

## Historic Preservation

### Summary

Historic properties have a way of disappearing. They quietly fall prey to demolition, neglect, or renovations that alter them beyond recognition. Building by building, site by site, the evidence of a community's heritage can gradually be lost through private and public action and inaction, taking with it much of the community's character, individuality, and vitality.

### Planning Issues

Like any limited resource, historic properties need careful planning and management to ensure their survival for current and future generations. They are subject to complex pressures and issues, and often their preservation appears to be at odds with the immediate needs for affordable housing, economic revitalization, and growth.

However, preserving Sandusky County's historical treasures can assist local communities by stabilizing neighborhoods, providing affordable housing, lowering crime, stimulating private investment, bringing people and businesses back downtown, attracting tourists, and strengthening community pride.

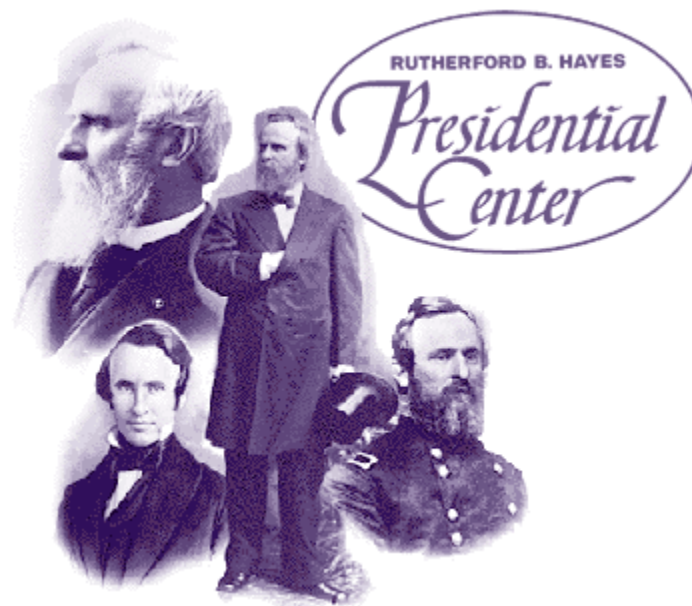
There are numerous ways a community can work to preserve its historic properties. A few include: a historic preservation ordinance or resolution, zoning, demolition moratoria, downtown revitalization programs, local economic incentives, promoting the federal rehabilitation tax credit (especially in combination with the low-income housing tax credit), and public education programs. The best approach is to use a combination of tools, specially chosen and integrated to suit local needs.

### Goals and Objectives

Historic Preservation Goal: To encourage the promotion and preservation of Sandusky County's links with the past:

#### Objectives

1. Assist communities in preserving central business districts and historic resources. This can be achieved in part by using appropriate tools, such as Certified Local Governments, Main Street programs, National Register of Historic Places nominations, and historic tax credits.



2. Encourage the development of zoning codes that include historic preservation overlay districts and design review ordinances.<sup>1</sup>

### Existing Conditions and Trends

There are several historic properties located in Sandusky County, including the following:

A. Located in Fremont, the Rutherford B. Hayes Home is a thirty-three room mansion and is centerpiece of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center in Fremont, Ohio. The home, library and museum, and tomb are located in a twenty-five-acre park called Spiegel Grove. The museum of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center was started by the President's second son, Colonel Webb Cook Hayes, and includes exhibit galleries (two floors), research library (one floor), and storage areas (four floors) comprising 52,640 square feet. The museum also includes 13,000 artifacts, 1,785 of them on permanent display, to illustrate the life and times of Rutherford B. Hayes, the 19th President of the United States.

The Hayes Presidential Center provides the following programs and services:

- ✓ An active school visitation program that brings 10,000 school children into the Center and Hayes Home each year. Each group receives a tour by a well-prepared docent.
- ✓ A Library containing a rich collection of published and unpublished sources that annually attract nearly 5,000 researchers and genealogists who use the collections.
- ✓ The Dillon House, a 19th Century Victorian mansion, which doubles as an example of elegant living for visitors and overnight researchers at the Center. Scholarly, cultural, and business groups use the Dillon House for quiet and gracious meetings and special overnight stays.
- ✓ An active program of concerts, lectures, and other functions that entertain and educate, including the Civil War reenactments).
- ✓ Active volunteers assisting in every area of the Museum, Library, and Historic Site.
- ✓ Indexing programs for local newspapers and other sources of value to the historian and genealogist readily accessible on the computer and computer-generated hard copy.
- ✓ Publication of The Statesman, a quarterly newsletter containing information about the Center, its collections, and programs.

