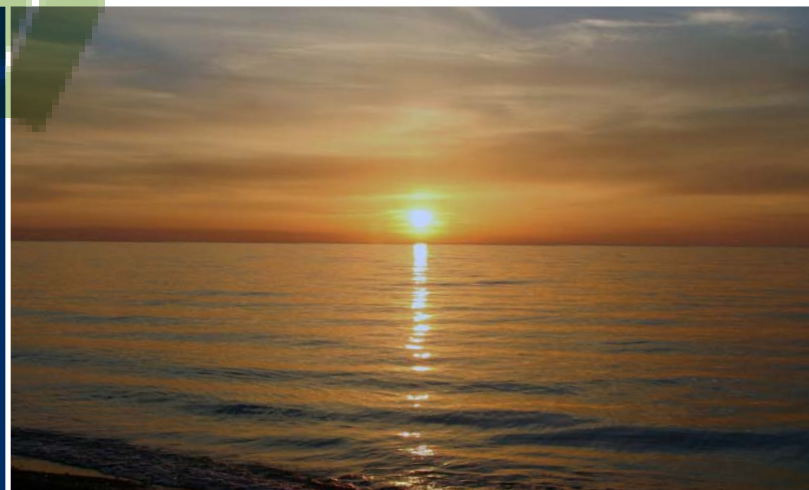


# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Ashtabula County Commissioners

Peggy A. Carlo  
Joe Moroski  
Daniel R. Claypool

## Ashtabula County Planning Commission

Commissioner Peggy Carlo  
Commissioner Daniel Claypool  
Commissioner Joe Moroski  
Martha Demshar  
William Douglass  
David Hartz  
Gary Hunter  
Sandi Kanicki  
Marty Kuula  
Kathleen Roskos  
Evelyn Schaeffer

## Coastal Management Plan Steering Committee

**Bill Douglass**, Ashtabula County Planning Commission  
**Evelyn Schaeffer**, Ashtabula County Planning Commission  
**Jake Brand**, Ashtabula County Community Services & Planning Dept.  
**Barb Carr**, Ashtabula County Community Services & Planning Dept.  
**Janice Switzer**, Ashtabula County Community Services & Planning Dept.  
**Jessica Forsythe**, Ashtabula Area Chamber of Commerce  
**Jim Timonere**, Ashtabula City  
**Ron Kister**, Ashtabula City Port Authority  
**Marty Kuula**, Ashtabula City Port Authority  
**Norah Anderson**, Ashtabula Civic Development Corporation  
**Peggy Carlo**, Ashtabula County Commissioner  
**Dan Claypool**, Ashtabula County Commissioner  
**Joe Moroski**, Ashtabula County Commissioner  
**Sean Ratican**, Ashtabula County Port Authority  
**Mark Winchell**, Ashtabula County Visitors & Convention Bureau  
**Debbie Santiana**, Ashtabula Lighthouse  
**Mike Wayman**, Ashtabula Twp Park  
**Pat Douglass**, Citizen  
**Ron Maki**, Conneaut City Planning Commission  
**Deanna Gates**, Conneaut City  
**Diana Spencer**, Conneaut City Planning Commission  
**Luke Gallagher**, Conneaut Port Authority  
**Denver Spieldenner**, Conneaut Port Authority  
**David Dickson**, Conneaut Township Park  
**Jim Supplee**, Conneaut Township Park  
**Jim Lavender**, Geneva on the Lake  
**Denny Brown**, Geneva Township  
**Jim Hockaday**, Geneva on the Lake  
**Brian Anderson**, Growth Partnership  
**Shelly Mullen**, Lift Bridge Community Association  
**Janette Petroli**, The Lodge & Conference Center - GOTL  
**Matthew Smith**, ODNR - Scenic Rivers  
**Phil Vichocky**, ODNR - Geneva State Park  
**Carl Feather**, Star Beacon  
**Lori McLaughlin**, The Lodge & Conference Center - GOTL  
**Earl Tucker**, Ashtabula City Park Commision

## Ashtabula County Staff

Janice Switzer, Director - Ashtabula County Department of Community Services and Recycling  
Jake Brand, Grant Specialist - Ashtabula County Department of Community Services and Recycling  
Barbara B. Carr, Administrative Secretary - Ashtabula County Department of Community Services and Recycling

## Planning Consultant

Poggemeyer Design Group, Inc.

This Coastal Management Plan was prepared by Ashtabula County under award NA11NOS4190075 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Office of Coastal Management. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, or the Office of Coastal Management.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Introduction .....1**

Local Planning Context ..... 1-1

State & Federal Planning Context ..... 1-2

Planning Process..... 1-2

Survey ..... 1-5

Review of Draft Plans ..... 1-7

**Ashtabula County’s Coastal Places .....2**

General County Features and Land Use Patterns ..... 2-1

Public Access to Lake Erie ..... 2-2

Boating ..... 2-5

Fishing ..... 2-5

Places to Experience Nature ..... 2-6

Scenic Rivers ..... 2-7

History and Culture ..... 2-7

Agriculture and Food ..... 2-9

**Transportation and Mobility .....3**

Vehicular Mobility and Road Network ..... 3-1

Mass Transit..... 3-3

Rail Transportation and Shipping..... 3-3

Boating Facilities..... 3-3

Water-based Mobility ..... 3-3

Non-motorized Mobility ..... 3-3

Winter mobility ..... 3-5

Wayfinding Signage System ..... 3-5

**Related Planning Efforts .....4**

A Strategic Tourism Plan for Ashtabula County..... 4-1

“Lake Visions- A Revitalization Strategy for Geneva-on-the-Lake” ..... 4-1

The Walnut Beach Park Master Plan ..... 4-2

The Lift Bridge Community Association Revitalization Implementation Strategy ..... 4-3

Saybrook Township Comprehensive Plan..... 4-4

The North Shore Trail Plan ..... 4-5

SR 534 Corridor Study ..... 4-6

Eastern Lake County Coastal Comprehensive Plan ..... 4-6

Landside Communities Conceptual Master Plan & Focus Area Plans (Lake County)..... 4-6

Lake County Coastal Plan ..... 4-7

PA Coastal Zone Management Program 309 Assessment..... 4-7

Cleaning Up The Ashtabula River. .... 4-7

2003 Ashtabula County Comprehensive Plan..... 4-8

Ohio Balanced Growth Program..... 4-9

General Ashtabula County Land Use Issues ..... 4-10

**Issues and Opportunities.....5**

Transportation ..... 5-1

Economic Development..... 5-2

Tourism ..... 5-4

Public Places ..... 5-5

Culture and History ..... 5-5

Erosion ..... 5-7

Climate Change..... 5-7

Local Land Use Policy ..... 5-9

**Recommendations .....6**

Implementation Context..... 6-1

Land Use ..... 6-1

Economic Development..... 6-2

Tourism ..... 6-3

Transportation ..... 6-4

Public Places ..... 6-5

Development Regulations..... 6-6

Erosion and Flooding..... 6-6

**Appendix ..... A**

Acronyms..... A-1

Complete Survey Results ..... A-2

ICA ..... A-3

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

## chapter

## 1 INTRODUCTION

**The State of Ohio is blessed with about 312 miles of Lake Erie shoreline and 30 miles of this precious resource is located within Ashtabula County.** This plan represents an effort to examine major opportunities and challenges associated with this shoreline, and to identify how residents and community leaders can make wise choices about how to protect, develop and capitalize on this one-of-a-kind natural treasure.

This Plan was produced by the Ashtabula County Community Services & Planning Department using grant funds provided by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Office of Coastal Management. As the recipient of a Coastal Management Assistance Grant, Ashtabula County led the development of this Plan, but took important and deliberate steps to involve key stakeholders from throughout Ashtabula County, especially those municipalities located along the shoreline. Major conclusions and recommendations are the product of a Steering Committee convened by the County Commissioners.

It is important to note that this Plan has a countywide focus; it is mostly concerned with matters that impact multiple local governments. Quite clearly, a resource as significant and important as the Lake Erie shoreline is a shared resource, and there is much to be gained by intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration. While Ashtabula County is made up of largely autonomous municipalities and townships with locally-elected officials and local priorities, there are still important ways each local government can create greater economic synergy and enhance livability by planning with their neighbors. This Coastal Management Plan focuses on these opportunities, and seeks to shine a bright light on strategies, initiatives, projects and policies that can lead to a more complete understanding of how to use, protect, and develop the Lake Erie shoreline.

### Local Planning Context

This planning document is intended to supplement and support other community planning efforts in Ashtabula County, and to be consistent with plans for neighboring counties, specifically Lake County, Ohio and Erie County, Pennsylvania. Ashtabula County and its individual communities are constantly changing. They grow, age, develop and redevelop. Sometimes this physical change is subtle and nearly imperceptible. Other times, change is dramatic, as large development projects are launched or completed. Apart from the matter of how fast community changes occur, is the larger question as to whether change is making the community more livable, economically stable, attractive and/or desirable.

Development and redevelopment is driven by all types of decisions. The places we see across Ashtabula County today are the products of decisions made by both public and private entities. Community leaders of all types and various boards and commissions have made decisions over the years about regulating land use, what public infrastructure to build and maintain, and what ordinances to pass. Private entities and residents have also made important decisions concerning how to improve or develop property.

Given this environment of change and decision-making, it is not unusual for community leaders to question the overall direction of development and to seek a sense of direction and overall vision. The purpose of this Plan is to provide a vision for coastal areas, capturing and articulating desired community goals, based on community attitudes and preferences. This Plan also intends to provide a long-term vision that recognizes the interrelated elements of community fabric, including how land is used, how people move from place to place, and what public infrastructure is built to support human needs. It also seeks to develop and articulate a sense of place that can be the foundation for economic development, tourism and livability.

Once adopted, this Plan becomes a document that public officials, citizens, the business community, and other interested parties consult when taking actions or adopting policies affecting the future of the community. It should be reviewed and amended regularly, to address changing conditions and changing attitudes.





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

## State & Federal Planning Context

In 1972, the United States Congress passed the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). The CZMA authorizes and encourages coastal states to develop comprehensive coastal management programs. About 30 states and territories have coastal programs approved by the Assistant Administrator of the National Ocean Service. The CZMA supports the goal of protection and careful development of coastal zones by providing assistance and encouragement to coastal states. The CZMA authorizes financial assistance for both program development and program implementation for eligible projects and applicants.

The State of Ohio has developed a Coastal Management Program pursuant to the CZMA. The Ohio Coastal Management Program (OCMP) promotes the beneficial use of coastal resources, prevents their impairment, and manages major activities that substantially affect numerous resources. In 1988, the Ohio legislature enacted the Ohio Coastal Management Act (O.R.C. Chapter 1506), which provides a comprehensive framework for the OCMP, and requires the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to identify and manage Lake Erie coastal erosion areas, implement the Lake Erie Access Plan, and administer the leasing of state submerged land. The lead agency for implementing the program, as prescribed by the Ohio Coastal Management Act, is the ODNR.

One key aspect of the OCMP is the Coastal Management Assistance Grant Program. Since 1998, this program has provided more than \$3.5 million to fund projects related to water quality, coastal planning, coastal resource management, and research and data collection. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis, with applicants providing a minimum of 50 percent of the project costs.

In 2011, Ashtabula County received two grants under this program. The Conneaut Port Authority received a Lake Erie Clean-Up Grant in the amount of \$3,923 (total project cost \$7,846) to cut, chip and remove large piles of brush, tires and litter from the Conneaut Port Authority Access site (also known as the Conneaut Sandbar). Additionally, the Ashtabula County Commissioners received \$50,561 (total project cost was \$101,122) to fund

this planning project – which is intended to “result in the establishment of a collaborative and inter-governmental process that will be used in the development of a County Coastal Development Plan.” In past years (2007-1998), the City of Geneva, Saybrook Township, and the City of Ashtabula also received grants for planning and physical improvements to coastal features. Combined, Ashtabula County has received more than \$70,475 to help fund projects valued at more than \$130,000.

## Planning Process

The planning process utilized to prepare this Coastal Development Plan began in mid-2012 with organizational meetings held by the Ashtabula County Community Services & Planning Department. These initial meetings focused on creating a framework for the planning process, the formation of a stakeholder group to help raise the level of coordination of planning efforts in Ashtabula County, and consideration of choices regarding development and protection of coastal resources. This stakeholder group was formed with substantial effort to assure that key individuals with an interest in the future of the Ashtabula County coastline were included.



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The first meeting of this stakeholder group took place on June 20, 2012, and focused on information sharing, providing opportunities for a first round of collaboration and dialog. The County's consultant, Poggemeyer Design Group, helped facilitate this meeting, which also included a discussion about how smart growth strategies can help coastal and waterfront communities manage growth and development, while balancing environmental, economic and quality of life issues. Specifically, materials referenced and discussed in this presentation were taken from a publication entitled Smart Growth for Coastal and Waterfront Communities, which was prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the International City/County Management Association, and the Rhode Island Sea Grant, in consultation with the National Smart Growth Network.

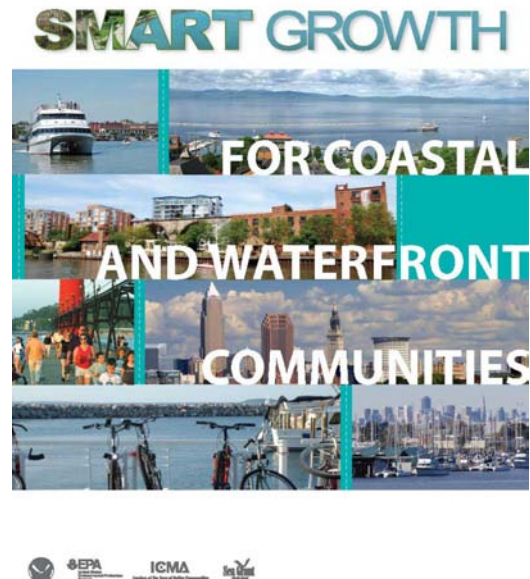
This guide includes an overview of the unique development challenges and opportunities along the water, and provides specific approaches to development and redevelopment. Ten Smart Growth Principles for waterfront areas, and related implementation steps were defined as:

## 1. Communities should mix land uses, including water-dependent uses. This could require:

- Revising zoning codes to permit horizontal and vertical mixing of land uses.
- Creating form-based codes that focus more on building types than on land uses.

## 2. Municipalities should take advantage of compact community design that enhances, preserves, and provides access to waterfront resources. Suggestions to accomplish this include:

- Revising zoning requirements to increase density,
- Prioritizing pedestrian use on waterfront streets,
- Using context-sensitive solutions for street designs, and/or
- Adopting zoning requirements that automatically allow appropriate scale rather than requiring individual variances for to achieve that result.



## 3. Communities should provide a range of housing opportunities and choices to meet the needs of both seasonal and permanent residents. This can be achieved by:

- Allowing increased density near waterfront amenities.
- Creating more zoning districts for construction of multi-family and rental units.

## 4. Communities should be walkable, with physical and visual access to and along the waterfront for public use. This can be achieved by:

- Connecting buildings, streets, and paths to the waterfront.
- Ensuring pedestrian safety through street design standards and speed control measures.
- Providing well-maintained pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths.

## 5. A strong sense of place should be created that capitalizes on the waterfront's heritage, and fosters distinctive and attractive communities. Steps that could be taken to achieve this include:

- Conducting a community asset inventory to fully grasp local assets.
- Adopting design guidelines to protect local assets.
- Implementing historic preservation districts to protect historic resources.

## 6. Communities should strive to preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and the critical environmental areas that characterize and support coastal and waterfront communities. Methods could include:

- Using green infrastructure planning to identify community and regional environmental assets.
- Using best management practices that promote on-site storm water infiltration, native species, and living shorelines.
- Partnering with community land trusts to protect high priority lands.

## 7. Local governments should strengthen and direct development toward existing communities (as opposed to green fields), and encourage waterfront revitalization where needed. Steps could include:

- Employing development incentives such as expedited permitting processes in areas with existing infrastructure.
- Using state and local brownfield assessment and cleanup programs where applicable.

## 8. The County should provide a variety of land- and water-based transportation options, including:

- Encouraging water-based public transportation options, particularly those that accommodate walk-on passengers (e.g., ferries and water taxis).



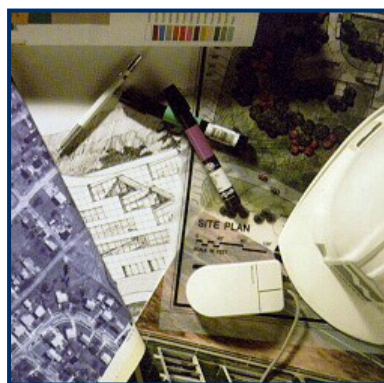
# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Applying transit-oriented development principles to water taxi or ferry terminal areas, using high-density, mixed-use projects to attract water transit riders.
- Locating parking structures and lots away from the water's edge.

**9. All communities should strive to make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost- effective, through consistent policies and coordinated permitting processes, and by creating development policies and regulations that are easy to understand and apply.**

**10. Communities should encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions, ensuring that public interests in and rights of access to the waterfront and coastal waters are upheld.**

Following this initial meeting, County staff and consultants worked on collecting, organizing and mapping key information elements. In large part, this work involved compiling information from divergent sources and verifying existing local conditions.



A second meeting of the stakeholder group convened in September 2012 to review and consider a more complete picture of coastal resources, development opportunities, and local conditions. This meeting was conducted in a workshop-type format and the topics were organized into three key areas:

**Key Issues**

**Potential Improvements/Initiatives**

**Recommendations**



**Survey—** To reach out to interested individuals and local officials, a survey was conducted. The survey was emailed and responses were collected electronically. A complete report of survey responses is provided in Appendix B and a summary of key findings are provided below:

**A total of 185 people completed the survey on-line during November and December of 2012.**

- Of the people that indicated the community that they were representing, 35.6% were representing Conneaut, 24.9% Geneva-on-the-Lake, 21.9% the City of Ashtabula, 9.4% the City of Geneva, 11.2 % Kingsville & North Kingsville, and the balance communities within Ashtabula County, Lake County, or people who had boats at the yacht club, etc. One was from Boulder CO and one was from Windsor.
- When asked what their **primary interest in the coastal area of Ashtabula County** was, the following responses were provided:
  - 43% County residents,
  - 24.2% private property owners on the Lake Erie shoreline,
  - 11.4% private business owners on or near the shoreline,
  - 11% members of a concerned group,
  - 7.8% elected officials, and
  - Another 7.8% appointed officials.
- About nineteen percent (19.2%) listed other reasons for their interest in the coastal area. These people were a harbormaster, yacht club commodore and members, newspaper editor, pastors, representatives of various parks, a school superintendent, and members of Citizens against Agenda 21, Ashtabula Downtown Development Agency, the Land Conservancy, the Arts Center, bird clubs, Ashtabula Lighthouse Society, Lift Bridge Community Association, Growth Partnership, Geneva Business Association, New Entrepreneurs Opportunity Fund, Geneva-on-the-Lake Visitor Center, ODNR (Geneva State Park), the County Planning Commission, and the Lodge, as well as prospective business owners.
- One of the key issues in this entire planning process, as well as in prior planning efforts, is **public access to the Lake**. Respondents were asked to rank a variety of issues related to public access.
  - Enhancing existing lakeside parks (4.17)
  - Preserving public vistas of the Lake (4.10)

- Developing more public amenities along the Lake (restrooms, parking, etc.) (3.91)
- Developing more public access to the Lake (3.89)
- Providing more access to scenic rivers (3.62)
- Creating and/or expanding public beaches (3.61)
- Creating new lakeside parks (3.21)

•**Eight economic development issues** were presented and respondents were asked to rank them in terms of countywide priority.

- More economic development activities at ports (4.18)
- Support more retail businesses (4.13)
- Create more activities and events at lakeside parks (3.89)
- Connect Lake activities with covered bridges and wineries (3.79)
- Develop Lake cruises (3.73-tie)
- Offer equipment rentals (jet skis, canoes, cross-country skis) (3.73-tie)
- Winter activities on or near the Lake (snowmobile trails, cross-country skiing) (3.71)
- Support and/or develop local specialty food production (3.67)
- More fishing-related businesses, services, charters (3.59)
- Enhance birding opportunities (3.16)

•**Various uses of land** that have been discussed within the County and at earlier Coastal Management Plan meetings were presented in this survey, and respondents were asked, once again, to rank them in terms of countywide priority.

- Improving Walnut Beach Park in the City of Ashtabula (3.76)
- Supporting more mixed uses to add character and promote walkability (3.76)
- Adding more lodging facilities (3.66)
- Stricter zoning to protect the lake shore (3.57)
- Redevelopment of Conneaut Shores Golf Course (3.36)

- More commercial development along the Lake (3.32)
- More camping along the Lake (3.19)
- Redevelopment of Deer Lake Golf Course (3.10)
- Promoting and encouraging nautical themes in new non-residential construction (2.82)
- More single-family housing along the Lake (2.63)

•**Transportation issues** were also discussed within the Coastal Management Planning process and a series of issues were presented in the survey to garner attitudes on those specific transportation issues. Add a bike lane or multi-modal trail along the lakeshore, possible along.

- SR 531 (4.01)
- Extend the Western Reserve Greenway Trail to Lake Erie (3.92)
- Capitalize on the Erie County, PA/ City of Conneaut proposed multi-modal port project (3.75)
- Provide more parking at critical areas (3.59)
- Create a more consistent signage system (3.57)
- Provide additional transient docking (3.46)
- Expand and link sidewalk systems in urban areas (3.44)
- Provide bus tours along the Lake (3.25)
- Add more public marinas (3.15)

•Issues regarding the many **cultural and natural features in Ashtabula County** were presented. The survey asked respondents to rank various features in terms of countywide priority.

- Pollution of beaches and water (4.39)
- Beach clean-up (4.27)
- Shoreline erosion (4.25)
- Storm water management along the Lake (3.91)
- Enhancing “The Strip” in GOTL (3.87)
- Preserving wildlife habitat along the Lake (3.85)



- Enhancing Conneaut’s downtown (3.66)
  - Local museum support (3.63)
  - Educational opportunities at wetland and habitat areas (3.57)
  - Revitalizing Ashtabula’s downtown (3.44)
  - Restoring the Ashtabula Lighthouse & providing access to it (3.41)
  - Climate change (2.66)
- The **Ashtabula coastline** is a shared resource that benefits all residents. An open-ended question was asked to generate ideas about how local public and private organizations could work together more regionally to develop or enhance the coastal area. Sixty-five (65) people responded. Responses included:
- More coordination among entities is needed, including among the port authorities, along with a good communication network, website, and/or blog; possibly a citizen action group should be created; and a collaborative plan with specific steps for each community should be developed. We should work more regionally, share resources and maintenance responsibilities, hire a regional coordinator, provide opportunities for volunteerism—especially for students, and identify “cheerleaders” to help create a more positive attitude among residents. Personal agendas should be put aside.
  - •More events should be provided, including “predicted log races,” sailing opportunities, marine poker run, special events with a small fee, art projects (in conjunction with local arts centers), toboggan run, beer festival in winter, ice skating rink, and enhanced family activities.
  - From a private business perspective, a Bass Pro Shop or Gander Mountain should be recruited, as should more retail shops to entice people to stay. Incentives should be provided to attract private development, and shops should be allowed in the parks. At the same time, more education is needed regarding the environmental impacts of increasing commercial activity along the coastline.
  - More public grants and more private funds (especially from large businesses) should be acquired.
  - Transportation linkages were suggested, including buses, bikes, and snowmobiles, along with a bike trail from GOTL to Conneaut.

- **We should work together to:**
  - clean up beaches,
  - provide more public beaches,
  - enhance and maintain the area with the highest integrity,
  - enhance North Kingsville Park on the Lake,
  - add more parks,
  - conserve historic buildings,
  - coordinate a coastline project among the libraries and museums,
  - create a countywide parks system like Cleveland Metroparks and combine all parks into that system,
  - provide trails at the beaches,
  - respect private beaches,
  - fortify the banks and stop erosion,
  - clean up GOTL,
  - add more private residences, and
  - encourage the universities to have students study along the lakeshore.
- **From a marketing perspective, several suggestions included:**
  - better signage along I-90,
  - hire marketing expertise,
  - identify leaders with a real vision for the future,
  - develop a brand or theme for the area, and use it in a signage system, cross-promote,
  - use more social media,
  - add wifi, and
  - promote ecotourism and tie funds to trails, fishing, hunting, wineries, etc.
- One person suggested that things be left alone, and another mentioned the importance of following up and implementing plans. Another suggested that consultants should be hired to help implement plans.

