



**REPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY
2023-2024**



**LAKE DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY**

Accelerating Economic Growth



ARTHUR LINDROSE



PATRICK T. MOHORCIC

Lake Development Authority accelerates the economic growth of Lake County by providing tailored guidance and resources in the areas of financing, partnership, spaces, transportation, and community.

In short, we help people, businesses, and municipalities to thrive.

LDA Report to the Community

From Board Chair, Arthur Lindrose and Executive Director, Patrick T. Mohorcic

It is our pleasure to present this Report to the Community from the Lake Development Authority (LDA). I am thrilled to report significant progress on many fronts outlined in our long-term strategic plans, including the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) and the Lake County Coastal Development Plan (CDP). These plans were not just words on paper; they are becoming tangible realities, with several projects either underway or slated to begin construction this year. It is both our board's and organization's commitment to continue transforming visions into actions, as outlined in our strategic plan established during our inception in 2007.

Leading the charge is the construction of our new Airport Terminal Building, marking a pivotal moment in the revitalization of **Lake County Executive Airport (LCEA)**, formerly known as Lost Nation Airport. When LDA assumed stewardship in 2014, the airport faced decline, having foregone Federal Aviation Administration funding for nineteen years. However, through concerted efforts, we've not only sustained essential services but are now poised to propel LCEA's growth and modernization. The terminal project signals the beginning of this transformative journey, aimed at expanding corporate charter operations while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of Lost Nation Road, welcoming our community with open arms.

Simultaneously, our dedication to implementing the **Lake County Coastal Development Plan** remains unwavering. Collaborating with partners like Lake Metroparks, we've allocated \$550,000 from the Lakeshore Improvement Fund towards the construction of revetment walls for their scenic lakefront trail—an initiative that underscores our commitment to enhancing recreational amenities and preserving natural beauty.

The culmination of years of planning comes to fruition with the commencement of construction on the **Mentor Harbor Channel Walls**. Through the collaborative efforts with the City of Mentor and the Mentor Harbor Yacht Club, coupled with vital support from State Senator Jerry Cirino and State Representative Jamie Callender, we've secured over \$6 million from the State of Ohio to rehabilitate century-old walls, safeguarding critical infrastructure and maritime heritage.

In the pages that follow, you'll witness our staff's steadfast dedication to accelerating economic growth, particularly through the growth of Lake County Executive Airport and leveraging our unique position as an Ohio Port Authority to foster community-wide development.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to the Lake County Commissioners for their unwavering support and extend our best wishes to all our esteemed community partners. Together, we are helping people, businesses, and municipalities thrive. *ML*

Patrick T. Mohorcic



JOHN T. PLECNIK,
COMMISSION PRESIDENT



RICHARD J. REGOVICH,
COMMISSIONER



JOHN R. HAMERCHECK,
COMMISSIONER

A Message from the Lake County Commissioners

The Lake County Commissioners are committed to improving quality of life and the financial future of Lake County by increased efforts focused on Coastal, Economic, and Workforce Development.


The Commissioners assisted in initial funding of the proposed Lake Metropark’s two-mile multi-purpose trail along the Lake Erie coastline from Fairport Harbor to Painesville Township Park. Upon completion, the 10-foot-wide asphalt trail will link Painesville Township Park and Fairport Harbor. Together, the parks attract over 500,000 visitors annually. This trail will improve the health of our community and be a catalyst for further economic development in the area. Creation of the trail will provide clean, safe access to outdoor recreation and a location for visitors to stay healthy by walking, running, or biking.

“The Metroparks have been a tremendous partner with this board, and the County in general. Our Metroparks are among the best in the state of Ohio. You often hear us talk about safety and our Metroparks are safe. They’re a key reason Lake County is somewhere you can live, work, and raise a family,” said Commissioner John R. Hamercheck.

The Commissioners also continue to partner with the Lake Development Authority to facilitate the economic development process in a way that ensures businesses have the necessary tools to successfully enhance their operations and business ventures.

Commission President John T. Plecnik added, “I will continue to put economic development at the forefront of priorities for the County Budget. By using economic development to grow the tax base in Lake County, the Board will be able to provide outstanding services to its residents without raising taxes.”

The County also continues to partner with multiple agencies, such as OhioMeansJobs Lake County, the Alliance for Working Together, Auburn Career Center, and Lakeland Community College, to promote workforce development in Lake County,

“Since the time I became Mayor and now as Commissioner, one of the things we focused on was improving access and education to rewarding careers in Lake County for our young people,” said Commissioner Richard J. Regovich. “We need to continue this important initiative to ultimately become even a better destination business looking to relocate by providing a world-class workforce.” 

