



Revitalizing and Reconnecting Lorain: Creating a Bridge to Transformation

**Lorain Harbor Area-Wide Planning Report
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1. Introduction

Located in Ohio's industrial heartland, the City of Lorain is on the verge of transformation. With an ideal waterfront location and a dedicated citizenry, Lorain stands ready to create a bridge between its historic industrial past and a new revitalized future. The Lorain Harbor Area-Wide Planning project provides guidance to reinvigorate Lorain's historic downtown core and waterfront.

Area-Wide Planning Program

In 2017, the County of Lorain was awarded a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Area-Wide Planning (AWP) Grant. The purpose of these grants is to help cities and communities take a holistic approach to the challenges associated with multiple brownfield sites within a defined area.

Project Study Area

The Lorain AWP study area consists of properties located along Lake Erie in the central lakefront area of Lorain and along the Black River from its mouth at Lake Erie. The study area includes the deep-water portion of the Black River, accessible to Lake Erie and the Great Lake shipping channels.

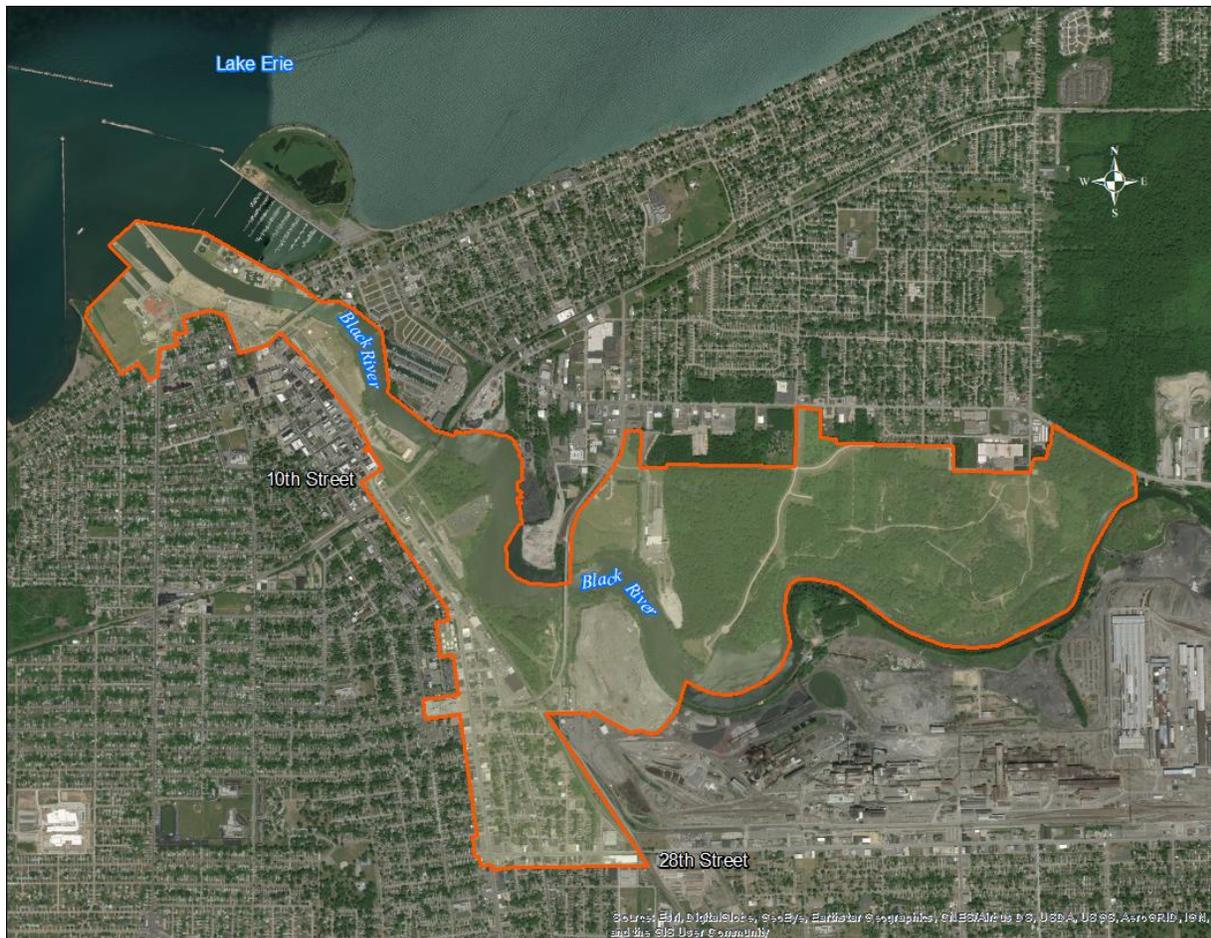


Figure 1: Lorain Harbor AWP Study Area

The study area is located approximately 30 miles from Cleveland to the east and 90 miles from Toledo to the west. It encompasses approximately 1,000 acres, including approximately 620 acres of land owned by the City of Lorain or the Lorain Port Authority.

Environmental Setting

A key environmental consideration in Lorain is the Black River. The Black River was formerly the only river system in Ohio where the entire watershed was designated by the USEPA as an Area of Concern or AOC (a designation from the USEPA as being one of the worst waters in the Great Lakes Basin). As a result, the Black River Remedial Action Plan committee, a unique community-based public/private initiative, was formed and adopted the motto, "Our River, Our Responsibility." Based on guidance from the USEPA, the name was changed to the Black River AOC Advisory Committee in 2014. Since this time, a significant amount of work has been put into the restoration of the river.

The Black River AOC Advisory Committee, in concert with Lorain County, the City of Lorain, and the LoCo 'Yaks (the Lorain County Kayak and Paddlesports Group) held the first annual Black River Summit at the Lorain Palace Theater on March 29th. The Black River Summit was a celebration and informational meeting on the progress that the Black River has made in the past 20 years.

In the early 1980s, the Black River was known as the River of Fish Tumors. Children were told not to play in the water and no one used the river for recreation. To date, things have changed greatly. The river is now one of Lorain's greatest assets. It is home to countless recreational and boating opportunities, including kayaking, fishing, and bird watching. In the past 10 years, approximately 20 million dollars have been spent cleaning up the river. It is expected that the Black River will move from being an Area of Concern to a River in Recovery.

Project Team

This project was headed by Lorain County, under a cooperative agreement with USEPA. USEPA Region 5 provided oversight on the project. The technical assistance team was led by Vita Nuova LLC (www.vitanuova.net), a national redevelopment consulting firm focused on economically-distressed areas throughout the country.

Project Description

The Lorain Harbor Area-Wide Planning Project focused on the historic waterfront and downtown core of Lorain, OH. The study area has been negatively impacted by the past downturn in the domestic steel production industry and has experienced disinvestment, poverty, and abandonment. To address these factors, the project concentrated on evaluating market conditions, potential catalytic sites, and managing a formal Expression of Interest process to generate development interest in key catalytic sites. This process capitalized on extensive grassroots, community-led initiatives and developed concrete steps to realize the area's true potential as a mixed-use and sustainable waterfront community.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

The project team used stakeholder engagement to understand the physical, social, economic, and environmental context of the City of Lorain. It was a two-way process to gather information and enhance decision-making. Lorain has been heavily planned in recent years, with multiple planning processes and studies conducted over the past 10+ years. The AWP process was designed to strengthen community connectiveness by encouraging residents to get involved in the process without causing greater planning fatigue. Stakeholder involvement was crucial to creating a knowledge bridge between the project team and the community. To ensure that the community was heard, the project team worked directly with a Steering Committee on a regular basis. As a complement to the Steering Committee, the project team met frequently with a range of community members, groups, and organizations throughout the project process.

Steering Committee

The project Steering Committee was chosen to bring a unique perspective to the process, as well as represent key players in the revitalization of Lorain. Steering Committee members included the following:

- Lorain Growth Corporation: Jim Long, President and Board Chairman
- Lorain County General Health District: David Covell, Health Commissioner
- Lorain County Community Development: Don Romancak
- Lorain County Community Development: Megan Wainwright
- City of Lorain—Mayor’s Office: Louise Kilbane
- Charleston Village Society: Loraine Ritchey, Co-Chair
- City of Lorain Port Authority: Tom Brown, Executive Director
- City of Lorain Port Authority: Tiffany McClelland
- USEPA: Kirstin Safakas, Community Brownfields Planner
- Lorain County Chamber of Commerce: Anthony Gallo, President

Community Outreach

Lorain has strong citizenry who have been working on a variety of grassroots efforts to improve their community for decades. This includes numerous distinct groups and organizations (e.g., non-profits, historical societies, civic groups, etc.). This dynamic, but fragmented nature required the project team to craft an outreach strategy that included both formal and informal engagement to reach all parties, including those that would not have otherwise been involved.

As mentioned above, the extensive community planning work completed over the previous years created meeting fatigue among Lorain’s residents. Therefore, the project team made the decision to meet with already existing groups and organizations to gather information and receive feedback, mostly during their already scheduled meetings and events. By interacting with the organizations and learning about their activities, the project team members could serve as a connection point between the disparate grassroots efforts. Many of the efforts were and are

conducted in isolation. Through the community outreach process, the project team connected these organizations and groups so their positive actions could work together and build upon one another to achieve results.

The following is a list of the groups and organizations that were a part of the community outreach process.

- **Entrepreneurs:** Numerous start-up businesses located throughout Lorain and the project area
- **Faith-Based Organizations:** Project area religious organizations
- **Historic Societies:** Charleston Village Historic Society (creators of historic walks, caretakers of the oldest cemetery in Lorain); Lorain Historic Society (providers of historic education, preservation, and programming); and Lorain Lighthouse Foundation (caretakers of Lorain's 100-year-old lighthouse)
- **Neighborhood Coalitions:** Block Watch (over 200 members, cleans parks and reclaims common green space); El Centro (Hispanic/Latino support organization); and Direct Action
- **Foundations and Philanthropic Organizations:** Stocker Foundation (grantmaking organization focused on the literacy achievement gap for pre-K through third grade); Nord Family Foundation and Nordson Corporation Foundation (contributions of more than \$100 million to projects in the community); Community Foundation of Lorain County; Lorain Community College Foundation; and the United Way
- **Government:** Lorain Metropolitan Housing Authority (both housing of last resort and housing for opportunities); and US Housing and Urban Development
- **Education:** Academic Distress Commission (state-appointed commission focused on fixing Lorain City Schools); Lorain School Board; Oberlin College (top-tier liberal arts college south of Lorain); and Lorain Community College (oldest community college in Ohio)
- **Other Organizations:** Lorain Proud (volunteers promoting local events and clean-ups); Lorain Rotary Club; Lorain Polish Fishermen's Club (promoters of conversation and fishing and planners of a new Sunset Pier in Lake Erie); Lorain County Metropark (co-sponsors of lakefront connectivity plan); The Palace Theater (90-year-old theater run by a volunteer board); Rebman Bowling Alley (local hangout); LoCo 'Yaks (kayak and watersports group); Lorain Alliance for Black Educators; Lorain Club of Negro National Association of Business and Professional Women; and Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund

3. Redevelopment Planning – Opportunities and Constraints Analysis

The project team’s first step in the redevelopment planning process was to analyze the study area’s opportunities and constraints. These opportunities and constraints were key to fully understanding how to approach the study area’s redevelopment potential and craft the appropriate tools to reconnect Lorain.

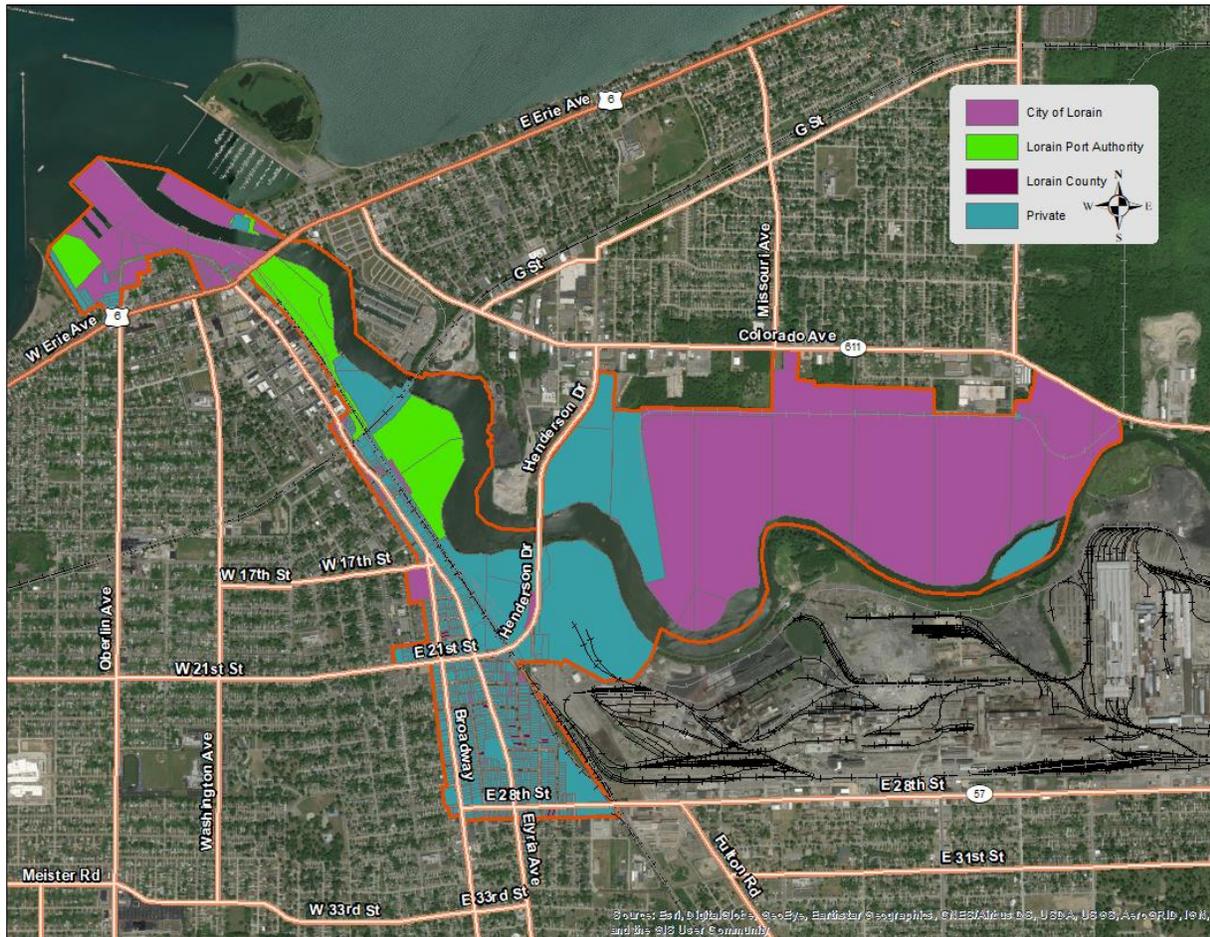


Figure 2: Study Area Ownership

The study area has a long history of industrial activity related to steel production and ship building that extends back to the early 1800s. Ship building ended in 1983 with the closing of the American Shipbuilding Company shipyard, which was located to the east of the Riverside Marina. Steel production has declined substantially with the closing of the Republic Steel Lorain Mill in 2016 and permanent closure of a portion of the US Steel Corporation tubular operations in 2017.

Significant Area Features

The study area has historically included a mix of commercial and industrial activities. Activities adjacent to Broadway Avenue are typically commercial, while activities adjacent to the Black River have historically been industrial. The study area has a number of significant features,

including historic buildings, recreational and boating opportunities, former and active industrial sites, and residential developments.