- The final question on the survey asked for any **general comments regarding Ashtabula County’s coastal area**. Once again, 65 people provided input and many mentioned sharing the same vision for the area. Responses included many that were repetitive of the above answers. Comments included:
  - **Environmental suggestions:**
    - protect the shoreline
    - preserve nature
    - remove the construction debris from the water
    - dredge Conneaut Harbor
    - clean up the Lake and beaches
    - maintain properties better
    - preserve historic structures and sites
    - provide education regarding erosion control measures
    - preserve green space
    - respect private property owners’ rights
  - **Transportation related suggestions:**
    - provide public transportation
    - become a point of entry for east-bound water transportation with two deep water ports and an eager workforce
    - develop a rail system from Sandusky to Niagara
    - provide traveler accommodations on the west side of Saybrook, including full-service camping
    - provide accessibility to the shore
  - **Commercial and business related suggestions:**
    - recruit clean and appealing businesses
    - train friendly and clean workers
    - consider commercial development carefully
    - develop commercial business opportunities
    - provide tax incentives for businesses

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

- reduce government regulations
- create JOBS
- fewer fast food restaurants and drug stores
- involve the private sector, not government
- encourage redevelopment over new development
- recruit a business to rent jet skis in GOTL
- do not allow industry on the coastline

○ **Tourism suggestions:**

- enhance tourism
- start an outdoor theater
- promote romantic weekends away, girls wine weekends, conferences, and day trips
- build a 200' high land-based lighthouse with easy access in a park setting, with 360° views, in GOTL at the east curves or in Saybrook

○ **General suggestions:**

- promote cross-marketing
- promote affordable residency in the City of Ashtabula
- help the Conneaut area
- pursue more grants and identify specific projects for these funds
- do not allow any more residential permits north of SR 531 except in cities and villages; buy out others' properties and create a fund to do this

## Review of Draft Plans

An initial draft of this plan was produced in November and was distributed to Steering Committee members. This document was discussed at a meeting, along with preliminary survey results. At this point, more than one hundred surveys were returned and yielded valuable input. However, it was also found that survey responses were heavily weighted toward GOTL respondents. Committee members felt that more efforts were needed to reach out to other coastal area interest groups and extended the survey deadline. Later, with the benefit of greater numbers of survey responses and more diversity in terms of where the surveys came from, a subsequent draft of this plan was prepared in December 2012.

A final meeting of the Steering Committee was held in January, 2013 and it focused on developing a sense of priority among proposed projects and initiatives. The list of projects and initiatives (described more fully in Chapter 6) were briefly discussed and members had the opportunity to vote for each in terms of impact and benefit. Using electronic "clickers" and TurningPoint software, Steering Committee members were able to cast votes and see the results of their voting "live" on the screen.



November Committee Meeting

## Coast management plan seeks input from area

By CARL E. FEATHER

Staff Writer

[cfeather@starbeacon.com](mailto:cfeather@starbeacon.com)

JEFFERSON — More public input, especially from Conneaut and North Kingsville, is needed before the county's Coastal Management Plan can be approved.

A stakeholders' meeting for the purpose of reviewing and commenting on the draft plan was held in Jefferson on Monday afternoon. Poggenmeyer Design Group representatives served as facilitators of the meeting, the fourth held since last summer to gather input.

A \$25,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, with a local match, is paying for the project. Originally assigned to the county's planning department, the project was inherited by the Department of Planning and Community Services when commissioners merged the planning department, Janice Switzer, program manager for combined departments, said she hopes to have the plan ready for approval by January.

Monday's meeting provided a forum for stakeholders to raise additional issues, comment on the plan and tweak the language. Randy Mielnik, a facilitator, said nothing controversial has emerged from the discussions, but there does seem to be a theme of improved public access to the lakefront. Mielnik said the comments suggest that a better job needs to be done with the access areas that already exist, except at Geneva-on-the-Lake, where new access points and beaches need to be created.

The plan's major divisions include coastal places, transportation/mobility, related planning efforts, issues and recommendations.

The report recognizes key tourism and industrial drivers on the public sections of the lakefront, including the Port Conneaut project, Harbor Historical District and Geneva-on-the-Lake Strip.

Switzer said an online survey was offered to help residents of coastal communities provide input to the process. The survey is online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/SHCC3TS](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SHCC3TS).

The survey received only one response from North Kingsville and five from Conneaut. Most came from Geneva-on-the-Lake, 57, and Ashtabula, 29.

She said the survey guides the department's decisions regarding development projects, such as bike trails or parks. "How should the coastline be developed? If you have an opinion, we'd love to hear from you," Switzer said.

The survey closes Dec. 7. Ashtabula County needs a coastal management plan so it can apply for grants related to needs identified by the plan, Switzer said. While only public lands can be used for those grant dollars, the plan does take into consideration the impact of private investment, such as noting the need for more commercial development to fill in empty spaces along The Strip or constraining condo development in certain areas.

The draft plan is online at [ashtabula-county.us](http://ashtabula-county.us). Follow the offices link to planning, then take the Ashtabula County SharePoint link to planning documents and the coastal management draft.

Ashtabula Star Beacon - November 20, 2012, Page A3



January Committee Meeting



## 2 ASHTABULA COUNTY'S COASTAL PLACES

There are tremendous amounts of descriptive resources available about Ashtabula County and its coastline. The focus of this Plan was not to recreate or re-assemble this existing data, but rather, to incorporate it as needed and focus on relationships, opportunities and potential synergies that provide the foundation for a relevant and endorsed plan for the future. Some key issues and important elements of background information are provided in this document, but readers who wish to dig deeper into descriptive aspects of Ashtabula County and its coastline are directed to sources of information such as:

- Ohio's Coastal Atlas, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Office of Coastal Management (2007).
- Map Booklet and Data Table Booklet, Ashtabula County, Lake Erie Coastal Erosion Area, Ohio Coastal Management Program.
- Online resources at [www.dnr.state.oh.us/LakeErie/aboutOCM/](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/LakeErie/aboutOCM/).
- The Lake Erie Public Access Guidebook, ODNR Office of Coastal Management.



### General County Features and Land Use Patterns

Ashtabula County is Ohio's largest county, geographically spanning 702.7 square miles. It is both a rural and an urban county, with various population centers near the Lake Erie shoreline.

The Ohio Office of Policy, Research and Strategic Planning reports that land uses in Ashtabula County are broken down in the following categories:

Land Use / Land Cover	Percent
Urban (Residential/Commercial/Industrial/Transportation) and Urban Grasses	6.86%
Cropland	31.59%
Pasture	4.30%
Forest	38.54%
Open Water	1.68%
Wetlands (Wooded/Herbaceous)	17.00%
Bare/Mines	0.02%

This data shows that nearly three fourths of Ashtabula County is cropland, forest, or pasture, which helps to define the county as a more rural place. However, from another perspective, Ashtabula County is a much more urban county near the Lake Erie shoreline (north of Interstate 90). The 2010 population of Ashtabula County was 101,497. More than one third of these residents live in the cities of Ashtabula (19,124 – 2010 Census), Conneaut (12,841 – 2010 Census), or Geneva (6,215 – 2010 Census). If the Villages of North Kingsville, Geneva-on-the-Lake and the townships of Saybrook, Ashtabula, and Geneva are included, then it is apparent that about two thirds of Ashtabula County residents live north of I-90, close to the Lake Erie shoreline.

For the most part, the Ashtabula County population has been stable over the past 40 years. In 1970, Ashtabula County had 98,237 residents,

compared with just over 101,000 residents today. Like many rural counties, residents of Ashtabula County are generally older and have lower household incomes than the average Ohio resident. Further, like many areas in Ohio and throughout the Midwest, Ashtabula County has seen unemployment rates rise and the numbers of employed persons drop.



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Public Access to Lake Erie

The majority of the Lake Erie shoreline is privately owned. Thus, public access and ownership of the Lake Erie shoreline is critically important for both visitors and residents who do not own property on the shoreline. Twelve major areas in the County provide public access to, or views of, Lake Erie. Each area is owned by a specific government authority and offers a unique mix of amenities and attractions. These public access sites are identified on Map 1. Below are descriptions of each.

**Geneva State Park:** At the far western end of Ashtabula County is the 698-acre Geneva State Park. Owned and managed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, this State Park includes a 300-foot guarded swimming beach on Lake Erie. The entire length of the park overlooks Lake Erie for approximately two miles, with access to the Lake provided at various points along the lakefront. Six miles of multi-use trails traverse the park and are used by hikers, snowmobilers, cross-country skiers and hunters. Two miles of paved trails for non-motorized bikes are also included in the park.

Camping is available at Geneva State Park with 89 electric sites, four full hook-up sites, seven non-electric sites, showers, flush toilets, and a coin-operated laundry. A six-lane boat ramp is provided at the park, with easy access to Lake Erie's central basin. The marina features a canteen and concessions area, and 383 docks for seasonal rental. Fishing opportunities are also available at the park. The Geneva State Park Marina is designated as a small boat harbor. Private charter fishing boats are available. Picnic areas are provided with two shelter houses that include electric and water, restrooms with flush toilets, a volleyball court, and a horseshoe pit. In addition, 12 cedar cabins are provided near Lake Erie that sleep four adults or a family of six.

The Lodge and Conference Center was constructed and is managed through a unique state/local partnership with Ashtabula County. It has 109 guest rooms, a full-service restaurant and lounge, and 8,500 SF of conference facilities, including banquet catering and AV support.

**Chestnut Grove:** The Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake (GOTL) and the County (through the Convention and Facilities Authority) jointly own and maintain



this property, and are working together to improve the Chestnut Grove area. Improvements include access to the beach and new restrooms, and are planned for 2013. This project is reinforced in the Corridor Study. In addition, it would meet an unmet need for public beach access in GOTL.

GOTL's current Revitalization Plan recommends that signage identifying the Chestnut Grove area and bike path should be provided along SR 531 and SR 534, and the 20' of unpaved walking area should be paved to connect the Lodge to the sidewalks along The Strip. In addition, the parking lot of the Lodge should be connected to the Chestnut Grove parking lot to create better connectivity.

**Geneva Township Park:** Located on the east side of Geneva-on-the-Lake is Geneva Township Park. This 11.9-acre site is north of SR 531, east of Park Drive and north of Austin Road. Amenities at Geneva Township Park include picnic shelters and tables, playground equipment, trails, an upland sand volleyball court and a baseball field. Depending on water levels, a sand beach may be present, and paved paths from the parking lot lead to a handicap-accessible wooden ramp down the bluff to a seawall. The seawall is capped with paved concrete, and fishing is allowed here, as well as from the groins. Benches overlooking Lake Erie are located along the south side of a mulch path at the top of the bluff.



**Saybrook Township Park:** This 7.6-acre site, located along SR 531, east of the Russell Road intersection, includes two large picnic shelters and a concession stand. Benches overlook Lake Erie and parking is available along the park's access road, which runs a quarter-mile loop around the park. South of the access road are basketball and sand volleyball courts, an open mowed-grass green space, and a baseball field.

## Boating

Apart from the aforementioned public facilities, many private marinas in Ashtabula County support a range of boating and lake-related pursuits. The Ashtabula City Port Authority alone lists ten private marinas and/or yacht clubs, with 1,100 boat slips available (about half are rented seasonally). The Conneaut Port Authority also lists numerous marinas with full services, as well as charter boats, a public dock and ramps, wind surfing, and public beaches. The Geneva State Park Marina offers six public boat launch ramps,



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



**Highland Beach:** Highland Beach is owned by the City of Ashtabula and consists of 3.2 acres of land along Walnut Boulevard, less than ¼ mile north of the intersection with SR 531. This property is an unsigned public access site with no beach. A stone bank, backed by stepped concrete north of block seawall, protects the 815-foot shoreline. A small amount of sand is impounded between the revetment and concrete blocks. The blocks provide a flat area to walk along and/or sit on at the base of the steep bluff. At the park's east end, an unpaved path leads through a small stand of deciduous trees from the road down to the shore. A second unpaved path angles down the face of the bluff near the middle of the park. The area of mowed grass at the top of the bluff is wider at the park's ends, averaging about 50 feet. The park's only amenity is a single picnic table, and access to the water for fishing is possible.

**Walnut Beach Park:** Walnut Beach Park is owned by the City of Ashtabula and is located at the terminus of Lake Avenue on Lake Erie. This diverse recreation feature includes a wildlife preserve, playground, beach volleyball courts, basketball courts, picnic tables, a skate park and concessions stand. The majority of this facility is a sand beach backed by low dunes with beach vegetation. Ashtabula Harbor's west breakwater forms the east end of the beach. The breakwater extends 1.4 miles into Lake Erie, providing access for fishing. The Ashtabula Harbor Lighthouse is near the end of this limestone boulder breakwater. From the foot of the breakwater, the City's public beach area extends nearly 800 feet west; the sand continues westward for another ½ mile. Walnut Beach is approximately 500 feet at its widest area, which is just west of the parking lot. Significant plans exist for improvements to Walnut Beach Park, and will be discussed later.

**Ashtabula Harbor:** The Ashtabula Harbor includes the Inner Harbor on the River where most of the marinas are located and the Outer Harbor, which is a working commercial harbor. The Inner Ashtabula Harbor includes several areas for public access to the River. There are 10 marinas and yacht clubs, a public dock with two pump out stations, a handicap accessible ramp, public restrooms, and a small park with benches, informational kiosk, etc. Higher up on the bluff, Point Park provides parking and great views of the Harbor, the Bascule Bridge, and the boating activities. This area is adjacent to the Bridge Street commercial area (National Register area) and is part of the Harbor Historic District

**Lakeshore Park:** Owned by the Ashtabula Township Parks Commission, Lakeshore Park offers amenities including a playground, horseshoe pits, volleyball and bocci courts, an 18-hole disc golf course, a beach on Lake Erie with lifeguards, five picnic pavilions, and a waterfowl pond on its 54 acres. One pavilion is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A public boat launch is also available, along with a bait shop. The park is home to a Classic Car Show every Sunday during the summer, an annual Easter Egg Hunt, and the annual Rib Burn Off, all of which bring thousands of visitors into the park. Lights on the Lake at Christmas is also a popular event.

**(Al Cummings) Sunset Park:** The 17.4-acre Al Cummings Sunset Park is north of SR 531 in North Kingsville. This small passive park includes green space, a wooded area and gravel parking, with great vistas of Lake Erie. A picnic shelter is adjacent to the parking area, and picnic tables are scattered throughout the park. Additional park amenities include playground equipment and natural trails through the woods. There is no access to Lake Erie from this park.

**Conneaut Township Park:** Conneaut Township Park, nearly 60 acres in size, is located north of SR 531 in the City of Conneaut. This park has a 0.4-mile long sand beach that ranges in width from 200 to 1,000 feet, and includes a small dune area. The Conneaut Harbor includes a 0.3-mile breakwater that is used for fishing and marks the east side of the beach. A series of wooden boardwalks connect the parking areas to the beach and shore.

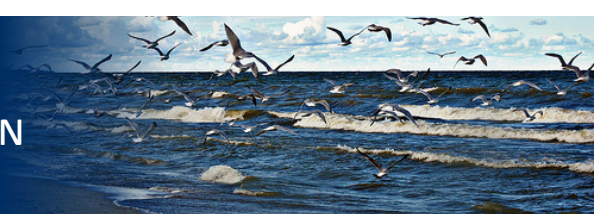
In the upper park area, benches overlooking Lake Erie from a tiered, grass-covered high bluff, provide views of the Harbor and Conneaut Lighthouse (which is privately owned). Many additional park amenities are located in the upper park area, including picnic facilities, playground equipment, a concessions stand, athletic fields and courts, and a gazebo.

**Conneaut Port Authority Access:** The 53.1-acre Conneaut Port Authority Access includes a boat launch, fishing and walking pier, and beach area. The beach includes nearly 40 acres, as massive amounts of sand accumulated on both sides of the breakwater. This site is a very popular birding location, with footpaths crisscrossing the inner areas of this sand peninsula, and a wooden observation deck. Access to the beach is at the west terminus of the Lakeside Drive/Erie Street intersection. The Conneaut Port Authority has two launch ramps with a total of five lanes. Both ramps are located at the public docks on Naylor Boulevard. The fishing/walking pier's 800 feet of waterline surround an asphalt-paved parking lot, with car-trailer spaces to the south and car-only spaces to the north.

**Lakeview Park:** Lakeview Park is an 8.7-acre site at the northwest corner of Erie and Sandusky Streets, four blocks west of Conneaut Creek. Lakeview Park is mostly mowed-grass green space with a few clusters of deciduous trees. The site features a picnic area, playground, baseball field and a basketball court. Sitting on a high bluff, Lakeview Park provides views of Lake Erie, Conneaut Harbor and the Conneaut Lighthouse.

**Broad Street Extension:** The Broad Street Extension is Ohio's easternmost public access site on Lake Erie. Located to the north of the Lakeside and Marina Drive intersection, one block east of Lakeview Park, the Broad Street Extension is managed by the Conneaut Port Authority. The Extension is adjacent to and north of Independence Park, a ½ acre of partially-shaded green space. Across from Independence Park, the Port Authority operates a waterside restaurant overlooking the Harbor. This site is a nearly 1,000-foot J-shaped manmade breakwater that extends into Conneaut Harbor and serves as a popular fishing spot. Fishing is not permitted on the structure's east side, as this is a private marina.

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



MAP 1 Public Places





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Conneaut Harbor

396 boat slips from 20 to 40 feet long, and transient docking, as well as fuel, convenience store and deli, showers, shop store, bait & tackle, fish cleaning, fishing licenses, boat service, and winter boat storage.

These private enterprises provide local employment, in addition to drawing a significant amount of the tourist business. Boating is a huge economic driver in Ohio, as well as in the County. According to ODNR's Division of Watercraft and a Great Lakes Commission Study, recreational boating generates an estimated \$3.5 billion economic impact for Ohio's economy, and Ohio's boating industry supports as many as 26,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

The Division of Watercraft also notes that Great Lakes boat owners spend an average of \$3,600 per year per owner on their boats, which includes \$1,400 on boat-related expenses, such as dock fees, repairs and insurance. The remaining \$2,200 are spent on boating trip-related expenses such as

food, lodging, and onshore entertainment. Average spending on trips per boating day varies from \$76 to \$275.

## Fishing

The Ashtabula City Port Authority lists 25 charter boats that take clients on Lake Erie fishing trips for perch, walleye, bass, and other species. Several charter boats are also based in Conneaut and Geneva-on-the-Lake. This business activity draws tourists to Ashtabula County, with spin-off economic activity as charter boat customers eat at local restaurants, stay at local hotels, purchase gas, and shop at local stores.

Fishing activity also occurs from the shoreline, piers and private boats. Ashtabula County is located next to the "central basin" of Lake Erie, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources describes fishing opportunities in Ashtabula County as "year-round" (ice fishing is dependent on extended periods of cold weather for safe ice formation).





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Conneaut Creek is particularly well known for steelhead fishing. Steelhead fish are actually trout that spend two to three summers in Lake Erie, then migrate up rivers and streams in the fall and winter. Some steelhead fish weigh more than ten pounds, and are highly prized by anglers who wade or cast from piers and shorelines. Most of Ohio's steelhead streams are toward the northeast portion of Ohio. Conneaut Creek and the Ashtabula River are among the most popular steelhead fishing locations. ODNR has an annual stocking program to maintain this fishery.

## Places to Experience Nature

As shown on Map 2, Ashtabula County provides several venues to view and experience nature. Perhaps most notably, Conneaut Harbor has extensive mudflats, which attract many species of shorebirds. In fact, Conneaut is one of Lake Erie's legendary birding hotspots. The most productive birding time is from mid-summer until early winter. By early July, plovers and sandpipers appear. In the fall, large numbers of gulls concentrate in the Harbor, and rare species are often within these flocks. Conneaut also attracts ducks and snowy owls on rock breakwalls around the Harbor.

**Conneaut Swamp Nature Preserve** is a 55-acre site on Thompson Road south of Conneaut, near the Ohio-Pennsylvania state line. It exhibits a rare hemlock, hardwood, swamp plant community. The hemlock swamp contains a diverse mix of trees including hemlock, yellow birch, beech, tulip



poplar, sycamore, cucumber, magnolia and a variety of oaks and maples. Beneath the canopy lies a mix of sedges, grasses and wildflowers. This State Nature Preserve is actually part of the 86-acre Conneaut State Wildlife Area. Hunting is not allowed in the Preserve.

**North Kingsville Sand Barrens** is an area of open sand barrens and dense swamp forests. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History owns this 118-acre site, which provides an extraordinary variety of plant and animal life. Fossil sand dunes are rare features of the northeast Ohio landscape. Sand deposited by the glacier more than 12,000 years ago form inland ridges, which were convenient sites for early roads and trails (such as US 20). As a result, many dune habitats were lost to development. This site, however, was protected in 1990 as part of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History's preserve system. This area supports endangered plants, grasses, and rare species of insects and moss, including "Bug-on-a-Stick" (*Buxbaumia aphylla*). Bug-on-a-Stick is historically known in only four Ohio counties, all based on literature references. It is one of the ephemeral annual mosses, appearing late in the summer, persisting through the winter, and shedding its spores in May.

**Sam Wharram Nature Preserve** is a 36-acre private nature preserve affiliated with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the Kingsville Sand Barrens area.

**Wetland Conservation Area** is an area in Geneva Township that the Cleveland Museum of Natural History has been engaged in to acquire and restore wetlands. Since 2008, the museum has acquired more than 200 acres of pristine wetlands. Grant funds awarded in 2011 helped to fund more land preservation under EPA's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative--the East Geneva Swamp and the West Geneva Swamp. The museum raised \$500,000 to purchase the West Geneva Swamp, with assistance from the Ashtabula Foundation, Cleveland-area foundations and individuals. The West Geneva Swamp is north of the City of Geneva and includes about 230 acres. Many species of beetles, amphibians, birds and plants live in these habitats, and the forest hosts migrating birds in the spring and fall.





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



**Indian Trails Park / Cedarquest Park:** Owned and managed by the Ashtabula Township Parks Commission, Indian Trails Park consists of 405 acres along four miles of the scenic Ashtabula River. The Park includes public fishing areas and primitive hiking trails, as well as 3,000' of improved trails through unique plant species and wildlife habitat. The trail's southern end is under the Smolen Gulf Covered Bridge. Adjacent to Indian Trails Park is Cedarquest Park which is also owned by the Ashtabula Township Parks Commission and located along the River.

## Scenic Rivers

Ashtabula County is the only county in Ohio to have three Scenic Rivers – the Ashtabula River, Conneaut Creek, and the Grand River. Ohio's 1968 Scenic Rivers Act created a state program to protect Ohio's quality streams for future generations. The Act requires that a citizens advisory council, representing local officials, landowners, and conservation organizations, be appointed for each designated river. The council provides advice about river protection and preservation concerns.

Scenic rivers are classified according to their outstanding stream qualities in one of three categories: wild, scenic or recreational. All wild, scenic, and recreational rivers possess excellent water quality and exceptional biological diversity, have intact riparian forests, and have limited human disturbances within the river corridors. In addition, these rivers provide excellent opportunities for paddlers, anglers, birders, hikers, and other outdoor enthusiasts.

