

BLACK RIVER MASTER PLAN: FINAL REPORT

prepared for:

**Lorain Port Authority
Lorain, Ohio**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goals

The Master Plan for the Black River, funded through a grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation, is designed to address three major goals.

- Integrate existing and potential industrial and non-industrial uses along the river.
- Develop an implementable strategy for economic diversification and development leading to job creation and a buffer against future economic change.
- Provide flexibility to allow for successful implementation under various development scenarios.

Study Area

The study area for the Master Plan includes all property along the Black River, extending three miles from the mouth of the river to (and including) the USX property at the turning basin. The eastern boundary is bordered by Colorado Avenue, and the western boundary by Broadway and Elyria Avenue. The area includes approximately 500 acres of vacant land, several major industrial sites (including the USX facility, LTV, Gold Bond, and others), several marinas, new commercial development, public parks, part of downtown, and the waste water treatment plant located at the mouth of the river. The river is noted for its deep water channel, but navigation is hampered by the many twists and turns located within the study area. Three notable new developments are included in the area: the Spitzer Great Lakes, Ltd. marina on the abandoned AmShip site, the Port Authority's Marina International, and the Renaissance Inn located at the corner of Broadway and Erie Avenue.

The Black River provides an opportunity for Lorain to bounce back from the economic downturn of the early 1980s, and recent population loss in Lorain County. The plan recognizes Lorain's continued dependence on manufacturing sectors for employment, but also recognizes potentials for attracting additional retail and some future housing markets related to the use of the waterfront. New types of industrial uses, such as plastics manufacturing related to the auto industry, are also recognized as potential areas for future growth.

Opportunities and Constraints for Development

Characteristics of the Black River, the City of Lorain, and Lorain County all impact the development potential of the area. Characteristics that positively impact the development potential of the area include:

- There are few land owners and large development parcels along the River, thus facilitating the potential for land acquisition.
- Industrial, commercial and recreational uses are already somewhat segregated, mitigating confrontation between non-conforming uses.

- The depth of the harbor and the width of the river can accommodate both commercial shippers and recreational boaters.
- New industrial development along the river and in Lorain County is evident.
- Plastics technologies in Northern Ohio are well-suited to research and development projects associated with the auto industry in Lorain County.
- New commercial development is evident along the river.
- Growth in recreational boating in Ohio is continuing.
- Lorain has a rich ethnic heritage that can be used as a draw for tourists.

Some of the less favorable characteristics of the area are:

- The City has an image as an old, economically depressed industrial community.
- Casino legislation is uncertain and thus makes many development plans uncertain.
- Downtown Lorain has suffered significant decline and lacks a solid retail base.
- The City has few visitor attractions.
- Automobile access to the river area is not adequate.
- Businesses perceive that the City has a poor attitude towards attracting new business.
- Some uses along the river, such as the USX facility and the waste treatment facility, are fixed and will influence future development.
- Steep banks along some parcels inhibit certain types of waterfront development.
- There are barriers (such as railroad tracks) between some activity centers.
- There is a lack of public access to the river.

Land Use and Development Opportunities

Despite the constraints listed above, there are numerous opportunities for development along the Black River. These include:

- Industrial development -- e.g., manufacturing of plastic auto parts, research and development facilities, etc.
- Institutional Development -- e.g., educational or training facilities.

- Commercial Development -- e.g., hotels, specialty restaurants, marine-related retail, etc.
- Recreational/Open Space Lands Uses -- e.g., boat ramps, marinas, a heritage park, etc.
- Future Residential Development -- e.g., condominiums and second homes.

Land Use Plan

The Black River study area can be divided into three distinct planning districts. The area from the mouth of the river to the railroad bridges is the area where the most land changes have occurred in recent years. Most of the recreational marinas are found in this area and major new developments are created here. This area (Area A) will be of most interest to developers in the near future. The area between the railroad bridge and the Henderson Bridge is an area of transition. The area still supports several viable industrial uses, but it is likely that in future years, these uses will be replaced by uses similar to those found closer to the mouth of the river. The area south of the Henderson Bridge (Area C) is dominated by industrial uses, which are expected to remain for many years.

Because the land uses in the study area are changing, the Master Plan includes recommendations for guiding development along the river in the future. The tool recommended for guiding development is zoning. Currently, all the property adjacent to the river is zoned I-2, a designation which allows for all uses except residential. This zoning is no longer appropriate for the waterfront property, because industrial uses are no longer appropriate for all areas along the river. Therefore, two new zoning districts are proposed for Areas A and B. A Waterfront Mixed Use (WMU) District is proposed for Area A that will allow residential office, restaurant, specialty retail, open space and recreational uses, while prohibiting shopping centers, strip retail development, all manufacturing research and development, auto sales, auto services, wholesaling, trucking and communication facilities. A second Waterfront Mixed Use District is recommended for Area B, which would allow all the uses allowed in Area A, plus research facilities and clean manufacturing. Heavy manufacturing would be prohibited. All existing uses are protected in both WMU Districts.

The plan further recommends the adoption of a formal development review process for both the WMU Districts. The review process, which would be required for developments over a certain size, would help to ensure that all new developments are built in a manner that best furthers the best interests of the City with respect to the future of the Riverfront.

Finally, the plan recommends that the current I-2, zoning in Area C be changed to I-3, and existing zone listed in the city's zoning code. The I-3 zone can be described as an industrial park zone. It allows virtually any type of development, but includes a provision requiring a development review process for developments over a specified size.

The zoning changes and review process recommended in the Master Plan will help guide riverfront development in a manner that will bring the most economic benefit to the City while ensuring the future of one of the City's greatest assets - the Black River. The first step for ensuring this future is adoption of zoning reflecting the recommendations of the Black River Master Plan.



1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Overview

The development of a Master Plan for the Black River Riverfront is an important process for the City of Lorain. The River represents a major asset for potential economic development and public enjoyment. To realize this potential, the Master Plan must address the goals of the City and the Port Authority with regard to the future of Lorain and the River.

The Master Plan for the Black River must be developed with a clear understanding of the history of Lorain and existing conditions within the City. The plan must consider economic, physical, infrastructure and other constraints to development, as well as existing and potential opportunities for development. Finally, because the economy of Lorain continues to undergo changes, the Plan developed for the Black River must be flexible. It must provide alternatives for development that can be implemented given the unknown future economic climate.

The Master Plan study area encompasses the primarily industrial lands which stretches along both sides of the Black River, extending from Lake Erie upstream to the turning basin. The area is bounded by Colorado Avenue to the east, the USX properties on the south, and downtown or Broadway/Elyria on the west.

This background chapter provides the basis from which the Master Plan for the Black River is developed. It includes a discussion of the goals to be achieved by the Master Plan, the historical context for the study and the importance of the area. This is followed by an overview of existing conditions in Chapter 2. That includes a discussion of the physical characteristics and the existing economic characteristics of the area. An inventory of existing land uses, and an analysis of water-dependent and water-borne uses is also included, as well as a discussion of existing zoning and land use regulations. Chapter 3 then discusses strengths and weaknesses of the study area, and opportunities for development. The recommended land use and development plan, and implementation strategy, are presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

1.2 Goals

The primary goals of the Master Plan for the Black River are to:

- Develop a land use plan that successfully integrates existing and potential industrial and non-industrial (e.g., commercial, recreational, housing, etc.) uses along the River.
- Develop an implementable strategy for economic diversification and development that will lead to job creation and will buffer Lorain's economy in future periods of economic change.
- Provide flexibility within the plan to allow for successful implementation under a variety of future development scenarios.

Through the development of the Master Plan, the Lorain Port Authority expects to address several issues. The Plan identifies the most appropriate uses for parcels which are currently vacant or underutilized, and encourages these uses through recommendations for land use controls, zoning incentives and regulatory changes. The Plan builds upon assets of the River, such as its depth and width, as well as recent development activity, to help link economic activity within the study area and downtown Lorain. The Plan recommends strategies to integrate commercial shipping and recreational boating on the river. Finally, the Lorain Port Authority hopes to continue involvement of the community in the planning process, to build pride in Lorain and to ensure that the Plan is developed to incorporate the ideas and desires of the community in the future of the City.

1.3 History

The history of the Black River in Lorain is largely the history of settlement and development in the area. Lorain started as a farming and shipbuilding settlement. From the earliest time, the River was used for transportation purposes. The local economy waxed and waned with the importance of shipping, from the 1820's through to the 1980's. The dominant industries along the River have been the AmShip facility on the east bank and the U.S. Steel mill, now USX Corporation Lorain Works, on the west bank. The first steel mill in Lorain was built in 1895, and steel continues to be the most important part of Lorain's economy, although its importance has declined in recent years. Immigrants from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world came to work in the mill, and at its peak, it employed over 13,000 people. In addition, the AmShip facility was built close to the mouth of the River along its eastern bank. This facility employed over 10,000 people in the 1940's.

Lorain reached peak prosperity and employment during and immediately after World War II. Since then, the industrial base of the city has contracted. The early 1980's proved particularly difficult for the City, with employment cutbacks at the U.S. Steel plant, and the closure of the AmShip facility. Yet Lorain is still immensely important to the region and State. The shipping and metals industries now employ people in a wider variety of businesses. Important and direct transportation ties connect Lorain to the coal fields of Pennsylvania, the ore mines of Michigan and Minnesota and, via the Saint Lawrence Seaway, the entire world. Industries such as Ford, National Gypsum, and Reliance Electronic are strong, healthy industrial businesses, diversifying Lorain's economy. New commercial and recreational developments, such as Marina International and the Spitzer development, are further strengthening Lorain's economy.

As the economy diversifies and shifts, the role of the River changes. Shippers now share the river with recreational boaters. New waterside uses, such as yacht clubs, marinas, and restaurants have sprung up along the shore. These traditionally conflicting uses can and are living side by side. With adequate planning for the Black River's future, a rich and exciting mix of activities can be created.

