

Annual Report

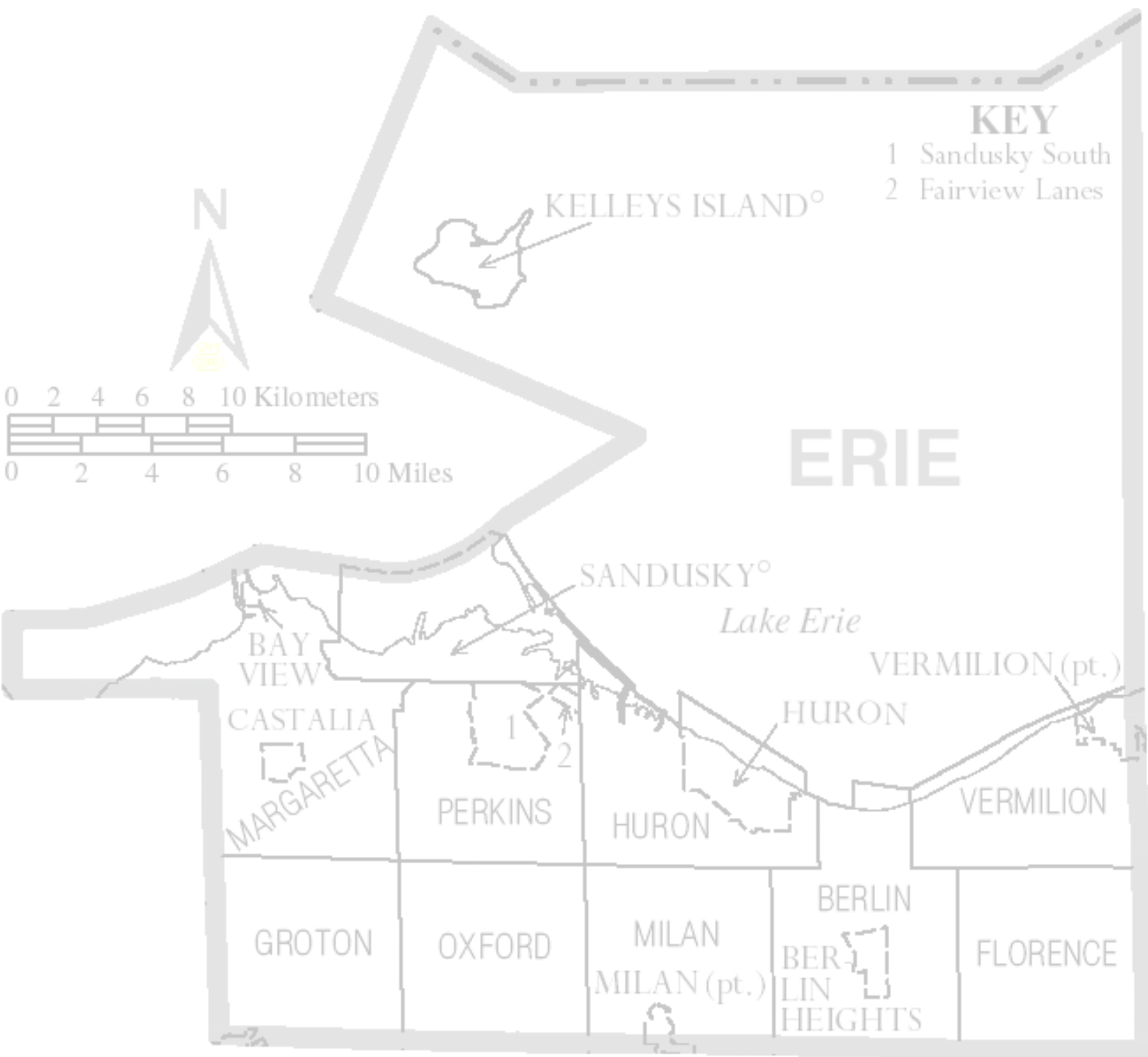
2023



Erie Regional Planning Commission

ERPC

Metropolitan Planning Organization



Annual Report

2023

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Erie County Regional Planning Commission and Metropolitan Planning Organization

Services Provided:

Planning Services

- Zoning Code/ Resolution Development and Revisions/ Updates
- Subdivision Regulations Development and Revision/ Updates
- Comprehensive Planning
- Special Planning Studies
- Planning Research
- Downtown Revitalization Activities
- Legal Opinions on Zoning and Planning Issues
- Newsletters with Planning Information
- Grant Search Assistance and Writing
- Subdivision Review for Unincorporated Areas
- Lot Split and Approval
- Re-Zoning Review for Zoning Changes

Economic Development

- Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program Administration
- Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA)
- Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Housing and Community Development Services

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Administration
- Community Housing Impact and Preservation Program (CHIP) Administration
- Fair Housing Services
- Handicapped Access Improvements to Residential Units