Figure 3: Study Area Significant Features

To the south of the study area are the Republic Engineered Products facility and the US Steel Tubular Operations facility. Operations at these facilities have either ceased or have been substantially reduced over the past years. Along the eastern edge of the study area are out-of-service rail lines that serviced the former Pellet Terminal. Right-of-way for the rail is currently owned by the rail company up to the Norfolk and Western rail crossing over the Black River. The former right-of-way above the rail crossing is currently owned by the Lorain Port Authority up to the former Pellet Terminal.

Several historical structures are present along Broadway Avenue adjacent to the east of the study area between West Erie Street and West 10th Street, including the former Post Office Building, Duane Block, Gould Block, the Palace Theater, Eagles Building, and Broadway Building. These buildings are listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Other buildings include Lorain County Health and Dentistry, housed in a recently renovated building at 1205 Broadway Avenue, the Lorain Metropolitan Housing Authority John F.



Kennedy Plaza Apartments, and the former St. Joseph Hospital/Community Center, which is currently vacant.



Other area features include the city-owned Water Treatment Plant and Wastewater Treatment Plant located along the lakefront. These utilities provide service to the City of Lorain and some adjacent communities. The Black River Landing Park, owned and operated by the Lorain Port Authority, is located along the



Black River south of the West Erie Street bridge. It is home to Northeast Ohio's longest running and highest attended summer outdoor concert series, boat tours of the Black River, and other community events. On

the eastern side of the Black River are the HarborWalk townhomes and marina. These units are some of the few residential developments on the Lorain waterfront. The adjacent marina offers docks to the entire Cleveland metro area.



Spanning the Black River is the Charles Berry Bascule Bridge. The



bridge is a Lorain landmark and the second-largest bascule (or drawbridge) bridge in the world.¹



Located in the Lorain harbor is another key area landmark – the Lorain Lighthouse. The lighthouse recently celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2017 and while it is no longer a functioning lighthouse, it continues to represent Lorain and the area's long relationship with shipping.²

The City of Lorain recognizes the need to enhance this key area and a reconstruction of Broadway Avenue is planned. This will improve Broadway from West Erie Avenue south to West 10th Street. The streetscape plan includes new sidewalks, lights, gateway signage, trees, and changes to the traffic flow. In February 2018, the Lorain City Council approved legislation for financing of this project.



¹ Bridge Fast Facts, Charles Berry Bascule Bridge, <http://www.loraincounty.us/commissioners-departments/charles-berry-bridge/bridge-facts>. Accessed May 6, 2018.

² Lorain Lighthouse History, <https://lorainlighthouse.com/history/>. Accessed May 6, 2018.

Vacancy

Over 50% of the land in the study area is vacant; either vacant land or vacant buildings. There are 266 vacant parcels within the study area totaling approximately 680 acres of which 233 parcels are less than one acre. Of the remaining parcels, the City of Lorain or the Lorain Port Authority own 29 parcels, mostly vacant land, totaling approximately 496 acres. There is also a substantial amount of vacant land in the area surrounding the study area, primarily residential parcels and undeveloped land.

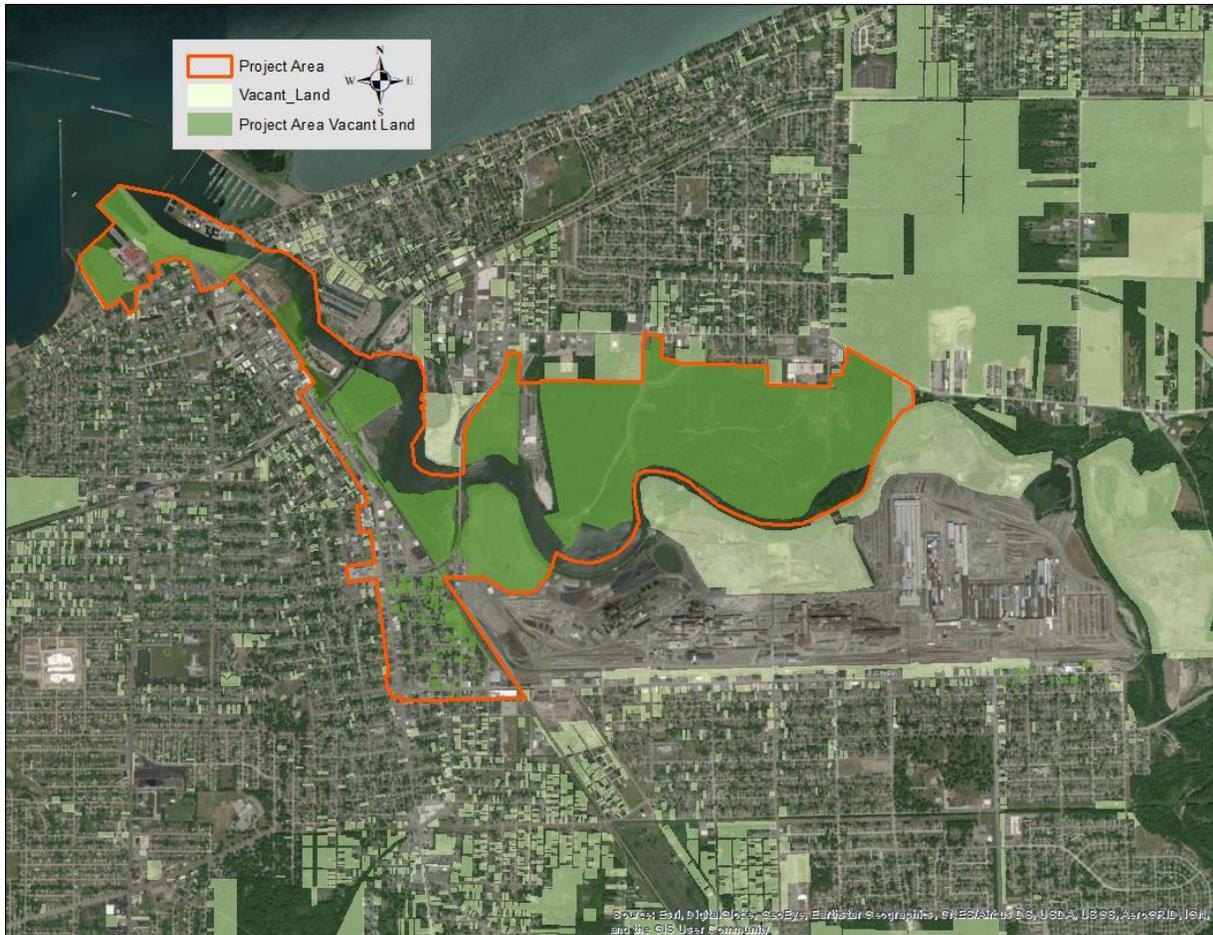


Figure 4: Study Area and Surrounding Area Vacancy

Access and Visibility

The study area is accessible by water, rail, air, and highway.

Water Access

Lorain has exceptional water access to Lake Erie and the Black River. There are numerous marinas and opportunities for recreational boating. In addition, the Lorain Port Authority is an active commercial port along the Black River and maintains a deep-water navigation channel from Lake Erie to the Republic Engineered Products facility.

Rail Access

There is major rail access to the area via CSX and Norfolk and Southern railroads, although rail service does not currently extend into the study area. The Lake Terminal Railroad, a terminal switching carrier, located within the Republic Engineered Products and US Steel Lorain Tubular Operations facilities, provides services to these facilities. The Lake Terminal Railroad connects to the CSX and Norfolk and Southern rail lines.

Air Access

Cleveland-Hopkins International Airport (CLE) is located approximately 26 miles to the east of the study area via I-80/I-480 East. Additionally, the Lorain County Regional Airport is 11 miles from Downtown Lorain and the Lakefront. It is classified as a reliever for Hopkins and has a 5,000 foot runway.

Highway Access

There is access to the study area via State Route 6 (East/West Erie Avenue), State Route 611 (Colorado Avenue), and State Route 57. Local access to the study area is served by Broadway Avenue (State Route 57), East 21st Street which intersects Broadway Avenue and Henderson Drive (an extension of East 21st Street) and connects to State Route 611, and East 28th Street which intersects Broadway Avenue.

Interstates I-90/I-80 are located approximately six miles south of the study area via State Route 57. Interstate I-90 East is also accessible via State Route 611, approximately seven miles to the east of the study area. State Route 57 is a limited access, four-lane road and State Route 611 is a two-lane road with a center turning lane for most of the distance to I-90. Interstate I-75 is located approximately 88 miles west of the study via I-80/I-90 West. Interstate I-71 and Interstate I-77 are located approximately 25 miles and 35 miles, respectively, east of the study area via I-80/I-480 East.



Figure 5: Study Area Key Access Points

Utilities

The study area is serviced by or has access to key utilities, including:

- Water: City Owned and Operated
- Sewer: City Owned and Operated
- Gas: Columbia Gas of Ohio
- Electric: First Energy – Ohio Edison
- Telecommunications: CenturyLink and Spectrum
- Internet: CenturyLink (DSL 100 mbps) and Spectrum (Cable 100 mbps)

Land Use and Policies

Prior Planning Efforts

The historic waterfront and downtown core area of the City of Lorain has long been a part of the fabric for progress. There have been many prior planning efforts that have focused on, or

included, the subject area, parts of the subject area, or the surrounding area. In an effort to fully understand the planning landscape in the study area, the project team reviewed the following relevant planning documents:

- Riverfront Urban Renewal Plan (May 18, 1999)
- Upper Black River Master Plan (August 1999)
- Black River/Lorain Harbor Shoreline Master Plan (December 2003)
- “Developable Sites Report”
- Economic Research Associates: Waterfront Development Strategy (2006)
- Request for Proposals for the Redevelopment of the Lorain Harbor West Bank (August 2006)
- West Harbor Resort Plan
- Lorain Dike Redevelopment Site – Preliminary Concept Evaluation (August 2007)
- Staubach Report/Presentation (November 2007)
- Lorain Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (November 2008)
- Lorain Lakefront Urban Renewal Plan (November 2008)
- Lower Black River Restoration Master Plan (November 2008)
- Lorain County: NEO 2040 (March 2014)

In addition, the Lorain Historic Society underwent an extensive multi-year planning process beginning in early 2017. This process identified five areas of attention: 1) Lakefront and waterfront development; 2) History, arts, and culture movement; 3) Downtown Broadway Avenue; 4) Active transportation; and 5) Youth and education.

Building upon the Historic Society’s process and other previous planning efforts, a number of key concepts resounded throughout the review. These included Land Use, Constraints, and Waterfront Access and Catalytic Development. The following is a brief summary of each concept:

Land Use:

- The waterfront in Lorain is an asset.
- There needs to be a focus on an “attractive reuse” to the waterfront properties, or a focus on redevelopment that will draw people to the waterfront.
- Specific attractive reuse opportunities were: conference space, museum, hotel, mixed-used entertainment, restaurant/retail, and gaming (casino).
- Waterfront focus on greenspace and walkability, open areas, natural space, and amenities.
- The finger piers could be utilized as a marina and green space development.

- Focus on key industrial areas and sites, particularly utilizing key river assets and incorporating the industrial park into planning.

Constraints:

- The study area has environmental issues and urban blight that is a deterrent to immediate redevelopment; there is a need for additional cleanup and preparatory work in order to achieve optimal redevelopment potential.
- For the study area to maximize redevelopment potential, there is a need for streetscape improvements.
- The area is currently a weak market; there is a need for initial public investment to help drive market potential.

Waterfront Access and Catalytic Development:

- With any future development, it is important to improve and maintain visible access (water views) to the waterfront.
- The water is a major asset to the overall architecture of the downtown; a focus needs to be made to connect downtown to the waterfront. Any redevelopment planning and improvements should focus on these key connections.
- Vacancy and blight exists along Broadway Avenue, the main travel corridor of the study area. There are several current vacant buildings along Broadway that could catalyze development (e.g., Broadway Building, Duane Building, Eagles Building).

In general, the previous planning efforts focused on redevelopment potential without consideration of the market or market potential. The efforts also lacked implementation priorities.

In addition to the previous planning efforts, there were also two current planning processes that were underway during the Area Wide Plan process: The City of Lorain Comprehensive Plan and The Lakefront Connectivity Plan.

The City of Lorain Comprehensive Plan focused on nine areas:

1. Make Downtown Development Ready
2. Make Broadway Development Ready
3. Strengthen Connections
4. Parks
5. Stabilize Vacant Properties
6. Gateways and Signage
7. Create Annexation Strategy
8. Promote Lorain
9. Zoning and Future Land Use

Of these nine areas, four areas were relevant to the Area Wide Planning process: Making Downtown Development Ready; Making Broadway Development Ready; Strengthening Connections; and Zoning and Future Land Use. Specifically, the plan focused on making connections to the waterfront and creating design strategies to drive people and catalyze development in the area. The design strategy was based largely on a visioning process with the community and not necessarily based on market reality.

The Lorain Comprehensive Plan is currently still under review. The land use portion was approved in the fall of 2018. The City is in the process of finalizing an updated zoning code to be brought to the City Council for adoption in early 2019.

The Lakefront Connectivity Plan focused on connectivity among four waterfront communities in the region, including the City of Lorain. The process was a Transportation for Livable Communities (TLCI) program funded and conducted by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). As a primary transportation and land use planning study, it was focused on bicycle and trail connections among the waterfront communities and connecting the waterfront to downtown areas in these locations. Relevant to the Area Wide Planning process, each waterfront community included a key area site plan (Lorain Downtown Riverfront Redevelopment Conceptual Site Plan). The Lorain site plan focused on a marina development, open/greenspace (Promenade), residential, retail, office, and mixed-use reuse, and the development of a hotel and conference center. Again, this conceptual strategy was largely driven by a community visioning process and not necessarily based on market reality.

The Lorain County Lakefront Connectivity TLCI Plan was recently completed and is publicly available. The final TLCI report and appendix can be found at: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/akf8yqo7tkd21bv/AADbUG3-Z2-P1Ugsigryzl8ua?dl=0>. The final plan was presented to the Lorain County Board of Commissioners on April 25, 2018. It will now go through the process of being considered for implementation.

Current Land Use

Land use in the study area is a mix of public, commercial, industrial, and vacant land, while the surrounding area is primarily residential.