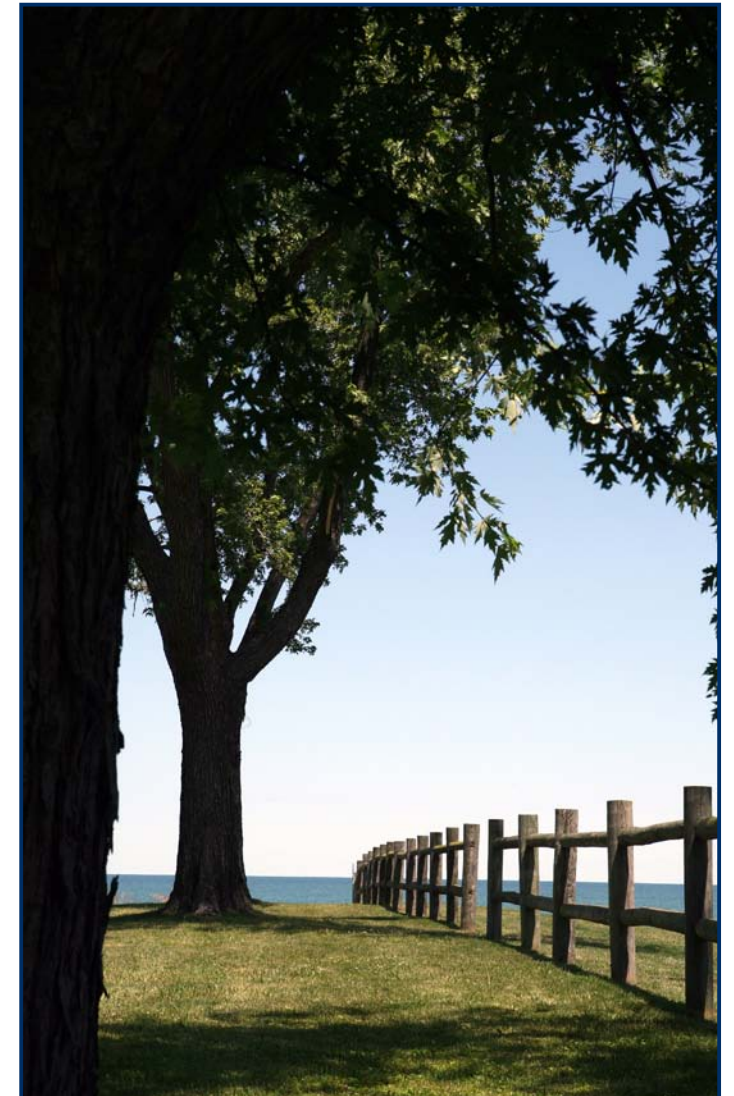
- The Ashtabula River was designated a Scenic River in 2008, and includes 46 continuous river miles. The designated segment closest to Lake Erie includes the area from the confluence of the East Branch and West Branch of the Ashtabula River, downstream to the East 24th Street Bridge.
- Conneaut Creek was designated a Wild & Scenic River in 2005. Twenty-one miles are designated as "scenic" and 16.4 miles are designated as "wild." The "scenic" portion extends from the Ohio-Pennsylvania border to the Penn Central Railroad Bridge in the City of Conneaut. The "wild" portion is from the state line to the Creek Road bridge crossing.

- The Grand River was designated as Ohio's second Wild & Scenic River in 1974. The "wild" designation applies to the section from Harpersfield covered bridge downstream to the Norfolk and Western Railroad trestle, south of Painesville. The "scenic" designation runs from the US 322 bridge in Ashtabula County downstream to Harpersfield covered bridge. The Wild and Scenic Grand River represents one of the finest examples of a natural stream anywhere in Ohio. Due to its rugged topography, the Grand River has only recently felt the influences of urbanization. Although the Grand River is some distance south of the Lake Erie Shoreline within Ashtabula County, it heads west and reaches Lake Erie in Lake County, north of the City of Painesville at Fairport Harbor.

## History and Culture

The influence of Lake Erie on local history and culture is substantial. Ashtabula County has about 19 museums, historical sites and cultural attractions that help to create a sense of place and local identity, many of them located north of I-90, including:

- Ashtabula Lighthouse in the Ashtabula Harbor
- Kent State University - Ashtabula Campus - west of Ashtabula City
- Site of Ashtabula River Railroad Disaster
- Jennie Munger Gregory Memorial Museum in Geneva-on-the-Lake
- Conneaut Historical Railroad Museum
- Conneaut Lighthouse
- Conneaut Historical Society
- Conneaut Arts Center
- Finnish-American Cultural Center in Ashtabula City
- Ohio's Museum of Covered Bridges in Ashtabula City
- Ashtabula Arts Center / G.B. Community Theater
- Ashtabula Maritime and Surface Transportation Museum



## MAP 2 Natural Places





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Covered bridges are another defining historical and cultural feature within Ashtabula County. The County is home to 14 historic covered bridges, plus new ones, including both America’s longest and shortest covered bridges. The longest, Smolen Gulf Covered Bridge, is 613 feet long, spanning the Ashtabula River in Ashtabula Township . The shortest covered bridge is the West Liberty Street Covered Bridge, which spans just 18 feet over Cowles Creek in the City of Geneva.

## Agriculture and Food

Ashtabula County is a strong wine-producing region in Ohio, along with Lake and Geauga Counties. The proximity to Lake Erie creates the seasonal temperature patterns that are conducive to growing grapes, and the resulting viticulture industry. Ashtabula County grows about 65% of all of Ohio’s grapes and more than twenty wineries, many offering tours and wine tasting, help attract tourism visits. Two of these wineries in Geneva-on-the-Lake have lakefront properties, and two wineries in the Conneaut Creek area are north of US 20. The balance are south of US 20. Many of the wineries offer dining, bakeries, gift shops, indoor and outdoor entertainment, gift packages, and other events in addition to the traditional wine tasting, selling, and tours of the wineries.

Winemaking in Ohio has experienced significant growth in the past few years. According to a report commissioned by the Ohio Grape Industries Committee, there were 75 Ohio wineries in 1999. That number grew to 124 in 2008, and 140 in 2010. Ashtabula celebrates a Wine & Walleye Festival each August in the historic Bridge Street area of the City. Local wines, walleye and perch dinners, unique shopping in the Harbor Historic District and about 60 outdoor vendors, live music, and variety of other entertainment are provided at this successful festival.

There are many farms and markets in Ashtabula County. The growers produce and sell a variety of fruit and vegetables, as well as pecans (grown in Arizona). Several farms raise Alpacas and sell Alpaca products. Others produce and sell maple syrup, homemade pies, goat cheese, honey, and Christmas trees. Fun activities such as corn mazes and pig races are also available. Although they are all south of I-90, they provide excellent

opportunities for residents to purchase fresh, local produce, as well as providing economic opportunities for the proposed Wine & Culinary Center.

It is important to note that the Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACCVB) is committed to aggressively pursuing its “Local Food Initiative” objective from the Strategic Tourism Plan. ACCVB has retained a project manager and one of her responsibilities is to pursue this Local Food Initiative. “Be a Locavore! Eat food locally grown in Ashtabula County” is a new tag line promoting this concept. There are several local farmers markets in Ashtabula County and their numbers are increasing each year.

In 2010, Poggemeyer Design Group prepared a Geneva Wine & Culinary Center Feasibility Study, which included a market study completed by Boulevard Strategies. The Geneva Wine & Culinary Center Committee had been working for years on the concept of creating a wine and culinary center in the area, learning from similar venues in other areas of the country. The Ohio Wine Producers Association and the City of Geneva, as well as many other local partners, continue to play a major role in this project, which has now acquired a site within the City of Geneva, appointed a full-time project

manager, been branded with the name “Pairings,” and is seeking funds for construction of the first phase in an existing barn on the site. The feasibility study and market analysis concluded that the project has an excellent chance of being very successful. This Center will combine the agricultural venues within the County with the wineries, providing many economic development and tourism opportunities for the County.

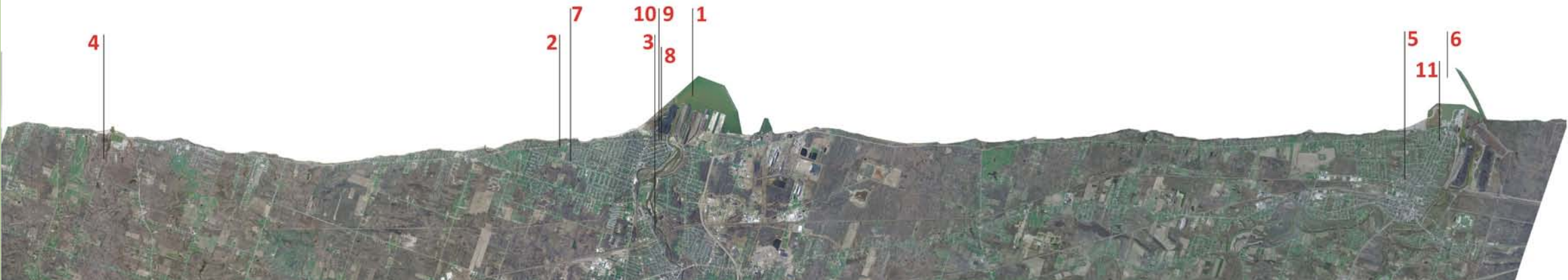


## Study Findings

- There is no generally accepted definition of “local” food.
- Local food markets account for a small but growing share of total U.S. agricultural sales.
- Production of locally-marketed food is more likely to occur on small farms located in or near metropolitan counties.
- Consumers who value high-quality foods produced with low environmental impact are willing to pay more for locally- produced food.
- Federal, State, and local government programs increasingly support local food systems.
- As of early 2010, there were few studies on the impact of local food markets on economic development, health, or environmental quality.

Source: Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues / ERR-97 Economic Research Service/USDA

## MAP 3 History and Culture



Ashtabula County has many cultural features & historical anchors (19 museums and historical sites in all). Some major features near Lake Erie include:

Number	Feature
1	Ashtabula Lighthouse, Harbor Historic District, National Register Area, Bascule Lift Bridge
2	Kent State University - Ashtabula Campus
3	Site of Ashtabula River Railroad Disaster
4	Jennie Munger Gregory Memorial Museum
5	Conneaut Historical Railroad Museum
6	Conneaut Lighthouse
7	Ashtabula Arts Center / G.B. Community Theater
8	Ashtabula Maritime and Surface Transportation Museum
9	Hubbard House Underground Railroad Muesum
10	Finnish-American Cultural Center
11	Conneaut Arts Center





## 3 TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

### Vehicular Mobility and Road Network

Major State and Federal highways connect the coastal area of Ashtabula County. SR 531 is the most significant east-west connector, as it provides a direct route between Geneva-on-the-Lake to the west and the City of Conneaut to the east, adjacent to the Lake. This roadway is generally one lane in each direction, and offers remarkable vistas of Lake Erie from the higher bluffs along the shoreline. SR 531 is part of the Lake Erie Coastal Trail Scenic Byway, which extends 293 miles from the Ohio/Pennsylvania state line to Toledo, Ohio. It is also a National Scenic Byway.



Further to the south, US 20 traverses east-west through Ashtabula County. US 20 is a coast-to-coast route that spans more than 3,300 miles across the United States. In Ashtabula County, US 20 is generally parallel to and north of Interstate 90, which also traverses the County in an east-west direction. SR 84 runs parallel to and between I-90 and US 20 for most of the County, taking a slight jog to the south at SR 193, before it continues east to the Pennsylvania state line.

Major north-south routes in Ashtabula County include SR 534, SR 45, SR 46, SR 11, SR 193 and SR 7. These routes connect the southern portions of Ashtabula County with the Lake Erie shoreline, as well as with US 20 and I-90. They provide excellent access to the wineries, covered bridges, farm markets, and other points of interest.



A corridor study was recently completed for SR 534 between Geneva-on-the-Lake and I-90. This report made many recommendations in terms of access management, public infrastructure, landscaping, adjacent land uses, and multi-modal mobility. It recognized the strong seasonal tourist-oriented traffic flows along this corridor, and identified a long list of potential improvements. Most notably, it was recommended that the SR 534 Corridor be improved to include bike lanes, and that SR 534 in the City of Geneva receive streetscape improvements and off-road multi-use trails. Some streetscaping improvements were recently completed with CDBG Downtown Revitalization grants and other funds.

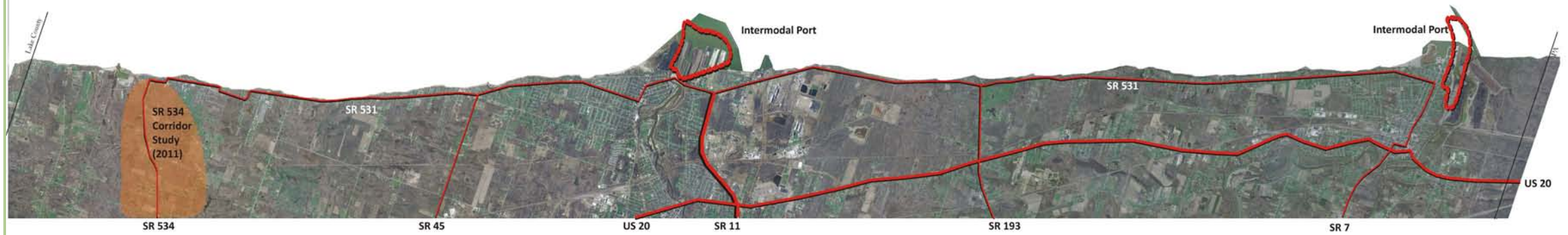
Seasonal traffic congestion in the Village of Geneva-on-the-Lake is a significant problem. It is more than a convenience issue, as there are concerns over emergency vehicle access and response times. Encouraging non-motorized transportation with bike lanes and possibly authorizing the use of golf carts could help address this problem.





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

## MAP 4 General Transportation





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



## Mass Transit

Amtrak provides passenger rail service between Cleveland, Ohio and Erie, Pennsylvania. Although a stop in Ashtabula has been proposed in the past, passengers are not currently able to board Amtrak in Ashtabula County. The closest place to board an Amtrak train is in downtown Cleveland.

Ashtabula County Transportation System operates three bus lines and a “dial-a-ride” service in the City of Ashtabula, Ashtabula Township and Saybrook Township.

## Rail Transportation and Shipping

**Conneaut Harbor** is a major receiving and shipping port on the Great Lakes, currently ranked 16th among the Great Lakes Ports, generating almost \$100 million in direct revenue and supporting over 1,300 jobs. These jobs generate over \$48 million annually in personal income. Over 5 million tons of material were shipped in 2007, including coal, iron ore, aggregates, limestone, ores, and minerals. There are four major docks in the Conneaut Harbor, which are in good physical condition. The harbor includes over 2.2 miles of breakwater structures, a 142-acre outer harbor and 2,450’ of federal channel in the inner harbor. Dredging of the harbor every 2 to 3 years is critical to maintaining its functionality, and the east breakwater needs to be repaired. The channel is currently down to three feet—a serious situation that could affect industry, boating, tourism, fishing, and the general economy of Conneaut.

The docks are supported by a substantial rail system. The Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad (owned by Canadian National) and the Union Railroad Company own all the land between the harbor and the Pennsylvania State line north of the CSX tracks to the Lake. The CSX tracks run parallel to the Lake south of the harbor, and Norfolk Southern tracks parallel them further south. Both are north of US 20. An extensive network of rail that once serviced a very busy harbor, still exists, most of which is currently inactive or underutilized. Commodities are brought in by ship, loaded onto trains, and shipped to cities such as Pittsburgh, for further distribution.

Approximately 900 acres of land are available adjacent to this port and rail system, and could be developed. The Economic Development Corporation of Erie County (PA) (EDCEC) and the Conneaut Port Authority are collaborating on developing a first class intermodal port facility, utilizing this port and rail facility, as well as additional rail and highway facilities in both Ohio and Pennsylvania. The EDCEC is serving as the port manager for Conneaut to help implement this plan.

**Ashtabula Harbor** was once the third largest receiving port in the world, and was a hub of activity around 1830. In the 1960s, it was the third largest iron ore port in the world. Today large boats and vessels have access to docks via Kinder Morgan (the largest private dock on the Great Lakes), RW Sidley, and Norfolk Southern, as result of dredging to 29 feet to accommodate large ships (dredging up river is still needed). Commodities handled through the port include coal (exported), iron ore, sand, gravel, stone, and limestone (imported). Rail service is provided by Norfolk Southern and CSX.

## Boating Facilities

The Ashtabula Harbor boasts eleven marinas and yacht clubs along the Ashtabula River. Services provided by these marinas include seasonal dock space, overnight dock space, camping, picnic facilities, boat launching ramps, and winter storage.

The Ashtabula Port Authority’s transient dock is located on the west side of the riverfront, north of the Bascule Lift Bridge. It is 250’ long and was built in 2001 to accommodate visiting boaters. Boats can be launched at Ashtabula Recreational Unlimited Marina & Campground (ARU) or Brockway North Coast Marinas, and at Lakeshore Park. The Division of Watercraft and the US Coast Guard have facilities at the harbor.

The Conneaut Harbor has recently completed dock improvements. There are about 300 slips for transient boaters at the Conneaut Port Authority Marina and the Lagoon marina, generating more than \$190,000 annually for the Port Authority. These funds are used to enhance lakefront activities. Dredging is constantly needed to assure the safe use of these facilities.

## Water-based Mobility

Cruise ships have had sporadic activity on the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes Cruise Company operates several vessels with multiple cruises on the Great Lakes. Towns as small as Saugatuck, Michigan (population just over 1,000) have been ports of call. Ferries such as the Jet Express out of Port Clinton have expanded services in recent years, with a new service from the City of Lorain to Put-In-Bay. The Jet also provides other specialty trips.

## Non-motorized Mobility

The largest non-motorized mobility feature in Ashtabula County is the Western Reserve Greenway Trail. This trail, which terminates the southern part of the City of Ashtabula near 52nd Street, is a 43-mile, mostly rural rail-trail that cuts a north-south course from the City of Ashtabula to the City of Warren, Ohio. The Western Reserve Greenway Trail is located on the former Penn Central Railroad right-of-way that closed to rail traffic in 1976. It is part of the 100-mile Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway, which is planned to extend from Lake Erie in Ashtabula County to the Ohio River.

Current plans by Ashtabula County Metroparks are to extend the Western Reserve Greenway Trail northward to Bridge Street at the Ashtabula Harbor. This 4.2 mile extension is planned to utilize public streets and walkways, private easements and former railroad rights-of-way, at an estimated cost of more than \$2 million. Funding is anticipated from a variety of public sources, with matching funds provided by the Civic Development





MAP 5 Non-motorized Transportation





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Corporation of Ashtabula County. The Lift Bridge Community Association is planning on extending the North Shore Trail from Bridge Street to Walnut Beach Park, with an eventual connection to a proposed bike path along SR 531 to Geneva-on-the-Lake (GOTL).

A variety of other non-motorized trails and paths exist in Ashtabula County. Most of these are located within State or local parks, some of which are along the Lake Erie shoreline. The most extensive non-motorized trail systems are located in Geneva State Park, just west of GOTL. The Erie to Pittsburg Greenway Trail parallels the Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway Trail to the east. Bike and excursions between Conneaut and Pittsburg are common.



## Winter mobility

Ashtabula County experiences “lake effect snow storms” in winter, similar to other areas along the southern shores of Lake Erie. Some efforts have been made, however, to capitalize on the snowy winter months. Geneva State Park and the Lodge provide hiking, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling in the vast system of trails within the Park. The wineries provide many winter-time activities, although not necessarily in the outdoors. General consensus is that the County needs to capitalize on the winter months by providing more winter activities to draw tourists into the area during the off-season. The Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACCVB) is working on this, starting with after summer time activities.

## Wayfinding Signage System

Ashtabula County lacks a consistent wayfinding system to identify tourist attractions and other sites of interest. Wayfinding signage systems typically include gateway signs, directional signage, and identification signage, in a uniform design concept. Wayfinding issues also often involve issues related to branding and image of communities. The ACCVB has identified this as one of its strategic initiatives. The Lift Bridge Community Association is currently working on a signage system for the Harbor Historic District, and signs may be going up shortly.

## 4 RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

**Planning for Ashtabula County's coastal area is an ongoing process and related local efforts have involved various stakeholders and organizations in the recent past. To make this Plan as inclusive and comprehensive as possible, these other planning documents were reviewed and considered as recommendations were formed. These documents included the following:**

### A Strategic Tourism Plan for Ashtabula County

The Ashtabula County Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACCVB) prepared this Strategic Tourism Plan in early 2012. Tourism summits were held in 2010 and 2011 with a variety of stakeholder groups to identify a course of action to improve Ashtabula County's tourism industry. These summits culminated in a Strategic Board Retreat, held in September 2011, with Civic Development Corporation (CDC) and ACCVB Board members and Executive Directors, and with facilitation provided by the Ohio State University Sea Grant program. The Mission of the Strategic Tourism Plan is to grow the local economy by implementing tangible, measurable, and sustainable tourism projects. Priority projects are as follows:

- **Public Access** - Ashtabula County is blessed with hundreds of opportunities for outdoor recreation. Unfortunately, many of the opportunities are underutilized due to a lack of access. Clearly defining the lines between public and private land is paramount, while maximizing exposure to our natural assets.
- **Countywide Branding** - The critical need for a countywide branding effort was identified in the Tourism Summit Reports. It is understood that this effort would support other marketing initiatives. Having a consistent brand in the marketplace is important to establish the "Ashtabula County Brand and Identity."
- **Countywide Signage Program** - A must for every tourism destination is high-quality, uniform signage. With partnerships with local and state officials, in addition to other resources, this project has the ability to change the travel patterns of visitors.

- **Customer Service Training** - There is a need for a consistent and professional customer service program. The key to positive initial and extended stays in Ashtabula County is the need for front-line workers who interact well with the traveling public.

- **Expand Hospitality Tax Base** - Developing a "toolbox" for investors in the hospitality area is necessary to facilitate continued growth. Working with the Growth Partnership, SBDC, the 503 Corporation, the CDC, and local Chambers of Commerce, the ACCVB can become a resource to investors, guiding them to the appropriate organizations and institutions that can help them achieve success in the tourism industry.

- **Marketing to the End Consumer** - While creating additional products and services will improve tourism offerings of Ashtabula County, adequate resources to promote that growth are vital to the overall success. Successfully getting the messages and stories to the end consumer is a must.

- **Expansion of Programs, Hours and Offerings** - With 60% of all retail transactions taking place after 6:00 pm, it is no longer acceptable to have hours from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. This objective will target the hours of operation, and extend the marketable season for the traveling public into the fall months of September and October.

- **Local Food Initiative** - Establish a sustainable, measurable program where local businesses purchase and use local foods in their restaurants and businesses, and allow visitors and residents to "taste the local flavor" of our region. Utilizing the local foodshed, the County intends to create a "Locavor Trail," where consumers can sample local wines, dine on local foods, and enjoy the authentic local culture.

### "Lake Visions- A Revitalization Strategy for Geneva-on-the-Lake"

This Plan for Geneva-on-the-Lake (GOTL) is the result of over a year of effort on the part of Village Council, administration, and the GOTL Planning Committee. A summary of key recommendations for the first one to three years that relate in some way to this Coastal Management Plan include:

- Pursue designation of an historic district or designation of individual buildings to the National Register of Historic Places.

- Authorize planning and preliminary design of the bike path along 531.

- Plan and construct additional parking south of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) building to replace spaces that will be lost by adding the bike path along SR 531.

- Aggressively encourage the Township Park Board to remove the chain link fence around Township Park and replace it with a split rail and/or shrubbery fence.

- Complete plans for wastewater treatment plant improvements in order to provide for future growth.

- Initiate a sewer lateral replacement program.

- Pursue financing and design for improvements to the sanitary sewer, water line and sidewalk/bike path between the S curves on the west side of GOTL along SR 531.

- Work with the Lodge and the County Facilities Authority to connect the parking lots and sidewalks in the Chestnut Grove/Lodge area.

- Work closely with the ACCVB to extend the shoulder tourist season.

- Transfer the Firehouse property to the Village for use as a public beach.

- Pursue an alternative mixed-use development for the Eddie's Grill parking lot on The Strip to enhance the economic viability of the property and the balance of The Strip.

- Work with owners of the theater to restore it to its former glory and use it again as a theater, adding a variety of venues year-round.

- Work with the ACCVB to develop an Integrated Lodging Booking System.

- Add winter sports and activities to encourage a year-round economy.

- Initiate a "Clean-up GOTL" program.

- Add pedestrian connectors whenever possible.

- Improve the restrooms at the CVB building.

- Update the Zoning Code.



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



- Adopt and implement Design Guidelines.
- Land on the east side of SR 534 across from the wastewater treatment plant and the Lodge should be planned for commercial development, and could serve as a transit station for a tram, golf cart, monorail, bus, or trolley service.
- The lakefronts of the Lodge, Chestnut Grove, the Jennie Munger Gregory property, and the Township Park should be developed for additional public beaches and/or access to the Lake.
- Vacant parcels of land south and east of the golf course should be developed as upscale single-family residential housing.
- Vacant land along the lakefront between Austin Road and the eastern corporate limits (including “the ranch”) should be zoned to develop higher-density multi-family development, specifically condos, with public access provided to the lakefront.
- On both sides of SR 531 (Lake Road) from Austin Road to Indian Creek, a mix of uses should be planned.
- The 150-acre site on the west side of the Village, formerly the Deer Lake Golf Course, should be used for unique passive recreational activities such as horseback riding, trapping, biking, dirt biking, camping, fishing, birding, other outdoor recreational activities, and winter activities such as cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snow-shoeing, etc. Activities should be compatible with Geneva State Park camping and other recreational activities.

