Mid	PZ
	<input type="checkbox"/> Create and enforce design standards for street furniture along major corridors or near transit stops, including benches and shelters.	Mid	PZ
	<input type="checkbox"/> Create and enforce design standards for street infrastructure including waste receptacles, lighting fixtures, bike racks, and other street features throughout the neighborhood to maintain consistency.	Near	PZ
		Near	PW, CD
	<input type="checkbox"/> Create neighborhood street lighting standards to provide adequate sight, while promoting safety based on the context of the corridor.	Mid	PZ, PW
Create and reinforce landscaping standards along key corridors in the public right-of-way to enhance appearance, shade, and community health.	<input type="checkbox"/> Document a tree planting plan and timeline to expand tree canopy coverage on well-traversed blocks.	Mid	PW
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pursue funding opportunities to employ green stormwater design on major thoroughfares which will address residential flooding issues while enhancing overall streetscape design.	Mid	PW, CDD
	<input type="checkbox"/> Use native plantings to decrease water and general maintenance costs.	Long	PW
	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilize the Community Development Block Grant federal program to fund tree plantings on designated corridors.	Mid	PW, CDD
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assist resident establishment of South Side garden or beautification committee.	Mid	NBR, CDD
Establish gateways to Churchwell Park off of Forest Drive and Clay Street.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use right-of-way landscaping, lighting fixtures, and sidewalks consistent with features to be constructed in Churchwell Park on Forest Drive and Clay Street to create a uniform and inviting community space.	Mid	PW
Enhance the underpasses at Hayes, Camp, Mills and Campbell as northern gateways to the neighborhood.	<input type="checkbox"/> Add lighting to enhance a sense of safety, especially during darkened hours.	Mid	PW
	<input type="checkbox"/> Use art installations including mural or interactive displays to establish a sense of place.	Mid	ARTS
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure design parallels any overall wayfinding and branding strategies for South Side and the City of Sandusky.	Mid	PW
	<input type="checkbox"/> Promote traffic slowing via road improvements.	Mid	PW

Establish a gateway at the intersection of Hayes and Buchanan to enhance student safety at Sandusky Public Schools and for patients of Firelands Regional Medical Center.

<input type="checkbox"/> Implement traffic calming measures including speed bumps and alternative materials for road crossings to enhance student safety.	Mid	PW
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify opportunities for storytelling and showcasing stories of the innovation and work of Sandusky students and residents through public art installations and placemaking elements.	Long	ARTS, NBR
<input type="checkbox"/> Use planters and light pole banners in the public right-of-way to visually enhance Hayes Avenue.	Mid	PW

GOAL 2: ENHANCE, PROTECT, AND REVITALIZE EXISTING PROPERTIES (AS NEEDED) TO PRESERVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Create, sponsor, or support beautification centered community events.	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify neighborhood associations, business associations, or non-profit community champions that can lead local beautification and street clean-up efforts on an annual or semi-annual basis.	Mid	CDD
		Mid	CM
	<input type="checkbox"/> Support an annual community event for students, church members, residents and interested parties to clean, replace, or install new plantings to assist with maintenance.	Near	CM, ARTS, EDU
	<input type="checkbox"/> Support a tri-annual neighborhood art event where the city and related community groups assist with funding permanent installations such as murals or monuments, as well as some tactical art installations at community hubs such as a Sandusky City School District sidewalk art competition.		
Promote funding sources beyond Community Development Block Grants which can be used for building maintenance and improvements.	<input type="checkbox"/> Lead semi-annual training sessions at community centers such as the Sandusky Rec Center informing residents of available funding opportunities for property improvements and methods of applying.	Long	CDD
	<input type="checkbox"/> Create a dedicated web page on the city website showing the variety of funding opportunities available to support building maintenance and improvements.	Long	CM
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enhance marketing for the Facade Improvement Program which is dedicated to small businesses that could benefit from a face-lift.	Mid	CDD
Bolster zoning and approvals process to have character standards, which will ensure new buildings match the existing physical character of the neighborhood.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create materials standards to maintain a high quality housing stock in the neighborhood.	Mid	PZ, CDD



3: CREATE SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM PLANS FOR PUBLICLY OWNED VACANT LAND AND UNDERUTILIZED LAND.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Use vacant land based on the best use of the land and the surrounding context.	<div><div></div>Create a vacant land plan to determine the best use of land as housing, mixed-use buildings, open space, green infrastructure, or some combination based on the best use of the land and the surrounding context.</div>	Mid	ECLB, CDD
Screen and activate large surface parking lots when possible to reduce gaps of activity in the residential neighborhood fabric.	<div><div></div>Create a plan for the transitional use and short-term activation of the Strobel Stadium parking lot during the off season.</div> <div><div></div>Create and implement landscaping design standards for large surface parking lots.</div>	Long	SCS, CDD
		Near	PZ