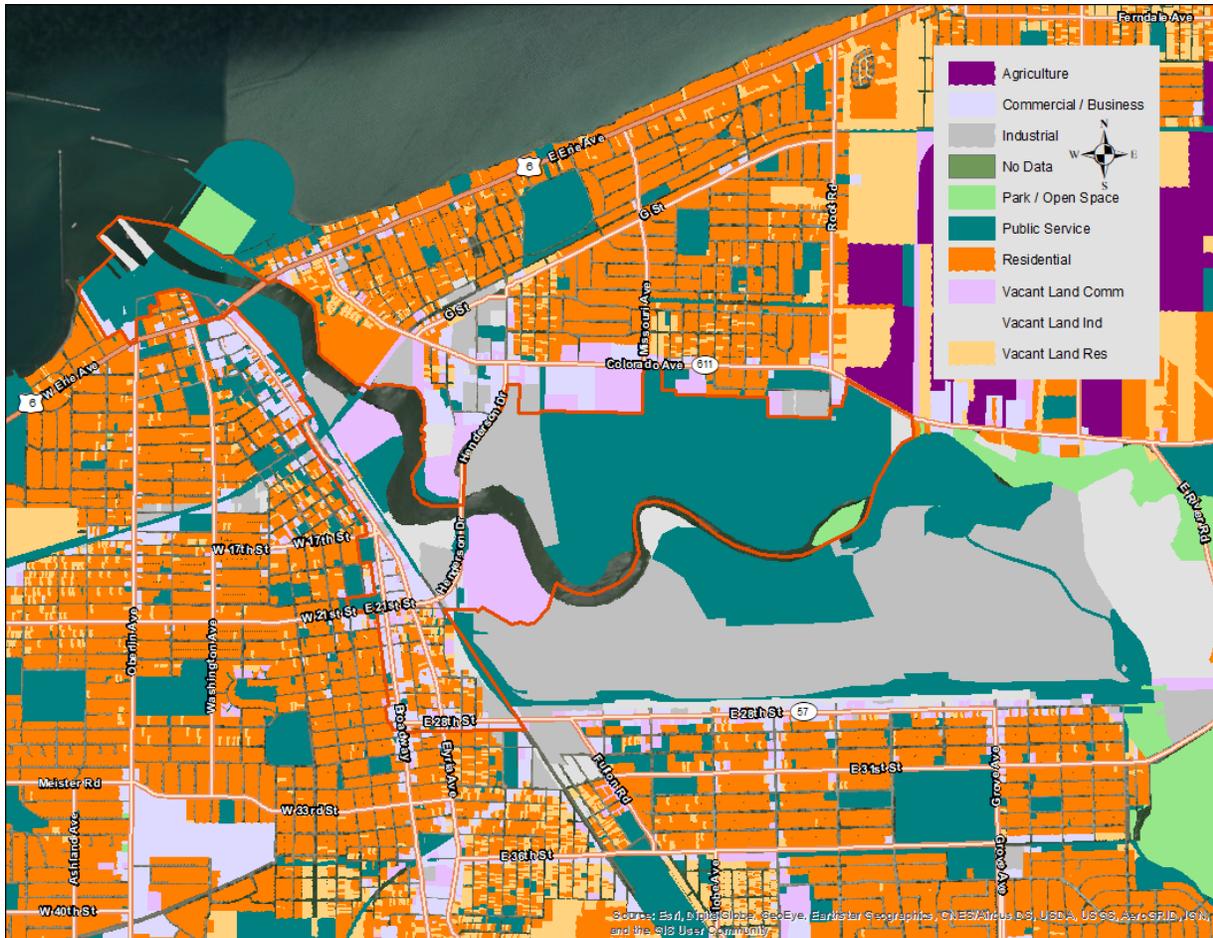


Figure 6: Study Area and Surroundings Land Use

The study area is currently primarily zoned I-1 (Industrial Land District), I-2 (Heavy Industrial), or Ind (Undetermined Industrial) according to the Lorain City Planning and Zoning Code. The City is currently in the process of considering a Comprehensive/Land Use Plan that will restructure the zoning in the study area to allow for additional and more appropriate end uses that reflect the community's desire for redevelopment.

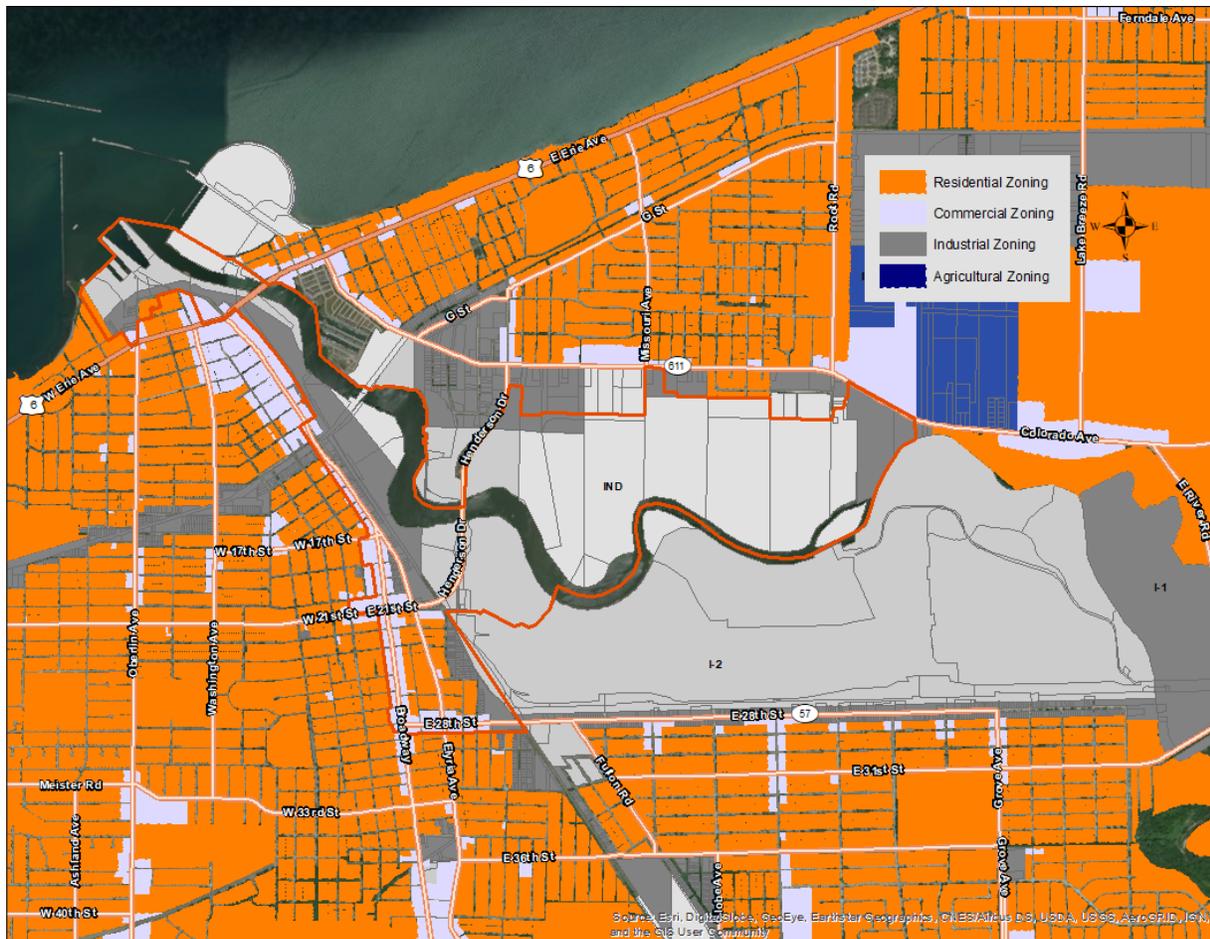


Figure 7: Study Area and Surroundings Current Zoning

Potential Environmental Conditions

A limited Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was conducted for the entire study area. The study area Phase I ESA³ was conducted to identify potential areas of concern within the study area. It was not intended to be a complete Phase I ESA in accordance with ASTM E 1527 and federal All Appropriate Inquiry, but reviews and inquiries were conducted in accordance with these requirements.

The study area Phase I ESA suggested a medium potential for Recommended Environmental Conditions⁴ (REC), as defined in ASTM E 1527, to be present on the Black River South, Boat Launch, Stein, and Rowland sites. Two areas (the former Pellet Terminal and the Riverbend Commerce Park) have had individual Phase I ESAs and Phase II ESAs and other investigations conducted in the past. (See Catalytic Sites section for more information.)

³ Area Wide Assessment of the Black River Lorain, Lorain County, Ohio, Prepared for The Lorain Port Authority, 319 Black River Lane, Lorain, Ohio 44052, Hull & Associates, Inc., 4 Hemisphere Way, Bedford, Ohio 44146, Draft, December 2017.

⁴ ASTM defines a recognized environmental condition as the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at a property: (1) due to release to the environment; (2) under conditions indicative of a release to the environment; or (3) under conditions that pose a material threat of a future release to the environment.

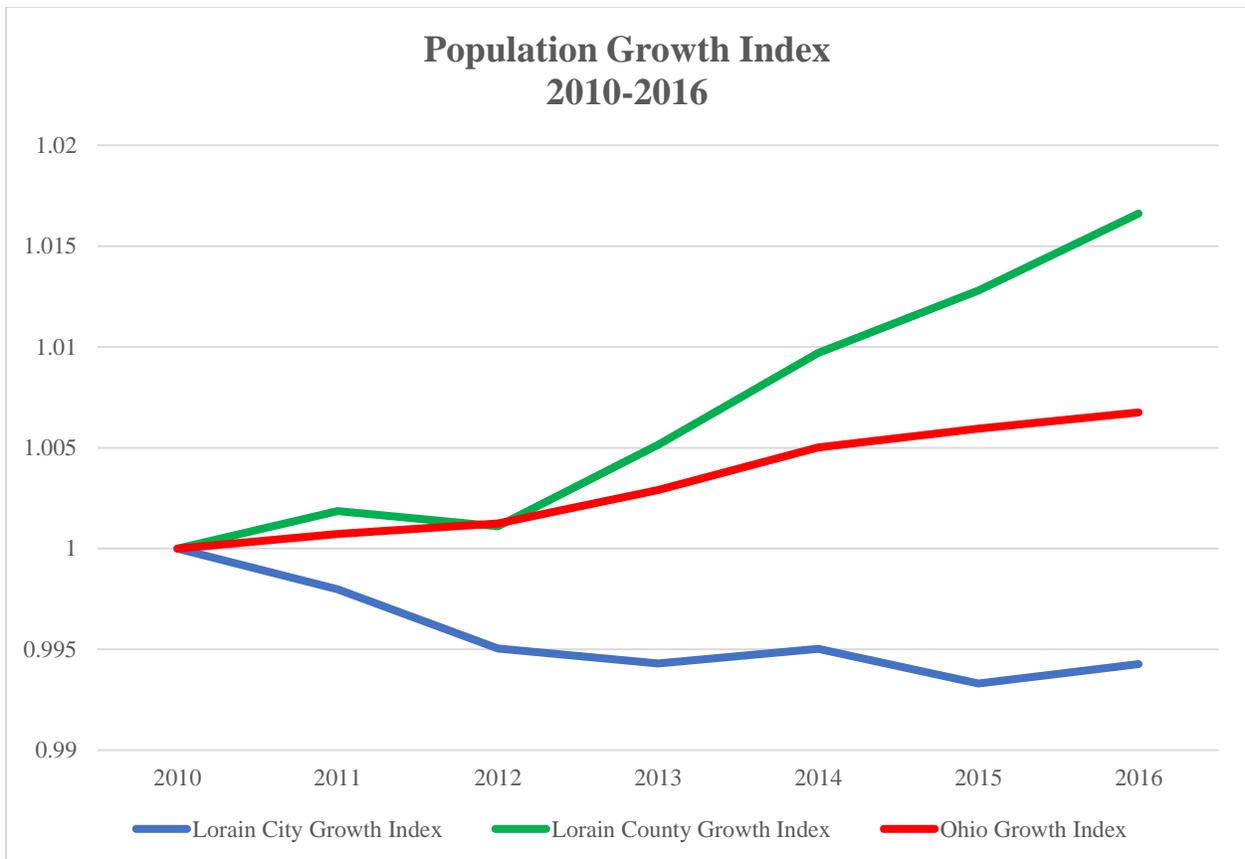
4. Redevelopment Planning – Market Analysis

To fully understand the redevelopment potential of the study area in the context of its opportunities and constraints, the project team conducted a market analysis of Lorain. The socioeconomic conditions section provides an overview of the residents of Lorain. The economic conditions and industry trends, and market assessment sections evaluate potential market opportunities for Lorain. Finally, the strategy and recommendations provide guidance on redevelopment implementation.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Population

As of July 1, 2016, the latest data available, the population of Lorain was 63,730. This is a decrease of 367 people, or -0.6%, from the 2010 Census. As shown in the figure below, the population growth over the past six years has been slightly negative. Comparatively, Lorain County and Ohio overall experienced modest growth over the same six-year period, 1.7% and 0.7% respectively.⁵ However, a historical view shows that Lorain has also been losing population for decades. Lorain’s population peaked in 1970 (78,185); in the past 45+ years the City has lost almost 14,500 people.⁶



⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates, April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016.

⁶ Historical Population, <http://population.us/oh/lorain/>. Accessed April 1, 2018.

Unemployment

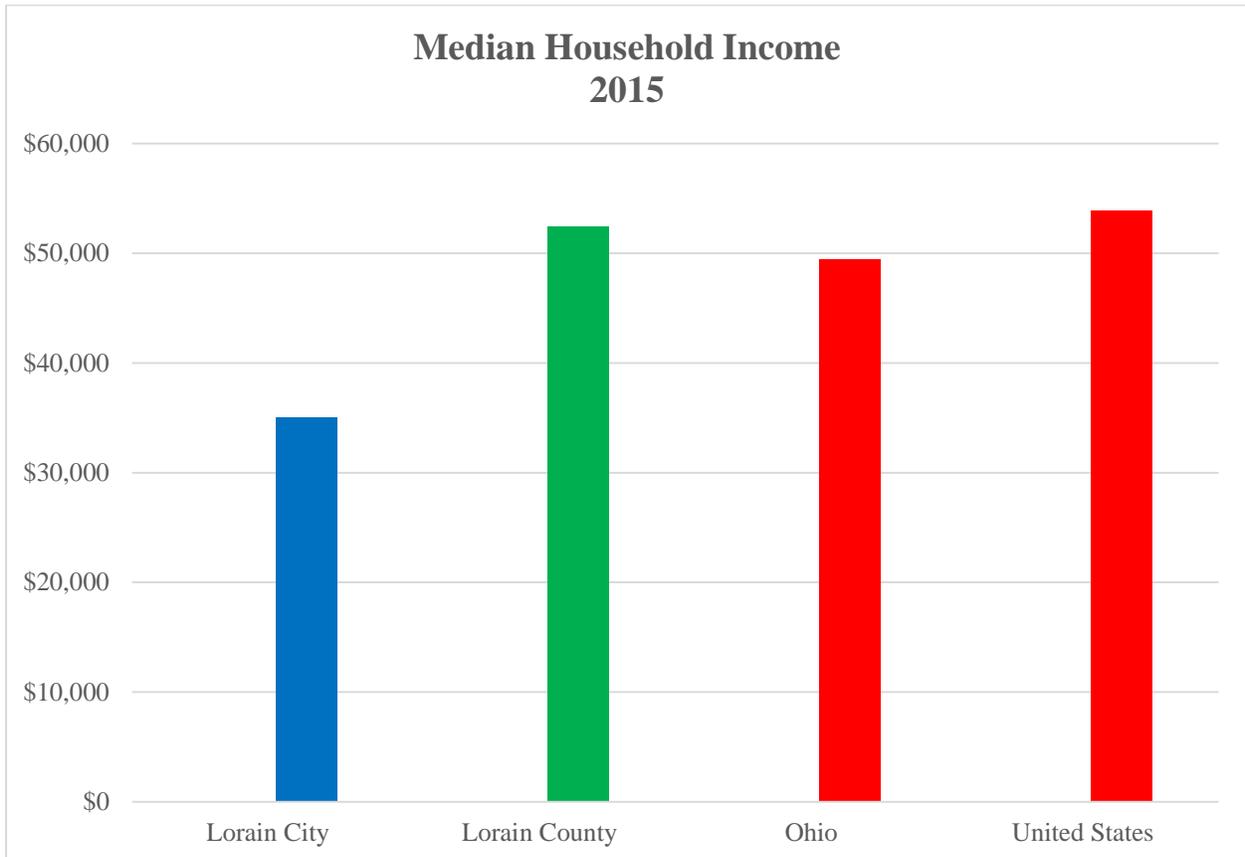
The City of Lorain has sustained higher unemployment rates than the county, region, and state over the past 16 years. While all areas follow a similar pattern, Lorain's unemployment is higher. In 2016, Lorain's unemployment rate was 7.8%, compared to 5.9% in Lorain County, and 5.4% in Northeast Ohio. Over the period 2000-2016, Lorain had its highest unemployment rates in 2009-2010 (11.3% and 11.5%, respectively) during the Great Recession. The City's lowest unemployment rate was 4.3% in 2000. The City of Lorain's total civilian labor force in 2016 was 27,400, with approximately 2,100 unemployed. Since 2000, the City's labor force has decreased by 14.6%, or a loss of 4,700 workers.⁷



⁷ Ohio Labor Market Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, <http://ohiolmi.com/laus/laus.htm>. Accessed August 24, 2017.