## The Walnut Beach Park Master Plan

In April of 2010, Bird Houk completed the Walnut Beach Park Master Plan for the City of Ashtabula. Walnut Beach Park is the proposed northern terminus of the Great Ohio

Lake-to-River Greenway. The Park is adjacent to Harbor-Topky Memorial Library, the Hubbard House Underground Railroad Museum and the Ashtabula River and Port, and is located within the Harbor Historic District. This Plan included strategies and projects to make Walnut Beach Park one of the finest public beaches on Lake Erie. Goals of the Plan included:

- Linking the park to the community
- Re-establishing a destination within the Harbor Historic District
- Enhancing bike and pedestrian access
- Creating a gateway to Walnut Beach Park at Walnut Blvd. and Lake Avenue
- Creating a multi-use recreational facility
- Responding to the needs of the community
- Balancing active and passive recreation
- Restoring the wetlands
- Educating visitors
- Enhancing gathering areas
- Creating a sense of community ownership
- Considering adopt-a-park opportunities
- Developing a revenue stream
- Attracting users that support businesses in the Bridge Street and National Register Areas
- Pursuing public funding
- Providing maintenance resources



### The following nine phases were proposed for the overall redevelopment of Walnut Beach Park:

- Phase 1: Relocation of existing parking lot and sport courts, creation of a vehicular drop-off area adjacent to existing bathhouse, and development of an arrival plaza directing visitors to the beach.
- Phase 2: Renovation of the bathhouse facility and surrounding area.
- Phase 3: Bocci ball court improvements, rehabilitation of pavilion structure and picnic plaza.
- Phase 4: Children play facilities including traditional equipment, seating areas for parents, overhead trellis structure, rubberized play surfaces, and a splash pond.
- Phase 5: Additional parking adjacent to the sports courts, roadway improvements, a drop-off area at the proposed fishing enclave, landscape buffers and treatments.
- Phase 6: Fishing pier and bike trail/walkway extensions.

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



- Phase 7: Amphitheater, stage area, seating area, and flex-lawn sport field.
- Phase 8: Fenced in, self-contained dog park facility.
- Phase 9: Additional picnic pavilion structures, landscape buffer, wildlife observation deck that overlooks the beach grass dunes and Lake.

The total project cost for all phases was estimated at almost \$8 million. A variety of funding opportunities were presented. In 1998 and 1999, the City received Ohio Coastal Management Program grants to fund the construction of a handicap-accessible boardwalk and seating area, as well as a self-guided nature trail including observation decks and walkways over the beach dunes and estuary wetlands. The City is currently (2012) using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Revolving Loan funds to renovate the restrooms and concessions facility. The Lift Bridge Community Association (LBCA) identifies this project as one of the key efforts needed to continue the revitalization of the Harbor Historic District.

## The Lift Bridge Community Association Revitalization Implementation Strategy

The Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners and the LBCA retained Poggemeyer Design Group, Inc. to synthesize the key recommendations of three plans for the area, and to assist with implementation of several projects within a short time frame. The goal was not to create another plan, but to consolidate existing studies, and identify and initiate specific strategies for implementation, while at the same time, preparing the City and the Harbor Historic District to meet eligibility requirements for several grant programs.

The Target Area for this Implementation Strategy was the Harbor Historic District and 6th Street on the east side of the River to SR 11. Although the primary emphasis is the west side of the River and the Bridge Street commercial area, 6th Street plays a vital role as the gateway into the National Register Area and Bridge Street, crossing over the historic Bascule Bridge.

### The following priority projects or short-term tasks include:

#### North Shore Trail (NST)

The LBCA will continue to support the Metroparks, City, Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Civic Development Corporation with the development of the second phase of the Greenway Trail project, the North Shore Trail. While the proposed NST project is being implemented from Bridge Street to the Western Reserve Greenway, the LBCA will actively pursue the final phase of the NST, from Bridge Street to Walnut Beach Park, as well as a trail from Walnut Beach Park to Geneva-on-the-Lake (GOTL) along SR 531.

#### Walnut Beach Park

The Walnut Beach Park Master Plan has many great recommendations (as noted above), and the LBCA should encourage the City to consider a variety of options that will assure that the Plan is implemented over time, and that all projects are consistent with the recommendations of the Master Plan. The goal is to make Walnut Beach Park the finest public beach on Lake Erie, and implementing the Master Plan would make that happen.

#### Parking

Additional parking for the public is needed along Bridge Street and should be pursued as soon as possible to encourage additional private investment in the area. Both public parking and employee parking options should be pursued. Some suggested areas for future parking include:

- An existing vacant lot on Bridge St. between the City garage and the Iroquois Club
- The building north of the Goodwill building, which is deteriorated to the point that rehabilitation is not feasible
- The vacant area between the Norfolk Southern and Coast Guard properties, which could be improved to create about eight parking spaces for the Coast Guard, which would remove those vehicles from Bridge Street
- The Ashtabula Yacht Club vacant property adjacent to the public restrooms and proposed North Shore Trail trailhead

- The hill south of the buildings on the south side of Bridge Street-- This could also alleviate a creeping erosion problem that threatens some buildings in the National Register Area
- Valet parking should be considered, especially as the existing restaurants become more successful and new restaurants are started, and during special events.

### Redevelopment of the Goodwill building and/or site and the immediate SE quadrant next to the Lift Bridge and the River

Goodwill Industries will be relocating to a different location in the near future, leaving a key parcel and building vacant. The LBCA should continue to work with potential developers and investors to utilize this space for an investment that will complement the Harbor Historic District and provide needed amenities, such as lodging and parking. Equally important is the adjacent parcel of land to the southeast of the Goodwill site. Its location next to the Lift Bridge and the River require a thoughtful design concept that provides for the best use of this property, one that capitalizes on the natural and historic assets of the area.

#### The Ashtabula Lighthouse

Continue to work with the Ashtabula Lighthouse Restoration & Preservation Society (ALRPS) to turn the lighthouse into an active tourist attraction. The LBCA should assist the ALRPS as much as possible in identifying private and public resources to make this happen and to provide access to the site.

#### Period Lighting

The installation of new period street lighting in the lower Bridge Street portion of the Harbor Historic District should continue to be pursued. The project could involve new light fixtures and poles, along with burying or relocating all power lines. Although First Energy is supportive of the project, they are not in a position to assist with financing it. As a short-term alternative, the LBCA should continue to investigate the potential of stringing lights in swags across Bridge Street for the two-block area, adding period lighting to private buildings in lieu of in the street rights-of-way, or other alternatives.



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Signage

The Lift Bridge Community Association (LBCA) has designed a signage system, incorporating the new Harbor Historic District logo. Parking, identification, and directional signage is being designed and should be placed at appropriate locations in the National Register Area. This project is being funded through a Civic Development Corporation grant.

## Bike racks

Bike racks will be installed soon at key locations in the Bridge Street commercial area, as part of the CDC grant. The Harbor Historic District logo will be attached to each bike rack.

## Mariners Memorial

The LBCA is working with the Mariners group to create a memorial to the former high school's alumni. A site has been acquired on the former high school property, and plans are underway to design and construct the memorial.

## Topky Warehouse

Private investors in the Bridge Street area are restoring the Topky Warehouse. The McCarthy Foundation, LBCA, and the New Entrepreneurs Opportunity Fund (NEOF) offices have moved into the upper floor, which provides a fantastic vista of the River, the port, and the Bascule Bridge. This upper floor will also be available as a community meeting room. Lower floors are still being renovated and tenants are being pursued. The outside area facing the River is planned as a courtyard/ green space amenity.

## Staffing

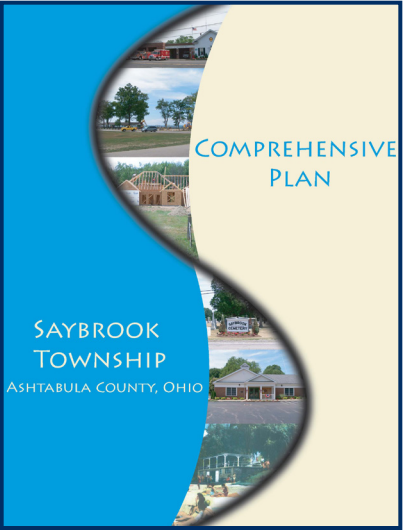
The LBCA should continue to discuss the possibility of a joint staff person with the City of Ashtabula, the Ashtabula Downtown Development Association (ADDA), Geneva-on-the-Lake, the City of Geneva, and/or other communities in the area to see if revenues could be generated for a shared staff person among a group of entities.

## Saybrook Township Comprehensive Plan

Saybrook Township recently completed a Comprehensive Plan. The process that led to the creation of this document commenced in early November 2006 and was completed in mid-November 2007. This document was prepared by Saybrook Township under award NA06NOS4190185 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Office of Coastal Management. This document offers a number of goals and recommendations as summarized below:

### Demographics, Housing & Economy

- Develop a comprehensive business attraction and retention strategy.
- Foster a balanced tax base.
- Expand areas where research and development uses are permitted.
- Encourage residential developments which utilize conservation or cluster development techniques to preserve open space and other environmental features.
- Improve the appearance of the Township.
- Initiate cooperative service agreements with adjacent communities to reduce the cost of providing Township services such as maintenance of Township roads and parks and recreation services.
- Coordinate with adjacent communities regarding the establishment of intergovernmental alliances such as Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDDs) and Cooperative Economic Development Agreements (CEDAs).



- Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into existing zoning regulations.
- Encourage development that preserves lake views.
- Support a tax abatement policy that considers proposed investment, job creation, and revenue foregone by the applicable school district.
- Develop a comprehensive redevelopment strategy for US 20, east of SR 45, to address vacant, underutilized commercial properties.
- Work with the County to initiate a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) for suitable areas of the Township.
- Take advantage of the Township's proximity to Lake Erie.
- Provide for mixed use development along the US 20 corridor.
- Encourage retail uses that will provide residents and visitors with amenities and places to spend money within the Township.
- Promote redevelopment of existing brownfield sites.

## Environmental Features

- Identify potential areas for acquisition of open space.
- Identify and preserve areas that contain rare and/or endangered species.
- Discourage development in flood prone areas.
- Support open space preservation and connectivity.
- Protect riparian corridors.
- Protect steep slopes.
- Protect wetlands.
- Promote green building practices.
- Minimize lakeshore erosion.
- Promote agricultural preservation within the Township.

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Utilize Greenspace and Farmland Preservation Tools and Programs.
- Minimize impacts on the Coastal Management Area.

## Community Facilities and Infrastructure

- Promote increased park and recreational opportunities throughout the Township.
- Maintain and improve roadway safety.
- Support construction of railroad overpasses along SR 45.
- Develop an access management plan for Township roads.
- Coordinate and partner with the County Department of Environmental Services regarding expansion of sanitary sewer service areas in the Township.
- Coordinate with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to identify and develop opportunities for increased public access to the lake.
- Continue to work collaboratively with the County to identify funding sources and provide financial support for expansion of water service to unserved or underserved areas of the Township.
- Promote an enhanced public transportation system.
- Work with neighboring communities to undertake a feasibility study and needs assessment regarding future fire service needs in the Township and surrounding areas.
- Support increased pedestrian circulation opportunities.
- Enhance roadway appearance.
- Support historic preservation.
- Promote safe pedestrian travel.
- Promote development of boat launches, public beaches, and marinas.
- Support development of a revetment adjacent to the Lakeshore that would enable safe boat launches.

## The North Shore Trail Plan

In 2010, as part of a local capital campaign initiative, the Ashtabula County Metroparks developed the North Shore Trail Plan, which would bring the Western Reserve Greenway Trail from its current terminus at West Avenue and 52nd Street to Bridge Street (approximately 4.2 miles) and the Ashtabula Harbor. The North Shore Trail is planned as the northern-most stretch of the 100-mile Great Ohio Lake-to-River Greenway Trail. The Trail Coalition’s mission is “to establish, preserve, and promote a greenway trail from Lake Erie to the Ohio River for recreation and transportation that will enhance economic development and the quality of life for our region.”

The overall greenway trail would provide opportunities for walking, running, biking and cross-country skiing on a path surrounded by nature. The economic opportunities that it would provide to the communities along its route, as well as to the State of Ohio, are substantial.

The Ashtabula County Metroparks has spearheaded the effort to design and acquire funding for the North Shore Trail. The graphic on right, indicates the proposed location of the North Shore Trail. The estimated cost of the project is just over \$2 million, although several alternatives have been suggested that would likely alter that cost estimate.

The Ashtabula County Metroparks is coordinating with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), which strongly support this project. Clean Ohio Trail Fund (COTF) applications were submitted in 2011 and 2012, but were not funded. The Lift Bridge Community Association helped refine the COTF application and the Metroparks resubmitted it again in February 2012. The Ashtabula County Civic Development Corporation (CDC) allocated \$275,000 as local match for the land acquisition and design of this Trail project. The City of Ashtabula intends to spearhead future efforts on the North Shore Trail with the Metroparks.

The North Shore Trail would provide needed non-vehicular linkages within the City. It would connect places of employment, residential neighborhoods, the Harbor Historic District with its retail shops and restaurants, downtown







Western Reserve Greenway South of the City of Ashtabula

Ashtabula with its many personal and government services, the Ashtabula County Medical Center, marinas, museums, Walnut Beach Park, several other parks, the historic Bascule Lift Bridge, the Ashtabula Port and Lighthouse, and all places in between. The Trail would truly be a great recreational and transportation asset, as well as an economic development driver for the region.

## SR 534 Corridor Study

Ashtabula County retained the services of a consultant to complete a Corridor Study along SR 534 to identify areas for future growth and redevelopment, as well as areas requiring transportation-related improvements. The 534 Corridor Study focused on an eight-mile section of SR 534, from SR 307 in Harpersfield Township to SR 531 in Geneva-on-the-Lake (GOTL). The study considered future changes affecting transportation, land use, economic development and sensitive environmental resources. It included short-, intermediate- and long-term improvements along the corridor, and offered a recommended land use plan for the corridor.

Four priority areas were identified, including GOTL, Geneva, South Geneva, and Harpersfield Township. A visioning phase of the project included an effort to portray ways that the corridor could evolve over the next five to twenty-five years, identifying three alternative themes. These themes included “Familiar Places,” where traditional virtues of the Strip, the historic Geneva city center and an interchange will continue; “Breaking Away,” where outdoor athletic recreation, waterfront activity, and wine culture will increasingly be a focus of activity; and “The Green Line,” where access to green space and ecotourism becomes an increasingly important focus for the 534 corridor.

## Eastern Lake County Coastal Comprehensive Plan

This Plan was reviewed to identify any recommendations that could affect Ashtabula County. Completed in 2002 by the Lake County Planning Commission, this study looked at 1000’ shoreward from the Lake, as well as creeks and rivers. It evaluated soils, sand and bluff conditions, rare species of wildlife habitat, demographics, land uses, zoning ordinances, existing utilities, and lake access for the key communities along the Lake.

Recommendations were made for additional recreational boating facilities, channel maintenance, additional public access to the Lake, new infrastructure, storm water management, education, promoting ecotourism, regional and multi-jurisdictional coordination, public private

partnerships to enhance lakefront projects, better usage of the waterfront to stimulate growth, protecting our natural resources, and many specific projects to improve the lakefront.

Of special importance to Ashtabula County is a recommendation to provide a bike path along the lakefront connecting the City of Euclid to Geneva-on-the-Lake.

## Landside Communities Conceptual Master Plan & Focus Area Plans (Lake County)

Completed in April 2006 by the Lake County Planning Commission and the Cleveland Urban Design Center of Kent State University, this plan proposes \$77 million of waterfront improvements. Recommendations were made to identify historic and tourism points along the scenic highway, improve waterfront parks, provide additional public access to Lake Erie, accommodate private development while preserving public access, and conservation of the environment.

Focus area plans were provided and identified significant improvements in the following focus areas:

- Eastlake
- Mentor-on-the-Lake/Mentor
- Fairport Harbor
- Painesville Township Park
- Perry Township park
- Stanton Park
- Madison Township Park

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Lake County Coastal Plan

This plan was completed in January 2005 by the Lake County Planning Commission and JJR. It evaluated shoreline edge conditions, presented the economic benefits of boating and other Lake activities, and evaluated both land and water existing uses. A summary of regulatory issues was also provided.

Recommendations were made for improvements to the Chagrin River, Mentor-on-the-Lake/Mentor Beach Park, Fairport Harbor and Marina, Mentor Harbor, Perry Township Park, Townline and Stanton Parks, and Madison Township Park.

## PA Coastal Zone Management Program 309 Assessment

Erie County, PA has no Coastal Management Plan similar to the one being prepared for Ashtabula County or the one completed for Lake County. The closest document is this 309 Assessment, completed in February 2011 by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This document addressed nine priority enhancement areas for the Lake Erie coastal area and the Delaware Estuary area. These nine areas included:

- Coastal wetlands
- Coastal hazards
- Public access
- Marine debris
- Cumulative & Secondary Impacts
- Special Area Management Planning
- Ocean Resources
- Energy & Government Facility Siting
- Aquaculture

Comprehensive analyses of these nine areas were conducted, priorities set, and policies and initiatives recommended.

## Cleaning Up The Ashtabula River

The City of Ashtabula is now poised to reap the benefits of many years of effort to clean and restore the Ashtabula River. This story is strong and compelling, and helps to draw attention to successful planning efforts and improved environmental quality. Like Lake Erie itself, the Ashtabula River has transformed. In the 1960s and 1970s, Lake Erie was considered “dead” and places such as the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland actually caught fire. These conditions were the product of decades of neglect and a lack of understanding of how discharges of waste and chemicals impacted aquatic systems.

Today, both Lake Erie and the Ashtabula River are many times cleaner and far more desirable than in the past. The middle of the 20th century was a time of significant industrial development in the City of Ashtabula. Ashtabula emerged as a major shipping and commercial center in the 1950s, and saw growth with an expanding chemical industry and increasing harbor activity. Ashtabula was one of the most important port cities of the Great Lakes. This economic success also brought environmental degradation from uncontrolled discharges of chemicals and pollutants. For example, there was a concentrated cluster of chemical companies in the Fields Brook area just east of the City of Ashtabula.

In the 1940s and in the decades that followed, industrial facilities in Ashtabula released hazardous substances to the Ashtabula River area, and a wide variety of chemicals and heavy metals were subsequently detected in the sediments, water and fish. An advisory was issued in 1983 by the Ohio Department of Health, and Ohio EPA recommending that no fish caught in the lower two miles of the Ashtabula River be eaten. This advisory was based on the results of fish tissue sampling from 1978 to 1981. Sediment sampling in 1979 and 1983 also confirmed that River sediments were highly polluted and toxic.

In 1985, the lower Ashtabula River and Harbor were designated a Great Lakes Area of Concern (AOC) by the International Joint Commission (IJC). Canada and the United States created the IJC out of recognition that each country is affected by the other’s actions in lake and river systems along the border. The lower Ashtabula River AOC was one of 31 AOCs on the U.S. side of the Great Lakes, and it was defined as the two-mile reach extending from the upper limit of the Federal navigation channel to the mouth. At that time, regular dredging was prevented due to the contaminated sediments, and this seriously impeded both commercial and recreational navigation.



Photo Credit - EPA

In 1985, the IJC also called for the preparation of Remedial Action Plans (RAPs) for each AOC to provide a focus for developing and implementing remedial options and establish a means for tracking changes in environmental quality. RAPs were to embody a systematic and comprehensive ecosystem approach to restoring and protecting AOCs.

In 1988, the Ashtabula River RAP Advisory Council was formed and began to focus on the Ashtabula River AOC. A variety of agencies and organizations contributed to the Ashtabula River RAP, including the Ashtabula River Partnership, Ohio Sea Grant, Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District,



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), angler groups, local businesses and industries, marinas, port authority and other local groups. In 1991, the Stage 1 Investigation Report was released.

In late 2002, clean up of the Fields Brook Superfund site was completed and resulted in the removal of contaminated materials. Fields Brook flows into the Ashtabula River and ultimately Lake Erie. Sediments and surface water of Fields Brook, and soils on the Fields Brook floodplain/wetlands area, were contaminated with a wide variety of materials.

In 2006, work began on the cleanup of the Ashtabula River, with efforts to remove PCBs and other contaminants from the river bottom. It was the first cleanup project in Ohio funded by the federal Great Lakes Legacy Act. About 500,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment were removed to improve the environmental health of the area and to allow for the return of commercial navigation and recreational boating in the River and harbor. The project cost was over \$50 million, with half of the funding coming from Legacy Act and the other half from the Ashtabula City Port Authority in cooperation with other public and private entities, including the Ashtabula River Cooperation Group II, a group of private companies. The State of Ohio provided \$7 million for the project. Other organizations, including U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, played important roles. Work was considered to be complete in 2008.

In 2011, Ohio EPA began a large habitat restoration project using Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funds (GLRI). This federal, state and local effort will develop 1,500 feet of fish shelf in the lower two miles of the River. This will provide native fish species with a shallow water habitat to forage and spawn. This project compliments an in-water and shoreline project to increase fish habitat completed in 2010 under the Great Lakes Legacy Act.

On July 12, 2012, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the US Department of the Interior, and the State of Ohio settled natural resource damage claims with 18 companies. Under the settlement in the final Consent Decree, the settling companies will implement certain restorations actions, such as acquiring ecologically-valuable properties along the River, undertaking habitat restoration projects and using land-use restrictions to protect these restoration properties. Altogether, the settlement is valued at \$5.5 million.

Because of these efforts for more than two decades, the Ashtabula River could be off the list of the EPA's AOCs in the future. One of the last remaining hurdles involves fish habitat restoration. Channel and stream bank modifications toward the lower reaches of the AOC destroyed habitat to facilitate industry, shipping and rail service. This loss of quality aquatic habitat is a remaining challenge to sustaining healthy fish communities. Work now underway in the middle of the AOC related to the 5½ slip site is an effort to improve habitat.



Ashtabula River and Harbor (Photo Credit - EPA)

## 2003 Ashtabula County Comprehensive Plan

The Ashtabula County Planning Department organized a large group of community stakeholders to assist in the developing this Comprehensive Plan, which included sections on:

- Green Space Preservation
- Economic & Community Development
- Recreation
- Farmland Preservation
- Heritage: The Future of Our History

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Some key recommendations included:

- Protect forests, wetlands, rare species, habitats, green space, farmland, watersheds, rivers, Lake Erie, and historic sites
- Encourage vegetative buffers near key environmental areas
- Encourage compatible commercial and residential development
- Encourage the use of farmland and green space preservation tools
- Connect river corridors with protected lands and parks
- Provide additional public access to Lake Erie and scenic resources
- Update water and sewer plans
- Encourage use of brownfield sites for industrial development
- Update zoning codes
- Maintain a viable agricultural presence in the County
- Provide a range of transportation choices, including a safe, convenient and economical public transportation system
- Promote pedestrian and bicycle transportation
- Support the continued viability of passenger and freight rail systems
- Protect and preserve the airport
- Provide a safe and efficient system of rural roads and rights-of-way
- Maintain a data system to assist with economic & community development
- Identify areas with greatest potential for growth and encourage orderly sequencing of growth
- Provide tools to encourage development in targeted areas, especially in the County's numerous industrial parks
- Continue to promote tourism
- Develop a master recreational plan for the County

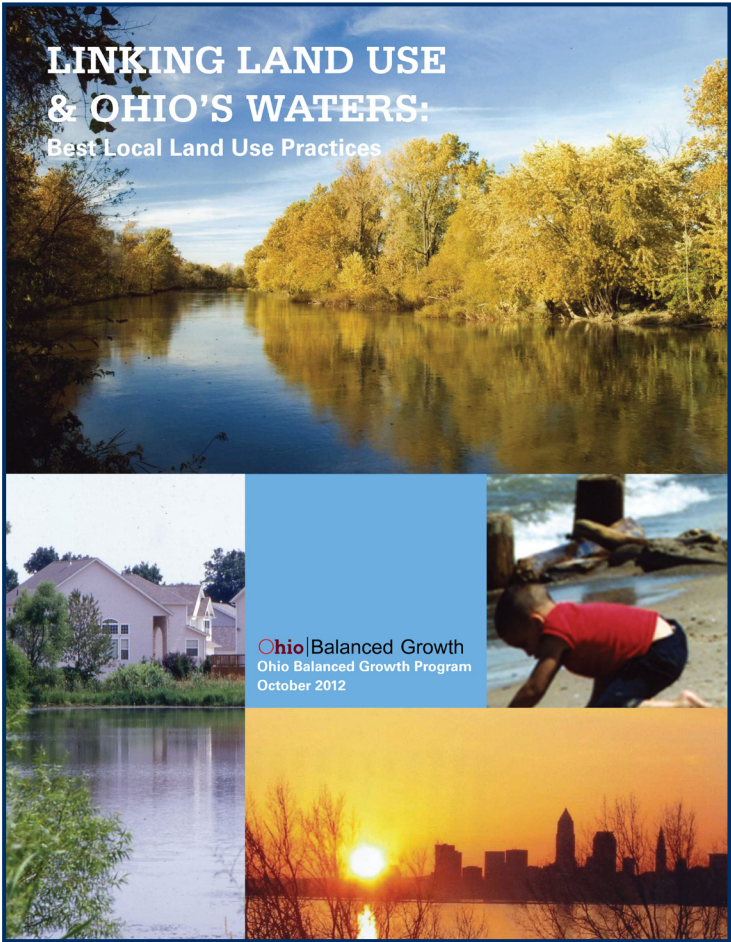
- Complete the construction of the Western Reserve Greenway Trail, including a bike lane along Lake Road, and connect parks and greenways
- Assure that there are designated areas for hunting, fishing, birding, and wildlife associated activities
- Develop additional recreational facilities

## Ohio Balanced Growth Program

The Ohio Balanced Growth Program is a project of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission and the Ohio Water Resources Council. This program recently released (October 2012) this manual as a means to help local governments balance development opportunities and environmentally friendly practices. This document is actually an update to a 2004 document titled Linking Land Use and Lake Erie and it includes background information, example projects, and sample policy language for local government use, identifies key issues and recommends best practices. The best practices have broad applicability to Ohio communities, and material is oriented toward how land use and development activity impact our water and quality of life. This manual notes that many of Ohio's local governments are working with outdated land use policies. Many of Ohio's local governments do not have a comprehensive plan, or they are working with one that hasn't been updated for decades. Further, zoning and development codes often do not reflect more contemporary regulatory practices.