Mapping/GIS/Computer Services

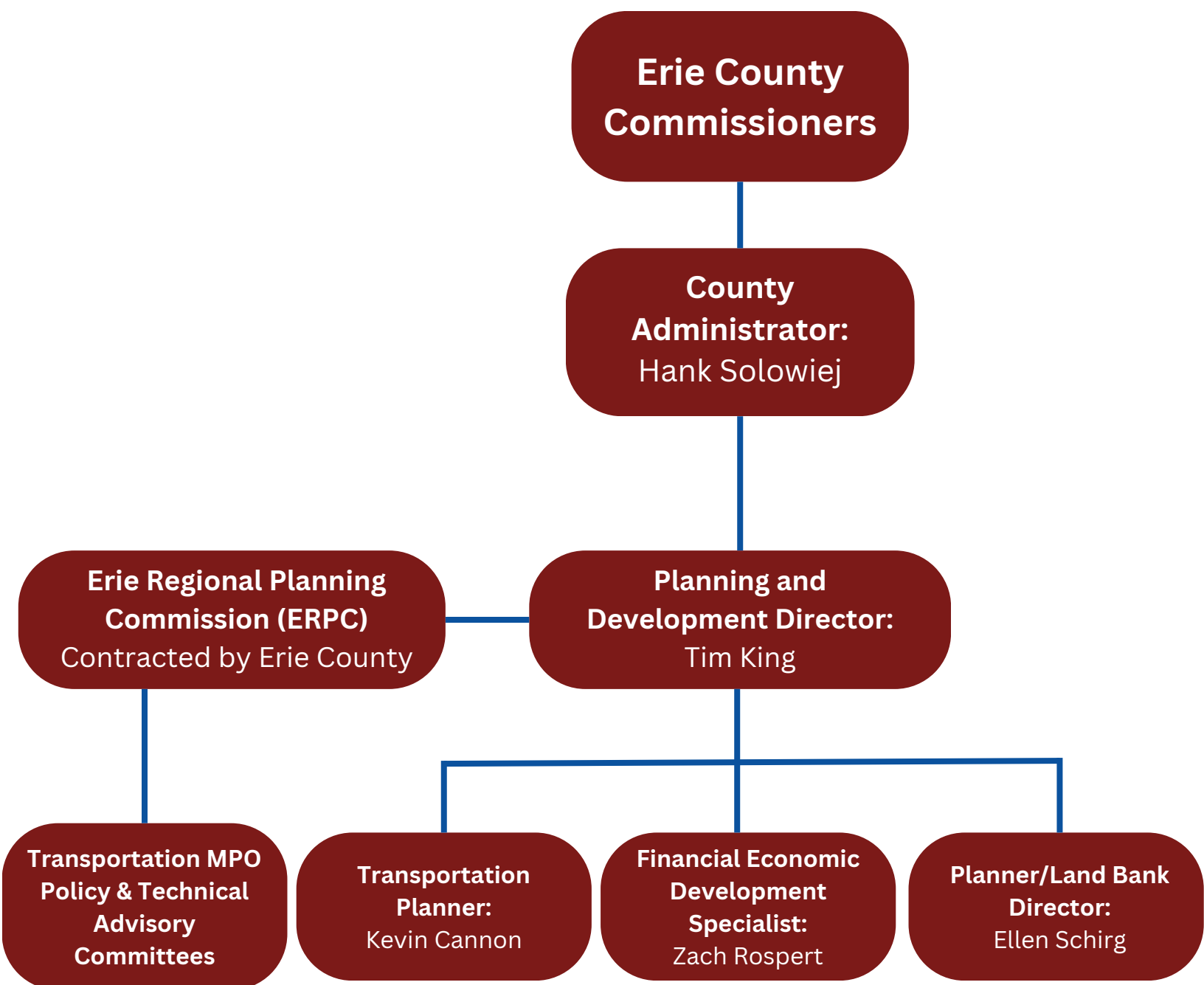
- Geographic Information System (GIS) Access
- Zoning Map Maintenance and Reproduction
- Specialized Maps for Documents or Presentations
- Assistance with Preparation of Documents or Presentations

Chair:

President:

Erie County Department of Regional Planning and Development Metropolitan Planning Organization

Flowchart of Erie County Regional Planning



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Sandusky, Ohio 44870

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2023 Community Housing Impact & Preservation (CHIP): Erie County was awarded an additional \$1.25 million in 2023 CHIP funds to continue assisting Erie County residents with rehabilitation of their homes. Beginning in 1995, the CHIP funding awards are as follows:

Amount	Year
\$500,000	1995
\$600,000	1998
\$500,000	2000
\$555,000	2002
\$555,000	2004
\$540,000	2006
\$522,000	2010
\$400,000	2013
\$575,000	2014
\$1,400,000	2017
\$1,250,000	2019
\$1,250,000	2021
<u>\$1,250,000</u>	<u>2023</u>

\$9.897 Million- Total

\$761,307.70 Average Total

The 2023 CHIP Gant partners Erie County with the Cities of Huron, Sandusky, and Vermilion. However, due to a higher demand for housing assistance in the City of Sandusky, the funding amounts breakout as follows:

Erie County	\$300,000
City of Huron	\$300,000
City of Vermilion	\$300,000
City of Sandusky	\$350,000 * Home
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$1.250 Million</u>

The CHIP Program allows for no direct costs to applicants. It should be noted, Erie County has a “Walk Away” policy that stipulates homes with costs estimates in excess of the allowed maximum are deemed walk-a-way projects and the program cannot provide assistance.