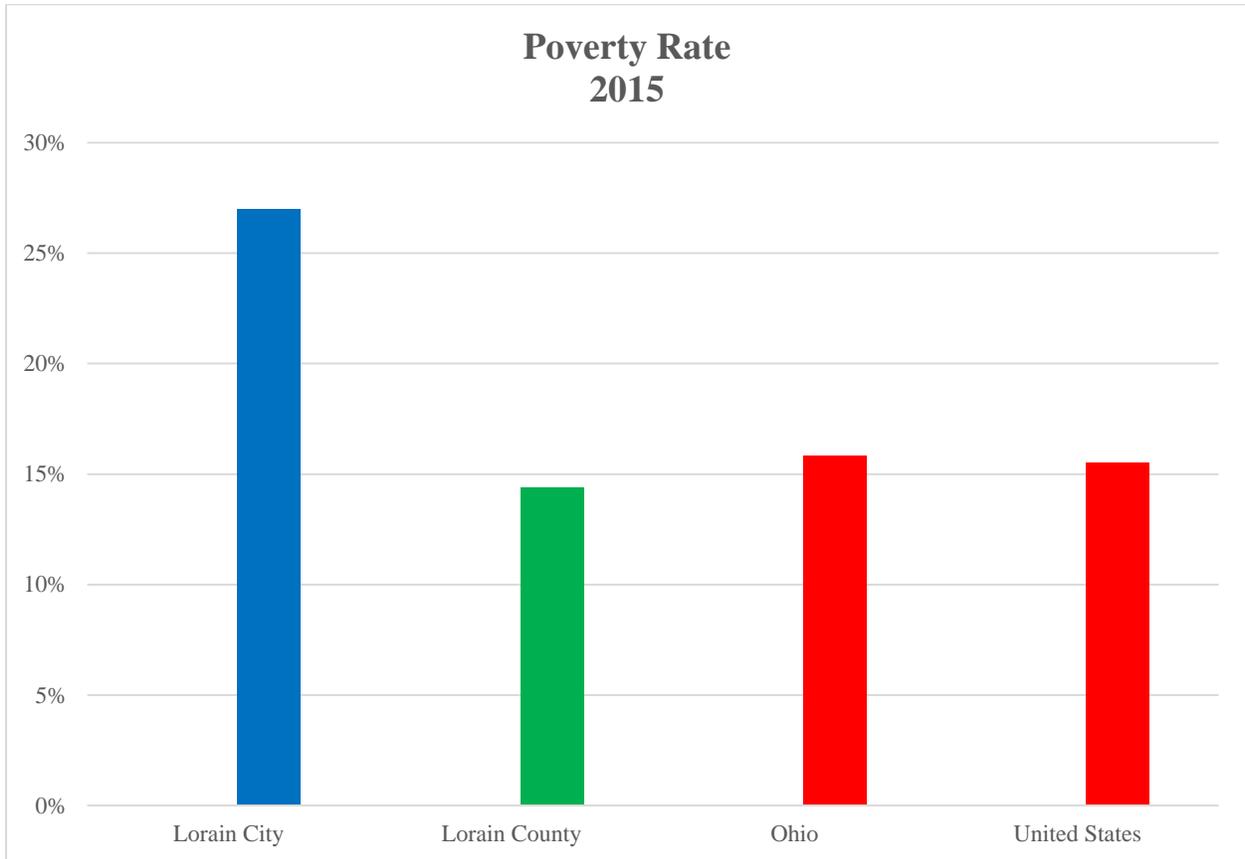
Income and Poverty

The residents of the City of Lorain had a median household income of \$35,042 in 2015. This is significantly lower than that of the surrounding Lorain County (\$52,457) and Ohio overall (\$49,429). Similarly, median earnings for workers in Lorain (\$23,347) are below that of both the county (\$30,035) and state (\$30,060).⁸



⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

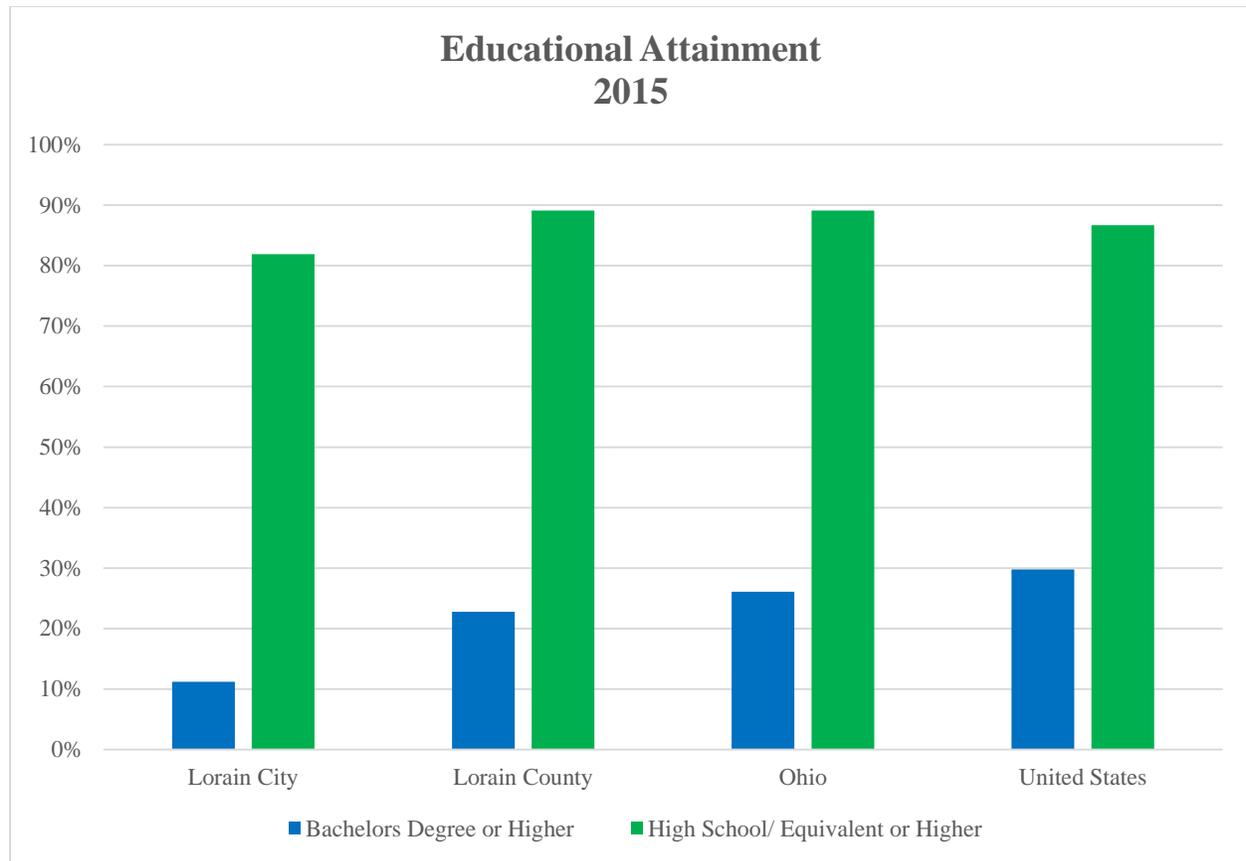
Residents of Lorain experience almost double the poverty rate (27.0%) than that of surrounding county (14.4%) and overall state (15.8%). With a rate of 27%, Lorain is also more than 11 percentage points higher than that of the United States as a whole (15.5%).⁹



⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Education

Within the City of Lorain, 81.9% of residents have obtained a high school degree or higher. This compares with 89.1% in both Lorain County and Ohio overall. This discrepancy in educational attainment is even more evident in the percentage of residents who have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher. Approximately 11% of Lorain residents have completed a 4-year college program or higher, whereas 22.8% of Lorain County and 26.1% of Ohio residents have achieved the same.¹⁰



Housing

The City of Lorain has a majority of owner-occupied housing units (57.8%). Home values within Lorain are lower than that of the county and state. Median home value in Lorain is \$87,300, compared to \$137,400 and \$129,900 for the county and state, respectively. Median gross rent within Lorain (\$656) is also below that of the county (\$741) and state (\$730) as well.¹¹

Housing structures in the City of Lorain are primarily single-family; only 26% of total housing units are multi-family. The multi-family percentage is most likely driven by the recent construction of the HarborWalk townhomes on the Black River.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

In addition, the housing stock within the City of Lorain is older. Over 70% of homes within Lorain are 49 years old or older.¹²

Table 1: Housing Characteristics - 2015

| Geography | % Owner-Occupied Housing Units | Median Home Value | Median Gross Rent |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| City of Lorain | 57.8% | \$87,300 | \$656 |
| Lorain County | 71.3% | \$137,400 | \$741 |
| Ohio | 66.3% | \$129,900 | \$730 |
| United States | 63.9% | \$178,600 | \$928 |

Crime Statistics

The study area suffers from a negative perception of crime. Many residents believe the area is unsafe. To evaluate the crime levels within the study area, the project team worked with the Crime Analysis Unit of the Lorain Police Department. The team evaluated two key measures: citizen involvement in crime prevention and actual instances of crime.

The first measure, citizen involvement and crime prevention, was calculated by analyzing 911 calls. These calls tend to trend up as the citizens become more engaged in an area. In 2015, the total calls for service in downtown (roughly corresponds to the study area) was 803. In 2017, the calls increased to 1,239. The most reported crimes were suspicious condition, alarm, welfare check, disturbance, unwanted person, theft, traffic complaint, premise check, and domestic disputes. Notably, the top calls for service are mostly proactive actions.

The next measure, actual crimes committed, compared the number of offenses in the entire city to the number of offenses downtown. In a three-year period (2015-2017) approximately 3% of crime was committed downtown. This means 97% of crimes occurred elsewhere in the city.

Taken together, these measures illustrate that there is little evidence to support the assertion that downtown is more unsafe than the rest of the city.

Economic Conditions and Industry Trends

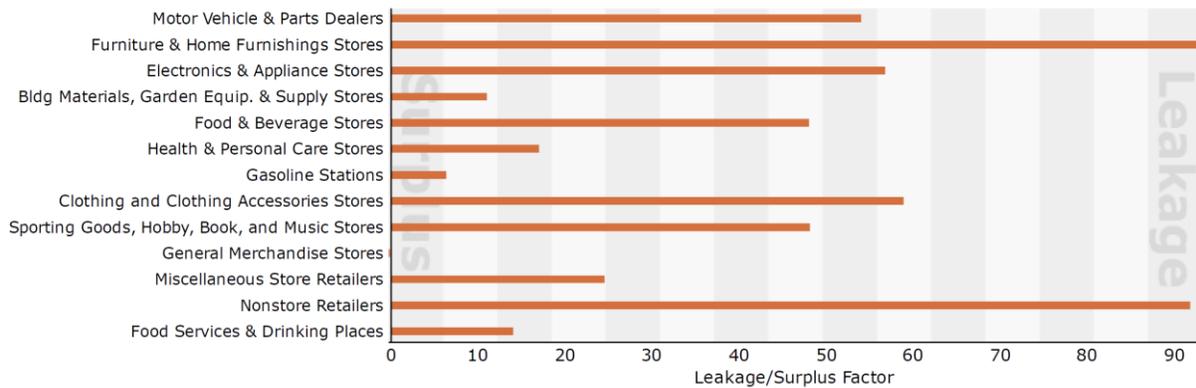
Retail Leakage Analysis

A leakage study was conducted to evaluate the City of Lorain’s commercial market for retail and services. As demonstrated by the following leakage data, currently, Lorain does not contain many, if any, commercial businesses. A leakage analysis analyzes the extent that residents must travel to purchase goods and services. The chart below indicates that residents of Lorain often must go outside of the city for even the most basic needs. While there is a slight surplus in General Merchandise stores (e.g., department stores), all other industry subsectors show

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

leakages.¹³ This indicates that Lorain is an under-served market and there could be the potential for new businesses to help meet local demand.¹⁴ Anecdotal evidence from interviews with new businesses and start-ups within Lorain indicate that there is little to no competition and their growth is only being supported by the local population.

Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Subsector



Commuting Patterns

Currently, the City of Lorain residents largely commute to jobs outside of the city for employment. The majority of these jobs are to the east, within and around Cleveland. There are relatively few employment opportunities that keep Lorain residents within the city limits for work.

As of 2015 (the latest data available), 4,462 workers both live and work in Lorain. This means the vast majority of Lorain workers (19,691, or 81.5%) commute outside of the City for their jobs. Conversely, 69% of jobs in Lorain are filled by workers living outside of Lorain (approximately 9,829 workers).

¹³ Nonstore retailers are defined as: Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses, Vending Machine Operators, Direct Selling Establishments (Source: 2014 Methodology Statement: ESRI Data—Retail MarketPlace, www.esri.com/library/whitepapers/pdfs/esri-data-retail-marketplace.pdf).

¹⁴ ESRI and Infogroup. Retail MarketPlace 2017.

The largest destination municipality for Lorain workers, outside of Lorain, is Elyria with 2,519 workers or 10.4%. The next largest destination is Cleveland with 1,995 workers or 8.3%. Of the 14,291 primary jobs in Lorain, the largest home destination for workers, besides Lorain itself, was Elyria with an estimated 8.6% of workers.¹⁵