1.4 Importance

With its industrial past, the Black River has played an important role in the development of Lorain. Industry along the River continue to be important to the City. The recent investment of Japan's Kobe Steel in the USX facility indicates renewed industrial interest in the River. Expansion in the auto industry in Lorain County also may provide new industrial shipping opportunities on the River. Furthermore, the recent growth of water recreational uses and marina development mean that the Black River will play an important part in the diversification of Lorain's economy. The area's potential vitality is evident in the industrial investment and the actions of local developers, and in the public interest that recently has been focused on the River.

Reasons why this area is of particular importance to Lorain and to Northern Ohio include:

- The City's historical economic base is centered along the River.
- The River provides unique transportation opportunities for industries which are dependent on, or can benefit from, water transportation.
- The mix of future land uses already present in the study area is beginning to diversify with the addition of new marinas and restaurants on the water's edge.
- Waterfront areas hold a fascination for the public, and can draw visitors and residents.
- The recreation and boating industries are expanding all along Lake Erie, in Northern Ohio, and in Lorain, which offers one of the few deep harbors on the Lake. The recreational boating industry and its associated spinoffs are the source of strong growth in the economic base of the area.
- The resurgence of waterfronts has happened across the nation. Their revitalization has often played a primary role in changing the fortunes of the cities where they exist. Commercial development on the waterfront has extended inland to the heart of many cities. Examples include the waterfronts in Baltimore and Boston. In most cases, the successes have been the result of the active involvement of public and private partnerships working together to restore under-utilized or deteriorating harbor areas.
- The publicly owned properties at the mouth of the River, including the dredge disposal area, the new marina, the recently acquired properties along Lakeside Avenue, and the treatment plant site, represent key building blocks for the future revitalization of the Black River study area. New development can enhance and extend the improvements already made in these areas and at the AmShip site. They can further enhance the image of Lorain and ultimately attract new industrial and commercial activity to the City.
- Large vacant or underutilized tracts of land in single ownership represent additional opportunities for a variety of types of development. These properties

can be treated in a comprehensive manner through the planning process. Future uses can be planned to best complement existing uses, and stimulate continued economic growth in Lorain.

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 Physical Context of the Area

Within the Study Area, the Black River is a meandering river of many twists and turns (see Figure 1). Topographically, the west side of the river is higher than the east. Two bluffs look down over the water. Steep slopes run sharply down to the water's edge, particularly along the undeveloped sites. In other locations, hills have been carved away by man or erosion. At the mouth of the river, the topography flattens out towards the Lake edge.

A variety of conditions exist along the lakeside and riverside edges. The lakeside edge is almost entirely man-made. All of the piers have been created by filling. The riverside edges are a combination of man-made and natural conditions. An example of the man-made edges are the concrete bulkheads at USX Corporation or the modified shoreline at Spitzer's marina. Natural areas include the shoreline opposite the USX Corporation and the marsh area on the west bank, just north of the Henderson Bridge.

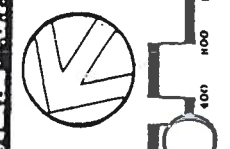
Along its banks, the River is characterized by major industrial facilities, large parcels of vacant or underutilized land, and new recreational and commercial marine-oriented uses. For example, the slag heaps of USX Corporation are opposite an unused, forested site owned by the same firm. Storage domes for potash are next to a marine and boat servicing operation. At the mouth of the river, piles of iron ore pellets tower over the sailing club basin, the Coast Guard and the sewage treatment plant. The AmShip site has been converted into a large new marina.

Before the river reaches this industrial basin, its waters have already been subjected to pollution from point and non-point sources located further upstream. Because the river moves so slowly, contamination from phosphorous, ammonia, suspended solids, bacteria and heavy metals is hard to absorb and process. Industries in Elyria also contribute to the problem. However, the treatment plant problems should now be largely resolved with a plant upgrade that has just come on line.

The primary water quality problems, however, stem from the five outfalls of the USX Corporation in Lorain. Substances coming from the plant include suspended solids, oil, grease, ammonia, cyanide, phenols, chlorine, lead, and zinc. The corporation is under an EPA mandate to dredge the river bottom and remove the sediments to a hazardous waste landfill on its own property. Problems may have been reduced with the closing of the coke plant in 1983. Since that time, the outfalls have come into compliance with EPA's permit conditions (permit issued November 1983).

The Black River Study Area is served by most major transportation links, including shipping, roadway networks, and rail (see Existing Conditions map). The major north/south roads are Colorado Avenue and Broadway/Elyria. Henderson Drive and Erie Avenue are important east/west connectors. Colorado Avenue is in poor condition. There are plans to improve this important road, and widen it to four lanes along its length. Henderson Drive and Erie Avenue are the only bridge crossings for vehicles in the study area. Henderson Drive has a high level bridge across the River, while Erie Avenue has a low bascule bridge that rises to let

- KEY**
- IL ROAD
 - STATE HIGHWAY
 - MAJOR STREETS



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BLACK RIVER MASTER PLAN

LORAIN PORT AUTHORITY

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

boats pass. In 1987, the bascule bridge opened over 3,100 times. This represents a major disruption to traffic. During 1988, while the bridge was being reconstructed, 3221 vessels passed through the draw.

Two rail lines serve the study area. The Norfolk and Western provides east/west rail transportation, while CSX (formerly Baltimore and Ohio) provides service north and south. CSX has important rail yards adjacent to the River and Erie Avenue.

Four breakwaters, three on the east side and one on the west, protect the Lorain harbor. The northern tip of the outermost breakwater is lit by an historic lighthouse. A semi-circular spoil area maintained by the United States Army Corps of Engineers acts as a breakwater on the east side of the harbor. It receives dredged material taken from the navigational channel in the river at a rate of about 150,000 cubic yards yearly. It is fifty-four acres in size and is currently about fifty percent filled.

The lake approach is eight hundred feet wide and thirty feet deep. The outer harbor is about sixty acres in size, eight hundred feet wide and twenty-eight feet deep. This makes the harbor one of the deepest on Lake Erie.

The Black River is owned by the City of Lorain. Ships of seven hundred to one thousand feet in length ply the waters of the River, serving the industries along its borders and up to 200 miles distant from Lorain. The River flows north into Lake Erie. A dredged navigation channel within the river is kept at an average depth of about twenty eight feet for three miles upstream. At the furthest point of navigation, there is a turning basin for the ore carriers that deliver shipments to USX Corporation. The basin has an average depth of twenty-one feet, outside of the channel area.

2.2 Area Demographics

The population of Lorain County was 268,925 in 1988, down 2% from 1980 (see Table 1). During the same period, the number of households in the County increased by 2%, to 92,897. These contradictory trends are explained by national trends toward fewer births, smaller families, and the aging of the population (the latter increasing the number of "empty nest" households).

Lorain County has experienced an increase in the average age of its residents, from 31.9 in 1980 to 33.6 in 1988. While the average age of the population is increasing nationally due to fewer births and longer life expectancies, the increase in Lorain is of some concern. Lorain is losing large numbers of its young, educated residents, who leave the City and County for college and do not return to the area. This is a trend which is occurring in communities across the nation have traditionally relied on a strong basic manufacturing economy. The average household income continues to increase in Lorain County, and in the city of Lorain, and is expected to continue to increase into the 1990s. The average household income in the City of Lorain has historically been approximately 13% lower than that for the County as a whole.

TABLE 1
 DEMOGRAPHICS: LORAIN COUNTY

	1980	1988	% Change
Population	274,909	268,925	-2%
Number of Households	90,819	93,897	+2%
Average Age	31.9	33.6	+5%
Average Household Income	21,895	29,947	+37%

Source: Urban Decision Systems, 1989

TABLE 2
 OCCUPATIONAL SKILL PROFILE
 LORAIN COUNTY, 1988

Total Employment	75,600
Occupation:	
Executive	8.0%
Professional	10.5%
Technical	3.3%
Sales	8.9%
Clerical	14.2%
Private	0.4%
Service	11.6%
Farming	1.5%
Craft	15.2%
Operator	21.0%
Laborer	<u>5.3%</u>
	100.0%

Source: Urban Decision Systems, 1989

Table 2 shows the occupational mix of Lorain County residents. White collar executives and professionals make up 19% of the work force, skilled blue collar workers engaged in crafts and technical work also account for 19% of the work force, and 21 are skilled machine operators. The remaining work force are less-skilled blue collar occupations of which 17% are laborers and service workers, and 23% are sales and clerical workers. The skilled work force is an asset. Nationally, manufacturers in many industries are now choosing new plant locations based on the existence of a trained labor force.

2.3 Economic Base

Lorain's economic history revolves around basic manufacturing. The U.S. Steel (now USX) Lorain Works, and the AmShip facility employed thousands of Lorain residents and the residents of nearby towns for decades. In the early 1980's, these major employers experienced difficult times, resulting in the closure of the AmShip facility, and major job loss at USX. These economic jolts are forcing the City to evaluate the economic position of the City, and to begin to explore new opportunities to diversify the economy to cushion against future economic change.

New non-industrial activities along the Black River have provided some evidence that Lorain's economy can be successfully diversified beyond the basic industry that has been its backbone. However, in order to understand the potential for diversified economic growth in Lorain, it is important to evaluate the current economy of the Lorain metropolitan area, and to identify likely opportunities for growth.

Table 3 shows 1986 employment by industry in Lorain County. The table also shows the concentration of employment by industry relative to employment concentration by industry for the U.S. as a whole. In 1986, 75,870 persons were employed in Lorain County. Of these, 31,888, or 43%, were employed in the manufacturing sector. In the U.S. as a whole, only 23% of all workers were employed in manufacturing. These figures reinforce Lorain's continued dependence on manufacturing, even after experiencing major declines in employment in this sector.