B. The Bellevue Historical Museum contains artifacts from Bellevue's colorful past, is located in the Bellevue Savings Bank Building at 200 East Main Street. This Museum focuses on items, photos and displays relating to Bellevue's past from early village days through the present time. Featured are local



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<sup>1</sup> A historic preservation district was developed recently by the City of Fremont and is currently being implemented.

businesses, church, and school memorabilia. The displays are continually changing, so each successive visit finds something unique from arrowheads found locally to children's items and reminders of the City of Bellevue past to present.

C. Mad River & Lake Erie Railroad is one of the earliest railroads that ran through Bellevue in 1839. The Mad River & NKP Railroad Society, a non-profit organization, chose this as part of their name when they formed. In 1976 they opened the museum as a lasting bicentennial project. Henry Flagler, who built the Florida East Coast Railroad once lived on the property where the museum is now located.

D. The Clyde Museum was started in 1931 by Clyde High School science teacher Richard Edward Wolfe. Originally located in the basement of the Clyde Public Library, in 1987 it was moved to its present location, the former Grace Episcopal Church at 124 West Buckeye Street.

E. Woodville Historical Museum is located at 107 East Main Street in Woodville and contains a wide array of local and regional historical artifacts and related materials.

F. Sandusky County Historical Society Museum, located on Birchard Avenue in Fremont, contains a wide array of historical resources, documents, and artifacts of Sandusky County's past and present.

G. Other Historical Resources: The following buildings and highways in Sandusky County are listed on the National Register:

Bartlett, Joseph and Rachel, House, also known as Cole, Sardis, and Margaret House; First United Methodist Church (added 1990)  
212 Park Ave., Fremont

Buckland, Ralph P., House (added 1974)  
300 S. Park Ave., Fremont

Cronenwett, Georg, House (added 1978)  
606 W. Main St., Woodville

Fabing, Frederick, House, also known as Dr. John Gray Office-Residence (added 1983)  
201 S. Park Ave., Fremont

Hayes, Rutherford B., House (added 1966)  
Hayes and Buckland Aves., Fremont

Layman, Christopher C., Law Office (added 1986)  
212 W. First St., Woodville

McPherson, Maj. Gen. James B., House (added 1974)  
300 E. McPherson Hwy., Clyde

Mull Covered Bridge (added 1974)  
E of Burgoon between OH 12 and 53, Burgoon

Overmyer-Waggoner-Roush Farm, also known as Creek Bend Farm (added 1983)  
654 S. Main St., Lindsey

Sandusky County Jail and Sheriff's House (added 1997)  
622 Croghan St., Fremont

Soldiers Memorial Parkway and McKinley Memorial Parkway (added 1991)  
Fremont, Ohio

St. Paul's Episcopal Church (added 1977 - Building)  
200 N. Park Ave., Fremont

### Strategies and Recommendations

#### Develop a Historic Preservation Plan

Meets Historic Preservation Objectives: 2

A historic preservation plan is a statement of the community's goals for its historic properties and the actions it will take to reach those goals. It is most effective when it is a component of a community's master plan and is coordinated with other policies for housing, economic development, transportation, et cetera. Communities that do not have a master plan, or that will not be revising it soon, can create a separate historic preservation plan to serve in the interim.

The plan at its best, however, is more than a written document. It should be a continuous process that brings together citizens and interest groups and helps them identify where their diverse goals complement historic preservation and how they can work together to preserve their local heritage.

Historic preservation planning should include these factors:

- ✓ The history and inventory of historic properties of the community. In order to plan for historic properties, a community must identify them first. A thorough and up-to-date survey of historic properties is critical. Keep in mind that your community's history is found not only in architectural centerpieces, but also in middle and working class neighborhoods, modest commercial rows, industrial structures, cemeteries, farm buildings, bridges, landscapes, and in the often-hidden archaeological value of unassuming structures and vacant land.
- ✓ A map and address list should be developed of known historic properties from surveys, local historic districts and landmarks, and the National Register of Historic Places.
- ✓ Rehabilitation Tax Credit computerized log: This log lists all the development projects in Ohio that successfully used the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit. It contains property names, addresses, developers, owners, project costs, and the use of the property before and after rehabilitation—all of which can be searched by county, region, or the entire state and used for marketing local historic properties.
- ✓ Agriculture Chronology and Bibliography: This is the first in a series of references the Ohio Historic Preservation Office is beginning to develop about broad themes in Ohio's history. The chronology lists pertinent events, people, legislation, technologies, and other factors that contributed to Ohio's agricultural development; the annotated bibliography provides sources for further

research. They are meant to assist local governments, state agencies, Ohio Historic Preservation Office staff, and others in evaluating the historic significance of properties.