2023-2024 BY THE NUMBERS

**Team
neo**
Support in
Lake County
\$50,000



Reported 2023 Metrics in Lake
County Business Support

1 Project | 26 Total Jobs Created
\$1,500,000 Total Jobs Created Payroll
\$100,000 in Total Fixed Asset Investment



Fairport Harbor Marina Project: Lake Erie’s Recreation and Research Center

In collaboration with Ohio Department of Natural Resources, The Village of Fairport Harbor, Fairport Harbor Port Authority, and the LDA, this project focuses on building a new recreational transit marina in the Village of Fairport Harbor, along with an ODNR Research Vessel.

The current Fairport Harbor Marina, situated West of the Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park, presently accommodates

the Fairport Harbor Port Authority’s 14 floating docks and a two-lane launch ramp. The envisioned project aims to revolutionize this space. The proposed design entails replacing the current slips with 60 transient slips and 22 seasonal slips. Additionally, plans involve the reconstruction of the boat launch into a four-lane public launch featuring a dedicated jet ski launch. Other notable features include the installation of a breakwater, the creation of a new parking lot with expanded capacity for 95 trailers and cars, restroom facilities, a fish cleaning station, fuel station, and the incorporation of pop-up shops to enhance the visitor experience.

Currently the funding search for this project includes federal, state, and local grant dollars. The LDA has secured \$5 million through ODNR for the breakwater construction. MSA is working on the design, engineering, and permitting of the breakwater. In addition to the breakwater funds, Lake Development Authority has been awarded \$1,100,000 from the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program to go towards the first set of slips.