The Best Local Land Use Practices (BLLUP) program is a statewide initiative to assist individual local governments with implementation of land use policies in support of balanced growth. As defined by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program, Balanced Growth is a voluntary, incentive-based strategy to protect and restore Lake Erie, the Ohio River, and Ohio's watersheds to assure long-term economic competitiveness, ecological health, and quality of life. The BLLUP program stresses individual actions that can be taken to improve local land use policies. The categories for such action include:

- Comprehensive Planning
- Compact Development
- Conservation Development
- Storm Water Management
- Stream, Floodplain and Wetland Protection
- Source Water Protection







- Natural Areas Management
- Brownfields Redevelopment
- Tree and Woodland Protection
- Steep Slope Protection
- Agricultural Land Protection
- Transfer of Development Rights
- Historic Protection
- Scenic Protection
- Access Management

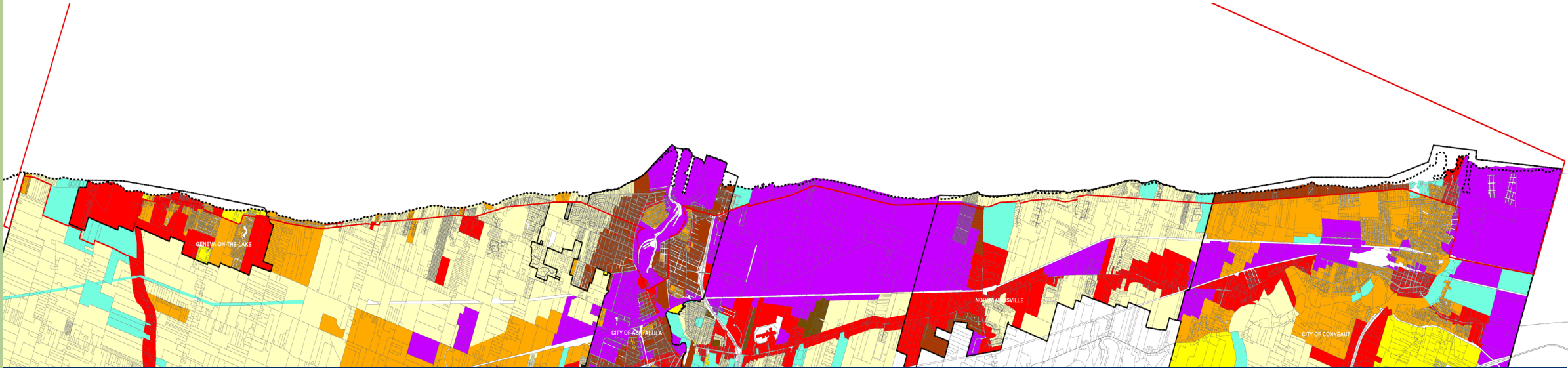
In Chapter 6, a specific comparison is made between these Best Local Land Use Practices and existing plans and regulations in place among coastal jurisdictions in Ashtabula County.

## General Ashtabula County Land Use Issues

Land use planning primarily occurs at the municipal and township levels in Ashtabula County. Additionally, with the exception of county subdivision regulations (applicable to unincorporated areas), primary regulations with respect to how land can be used and developed is embodied in local regulations (primarily zoning) enacted by municipal and township governments. Like most areas in Ohio, there are only general similarities between how zoning districts are defined, structured and named. This makes it difficult to compare one jurisdiction with another and hard to grasp how a large area (such as the Ashtabula County Coastline) is intended to develop and redevelop.

To address this, Map 6 was prepared with assistance from the Eastgate Council of Governments. The Eastgate Council of Governments provided basic GIS layers and zoning boundaries from each local jurisdiction. Using this data, zoning districts were grouped into similar categories by type and allowable residential density. The result helps to illustrate how the whole coastal area is zoned by local governments, and this provides a glimpse of how coastal areas may look in the future (subject to rezonings and zoning updates). As shown, large areas of land in and near both Ashtabula and Conneaut are zoned for industrial purposes. In some cases, zoning is cumulative. This means that a wider range of land uses may be permitted beyond just the name of the district since groups of land uses are permitted in multiple zoning districts.

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



### Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Coastal Management Area

### Zoning Districts

- Low Density Residential & Rural Zoning Districts  
(Generally Less Than 1 Dwelling Unit Per Acre)
- Medium Density Residential  
(Approx 3-6 DU/AC)
- High Density Residential  
(Approx 7-9 DU/AC)
- Multi-Family Residential  
(Approx 10 DU/AC or Greater)
- Mobile Home Parks
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Special Districts



## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The planning process and collaborative efforts with the Steering Committee revealed many issues and opportunities with respect to Ashtabula County's Coastal resources. These issues and opportunities became focal points for this planning effort and are described below:

### Transportation

#### Consider personal boating and kayaking and define water trails in Ashtabula County

According to American Rivers.org, "Blue Trails" (or water trails) are the water equivalent to hiking trails. They are created to facilitate recreation in and along rivers and water bodies, and are found in urban settings as well as remote environments. Blue Trails come in all shapes and sizes, and are used by paddlers, anglers, hikers, picnickers, and those just seeking some solitude.

To have a successful trail, a community needs to have a healthy body of water. That is why these trails are often associated with conservation easements and land acquisition, stream buffer requirements, higher water quality standards, and requirements for stream flow protections.



On Lake Michigan, The Lake Michigan Water Trail Association was formed in 2010 to create kayaker-friendly facilities and help bring stakeholders together from the four states bordering the lake. The goal is to promote launch sites, services, and businesses actively supporting kayakers, and to help make Lake Michigan a premier paddling destination. A 1,200 mile route is being developed around Lake Michigan to support paddlers and help communities gain economic benefits from increased tourism. In November, 2012, paddlers, planners, bikers, site owners and governments from Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and Illinois met at a conference for two days to plan and develop this trail.

In Ohio, the Department of Natural Resources has formed the Ohio Water Trails team. It includes employees from several divisions within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources who work with local partners to promote the awareness of public boating access by developing designated water trails on Ohio waterways. There are presently three water trails in Northern Ohio and they include the Mahoning River Water Trail, the Vermilion-Lorain Water Trail and the East Sandusky Bay Water Trail.

The water trail most relevant to Ashtabula County is the Vermilion-Lorain Water Trail which was designated in



January 2009. This trail provides a unique paddling experience offering both river and open water travel along Lake Erie and travels through both urban and rural areas. The configuration of this water trail could be replicated in Ashtabula County in a similar fashion along either the Ashtabula River or Conneaut Creek. Future connections to other trails may also make sense.

#### Commercial cruise ships in Ashtabula County would be an asset

Commercial cruise ships on the Great Lakes provide opportunities for economic development. Vessels owned by The Great Lakes Cruise Company for example, offer voyages from the St. Lawrence Seaway to Chicago. Further development of Great Lakes Cruise Company routes could include Ohio Ports of Call and help boost area tourism.

The Great Lakes Cruising Coalition (GLCC) is an organization that advocates passenger cruising on the Great Lakes. It represents American & Canadian port cities and towns, various significant Port Authorities, several U.S. States, the Canadian Province of Ontario and the St. Lawrence Seaway. The GLCC was formed to support the development of cruising on the Great Lakes, and believes that the Great Lakes have yet to be discovered by the worldwide cruise community. The mission of the GLCC is to create an atmosphere that is attractive to the worldwide cruise industry, and impress upon them how magnificent and rewarding cruising the Great Lakes can be.

*Kayaking and canoeing are among the fastest growing outdoor activities in North America, according to reports from the Outdoor Industry Association.*



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Promotion of Ashtabula County as a destination for private cruise vessels

Ashtabula County can be promoted as a destination among private owners of vessels who travel the Great Lakes. An organization called the Great Lakes Cruising Club was founded in 1934, and shares cruising information among its members, as well as information about harbors and attractions provided by members who have personally visited the areas, anchorages, harbors or waterways described in the individual reports.

## Capitalizing on area ferries to recruit visitors

At one time, an industrial ferry provided railroad service between Ashtabula and Port Burwell in Ontario, Canada. This vessel, “The Ashtabula,” sank in 1958 after a collision with a Lake Freightier called the Ben Moreell. More recently, discussions about a ferry service to Canada have taken place in the region. It has been reported that the City of Cleveland will be a site for a ferry service connecting northeast Ohio and Port Stanley, Ontario, and that the ferry will shuttle people and vehicles across Lake Erie beginning in 2013.



The Conneaut Port Authority continues to express interest in a ferry and is concentrating its effort on establishing a relationship with Port Burwell, Ontario. The interest in creating a ferry terminal stems from the economic impact resulting from passengers either heading to or arriving from Canada, and patronizing restaurants, shops, gas stations and tourist attractions near a terminal. It is reported that a trip across Lake Erie to one of Canada’s ports by ferry is about 80 miles and takes about three hours. By comparison, a truck may need six hours to reach the same destination by driving around the Lake. This alternative can also be more fuel-efficient and reduce emissions. However, the costs of such an endeavor may render this project unattainable. It may be more productive to concentrate on recruiting

tourist activity generated from ferries docking elsewhere.

## Bike travel could and should provide an alternative transportation mode

More emphasis on non-motorized travel in Ashtabula County includes steps to not only develop bike lanes and bike paths—but also to accommodate bike usage by installing bike racks in private and public spaces. Some communities have adopted zoning requirements that require bike racks in private parking areas. Increasingly, communities are taking steps to support bike travel and are providing bike racks in the public right-of-way. The Lift Bridge Community Association (LBCA) for example, will be installing new bike racks which display the Harbor Historic District Logo in the Spring of 2013.



## Trolleys could provide a viable alternative transportation mode

The idea of developing a trolley system between Ashtabula and Geneva-on-the-Lake (GOTL)/ Geneva State Park deserves more study and consideration. This linkage could connect tourists



to more destinations within the County, and help create a more appealing recreational experience. Destinations such as the Bridge Street commercial area, the Bascule Bridge, Walnut Beach Park, Point Park, the Ashtabula Lighthouse, The Strip in GOTL, Geneva State Park, and the many museums could be part of this route, along with destinations such as wineries and covered bridges. This could be undertaken as a private business, not a government service.

## Consider golf carts for transportation mode in select areas

Golf carts are often used in communities, especially those with a considerable amount of tourist traffic, to help lessen congestion. Short trips are ideal for golf carts and such trips make up the majority of all trips in the U.S. Typically, provisions regarding golf cart use include drivers having



a valid driver’s license, not allowing carts on streets with speed limit of 35 mph or above, and not allowing golf cart usage at night.

## Economic Development

### “Plant C” is an important economic development resource

The Port Authority purchased Plant C from FirstEnergy in 2006 to protect jobs, and possibly to revamp the generation portion of the plant to burn biofuels. In April 2009, Senator Sherrod Brown announced that the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) would grant \$1.5 million to the Ashtabula County Port Authority for upgrades to Plant C. The Port



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Authority matched the federal grant with \$1.5 million from a State loan. The \$3 million project replaced the pumps and pipes that draw water from Lake Erie and deliver it to industries that use it in their processes. More than six industries, (approximately 1,300 employees), depend upon water from Plant C.

More recently (in 2012), the Ashtabula County Port Authority signed an agreement to scrap out the non-structural assets of Plant C. Those assets included generators, motors, and other industrial surplus that could be sold for scrap value. This decision was made after local officials could not make progress toward converting Plant C to a generating facility that burns biofuels. Plant C has a permit to draw 157 million gallons of water per day from Lake Erie. This asset and circumstance is believed to be somewhat rare and should be used to help draw industries that are large water users to Ashtabula County.

## Shale gas operations are coming to the area and they present many land use and environmental issues, as well as economic development opportunities

One issue raised by some residents of the County is that gas drilling (and fracking) can have a negative impact on tourism. Gas companies that set up operations in a community are there for extended periods, often tying up large blocks of hotel rooms, leaving tourists without lodging. If tourists are forced to stay outside the County, local spending and visitation will suffer. Similarly, the laws of supply and demand can affect other prices. Restaurants can charge more for that roast beef dinner if the gas company employees are willing to spend their money freely; however, this could be detrimental to the tourism business. The impacts on local roads, effects on water quality, noise levels, the need for additional language skills, impacts on local schools, greater housing needs—these can all be perceived as problems, or they can be perceived as opportunities for growth and development when addressed properly. The County Commissioners recently established an “Energy Development Task Force” to discuss and analyze issues and to prepare the County for alternative energy development.



## Intermodal facilities could bring a substantial amount of development to the lakefront

The Conneaut Port Authority and the Economic Development Corporation of Erie County (PA) (EDCEC) are collaborating on developing large tracts of land for industries dependent on inter-related shipping, rail, and highway facilities. The Port of Conneaut provides the port for shipping a variety of commodities, and has an extensive available rail system (although some upgrades may be needed) with access to at least three railroad systems—Bessemer & Lake Erie (owned by CN), CSX, and Norfolk Southern (NS). The Union Railroad Company owns land west of the state line, although it has no rail facilities in place.

About 900 acres of developable land (excluding potential wetlands) are available in this area. (The property is owned by the railroad companies, and although negotiations are ongoing, there is no current site control by the local economic development agencies.) The lower coal yard, which is adjacent to the existing rail lines, is the first priority for development, as it would require the least amount of infrastructure improvements. Additional

land is available between the CSX and NS railroad tracks north of the prison and west of the Pennsylvania line. The City of Conneaut also owns property that is available for development north of I-90 at the state line. The City of Albion, PA has property for industrial development along the NS and CN railroads, and there are a couple of prospective industries looking seriously at those sites.

It should be noted that trains cannot easily transfer from the Bessemer & Lake Erie to the NS system. They must go miles out of their way and then back track to transfer from one railroad to the other. Also, to provide adequate highway access to US 20, a north-south connector in the vicinity of Thompson Drive is critically needed. A bridge over the railroad tracks would be needed along Thompson Drive. Even with this connector, (and assuming an interchange at I-90 is not feasible) ALL trucks would have to travel east on US 20 several miles into Pennsylvania to US 6 to access I-90, to go either east or west. Traveling west on US 20 to access I-90 at SR 7 is not feasible, as US 20 goes through downtown Conneaut.

## Wind Power is being considered for the Lake Erie region

LEEDCo is a regional non-profit and economic development organization building an offshore wind energy industry in Ohio. As a regional economic development corporation, LEEDCo brings together the necessary constituencies and stakeholders from Lake Erie’s coastal counties of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Lake, and Lorain, creating a single



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

point of contact. LEEDCo is not a project developer, manufacturer, installer or service provider for any offshore wind project. Rather, LEEDCo plays two primary functions--the first being to garner public support for prudent development of offshore wind in the Ohio waters of Lake Erie, and the second, to maximize the local content of the economic activity associated with offshore wind deployment.

The scale and magnitude of offshore wind energy requires a significant amount of maritime capabilities, capacity, and onshore land availability. As the industry launch pad and staging area for all installation and assembly activity, port revitalization is an essential backbone to a thriving offshore industry. A number of vessels and shipbuilding activities are required to service the industry. To this end, Ohio's ports (including Conneaut and Ashtabula) are vital to the development of wind resources in Ohio.

The Ashtabula City Port Authority was selected by Green Energy Ohio (GEO) and the State of Ohio as one of two sites to participate in an Anemometer Loan Program (ALP) to study the potential for wind energy. The potential for a 100 kilowatt wind turbine at the City's wastewater treatment plant along Lake Erie, would complement several existing green initiatives including recycling programs, and using methane from primary waste digesters to reduce the amount of natural gas consumed at the site. Wind data from the study will determine if this site is feasible as an alternative wind energy facility.

## **SPIRE Institute presents some unique opportunities to attract businesses and consumers to the County**

Located south of Geneva, the SPIRE Institute is a non-profit organization, created to "unlock the full potential of the human spirit through athletics, academics



and service." In 2008, SPIRE began construction of a world class sports, education, training and wellness complex. Today, SPIRE facilities include a field and courts building, an outdoor stadium, a track and field building, an aquatic performance center, and a track and field stadium, as well as banquet and kitchen space. Future plans include the construction of housing, commercial uses, a student union, a Research & Development center, and a hotel/conference center.

The growth of SPIRE has been substantial in recent years, and Ashtabula County will benefit from the continued development and successes of SPIRE. Collaboration with SPIRE to make sure that visitors and athletes are aware of area attractions is warranted.

## **Tourism**

### **Festivals draw consumers into the County**

Events such as Ashtabula's Wine and Walleye Festival and Beach Glass Festival, Geneva's Grape Jamboree, Ashtabula County's Covered Bridge Festival, Crafts in the Park and Lights on the Lake at Lake Shore Park, car shows at various events, and the D-Day re-enactment in Conneaut are huge draws. Expansion of these events and the addition of more are needed to draw more tourists in the county, especially in the off-season with paid staff organizing them.



August 24, 25 & 26, 2012  
Historic Ashtabula Harbor  
Bridge Street

### **Winter recreation would attract more tourists**

Tourism naturally declines in winter months, but development of area snowmobile, cross-country skiing, sledding and related lakefront activities can help bring more activity to the area, and help sustain businesses through the slow



months. Ice fishing on Lake Erie and other off-season or winter time sports associated with the Lake or lakeshore could bring additional tourists into the county during the off-season and could provide exercise and recreational opportunities for residents.

### **Packaging Events & Attractions**

There are currently several organizations and businesses along Lake Erie that provide packages to tourists during the summer months. These include dinner and overnight accommodations, wine and dinner, entertainment



plus wine and dinner, etc. Given the variety of assets within the County, additional packages could be designed and promoted throughout the calendar year, and could emphasize Lake Erie activities or events along the shores. If/when cruises were offered, more exciting packages could be created. Continual and additional efforts are needed to make sure that lakeshore events and attractions are showcased and promoted to target audiences.



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



## Ashtabula County offers a Prime Location along Lake Erie for Corporate Retreats

The Lodge at Geneva is a prime location for corporate retreats and large meetings. Other venues along Lake Erie and the rivers, such as the Lakehouse Inn Winery, Old Firehouse Winery, the Topky building, the Bascule Bridge Grill & Wine Bar, the Conneaut Community Center for the Arts, and others are available for smaller meetings and events. Gatherings of this type can pair meeting facilities with recreational activities such as charter fishing, winery tours, covered bridge tours, dining, biking, and other outdoor recreational activities on Lake Erie.

Ashtabula County is likely not the first place that one thinks about when planning a corporate retreat area, so extensive and cooperate advertising is needed. The Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACCVB)



provides great advertising and promotional opportunities and is doing its best to market the County and its businesses. Coordinating marketing and promotional efforts among private and public sectors along Lake Erie will stretch the marketing dollar, providing each participant with a greater bang for their buck.

## Lodging facilities

The availability of lodging facilities is a growing issue in Ashtabula County. Visitors wanting to spend a week or a weekend on the shores of Lake Erie have a variety of cottages available to them for rent, especially in Geneva-on-the-Lake. There are 12 inns, B&Bs, cottages, resorts, etc. within walking distance of Lake Erie in Ashtabula County, and many more further south. However, with the potential for lodging needs created by SPIRE Institute, natural gas development, and more aggressive marketing of the County, the lodging situation is becoming critical. Especially critical is the need for additional facilities along the Lake, Ashtabula Harbor, and potentially the Conneaut Port, as the Erie Inland Port project continues to develop.

The ACCVB has prioritized the objective of expanding the hospitality tax base for the County, and could take the lead in developing a toolbox for investors to facilitate continued growth.

## Pairings

“Pairings—Ohio’s Wine & Culinary Experience” is a proposed 38,000 square foot facility to be constructed in downtown Geneva that will offer premier restaurant and banquet facilities, culinary classes, winemaking demonstrations, incubator facilities for start-up wineries, educational culinary demonstrations, office space and a gift shop focusing on Ohio products. It will also showcase Ohio food and wine, increase regional tourism, provide useful educational opportunities, create dozens of jobs, and will



be self-sustaining. A ground breaking is scheduled for late 2013 for the first phase of this project.

Although located about ten miles south of Lake Erie, Pairings will provide the opportunity for coordinated marketing and promotional efforts. Visitors coming to the County to enjoy Lake Erie should be informed about Pairings, and vice versa. It is Lake Erie that makes this area such a great grape growing region, so connections between the two assets should be capitalized upon.

## Paragliding and wind surfing

Paragliding and wind surfing are becoming more popular on Lake Erie. There are no businesses along the lakeshore that offer lessons or rent equipment for these types of activities. Marketing these activities, and providing lessons and rental equipment, could provide another tourist attraction and business opportunity.

## Public Places

### Public Access to Conneaut Creek

Better public access is needed to Conneaut Creek. According to the ODNR Division of Watercraft, most access to Conneaut Creek is in the form of roadside access with roadside parking. The only actual parking lot and public dock associated with Conneaut Creek is the public dock at the end of Broad Street in Conneaut. Conneaut Creek is a designated Scenic River, and residents and visitors should be able to see and appreciate its natural beauty. Potential access points should be identified, and control of the property should be sought so more people can appreciate this natural asset.

## Culture and History

### Conneaut Arts Center

The Conneaut Arts Center was created in 1976, and serves as a place for hosting formal business meetings, weddings, anniversary parties, baby showers, club meetings and family reunions. The main hall gallery holds 80

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



to 100 people. There are also separate meeting rooms. Art classes are held in this facility, along with monthly art exhibits, free Sunday evening concerts (in July and August), and other special events. Beautiful sunsets over Lake Erie can be enjoyed from the Center’s property. This facility should be promoted and utilized more, as its location on Lake Erie provides many opportunities on a beautiful site on the Lake.

## Finnish-American Cultural Center

The Finnish-American Heritage Association of Ashtabula County (FAHA) is an organization dedicated to maintaining and preserving Finnish heritage in the community and county. It strives to gain a broader understanding of Finnish traits, customs, and traditions, and to learn what contributions the Finns have made to life in America. The Finnish-American Cultural Center is located on W. 8th Street in Ashtabula. Various events are held at this facility that relate to local Finnish culture, history and traditions. Because of its proximity to the Lake and the Ashtabula River, the Cultural Center should be included in tours and events related to Lake Erie and waterfront activities.



## County Metroparks

The Ashtabula County Metropolitan Parks District was created in 1959, to develop historical and recreational parks and conservation areas within the County. This organization works in partnership with Ashtabula County; city, village, and township governments; and other groups to promote countywide outdoor recreation, conservation and education. It works to insure a well-maintained and patrolled environment for park users, and pursues federal, state and other dollars to fund projects that improve recreational activities throughout Ashtabula County. Volunteer efforts also support the mission of the Parks District, as volunteers donate time to

mow, provide litter control, remove tree limbs, sponsor educational events, undertake fund raising events, and provide other services.

The Metroparks is the key player in developing and acquiring funds for the North Shore Trail, a 4.2-mile trail that will extend the Western Reserve Greenway Trail from its terminus on 52nd Street to Bridge Street and the Ashtabula River. The North Shore Trail is the northern most piece that would complete the Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway—a 100-mile trail that stretches from the Ohio River to Lake Erie. Grant applications are being submitted for funding for land acquisition, design, and construction.