Table 3 shows 22 industries at the 2-digit standard industrial classification level that employ more than 1,000 people. The transportation equipment manufacturing sector, with 10,712 employees in 1986, or 14% of all employment, is by far the largest employer. Employment in transportation equipment manufacturing is concentrated at the Ford facility in Lorain, and and the new Ford-Nissan plant in Avon Lake. The joint venture between Ford and Nissan bodes well for the continued growth of this industry in Lorain County. The health services industry is the second largest employer in Lorain County, with 7,247 employees (10% of all employees). Most of these are employed at one of the two major hospitals in the City of Lorain, which serve a regional market. The fabricated metals industry (with 6,287 employees) is currently the third ranked employer in the County, followed by eating and drinking establishments (4,707 employees) and primary metals (4,131 employees). Although the fabricated metals industries in Lorain (and the U.S. as a whole) has experienced declines in recent years, there are signs that the industry is stabilizing and will continue to play a major role in the economy of Lorain County. USX has recently invested several million dollars to modernize the facility. In addition, the recent buyout of 50% of the USX Lorain Works by Japan's Kobe

TABLE 3

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, LORAIN COUNTY, 1980-1986

Description (SIC)	Employees (1980)	Employees (1986)	% Change	Index (1986)
Total Employment	83531	74870	-10	100
Agric Serv, Forestry, Fisheries				
Agricultural Services	271	344	27	99
Forestry	0	0	NA	
Fishing, Hunting and Trapping	0	0	NA	
Mining				
Metal Mining	0	0	NA	
Anthracite Mining	0	0	NA	
Bituminous Coal and Lignite Mining	NA	33	NA	21
Oil and Gas Extraction	NA	17	NA	7
Nonmetallic Minerals, except Fuels	0	0		
Contract Construction				
General Constructions and Builders	694	671	-3	60
Heavy Constructions and Builders	263	217	-17	35
Special Trade Contractors	2142	1953	-8	80
Manufacturing				
Food and Kindred Products	474	736	55	58
Tobacco Manufacturers	0	0	NA	
Textile Mill Products	0	0	NA	
Apparel and Other Textile Products	D	89	NA	9
Lumber and Wood Products	NA	60	NA	10
Furniture and Fixtures	NA	15	NA	3
Paper and Allied Products	NA	89	NA	16
Printing and Publishing	787	983	NA	75
Chemicals and Allied Products	D	1089	25	146
Petroleum and Coal Products	NA	21	NA	18
Rubber and Miscellaneous Plastics	844	1306	55	188
Leather and Leather Products	0	0	NA	
Stone, Clay and Glass Products	417	243	-42	49
Primary Metal Industries	11165	4131	-63	612
Fabricated Metal Products	7932	6287	-21	471
Machinery, except Electrical	4134	2600	-37	145
Electric and Electronic Equipment	1632	1720	5	94
Transportation Equipment	9773	10712	10	651
Instruments and Related Products	D	1385	NA	249
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	307	422	37	126

TABLE 3 (p.2 of 3)

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, LORAIN COUNTY, 1980-1986

Description (SIC)	Employees (1980)	Employees (1986)	% Change	Index (1986)
Transportation and Other Public Utilities				
Local and Interurban Pass Transit	106	185	75	75
Trucking and Warehousing	697	778	12	66
Water Transportation	NA	30	NA	19
Transportation by Air	609	40	-93	9
Pipe Lines, except Natural Gas	0	0	NA	
Transportation Services	111	95	-11	35
Communication	518	789	52	69
Electric, Gas and Sanitary Services	943	1008	7	133
Wholesale Trade				
Wholesale Trade - Durable Goods	1110	1235	11	43
Wholesale Trade - Nondurable Goods	825	776	-6	39
Retail Trade				
Building Materials & Garden Supplies	468	459	-2	81
General Merchandise Stores	2854	2415	-15	137
Food Stores	2585	2932	13	120
Auto Dealers, Service Stations	2096	2101	0	121
Apparel and Accessory Stores	D	613	NA	62
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	565	519	-8	85
Eating and Drinking Places	4334	4707	9	94
Miscellaneous Retail	1497	1695	13	85
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate				
Banking	1297	1254	-3	85
Credit Agencies other than Banks	524	496	-5	68
Security, Commodities Brokers	62	59	-5	17
Insurance Carriers	325	314	-3	27
Insurance Agents, Brokers	309	338	9	63
Real Estate	642	466	-27	42
Combined Real Estate, Insurance, etc.	NA	11	NA	50
Holding and Other Investment Offices	NA	20	NA	10
Services				
Hotels and Other Lodging Places	593	611	3	51
Personal Services	898	878	-2	87
Business Services	935	1367	46	33

TABLE 3 (p.3 of 3)

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, LORAIN COUNTY, 1980-1986

Description (SIC)	Employees (1980)	Employees (1986)	% Change	Index (1986)
Services (cont'd)				
Auto Repair, Services and Garages	445	523	18	80
Miscellaneous Repair Services	313	295	-6	96
Motion Pictures	106	68	-36	30
Amusement and Recreation Services	812	570	-30	79
Health Services	6907	7247	5	122
Legal Services	260	356	37	53
Educational Services	2265	2813	24	200
Social Services	516	1302	152	106
Museums, Botanical Gardens and Zoos	NA	33	NA	98
Membership Organizations	1246	1750	40	115
Miscellaneous Services	252	345	37	27

NA - Not Available

D - Disclosure Rules Suppress Employment Figure

I - The Index column provides information regarding the concentration of employment in each industry relative to the employment concentration in that industry for the US as a whole. An index less than 100 indicates that the employment concentration in Lorain is less than the concentration for the US. Conversely, an index greater than 100 indicates that the employment concentration in that industry in Lorain is greater than that for the US as a whole.

Steel represents major new investment in the facility, and a commitment by Kobe to continue steel production in Lorain.

One technique for analyzing the economic base of the Lorain economy is to compare employment concentration by industry in Lorain County to employment concentration by industry in the U.S. as a whole. Table 3 shows the employment concentration in Lorain County relative to the U.S. For those industries that show a factor greater than 100, the employment concentration in Lorain is greater than in the U.S. Conversely, industries with a factor less than 100 have a smaller proportion of the County's employment than the proportion of U.S. employees in this industry.

There are ten industries in Lorain which have employment concentration 30% or more above the U.S. average. These industries are shown in Table 4. The table also indicates local and national employment trends in these industries. Of these industries with high employment concentrations, three have shown positive growth trends in recent years in Lorain. These are rubber/plastics products manufacturing, auto manufacturing, and instruments and related products. Employment in the rubber/plastics industry has been stable at the national level, while the other two local growth industries are declining nationally. Chemical manufacturing, non-electric machinery manufacturing, electric gas and sanitary services, and general merchandise stores have remained stable in Lorain County, while each of these except general merchandise stores has declined nationally. Lorain County and the U.S. are experiencing declines in the other locally-concentrated industries -- primary and fabricated metals.

The local trends in these industries with high employment concentrations are, for the most part, encouraging. The fact that there are certain industries which are declining nationally but are stable or growing in Lorain indicates that Lorain has a locational advantage for these industries. In addition, Lorain is experiencing growth in some industries which can complement each other to support future growth. Specifically, the growth in the auto industry can benefit from growth in plastics, as many of the components used on automobiles are now made from plastics. Lorain may be able to market the Lorain location to new plastics manufacturers, who can capitalize on this linkage. Lorain's location in northern Ohio, a center for polymers research and firms, strengthens its ability to attract plastics manufacturers.

Table 5 shows industries with employment concentrations at least 30% below the U.S. average. Many of these industries are in the finance/insurance/real estate (FIRE) sector and the service sector. These figures are significant because these are industries which are booming nationally. Lorain's lack of FIRE industries is reflected in the limited office market in the community. To attract this market, Lorain would need substantial additions to its entertainment attractions, restaurants, and business services. The lack of hotels, movie theaters and apparel shops is also evident. Many residents go out of town to shop or to see a movie. Visitors, whether on business or pleasure, cannot stay in the City of Lorain, and there are limited lodging choices in the county.

Still, Lorain's industrial mix gives the City and County a "high technology" index twice that of the U.S. as a whole. The high technology index is a measure of the concentration of industries which are at the forefront of adopting emerging technologies and developing state-of-the-art products. (It does not, in this case, refer to a high concentration of computer companies.) In Lorain's case, industries which fit this category are rubber/plastics,

TABLE 4

TRENDS: INDUSTRIES WITH ABOVE-AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT
CONCENTRATIONS, LORAIN COUNTY

Industry	Trends	
	Lorain County	U.S.
Chemical Products Mfg.	Stable	-
Rubber/Plastics Products Mfg.	+	Stable
* Primary Metals Mfg.	-	-
* Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	-	-
Non-Electric Machinery Mfg.	Stable	-
* Auto Manufacturing	+	-
Instruments and Related Products Mfg.	+	-
Electric/Gas/Sanitary Services	Stable	+
General Merchandise Retail Stores	Stable	-
Education	NA	NA

(* = 5-6 times national average)

TABLE 5
INDUSTRIES WITH BELOW AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT
CONCENTRATIONS, LORAIN COUNTY

Industry
Construction and Builders
(Food, Apparel, Wood, Petroleum, Stone/Glass/Clay Mfg.)
Public Transportation
Passenger Water Transportation
Wholesaling
Retail Trade-Apparel Stores
Securities and Commodities Brokers
Insurance Agents
Real Estate Agents
Hotels
Business Services
Movie Theaters
Legal Service Offices

instruments, and the automotive industry. Nationally, plastics (and polymers) are being used in more and more applications, from industrial machinery parts, to auto parts, to specialized food containers. The auto industry is investing in developing new technologies to improve auto performance and efficiency. Specialized measuring devices and medical/dental instruments are being developed within the instruments sector.