GOAL 4: UTILIZE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN KEY AREAS TO IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOOD RESILIENCY AND BEAUTIFY COMMUNITY LANDSCAPING.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Enhance existing tree canopy along major roads and corridors.	<div><div></div>Implement Complete Street Initiatives across the South Side.</div> <div><div></div>Expand the right-of-way and tree-wells along major corridors like Hayes Avenue and Camp Street to allow for larger street trees.</div> <div><div></div>Utilize stormwater best management practices in streetscaping and at public facilities.</div> <div><div></div>Partner with Perkins Township to conduct a Complete Streets Study for Hayes and Perkins Avenue.</div>	Long	PW
		Mid	PW
		Long	PW
		Mid	PW, DOT
Collocate green infrastructure systems and best management practices within existing parks and open spaces in the South Side.	<div><div></div>Encourage the use of permeable paving in public parking areas and along trails.</div> <div><div></div>Implement best management practices and green infrastructure throughout Mills Creek Golf Course, MacArthur Park, and Mills School.</div> <div><div></div>Incentivize green infrastructure in future developments within the South Side.</div>	Long	PW, CDD
		Mid	CDD
		Long	CDD
Implement a community native planting and stormwater program that can provide residents with opportunities to implement rain gardens and best management practices that will elevate the landscape of their property and reduce runoff and stormwater community wide.	<div><div></div>Research and pursue environmental grants to support green infrastructure implementation across the South Side.</div> <div><div></div>Create informational brochures around the benefits of green infrastructure.</div> <div><div></div>Enhance green infrastructure standards city wide.</div> <div><div></div>Explore ability to host programs and grow native plants in the Sandusky Greenhouse.</div>	Near	CDD, REC
		Near	CDD
		Near	CDD, REC
		Mid	REC

GOAL 5: TELL THE SOUTH SIDE STORY.

STRATEGY	ACTION	TIME-LINE	ACTION LEAD
Prioritize contracting local South Side artists and designers for creative installations and events in the neighborhood.	<div><div></div>Create and maintain a database of opportunity spaces and property owners interested in hosting artistic installations on their property when interest and funding arises.</div> <div><div></div>Create a publicly available roster of South Side and minority Sandusky artists to be hired for community events, branding, etc. This can be built on existing resources such as the call to artists from the Sandusky ArtBox project of 2022.</div>	Mid	ARTS, CDD, NBR
		Near	ARTS
Create landmarks celebrating places with local historic significance.	<div><div></div>Coordinate a neighborhood-wide mural project that creatively illustrates the story, history, and values of the South Side.</div> <div><div></div>Create landmark markers for the American Crayon site, Mills School, Churchwell Park, and the historic Firelands facility.</div>	Near	ARTS
		Mid	CDD
Celebrate and promote the multi-generational experience and history of South Side residents.	<div><div></div>Pursue funds and partnerships to collect the oral history of residents and display via social media.</div> <div><div></div>Create signage markers for properties in the South Side which have transitioned over time to show how the neighborhood has evolved.</div> <div><div></div>Partner with Sandusky City School District to create yard signage designs for residents to share the story of how they came to live in the South</div>	Mid	CDD, NBR, NP
		Mid	CDD, ARTS
		Near	SCS, CDD
Expand on the brand standards established in the 2017 Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative.	<div><div></div>Create a wayfinding plan building off the brand standards established in the 2017 Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative with a variety of signage typologies to match various contexts, including road signs, brick inlays, murals, and other alternative methods to conventional signs.</div> <div><div></div>Earmark funds for new signage.</div>	Near	CDD
		Mid	CDD, PW
Engage local artists, residents and students to use their work in South Side wayfinding, signage, and landmark development.	<div><div></div>Host a competition for a public art installation to be included as part of the renovations to Churchwell Park facilities.</div>	Mid	ARTS



# PLAN ALIGNMENT

A number of recommendations included in this neighborhood plan build upon the ideas and values outlined in earlier plans and initiatives outlined by the city, elevating work that needs enhanced focus. The plan primarily built on the momentum started by three prior plans: the Sandusky Neighborhood Initiative, Sandusky Public Art and Placemaking Plan, and the Bicentennial Vision Plan.

	SANDUSKY NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE	SANDUSKY PUBLIC ART + PLACEMAKING PLAN	BICENTENNIAL VISION
HOUSING + NEIGHBORHOODS			
Expand housing assistance for current residents and maintain overall housing affordability.	•		
Enhance existing housing conditions and diversify housing options in the South Side.	•		
Retain and adaptively reuse the former Mills School building.	•		
CONNECTIVITY + INFRASTRUCTURE			
Improve neighborhood connectivity and enhance pedestrian and bike infrastructure.	•		
Upgrade neighborhood infrastructure including sewage and stormwater systems, streets, sidewalks, lighting, and public spaces.	•		
Implement traffic calming strategies, enhanced lighting, and improved public spaces to enhance community safety.	•		
Utilize green infrastructure in key areas to improve neighborhood resiliency, enhance sustainability, and beautify community landscaping.	•		
PARKS + OPEN SPACE			
Transform Churchwell Park into a neighborhood serving park.	•		
Enhance South Side recreation and activities.	•	•	
Enhance all parks and recreational programs and services.	•	•	
ACCESS + SERVICES			
Build trust and improve the relationship between the city and South Side community.			•
Strengthen partnerships with local community associations, social service organizations, non-profits, and faith based groups.			•
Improve community health through increased access to mental health support, healthy food options, and quality community spaces.			•
Increase residents access to educational resources that support lifelong learning			•

	SANDUSKY NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE	SANDUSKY PUBLIC ART + PLACEMAKING PLAN	BICENTENNIAL VISION
ECONOMIC PROSPERITY			
Support local employment and entrepreneurship across the South Side.			
Incentivize development opportunities and allow for strategically located mixed-use.	•		•
Work with neighboring jurisdictions to increase local job opportunities and attract new businesses that offer living wages.			•
BRANDING + BEAUTIFICATION			
Improve streetscapes to reinforce a sense of place and enhance real and perceived safety.		•	
Enhance, protect, and revitalize existing properties (as needed) to preserve the neighborhood character.	•		•
Create short- and long-term plans for publicly-owned vacant land and underutilized land.	•		•
Establish gateways along key corridors across the neighborhood.		•	
Improve overall signage and wayfinding with a unified brand that reflects the residents of South Side and Sandusky as a whole.	•	•	
Ensure that South Side history and community are embedded in branding and beautification strategies.		•	





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# **SOUTH SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

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2023