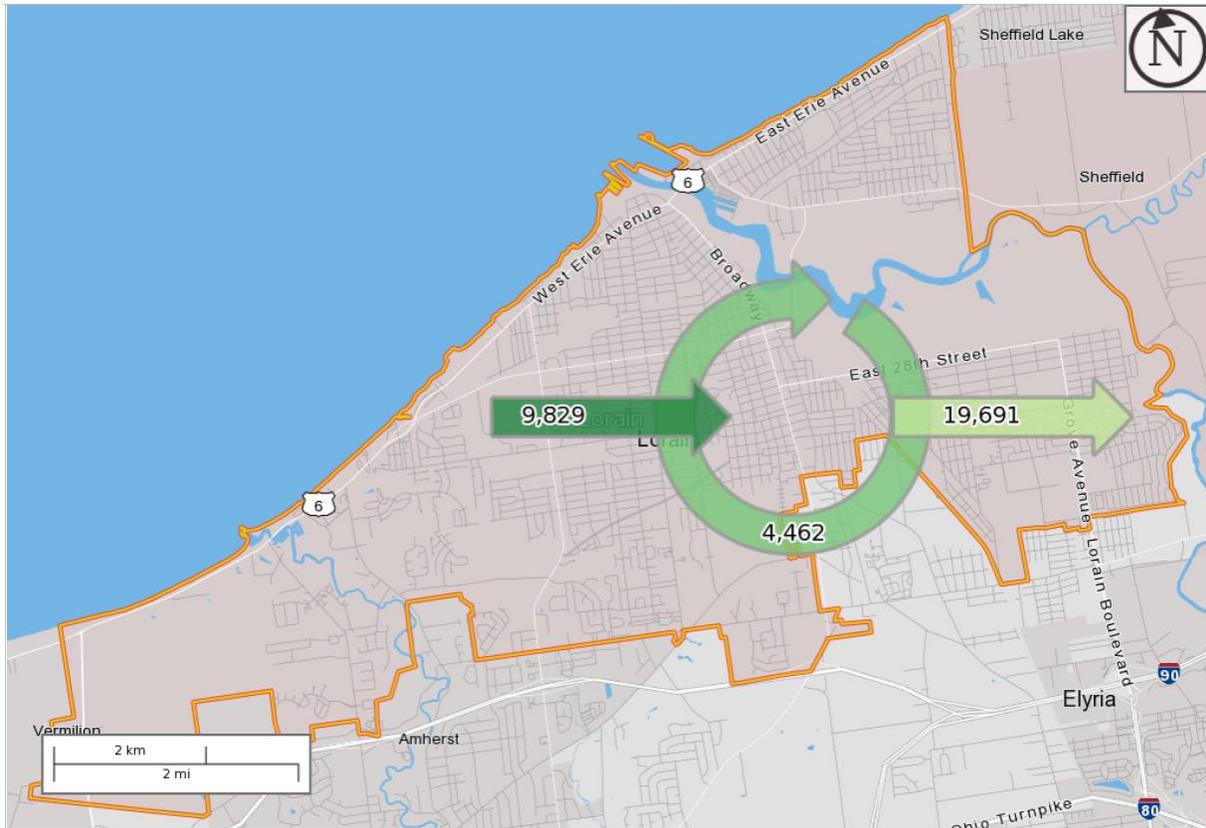


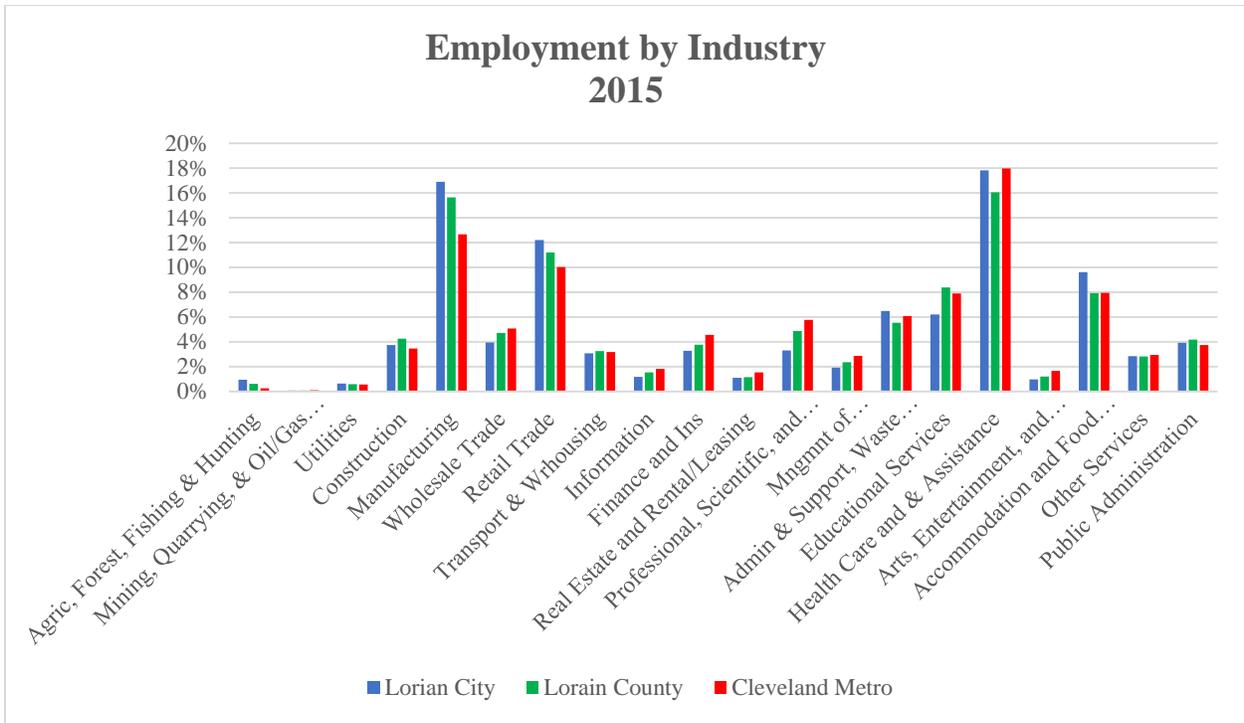
Figure 8: City of Lorain Job Inflow-Outflow, 2015

Industry Sectors – Trends and Concentrations

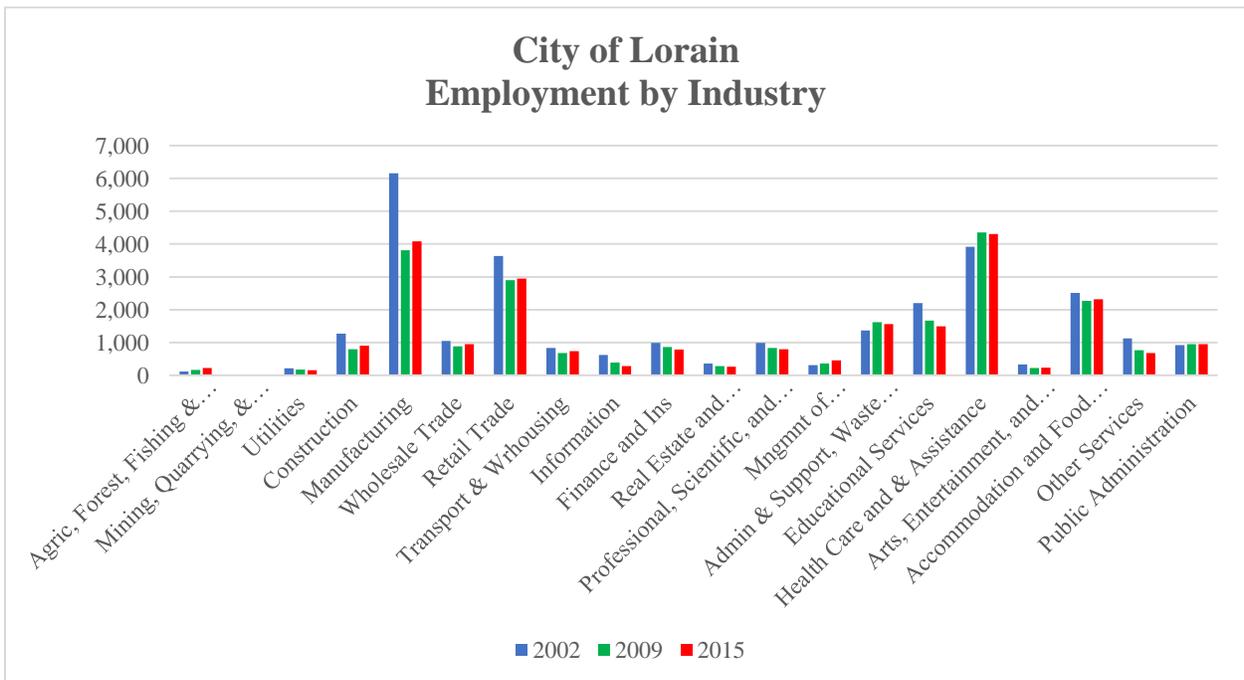
This section analyzes the industries (businesses and organizations) located in Lorain in order to understand industry strengths and employment. Comparing industry concentrations for Lorain to the county and state shows that manufacturing, health care, and retail are leading sectors within Lorain (2015 data). This is a similar pattern to the county and metro. Lorain has relatively fewer jobs in education, professional and technical services, and finance and insurance.¹⁶

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics.

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2015).



The number of manufacturing jobs decreased by approximately a third in Lorain between 2002 and 2015 – consistent with a long-term decline in manufacturing employment. Declines were also experienced in construction, retail trade, education, and a range of service industries. However, job gains did occur in the health care and business services industries.¹⁷



¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2015).

Looking toward the future, the following figure illustrates the key growth industries within Lorain County over the six-year period ending in 2015. For context, the top growth industries for the Cleveland Metro Area, since the Great Recession, are Health Care (42,675 jobs), Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation (9,737), Manufacturing (6,664), Management of Companies and Enterprises (6,030), Accommodation and Food Services (5,991), Construction (2,923), and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (2,661).¹⁸

Table 2: Lorain County - 2009-2015 Key Sector Job Growth

| Industry | Job Growth | % Increase |
|---|------------|------------|
| Health Care and & Assistance | 2,610 | 14.3% |
| Manufacturing | 1,427 | 7.6% |
| Public Administration | 1,063 | 24.5% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 984 | 10.6% |
| Management of Companies/Enterprises | 935 | 44.5% |
| Construction | 767 | 16.2% |
| Admin & Support, Waste Management and Remediation | 629 | 9.6% |
| Retail Trade | 598 | 4.3% |
| Professional, Scientific, and Tech Services | 584 | 10.2% |
| Wholesale Trade | 493 | 8.8% |

Market Assessment

Identifying redevelopment opportunities in the Lorain AWP study area requires a strong understanding of the market conditions and trends. As demonstrated above, Lorain is experiencing some distress. This market assessment of different reuse options reflects those broader market conditions. The strength of market segments connects directly to the physical opportunities and constraints of the study area, including infrastructure assets, highway proximity, environmental conditions, and other factors.

The market assessment is organized around four key sectors: 1) industrial development; 2) retail, restaurant, and tourism; 3) office market; and 4) residential development. The market analysis findings are derived from multiple sources of information:

- Data-driven indicators on population, income, industries, and real estate data;
- Interviews with approximately twenty local and regional economic development officials, employers, real estate brokers, and developers; and
- Extensive site visits and tours of the study area.

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2015).

Summary Findings

To comprehensively evaluate the market segments that will best fit Lorain's future waterfront, it is necessary to understand the City's strengths and challenges.

Strengths:

1. Citizen-led grassroots efforts are sparking positive change in the study area;
2. The lake and river attract people for boating, kayaking, fishing, and concerts;
3. The Palace Theater and emerging/new ventures in downtown;
4. Start-up interest in the study area;
5. City leaders have prioritized reconstruction of Broadway Avenue and streetscape improvements;
6. Range of large, vacant industrially-zoned sites;
7. Two Class 1 railroads with possible spurs;
8. Deep water port/river with barge access;
9. Workforce and tradition of manufacturing with active businesses; and
10. Infrastructure in place at Riverbend Commerce Park.

Challenges:

1. A pervasive negative perception of Lorain;
2. Facing the reality of a smaller steel industry;
3. Effective communication of Lorain's future vision;
4. High vacancy and low lease rates;
5. Few attractions draw visitors to Lorain;
6. Lack of amenities in Lorain (i.e., places to eat, drink, and stay);
7. Rents and home values do not support new construction;
8. Weak highway access compared to many nearby towns;
9. Need for reinvestment in infrastructure, clean-up, green space, buildings; and
10. Perceptions of safety/crime issues.

The following individual market sections analyze the potential for each segment in the context of Lorain's strengths and challenges.

Industrial Market

The industrial market in Lorain is characterized by a distinct set of: a) existing industrial strengths and companies; b) available sites and regional opportunities; and c) difficult challenges as Lorain competes with the broader region for industrial development.

Existing Industrial Strengths and Companies:

- Lorain has a strong tradition of manufacturing and related industrial activity led by the major steel mills located along East 28th Street (Republic and US Steel). Despite a long-term decline, manufacturing is still the second largest industry in Lorain in terms of jobs and there are several active manufacturing companies in steel, auto parts and supplies, plastics, and other industries.

- Camaco is a successful auto supply manufacturer at Riverbend Commerce Park that has 450 employees and expanded twice in recent years. They also distribute out of their facility near Rt. 611 and demonstrate that a major manufacturing facility can be successful in Lorain.
- Lorain’s industrial legacy and strategic lakefront position mean that the City has unique freight infrastructure assets for shipping bulk products with: a) deep water port facilities and sites that could use river barges for marine shipping on the Great Lakes and beyond; and b) two Class 1 railroads– Norfolk and Southern and CSX.

Available Sites and Regional Opportunities

- There are four industrial sites in the AWP study area of 14 acres or more that are on the market today and/or owned by City of Lorain or the Port Authority. These sites vary in size from approximately 14 acres to 200+ acres and each have strong but unique infrastructure assets.
- Manufacturing remains a regional strength in Northeast Ohio and has shown some growth since the Great Recession. Along with auto suppliers, food processing companies are another area of manufacturing opportunity for the region, as well as chemical industries tied to oil and gas.
- Regional development leaders report that the largest industrial job gains over the past year were for distribution companies (e.g., Amazon).

Challenges to Overcome

- The biggest and most frequently cited challenge to industrial development in Lorain is the distance to major highways (namely I-90). Other comparable communities have better access to I-90 and are generally a higher priority for industrial and commercial development opportunities in the region. Brokers report that its hard to entice potential industrial tenants to look at Lorain’s industrial sites based on the distance from the highway. When the potential tenets do look at Lorain, the drive on Rt. 611 or other routes is a visual deterrent to development.
- While the rail and water/barge infrastructure are assets, there are relatively few companies that need access to those modes. Industrial brokers said it can be like finding a “needle in a haystack” to locate companies needing one or both of those modes.
- Lorain’s industrial sites could be better positioned and marketed with regional leaders.
- There is a prevalence of vacant land in the region.
- There is no natural port shipping or intermodal handling use in Lorain. The Port of Cleveland has space to grow and struggles to build its intermodal shipping, meaning there is little opportunity for Lorain.

- It would likely take a significant level of incentives (i.e., 100% tax abatement for 15-20 years) to draw stronger industrial development interest as current sites on the market are not generating any market interest.

Retail/Restaurant/Tourism Market

Stakeholders throughout Lorain would like to see a more vibrant retail and restaurant scene in the study area. Many often cite growing a restaurant market as a pathway to attracting more people into the area. There are various tourist/visitor attractions in Lorain (e.g., boating, summer concerts, fishing tournaments, kayaking, the Palace Theater), as well as efforts to develop a museum or other cultural attraction to bring a more sustained number of visitors to Lorain. These desires are reflected in recent city plans (e.g., Lakefront Connectivity Plan, Comprehensive Plan) which depict a mix of retail, restaurant, and other commercial uses (i.e., a hotel and museum or convention center attraction) for the Pellet Terminal site and nearby downtown/Broadway area. While these types of uses are an important part of a revitalized urban downtown and waterfront, the current market conditions in Lorain would need support to bring this vision to reality.

Data research and interview findings on the retail, restaurant, and tourism market indicate:

- There is strong local interest in growing a restaurant market in Lorain, as there are few options today in downtown.
- Retail lease rates (\$ per SF) are very low in Lorain, often \$1 to \$2 per SF.
- New retail or restaurant ventures would need public subsidies to overcome current market conditions.
- Past planning efforts have envisioned a museum or similar attraction near the lakefront to help draw visitation. This larger regional draw would require careful planning to select an appropriate theme/topic and secure the necessary funding.

Office Market

The largest industry in both Lorain and the Northeast Ohio region is health care and social assistance. Industry data show health care is one of the strongest growing sectors, and thus a major driver of new office demand (i.e., for specialized health services outside of hospitals). There is a limited market in Lorain for other typical office users (e.g., law firms, finance, engineering, consulting, other professional/business services).

- Health care is the strongest growth sector for office use in Greater Cleveland. However, this is centered on: a) the life sciences initiative in Cleveland with strong anchors like the Cleveland Clinic and universities; and b) more affluent suburban communities where the majority of the population has private insurance. In Lorain, with lower incomes and more residents on Medicaid, it is less likely to see specialty health care services.
- Similar to retail, the office market is too weak in Lorain to construct new office space (this is true throughout most of the US today) without public subsidies.

- Interviews revealed interest from start-up companies (e.g., graphic arts, marketing, etc.) that may consider locating in downtown Lorain to be part of a more urban, low-cost environment. Finding a way to support these kinds of ventures through co-working spaces, incubators, or rehabbing existing office space could be a way to start growing this market and build more positive momentum in downtown Lorain.