There is some interest in Lorain to retain vacant parcels along the River for water-dependent or water-related uses. Water dependent uses are industries/businesses which must be located on water to operate. These include container ports, non-containerized cargo ports, coastal power plants (fossil fuels), commercial fishing, auto import distribution centers, and petroleum. Water-related uses are industries that rely on a waterfront location to increase their competitive position. For the purposes of this report, the term water-dependent will be used to describe both types of uses.

Every business currently located on the Black River in the study area, both industrial and non-industrial, is water-related. All of the manufacturing industries either receive materials or ship products by water. Marine construction companies, boat repair facilities and marinas use the water location for boat storage and repair. (See Water Dependent Uses map.) Other marine-related industries not already located in Lorain include fish processing, manufacturers of boating/shipping equipment, shipbuilding, and repair of marine electronics.

Certainly, those water-related industries already located on the Black River should be encouraged to continue operating at their Lorain location. Lorain also may be able to attract a petroleum-related business to Lorain, to use the currently vacant storage tanks at Henderson Avenue on the River's east side. In addition, vacant sites might provide an opportunity for shipping automobiles and vans produced at the new Ford-Nissan facility in Avon Lake. Marina development can also likely be attracted to Lorain.

Lorain's deep water port provided a potential competitive advantage for attracting water dependent industries or businesses which can gain a competitive advantage from a waterfront location. However, Lorain has not had much success at utilizing this asset to its advantage in recent years. It may be more advantageous to utilize currently vacant sites for non-industrial uses which support the commercial developments and marinas, or non-water related industrial uses that support and build off existing businesses in Lorain.

2.4 The Retail Market

Retail spending patterns of Lorain City residents are similar to national retail spending patterns. However, Lorain's retail sector is not strong. The once vibrant Broadway retail district is now marked by numerous vacant storefronts, the victim of suburban malls in Elyria and other western suburbs of Cleveland. Downtown Lorain is dominated by furniture stores, bars, jewelry stores, a few cafes, and some local professional offices. It does not offer a wide enough variety of retail shops to attract large volumes of shoppers.

Residents of the City, by themselves, could support over 2,000 seats of family restaurants and over 1,600 seats of upscale adult restaurants. There is currently not nearly this level of restaurant activity in Lorain, as most residents and visitors travel as far as Cleveland to

dine out. Similarly, residents of the City, by themselves, could support over 100,000 square feet of apparel stores, equivalent to roughly 10-20 clothing shops. Further statistics on the retail market are provided in the Appendix.

Lorain is at a disadvantage for attracting significant retail activity. Because Lorain is not located on a major highway, the community cannot attract and support a mall to compete with the mall in Elyria or other malls in communities west of Cleveland. This means that Lorain will always experience leakage of retail dollars to shopping areas that can support a greater variety of shops because they enjoy a broader market area. However, Lorain should be able to attract some specialty retail activity and restaurants targeted toward the marina users and other recreational boaters.

Overall, the Black River Area, and the City of Lorain are not well located to compete in the retail market at the present time. The area has poor access for retail activity, and cannot effectively compete for normal day-to-day retail shopping in either the County or the broader metropolitan area. The area will have future retail potential to serve the limited residential population nearby, and additional seasonal marina visitors. It will have substantial future potential if the area is established as a destination entertainment resort area.

2.5 Hotel Market

There are six major hotels which serve Lorain County. Commercial visitors account for half of their market. The rest is split between pass-through tourists and business meetings.

The higher priced hotels include the Holiday Inn at Westlake, the Ramada Aqua Marine Resort, and the Holiday Inn at Elyria. Budget priced hotels include the Days Inn, Best Western, and Knights Inn. The Ramada Aqua Marine Resort is the largest.

Both of the successful Holiday Inn franchises are at interchanges with major interstate highways, enabling them to better compete for regional business visitors, as well as the tourist market and a general transient market. The Black River area is too remote to compete effectively in such markets, although it does have an advantage with respect to seasonal boating activities. The seasonal business generated by these facilities would not be sufficient to support a major hotel but would require additional resort visitor attractions, or other business activity. (Existing businesses have noted that they would support a local hotel to accommodate out-of-town visitors.) The business meeting and convention market in the Lorain area is one possible adjunct to the basic market. The modest market for a hotel in the downtown Lorain area is being met by the development of a downtown hotel at the corner of Erie Avenue and Broadway.

Proposed development of a major casino, resort and conference center on the Spitzer property represents a destination activity that would create its own market. The proposed facility would also include recreational amenities necessary to attract business meetings. If the casino is built and is successful, a year round market for lodging would be created, and would probably support hotel rooms beyond those planned for the Spitzer site.

2.6 The Housing Market

Table 6 describes the composition of the housing stock in Lorain County. Only 23% of the existing housing in the County has been built since 1970, while 41% was built in the two decades between 1950 and 1969. The age of the housing stock corresponds to the years in which the economy of Lorain was most prosperous, and the population of Lorain was growing.

Lorain County has, in the past, operated as a separate housing market area from the greater Cleveland metropolitan area. The scale of the Lorain market has been modest, in the range of 250 new units per year over the last decade. Despite the outlook for a more stable economy in the County, the scale of the housing market is insufficient to support the redevelopment of major new housing, unless combined with other major mixed-use commercial development plans.

Approximately 75% of the housing units in Lorain are owner occupied. Single family housing prices in Lorain County are very affordable, averaging approximately \$61,300 in 1988. This represents a 12% increase over 1987 prices. Because the cost of single family housing is so affordable, condominium development in Lorain County has been minimal. However, the average price for condominiums in Lorain County increased by 39% between 1987 and 1988, from \$60,289 to \$87,363. This unusual increase is accounted for primarily by luxury condominiums in Avon Lake and North Ridgeville. Developments in these communities, which are closer to Cleveland, have attracted some professionals who work in the City. In addition, Avon Lake has developed condominiums in a "resort" community setting, offering a special ambience. Conversely, new 2,000-2,500 square foot townhouse condominiums in Elyria, which are priced between \$119,000 and \$139,000, are moving very slowly. This is probably because their location does not offer any special amenities, and they compete with single family homes with lower price tags. (Source: Realty 1, Elyria.)

There were a total of 135 condominium units sold in Lorain County in 1988. Of these, 79 were in Avon Lake, 24 in Elyria, 6 in Lorain, 20 in North Ridgeville and 6 in Vermillion. In Lorain, the average sale price was \$63,083, the lowest for all the communities listed above. (Avon Lake and Vermillion condominiums had the highest average cost.) Prices in Lorain ranged from \$37,500 to \$130,000. Five of the six condos sold in Lorain were located at the Fairway 12 development on Oakhill Boulevard. The sixth was located on Greenbriar Lane. (Source: The Real Estate Pace, Special Report: Lorain County Condos, 1988, prepared by Ameristate, for Cambridge Systematics, Inc.)

The condominium market in Lorain is not expected to strengthen unless the Spitzer development is successful. Condominium development along the Black River would compete well in the market only if the development included a marina, views from the units did not include industrial property, and the entranceway to the development could be located on a major road with easy access. There are limited vacant sites available that also provide a good waterfront location for marina development. This is because marinas can only be developed in areas where they will not impede with commercial shipping lanes. The Spitzer property provides the best site for condominium development, along the River, given market constraints and the amenities required to make condominiums viable.

TABLE 6
LORAIN COUNTY HOUSING MARKET

	1988
<u>Age of Occupied Housing Stock</u>	
1975-1988	12.2%
1970-1974	11.5%
1960-1969	20.9%
1950-1959	21.3%
1940-1949	10.1%
Pre-1940	24.0%
 <u>Occupied Housing Units</u>	
Owned	74.5%
Rented	25.6%
 Average Home Value	 \$61,300
Average Condominium Value	\$87,363
Average Rent	\$240

Source: Ameristate

2.7 Existing Land Use and Ownership Patterns

For the purposes of this report, the study area has been broken into three areas ("A", "B", and "C"), as shown in Figure 2. Area A includes all properties and the River north of the railroad bridge. Area B lies between the railroad bridge and the Henderson Avenue bridge. Area C extends south along the east side of the River from the Henderson Bridge (see Study Area and Land Use maps).

The Black River is unique with respect to its land uses. While many municipalities are faced with many competing land uses and land owners on the waterfront, the Black River has comparatively few. In addition, the current uses along the River are already somewhat segregated by use.

Perhaps the greatest diversity of uses occurs at the mouth of the river in Area A. Farthest west are Ohio Edison and two piers, currently used for the Hot Waters Launch Ramp and a Fishing Pier. Parking used by fishermen but owned by LTV Steel Corporation is adjacent to Hot Waters to the west and the LTV Lorain Pellet Terminal to the east. The CSX Railroad feeds into this complex. Beyond the pier area the downtown begins, with the new City Hall located just north of Erie Avenue. Houses fill the few blocks south and west of the pier and commercial areas.

On the east side of the River, north of Erie Avenue, are a variety of public and private uses. At the tip of the promontory of land extending into Lake Erie is Lorain's sewage treatment plant. Also in this area is the Lorain Sailing Club, the Coast Guard facility, and Riverside Park. To the east along the Lake is the new Marina International and a residential strip of two story houses in moderate condition. Those located directly on the shore are owned by the Lorain Port Authority and are slated for demolition to create a lakefront park. A semicircular breakwater is being filled to create public parkland adjacent to this area. Further inland are more residences served by a local commercial strip along Erie Avenue. In spite of the presence of a few public boat launches (e.g., Hot Waters and a small launch on the east side of the sewage treatment plant pier), this area lacks public launch sites.