- ✓ Work with your local government to plan carefully for the future of the places, which are evidence of your community's heritage. If you have a historic preservation plan, make sure it is up-to-date and is being implemented.
- ✓ Establish local historic preservation legislation. Protect your historic resources through an ordinance or resolution, or make sure the existing legislation is adequate and that the properties that need protection have indeed been designated as historic.
- ✓ Examine local zoning. Make sure the zoning for historic areas encourages their survival, rather than their replacement with parking lots or commercial strips.
- ✓ Document your community's historic properties. Work with your local historical society, preservation organization, or other citizen groups to conduct surveys or develop National Register nominations.
- ✓ Encourage your local government to participate in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. As a Certified Local Government, your community will be eligible to apply for federal matching grant funds for planning and other preservation activities.

### **Utilize Historic Preservation Tools and Incentives**

Meets Historic Preservation Objectives: 1

#### **Certified Local Government Program**

Jointly administered by National Park Service in partnership with the State of Ohio Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the CLG Program is a model and cost-effective local, State, and federal partnership that promote historic preservation at the grassroots level across the nation. Working closely with such national organizations as the National Association of Preservation Commissions, the CLG program seeks to:

- 1) Develop and maintain local historic preservation programs that will influence the zoning and permitting decisions critical to preserving historic properties; and,
- 2) Ensure the broadest possible participation of local governments in the national historic preservation program while maintaining preservation standards established by the Secretary of the Interior. By being a listed as a "Certified Local Government", communities in Sandusky County can qualify for dollars to perform a wide array of historic preservation

efforts. Since 1985, more than \$40 million in HPF grants has been allocated to the Certified Local Government program; and 1,228 local governments currently participate in the program nationwide.

### **Historic Preservation Easements**

A preservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that protects a significant historic, archaeological, or cultural resource. An easement provides assurance to the owner of a historic or cultural property that the property's intrinsic values will be preserved through subsequent ownership. In addition, the owner may obtain substantial tax benefits. An entire historic structure or just the facade or interior may qualify. Historic preservation easements also are used to protect a historic landscape, battlefield, traditional cultural place, or archaeological site. Under the terms of an easement, a property owner grants a portion of, or interest in, her property rights to an organization whose mission includes historic preservation. Once recorded, an easement becomes part of the property's chain of title and is tied to the property in perpetuity, thus binding not only the owner who grants the easement but all future owners as well.

According to the IRS an easement must either preserve a certified historic structure or a historically important land area to qualify for federal income and estate tax deductions. The IRS definition of a certified historic structure includes any building, structure, or land area that is:

- ✓ Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or
- ✓ Located in a registered historic district and certified by the U.S. Department of the Interior as being historically significant to the district.

### **Historic Preservation Tax Incentives**

The Federal historic preservation tax incentives program (the 20% credit) is jointly administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Department of the Treasury. The 20% rehabilitation tax credit applies to any project that the Secretary of the Interior designates a certified rehabilitation of a certified historic structure. The 20% credit is available for properties rehabilitated for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but it is not available for properties used exclusively as the owner's private residence.

To be eligible for the 20% rehabilitation tax credit, a project must also meet the following basic tax requirements of the Internal Revenue Code:

- ✓ The building must be depreciable. That is, it must be used in a trade or business or held for the production of income. It may be used for offices, for commercial, industrial or agricultural enterprises, or for rental housing. It may not serve exclusively as the owner's private residence.
- ✓ The rehabilitation must be substantial. That is, during a 24-month period selected by the taxpayer, rehabilitation expenditures must exceed the greater of \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the building and its structural components. The adjusted basis is generally the purchase price, minus the cost of land, plus improvements already made, minus depreciation already taken. Once the substantial rehabilitation test is met, all qualified expenditures, including those incurred outside of the measuring period, qualify for the credit.
- ✓ If the rehabilitation is completed in phases, the same rules apply, except that a 60-month measuring period applies. This phase rule is available only if: (1) there is a set of architectural plans and specifications for all phases of the rehabilitation, and (2) it can reasonably be expected that all phases of the rehabilitation will be completed.
- ✓ The property must be placed in service and returned to use. The rehabilitation tax credit is generally allowed in the taxable year the rehabilitated property is placed in service.
- ✓ The building must be a certified historic structure when it is placed in service; if it is not yet a certified historic structure at that time, the owner must have requested on or before the date that the building was placed in service a determination from the NPS that the building is a certified historic structure, and have a reasonable expectation that the determination will be granted.
- ✓ Qualified rehabilitation expenditures include costs associated with the work undertaken on the historic building, as well as architectural and engineering fees, site survey fees, legal expenses, development fees, and other construction-related costs, if such costs are added to the basis of the property and are determined to be reasonable and related to the services performed. They do not include costs of acquiring or furnishing the building, new additions that expand the existing building, new building construction, or parking lots, sidewalks, landscaping, or other facilities related to the building.