Anyone in need of home repairs who might qualify financially should contact Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP) at:

Phone: 1-800-775-9767

Website: www.glcap.org/programs/home-rehabilitation-needs/home-rehabilitation/

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Awarded grants:

Since 1992, Erie County has been the recipient of just under \$6 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Formula Allocation funding. The Formula Funds are very flexible and can be used in a variety of projects. Over the years they have been utilized to provide shelter to the homeless, open doors for those with disabilities, and to complete projects a community might not be able to fund on their own.

Notable past beneficiaries of the Erie County Formula Allocation funds include the following:

- The Volunteers of America
Crossroads Shelter
- Habitat for Humanity
- Care-A-Van
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- Kinship



Without the Allocation program, the Village of Bay View, Margareta Township and Kelly's Island, just to name a few, could not afford to undertake projects which provide ADA access to voting precincts and recreational facilities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

Erie County Revolving Loan (RLF) fund offers a loan program with favorable rates to new and existing businesses located or considering locating within the County. The program is designed to fill the gap between the owner's equity and a private lender loan. Therefore, most of the loans are made to those who have exhausted all other financing avenues. The loan cannot exceed 50% of the entire budget or cost and there is a job creation requirement affiliated with each loan. The RLF loan can be used in concert with other local, state, and federal loan programs. All monies from the County's RLF are generated by repayments from businesses that have received financial assistance on Community Development Block Grant Economic Development (CDBG ED) projects. County staff and an outside RLF Committee evaluate all requests and make recommendations regarding loan proposals. Anyone interested in the RLF loan program should contact the Regional Planning Commission at 419.627.7792.

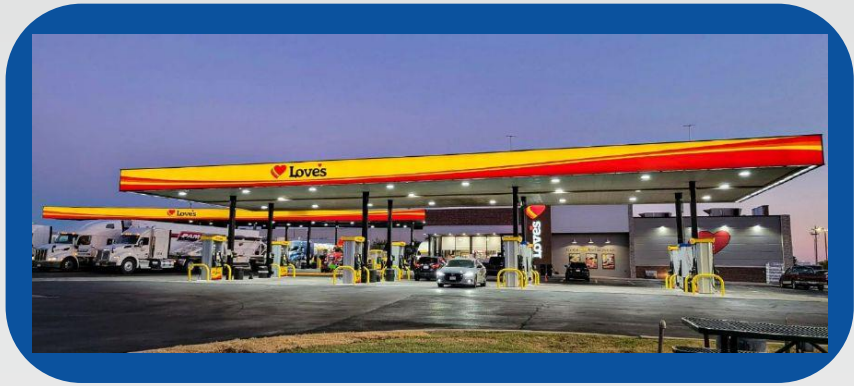
Ohio Enterprise Zone Program

The Ohio Enterprise Zone Program is another economic development tool administered by municipal and county governments that provides real and personal property tax exemptions to businesses making investments in Ohio. While all of Erie County is certified as an active Enterprise Zone, businesses must first negotiate and have any abatement approved before the project can begin. The maximum exemption level of 100% for 15 years must be approved by the local school district.



Lake Erie Arms, recipients of Enterprise Zone abatement in 2022

*Love's Travel Center
expecting construction in
2024*



Community Reinvestment Areas

Community Reinvestment Areas: The Ohio Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program is an economic development tool administered by municipal and county governments that provides real property tax exemptions to business making investments in Ohio. In order to use the CRA program, a city, village or county petitions to the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) for confirmation of a geographical area in which investment has traditionally been discouraged. Part of the petition reviewed by the ODSA is a survey performed by the respective political subdivision. Once an area is confirmed, communities may offer real property tax exemptions to tax payers that invest in the area.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is another economic development mechanism available to township, municipal or county governments to finance public infrastructure improvements and, in some circumstances, residential rehabilitation. Payments derived from the increased assessed value of any real property are directed into a separate fund (often referred to as Payments in Lieu of Tax “PILOT”) used to pay off the bonds associated with the financing of the improvements.

Regional Planning staff worked with Love’s Travel Center on using a TIF to fund a sewer extension further south down US 250 and a public roadway for their potential development in Milan Township. Approval was received from Edison Local Schools, Milan Township and the Erie County Commissioners. Construction is expected to begin in 2024.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Regional Planning worked on a grant which resulted in receiving funding from the US Economic Development Administration (“EDA”) to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (“CEDS”). The Hamman Consulting Group was hired to develop a plan for regional economic development with Erie and Huron Counties. The plan will allow for the region to document different strengths and weaknesses of our region, allowing us to plan for and maximize our economic development future. Once the plan is approved by EDA, the region will have opportunities to apply for grant funding from the Federal Government.

Erie County Land Use Reutilization Corp.

The Erie County Land Reutilization Corporation (or Land Bank) is a community improvement corporation whose purpose is to promote and facilitate the reclamation, rehabilitation and reutilization of vacant, abandoned, tax-foreclosed or other real property in Erie County.

By strategically acquiring properties and returning them to productive use, the Land Bank works to reduce blight, increase property values, strengthen neighborhoods, and improve the quality of life for all Erie County residents.