The Lift Bridge Community Association (LBCA), while supporting the North Shore Trail project, is working to connect the trail from Bridge Street to Walnut Beach Park on Lake Erie, and then to a proposed bike path along SR 531 to Geneva-on-the-Lake. The 531 bike path could then connect to trails through Geneva State Park and a proposed bike path along SR 534 to the City of Geneva and SPIRE Institute at I-90.

## Park Funding & Operations

Apart from the Ashtabula County Metroparks, townships and municipalities in Ashtabula County own and operate park facilities along the Lake Erie Shoreline (as described previously). Township facilities are owned and operated by Geneva Township, Ashtabula Township, Conneaut and Saybrook Township and each have enacted levies to support operation and maintenance of these facilities. In Ashtabula Township, a parks levy renewal was approved on November 6, 2012 and will provide 0.5 mills for five years towards current operating expense. Similarly, Conneaut & Saybrook Township Park District levy measures were passed in 2011.

The Ashtabula County Metroparks has been unsuccessful in passing a levy in the past. Instead, it has operated with funding from the Ashtabula County Commissioners, volunteer efforts and grants. Additionally, the Ashtabula County Parks Foundation was incorporated in 1995 and was granted tax exempt status in 1996. Contributions to this foundation are earmarked for specific projects. The Ashtabula County Metroparks is responsible for the Western Reserve Greenway Trail, Harpersfield Covered Bridge Metropark, Conneaut Creek Metropark (undeveloped), Hatches Corners (Conneaut)

property, Pymatuning Valley Greenway, Lampson Reservoir, Eyring Wetlands, Battles Road Fishing Pond (Plymouth Township), Graham Road Covered Bridge and several wetlands easements.

The challenges associated with funding the Ashtabula County Metroparks are a significant obstacle to maintaining and developing recreational facilities and places. Often residents have difficulty separating the role and function of a local township or municipal park district from a park district that has county-wide focus. Traditionally, the role of a county-level park district is to deal with inter-jurisdictional park and open-space issues that involve multiple local units of government (such as trails and river corridors) and to deal with matters that are of county-wide significance. Other Ohio County Park Districts have been similarly challenged to pass levies (the Licking County Park District finally passed a levy in 2012, after seven failed levy tries since its formation in 1989). On the other hand, it is also true that both Geauga and Lake Counties renewed park district levies in 2012 and have enjoyed strong community support for many years.

## Star Viewing

Ashtabula County, because of its rural character and proximity to Lake Erie, provides excellent opportunities for star viewing. Controlling light





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

pollution is critical to continuing, enhancing, and marketing star viewing opportunities. Increasingly, light pollution from urban areas is inhibiting views of stars and planets. The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), a non-profit organization formed in 1998 to address this problem, has a mission to preserve and protect the nighttime environment through environmentally responsible outdoor lighting. IDA has produced a Model Lighting Ordinance (MLO) as a valuable guide for outdoor lighting in North America, and has published a number of articles and helpful guides on the topic of dark sky preservation.

## Erosion

To assist property owners along Lake Erie with erosion-related issues, the Lake Erie Shore Erosion Management Plan (LESEMP) was developed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, in partnership with the Office of

Coastal Management, Division of Wildlife and Division of Geological Survey. This management plan identifies the causes of erosion in specific areas, then outlines the most likely means of successful erosion control.

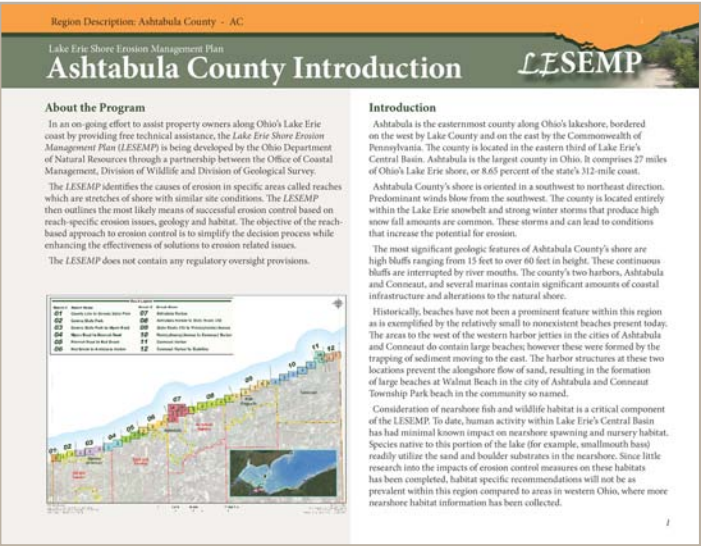
The LESEMP offers detailed recommendations for the various coastal conditions within Ashtabula County (and the balance of the Lake Erie coastline). Ashtabula County was segmented into 12 reaches. Each reach contains introductory material on the coastal setting, followed by a set of recommendations specific to the reach. This information was released in 2011.

Erosion issues have been very evident along SR 531 along the Lake Erie Shoreline. In certain areas, erosion has threatened this roadway, and this

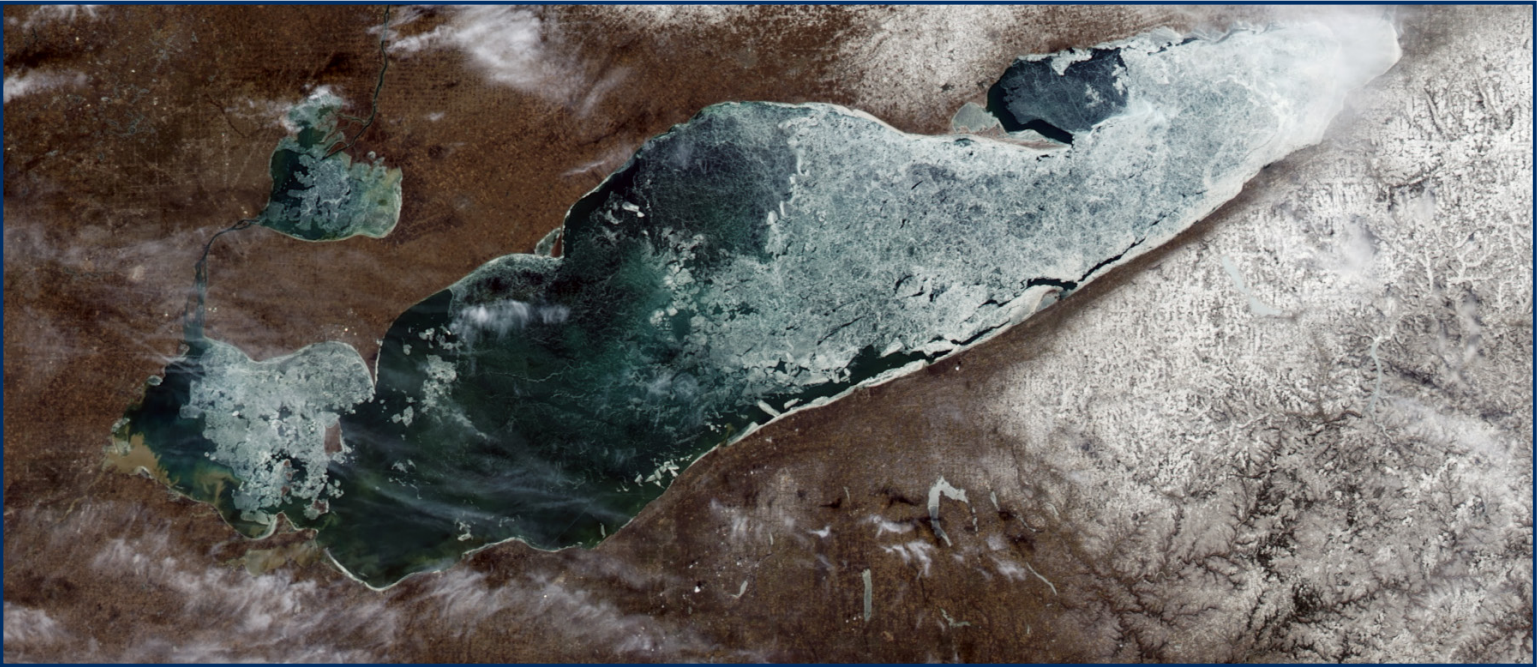
has led to the need for ODOT to fund work that will stabilize the shoreline and protect the pavement.

## Climate Change

According to the U.S. EPA, the earth is warming. Earth's average temperature has risen by 1.4°F over the past century, and is projected to rise another 2 to 11.5°F over the next hundred years. Rising temperatures have been accompanied by changes in weather and climate. These changes include changes in rainfall, more floods, droughts, or intense rain, as well as more frequent and severe heat waves. These and other changes will likely present challenges in the future globally and locally.



Source - LESEMP Webpages: [ohiodnr.com/tabid/20501.default.aspx](http://ohiodnr.com/tabid/20501.default.aspx)



Lake Erie Ice Cover - March 2007 (Photo Credit - NASA images by Jeff Schmaltz, MODIS Rapid Response Team, Goddard Space Flight Center.)



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



The effects of climate change on water resources are being observed. According to the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), warmer temperatures are causing changes to the water cycle that include:

- Changes in precipitation patterns and intensity
- Increases in evaporation
- Changes in runoff and soil moisture
- Changes in the occurrence of drought
- Widespread melting of snow and ice
- Loss of lake and river ice
- Rising water temperatures

About ten years ago, an article was published in National Geographic Magazine (“Down the Drain?” September, 2002) and it made some connections between falling levels in the Great Lakes and climate change. This article drew attention to falling lake levels and pointed out that six of the warmest years on record occurred in the past decade. These warm temperatures not only increased the rate of evaporation in the summertime but also raised it in the winter by reducing normal ice cover. Ice cover normally inhibits evaporation. The Great Lakes rarely freeze shore to shore but often “ice up” near the shorelines. It was found that more recently, ice cover did not occur in areas accustomed to freezing, and if it did occur, it came in later and went out earlier than usual. Naturally, dry weather is also a contributor to falling lake levels.

Some forecasters predict Lakes Superior, Michigan, and Huron will likely reach historic low levels in the late fall or winter of 2012. Lake Erie water levels, already below average, could drop 4-5 feet by the end of this century, significantly altering shoreline habitat. Other potential consequences include less habitat for coldwater fish, more suitable temperatures for aquatic invasive species and hazardous algal blooms.

In Ohio, the OSU Climate Change Outreach Team is a partnership among multiple departments within The Ohio State University. The team’s goal is to help localize the climate change issue by bringing related research and resources to residents of Ohio and the Great Lakes region. From the website [www.changingclimate.osu.edu](http://www.changingclimate.osu.edu), new information and scholarly research is posted and shared, along with webinars.

According to one report posted on this website titled: Investigating the Impacts of Climate Change on Ohio Agriculture and Forests - By Christina Dierkes and Dr. Brent Sohngen, if predictions come true and climate change continues, the associated rising temperatures could seriously affect all aspects of agriculture. This includes the types of crops farmers plant, and when and where crops are planted. More specifically, if climate change continues as predicted, corn and soybean yields in Great Lake states like Ohio and Indiana could decrease 20-30% by 2049 and 40-80% by 2090.

Additionally, in 2009, Painesville, Ohio hosted a “Wines & Vines in a Changing Climate” symposium, sponsored by the American Society for Enology and Viticulture-Eastern Section. This symposium included a presentation from Dr. Alan Lakso, a professor in the Department of Horticultural Sciences at Cornell University. His research suggests that a

## What are climate change and global warming?

Global warming refers to the recent and ongoing rise in global average temperature near Earth’s surface. It is caused mostly by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Global warming is causing climate patterns to change. However, global warming itself represents only one aspect of climate change.

Climate change refers to any significant change in the measures of climate lasting for an extended period of time. In other words, climate change includes major changes in temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, among other effects, that occur over several decades or longer.

Source: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/basics/>

longer growing season, warmer winters, less snow cover and similar considerations will influence pest pressures on vineyards, and vineyard site selection and the selection of plant varieties.

In summary, the climate change issue is important, but Ashtabula County has little control over the effects of climate change. However, the following observations can be made and Ashtabula County should prepare for these likely circumstances and continue to keep abreast of issues as they develop.





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



- **Falling water levels of the Great Lakes are likely to continue.** On the positive side, this could help reduce shoreline erosion, but on the negative side, costs for dredging would increase to maintain existing marine traffic in harbors.
- **Water temperatures will likely increase.** Increased water temperatures will impact aquatic life in complicated ways. Warm water fish species (perch, bass, and walleye) may not be impacted as severely as cold water fish species such as steelhead and salmon. Increased water temperatures may also contribute to the spread of invasive species such as zebra mussels.
- **There will be warmer seasons and changing participation patterns.** Traditional crops and specialty crops such as vineyards will be impacted by climate change in various ways.

## Local Land Use Policy

As stated, this Coastal Management Plan has a county-wide focus and fully recognizes that local municipalities and townships have the primary responsibility for local planning and land use controls. Ohio is a strong “home rule” state and as such, planning and zoning decisions are rightly placed with the unit of government closest to residents. That being said, important issues remain about how best to respond to the challenges of maintaining and enhancing the Lake Erie Coastline, as development and redevelopment occurs. Elsewhere, examples of how development has damaged coastal environments abound, and it is clear that Ashtabula residents care deeply about the future of the coastline in terms of both economic development and environmental protection.

The Ohio Balanced Growth Program provides a description of state-of-the-art tools and practices available to guide development. It recognizes that many local governments are working with outdated land use policies and practices that leave them vulnerable to unintended consequences. Perhaps more importantly, these outdated tools can result in forgone opportunities to enhance property values and create quality places attractive to businesses and residents. Using the Ohio Balanced Growth Program as a benchmark, a review of existing policies and practices for local governments along the coastline is offered below. It should be noted that not all policies and practices are equally applicable among all jurisdictions. However, the following table does highlight some areas where local efforts may be improved - subject to local priorities.

Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
Comprehensive Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare a Comprehensive Plan, or update an existing plan.</li><li>• Evaluate your plan annually and update it every 3-5 years.</li><li>• Involve the public.</li><li>• Include fiscal analysis.</li><li>• Project demand.</li><li>• Align zoning code with comprehensive plan.</li><li>• Identify potential for cooperation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Ashtabula County Comprehensive Plan is nearly 10 years old and should be updated to remain relevant.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ashtabula Township does not have a recently adopted Comprehensive Plan.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recently completed a Comprehensive Plan called “Lake Visions - A Revitalization Strategy for Geneva-on-the-Lake.”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Geneva Township does not have a Comprehensive Plan. However, as described, the SR 534 corridor plan included parts of Geneva Township and addresses some land use and transportation issues.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Saybrook Township Comprehensive Plan is 5 years old and should be updated to remain relevant.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The City of Ashtabula does not have a current Comprehensive Plan. However, (as described previously) focused planning work has recently been directed toward the Harbor District, Walnut Beach Park and the North Shore Trail.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Village of North Kingsville does not have a recently adopted Comprehensive Plan.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The City of Conneaut does not have a recently adopted Comprehensive Plan.</li></ul>

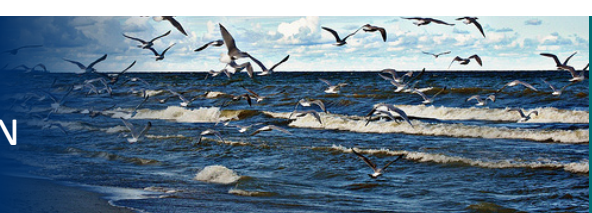
# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



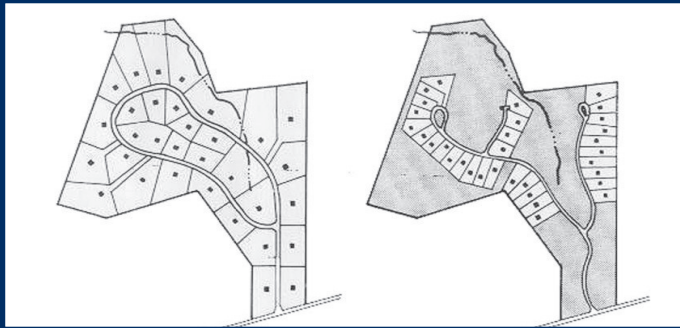
Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<p><b>Compact Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Compact development” refers to development that uses land efficiently through creative and intensive site, neighborhood and district design. Compact development may be residential, commercial or mixed use, but most often approximates the intensity of development that was typical of Ohio communities in the first half of the twentieth century.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify areas for compact development</li><li>• Look for ways to incorporate a mix of uses into districts that have traditionally been single-use.</li><li>• Develop specific planning concepts for individual districts or neighborhoods</li><li>• Develop a street design and parking strategy that incorporates a range of transportation options besides the automobile.</li><li>• Develop architectural and spatial design guidelines that enhance vibrancy and development quality.</li><li>• Provide public education to help people understand the design quality and intent of the compact development area.</li><li>• Aim toward human-scaled environments with an emphasis on making areas pedestrian-friendly and connected with the surroundings.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Since Ashtabula County does not directly control local planning and zoning, its role is to be a supportive resource to local governments who wish to explore the benefits of compact development strategies in local circumstances.</li><li>• It should also be noted that the Ashtabula County Health Department also regulates density when on-site water and sewer systems are involved.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ashtabula Township Zoning provides for four residential districts. Two districts (R-8 and RMF 24) allow for higher density residential development (8-24 units per acre maximum). Some zoning districts allow for a mixture of land uses, but there may be more potential to mix land uses and support compact development.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Zoning Ordinance includes three residential zoning districts, a mobile home park district, one business district and one commercial-industrial district.</li><li>• Compared with other communities, the GOTL Zoning Ordinance permits a higher level of mixed uses.</li><li>• Residential densities are comparatively high due to the “resort nature” of the community.</li><li>• The GOTL Comprehensive Plan provides multiple recommendations to update zoning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Zoning Resolution includes 3 residential districts, one recreational district, one commercial district, one industrial district, one recreation-commercial district and one waste management district.</li><li>• Zoning Districts are generally cumulative, which allows for a greater level of mixed uses. However, intentional mixing of land uses in the structure of most zoning districts may be absent.</li><li>• Permitted residential densities are generally suburban-scale. The R-1 District requires two acres and 200 feet of frontage for each dwelling unit (without sewers).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Zoning Resolution includes 4 residential zoning districts and lot sizes of nearly one acre are required in each (unless sewer is provided).</li><li>• Except for R-4, The frontage requirement in all residential Districts is 200 feet and the maximum amount of lot coverage is only 20-30 percent.</li><li>• There are two commercial zoning districts, a special recreation district and two industrial zoning districts. Although generally cumulative and thereby allowing for some land use mix, each of these zoning districts are generally distinct.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Zoning Ordinance includes four residential districts, four commercial districts, three industrial districts and the Harbor Historic District.</li><li>• Zoning Districts are generally cumulative, allowing for a greater level of mixed uses. However, intentional mixing of land uses in the structure of most zoning districts may be absent.</li><li>• The Harbor Historic District is unique. It focuses on historic preservation and the design of buildings. An Architectural and Restoration Review Board is established.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Zoning Ordinance contains two residential districts, along with commercial, industrial, planned unit development and open space zoning districts.</li><li>• Zoning Districts are generally cumulative, which allows for a greater level of mixed uses. However, intentional mixing of land uses in most zoning districts may be absent.</li><li>• Permitted residential densities are generally suburban-scale as the R-1 District requires two acres for each dwelling unit.</li><li>• The R-2 District allows higher densities and multi-family structures with sewers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Zoning Ordinance contains one agricultural district, five residential districts, four commercial districts and one manufacturing district (and other special districts).</li><li>• A mixture of land uses is evident in most zoning districts. For example, R-4 uses are allowed in some commercial districts and industrial uses are conditionally permitted in B-1.</li><li>• Permitted residential densities seem consistent with an urban area - subject to availability of water and sewer.</li><li>• Lot size requirements for some non-residential uses may be inconsistent with compact development.</li></ul>



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<b>Conservation Development</b>  “Conservation Development is a development technique that allows design and layout of an entire development parcel, to conserve resources while allowing development to occur at the same density as the underlying zoning.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is recommended that communities implement conservation development, both residential and commercial, as a component of their zoning code. This must be done following a well-discussed planning process. As part of that planning process, recommended types of development, levels of development intensity, and areas for open space linkages and retention must be designated.</li><li>• Ideally, areas where the conservation development districts may apply should be mapped; other areas should be identified for compact development. Areas that are a high priority for preservation, especially agricultural preservation, should be addressed with other tools than conservation development.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Ashtabula County Subdivision Regulations recognize the possibility that a local township could approve a Planned Unit Development and offers some flexibility in terms of subdivision design (Section 426.07). Additional language and support for conservation development could, however, be added to clarify requirements and policy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Ashtabula Township Zoning Resolution does not clearly support conservation development. A general Planned Unit Development District is also absent.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Although not prohibited, both the Geneva-on-the-Lake subdivision regulations and the zoning code lack clear language with respect to conservation developments. A Planned Unit Development District is also absent.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Although not prohibited, the Geneva Township Zoning Resolution lacks clear language with respect to conservation developments. A Planned Unit Development District is also absent.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saybrook Township does have a “planned unit development” provision in its zoning resolution which is one way to provide for a conservation development.</li><li>• The Saybrook Comprehensive plan does address the expansion and connection of open space/conservation areas and encourages residential developments which utilize conservation or cluster development.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Although not prohibited, the Ashtabula Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations lack clear language with respect to conservation developments. A Planned Unit Development District is also absent.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The North Kingsville Zoning Ordinance does include an optional Planned Unit Development Zoning District. This district can be approved by Planning Commission and Council. This district allows for clustering of residential density as would be involved in a conservation development (Article 13).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Conneaut Zoning Ordinance includes an optional Planned Unit Development District that supports conservation development (Chapter 1129). This district includes specific provisions for common open space, lot size reductions and approval procedures.</li><li>• Provisions in the subdivision regulations also support conservation development.</li></ul>



Conservation Development Illustrations

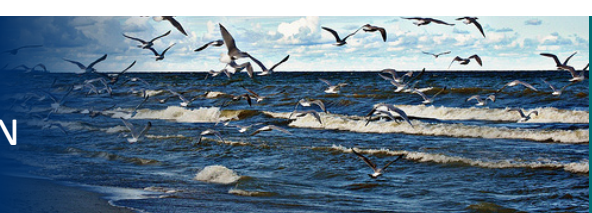
# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<b>Stormwater Management, Erosion &amp; Sediment Control</b>  Stormwater Management is the long-term, post-construction control of the increased volume, flow rates, and quality of stormwater runoff that are caused by man-made disturbances to land. Such controls consist of a system of structural and non-structural measures, referred to as Best Management Practices (BMPs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Provide a combination of structural and non-structural BMPs:</li> <li>•Adopt zoning and other appropriate land-use and management provisions.</li> <li>•Enforce Site Runoff Release Rates:</li> <li>•Review Parking and Street Standards</li> <li>•Integrate your Storm Water Management (SWM) Plan:</li> <li>•Incorporate ongoing monitoring into community activities:</li> <li>•Apply SWM Plans even if not legally required to do so:</li> <li>•Create a project design and review process in the storm water management code that enforces the integration of storm water management concerns early in the project design process, instead of adding BMPs at the end of project design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Ashtabula County Subdivision Regulations address stormwater management and erosion and sediment control in Section 440.</li> <li>•The Ashtabula Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is an independent body of state government responsible for the conservation of soil and water resources. The major functions of the SWCD is to analyze natural resources needs and to design and implement a program to solve soil and water conservation challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Like many Ohio Townships, Stormwater Management, Erosion &amp; Sediment Control provisions are absent from the Resolution.</li> <li>•Parking Standards do not seem to deviate much from the norms, but could be further reviewed to make sure that they do not require unnecessarily large parking lots which contribute to runoff issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Preliminary and final site development plans are required for all proposed developments in any Commercial Service District and must be submitted to the Planning Commission for review and approval. Plans must include detailed plans and specifications for all streets, storm and sanitary sewers.</li> <li>•Subdivision plats must include an adequate drainage system including necessary open ditches, pipes, culverts, intersectional drains, drop inlets, bridges, etc. shall be provided for the proper drainage of all surface water.</li> <li>•GOTL is considering a storm water utility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Like many Ohio Townships, Stormwater Management, Erosion &amp; Sediment Control provisions are absent from the Resolution.</li> <li>•Parking Standards do not seem to deviate much from the norms, but could be further reviewed to make sure that they do not require unnecessarily large parking lots which contribute to runoff issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Like many Ohio Townships, Stormwater Management, Erosion &amp; Sediment Control provisions are absent from the Resolution.</li> <li>•Parking Standards do not seem to deviate much from the norms, but could be further reviewed to make sure that they do not require unnecessarily large parking lots which contribute to runoff issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•City Subdivision Regulations address storm water issues largely in the context of new subdivisions (section 1181.07).</li> <li>•The Zoning Code is generally silent on storm water issues.</li> <li>•Some parking standards could be lowered to reduce the amount of hard surfaces and runoff. For example, general retail uses are required to have one parking space for each 200 gross square feet. The result may be a large number of unused parking spaces and hard surfaces adding to stormwater runoff volumes.</li> <li>•All sites over 500 square feet shall be graded to drain to a catch basin attached to a City storm sewer; if no storm sewers are available, drainage shall be into ditch or natural water course... (1149.03).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Zoning Code is generally silent on storm water issues.</li> <li>•Some parking standards may be excessive (Section 1118). Many commercial uses require one space for each 100 square feet of floor area. The result may be a large number of unused parking spaces and hard surfaces adding to stormwater runoff volumes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•In subdivisions, drainage system design is addressed in the Subdivision Regulations (1167.04)</li> <li>•Some parking standards could be lowered to reduce the amount of hard surfaces and runoff. For example, a general retail category of uses (in Section 1133.06) requires 1 parking space for every 150 sq. ft. of floor area plus 1 space for every employee. The result may be a large number of unused parking spaces and hard surfaces adding to stormwater runoff volumes.</li> </ul>