Mentor Harbor Channel Wall Revetment Project

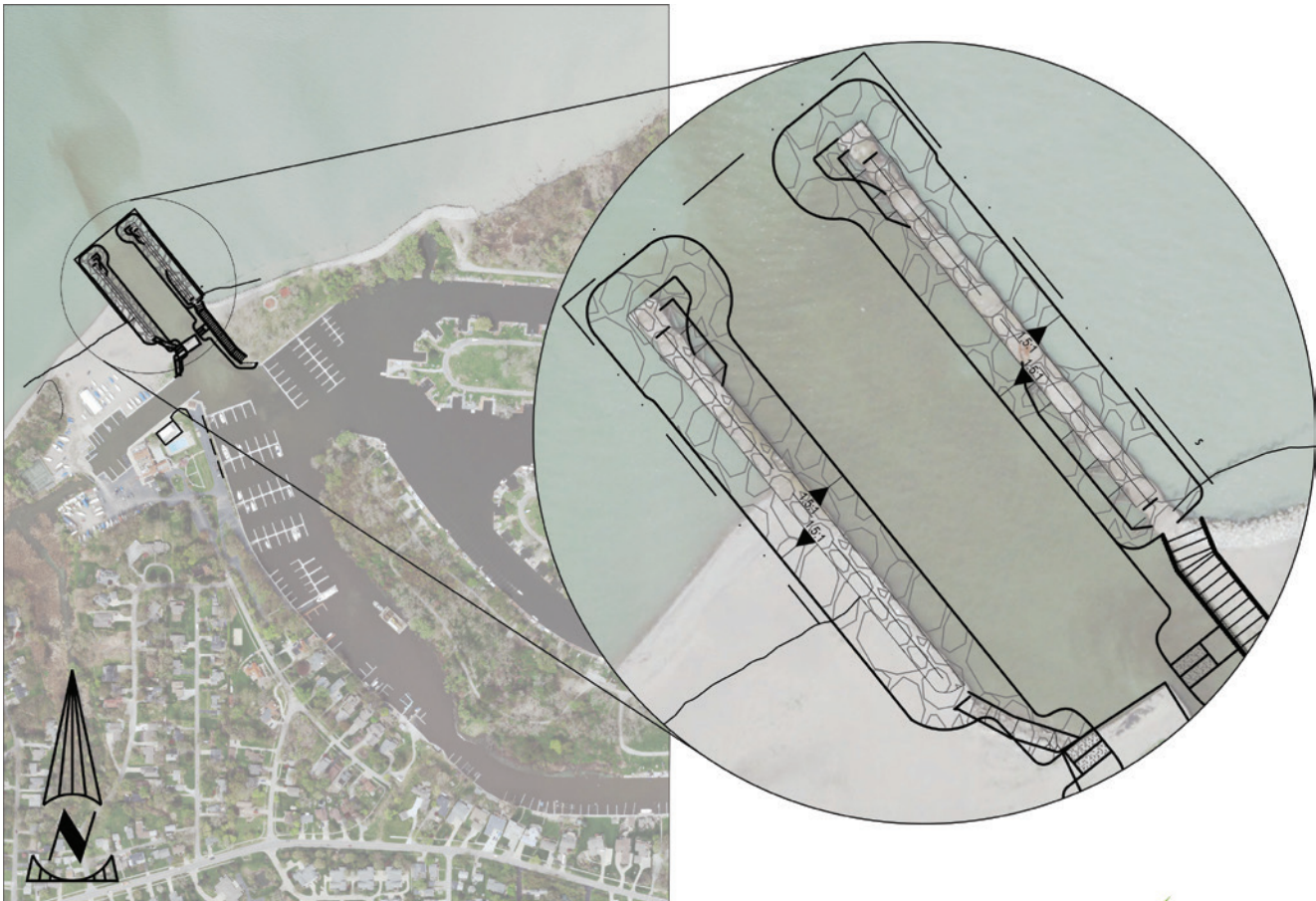


The Mentor Harbor Channel Wall Revetment Project aims to reconstruct and stabilize parts of the 100-year-old channel walls and existing sunken barge. This endeavor is geared towards enhancing navigability, reducing wave impact, and ensuring safe access for boaters in both public and private marinas.

Thanks to the support of Ohio State Senator Jerry Cirino and Ohio State Representative Jamie Callender, H.B. 45 and H.B. 33 secured \$500,000 for project redesign and engineering, along with \$6 million in construction grant money.

The project has been in collaboration with LDA, City of Mentor, and Mentor Harbor Yachting Clubs with design, engineering, and consulting firm, Mannik and Smith Group.

Design and engineering is completed, while permitting and bidding processes are underway. Construction will begin during the end of 2024 and early 2025. 



MENTOR HARBOR OVERALL SITE
SCALE: 1" = 500'

REPAIR DETAIL
SCALE: 1" = 100'



LDA Bond Financing Program



MENTOR JOINT VENTURE

Location: Mentor, Ohio

Developer: Mentor Joint Venture, LLC


Total Project Cost: \$13,100,000

Taxable Lease Revenue Bonds: \$8,600,000 Series 2023

On March 22, 2023, the Lake Development Authority Board of Directors authorized the issuance of \$8.6 million in lease revenue bonds to support a new 125,000 square foot industrial spec building in the City of Mentor. The developer is Mentor Joint Venture comprised of George Davis, Rick Sommers, Spenser Pisak, and Kevin Callahan of Premier Development. The lease revenue bonds were able to lower the cost of the project by eliminating the sales tax on the construction material costs for the project. “With today’s high interest rates and material costs, the port authority’s financing was a critical component in making this project economically feasible” stated George Davis. “We look forward to working with the Port Authority on the additional 800,000 square feet of buildings we plan to construct at the site” added Rick Sommers.

“Ohio Port Authorities have broad development-related powers that allow them to provide many innovative financing solutions under Ohio Revised Code. Lake Development Authority promotes economic development by assisting capital investments made by public, private, or nonprofit entities through its Capital-Lease Bond Financing Program,” said prior CFO Patrick Mohorcic, who also served as director of public finance for the board.

“We are happy to help accelerate this investment in Lake County, especially in our industrial sector, where that industry has a vacancy rate of 3%, limiting the space where companies can expand their operations,” stated David Anderson, previous Executive Director.

LDA issues both taxable and tax-exempt conduit bonds underwritten by commercial lenders and other financing sources. These include private activity bonds (PABs), capital lease bonds, and community development bonds. For each of these, the borrower is responsible for service on the incurred debt. Capital lease financing enables a for-profit borrower to obtain a sales tax exemption on all construction materials. 




West Orchards Continues to Work with LDA for 10 Years

Lake Development Authority administers a CROP (Credit Relieve Outreach Program) Loan Program for the purpose of providing affordable short-term financing for Agro-Businesses in Lake County. Short term operating needs such as inventory, supplies, and payroll are eligible; typically, expenses are for seasonal start-up or harvesting. One of the agricultural businesses that has been utilizing this loan for 10 years is West Orchards located in Perry.

West Orchards is a fifth-generation farm, established in 1891, run by Todd and Ame West. The 70-acre Lake Erie orchard grows many deciduous fruit tree varieties including sour cherries, peaches, plums, nectarines, pears, and apples. They also feature pick-your-own strawberry patches. Vegetables are available including peppers, cucumbers, pickles, cabbage, tomatoes, yellow squash, zucchini, beets, gourds, pumpkins, and sweet corn. Lettuce and fresh herbs are a new feature, as well.