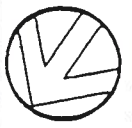
Area A also includes the area bounded on the north by the Erie Avenue Bridge and on the south by the railroad bridge. It includes the downtown commercial area and the former AmShip shipbuilding facility, now owned by Spitzer Great Lakes Co. The downtown faces away from the Black River on a plateau twenty-five feet above the water's edge. Downtown Lorain, which is focused on Broadway, is characterized by one- to four-story commercial buildings dating from the 1800s to the present day. Downtown establishments include jewelry and furniture stores, apparel shops, and offices for finance, insurance and real estate firms. The downtown retail shops serve a local market, and after years of decline, the area is generally stable. Due to competition from shopping malls in Elyria and the Greater Cleveland Area, the upside potential for further retail growth is constrained.

The land between downtown and the River is, for the most part, vacant. Marine construction operates from a small building in this area and AMCOR has two potash domes there. Despite the amount of vacant land, there is no lakeside or riverside recreation or conservation area in close proximity to downtown. In fact, there is no public access from downtown to the river.



2

BLACK RIVER MASTER PLAN LORAIN PORT AUTHORITY STUDY AREAS



Prepared by
HENDERSON GROUP
857BARD STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MA
and
CAMBRIDGE SYSTEMATICS, INC.
857BARD STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MA



400 900 7810

The Spitzer marina (formerly the AmShip facility) is located on the opposite shore of the river and is a mixed use revitalization project consisting of a marina and restaurant. Spitzer Great Lakes Co. is proposing to add a large hotel and casino to this site, pending passage of possible future State legislation permitting casino gambling. Another small marina and a county-owned water access (not open to the public) share this section of the shoreline with Spitzer. Beyond the waterfront area is a residential area of modest homes.

Area B, located between the Railroad Bridge and the Henderson Bridge, is a transition area. Land uses along the River are primarily industrial, although some marinas also exist here. Falbo Construction, Griffith Blacktop and Jonick Dock and Terminal all have industrial properties on the east side of the River. Each of these industries ships or receives goods via the water. Norfolk and Western Railroad owns two vacant industrial parcels in this area. The Falbos also operate a 26 slip marina on their property. The vacant land along the west side of the River is owned by Lorain Pellet Terminal (LTV). CSX Railroad has a switching yard just behind the bottom half of the downtown area on the west side of the river. Elyria Avenue is characterized by auto-related uses and light industry. Large parts of the street have vacant lots and there is far less consistency of design than in the Broadway area. Adjacent to the Henderson Bridge on both sides of the river, USX owns vacant land. The west side is low-lying wetlands.

Area C is entirely industrial in nature. The USX steel plant dominates the property on the west side of the River. Adjacent to the bridge on the east side are Gold Bond Building Products (National Gypsum) and the oil tanks formerly belonging to Ashland Oil (but which are currently unused). A very large parcel of vacant land owned by USX Corporation is opposite the steel plant.

2.8 Existing Water-Dependent and Water-Borne Uses

Water-dependent industrial uses along the Black River are fairly well segregated from non-industrial water dependent use. While water-dependent industrial users are located along the length of Black River, these uses are concentrated on the west side of the River in Area A. (See Figure 3). They dominate both sides of the river in Areas B and C. This location pattern has important implications for future planning of the area. For example, the existing concentration of industrial uses at the southern end of the project area, and non-industrial uses toward the mouth of the River, suggests that the Master Plan should respect these established land use patterns.

In Area A, the only industrial water-dependent use is the Lorain Pellet Terminal, but this single use dominates the entire western shoreline. The Lorain Pellet Terminal handled over 12 million tons of taconite pellets through the port in 1987. Ore carriers of up to 1,000 feet serve the terminal. This use should be considered fixed, but mechanisms for integrating the Pellet terminal with non-industrial uses should be explained. AMCOR and Monz Marine Services are also located in Area A. AMCOR receives shipments of potash by ship, which are stored on site for future truck transfer to a fertilizer facility in Medina. Monz Marine Services uses its waterfront location to store its barges and derricks.

KEY TO FIGURE 3



Boating Facilities

1. Marina International
2. Gas Dock - Marina International
3. Lorain Sailing Club
4. Coast Guard
5. Riverside Marina
6. Boat Doctors
7. Spitzer Great Lakes
8. Falbo/Captain's Quarters
9. The Boat Pad



Public Access Points

1. Marina International
2. Public Boat Launch (1)
3. Boat Launch Parking
4. Riverside Park
5. Meyer's Landing
6. Boat Launch (2)
7. Hot Waters



Water Dependent Uses

1. Lorain Pellet Terminal (LTV)
2. Monz Marine
3. AMCOR
4. Falbo/Terminal Ready-Mix Concrete
5. Jonick Dock and Terminal
6. Oil Tanks
7. Gold Bond - Lorain Gypsum Plant
8. USX Corporation
9. Griffith Black Top



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LORAIN PORT AUTHORITY

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Falbo Construction/Terminal Ready Mix Concrete, Griffith Black Top and Jonick's Dock and Terminal are located on the east side of the river in Subarea B. Falbo receives sand by ship. Jonick receives all bulk shipments made to USX in non-USX vessels. The ships used for this operation are in excess of seven hundred feet. The materials are transferred from the Jonick facility to USX by truck.

Area C contains the Ashland oil tanks (now unused), Gold Bond Building Products (National Gypsum) and USX Corporation. The steel company handled two million tons of metals through the harbor in 1987. They receive taconite pellets in vessels exceeding 750 feet in length. Gold Bond receives gypsum via the River for manufacturing into gypsum wallboard.

The Port handled approximately 14,734,400 tons of material in 1987, and 16,300,000 tons in 1988. Activity was concentrated in bulk shipments. Iron ore is the predominant material shipped, with gypsum, limestone, potash, sand/ gravel, petroleum and mill scale products also passing through the Port. Two hundred and eighty-eight ships were received and 266 ships were loaded in the Port in 1987. In 1988, these figures increased to 304 and 315 respectively. These figures represent a major resurgence in activity over 1986, primarily attributable to the improvements in the steel industry.

Future plans for the Port must take into consideration its importance to water-dependent industrial users, and ensure that the shipping industry is protected as land uses along the river continue to diversify. To date, competition with recreational boaters has not impeded navigation of the channel by commercial users. The land use plan developed in this study must support the continued use of the River by industrial users.

Recreational boating and related activities represent the major new uses on the Black River and the Lake Erie shoreline. In general, there are five marinas, two yacht/sailing clubs and one boat rental service either in or around the mouth of the River. These facilities provide 940 slips for use by recreational boat owners. These marinas, described in Table 7, are concentrated in Area A. The Captain's Quarters is located in Area B, and the Boat Pad is located south of Area C.

There are five public access points for fishermen and small craft launching. These also are concentrated near the mouth of the river, in Area A. Marina International, a Port Authority-operated public boat launch on the sewage treatment plant pier, Riverside Park, Hot Waters and the attached launch area provide the only public access to the water. There is a severe shortage of public launch sites and associated parking, so that some boaters are forced to wait up to an hour and a half to launch their boats. Parking is often unavailable in the vicinity of the launch.

2.9 Regulation

As with any waterside area, a number of public actors are involved in regulating land uses adjacent to, and activities on, the Black River and Lake Erie. The United States Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for maintaining the channels and harbor in navigable condition. The Corps annually dredges the River and is responsible for ensuring that private projects in navigable waters do not create navigation problems. To this end, all developers of

TABLE 7
BOATING FACILITIES

<u>Boating Facilities</u>	Number of Slips
1. Marina International	440
2. Gas Dock-Marina International	---
3. Lorain Sailing Club	68
4. Coast Guard	---
5. Riverside Marina	6
6. Boat Doctors	18
7. Spitzer Great Lakes	315
8. Falbo/Captain's Quarters	63
9. The Boat Pad	<u>34</u>
TOTAL	944

marinas, piers and bulkheads, or any use that projects into the River must receive a permit before it is built.

The harbor is policed and controlled by several groups. Typically there is a harbormaster responsible for the harbor as a whole, but the Lorain harbormaster retired and has not been replaced. The Coast Guard polices the harbor and the Lake Erie shoreline. The Coast Guard's primary concern is potential conflicts between pleasure boaters and shipping vessels which have a limited ability to avoid small craft. The Lorain Port Authority assists the Coast Guard in policing the harbor through its Marine Patrol Program.

As yet, there is no Coastal Zone Management program in Ohio that is responsible for approving land uses that affect use of the water. However, legislation has just been passed that will put a program into effect within a two years. It will not affect existing development. When operational, the program will require that local coastal management plans be developed.

3.0 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 Approach for Identifying Opportunities

Waterfronts historically have provided communities with a special resources for economic development. They offer opportunities for industrial, commercial, recreational, and residential development. Although Lorain's waterfront area has taken some hard knocks in recent years, with the closure of the AmShip facility and layoffs at the USX plant, there are specific development and land use opportunities for waterfront properties along the Black River. These opportunities are demonstrated by new industrial and commercial investment along the River. Current land uses within the study area are shown in Figure 4.

The evaluation of development and land use opportunities requires examination of several key elements, including:

- The ability of the economic environment to support existing and potential new businesses.
- The identification of the types of industries, both manufacturing and non-manufacturing, that are best suited for the area.
- The identification of other land uses that make sense for the area.
- The concerns and future hopes for the study area of property owners, business owners, and citizens.
- The relationship of environmental, physical, economic, infrastructure and land use constraints to future development and land uses in the area.

Based on the results of the analysis of baseline economic and physical conditions, and the key elements outlined above, the next step is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the City and study area for supporting new uses. From this analysis, the development and land use opportunities for the study area can then be identified. This chapter presents a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the study area for supporting new development and alternative land uses. Opportunities for the future are then discussed.