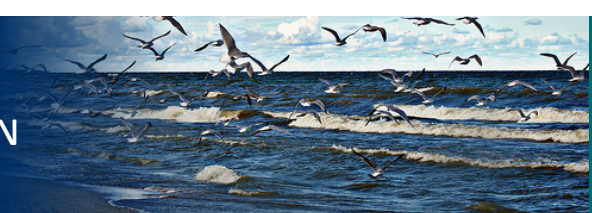
# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<b>Stream, Floodplain &amp; Wetland Protection</b>  Stream, floodplain and wetland protection has a direct role to play in environmental protection and in the economic health of a community, aligning it with the dual goals of Balanced Growth. Stream, floodplain and wetland protection regulations reduce the impact of flooding on property, business activity, health and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Implement higher standards and participate in the Community Rating System: The NFIP minimums are conservative standards. Room was given to communities to improve upon the standards by accounting for the unique characteristics of their communities and applying higher standards when necessary or desired.</li><li>•Adopt a stream setback code, either standalone, or within the Floodplain Management regulations.</li><li>•Wherever possible, preserve any wetlands within the community and apply a setback.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Ashtabula County is responsible for administering flood plain regulations for all of the unincorporated areas of Ashtabula County.</li><li>•No other local stream, floodplain or wetland regulations were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Beyond Ashtabula County Flood Plain Regulations, there are no requirements for stream, wetland and floodplain requirements.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The Subdivision Regulations require avoidance of flood hazard areas. Pursuant to Ordinance 909, passed October 5, 1987, the Village enacted a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance to comply with the National Flood Insurance Program.</li><li>•No other local stream, floodplain or wetland regulations were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Beyond Ashtabula County Flood Plain Regulations, there are no requirements for stream, wetland and floodplain requirements.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Beyond Ashtabula County Flood Plain Regulations, there are no requirements for stream, wetland and floodplain requirements.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The Subdivision Regulations require avoidance of flood hazard areas.</li><li>•The City has also enacted a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance to comply with the National Flood Insurance Program.</li><li>•No other local stream, floodplain or wetland regulations were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No local stream, floodplain or wetland regulations were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The Subdivision Regulations require avoidance of flood hazard areas.</li><li>•The City has also enacted a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance to comply with the National Flood Insurance Program.</li><li>•No other local stream, floodplain or wetland regulations were found.</li></ul>



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



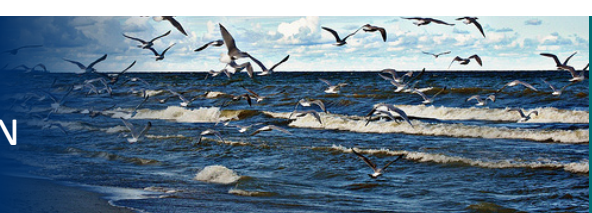
Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<b>Source Water Protection</b>  Pollution of source water can create environmental problems that can be very difficult and expensive to clean up, and can affect human health and our economic health for the long term. Avoidance of pollution is a benefit to environmental quality, and to our environment, and is in the authority of local government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Communities with public water supplies should develop a Source Water Protection Plan tailored to their needs, if they do not already have one, or continue to implement the ongoing strategies (such as education) of their plan.</li><li>•A municipality's Comprehensive Plan should address the SWAP areas within its jurisdiction.</li><li>•Communities with moderate to high potential for groundwater contamination of public or private water supplies should consider implementation of a local source water protection regulation (Ordinance), tailored to their needs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The Ashtabula County Water System operates in the coastal areas of Ashtabula City, Ashtabula Township, Saybrook Township, Geneva and GOTL.</li><li>•The Environmental Health Division protects residents who use private water systems. A private water system includes wells, cisterns, springs, ponds, and hauled water storage tanks.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No source water protection regulations exist in the Zoning Resolution – however, it is not known if there is a moderate or high potential for contamination of public or private water supplies.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No source water protection regulations exist in the Zoning Resolution – however, it is not known if there is a moderate or high potential for contamination of public or private water supplies.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No source water protection regulations exist in the Zoning Resolution – however, it is not known if there is a moderate or high potential for contamination of public or private water supplies.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No source water protection regulations exist in the Zoning Resolution – however, it is not known if there is a moderate or high potential for contamination of public or private water supplies.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No source water protection regulations exist in the Zoning Resolution – however, it is not known if there is a moderate or high potential for contamination of public or private water supplies.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No source water protection regulations exist in the Zoning Resolution – however, it is not known if there is a moderate or high potential for contamination of public or private water supplies.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The Conneaut Water Plant is located next to Lake Erie and draws source water from the Lake.</li></ul>

With the recent influx of shale gas companies drilling for oil and gas in Ashtabula County, source water protection is more critical





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<b>Natural Areas Establishment &amp; Management</b>  The Balanced Growth Program's dual goals for environmental quality and economic prosperity are supported with the encouragement of natural landscaping. While mowed lawn is often thought of as "soft space," absorbent and natural, it is in fact a surface treatment that has many detrimental effects on watersheds and environmental quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Communities enacting mowing regulations should ensure that natural areas are protected.</li><li>•Those with weed laws should revisit them to encourage natural meadows.</li><li>•Communities without existing requirements are best left as is, unless there are compelling reasons to restrict landscaping choices.</li><li>•Communities with concerns about natural meadows and weed control should work with local experts.</li><li>•Communities should consider incentives to return a site back to pre-settlement conditions.</li><li>•New Natural Areas Establishment regulations must protect against both noxious and invasive weeds.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No natural areas establishment &amp; management programs are known.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No natural areas establishment &amp; management programs are known.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No natural areas establishment &amp; management programs are known.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No natural areas establishment &amp; management programs are known.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No natural areas establishment &amp; management programs are known.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No natural areas establishment &amp; management programs are known.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No natural areas establishment &amp; management programs are known.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No natural areas establishment &amp; management programs are known.</li></ul>



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<b>Brownfields Redevelopment</b>  In recent years, several Ohio communities have become very successful with assessing, cleaning up and redeveloping brownfields, and many more communities are realizing the benefits of completing these projects. Several federal and state grant funding programs have helped communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Use planning to identify areas and sites for redevelopment.</li><li>•Facilitate the matching of sites to potential users.</li><li>•Community involvement</li><li>•Use U.S. EPA funding for inventories, assessments and brownfield funding.</li><li>•Work with Ohio EPA Technical Assistance and Targeted Brownfield Assessment Programs.</li><li>•Educate the public, businesses, and redevelopers about the benefits and opportunities that exist with existing programs.</li><li>•Continue to improve systems for identification of sites and continue to update and expand inventories of sites.</li></ul>	The Ashtabula County Port Authority is actively pursuing several brownfield redevelopment projects and recently submitted two grants to the USEPA to reclaim thousands of acres of brownfield land for redevelopment and may start a brownfield revolving loan fund.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Direct involvement with brownfield redevelopment is not evident.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Direct involvement with brownfield redevelopment is not evident.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Direct involvement with brownfield redevelopment is not evident.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Direct involvement with brownfield redevelopment is not evident.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•In 2010, the Ashtabula City Port Authority was selected to receive a brownfields assessment grant to inventory and prioritize brownfield sites and conduct 6-8 environmental assessments.</li><li>•The City of Ashtabula was also selected to receive a brownfields assessment grant.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Direct involvement with brownfield redevelopment is not evident.</li></ul>	In 2009, the City of Conneaut was selected to receive a brownfield assessment grant to inventory and prioritize brownfield sites and conduct 6-8 environmental assessments.





# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<b>Tree and Woodland Protection</b>  Tree and woodland protection refers to regulations which some communities adopt to ensure that the potential for tree survival is maximized during development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Communities with developing areas should protect woodlands with planning policies and development controls.</li><li>•Zoning code should require professional evaluation of blocks of woodland at preliminary design stage.</li><li>•Should have policies for infested trees (Ash Borer, &amp; others).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Tree &amp; Woodland protection regs. are found in the Subdivision Regulations. Section 412.01 specifically states that a proposed subdivision shall "... minimize the destruction of trees and topsoil." These regulations are only applicable to subdivision activity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No Tree and Woodland protection regulations could be found in the Zoning Resolution.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No Tree and Woodland protection regulations could be found in the Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision Regulations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No Tree and Woodland protection regulations could be found in the Zoning Resolution.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No tree and woodland protection exist in the Zoning Ordinance. However, PUD provisions offer developers the opportunity to engage in creative land development practices that may protect natural assets on the site.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No Tree and Woodland protection regulations could be found in the Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision Regulations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No tree and woodland protection exist in the Zoning Ordinance. However, PUD provisions offer developers the opportunity to engage in creative land development practices that may protect natural assets on the site.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No tree and woodland protection regulations exist in the Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision Regulations. However, PUD provisions enable creative land development practices that may protect natural assets on the site.</li></ul>
<b>Steep Slope Protection</b>  Steep slope protection refers to regulations adopted by many communities to protect health, safety and property from instability and erosion due to inappropriate development of steep slope areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Development on steep slopes should be discouraged. Options include:</li><li>•Limit development in areas with slopes between 15% -30%.</li><li>•Expansion of stream setback for designated slopes.</li><li>•Expansion of stream setbacks based on analysis of length, erodibility, slope and existing vegetation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Steep slopes are addressed in the Subdivision Regulations. Section 412 addresses the need to address natural topography and features in the context of new subdivisions. Development on existing lots (not involving a subdivision of land) would not be subject to these requirements.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific steep slope protection measures are evident in Ashtabula Township.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific steep slope protection measures are evident in the GOTL Zoning Ordinance. The GOTL subdivision regulations address the suitability of land to be subdivided in the context of steep slopes and other limitations (Chapter 1175).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific steep slope protection measures are evident in Geneva Township.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific steep slope protection measures are evident in Saybrook Township.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific steep slope protection measures are evident in the Ashtabula Zoning Ordinance. Subdivision Design Standards contained in the Subdivision Regulations (Chapter 1177) address steep slopes indirectly.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific steep slope protection measures are evident in the North Kingsville Zoning Ordinance.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific steep slope protection measures are evident in the Conneaut Zoning Ordinance. The Subdivision Regulations address slopes to a small degree in the context of new subdivisions.</li></ul>

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<b>Agricultural Lands Protection</b>  In recognition of the dual role of the Ohio Balanced Growth Program, which addresses both economic and environmental goals in protecting watersheds in Ohio, it is appropriate for communities to consider the economic benefits of preserving farmland in their areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•With sound citizen participation communities should identify goals for local economic stability – including a farm-based economy.</li><li>•Public education should occur about the various conservation tools available and their pros and cons.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific agricultural lands protection measures are evident at the county-level.</li><li>•Chapter 1 of the 2003 Land Use Plan does address agricultural land preservation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific agricultural lands protection measures are evident in Ashtabula Township.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific agricultural lands protection measures are evident in GOTL.</li><li>•Possibly no substantial amounts of agricultural land in community.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific agricultural lands protection measures are evident in Geneva Township</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Agricultural land protection is mentioned in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. Recommendations contained on Page 7-6 include the goal of agricultural preservation within the Township and the recommendation to develop zoning regulations to preserve agricultural uses within the Township.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific agricultural lands protection measures are evident in the City of Ashtabula.</li><li>•Possibly no substantial amounts of agricultural land in community.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific agricultural lands protection measures are evident in the Village of North Kingsville.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No specific agricultural lands protection measures are evident in the City of Conneaut.</li><li>•Since Conneaut merged with the Township, there is a substantial amount of agricultural land.</li></ul>

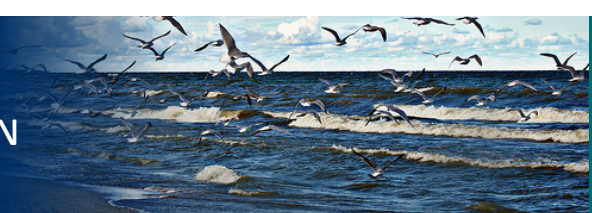


# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<p><b>Transfer Of Development Rights</b></p> <p>If applied properly in Ohio, “transfer of development rights” (TDR) could allow development in rural areas to be transferred to more compact development areas in urban areas, thereby encouraging balanced growth and retaining the quality of life and watershed in the countryside, while enhancing the small town feel and vibrancy of the village site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Legislation is recommended at the state level to ensure that strong, flexible programs can be established across jurisdictions.</li><li>•Communities should conduct a comprehensive planning process which examines the potential for use of TDR as a development management tool.</li><li>•Communities should incorporate community education.</li><li>•Receiving communities should develop design guidelines for compact development that incorporate increased density from TDR.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•TDR is not now authorized under Ohio Law – thus local planning and zoning. TDR may become a viable tool in the Ohio in the future. As recommended – communities should consider the potential for TDR and should support educational efforts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•TDR is not now authorized under Ohio Law – thus local planning and zoning. TDR may become a viable tool in the Ohio in the future. As recommended – communities should consider the potential for TDR and should support educational efforts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•TDR is not now authorized under Ohio Law – thus local planning and zoning. TDR may become a viable tool in the Ohio in the future. As recommended – communities should consider the potential for TDR and should support educational efforts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•TDR is not now authorized under Ohio Law – thus local planning and zoning. TDR may become a viable tool in the Ohio in the future. As recommended – communities should consider the potential for TDR and should support educational efforts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•TDR is not now authorized under Ohio Law – thus local planning and zoning. TDR may become a viable tool in the Ohio in the future. As recommended – communities should consider the potential for TDR and should support educational efforts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•TDR is not now authorized under Ohio Law – thus local planning and zoning. TDR may become a viable tool in the Ohio in the future. As recommended – communities should consider the potential for TDR and should support educational efforts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•TDR is not now authorized under Ohio Law – thus local planning and zoning. TDR may become a viable tool in the Ohio in the future. As recommended – communities should consider the potential for TDR and should support educational efforts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•TDR is not now authorized under Ohio Law – thus local planning and zoning. TDR may become a viable tool in the Ohio in the future. As recommended – communities should consider the potential for TDR and should support educational efforts.</li></ul>

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<b>Historic Protection</b>  The preservation and protection of historic, agricultural, and scenic resources is an important component of many development and redevelopment initiatives in existing communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Address historic resources through planning, inventories, evaluation and prioritization.</li><li>•Establish a community education and outreach program.</li><li>•Zoning regulations designed to preserve historic sites.</li><li>•Create historic districts.</li><li>•Become a Certified Local Government</li><li>•Explore other programs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Historic preservation issues do not normally intersect with requirements related to subdivision activity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No Historic Preservation Provisions could be found in the Zoning Resolution.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No Historic Preservation Provisions could be found in the Zoning Ordinance.</li><li>•The new plan recommends consideration of a Historic District.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No Historic Preservation Provisions could be found in the Zoning Resolution.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No Historic Preservation Provisions could be found in the Zoning Resolution.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The H-1 Harbor Historic District was created to apply to the Bridge Street area.</li><li>•The National Register Area is a small area within the City Historic District.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No Historic Preservation Provisions could be found in the Zoning Ordinance.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•A Downtown Preservation District encompasses the area that has traditionally become known as “Downtown Conneaut” (CHAPTER 1357).</li></ul>
<b>Scenic Protection</b>  Scenic protection refers to a range of tools that are available to communities to encourage preservation and conservation of viewsheds of scenic beauty, usually as visible from roads or other public spaces and access points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Consider scenic issues in local planning.</li><li>•Awareness of scenic byways and scenic river designations</li><li>•Zoning provisions.</li><li>•Develop design review criteria and detailed design.</li><li>•Consider scenic easements.</li><li>•Provide input on the siting and design of major utility and mining facilities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Articles 410-419 of the Ashtabula Subdivision Regulations address environmental and site design considerations with respect to subdivision requirements. Scenic protection is addressed to some degree in Section 412.01.</li><li>•Protection of “significant areas” are also identified in the Subdivision Regulations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No code provisions that expressly dealt with the preservation or conservation of viewsheds were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No code provisions that expressly dealt with the preservation or conservation of viewsheds were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No code provisions that expressly dealt with the preservation or conservation of viewsheds were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No code provisions that expressly dealt with the preservation or conservation of viewsheds were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No code provisions that expressly dealt with the preservation or conservation of viewsheds were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No code provisions that expressly dealt with the preservation or conservation of viewsheds were found.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•No code provisions that expressly dealt with the preservation or conservation of viewsheds were found.</li></ul>



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Best Local Land Use Practices as identified by the Ohio Balanced Growth Program	Key Recommendations	Ashtabula County	Ashtabula Township	Geneva-on-the-Lake	Geneva Township	Saybrook Township	City of Ashtabula	North Kingsville	City of Conneaut
<p><b>Access Management</b></p> <p>Access Management regulations address the number and spacing of driveways, signals, medians and intersections. Such regulations help to reduce vehicular conflicts and accidents and help maintain the capacity of roadways to support efficient traffic flow. ODOT adopted access management regulations for State Highways in 1998.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Building setbacks should preserve right-of-way for future road improvements and for adequate sight distances.</li><li>•Joint easements should allow internal traffic circulation and encourage shared access between adjoining commercial frontages.</li><li>•Minimum frontage requirements should be adequate for conforming lots to support desirable access spacing.</li><li>•Subdivisions occurring along an arterial should provide access to lots by an internal road system.</li><li>•Regulate minor land divisions (lot splits) with access standards.</li><li>•Development review should explicitly provide an opportunity to ensure proper access and street layout in relation to existing and planned roadways.</li><li>•Private road regulations and flag lot/private access agreements should be addressed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•The Ashtabula County Subdivision Regulations contain references to access management. Section 432.02 for example requires traffic studies relative to new subdivisions. However, Ashtabula County has not adopted separate access management regulations pursuant to ORC Section 5552.02.</li><li>•ODOT is responsible for access management on State Routes in Ashtabula County.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Some very general access management requirements are found in Section 1123. The State of Ohio is responsible for access management requirements along State Routes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Chapter 1131 of the Planning and Zoning Code contains some access management requirements (particularly 1131.10).</li><li>•Additional requirements could be added to help make sure new drives have minimal impact on traffic flow and safety. Traffic impact studies could also be required for new development that involves high-traffic generation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Some very general access management requirements are found in Section 1123. The State of Ohio is responsible for access management requirements along State Routes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Some very general access management requirements are found in Section 1123. The State of Ohio is responsible for access management requirements along State Routes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Chapter 1149 of the Planning and Zoning Code contains some access management requirements (particularly 1149.07).</li><li>•Additional requirements could be added to help make sure new drives have minimal impact on traffic flow and safety. Traffic impact studies could also be required for new development that involves high-traffic generation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Section 1105 of the Village of North Kingsville Zoning Code contains some access management requirements (particularly Section 1114).</li><li>•Additional requirements could be added to help make sure new drives have minimal impact on traffic flow and safety. Traffic impact studies could also be required for new development that involves high-traffic generation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Chapter 1133 of the Planning and Zoning Code contains some access management requirements (particularly 1133.06).</li><li>•Additional requirements could be added to help make sure new drives have minimal impact on traffic flow and safety. Traffic impact studies could also be required for new development that involves high-traffic generation.</li></ul>



## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

### Implementation Context

To move forward toward the goals expressed in this Plan, an implementation framework is needed. This includes assignment of responsibility to assure that the recommendations contained in this document have lasting meaning and impact. Additional development of this implementation framework will likely occur after this Plan is completed and adopted, but for the most part, the following implementation context is envisioned:

- The Ashtabula County Planning Commission should take the responsibility for assuring that the goals, initiatives, and policies within this document are heard, adhered to, and implemented whenever possible. This could require a special subcommittee or task force to deal specifically with the coastal area.
- An Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement (ICA) should be executed among lakefront local government entities. This ICA should address cooperation in implementing recommendations from this Coastal Management Plan and should guide future development decisions along the lakefront. As an example, five municipalities in the Butler PA area recently entered into an ICA, agreeing to update their zoning codes with some consistencies among them, to work together on key transportation and development projects affecting all five municipalities, and to review significant projects in any one municipality that would affect the other municipalities. An ICA for a proposed bikepath along SR 531, which would include many communities and townships, would be an example of a local potential ICA. A sample ICA is included in Appendix A-3.
- The County Planning Commission should work with the lakefront communities to update zoning and other development regulations with consistent policies and regulations that protect the shoreline and Lake Erie water quality. A model zoning code with these provisions should be developed and provided to lakefront communities for adaptation and adoption, possibly through a subcommittee of the Regional Planning Commission.

- The Planning Commission and/or its subcommittee or task force should review all proposed developments along the lakefront for consistency with this Coastal Management Plan, and make recommendations to the Planning Commission and/or local governments regarding compliance with the goals and policies of this Plan.

The following recommendations are organized by topic and are numbered to allow for easy reference.

### (1) Land Use

Ultimately, the responsibility to develop land use plans and control development with zoning rests at the local municipal or township level. That being said, there are many land use issues that are of county wide importance and the need to make good land use decisions along the shoreline is a shared responsibility among local governments. While some Ashtabula County communities have taken steps to update local plans, not all have up-to-date and clear visions for future development, and there is room for more efforts in this regard. More specifically, the following recommendations are offered:

#### 1.1 Encourage all communities to have current planning documents:

All communities should have current land use or comprehensive plans that are being implemented. These documents should be consistent with the recommendations of this Coastal Management Plan. They should also consider, where applicable, conservation design and compact development, complete streets, green infrastructure, mixed land uses, low-impact development, innovative storm water retention practices, setbacks from bodies of water, source water protection areas, preservation of natural areas, brownfield redevelopment, woodland protection, preservation of agricultural lands, historic preservation, design guidelines, and access management.

#### 1.2 Encourage communities to recognize and support the following Priority Development Areas:

- Geneva-on-the-Lake, specifically revitalization of The Strip, in-fill development, and infrastructure improvements. Cottage development should be considered as an appropriate in-fill design mechanism.

- The Harbor Historic District of Ashtabula, with continued revitalization, in-fill development, lodging, and additional River and Lake access.
- Port Conneaut, as part of the Erie Inland Port project, which could provide a substantial industrial development driver for the County. This would also include preservation and enhancement of existing residential and commercial areas around the Port.
- U.S. 20, east of SR 45 in Saybrook Township specifically to address vacant, under utilized commercial properties, and to encourage mixed-use development.
- Ashtabula Port, as a major shipping port on the Great Lakes, which has vacant and under utilized sites available for industrial and commercial development.
- Downtown Ashtabula, as a services, government and civic center for the City.
- Downtown Geneva with continued revitalization and the Pairings Wine & Culinary Center.
- Ashtabula City Industrial Park at the intersection of SR 11 and SR 531, which has nine sites from one to 16 acres in size, and is within ½ mile of a deep-water port at Pinney Dock. It is adjacent to SR 11, which has direct access to US 20 and I-90, just a short distance to the south. All infrastructure is available, as are a variety of incentives.

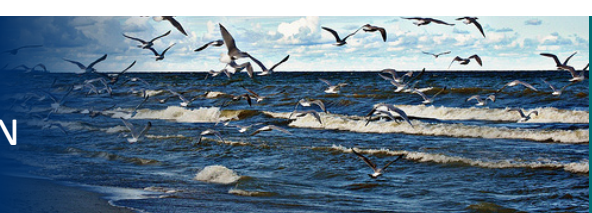
- Conneaut Industrial Park.