Residential Market Assessment

Residential development is central to recent plans focused on downtown Lorain and the study area. This makes sense for several reasons. First, revitalizing urban areas requires people to shop at stores, eat at restaurants, attend shows, and nurture a feeling of safety and community. Second, the lakefront location is a natural attraction and amenity that can drive demand for housing. Similar to other housing near the waterfront, existing plans for Lorain generally call for townhomes and modest-scale multi-family housing with first floor retail/restaurants. Evaluation of the local housing market found that:

- Median home values, rents, and home ownership are low in Lorain.
- When considering new townhomes within the study area, the most comparable residential development in Lorain is HarborWalk on the other side of the Black River. Developed by Spitzer Development, it was originally intended to be 460 total housing units. So far, approximately 165 housing units have been built. This may indicate a soft market in the residential sales market. Based on research:
 - Townhomes sell for approximately \$120,000 for two-bedroom units, equating to \$75 to \$90 per SF. Three-bedroom units sell for approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000 for over 2,000 SF.
 - Based on RS Means construction cost data, townhomes in the Cleveland area would cost approximately \$140 to \$150 per SF. An alternative cost data source (fixr.com) estimates costs in greater Cleveland at approximately \$130 per SF.
 - This sales and cost data show a significant financing gap between sales prices and construction costs. As a result, residential development projects would require public subsidies.
- Active residential growth areas in Cleveland (e.g., Ohio City) also require some form of public subsidy for projects to be financially feasible. This is an indicator of a regional housing market where prices are still generally low (compared to other large cities) and younger professionals are not getting “priced out” as they do in New York, Boston, etc.
- Lorain may consider growing its housing market by targeting senior living facilities. Seniors, as they enter retirement age, have less need to commute into Cleveland on a daily basis and may have the means to enjoy waterfront living part-time or as year-round residents. This type of development, if pursued, should not preclude other housing options (i.e., reserving land for future market-rate housing), but could be a way to generate more households with income in the study area.

Study Area Strategy and Key Recommendations

The Lorain AWP study area includes a diverse mix of uses and opportunities within a relatively small geographic area. To best create a bridge to revitalization, Lorain must build a strong foundation. The foundation should be built upon the following three-part strategy:

- 1) Develop a livable and walkable downtown/waterfront area that is an inviting and attractive destination to live, work, and play;
- 2) Leverage Lorain's industrial sites to attract private development, tax revenue, and jobs; and
- 3) Build capacity for Lorain's continued economic development.

More specific redevelopment strategies and action steps for each of these three goals are detailed below, all with the goal of creating the mechanisms by which Lorain can attract new residents, businesses, and visitors, and nurture a sustainable development path for the City.

Develop a livable/walkable downtown area

Consistent with recent plans, Lorain should seek to redevelop the study area and adjacent waterfront sites to create a livable and walkable urban area that is attractive to residents, visitors, and businesses. While the challenges that the Lorain faces won't allow this to happen overnight, the location on Lake Erie, with Black River Landing and the other urban assets in place or under development, can lead the way towards successful urban revitalization. Specific recommended action steps should include:

- Obtain funding to address the remaining environmental issues at the Pellet Terminal and beautify it;
- Complete the planned streetscape improvements along Broadway Avenue; and
- Complete a successful redevelopment of the Broadway Building.

Leverage industrial sites for new economic activity

As described above, the AWP study area in Lorain includes an unusually strong set of industrial sites available for development. However, there are reasons why these sites (some of which are actively on the market) are not attracting interest from industrial developers, brokers, regional development leaders, or private business. To overcome current deficiencies, Lorain must more aggressively and proactively position industrial sites for development by:

- Completing all site-specific detail in Zoom Prospector industrial site database to "authenticate" important sites in Lorain;
- Determine and communicate a tax incentive package for industrial development at key sites; and
- Complete an initial expression of interest (EOI) process for key sites in Lorain (see Expression of Interest Process and Next Steps section).

Build capacity for economic development

To realize the study area strategies described above, Lorain must also ensure that it is building capacity for implementing economic development projects and services. The following action steps are intended to demonstrate that: a) Lorain is “open for business” and ready to do its part to support and encourage development and b) Lorain is building momentum and tackling well-known issues so the City can sustain positive progress. Key citywide goals should be to:

- Reduce the perception of crime and enhance safety in the downtown area;
- Position the Lorain Port Authority as the City’s economic development leaders; and
- Create promotional marketing materials for Lorain and its waterfront.
- County Economic development is designated Jobs Ohio Liason
- County is managing ongoing revitalization process, working closely with City of Lorain, City of Lorain Port Authority and coordinating support from state and federal partners.

5. Catalytic Sites

Through the above redevelopment planning analyses and the ongoing stakeholder engagement process, the project team identified seven key catalytic sites which can serve as test cases for creating Lorain's revitalized future. These seven areas total approximately 628 acres and include three areas owned by the City of Lorain, two areas owned by the Lorain Port Authority, and two areas that are privately held. The following sections discuss each site in detail and provide key issues to be considered for redevelopment.

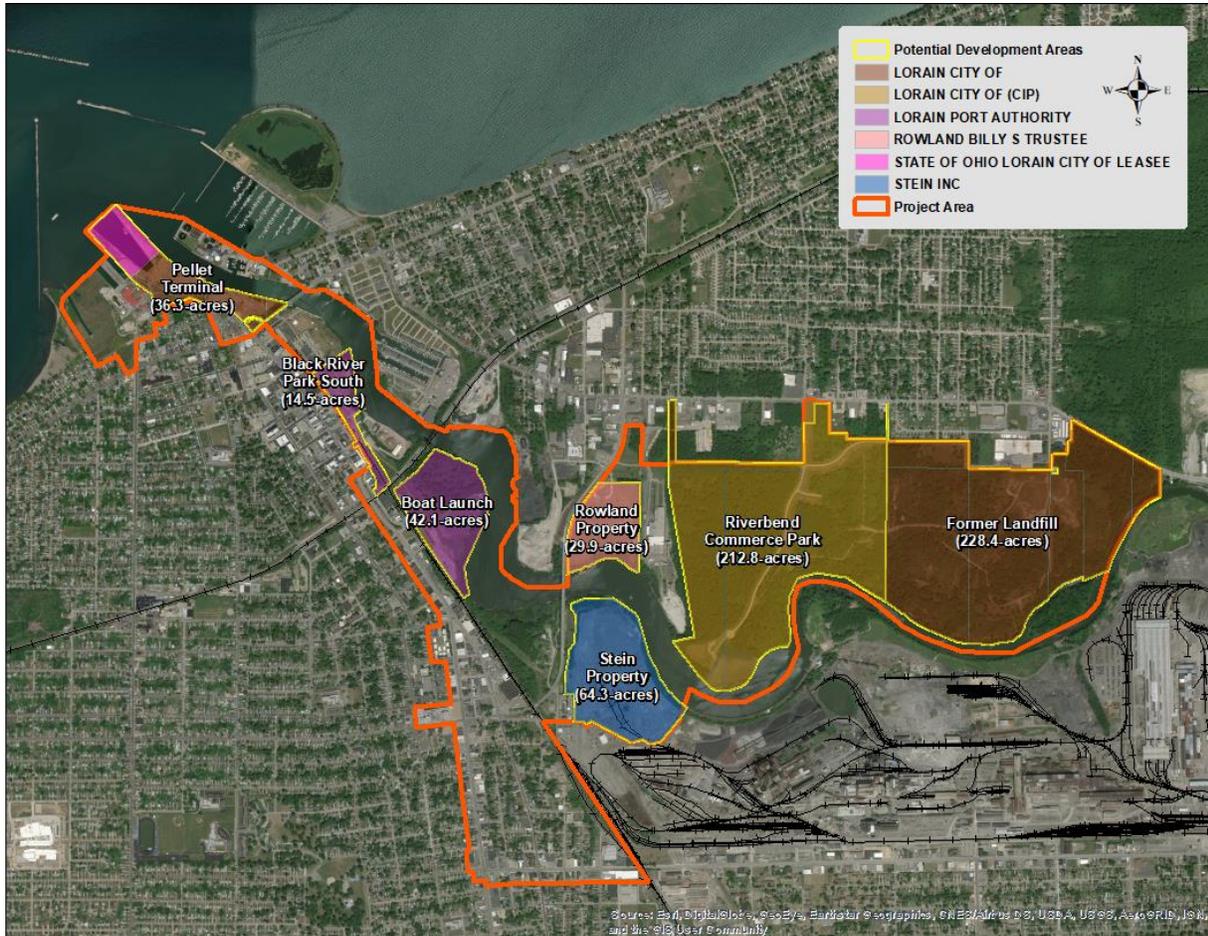


Figure 9: Study Area Catalytic Sites

Site-Specific Existing Conditions and Reuse Options

Pellet Terminal Site

The Pellet Terminal site, owned by the City of Lorain, is located at the mouth of the Black River on the western bank and extends into Lake Erie. It is protected by break walls that form Lorain Harbor. The site is accessed from Broadway Avenue/West 1st Street and is located north of East Erie Avenue and West of Broadway Avenue. It is bounded on the west by the Lorain City Hall and parking lot and by the City Utilities Department and Water Treatment Plant, on the north by Lake Erie, on the east by the Black River with the waste water treatment plant, US Coast Guard Station, and Lakeside Landing Park across the river, and on the south by Black River Landing and the Broadway Building. The site has over 5,000 feet of water frontage along the Black River and Lake Erie, 550 feet of frontage along East Erie Avenue (US RT 6) and more than 1,000 feet of frontage along North Broadway and 1st Street.

The Pellet Terminal site is composed of 15 parcels totaling 36.3 acres, with approximately 13.4 of those acres associated with the Finger Piers. The Finger Piers are considered submerged land and owned by the state of Ohio, but under a submerged land lease to the City of Lorain. The City controls the rights to sublease the land subject to the submerged land lease. The Pellet Terminal site includes the former Pellet Terminal, former Brush Beryllium Company production facility, and a former gasoline service station.

- The Pellet Terminal was an industrial site that was originally used to bring lumber into the area for construction and over the years has been used for the loading, unloading, and storage of coal and iron ore. A rail spur, rail unloading areas, and an ore stockpile were noted on portions of the Pellet Terminal site near the Black River based on 1893 Sanborn maps presented in the study area Phase I ESA. In 1980, Republic Steel Corporation constructed the Pellet Terminal to transfer iron ore from large lake carriers to smaller vessels capable of navigating the Cuyahoga River. Iron ore pellets were transferred from the larger ships to storage piles on site. The pellets were transferred off-site from the storage piles to rail cars or smaller vessels. The last load of pellets was transferred from the facility in early 2003. The transfer equipment was removed from the site and transferred to a site in Cleveland.
- The Brush Beryllium Company, located in the western portion of the area adjacent to the City Water Treatment Plant, was primarily engaged in the production of beryllium copper and beryllium metal products. Brush operated at the site from 1935 until its facility was destroyed by fire in 1948 and operations were discontinued. It is currently being used for parking.
- The area on the northeast corner of Broadway Avenue and East Erie Street, referred to as the Corner Parcel, contained a gasoline service station with six underground storage tanks from approximately 1950 to 1971, based on Sanborn maps presented in the Phase I ESA. Prior to the service station, the Corner Parcel contained a hotel.



Figure 10: Pellet Terminal Existing Conditions

A Phase I ESA and Phase II ESA were conducted on the Pellet Terminal site at the request of the City of Lorain to prepare the site for development. These assessments were conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ohio Voluntary Action Program. The underground storage tanks on the Corner Parcel were removed and a no further action determination was issued by the Bureau of Underground Storage Tank Regulations (BUSTR) on July 11, 2003. As a result of the Phase II ESA, a Remedial Action Plan was conducted in 2005. The remedial action plan proposed soil removal to meet unrestricted soil standards for concentrations of beryllium in soil at the former Brush Beryllium and for concentrations of Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and lead in shallow soil on the Corner Parcel property. A groundwater use restriction will be placed on the property to prevent future potable ground water use. The City of Lorain was granted an Urban Setting Designation in 2005 for groundwater underlying the approximately 114-acre lakefront area, which includes the Pellet Terminal site. Implementation of the remedial action plan is pending.

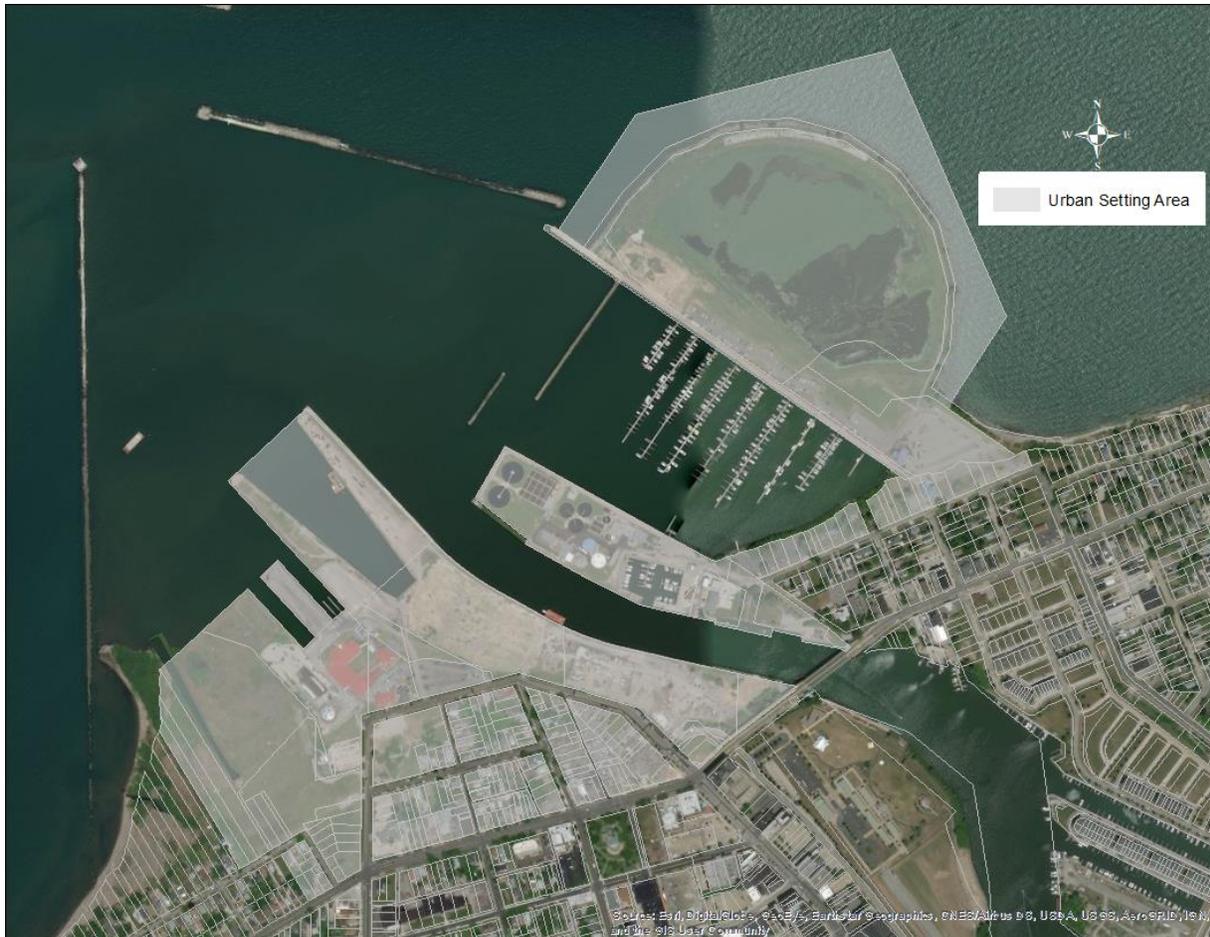


Figure 11: Pellet Terminal Urban Setting Designation

An approximately 5,500-foot-long combined sewage overflow tunnel was completed in 2016 between the former Pellet Terminal and 14th Street to divert sewage overflow during heavy rain events from discharging into the Black River. The tunnel is approximately 185 feet deep at the 36-foot diameter 14th Street access shaft and approximately 116 feet deep at the 30-foot diameter access shaft on the Pellet Terminal site. In addition to the access shaft on the Pellet Terminal site, there is also a building in the southwest corner of the site to provide access to debris screens associated with the tunnel.