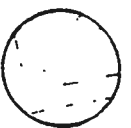
3.2 Positive Characteristics of the Black River Area

Land Ownership Patterns

The Black River Study Area stretches for three miles, thus including six miles of shoreline property. Surprisingly, there are a limited number of land owners with waterfront property within the study area, and most of the parcels are large in size. There are also several large parcels of vacant or under utilized land that can accept major development projects or major single land uses. This land ownership pattern will facilitate the land acquisition process for any development project. It eliminates the need to negotiate sale agreements with multiple land

KEY TO FIGURE 4

- BLUE = INDUSTRIAL
- ORANGE = VACANT
- RED = COMMERCIAL/RETAIL
- YELLOW = RESIDENTIAL
- PURPLE = PUBLIC
- GREEN = OPEN SPACE/RECREATION



BLACK RIVER MASTER PLAN

LORAIN PORT AUTHORITY

Prepared by
HUNTER-GIBSON CONSULTANTS





owners, and to piece together a parcel large enough for large-scale developments or land uses of any type. In addition, several large land owners have expressed a willingness to negotiate land sales with potential developers.

Existing Land Use Segregation

The existing land uses along the River are already quite segregated by use. Almost all recreational and commercial uses are located on the east bank of the River in subarea A, north of the railroad bridge. Industrial uses are concentrated on the west side of the River in subarea A, and on both sides of the River in subareas B and C. The only exceptions to this pattern are the sewage treatment plant, located on the east side of the River in subarea A, and the Captain's Quarters Marina, located on the east side of the River in subarea B.

This pattern of land use segregation is important because it means that there is little conflict between existing uses. New land use regulations can be designed to easily accommodate existing uses while keeping non-compatible uses separate. Also, the location of most recreational boating facilities near the mouth of the River minimizes the potential for conflict between commercial vessels and recreational craft along the River.

Physical Characteristics of the River

The Black River is wide and deep. These characteristics allow the River to accommodate very large shipping vessels with deep drafts. Because the River is wide, recreational and commercial vessels can currently operate on the River without conflict. Some business owners along the River have voiced concern that the Black River will face navigational problems similar to the Cuyahoga (i.e., safety problems do to conflicts between recreational boaters and large commercial ships). However, according to the Coast Guard, the width of the Black River can accommodate both types of traffic. The depth of the River and Lorain Harbor are also proving advantageous for attracting new marina development even while marinas in neighboring communities are forced to shut down due to low water levels.

New Industrial Investment

Recent industrial investments at two of the major industrial facilities in the Lorain metropolitan area provide a positive signal for Lorain's industrial economy. USX invested several million dollars in new equipment at the Lorain Works, and Kobe Steel of Japan bought a 50% interest in the facility. Meanwhile, Ford and Nissan, in a joint venture, announced the development of a new motor vehicle manufacturing plant in Avon Lake. These industrial investments are important in several ways. First, they indicate a renewed interest in the Lorain area as an industrial development site, after many years of decline in industrial investment. Second, Japanese firms are being sought after by communities throughout the U.S. The fact that Lorain was able to effectively attract Japanese investment should further renew interest in the area from both foreign and domestic firms. Third, competition for new motor vehicle manufacturing facilities is very strong in the mid-west. One reason for this competition is that these facilities, especially when they involve a Japanese firm, tend to attract numerous spinoff businesses (e.g., auto parts manufacturers). Fourth, both of these industries are potential candidates for using the Port of Lorain to import or export goods and materials. Fifth, these

businesses will utilize the highly skilled but underutilized work force in Lorain County. Economic benefits associated with the increased disposable income in the area will also be realized.

New Technologies

Lorain is located in a region which is at the forefront of new plastics/polymers technologies. Plastics and polymers are being developed to replace metals and other materials in a variety of products including automobiles, industrial machinery, and appliances. Lorain's location near businesses developing these technologies can be marketed to industries which are experimenting with these new materials.

Reliance Electronics in Lorain is developing a new product for the telecommunications industry. The technology involves the development of new methods for using closely linked work station cells to improve telecommunications systems.

New Development Activity

Three new developments of significance are underway in Lorain, which indicate that investors have faith in Lorain's economic future. The Lorain Port Authority, in partnership with some private investors, has successfully developed the Marina International on Lorain Harbor. The Spitzer/Great Lakes Marina has also been developed and slips are completely rented up. The Spitzer project is expected to take on major proportions if casino legislation is passed sometime in the future, in which case it would include the development of several hotels, restaurants and condominiums. Finally, Lorain's first hotel is being developed in the downtown area, on the corner of Erie Avenue and Broadway. These developments send positive signs to other would-be developers and investors, and the activities have already resulted in calls to several waterfront land owners by parties interested in purchasing property in Lorain.

Growth In Recreational Boating

New recreational boat registrations have been growing annually for several years. Boating activity in the Great Lakes region has seen particularly large increases. Many of the new boats being purchased are large craft that must be kept in the water during the boating season. This means that the demand for marina slips and moorings will continue to increase. Lorain is well positioned to accommodate this continued increase in demand.

Lorain's Rich Ethnic Heritage

Lorain has a diverse and rich ethnic heritage which is celebrated annually at the ethnic festival. This heritage can be celebrated on a year-round basis through the development of ethnic restaurants and cultural events held throughout the year.

3.3 Negative Characteristics of the Black River Area

Image

Lorain has an image as an industrial community. This image did not inhibit economic development during the 1940s through the 1960s, when the community's economy was booming. However, during the difficult years of the early eighties, Lorain received national press when the City's major employers either closed or sustained major layoffs. This negative press left the City with an image as a dying Rustbelt City. This image is reinforced by citizens of Lorain who travel to other communities in northern Ohio or elsewhere in the country, and talk down their community. Image problems are difficult to overcome, but can be improved through building community pride and advertising successes such as the Marina International, the reuse of the AmShip site, and new industrial investment in the community.

Uncertainty of Casino Legislation

Some of the currently discussed commercial development opportunities for Lorain are tied to the passage of Casino enabling legislation. However, this legislation has failed to pass in the past, and its future is by no means assured. This uncertainty leaves Lorain, and particularly the area included within the study area, in a state of limbo. While there is interest in the vacant sites along the River, and the Spitzer family has unveiled major plans for the site, development is almost at a standstill. New developments cannot proceed until the fate of the legislation is known because the scale and type of any new development along the waterfront in Lorain is directly dependent on that legislation.

The Status of Downtown Lorain

Downtown Lorain has suffered extensively with the decline of Lorain's industrial base and the emergence of suburban malls in Elyria and other Cleveland suburbs. The downtown has a very limited mix of stores, both in terms of variety of goods sold, and price range of goods available. Many of the store front are vacant and boarded up. The state of downtown sends a negative signal to both potential businesses and developers interested in locating facilities in Lorain. The state of downtown also does not encourage residents of the City to spend their retail dollars in Lorain, and thus the City loses the economic benefits associated with a strong retail sector.

Lack of Visitor Attractions

A strong retail base and an economy that can support hotels and restaurants must offer visitors cultural and recreational opportunities on a year-round basis. Currently, Lorain's visitor attractions are limited to water-related activities, which only attract users during the summer months. Unfortunately, the City does not offer any land side attractions that will keep these people in Lorain after they have finished using the water. The casino would provide one major visitor attraction that would operate year round. However, additional attractions, such as festivals, sporting events, and cultural events must occur in the City in order to offer visitors enough diverse opportunities to remain in the City.

Limited Access to the City

Lorain is not located on a major highway or Interstate. Furthermore, the condition of roads leading into Lorain, particularly Colorado Avenue, is not good. These factors are a detriment to business attraction, and particularly inhibit the development of a competitive retail sector.

Business Climate

Many businesses perceive Lorain as having a poor attitude toward attracting new businesses. The City is often not perceived as being a willing partner in working to help businesses to operate efficiently and effectively in Lorain. Many businesses believe that City permitting processes are bureaucratic, political and cumbersome. This perception has been reinforced by the recent Ford tax abatement case. This negative image is a problem which can be overcome with the combined efforts of all the City agencies involved in the business permitting and approval process, and the City Council. It will, however, require concerted efforts to change.

Fixed Uses

Some of the uses along the waterfront are fixed and any new development must occur around these uses. Most particularly, the sewage treatment facility is located on a prime waterfront development site, but the facility is likely to remain on that site for many years to come. Development of the waterfront must accommodate the facility. Other fixed uses include the USX plant and the LTV Pellet Terminal.

Physical Constraints of the Land

Many of the land parcels in the study area are separated from the River by steep banks. These steep banks preclude easy development of these parcels for water-related activities because it is difficult to access the River. In addition, the development potential of some of the parcels in the study area is in question due to the likelihood of contaminated soils. Other parcels are constrained due to wetland designation.

Barriers Between Activity Centers

A critical element of a successful plan for the Black River must be the development of linkages between activity centers along both sides of the River and the downtown area. The achievement of such a linkage is inhibited by the six rows of railroad sidings located along Riverfront Place. These sidings are utilized by the Pellet Terminal. Efforts must be undertaken to devise a way to safely move between the downtown area and the waterfront. The barrier formed by the railroad sidings must be removed, either by relocating the sidings, or by bridging them.

Additional barriers are created by the limited number of bridges between the two sides of the River, and the fact that one of those bridges is continually opening and stopping the flow of traffic. This inhibits the flow of vehicle traffic between the two sides of the River, and the

downtown area and major new developments on the east side of the River. Railroad crossings on both Broadway and Colorado Avenue further inhibit the flow of traffic on a regular basis.

Lack of Public Access and Open Space

Currently, there is a limited amount of public access and open space along the River. Citizens of Lorain have expressed a need for additional public access to the Riverfront, and for an additional boat launch area. There are several parcels of land along the River that are candidates for such a facility, but the site must provide adequate parking with safe entrance and exit to major roadways. A site which meets these characteristics has yet to be identified.