Local Funding

The Land bank in 2022 and 2023 had a dedicated funding sourced for the first time in its history. This is thanks to the Erie County Treasurer and the Erie County Commissioners for allocating Delinquent Tax & Assessment Collection (DTAC) funds to the Land Bank. The Erie County Commissioners in the fall of 2021, with the recommendation of the Erie County Treasurer, approved the resolution allocating 5% of the Erie County DTAC revenue back to the land bank. In 2022, the Land Bank allocated \$135,050.00 and \$168,600.00 in 2023.

Securing Outside Funding

In 2022, the land bank secured nearly \$700,000 from the state of Ohio for the purpose of demolition and revitalization activities at two properties in Erie County. The Land Bank will use this funding with the former Meier's Wine Cellar building on Campbell Street in Sandusky for redevelopment, and to completely clear the former school house on State Street in Vermilion. Both sites have end use plans in place that will better the community and will spur future development in the area.

In 2023, the Erie County Commissioners appointed the Erie County Land Bank as the lead entity for the State of Ohio's Department of Development Building Demolition and Site Reutilization and Brownfield Remediation Programs. This will be the second year that the state has funded both of these programs for the demolition and revitalization of residential, commercial, light industrial, and institutional properties throughout Ohio. The Ohio General Assembly allocated, and Governor DeWine approved \$150 million for demolition and revitalization, and \$350 million for revitalization of brownfield sites, \$175 million for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025. The program allocated \$500,000 for demolition and \$1 Million in 2024.



Years In Review:

2
0
2
2

- Sold 16 properties to private owners.
- Transferred 17 properties to community partners for the purposes of future redevelopment.
- Secured \$700,000 in State Funding for the demolition and revitalization grant.

2
0
2
3

- Sold 3 properties to private owners.
- Transferred 7 properties to community partners for the purposes of future redevelopment.
- Appointed as lead entity for the State Demolition and Brownfield Grants

In 2022 and 2023, the land bank demolished or reimbursed community partners directly for the demolition of seven blighted and abandoned structures in Sandusky, Perkins Township, Huron, Florence Township, Oxford Township, and Groton Township.

Board of Directors:

Pat Shenigo, Chairman
Mathew Old, Vice Chairman
Caleb Stidham, Ex-Officio Director
Colleen Gilson
Angela Byington
Matthew Lasko
Rob Quinn

*The Old Vermilion
Schoolhouse - Vermilion*



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MPO Overview:

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Sandusky Urbanized Area, the ERPC is the designated agency responsible for developing and maintaining a comprehensive, coordinated and continuing transportation planning process. This “3-C” process has been adopted to ensure that the region’s local transportation network continues to be developed cognizant of various land use patterns, and one in which the safe and efficient movement of goods and people is paramount. The agency’s transportation planning activities are predicated on a predetermined committee structure which includes the Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

The Policy Committee is comprised mostly of local elected officials who meet on a regular basis in order to determine transportation needs and improvement schedules. The TAC, which reports to the Policy Committee, represents a cross section of technical expertise that meets to evaluate and review policies and applications before they appear before the Policy Committee. The MPO also involves the general public into the planning processes. In order to ensure input and community involvement, the agency utilizes the services of its Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and other ad-hoc advisory committees. The MPO also receives valuable input from its Safety Review and Improvement Committee. The MPO’s responsibility to further an integrated transportation plan for the region is a difficult task which requires an informed decision making process involving a diverse cross section of representatives from the community. These committees associated with the MPO meet on a regular basis to give guidance to those projects and policies implemented through the MPO. These committees also work to ensure greater public outreach and comment as a component of future MPO projects.

Policy Committee Members:

John Orzech - City Manager, City of Sandusky
Richard Brady - Ex-Officio Mayor, Sandusky
Paul Sigsworth - Erie County Sheriff
Lawrence Hall - FHWA Rep.
Nate Vogt - ODOT Central Office Rep.
Pat Shenigo - Erie County Commissioner
Scott Ockunzzi - ODOT District 3
Aaron Klein - Engineer, City of Sandusky
Arin Blair - Planner, City of Sandusky
Gary Boyle - Perkins Township Administrator
Monty Tapp - City of Huron, Mayor
Jim Forthofer - City of Vermilion, Mayor
Jack Farschman - Erie County Engineer
James Stacey - Sandusky Transit System

Additional Committees:

Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
Citizens Advisory Committee
Freight Advisory Committee

Technical Advisory Committee Members (TAC).