## Parks, Recreation and Open Space

### Summary

Recreation and the availability of public facilities and parks has become an increasing need, as residents have demanded more healthy leisure choices. Such amenities and biking and walking/jogging trails have found their way to more park planners' drawing tables as a more fitness-conscious population makes its wants known.



The greatest work being performed in the area of open space and green space preservation is being carried out by the Sandusky County Park District, which has been charged with providing outdoor recreational opportunities countywide. The activities, facilities, and programming of the Park District are designed to complement and not compete with recreation programs being carried out in virtually every municipality within the county, and by at least one township (Ballville). With cities and villages providing neighborhood playgrounds and a wide variety and depth of team sports, much of the focus of the Park District has been placed increasingly upon passive recreation in natural areas. This follows a national trend toward public demand for eco-tourism and access to natural areas.

### Planning Issues

Recreation facility and site planning involves the same criteria as planning for virtually any other use, although some criteria, such as sensitivity to the maintenance of the natural condition of a site, may be more prominent. When planning for parks/recreation facilities and open space the following issues should be considered:

1. Compatibility of the site with adjacent and nearby uses. How will the public use of the site as a park or recreation facility impact local roadways and adjacent land uses, especially residences? How will the adjacent uses adversely impact users' enjoyment of the facility?
2. The "fit" of the specific site and facility within overall park district planning. Is the site planned within a larger "greenway" or belt? Does it complement other activities or offer easy accessibility to a geographic area that was denied similar facilities previously?
3. Long-term maintenance. Has the Park District factored site and facility maintenance and operation into its overall budget from now on?
4. Is the site or facility accessible via safe and adequate roadways, and is safe parking of suitable capacity available to meet expected demands?
5. Is the use of the land as parkland or open space precluding a more beneficial or significantly more productive use of the land? Does the property contain special or distinctive natural features that present it as a unique opportunity for preservation as a park or open space?

## Goals and Objectives

Parks and Recreation Goal: To promote the health and well-being of residents through the encouraged use of active and passive recreational outlets, by:

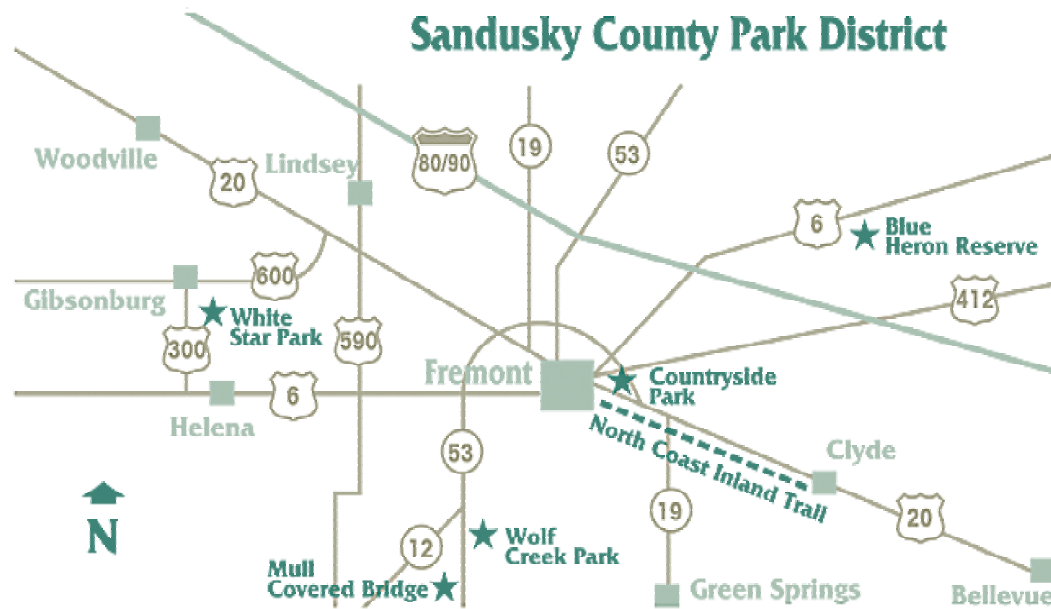
Objectives:

1. Provide a well-balanced array of recreational activities and outlets.
2. Pursue the feasibility of seeking additional revenues for the Sandusky County Park District to expand operations and its recreational inventory.