3.4 Land Use and Development Opportunities

Industrial Development Opportunities

Lorain's economy has been traditionally dependent on the few basic industries that have employed vast numbers of Lorain residents. Recently, these industries have not fared well, and initiatives to attract new businesses have not met with much success. We do not recommend that Lorain pursue an economic development policy that is centered around efforts to attract new manufacturers to the City. However, we do believe that the recent investments at the USX facility and at the Avon Lake Ford-Nissan facility do provide some unique opportunities for attracting new manufacturers to Lorain. Particularly, Lorain is well-situated to attract some new auto parts manufacturers. Auto parts manufacturers tend to locate near auto manufacturing facilities. This trend has become more important as the Japanese have entered the U.S. market and demand just in time delivery of parts. Lorain County houses two auto assembly plants, and is within a one-day journey of several other new plants in the mid-west, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Lorain's opportunities to attract auto parts manufacturing facilities are bolstered by the City's location in a region known for its significant advancements in plastics technologies. Substitution of plastics for metals in many auto parts has become increasingly pervasive throughout the auto parts manufacturing industry. Opportunities may exist to develop research and development in plastics as they relate to the auto industry (and other industries), through pursuing technology transfer program between manufacturing facilities and manufacturers of plastic auto parts.

Some constraints to Lorain's ability to attract auto parts manufacturers do exist. The City is not located on an Interstate, and many auto parts manufacturers, particularly the Japanese, are attracted to Interstate sites. Also, the perception that some businesses have about the business climate in Lorain is a major constraint to attracting firms. Lorain also is perceived as having a history of labor unrest, and this may be a drawback to some firms.

Some of the property along the Black River, particularly parcels between the railroad bridge and the Henderson Avenue Bridge are well-suited for a research park type of development. However, it is not obvious from the market study performed for this plan that Lorain can support a research and development park. In addition, Lorain County Community College might oppose such a development because it is undertaking its own efforts in this

arena. Finally, Lorain does not have a competitive advantage for attracting any particular type of research and development firms to the site, and research parks frequently need to attract several firms in similar lines of business to be successful. Opportunities for such a development should be explored further, particularly with major institutions, but do not merit significant expenditures of time and resources.

An additional industrial-related business which might be attracted to the Black River is an auto/motor vehicle exporting facility. Ford will be shipping finished vehicles from both the Lorain and Avon Lake facilities, and may be interested in a water transportation facility in Lorain. One drawback of using any of the large vacant parcels along the River for this activity is that it would require a lot of land to store vehicles, but would employ a limited number of people. One advantage is the fact that it would utilize the Port facilities.

Institutional Development

The large vacant parcels on the east side of the River between the railroad bridge and the Henderson Bridge form an ideal site for an institutional development such as an educational or training facility. The market for the development of such a facility should be explored by the City, through contacts with the State Department of Education, and other public sector agencies. Advantages of using the site for such an activity are that it would help to diversify the economy of Lorain and it would provide jobs in a variety of occupations. One drawback is that such an activity would require very good local and regional access. Regional access is limited because Lorain is not located on a major highway. Local access to this site is fairly good, but not outstanding. There is also a possibility that portions of the site have been designated as a wetland, and development of the site may therefore be constrained.

Commercial Development Opportunities

Certainly the most obvious and publicly recognized opportunity for commercial development along the Black River is at the Spitzer/Great Lakes site. Commercial development is already planned for the site, with or without the passage of the Casino legislation. Marina development at the site has been successful, and should be able to support some related restaurant and specialty retail (i.e., marine products stores, etc.) at the site on a seasonal basis.

If the casino is approved in future years, development of three hotels, several restaurants, condos, and retail is planned for the site, and additional related commercial markets will arise for other sites in Lorain. This pressure for additional development will provide opportunities to connect the Spitzer development with downtown, and every effort should be made to channel development in this direction, rather than to other development sites along the River. Linking downtown to other activity centers along the River is the only viable opportunity that exists to pump much needed life into the downtown. Conversely, if commercial activities associated with the Spitzer development are allowed to develop on sites other than in the downtown area, the remaining lifeblood will be sucked out of the downtown economy, and Broadway will sport additional vacant storefronts.

Creating linkages between downtown and the development activity on the east side of the River will not be an easy task. The downtown is currently separated from the east side of the River by the LTV railroad sidings, a large parcel of vacant land and the River. The Erie Avenue

Bridge currently provides the only access between the two activity areas, and this bridge is raised several times a day, blocking access between the two sides of the River. Also, downtown is oriented to Broadway. Thus, the view of downtown from the east side of the River is of the backs of stores. There is currently no visual draw between the downtown and the Spitzer development site.

These drawbacks are not insurmountable. The visual connection can be made between the two sites by punching through the row of stores on the east side of Broadway to create gateways to downtown. Stores located on the east side of Broadway can be remodeled to have storefronts on both Broadway and Riverfront Place. It might be possible to attract several ethnic restaurants to this area, creating a theme that can draw boaters and other visitors. The large vacant parcel between the River and the rail sidings can be converted into public open space, preserving the view between the downtown and the Spitzer property. If the casino development is built, a water taxi between the Spitzer property and the public open space may be feasible, creating a unique alternative mode of transportation between the activity centers.

One difficult problem still remains in making the linkage between downtown and the east side of the River. The rail sidings are needed by LTV for transporting pellets from the Pellet terminal to USX. These create a safety hazard, and they will have to be fenced off so that no pedestrians are regularly crossing the tracks. Alternatives for creating access from the public open space to downtown include bridging over the rail sidings, or depressing the sidings and creating a walkway across them. The City may be able to work with LTV to determine if the sidings can be relocated further south. Vehicular access to the site may be possible from the pellet terminal property and at 9th Street, thus avoiding vehicular access at the point where the tracks are six across. Whatever solution is agreed upon will undoubtedly be costly.

The Marina International property or nearby sites are appropriate for a restaurant development aimed at the boating population. Such developments, however, will only survive if additional visitor attractions can be developed to attract people to Lorain in the off-season. The magnitude of restaurant development that can be supported in Lorain depends on the level of development that occurs at the Spitzer property.

Recreational/Open-Space Land Uses

Site reconnaissance of land uses along the Black River has identified a shortage of public open space and public access along the River. This observation has been reinforced through discussions with local residents, fishermen and the Coast Guard. There are several sites which have the potential to be developed as public parkland. The site located adjacent to the River and Riverfront Place at Erie Avenue is a logical site to be developed as public open space. As discussed above, it is important to retain this parcel as open space if the connection between activity centers on the east side of the River and the downtown area are to be made. There are a number of other objectives that can be met by developing a park at this site. First, the site could be used for Lorain's annual ethnic festival, which is currently held outside of Lorain. It could also serve to host other special events, such as a Fourth of July celebration, culminating with a fireworks display on the River. These activities would draw residents and visitors to the downtown area on a variety of occasions throughout the year. The park should also sport playing fields to keep the park active. Part of the park could be flooded in the winter for ice skating, providing year-round utilization of the facility.

The public space could also be developed as a heritage park, paying tribute to the men and women who have contributed to Lorain's development over the years. We envision tribute to the many industrial workers, with sculptures of industrial machinery with interpretive displays explaining how the machinery was used. Plaques facing the former AmShip site and the LTV Pellet Terminal would explain the industrial operations which have occurred at these sites over the years, and describe the jobs of the ship builders. Descriptions of the shipping activity on the River could also be displayed, and people could use the park to watch current shipping activities on the River.

There are several positive reasons for undertaking this project. First, it is not costly, yet it can provide a real boost to Lorain and instill pride in residents of Lorain. Second, it will support future opportunities to connect the downtown to development on the east side of the River. It also creates a destination for visitors, and it creates an area for year-round activity near downtown.

Some drawbacks do exist. First, the property is owned by LTV, which is in bankruptcy at this time. Thus, acquisition of the property may be difficult. Second, the site does not provide a good location for a public boat launch. The banks to the River are steep, and access to the site, especially for vehicles towing boat trailers, is not easy.

One site that might be utilized for a public boat launch is the vacant parcel adjacent to Henderson Avenue on the west side of the River. This site does not have the steep banks to the River that are found on other parcels. Also, it is located on a major roadway with good access to Colorado Avenue, which connects to communities to the south. Direct access to the site would have to be improved so that vehicles entering and exiting the site with trailers in tow would not create any safety issue. One potential problem that might impede development of this site for this or any other use is that a portion of the site adjacent to Henderson Avenue may be designated a wetland. If a wetland does exist on the site, any boat launch facility and related parking lot would have to be located so as not to impede on the wetland area.

Residential Development Opportunities

Opportunities to develop housing along the Black River are limited by the market conditions in Lorain. Lorain's housing market is dominated by single family dwellings. The median price for a single family home is only \$61,000. Properties along the Black River are best suited to condominium development. However, the Lorain market can only support some very specialized condominium development. Any condos developed on the Black River properties would need to be developed in conjunction with a marina to attract boat owners to the development. The development would also require waterfront views that would not be impeded by industrial land uses. The only development site which can meet these criteria is the Spitzer property.

4.0 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.1 Overall Development Plan

The development program proposed below is designed to respond to the unique attributes of Areas A, B and C of the Black River study area, described earlier in this report, and shown again in Figure 5. Separate recommendations are included for each area.

Development within the study area will inevitably be affected by the casino proposal, put forth by Spitzer Great Lakes, Ltd. If the proposal is successful, speculative development pressures in the residential areas surrounding the Spitzer site will increase dramatically. The downtown area will also experience land speculation, as will areas to the south, near the Turnpike.

If the casino proposal is not successful, it is likely that the Spitzer site will still be developed, although on a more modest scale. Under these conditions the city should encourage mixed-use development, which can take advantage of the site's setting and its waterfront amenities.

The sections which follow set forth a development strategy and an implementation process which is intended to be applicable for the City and the Black River either with or without the proposed casino.