Lawrence Hall - FHWA Rep
Aaron Klein - Engineer, City of Sandusky
Matt Lasko - City of Huron, City Manager
Scott Ockunzzi - ODOT District 3 Representative
Dave Foster - ERPC Chairman
John Rufo - Erie County Environmental Services
Abbey Bemis - ECEDC Executive Director
Amy Moore - Director, Erie Metro Parks Rep
Robert England - Erie County Health Department
Eric Dodrill - Erie Soil & Water Rep.
James Stacey - Sandusky Transit Administrator
Tony Valerius - Services Director, Vermilion
Nick Katsaros - Utilities Representative
Gary Boyle - Perkins Township
Jack Farschman - Erie County Engineer
*Any Affected Township for ERPC Agenda Items

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

Coordinating the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) represents one of the Erie Regional Planning Commission's (ERPC) major responsibilities as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Sandusky Urbanized Area. The TIP functions as the formal listing of the federal funded transportation improvement projects that will be implemented within Erie County during the next four years. The formal TIP listing serves as a prerequisite to expending U.S. Department of Transportation federal surface transportation funding on the transportation system improvements within the county. The four-year TIP has primarily two elements, an Annual Element, which are projects programmed for the first year, and a multi-year element, which are projects that have been identified for future years. The current MPO TIP is for State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2024-2027. Below are the ERPC MPO funded projects for 2024-2025 and those programmed in the out year of 2026.

STATE FISCAL YEAR	PROJECT SPONSOR	PROJECT	MPO FUNDING
2023	VERMILION	VERMILION RD PHASE 4A (1,890 FT FROM SOUTH CORP LINE TO SOUTH CORP LINE - 0.36 MI)	STP \$745,582
2023	SANDUSKY	E. PERKINS AVE. (MILAN TO REMINGTON)	DD \$34,275.20
2023	SANDUSKY	MONROE STREET (MEIGS TO DECATUR)	PE Env \$98,652.80
2024	SANDUSKY	E. WATER ST (FRANKLIN TO MEIGS)	STP \$753,865
2024	SANDUSKY	E. WATER ST (FRANKLIN TO MEIGS)	STP \$474,477
2025	HURON	CLEVELAND ROAD PHASE 2 (CENTER/MAIN) INTERSECTION MODIFICATIONS	STP \$500,000
2025	SANDUSKY	W. MONROE ST. (BROADWAY TO CAMP)	STP \$290,823
2025	SANDUSKY	E. PERKINS AVE. (MILAN TO REMINGTON)	STP \$361,020
2025	VERMILION	SUNNYSIDE RD PHASE 2 (800' NORTH OF N/S RR XING TO 200' NORTH OF SHADY LAKE DRIVE - 0.38 MI)	STP \$689,367
2025	VERMILION	ERI VERMILION SRTS FY 2025 (SIDEWALKS)	TA \$320,000
2026	HURON	MAIN ST. (US 6/CLEVELAND RD EAST TO BOGART RD)	STP \$360,025
2026	SANDUSKY	W. MONROE ST. (CAMP TO DECATUR)	PE \$22,000 (SFY 2025) DD \$83,231 (SFY 2025) CO \$416,156 (SFY 2026) CE \$45,777 (SFY 2026)
2026	ODOT	US 6 CONNECTIVITY CORRIDOR	STP \$500,000 (SFY 2026)
2026	ECEO	CAMPBELL ST. RESURFACING WITH SIDEWALKS	PE \$12,000 (SFY 2023) R/W \$72,000 (SFY 2024) UTILITIES \$8,000 (SFY 2025) CO \$792,000 (SFY 2026) CE \$56,000 (SFY 2026)
2026	VERMILION	SUNNYSIDE ROAD PHASE 3	CO \$936,810 (SFY 2026) CE \$93,681 (SFY 2026)
2026	Perkins Township	Perkins Avenue Sidewalks	TA & CRP \$352,662