#### 1.3 Encourage communities to recognize and support the following Priority Conservation Areas:

- Walnut Beach Park
- Geneva Township Park
- Lakeshore Park
- Conneaut Township Park
- Saybrook Township Park
- Highland Beach



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



- Sunset Park
- Conneaut Port Authority Access
- Lakeview Park
- Broad Street Extension
- The Ashtabula River, Conneaut Creek, and Grand River and their shorelines
- Ashtabula Lighthouse and breakwall
- Conneaut Swamp Nature Preserve
- North Kingsville Sand Barrens
- Sam Wharram Nature Preserve
- Wetland Conservation Area in Geneva Township
- Indian Trails Park
- Geneva State Park and the Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake

**1.4 Support the recent planning document titled: “Lake Visions: A Revitalization Strategy for Geneva-on-the-Lake” should be approved and implementation by Village Council.** The Strategy encourages the following:

- Adoption of a Storm Water Utility that will identify storm drainage issues, prioritize infrastructure improvements, and present a revenue stream to finance them. This will prevent storm water from going through the wastewater treatment plant, assuring proper functioning of the wastewater treatment plant.
- Completion of proposed Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements to assure that effluent is properly treated before entering the receiving stream.
- Commercial development on the east side of SR 534 across from the Lodge and north of the Adventure Zone on SR 531.
- Redevelopment of the Eddie’s Grill’s parking lot to include a mixed-use commercial facility along with an upgraded parking lot, possibly using permeable materials for better storm drainage.

- Upscale housing around the Municipal Golf Course to capitalize on this natural asset and provide more housing choices.
- Condos along the lakefront on a vacant parcel on the east side of town, to allow more people to enjoy housing on the lakefront, while providing for public access to the water and preserving Lake vistas. Special construction provisions should be taken to prevent any erosion, or adverse impacts.
- Passive recreational uses at the former Deer Lake Golf Course west of Geneva State Park to preserve and enhance the Geneva State Park environment.
- Along with enhancement of The Strip, consideration of a historic district designation to help define a sense of place and preserve the history of Ohio’s First Summer Resort.

**1.5 Support The Lift Bridge Community Association (LBCA) Revitalization Implementation Strategy.** This document has been adopted by the LBCA and is supported by the City of Ashtabula. It encourages:

- Continued revitalization of the Bridge Street historic area with in-fill development, mixed land uses, lodging, streetscaping, additional parking, period lighting, and improved infrastructure and roadways, with preservation of the historic brick roads.
- Implementation of the North Shore Trail project by the Metroparks, and accommodations for the North Shore Trail trail head along the River.
- Connecting the North Shore Trail and Bridge Street to Walnut Beach Park, to provide greater public access to the Lakefront and complete the Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway.
- Connecting Walnut Beach Park and the Bridge Street area to points west by developing a bike path along SR 531.

**1.6 Support and encourage redevelopment initiatives for the Conneaut Shores Golf Course (west of Conneaut on SR 531), which is no longer operational. Any new development should take measures to eliminate runoff into Lake Erie and to preserve or enhance Lake vistas.**

## (2) Economic Development

**2.1 Coordination among Port Authorities:** The three Port Authorities within Ashtabula County should work together and coordinate with the Growth Partnership, to make a more aggressive and coordinated economic development impact within the County. Incentives should be developed that are unique and specific to the County and that can be used to match state and federal incentives and funding sources. The Port Authorities should clearly identify and promote their funding capabilities and be more aggressive in financing innovative and needed economic development projects that create jobs and/or make major investments in the community. Additionally, the Port Authorities should:

- Jointly retain professional assistance to educate local partners on financing options, and provide technical assistance to properly utilize these options, including opportunities available through neighboring Port Authorities.
- The Ashtabula Port Authority should aggressively promote its brownfield Revolving Loan Program once an EPA grant is approved.

**2.2 A priority development area for economic development is the Port of Conneaut portion of the Erie Inland Port project.** The County and its partners should understand and work with the City of Conneaut, the Conneaut Port Authority, and the Economic Development Corporation of Erie County (PA) to promote the Inland Port project, specifically that portion that utilizes the Port of Conneaut and adjacent industrial properties. This includes:

- Continuous dredging of the harbor and slips by the Corps of Engineers to keep the water levels navigable
- Continued maintenance and improvements to docks, breakwalls, roadways, and other infrastructure at the harbor
- Continued negotiations with the railroad companies to partner in this effort
- Upgrading of Thompson Drive to connect the port facility with US 20, including a bridge over the railroad tracks

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



- If feasible, negotiations with ODOT to extend Thompson Drive to I-90 and construct a new interchange
- Provision of necessary infrastructure to properties north of the prison and west of the state line to entice industries to locate here
- Investigating methods to connect the Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad (B&LE) to the Norfolk Southern Railroad (NS) more efficiently
- Providing incentive packages and state or federal financing assistance as needed to entice new industries to locate within this area

**2.3 Ashtabula County should continue to work with the County Port Authority to assure that Plant C continues to operate to provide required water supplies to local businesses.**

**2.4 Ashtabula Harbor Improvements:** The Ashtabula Harbor is supported by easy highway access (SR 531, SR 11, US 20 and I-90), providing access to major markets in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and West Virginia. Rail service is provided by Norfolk Southern and CSX. Lake boats and large vessels have access to the docks via Kinder Morgan, RW Sidley, and Norfolk Southern. Commodities handled through the Port of Ashtabula include coal (exported), iron ore, sand, gravel, and limestone (imported). Continued improvements to the Harbor are required to sustain industrial development.

**2.5 Implementation of the Revitalization Implementation Strategy (2012):** The Ashtabula City Port Authority should work with the City and the LBCA, as well as other partners, to implement the priority projects in the Revitalization Implementation Strategy (2012). This could likely include taking a lead role in certain projects and providing innovative financing mechanisms to achieve priority projects. The Port Authority should consider working with the Cuyahoga County Port Authority to undertake financing smaller projects using the Cuyahoga County Port Authority bonding capacity and expertise.

**2.6 Local Food:** Among other initiatives recommended in the Strategic Tourism Plan, municipalities should work aggressively with the Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACCVB) to develop and promote the local food initiative. Local agriculture and speciality local food production is a key economic

driver within the County, and it needs to be viewed as such to realize its full potential.

**2.7 Shale Gas:** Ashtabula County should aggressively work with other partners to understand the Shale Gas companies and the industry in general, and plan initiatives and policies to protect local residents and the environment, while accommodating this new economic development generator. Working through the newly designated Energy Development Task Force, efforts should be made to protect tourism, especially lodging, while accomodating any alternative energy facailities.

**2.8 Wind Energy:** Ashtabula County should work aggressively with LEEDCo and Green Energy Ohio to assure a greater understanding of the impacts (positive and negative) of wind power, and to be prepared to address potential sites for wind energy within the County. Impacts on Lake Erie and other natural assets should be considered in any facility siting decisions.

**2.9 SPIRE:** The ACCVB should continue to coordinate and cross-promote with the SPIRE Institute. SPIRE could bring additional lodging, restaurants, housing, and service businesses into the County, and properly planning the location and design of these faculties is critical to the entire County.

**2.10 Lodging Facilities:** All lakefront communities should pursue private investors to develop additional lodging facilities along Lake Erie and the harbors, and offer incentives as needed to assure that facilities are located in areas where needed, and that they are designed to fit into and protect the environment.

**2.11 Recreation Equipment Rental:** The Growth Partnership should recruit a company or individuals to start a small business to provide rental equipment and lessons for all types of summer and winter sports and activities, including diving, paragliding, wind surfing, snowmobiling, motorcycling, bicycling, jet skis, boats, ice skating, sledding, cross-country skiing, etc. to provide more venues to attract tourists to the County.

**2.12 Support Efforts to Maintain a Strong Fishery:** Ashtabula County should work with other lakefront counties and state and federal agencies to assure that over-fishing the Great Lakes, especially the central basin of Lake Erie, is properly addressed. Continued efforts to support fishing-related

activities are necessary to support a businesses that depend on sport fishermen.

## (3) Tourism

**3.1 Tourism as an Economic Generator:** Continued attention should be given to tourism as an economic generator, especially with past decades of declines in manufacturing activity. Synergies among tourism attractions is a key element of tourism planning, as groups of similar attractions hold much more appeal than isolated features. The ACCVB's Strategic Tourism Plan contains a number of initiatives that should be implemented by the ACCVB with all its County partner's participation.

**3.2 Continued Marketing:** Support the ACCVB efforts to market and promote the businesses and assets of Ashtabula County (especially Lake Erie and its shoreline assets), and coordinate the promotional strategy and costs among both private and public sectors.

**3.3 Signage:** Work with the ACCVB to develop and implement a wayfinding signage system throughout the County.

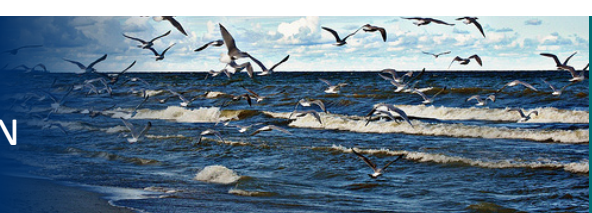
**3.4 Promote Nature:** Given the number and diversity of natural attractions, Ashtabula County can potentially promote itself as a premier place to experience nature, natural attractions, and unique natural and cultural features.

**3.5 Festival Coordination:** Continued coordination among County and municipal CVB's and other organizations to add more and improve existing festivals and events, especially along the Lakeshore, should be aggressively pursued.

**3.6 Winter Activities:** Municipalities should work as a group to provide additional sporting and recreational activities during the off-season, especially along the Lakeshore or on the Lake; and work with the ACCVB to extend the shoulder season in general. The County should promote winter cross-country skiing, snowmobile trials, snowshoe trails and other off-season activities.



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



**3.7 Lodging Packages:** The ACCVB and other Convention and Visitors Bureaus, (CVB's) should continue to develop and enhance a variety of entertainment and lodging packages, incorporating lakefront events, overnight lodging at lakeside facilities, shopping in the Harbor District, tours of the shoreline, and educational programs regarding the Lake and rivers, birding, wetlands, etc. Packages for bicyclists should also be considered, especially once the SR 531 bike path and North Shore Trail are completed.

**3.8 Pairings:** Capitalize on visitors to the proposed "Pairings—Ohio's Wine & Culinary Experience" and the first phase, "Windows on Pairings" to be constructed in Geneva in 2013, and emphasize how Lake Erie is critical to growing the grapes that make the wine and producing the foods being prepared at Pairings.

**3.9 Theater Renovation:** Encourage and support the owner of the theater in Geneva-on-the-Lake (GOTL) to renovate the theater and restore it to its former glory as a movie house, as well as a facility to provide other venues such as theater performances, plays, concerts, etc. The theater in Downtown Ashtabula may also be worthy of restoration.

## (4) Transportation

**4.1 Complete Streets:** The County should promote the use of "Complete Streets" with all future new and improved roadway projects. Complete streets provide access for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and mobility. This is especially important along the lake front, where tourism is so predominant.

**4.2 SR 531 Corridor:** In addition to addressing the SR 534 Corridor from I-90 to SR 531 in GOTL, the County and its partners should also address the SR 531 corridor from Geneva State Park to the Pennsylvania State Line. SR 531, a State and National Scenic Byway, offers impressive views of Lake Erie and future improvements could include bike lanes, defined pedestrian crossings and pull-off areas at key locations. These improvements would enhance travel along SR 531 for both motorized and non-motorized modes of travel, and could be coupled with access management strategies that limit curb cuts and encourage shared access drives/internal road systems.

Such measures would enhance safety and efficient traffic movement. Similarly, signage and lighting improvements would help define this corridor as a place that offers a richer and more appealing travel experience. To accomplish this, a corridor plan is recommended that would be similar to the SR 534 Plan and encompass a full range of land use, mobility, community character and environmental issues that are relevant to envisioning a 531 Corridor that meets its full potential. To help illustrate this, the graphics below are offered to depict how one segment of SR 531 could be transformed into a place that accommodates non-motorized travel and supports the notion that Ashtabula County is a desirable place for tourists and recreation. Such an enhancement potentially connects many lakefront destinations in Ashtabula County, supports planning that is underway in Geneva-on-the-Lake and along SR 534, and compliments plans to extend the Western Reserve Greenway Trail north to Walnut Beach Park in Ashtabula.



Existing Segment of SR 531 West of Ashtabula



Potential Enhancement of Existing Segment of SR 531 West of Ashtabula



Future Greenway Extension

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



**4.3 Water Trail:** Ashtabula County and its partners should consider the development of a “Water Trail” along the Ashtabula River that links Point Park, the historic Bascule Lift Bridge area, and other points of interest to the south. Kayaking in general should be promoted along the rivers and on Lake Erie when conditions warrant. Efforts should be made to reach out to other adjacent jurisdictions to develop a regional system of connected water trails.

**4.4 Great Lakes Cruises:** Ashtabula County should promote itself within the Great Lakes Cruising Club, and express its interest in being a cruise ship destination, even if a site outside the County is selected as an actual port of call. The County could be a destination for day trips from ships docked nearby.

**4.5 New Marina:** A new marina should be planned for the Conneaut Harbor, along with parking area improvements and improved access roads.

**4.6 Ferry Service:** The Port Authorities within Ashtabula County should coordinate efforts to capitalize on any ferry to be stationed near the County, and should work toward creating destinations to support visitors from these ferries and cruise ships within the County.

**4.7 Bike Paths:** Ashtabula County and its municipalities should pursue the addition of bike paths wherever possible. More specifically, the following bike path improvements are recommended:

- Communities should support the Metroparks in its efforts to complete the North Shore Trail, the northern-most part of the Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway, linking Ashtabula to many communities to the south toward the Ohio River.
- They should also support the Lift Bridge Community Association in its efforts to extend the North Shore Trail from Bridge Street to Walnut Beach Park, so that there is truly access to Lake Erie from the Great Ohio Lake to River Greenway.
- All shoreline municipalities should work together to create a bike path along SR 531, which would provide an east-west non-motorized connection, and more fully embrace the waterfront with transportation options. SR 531

could potentially connect to SR 5 in Pennsylvania, which is a designated bike route and scenic byway. There is also an interest in Lake County to connect a bike path west to the City of Euclid.

- A system of trail heads and parking facilities would be needed to support an east-west non-motorized route along the lakeshore.

**4.8 Trolley:** Ashtabula County should study the feasibility of a trolley system as an alternative transportation mode.

**4.9 Amtrak:** Continued efforts to support an Amtrak rail stop are warranted as a means to encourage tourism and provide greater transportation options.

**4.10 Golf Carts:** Geneva-on-the-Lake should investigate greater use of golf carts or other forms of transit service to reduce traffic congestion along The Strip during summer months.

**4.11 Dockage:** Transient dockage (1,100 slips) at the Ashtabula Harbor should be marketed to boaters and utilized before additional transient dockage is provided. This is especially true in terms of publicly owned docks which can have certain advantages over private facilities.

**4.12 Lighthouse Restoration:** The County and its partners should assist the Ashtabula Lighthouse Restoration & Preservation Society with providing public access to the Ashtabula Lighthouse, whether that be via boat or restoration of the breakwall for a walkway.

**4.13 Brick Street Restoration:** The City of Ashtabula should continue to restore and replace brick streets in the Harbor Historic District.

**4.14 Bridge Street Streetscaping:** Projects included in the Bridge Street streetscaping plan should continue to be implemented, including period lighting.

**4.15 Pedestrian Improvements:** Pedestrian walkways within GOTL should be replaced and/or constructed along all streets within the Village, to provide safe and accessible pedestrian movement. In addition, existing

sidewalks should be connected where applicable to provide a seamless and accessible walkway.

## (5) Public Places

**5.1 Priority Conservation Areas:** Priority Conservation Areas (as mentioned previously) should be included as important features in local planning documents and considered to be county wide anchors of activity.

**5.2 Old Firehouse Winery:** Geneva-on-the-Lake (GOTL) should work with owners of Old Firehouse Winery to acquire control of its lakefront property for use as a public beach.

**5.3 Geneva Township Park:** GOTL and local partners should improve beach conditions at Geneva Township Park, as well as providing other improvements, such as removing the chain link fence, paving parking areas, and upgrading other existing conditions.

**5.4 Public Access to Conneaut Creek:** The County and its partners should identify and gain control of additional public access points along Conneaut Creek. Provide safe access to the water and adequate parking and amenities for the public at each access point is critical to providing and preserving public spaces along this scenic river for future generations.

**5.5 Conneaut Port Authority Access:** Continuous dredging at the Conneaut Port Authority marina and navigation channel is required to preserve this asset and allow navigation. Restrictions on the allowable time frame for dredging by the State sometimes hinders dredging efforts. The Corps of Engineers completes dredging operations in the public channel and private property owners also dredge in the non-federal channels. Partners should continue to pursue all dredging options and investigate the sale of dredged material to areas that require beach replenishment each year, such as Presque State Park in Erie, PA. Necessary permitting is also needed from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, along with consultation with the ODNR Division of Geological Survey.

**5.6 Cultural Assets:** The County and its partners should work to preserve and enhance cultural assets, such as:



# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



- The Conneaut Arts Center with its prime location on the shores of Lake Erie.
- The Finnish Cultural Center near the Ashtabula Harbor.
- Local museums and centers, especially with acquiring adequate funding to acquire and preserve collections, sustain operations on a permanent basis, maintain reasonable hours of operation, and better utilize their assets for public enjoyment.

**5.7 Public Restrooms:** Lakefront communities should be encouraged to provide for adequate clean, safe, and accessible restrooms facilities in appropriate locations for use by the public.

**5.8 Historic District Designation:** GOTL should consider and pursue historic district designation for a portion of The Strip, and should also pursue Certified Local Government (CLG) designation. Other municipalities should do the same for historic areas in their respective communities.

**5.9 Certified Local Governments:** The City of Ashtabula should pursue CLG designation to open the door for additional grant funds to preserve and protect historic properties.

**5.10 Environmental Education:** Wetlands mitigation areas should be developed to provide educational opportunities. Improvements such as boardwalks and observation areas are strong components of such areas.

## (6) Development Regulations

**6.1 Smart Growth:** All lakefront municipalities should assure that their zoning and subdivision regulations are current and support smart growth principles. Some specifics include:

- The County should consider the development of a Model Ordinance for lakefront communities, which each could use as a draft for revamping and upgrading their ordinances.
- Lakefront communities should specifically evaluate if required setbacks from bodies of water, wetlands, and floodplains are adequate to protect property owners and environmental resources.

- Lakefront communities should explore regulations to assure that lake vistas are protected for public views when possible.
- Low-impact development provisions should be added or enhanced to make sure best practices are used.
- Community sustainability should be emphasized in plans and regulations.
- Parking lot and street widths should be minimized to control surface run-off.
- Water sources and watersheds should be protected with restrictions on development.
- Scenic and historic assets should be protected with easements or other methods.
- Prime agricultural lands along the lakefront should be designated for protection.
- Storm water management plans should be adopted, and storm utilities promoted when feasible.
- Substantial woodlands should be identified and protected as locally determined.
- Design guidelines should be developed and adopted for critical places along the shoreline to preserve and protect historic buildings and sites, and to create a sense of place to attract tourists and year-round residents. Historic or architectural review boards should be designated to implement and enforce design guidelines. The character and make-up of these guidelines should be locally-determined, but should reference the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines were applicable.

**6.2 Dark Skies:** Municipalities and townships should consider standards for outdoor lighting to preserve the night sky for star and planet viewing.

## (7) Erosion and Flooding

**7.1 Lake Levels:** Ashtabula County should continue to collaborate with federal and state agencies involved with studying lake water levels and their impacts, so that proactive measures can be taken if/when needed.

**7.2 Dredging:** The Conneaut Port Authority and County partners, working with the Corps of Engineers, should develop an agreement for continuous dredging of the harbor and the lakefront to assure that navigation, boating, fishing and other activities can be undertaken in a safe manner.

**7.3 Storm Water Utility:** GOTL, and other communities along the Lake should adopt a storm water utility program to better manage storm drainage and to provide a revenue stream to pay for the costs of improvements. This system would remove storm water from the wastewater treatment plant, allowing the plant to operate more efficiently and providing clean effluent into the receiving stream.

**7.4 Erosion Control:** Ashtabula County should continue to support erosion control measures at specific points along the lakeshore within the County. In particular, the local use of the Lake Erie Shore Erosion Management Plan (LESEMP) should be encouraged.

**7.5 Wastewater Treatment Upgrade:** Ashtabula, Conneaut and GOTL should continue efforts to upgrade its wastewater treatment plants to assure that Lake Erie is not polluted with its effluent and to provide for future growth and development.

## Priorities

As described in Chapter 1, a final meeting of the Steering Committee involved focusing on developing a sense of priority among proposed projects and initiatives. The list of projects and initiatives were briefly discussed and members had the opportunity to vote for each in terms of impact. Using electronic “clickers” and TurningPoint software, Steering Committee members were able to cast votes see the results of their voting “live” on the screen. The results are provided below:

# ASHTABULA COUNTY COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Projects and Initiatives

Public Access	
Firehouse Winery beach in GOTL for a public beach	Moderate to High Impact
Public access to Conneaut Creek	Moderate to High Impact
Transportation and Mobility	
SR 531 bike path	Moderate to High Impact
SR 534 bike path	Moderate to High Impact
North Shore Trail bike path	Moderate to High Impact
Market existing Ashtabula Harbor transient dockage	Moderate to High Impact
Bridge Street to Walnut Beach Park bike path	Moderate Impact
Water trails	Moderate Impact
Transit system along the lakeshore and to key tourist venues	Moderate Im pact
Support an Amtrak stop	Moderate Impact
Ferry service	Small to Moderate Impact
Restore brick streets in Harbor Historic District	Small to Moderate Impact
“Complete Streets” principles for all roadway projects	No Clear Consensus on Impact
Pedestrian walkways in GOTL and other urban areas	No Clear Consensus on Impact
Development Plans/Codes	
Implement the SR 534 Corridor Plan	High Impact
Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement for lakefront development—review proposed developments	Moderate to High Impact
Update County Comprehensive Plan	Moderate to High Impact
Implement GOTL Revitalization Strategy	Moderate to High Impact
Support LBCA Revitalization Implementation Strategy	Moderate to High Impact
Countywide zoning model for lakefront municipalities incorporating smart growth principles	Moderate to High Impact
Municipal zoning codes updates—include provisions, as appropriate, for: compact and conservation development; storm water management; erosion & sediment control; stream, floodplain & wetland protection; source water protection; natural area management; brownfield redevelopment; tree, woodland, agricultural lands & steep slope protection; transfer of development rights; historic & scenic preservation; and access management.	Moderate Impact
Prepare Plan for City of Ashtabula	No Clear Consensus on Impact
Prepare Comp Plans for Ashtabula and Geneva Townships	No Clear Consensus on Impact
Update City of Conneaut & Saybrook Township Comprehensive Plans	No Clear Consensus on Impact
Prepare North Kingsville Comprehensive Plan	No Clear Consensus on Impact

Signage	
Countywide signage system	Moderate to High Impact
Lighthouse signage	Low to Moderate Impact
Harbor Historic District signage	Moderate to High Impact
Implement the Walnut Beach Park Plan	Moderate to High Impact
Countywide parks financing system	Moderate Impact
Greater coordination among parks	No Clear Consensus on Impact
Improve beach and remove fence at Geneva Township Park	No Clear Consensus on Impact
Tourism	
More synergies among tourism venues	High Impact
Ashtabula Lighthouse renovation	Moderate Impact
Become a destination for private cruise ships	Moderate Impact
Winter recreational activities	Moderate to High Impact
Private business to provide paragliding & wind surfing	Moderate Impact
Coordination & cooperation among museums/ cultural centers	Moderate Impact
Economic Development	
Encourage (re)development in Priority Development Areas:	
•The Strip in GOTL	High Impact
•Harbor Historic District in Ashtabula	High Impact
•Conneaut intermodal port	High Impact
•Downtown Ashtabula	High Impact
•US 20 east of SR 45 in Saybrook Township	Moderate to High Impact
•Downtown Geneva	Moderate Impact
•Ashtabula City Industrial Park	Moderate to High Impact
•Conneaut Industrial Park	Moderate to High Impact
•Shale gas operations	Moderate to High Impact
Environmental/Education	
Support renovation & preservation of Priority Conservation Areas	Moderate to High Impact
Upgrade WWTP in GOTL	Moderate to High Impact
Maintain a strong fishery	Moderate to High Impact
Implement storm water utility in GOTL	Moderate to High Impact
Use LESEMP as guide for erosion control	Moderate Impact
Plan to accommodate climate change	No Clear Consensus on Impact