The property is flat and comprised primarily of fill materials; however, the surface elevation of the site is substantially lower than Broadway Avenue and the Corner Parcel on the southern portion of its western boundary. This elevation decreases to the north with site surface elevation meeting the surface elevation of Broadway Avenue in the area of 1st Street and Washington Avenue. There are two utility bunkers in the central portion of the site and easements to the City Utility Department and to the telephone company for utility lines crossing under the river to serve the City’s east side. In addition, as mentioned previously, there are the overflow tunnel access shaft in the central portion of the site and the screen access building in the southwest corner of the site that cannot be removed or relocated.

The site's historical use for loading and unloading coal and ore vessels provides the site with access to the Black River and Lake Erie. There are steel bulkheads along the entire length of the eastern boundary of the site and both sides of the finger piers.

Issues to consider for redevelopment include:

- Proximity to Black River Landing
- Proximity to Lorain's downtown core and planned Broadway Avenue reconstruction
- River and lake access
- Presence of tunnel access shaft
- Presence of tunnel debris screen building
- Presence of utility bunkers
- Presence of utility lines and related easements
- Remaining remedial action
- Proximity to the water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities
- Site is located within an opportunity zone as well as being in an entertainment district and TIFF district.

Black River Landing South

The Black River Landing South site, owned by the Lorain Port Authority, is irregularly shaped and consists of approximately 14.5 acres. The site is accessed from West 8th Street. The northern portion of the site, north of West 8th Street, consists of approximately 10 acres and is bounded on the north by Black River Landing festival grounds and transportation center, on the east by the Black River with the HarborWalk housing and commercial project located across the Black River, on the south by the American Metal Chemical Corporation facility and commercial uses, and on the west by Black River Lane. The remainder of the site is a strip of land bounded on the west by the Broadway Avenue business district, on the east by the American Metal Chemical Corporation facility, and on the south by the Norfolk and Southern Railroad.

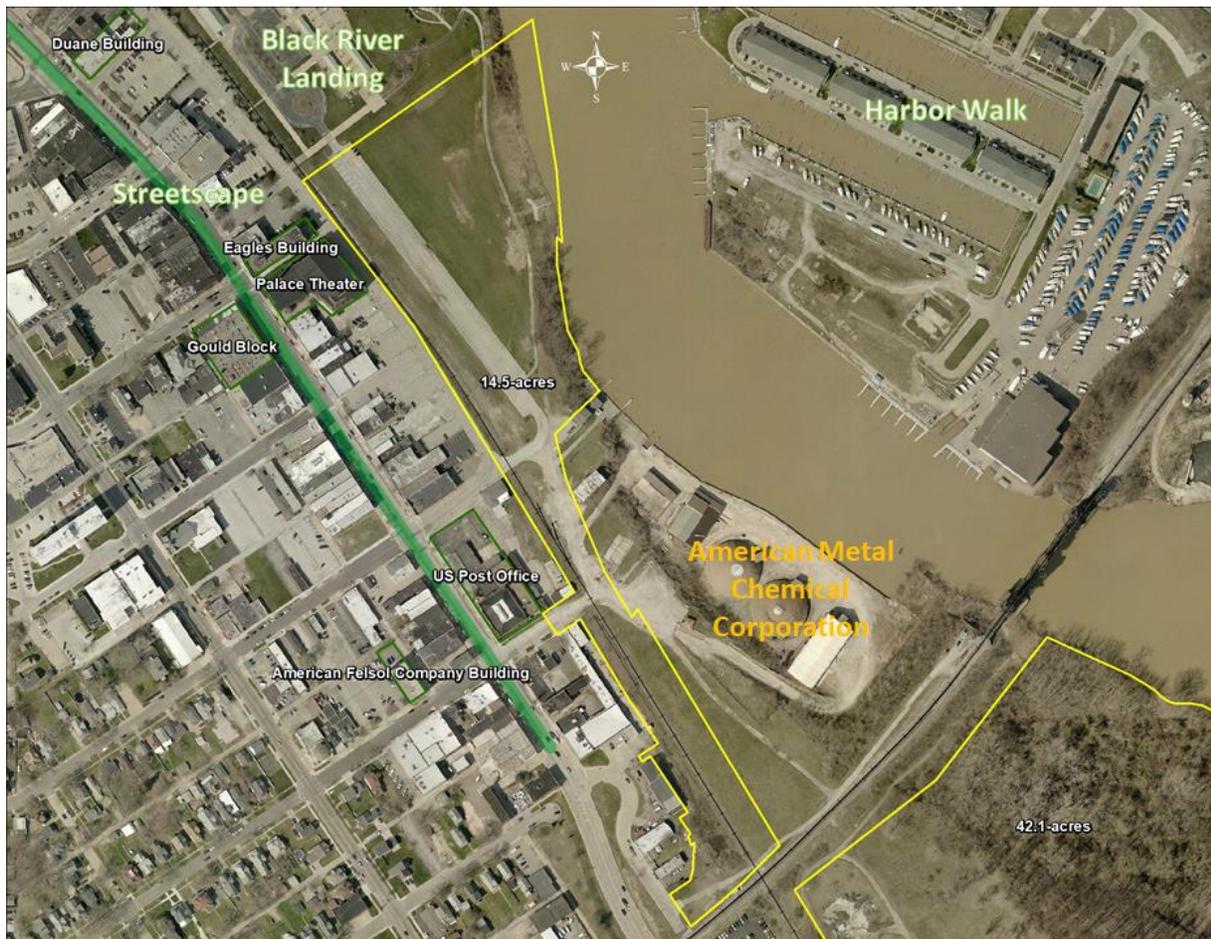


Figure 12: Black River Landing South Existing Conditions

The site was historically used for storage of iron ore and as a railroad car storage yard. There is an out of service rail line that runs along the western boundary of the site that serviced the Pellet Terminal area. The site is currently undeveloped green space, except for a paved area used for overflow parking for events at Black River Landing.

The site is somewhat isolated from the Broadway Avenue corridor due to the density of buildings along the east side of Broadway. However, it is adjacent to the rear of the Palace

Theater and former Eagles Building and has approximately 980 feet of frontage on the Black River in the northern portion of the site.

Information concerning environmental investigations on this site were not available. The Phase I ESA indicates that there is a medium potential for a recognized environmental condition to exist on this site due to its long-term use as a rail yard. The material types, quantities, and handling methodologies related to activities conducted on this site, however, are unknown.

Issues to consider for redevelopment include:

- Proximity to Black River Landing
- Proximity to business district and planned Broadway Avenue reconstruction
- Potential river access
- Unknown environmental status
- Site is located within an opportunity zone as well a TIFF district.

Boat Launch

The Boat Launch site, owned by the Lorain Port Authority, consists of approximately 42 acres. The site is accessed from West 14th Street and is bounded on the north by the Norfolk and Southern Railroad, the east by the Black River, with various industrial activities across the river, the south by undeveloped CSX Railroad property, and the west by commercial businesses along the Broadway corridor. The site was historically used as a railroad car storage yard and coal dock facility. Out-of-service rail lines are present adjacent to the western boundary of the site. Overall, the site has approximately 2,800 feet of frontage along the Black River.



Figure 13: Boat Launch Existing Conditions

The northern portion of the site, approximately 24 acres, is currently undeveloped and consist of a wooded area adjacent to the river. The central portion of this site, approximately 10-acres, contains the Black River Wharf Boat Launch, operated by the Lorain Port Authority. The boat launch consists of a 6-lane launch ramp, 170 car/boat trailer parking lot, service building, and transient dockage. The boat ramp construction was funded in part by a grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, which provides restrictions on the closing or relocation of the boat ramp. The remaining southern portion of the site, approximately 8-acres, is the starting point for the combined sewage overflow tunnel and contains the 185-foot deep, 36-foot diameter access shaft; but is otherwise undeveloped.

Information concerning environmental investigations on this site were not available. The Phase I ESA indicates that there is a medium potential for a recognized environmental condition to exist on this site due to its long-term use as a rail yard and potential impacts from an adjoining filling station and dry cleaning facility. The material types, quantities, and handling methodologies related to activities conducted on this site, however, are unknown.

Issues to consider for redevelopment include:

- Presence of the Black River Wharf Boat Launch
- Potential river access
- Presence of tunnel access shaft
- Separation from Broadway Avenue
- Commercial and industrial land uses in surrounding area
- Unknown environmental status
- Site is located within an opportunity zone and TIFF district, as well as being part of an enterprise zone.

Riverbend Commerce Park

The Riverbend Commerce Park, owned by the City of Lorain, consists of approximately 212 acres. It is accessed from State Route 611 (Colorado Avenue) and is bound on the north by State Route 611 and residential, commercial, and industrial facilities, on the west by the IRG International LLC property, with the Rowland Property adjacent to the west of the IRG property, on the south by the Black River with the Republic Engineered Products and US Steel industrial sites across the river, and on the east by the former municipal landfill. The site has approximately 5,100 feet of frontage on the river.

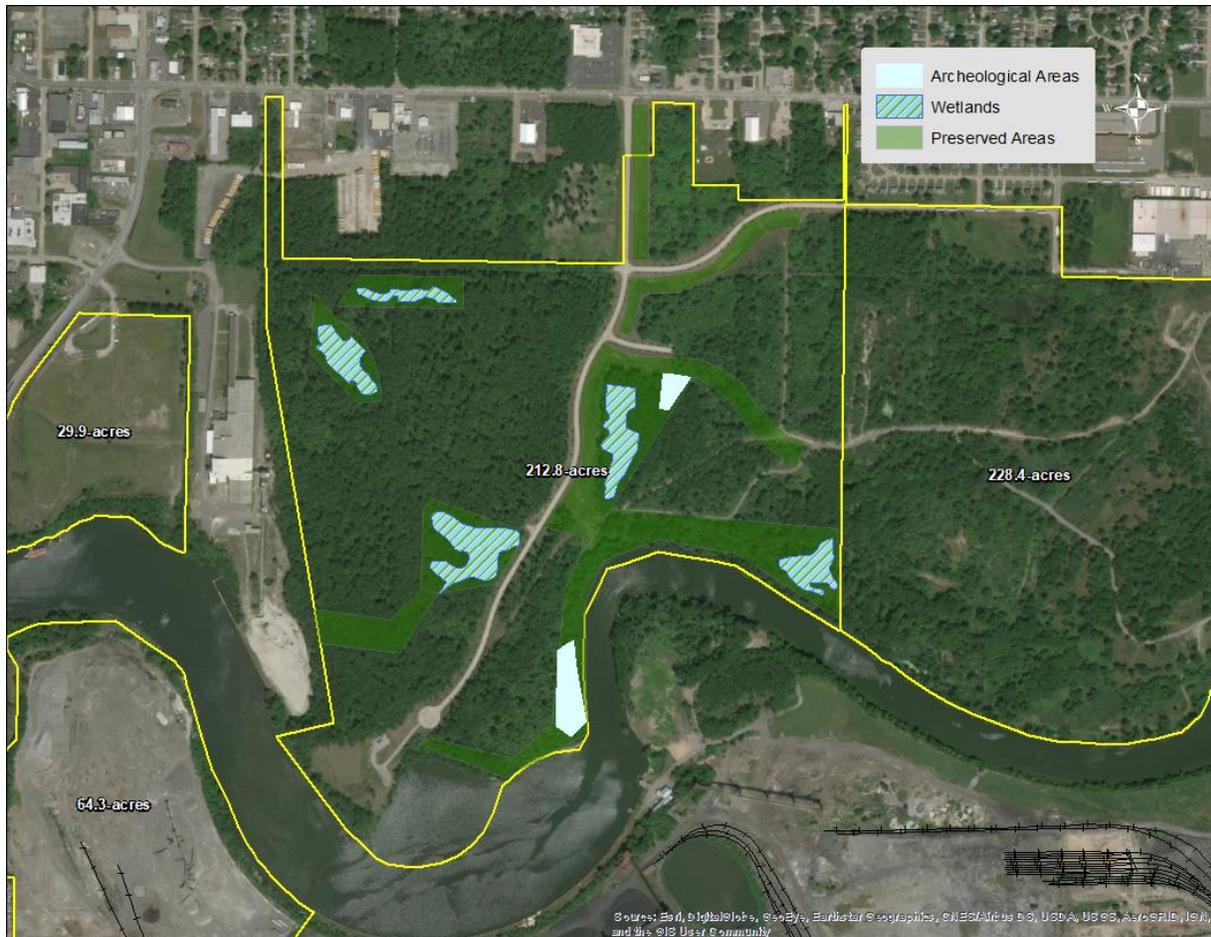


Figure 14: Riverbend Commerce Park Site Conditions

A commerce park design has been completed for this site and infrastructure (sewers, utilities, telecommunications, and access roads) is currently in place. The main road runs through the center of the site with approximately 80 developable acres on the western side of the road and approximately 49 developable acres on the eastern side of the road. The commerce park design provides multiple development parcels ranging from five to nine acres. The site is wooded except for the road and related infrastructure. There is a utility building in the southern portion of the site at the end of the main road into the area.

A steel manufacturing facility was briefly on the eastern portion of the site in the 1920s. Several buildings remained on the site until the early 1950s when they were removed.¹⁹ The site was vacant until infrastructure development for the commerce park. A Norfolk and Southern rail line was present in the northern portion of the site, but has since ceased operations and the rail lines removed.

Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments along with ecological and archeological assessments have been conducted on the site. The environmental assessments concluded that there was a very low risk of subsurface contamination on the property. In addition, the ecological and archeological assessments identified small areas to be preserved.

Issues to consider for redevelopment include:

- River access
- Existing infrastructure
- Surrounding industrial land use
- Site is located within an opportunity zone and TIFF district, as well as being part of an enterprise zone.

¹⁹ Phase I Environmental Property Assessment, Cromwell Park, 12 Acres of Park Land, Former Cromwell Steel Co, Lorain, Ohio, Prepared for the City of Lorain Community Development Department of Renewal Administrator, GEM Testing & Engineering Labs, 2310 Hamilton Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44114, August 20, 1997.

Former Landfill Property

The Former Landfill Property site, owned by the City of Lorain, consists of approximately 228 acres. It is accessed from State Route 611 (Colorado Avenue) and is bound on the north by State Route 611 and residential, commercial, and industrial facilities (including Camaco, a successful automotive parts manufacturer/supplier), on the west by the Riverbend Commerce Park, on the South by the Black River, with the Republic Engineered Products and US Steel industrial sites across the river, and on the east the Black River and wooded undeveloped areas. The site has approximately 5,100 feet of frontage on the river.



Figure 15: Former Landfill Site Conditions

The site is the location of a former municipal landfill operated by the City of Lorain from 1963 to 1975. The landfill accepted municipal sewage sludge and organic residues from industries. The landfill has been closed and is designated as No Further Remedial Action Planned. A Norfolk and Southern rail line was present in the northern portion of the site, but has since ceased operations and the rail lines removed. The site is currently undeveloped as Cromwell Park, with trails and several access roads.

Information concerning environmental investigations on this site were not available. The Phase I ESA indicates that there is a medium potential for a recognized environmental condition to exist due the closed landfill and historical superfund activities conducted on the site.

Issues to consider for redevelopment include:

- Proximity to Riverbend Commerce Park
- River access
- Surrounding industrial land use
- Closed landfill limits potential uses for the land
- Unknown environmental status

Stein Property

The Stein Property site, privately owned by Stein Inc, consists of approximately 64 acres. The site is accessed from Henderson Drive (State Route 611) and is bounded on the north and east by the Black River, on the west by East 21st Street or Henderson Drive (State Route 611) and a scrap metal recycling facility, and on the south by the Republic Engineered Products facility. The site has approximately 2,900 feet of frontage along the Black River.