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

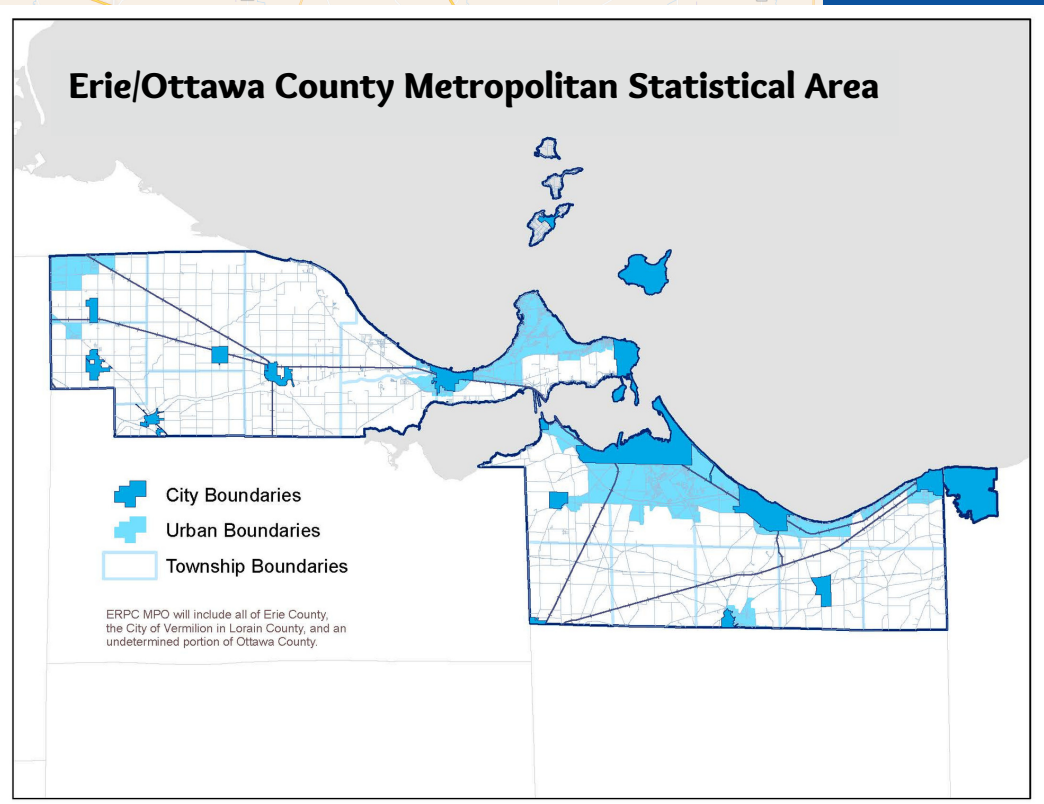
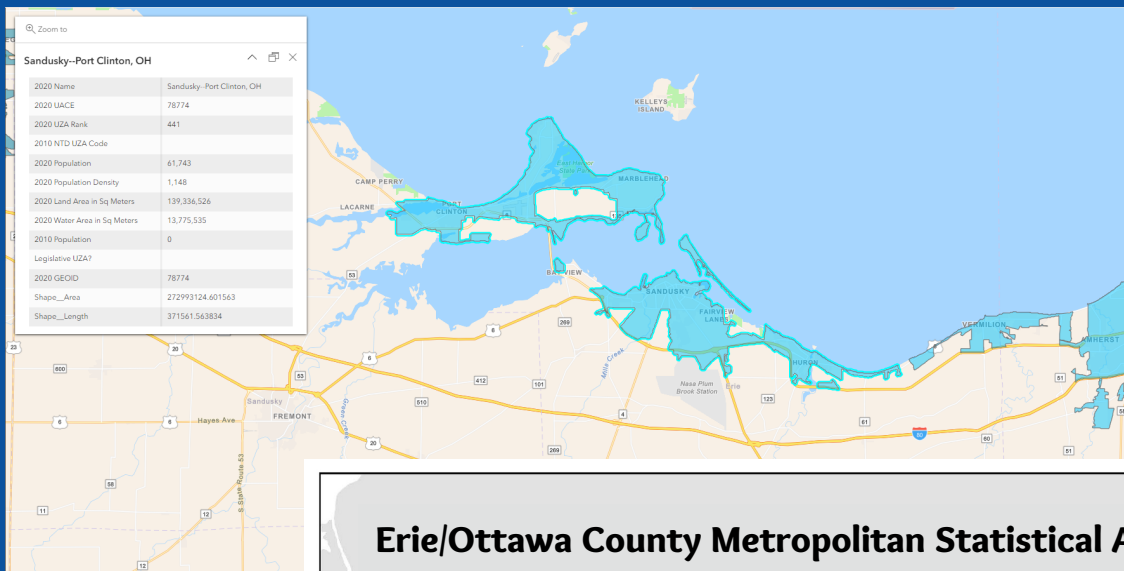
MPO CRRSAA Projects:

As part of the national Coronavirus Relief and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), funding was allocated to the ERPC MPO in the amount of \$280,241 during SFY 2022. The act appropriated nationwide a total of \$9.84 billion in Highway Infrastructure Program Funds to address urgent project/financial needs. Funding was to be used on projects including construction, operational, safety, pedestrian and bicycle projects and planning projects. All roads were eligible for the funding. The ERPC MPO's Policy Committee instructed staff to solicit for transportation alternative type projects, which include bicycle and pedestrian related projects. The committee approved three projects as shown below:

Project Sponsor	Project Title	Project Description	SFY	MPO Awarded Funding
City of Sandusky	Meadowood Subdivision Sidewalk Project	Install new sidewalks along portions of E. Oldgate, Heritage, and Fox Run in Meadowood Subdivision	2024	\$39,415
Village of Milan	S. Main Street (SR 601) Solar Radar Speed Limit Feedback Signs	Install solar radar feedback signs on S Main St (SR 601)	2023	\$120,413
City of Huron	Cleveland Road E Sidewalk Extension to Huron Green	Cleveland Road E sidewalk extension to from Gateway Blvd to Heron Dr.	2023	\$120,413

ERPC MPO Expansion:

Following the 2020 Decennial Census, the Sandusky Urbanized Area (UZA) map was redrawn to now include portions of Ottawa County. The area includes the City of Port Clinton, Catawba, Portage, and Danbury Townships, and the village of Marblehead. Staff for the ERPC MPO have begun closely working with ODOT and our partners in Ottawa County to expand the planning area into the region. The expanded Metropolitan Planning Organization will need reorganized and expanded by the submittal of the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan. In 2023, the MPO began its discussion on how far into Ottawa County the Policy Committee would cover, and began their public involvement process to ensure input from impacted local municipalities.



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

US 6 Connectivity Corridor Project Including the Sandusky Bay Pathway:

The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded the Ohio Department of Transportation a \$24.45 million federal grant through the FY 2022 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability & Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program to fund improvements along the US 6 Corridor and complete a portion of the Sandusky Bay Pathway.