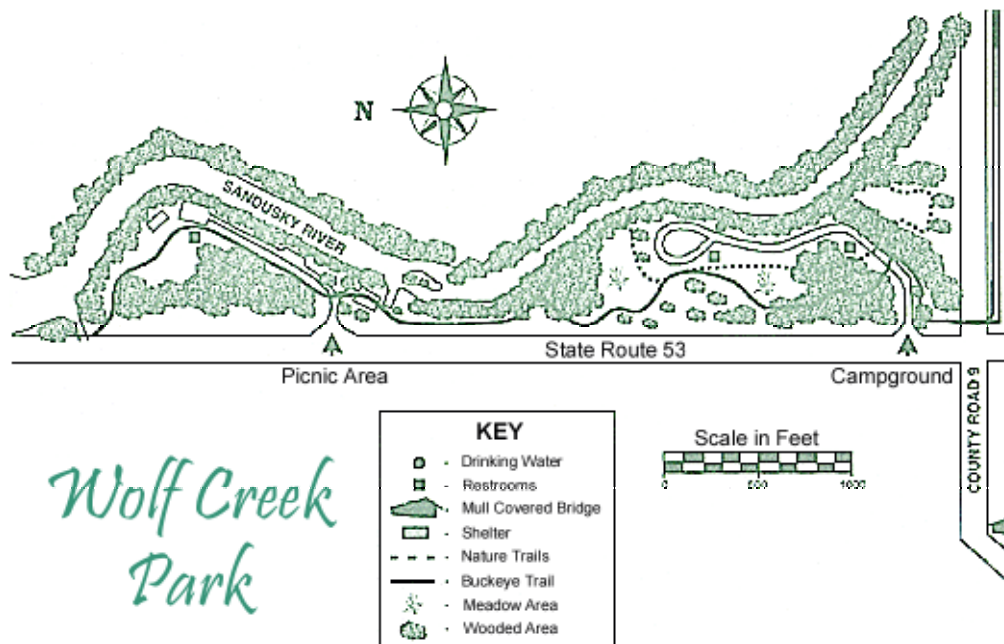
## Existing Conditions and Trends

Countywide parks and recreational facilities are promoted and supervised by the Sandusky County Park District. Governed by a Board of Park Commissioners, the Sandusky County Park District operates with an annual budget of approximately \$722,000. The largest revenue source is a ten-year, ½ mil levy that was passed in 1998. This levy provided \$458,000 in 2001. Other sources include user fees (such as fees for scuba diving in White Star Park) and grant funds. Major facilities owned and operated by the District include:

- ✓ White Star Park, ½ mile south of Gibsonburg on State Route 300, offering picnicking, hiking, swimming, fishing, camping, and scuba diving, making use of the local quarries and surface water. Facilities include a quarry with a beach and swim area, fishing platforms, boat ramp, scuba platform and access area, a nature preserve area and hiking trails.
- ✓ Wolf Creek Park, located 5 miles south of Fremont on State Route 53, and offering picnicking, camping, hiking, and access to the Sandusky River. Canoeing is also offered nearby for those interested in exploring this state scenic river.
- ✓ Blue Heron reserve, a 160-acre wildlife reserve located north of Clyde on County Road 260 at U.S. Route 6, offering a view of woods reminiscent of the Great Black Swamp, and a rare fen area. The area can be viewed from a unique recycled plastic boardwalk.



- ✓ A portion of the North Coast Inland Trail for bicycling, currently including a paved hike/bike path connecting downtown Clyde to the east side of Fremont. Users of the trail may be walking, running, bicycling, using wheelchairs, in-line skating, or cross country skiing. Plans call for the extension of this trail through the county from Bellevue to the county line near Elmore, as well as connecting north-south trails to other communities.



- ✓ The Park District’s main office is located in the Countryside Place county office complex, and in addition to a variety of resources housed in the main office; the grounds include picnicking, gardens, and a paved walking path.