Due to the proximity to Lake Erie, the orchard escapes the late spring frosts and early autumn freezes. During the growing season, the Wests operate a farm market at 3034 North Ridge Road and open their strawberry fields in early June.

All produce is hand picked and the orchard sells the best possible produce grown. The Lake Development Authority is proud to be able to have a program to support local farmers and the economy of small business owners in Lake County. 





Flying High at the Lake County Executive Airport

PATTY FULOP, MANAGER

Established in 2007, the Lake County Port Authority was tasked with creating economic development opportunities, improving the Lake Erie shoreline, and upgrading the then-named, Willoughby Lost Nation Municipal Airport into an enhanced regional facility benefiting Lake County's businesses and residents. While progress has been steady across all fronts, the

now-named Lake County Executive Airport is about to "take-off".

Since Lake County assumed ownership in 2014, the Lake County Executive Airport has implemented numerous projects that increase business jet traffic. These enhancements include the installation of an Automated Weather Observation Station (AWOS), runway repairs, ramp and taxiway repairs, and upgrades to the snow removal and mowing equipment. An Airport Master Plan was created to propel the airport into the future. Now with clear direction from the co-sponsors of the airport, the Lake County Commissioners and the LDA Board of Directors, progress including development of airport property and services can reach new heights.

A great deal of the money for current projects will come from federal and state grants whose source of funding draws from user fees, not individual taxpayers. There are several projects currently underway, including improvements to the future t-hangar site, rehabilitation of the main runway, a geometrical shift of a taxiway with removal of unused pavement, replacement of the electrical vault and beacon, and upgrading the main runway to LED lighting.





While these projects are undeniably significant, the prospect of a new terminal building eclipses them all. “I could barely contain my excitement,” exclaimed Patty Fulop, the Airport Manager, “when I got the call from Congressman David Joyce’s office, that our terminal building project had been accepted for grant funds by FAA.” The Lake County Executive Airport has been lacking a main entrance, administration office, and a terminal building for many years now. This phone call is the beginning of a long-awaited upgrade for the residents of Lake County and the users of the airport.

The 5,800 square foot terminal building will be ADA accessible, energy efficient, and have great views of the runways. The public areas on the first floor will consist of a lobby, lounge areas, a snack bar, pilot lounge, information counter, and ADA-compliant restrooms. There will be an elevator to the second floor that will house administration offices and a passenger meet-and-greet room for departing and arriving groups.

Our next steps are permitting and we are hopeful for a groundbreaking in 2025. 

EVENTS AT LCEA



The Lake County Executive Airport hosts annual events including the 2024 Total Solar Eclipse Watch Party, Annual Pancake Breakfast and Young Eagles Event in June, and a WWII reenactment this year September 14th.

The LCEA also hosted a group of 30 home school students with the Willoughby/Eastlake Public Library on May 8th, a group of 117 from Memorial Middle School in Mentor on May 20th, and a group of 75

from Shore Middle School (also from Mentor). A select group of Perry Middle school 6th graders were treated in October to a “Share Your Genius Day” experience with multiple hands-on activities and Young Eagle flights. Patty Fulop hosted three high school seniors in May 2024 for a job shadow experience. Fostering youth in aviation is an important role for the future workforce as there are shortages of pilots and mechanics and expected shortages in the future as older pilots and aircraft mechanics retire.



Lake Metroparks Opens First Part of 2.5 Mile Lakefront Trail

Phase one of a new lakefront hike and bike trail at Painesville Township Park is now officially open for public use—an important step in a long-term effort to connect Lake County residents with the lakefront.

Lake Metroparks is in the process of constructing a two-mile trail along the Lake Erie shore north of Fairport Nursery Road in Painesville Township and Fairport Harbor. This ten-foot-wide asphalt trail will link Painesville Township Park and Fairport Harbor. The path, built largely over brownfield property, will feature several stops and overlooks to take in views of Lake Erie.

One of the great advantages of this proposed area is that much of the 10,000-foot shoreline has already been armored against erosion and the trail is being constructed over an existing haul road behind the erosion wall. Portions of the trail will run near Kurtz Bros. Inc. property and across the former Diamond Shamrock property.

“This trail is unlike anything else in our system and unlike anything else on the Great Lakes. We are very excited for residents to get out and enjoy unobstructed views of Lake Erie,” says Executive Director Paul Palagyi.


Creation of this lakefront trail is a success story for modern conservation efforts. The project brought together a wide range of public and private partners who recognized the national significance of providing public access to the shores of Lake Erie. Funding came from many federal, state and local agencies who worked in concert with Lake Metroparks to assemble what is destined to be one of the premier lakefront paths in the Great Lakes region.