Figure 16: Stein Property Existing Conditions

The site was formerly used as a slag stockpiling yard associated with the adjacent Republic Steel Mill. The site was purchased by Stein Inc from Republic Technologies International LLC in June 2003. Large piles of slag remain on the site impacting the topography around the perimeter of the site. There is a small building, truck scale, and conveyor system for loading trucks on the site; in addition to various heavy equipment for loading and moving slag on the site. There is rail access to the site along its southern boundary through the Republic Engineered Products facility.

Information concerning environmental investigations on this site were not available. The Phase I ESA indicates that there is a medium potential for a recognized environmental condition to exist on this site due to its long-term use for storage and loading of slag and potential impacts from leaking underground storage tank incidents from adjacent properties (the scrap recycling facility

and Republic Engineered Products). The material types, quantities, and handling methodologies related to activities conducted on this site, however, are unknown.

Issues to consider for redevelopment include:

- River access
- Rail access
- Presence of slag piles on site
- Topography impacted by slag fill/piles
- Surrounding industrial land use
- Unknown environmental status

Rowland Property

The Rowland Property site, privately owned by Billy S Rowland Trust, consists of approximately 30 acres. The site is accessed from State Route 611 across a property to the north of the site currently owned by IRG International LLC. It is bounded on the north and east by the IRG International LLC property, on the west by State Route 611, and on the south by the Black River. The site has approximately 1,200 feet of frontage along the Black River, including former vessel loading/unloading facilities.

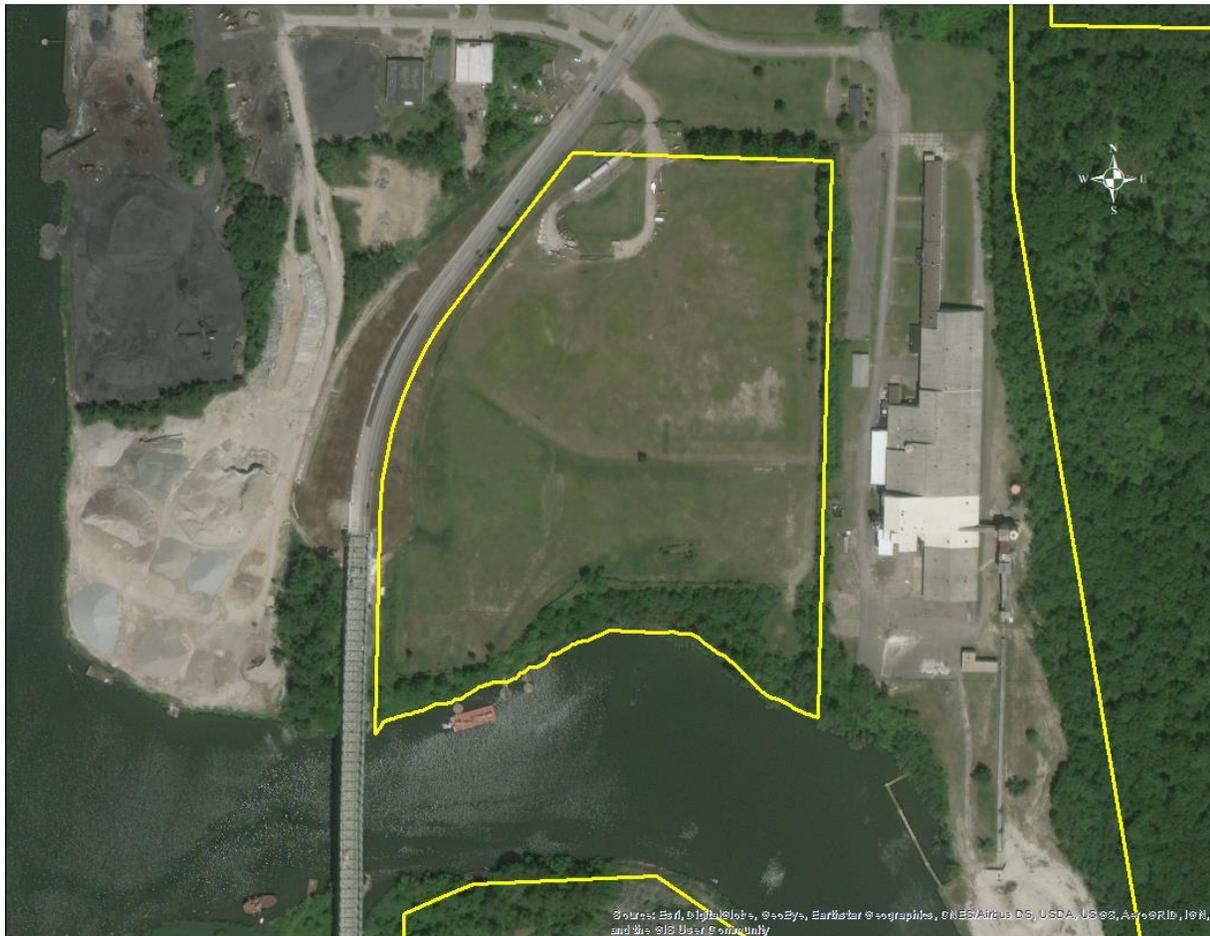


Figure 17: Rowland Property Existing Conditions

Formerly utilized by Jefferson Trucking and Ashland Oil Company, the site was undeveloped until sometime after 1970 based on aerial photos provided in the study area Phase I ESA. Two large above ground storage tanks (ASTs) were present from 1979 through at least 1994 and no longer present in 2004 (based on aerial photos provided in the study area Phase I ESA). It was not possible to determine the size and contents of the ASTs during this assessment. In addition to the tanks, the site had a river loading/unloading facility presumably to transfer liquid product to and from the above ground storage tanks. The site also appeared to have a truck transfer facility. The site is currently undeveloped green space with a circular drive area and small building.

Information concerning environmental investigations on this site were not available. The Phase I ESA indicates that there is a medium potential for a recognized environmental condition to exist due the former presence of the aboveground storage tanks and related transfer facilities.

Issues to consider for redevelopment include:

- River access and existing river loading/unloading area
- Access to the site
- Surrounding industrial land use
- Unknown environmental status

6. Stakeholder Outreach in Support of Lorain’s Expression of Interest Process

A. Materials

To help inform both the stakeholder community and the developer community about the Expression of Interest process, including property assets, location, and potential site uses, the Vita Nuova team worked with the County and the Port Authority to launch a project specific website, www.LorainHarborAWP.com. The website served as an information hub for community members, as well as provided crucial information about available sites, events, and tours of the properties to developers.

The team also created site specific fact sheets which developers could access via the website. The fact sheets included parcel information such as location, size, and zoning in order to help developers select the best site for their needs.

B. Process

On April 25, 2018 the City of Lorain and the Lorain Port Authority issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) for five of the seven previously discussed catalytic sites (the two privately-owned sites were not included). The EOI was a key recommendation for the redevelopment planning process and aims to spark interest in a revitalized Lorain waterfront.

C. Meeting 1

The EOI was widely distributed to a list of over 165 developers in the Midwest. This list of developers was compiled on behalf of the City and County of Lorain by Vita Nuova, LLC. It included regional and national developers operating in five states. In Ohio, developer markets in Cleveland, Columbus and Toledo were targeted. Out of state, regional developers from Chicago, Indianapolis, St. Louis and the greater Detroit area were contacted. Vita Nuova, LLC conducted extensive outreach to the developers identified. Outreach consisted of multiple contacts to the developers through phone calls and emails. It also included setting up individual meetings and site tours for interested developers. For many developers, this was their first-time introduction to the City of Lorain and the properties available for redevelopment along the Lorain waterfront.

The City and County hosted a Public Information Session on the Expression of Interest on June 14, 2018. The Mayor of Lorain and the County Commissioners hosted this event. Presentations by the Lorain Port Authority and Jobs Ohio discussed both local and state financing incentives to aid in redevelopment. It was an opportunity for the City to advertise the EOI and welcome developers to become familiar with Lorain and opportunities to invest in the community. Boat tours of the properties were offered. The turnout for the event was encouraging.

D. Meeting 2

Next the City of Lorain, Lorain County and Lorain Port Authority partnered with NAIOP of Northern Ohio to host a Lorain Harbor Developer Showcase on July 26, 2018. NAIOP is North America's largest and most prestigious commercial real estate organization. This event focused on the economic development incentives provided by the newly established Opportunity Zones enacted in part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Representatives from the USEPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization, Jobs Ohio, and experts in the field of finance and taxation discussed the incentives available to promote redevelopment of Lorain's historic urban waterfront. A factsheet of programs and incentives available at the City, Port Authority and County level was distributed to attendees. Boat tours of the properties along the Black River and Lake Erie were provided.

The EOI submission deadline was extended through September 21, 2018 in order to accommodate inquiries that were a result of the focused outreach efforts of the Lorain team. Vita Nuova, LLC assisted the City of Lorain and Lorain Port Authority team in reviewing the EOI submissions that were received developers.

Results

After the EOI process was complete, the Port Authority received 4 submittals

- Meridian Hospitality Group (MHG) – submitted with a general proposal (boutique hotel; mixed-use housing/office; industrial museum; urban agricultural facility; energy park; boardwalk and beautification): also interest in becoming master developer
- IRG – Waterfront mixed-use redevelopment (residential with mixed-use commercial and retail space on the first floor; beautification and access to waterfront)
- Riverbend R3 - Manufacturing facility of products from de-watered processed dredge sediments and from other community 'waste stream' materials (facility and training center)
- Herman Kittle – submitted senior low-income housing (may be possible to locate outside of the AWP area)

Following the submission deadline, an internal review was conducted by Vita Nuova in which a scoring sheet based on the questions and scope in the EOI was used to evaluate each submittal. Vita Nuova also met internally with the Port and the County to further evaluate and discuss the proposals. Based on those discussions, we asked each of the four groups who had submitted proposals to attend an interview to further discuss their submittals. This provided an opportunity

for the County and Port to ask specific questions regarding the proposals and timing. Following the interviews, we had a debriefing of each of the interview processes and proposals. The Port is following up with each of the proposing parties to further discuss what more is needed in order to entertain a partnership. Because this was an EOI process, and not an RFP process, the intent was to determine what interest existed and to provide a platform for the City, Port, and County to engage with possible developers.

The Port is going to follow up with each of the proposals. They are also working on marketing and financing possibilities of future development for the sites.

7. Enhancing Broadband Access in Lorain

Broadband is a critical infrastructure element to coordinate with redevelopment in urban areas, suburbs, and small towns alike. Currently considered as important as roads and utilities, broadband fiber provides the backbone of future economic and community development. As part of the Lorain Area-Wide Plan (AWP) effort, the Vita Nuova team evaluated the current state of broadband availability and services for commercial properties in the downtown study area. The team also worked with leaders of the community to identify strategic policy actions enabling improved coordination between broadband players and City officials during the redevelopment of downtown.

The AWP team requested contacts for various broadband providers and owners in Lorain and the vicinity whose interviews would form a baseline understanding of existing commercial service. A cross-section of players in the broadband space were contacted, including current data and Internet Service Providers (ISP), other Ohio counties with municipally-owned systems, and broadband non-profit interest groups. The contacts were all invited to participate in telephone interviews and attend the community planning workshop in the City of Lorain in October 2018. The team interviewed three ISPs, Charter Spectrum, Everstream, and Century Link, and the CEO of one municipal-owned system from Medina County. One ISP, Century Link, attended the workshop as a participating stakeholder.

The Lorain County Community College first worked with a non-profit entity to bring broadband fiber to the Lorain area over the past 10 years. First serving the Community Anchor Institutions, including hospitals and the College, the network was built with assistance of the broadband stimulus grant package. Lorain County began to connect to the Fiber, where possible, providing services to key County entities. Multiple ISPs then began constructing fiber lines in the downtown and immediate vicinity, providing services primarily to commercial customers. Century Link was the original telecom provider in Lorain for decades, using their existing infrastructure as the basis for upgrading to fiber.

Currently, robust broadband capacity and speeds are available to commercial entities downtown who can connect to the fiber lines. Speeds of up to 100GB are available with some providers. Most of Lorain City and the County are served with broadband, and it's a mix of fiber, cable, and copper lines. Fiber to the premises is not necessarily available in all places, commercial or residential. WiFi networks are available to individual paying subscribers to some of the ISPs,

however, free public WiFi zones utilizing access points in central locations do not currently exist in downtown.

Stakeholders at the AWP planning summit in October expressed the need for goals and actions in two primary areas, coordination and education. Groups want the broadband discussion to be formalized with the establishment of a Technology task force to spearhead efforts relating to broadband and economic development. Community members felt strongly that broadband deployment and planning should be coordinated with current and future infrastructure improvements downtown, maximizing opportunities to better transportation and communication network efficiencies. City and County leaders should be working directly with the ISPs, non-profits, and major broadband players, such as the Community College, to plan for the availability and promotion of high-speed networks. Education of elected officials and economic development professionals on the importance of broadband in attraction of high-quality businesses to Lorain was a high priority for workshop attendees.

Broadband, as a basic amenity, currently exists in downtown Lorain. The next step in the evolution of the asset is creating touchpoints between civic leaders, the private sector, businesses, and the community, to plan the future of how broadband can benefit the City and County in its redevelopment of the downtown area. An understanding of broadband's potential in harnessing economic development in downtown is critical to planning for the future deployment and expansion of its capabilities. Marketing this asset outside the community will help potential business owners and citizens considering Lorain to envision their growth in the community.

8. Key Accomplishments and Next Steps

The Lorain Area-wide Plan and associated activities has set in motion a redevelopment process which should help the city make substantial improvements in the coming years. Several key accomplishments were achieved and next steps identified.

Key Accomplishments:

- Key areas of waterfront property were identified and better defined for disposition and redevelopment.
- Lorain was put back on the map by the Greater Cleveland Real Estate community and is now known regionally from Chicago to Pittsburgh for its available waterfront property and readiness for redevelopment.
- Lorain now has a supportive stakeholder community, working together on their own revitalization projects and ready to support positive redevelopment in Lorain.
- Lorain now has a website lorainharborawp.com to promote positive revitalization activities and share redevelopment opportunities with potential developers and end users looking for a home.
- The entire Area-wide Planning region is part of an Opportunity Zone, designated by the Governor.
- The downtown, adjacent to the waterfront, now has an active revitalization committee that will meet quarterly under the auspices of the County Community Development Department.

- A path forward for broadening and strengthening broadband has been identified.
- The Area-wide Planning process has strengthened Lorain's approach to redevelopment and helped define key strategies and resources needed for achieving success.
- Lorain's relationship with key state and federal partners has been strengthened through this approach.

Next Steps:

- Complete City's Comprehensive Plan using information gained regarding land use and market in the area-wide planning process.
- Follow through on the EOI Submissions by either conducting due diligence on acceptable proposals or terminating review and informing participating parties.
- Continue to advertise success through the lorainharborawp.com website.
- Consider developing a Lorain Opportunity Zone Prospectus that highlights remaining property, incentives, and specific redevelopment opportunities which can be shared with developers.
- Follow through on the Lorain Downtown Prepared Workshop and continue to hold quarterly meetings with the downtown task force created in the process.
- Implement a Broadband Technology Task force that will coordinate with infrastructure improvements in the downtown and ensure access in Lorain. This could be a subcommittee of the downtown task force but should probably be broadened to include the community college and other key stakeholders.
- Continue to coordinate with EPA and see additional funds from state and federal agencies. Specifically, apply for a reuse EPA assessment grant with approximately 50% of the funds going toward redevelopment efforts in the downtown and waterfront.

Finally, while there may be many large and exciting projects proposed and possibly implemented, it is our recommendation that the redevelopment stakeholders in Lorain continue to focus on small opportunities to advance the vision for a revitalized waterfront and downtown.