- ✓ The Mull Covered Bridge, one of northwest Ohio’s few remaining covered bridges, is maintained by the Park District and is located on County Road 9, west of Wolf Creek Park.

- ✓ In October 2002, the Sandusky County Park District acquired the 187-acre Creek Bend Farm located on State Route 590, Lindsey, Ohio. The purchase of the property was made possible by a generous donation from the Robert and Francis Roush Family and a grant from the Ohio Public Works Commission’s Clean Ohio Conservation Fund. The Creek Bend Farm property, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, will be remade into a 1930’s-1950’s era farm park with the existing agricultural fields, Muddy Creek corridor, and numerous farm buildings (not including the house and garage). Creek Bend Farm will celebrate the rich agricultural history of the area, providing an ideal location for programming. Public tours of the property will be available in the spring of 2003 to any interested clubs or organizations.

In addition to these *facilities*, which are maintained by Park District staff, the District offers area residents and groups a variety of *programs* to better their understanding of the bounty of resources available within the county. Nature walks include night hikes, a river walk, and general nature walks. A variety of nature talks are available as well. Reference materials, including books, tapes, videos, compact discs, and slide shows, are also available for loan for educational purposes. The district provides some 300 such programs annually.

### New Directions for the Park District

The Park District is responding to new demands and new priorities. A major new thrust is in the area of wetland and stream restoration. An ultimate goal is to be able to control targeted corridors, limit development, and preserve their natural features.

Three areas of focus include flood plain areas along Muddy Creek in Washington Township from the Shade Road area north through Lindsey and Rice Township to the Sandusky Bay, the Sandusky River flowing through Ballville Township, Fremont, and Sandusky, Rice, and Riley Townships to the Bay, and the Green Creek, flowing from Green Creek Township just east of Fremont, through Riley Township into the Sandusky Bay. A fourth corridor also receiving attention in Sandusky County, within the context of a larger planning area being considered by the Toledo metropolitan Area Council of Governments, is the Portage River corridor, which extends through the township and village of Woodville at the county's western edge.

Because of the immensity of any plan to restore or preserve riparian lands along these three to four major corridors, the Park District is adopting the strategy of taking advantage of opportunities to preserve or protect resources as they come about. One highly significant example is the preservation of the Peninsula Farms land along the Sandusky River shoreline north of Fremont, preserved in perpetuity as private land, through the use of conservation easements. The District is prepared to use any of the several available tools for land preservation when available and feasible, including conservation easements, acquisition easements, and purchase of development rights.

In some cases, control of these riparian corridors could lead to greenway development. For example, District officials envision a potential for a greenway park extending north from Fremont along the Sandusky River to the county line.

In addition to river corridors, preservation of natural features extends to large tracts of land at the Blue Heron Reserve (some 160 acres) and White Star Park, where 200 acres are held under a conservation easement. The Park District is involved in an innovative project in this area, involving the active development of wetlands, as required of developers who must "replace" wetlands that are forsaken in development projects, and the use of these wetlands to filter and drain runoff in a drainage area on the south side of the Village of Gibsonburg. A 68-acre location in White Star Park has been selected for this purpose. The Park District is working in conjunction with three other county districts (Erie, Lorain, and Medina) to form wetland mitigation banks. In early 2001, they received approval for this program from six government agencies, paving the way for the establishment of an initial six wetland sites for restoration, including White Star Park and Blue Heron Reserve in Sandusky County. Also, in 2003, the park district submitted a Clean Ohio grant application to expand White Star park across CR 66 to include another 100 acres to be used for habitat restoration and passive recreation.

Continued development of bikeways is viewed as a high priority over the next few years. Bikeway planning began in the late 1980's, with the development of the Sandusky County Bicycle Plan. As the North Coast Inland Trail's parts and pieces continue to come together to form one uninterrupted trail through northern Ohio and connected to a continental trail, the vision of a trail within the county from Bellevue to Elmore will be realized. The Clyde-to-Fremont segment is completed and in use. An additional two miles of trail has been

funded within the City of Fremont, extending the trail through the east side of the city, crossing the Sandusky River, and connecting to the central business district. Planning is required to extend the trail to the western edge of Fremont, to allow it to eventually utilize the abandoned railroad corridor extending to and beyond the Calpine site to the northwest, and further in that direction, to Elmore. The next phase will see the trail cross under the U.S. 20 bypass north of Fremont, and extend to downtown Lindsey and that village's community park. Because of the use of this corridor for construction of the Calpine facility, this bicycle trail will not be completed until 2004 or later.