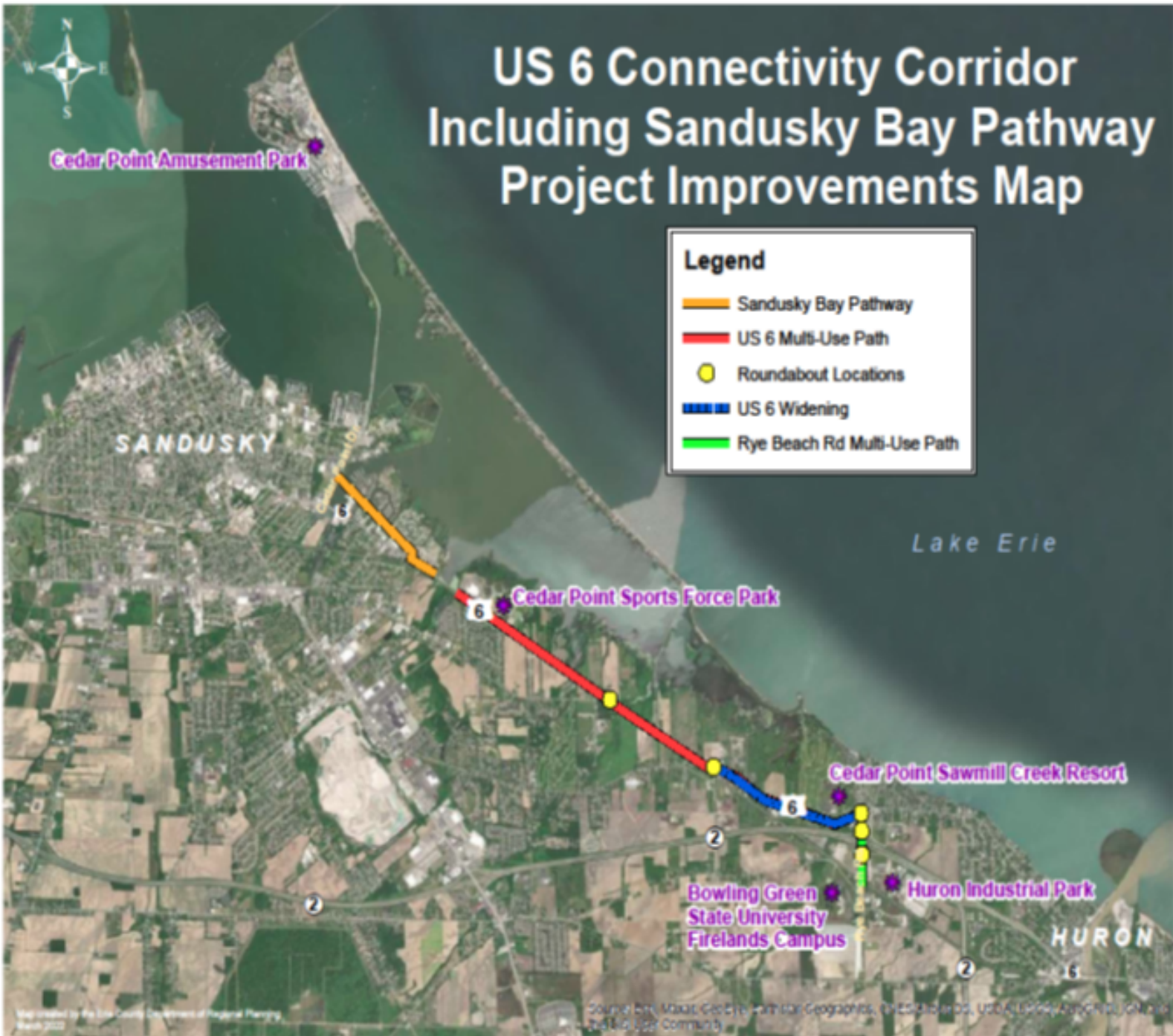
The total length of the project is approximately 6 miles long and will run from Cedar Point Drive in Sandusky to Rye Beach Road in Huron. Improvements include converting five total signalized and unsignalized intersections into roundabouts, installing a center two-way left turn lane along a portion of the corridor, completing a portion of the Sandusky Bay Pathway, and implementing a new separated multi-use path that will connect to the pathway and run along the corridor and Rye Beach Road.

The improvements are aimed at improving traffic flow, easing congestion, and enhancing safety for both motorists and bicyclists and pedestrians.



The ERPC Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff worked closely with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to complete the grant application for the RAISE grant and were successfully funded in the spring of 2022. To commemorate the occasion, a press conference with Secretary of Transportation Director Pete Buttigieg, ODOT Director Jack Marchbanks, Senator Rob Portman, US House Representative Marcy Kaptur, ODOT D3 Bob Weaver and Erie County Commissioner Pat Shenigo and area stakeholders attended to celebrate the competitive grant award.

The US 6 Corridor Project Including the Sandusky Bay Pathway was just one of 166 projects that was selected by the Secretary of the Department of Transportation for RAISE funding. Additionally, the ODOT Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) awarded the project an additional \$7.5 million in the spring of 2023 to close any remaining funding gap on the project. The project's total cost is \$41 million with \$3.3 million total in local funding provided by Erie County, City of Huron, Erie County MPO, Lake Erie Shores and Islands, and Cedar Fair; project construction will begin during State Fiscal Year 2026.



