

# Lorain County Lakefront Connectivity Plan

One of Lorain County's greatest assets is its 23 miles of Lake Erie shoreline. In an effort to capitalize on this unique asset, the Lorain County Board of Commissioners have partnered with the Lorain County Metro Parks and the four lakefront communities of Avon Lake, Sheffield Lake, Lorain, and Vermilion to develop the Lorain County Lakefront Connectivity Plan.

Lorain County Board of Commissioners submitted an application for funding through the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency's (NOACA) Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative. On June 10, 2016, NOACA announced the Lorain County Board of Commissioners will be awarded \$86,000 to develop a plan to enhance transportation alternative and economic development opportunities along the lakefront.

The goals for the Lorain County Lakefront Connectivity Plan are:

- **Increase** Economic Activities along the Lakefront Communities and Lorain County
- **Improve** the health of residents, employees and visitors to the area
- **Connect** non-lakefront communities in Lorain County to the waterfront
- **Improve** the environmental impacts associated with various forms of transportation and development
- **Reduce** air pollution caused by vehicle traffic and reducing water pollution in Lake Erie caused by storm water runoff

After receiving proposals and interviewing four companies, Environmental Design Group (EDG) was contracted to develop the plan and have held several meetings to start the planning process. EDG has created several waterfront connectivity plans that have received additional funding and implementation.

Led by Commissioner Matt Lundy, and supported by Commissioners Lori Kokoski and Ted Kalo, the partners have been working collaboratively on this project. In addition, many organizations have offered support for this county-wide effort: Congresswoman Kaptur's Office, Lorain Port Authority, Lorain County Port Authority, Charleston Village, the Lorain County General Health District, and Visit Lorain County. Other organizations will be assisting during the planning process including the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce, Lorain County Metro Housing, the Avon Lake Recreation Department and Joan Perch representing the Arts.

The next two meetings have been scheduled and are open to the public. During the Vermilion Gardeners Fair on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00, noon, the public is invited to stop by the Lakefront Connectivity booth to learn about the planning project and to offer ideas on the types projects and locations to improve connectivity along the lakefront. The study area includes the Cities of Vermillion, Lorain, Sheffield Lake and Avon Lake along the Route 6 corridor. In addition to east/west connectivity, north/south connections will also be studied. Economic development opportunities are being looked at in detail for the study area in the next phase of this project.

The public is also invited to attend a meeting at the Sheffield Lake Community Center on Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, from 6- 7:30 p.m. If you are interested in participating in the effort to improve lakefront connectivity, please plan to attend one of the two public meetings.

EDG will take the public comments received during these two meetings and start to formulate ideas on what could be done to improve connectivity on the lakefront. The public will have an opportunity to attend an additional two meetings in a month to learn about the ideas and to provide additional input. An announcement about these public meetings will be made at a later date.