Property is also under District ownership east of Clyde, to County Road 177 at Bellevue's western edge. The District is working to extend this corridor along the rail corridor into the city, to the Bellevue Railroad Museum.

### **Strategies and Recommendations**

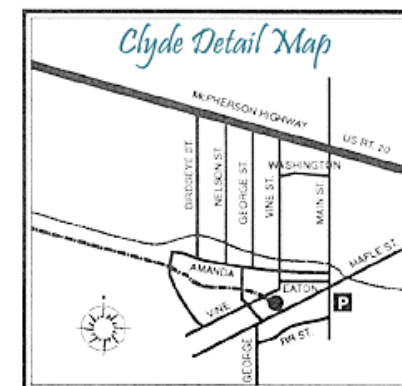
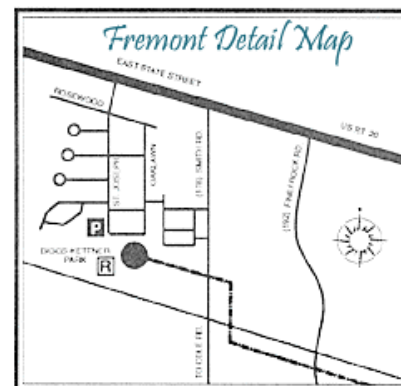
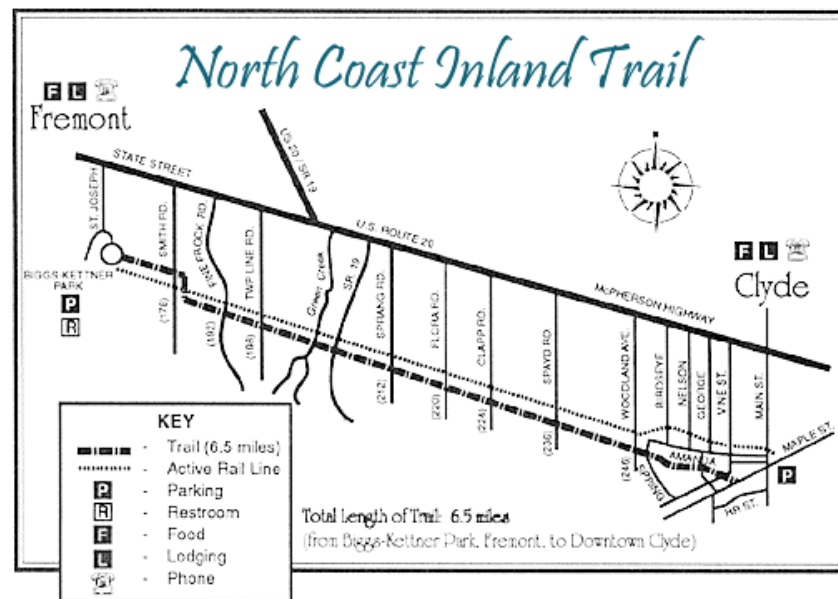
The Sandusky County Park District will continue to work to fulfill its two-pronged mission: providing accessible passive, outdoor recreational and educational opportunities that take advantage of the natural character, features, and amenities available throughout the county; and to preserve, protect, and make the public aware of those areas within the county that, because of their environmentally sensitive character, plant and animal life, geology, or other factors, should be preserved in their natural state. These sites include 14 acres at the Blue Heron preserve and almost 200 acres at White Star Park, which are currently held with conservation easements.

*Recommendations for further development include the following:* Sandusky County's bicycle trail construction process is well underway. The completion of the trail system, including "rails to trails" corridors, should be of highest priority, such that the trail extends throughout the county and links, where planned, with trails in adjacent counties, as a part of the North Coast Inland Trail.

An important but secondary priority should be the strategic linkage of the trail system to the major population centers, including:

- ✓ Completion of the system within the City of Fremont.
- ✓ Linking the Fremont portion of the trail to Ballville Township.
- ✓ Promoting access to the trail in Clyde and Bellevue.
- ✓ Where possible, tying bicycle paths to scenic corridors and rivers.
- ✓ When feasible, pursue other elements described in the Park District's "Sandusky County Bicycle Plan", including use of rail corridors from Green Springs through Clyde to Castalia, from Fremont north to Castalia, and south Fremont to Burgoon.