The proposed US Route 6 Connectivity Corridor Project from Rye Beach Road in the east to Cedar Point Drive in the West.

COUNTY PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Beyond the aforementioned work, Erie Regional Planning Staff is dedicated to serving our community through additional committee and councils, including the following:

Ohio Association of Regional Councils

Bayfront Corridor Committee

Ohio Public Works District 5 Executive Committee

The Erie County GIS Advisory Board

Erie County Community Council

Erie Basin Resource Conservation and Development Council

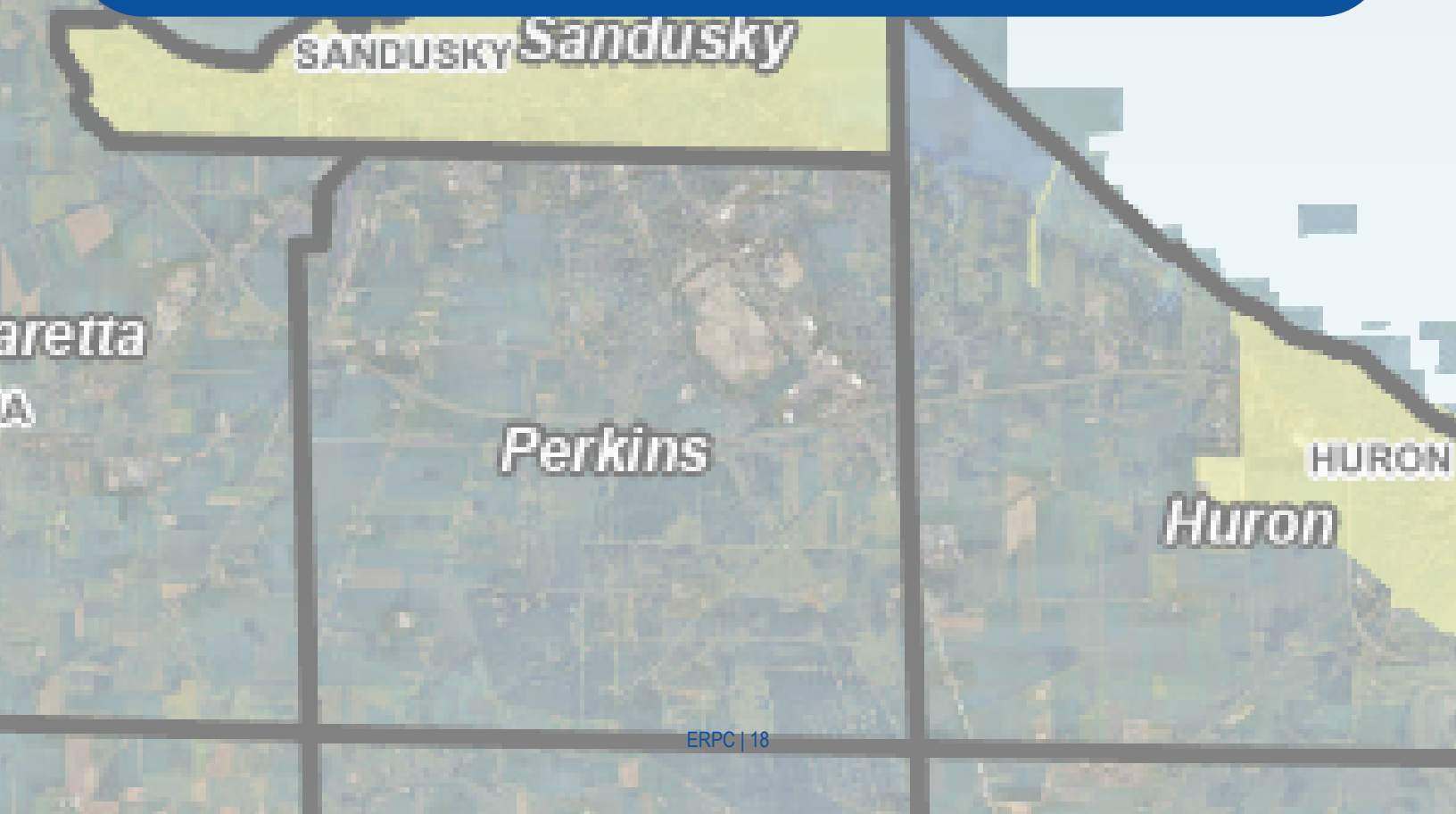
NASA Armstrong Advocacy Committee

Tax Incentive Review Council

Erie-Ottawa International Airport Board

Natural Resource Assistance Council

Erie County Solid Waste District



Contact the Erie Regional Planning Commission:

3rd Floor, County Services Center
2900 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, OH 44870
Phone: 419-627-7792

General Email: Planning@eriecounty.oh.gov
Fair Housing Email: fairhousing@eriecounty.oh.gov

Hours: 8 AM - 4:30 PM
Monday - Friday (Closed Holidays)