The development of this trail was made possible with help from a wide range of committed partners. Working together, this collaborative effort secured millions in federal, state and local grants and donations. Visitors can now enjoy a beautiful walk along Lake Erie thanks to the work of many valuable partners including Lake County Probate Judge Mark J. Bartolotta, Lake



Metroparks Board of Park Commissioners Gretchen Skok DiSanto, Frank J. Polivka & John C. Redmond, U.S. Representative David P. Joyce, Former U.S. Representative Steven LaTourette, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Ohio Senator Jerry C. Cirino, Ohio Representative Jamie Callender, Ohio Representative Daniel P. Troy, Kurtz Bros., Inc: President Rick Costello, Director of Business Development Jason Ziss and Owners John, Greg and Tom Kurtz, Lake County Commissioners John R. Hamercheck, John Plecnik & Richard J. Regovich, Lake Development Authority Former Executive Director David Anderson, Ohio Department of Transportation Director Jack Marchbanks, Ph.D., Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Director Anne M. Vogel and Ohio Department of Natural Resources Director Mary Mertz.

“We are very thankful to our partners for their support of this project. Their help allows us to continue enhancing connectivity among our parks and provides visitors with amazing access to our greatest natural resource – Lake Erie,” Palagyi said.

Phase one of this lakefront trail takes visitors along a half mile of lakeshore. Phase two will continue the trail west, but first requires construction of a breakwall and trail. The breakwall will be constructed in 2024 and the trail behind it will be constructed in 2025. Plans for a proposed phase three are still in development but may include parking lots and access points to the trail from Fairport Nursery Road. 

Osborne Park Shoreline Protection Project

The City of Willoughby is embarking on one of its most ambitious capital improvement projects in history as construction commences in early 2025 on the Osborne Park Shoreline Protection Project, with the start of the critical first phase of Willoughby's reimagining of the entire Osborne Park shoreline.

This first phase of the \$12 million project is being supported by \$2 million in state capital, \$1 million in City funding, and two planning and design grants from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources totaling \$275,000. Other sources of funding are currently being sought as the project progresses.

This restoration project will address the massive erosion problems and provide much needed public access to Lake Erie's shoreline. For years, high water levels have eroded much of the 1,400 linear foot shoreline along Lake Erie, resulting in the loss of 35 feet of natural parkland bluff, which is now threatening critical underground infrastructure and limits recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This first phase includes bluff stabilization, erosion control to prevent further degradation and the restoration of native habitat. Additionally, phase one will include the creation of a cobble and sand beach, a central jetty, and access paths to the shoreline.

"We are incredibly grateful to our state legislators and city council for their unwavering support in securing funds to help make this project become a reality," said Mayor Bob Fiala. "The Osborne Park shoreline is not only a key part of our community's recreational life, but it's also vital to maintaining the natural landscape and ecosystem along Lake Erie."

Refreshing Osborne Park has been an important issue for residents of Willoughby for some time. Several community meetings have been held to share ideas and gather feedback since the initial concept planning started in 2021. This plan to protect and restore the shoreline and create new recreational amenities through a multi-phased approach has been solidly supported by the public and planning team.

The Smith Group, a design consultant with an international reputation for coastal engineering, was retained in 2021 for the project. Design and

engineering are complete, and the shoreline permitting is expected to be finalized by early 2025.

This project design aims to help soften the typical harder shoreline protection strategies commonly employed to stop erosion by integrating a nature-based solution using various components (stone jetties, cobble and sand beaches, wetlands, and traditional armor stone) while all helping to improve water quality by reducing sediment load and treating stormwater surface runoff.

The bluff area will be restored using natural habitats and indigenous prairie grasses in concert with ADA accessible paths to the shoreline. Final phases of the project include a featured landscape amenity consisting of a series of grass and stone steps that will cascade down from the uplands to the shoreline providing stadium viewing of the beautiful great lake and its priceless sunsets. This project is noteworthy in many ways by delivering Willoughby another incredible landmark that improves quality of life, bolsters real estate values, encourages economic development, expands public access and improves the shoreline's quality. This project embodies the national urban trend of enhancing parks and public spaces which link residents to nature and encapsulates the public's desire in Lake County to connect with Lake Erie. *W*



Lake Development Authority Partners

BUSINESS PARTNERS



BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS



MUNICIPAL PARTNERS



Village of Grand River



Kirtland Hills



Leroy Township, Ohio



THE CITY OF Painesville

Painesville Township



PERRY VILLAGE

Village of Timberlake



The City of Wickliffe



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Patty Fulop
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Debbie Connor
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Myranda Keister
Director of Planning
and Development

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