- ✓ Continued concentration on the use of conservation easements and partnership with conservation land trusts to hold land in perpetuity as open space. The Park District has initiated some activities in this realm, including the achievement of a conservation easement for Peninsula Farms along the Sandusky River north of Fremont.
- ✓ Continued focus on the eventual development of “greenway parks”, such as the development of a greenway, extending north from Fremont along the Sandusky River, linking with Blue Heron Reserve.
- ✓ Further development of the Gibsonburg area as a recreational destination. White Star Park is already sought out as a regional venue for SCUBA diving, and the park contains the county’s only swimming beach. The emerging wetlands mitigation area provides an educational opportunity to serve as a “laboratory”. A private camping and water sports area exists within the village. Further, the quarries near the village offer possible potential as additional recreational facilities, with passive boating and fishing, the potential for hiking trails and sidewalks from the village. The net effect could be a sizeable water-related destination area that could boost local businesses and help support a more active central business district and tourism/recreation-oriented business (such as bed and breakfasts, restaurants, swim and SCUBA related retail) in Gibsonburg.
- ✓ Continue to coordinate park and recreation facility and programming planning with the several municipal and township recreation programs within the county, to ensure that programming is complementary and not redundant. It is apparent that the current system promotes a “continuum” of services from active



participant sports, community centers with planned activities, and neighborhood pocket parks in cities and villages, to the “wide open spaces” and educational naturalist programs of the park district. By continuing to ensure this continuum, county residents’ lives will continue to be enriched.

### **Other Community Facilities and Services**

#### **Education**

The importance of quality education is a well-recognized goal in the county. Sandusky County has many fine public and parochial schools. Vanguard Vocational School offers general education and career training. Higher education opportunities are provided by Terra Community College. The Sandusky County Educational Service Center also provides residents, teachers, and students with valuable and plentiful courses and services. The following schools and school districts are located in Sandusky County:

- ✓ Bellevue City Schools
- ✓ Clyde Green Springs Village Schools
- ✓ Fremont City Schools
- ✓ Gibsonburg Village Schools
- ✓ Lakota Local Schools
- ✓ Margaretta Local Schools
- ✓ Woodmore Local Schools
- ✓ Vanguard Joint Vocational Schools

#### **Health and Human Safety**

##### Health Facilities

Sandusky County is home to three hospitals with regional importance. Memorial Hospital in Fremont has 132 beds, and Bellevue Hospital has 70. Some areas of specialization at Memorial are cardiology, neurology, a pediatric clinic, and acute care. Bellevue’s hospital includes acute care and alcohol and drug rehab. A major addition of a new surgical unit is under construction at the Fremont Hospital, and plans for growth at the Bellevue Hospital include acquisition of property on the western edge of the community. In addition, St. Francis Hospital in Green Springs specializes in rehabilitation, with 186 hospital beds, 110 nursing home beds, and 36 rehab beds. Life flight services are also provided to county residents.

##### Police and Fire Protection

Sandusky County is policed by a county sheriff, assisted by a deputized staff. Each municipality within the county maintains its own police force. Fremont and Bellevue have full-time staffs of professional fire fighters. Volunteer departments in the rest of the county are trained through state-sponsored fire-fighting clinics. Mutual assistance agreements between departments provide additional support if the need arises.

### Sandusky County Emergency Management Agency

The Sandusky County Emergency Management Agency, its cooperating agencies and dedicated volunteers are committed to coordinating and providing professional mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery services that save lives, reduce injuries, economic loss and enhance recovery from disasters for the citizens of Sandusky County.



*Sandusky County  
Emergency Management  
Agency*

### Sandusky County Emergency Response Team (HAZMAT)

This team made up of twenty-two volunteer men and women was formed in 1995 in cooperation with Chemical Waste Management (Vickery Environmental, Inc.) located in Townsend Township. This team aids and assists area law enforcement, fire departments and emergency medical services in the event of hazardous materials incidents, biological events, weapons of mass destruction, etc. This highly trained and equipped unit is centrally located on the northeast side of Fremont and is dispatched by the communications division of the Sandusky County Sheriff's Department.

### **Library Services**

The Birchard Public Library of Sandusky County is a free public library, which seeks to meet the information, education, and recreation needs of the residents of Sandusky County, to provide easy and equal access to these materials in their variety of forms, and to develop broad community awareness of the Library and its services. These library facilities are located in Fremont, Green Springs, Gibsonburg, and Woodville. Library facilities are also located in Clyde and Bellevue. Because of the vast learning benefits of these entities, it is recommended that these services are expanded and enhanced in the future.