Lake Erie West
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Areawide Water Quality Management Plan

2026 Update

Introduction

The Areawide Water Quality Management Plan, or 208 Plan, from Section 208 of the Clean Water Act, is a TMACOG policy document created through collaboration of staff and members. The plan outlines our region's consensus for managing wastewater and associated infrastructure as well as best management practices for urban stormwater, agricultural runoff, and septic system management. Lake Erie West collaborates with the designated management agencies (DMAs) to maintain the 48 facility planning areas (FPAs) in the 208 Plan. While conducting annual updates of facility planning areas, Lake Erie West staff continue to work toward a comprehensive update of the plan, to be completed by the end of 2027.

Purpose of the 208 Plan

- Requirement of the Clean Water Act (Section 208)
- Outline the region's long-term plan for managing wastewater and associated infrastructure
    - Identifies wastewater infrastructure necessary to meet anticipated municipal and industrial wastewater treatment needs for a 20-year period
    - Lists each management agency's priorities for wastewater capital improvements

Chapters of the 208 Plan and Summary of Substantive Changes

- Changes for 2026 Update
  Chapter 1 - AREAWIDE OVERVIEW **– No Changes**
  Chapter 2 - DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING AREA **– No Changes**
  Chapter 3 - TMACOG WATER QUALITY POLICIES **– No Changes**
  Chapter 4 - FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AND LAKE ERIE WEST POSITION STATEMENTS **– No Changes. Chapter to be archived following 208 Comprehensive Update**
  Chapter 5 - PUBLIC WASTEWATER TREATMENT **– Update- In Progress**
  Chapter 6- FACILITY PLANNING AREAS**- New Chapter, FPA Updates**
  Chapter 7 - ON-SITE SEWAGE TREATMENT **– No Changes**
  Chapter 8 - AGRICULTURE, DRAINAGE, AND HABITAT **– Update- In Progress**
  Chapter 9 - STORMWATER MANAGEMENT **– No Changes**

Chapter 10 – PUBLIC DRINKING WATER **– No Changes**

Chapter 5: Public Wastewater Treatment –Update in Progress

- This year, the Wastewater Chapter was updated. The Facility Planning Area (FPA) information has been pulled out of this chapter and made into its own separate chapter. In addition to condensing some of the information in the chapter regarding procedures and regulations regarding wastewater treatment plants and facility planning areas, there has been new information added. The chapter now summarizes the potential impacts of various types of severe weather on treatment facilities. It looks at the potential impacts of intense rainfall and the resulting flooding, drought, and severe winter weather. The implications of these types of weather are summarized here and will be expanded in a future chapter dedicated to a severe weather vulnerability analysis of wastewater treatment plants. The chapter also discusses implications of a lack of funding in underserved and rural areas for wastewater infrastructure improvements. The updated chapter will be added to the 208 Plan after results from 2026 public involvement have been integrated.

Chapter 6: Facility Planning Areas- New Chapter and FPA Updates

- This year, FPAs within Sandusky County were updated. Some of the major updates made were adding an introduction paragraph to each of the FPA updates, updating sewered and critical sewage area boundaries, updating existing text, and updating the capital improvement schedules. Changes listed below for each county are the updates received from the designated management agencies in charge of their respective facility planning areas. The tracked changes document can be found in the Lake Erie West 208 Plan webpage.

Summary of Updates for Facility Planning Areas in Sandusky County

- The Bellevue FPA updates include plans for major wastewater system improvements, and recent treatment plant upgrades and ongoing collection system rehabilitation efforts. The revisions also clarify future service plans by noting the anticipated abandonment of the Norfolk Southern package plant following connection to the municipal sewer system. Additionally, the document updates capital improvement priorities that will cost $750,000 over the next 3 years and long-term control planning over the next 2 years.
- Clarifying language was added to the Burgoon FPA document to outline that the Village of Burgoon performs wastewater collection and sends its wastewater to the Bettsville Water Reclamation Facility in Seneca County. The water treatment in this area spans two counties, and the water is treated outside of the Lake Erie West 208 planning area.
- The Clyde FPA updates included adding information about various wastewater policies including requirements for new subdivisions to connect to public sewers and wastewater discharge effluent. It is also now noted that the Village of Green Springs tied into Clyde's system in 2008. The Clyde WWTP has $4 million in capital improvements planned with work starting in 2026.
- Updates for the Fremont FPA document include an updated list of the critical sewage areas, and information about various wastewater policies including requirements for new subdivisions to connect to public sewers and wastewater discharge effluent. Fremont has $19 million capital improvement projects planned. It is currently proposed that a portion of the Fremont FPA east of and along the Sandusky River will be absorbed into the Wightman's Grove FPA.

- The Gibsonburg FPA has implemented some projects from its long-term control plan including sewer separation on Main Street between Cedar Street and Lime Street as well as in an alley between Main Street and Webster Street. Gibsonburg also sewered in the Rodriguez Street area.
- The Lindsey WWTP NPDES permit cites poor plant performance due to excessive I/I, which is an ongoing issue. A cloth media filter was installed in 2024 and has helped with high flows, but the machine has had numerous problems with operations. Hessville remains a critical sewage area that needs to be addressed. Two improvements have been made to the WWTP since 2020.
- Wightman's Grove FPA has $3.5 million in capital improvement projects planned. There are two identified critical sewage areas in Wightman's Grove (Memory Marina Area and Barkshire Hill subdivision in Riley Township). The FPA boundary of Wightman's Grove will be shifted west up to the Sandusky River to take over an area that is currently part of the Fremont FPA. The shift makes the FPA more in alignment with the sewering needs of the area.
- The Woodville FPA has been updated to reflect that all 17 CSO's discharging to the Portage River have been closed. The I/I study conducted in 2022 to determine if any illegal cross connections to sanitary sewers were present found issues, and all violations were corrected. A filtering unit at the WWTP will be installed in 2027. All 5 SSO's that were present in 2019 have since been closed. Woodville has $8.9 million in capital improvement projects planned which are set to be completed this year.

Chapter 8: Agriculture, Drainage, and Habitat – Update in Progress

- The Agriculture, Drainage, and Habitat chapter of the 208 Plan was updated. It provides a comprehensive overview of the non-point source issues impacting the watershed in the 208 planning area. The updates for this chapter include making the information about policies and programs addressing water quality concerns more succinct and, utilizing links within the text for people to look up more in-depth information about the various topics summarized in the chapter. Information such as the history of water quality issues impacting western Lake Erie is put into a graphic timeline format. The land use map was updated, and there are updates on the estimated adoption rates of agricultural best management practices for nutrients. The chapter places emphasis on nutrient issues in the western basin of Lake Erie and provides information on the emerging concerns around contaminants such as PFAS and microplastics in our waterways. The chapter also includes information about the ways in which severe weather can impact local bodies of water. The updated chapter will be added to the 208 Plan after results from 2026 public involvement have been integrated.

View the current 208 Plan at https://lakeeriewest.org/water/208plan

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