4.2 Area "A" Land Use and Development (See Figure 6)

Of the three Black River sub-areas, Area A has experienced the most change in recent years, due to its proximity to Lake Erie. It is particularly popular with recreational boaters seeking quick and convenient access to the Lake and deep-draft berthing, within a sheltered harbor environment.

Marina Development

Additional demand for marinas will no doubt be experienced in Area A, especially in conjunction with expansion of residential, recreation, and other non-industrial uses in the area. This trend can be expected either with or without the proposed casino. Increased recreational boating activity can be accommodated in Area A, because it is somewhat separated from the heavy commercial shipping at the upriver sites, and most of the potential conflict between waterborne uses can be avoided. This will result in the concentration of recreational boating in down river locations near Lake Erie, and industrial uses and commercial shipping will continue, at least over the near future, to dominate upriver locations.

Land Use Transition

It is recommended that within Area A, the city encourage the transition from industrial uses to non-industrial development in order to consolidate the changes that have already taken place. Although a transition to non-industrial uses will occur in other areas abutting the Black





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BLACK RIVER MASTER PLAN



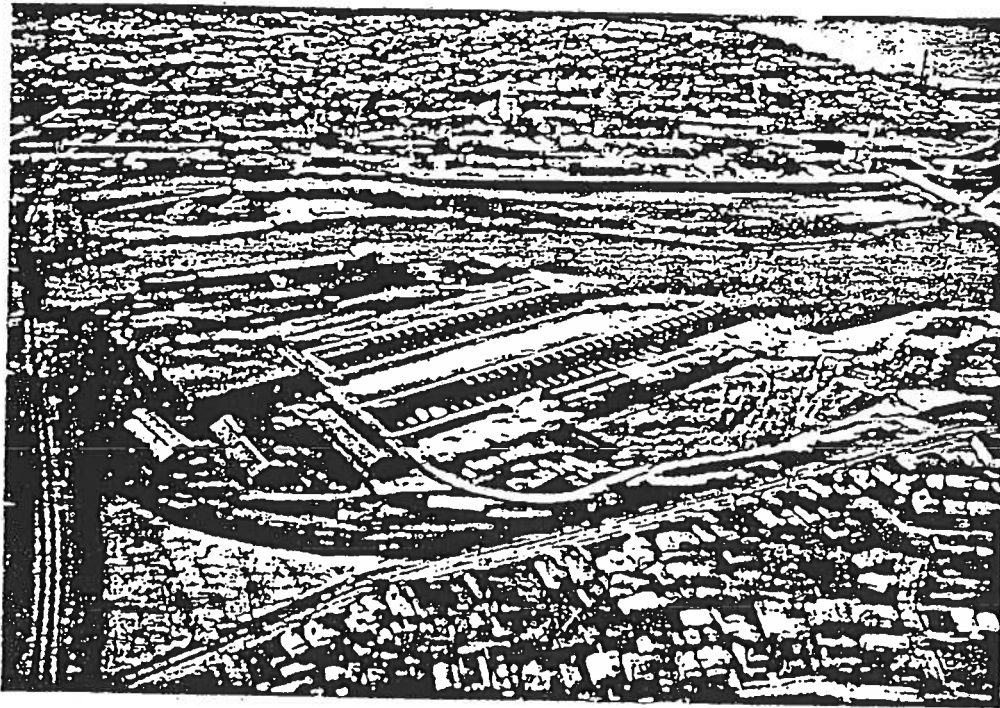
LORAIN PORT AUTHORITY
STUDY AREAS

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Area A, looking west across the Black River toward downtown Lorain. The lower half of the photo shows Colorado Avenue and the Spitzer Marine Site, location of the proposed casino. At left is the N&W Railroad, and its bridge across the river. On the far side of the river are the two AMCOR storage domes, at left, and the proposed park site at right. At the far right is the Erie Avenue Bridge across the Black River.

Area A, looking east. The lower half of the photo shows downtown Lorain. Beyond it is Area A, with the proposed park site on the near side of the river, adjacent to downtown Lorain, and the Erie Avenue Bridge is at left.



River in the future, it should be focused initially within Area A, where it is most appropriate. This will prevent "piecemeal" redevelopment all along the river, and the conflicts among uses which often accompany it.

Connections Across the River

In order to ensure that new development in Area A strengthens existing developed areas, and particularly the downtown, improvements on the east side of the river should be directly connected to downtown. This could be accomplished by improved transportation access through the use of shuttle buses and water taxis, as well as visual linkages. The connection should be strengthened by creating interesting "destination" retail areas and other attractions on the west side of the river, and by channeling new retail development into the downtown rather than to other parts of the city.

New "Heritage Park"

It is recommended that the Port Authority acquire the vacant and underutilized land on the west side of the river, between the Erie Avenue Bridge and the railroad bridge, and devote part of it to the creation of a new public "Heritage Park" to serve all Lorain residents. The park should allow full public access to the river (including promenades, boat launches, and docks for water taxis and tour boats), and should create a lively and attractive "destination" on the west side of the river near downtown. In addition, the existence of a park in this location would enhance property values downtown, and would create a focal point for future real estate development in the downtown.

The "Heritage Park" theme for the park could feature Lorain's unique industrial heritage and its rich ethnic diversity. Artifacts from Lorain's industrial past (locomotives, ships, large industrial machinery etc.) and other items of historic interest could be placed on permanent display in the park, like large pieces of outdoor sculpture. An example of such a park is located in Lowell, Massachusetts. It uses Lowell's unique history (as one of the first mill towns in the United States) as its theme, and includes renovated mill structures, a visitor's center, tours and outdoor activities, and a museum as highlights. The opportunity exists for such a visitor concept in Lorain, although at a smaller scale than in Lowell (e.g., without guided tours).

Other parts of the proposed park site should be used to create a continuous waterfront promenade along the Black River for pedestrians. New boat launching facilities, vehicular parking, athletic playing fields, and practice fields could also be provided.

In order for a sizeable new public park in this location to be successful, it must be programmed – which means that activities of several kinds, ranging from sports leagues to annual festivals and holiday celebrations (for instance 4th of July fireworks) and other special events must be planned for the area, publicized, and effectively carried out. Such a park would provide a spectacular location for Lorain's annual ethnic festival, which is presently celebrated outside of Lorain for lack of a suitable site.

The city's ethnic diversity could also lend a special character to the park in a permanent way if development of ethnic restaurants, food shops, and crafts is encouraged in immediate proximity to the park, in the heart of the downtown area. Many other American and European

cities have used similar themes for sub-areas within a commercial district to give them a special character and enhanced drawing power. Such areas can bring people from outside of the city into the downtown for shopping and dining on a regular basis.

Creation of the proposed park will enhance land values throughout the downtown. In the future, land on the periphery of the park site which are not developed with structures (such as parking lots and practice fields) could be privately developed under land lease or other arrangements with the city for residential, office, and other desirable downtown uses, as long as they are compatible with the open space and riverfront theme of the park.

The new park and development areas could be connected to the downtown by using existing crossings of the railroad tracks at 9th Street (on the south end of the site) and adjacent to the Lorain Pellet Terminal (on the north end of the site). A new driveway through the park would connect the two entrances to each other, would provide access to the boat launches and parking areas, and would provide access throughout the park for police and emergency vehicles.

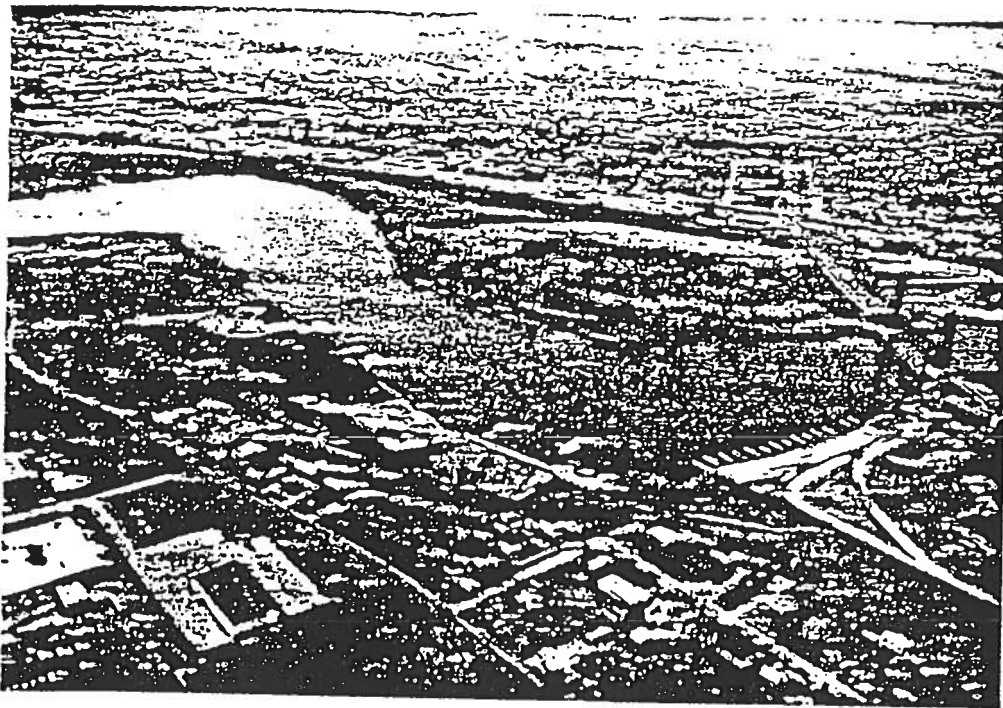
Pedestrian access to the park from downtown could be created via lightweight bridges across the railroad tracks, making use of existing openings between buildings which face onto Broadway. Some of these openings provide opportunities for major "gateways" to the riverfront from Broadway. If possible, some of the railroad tracks which are used for storage of railroad cars should be relocated to the south, but several of the tracks must remain in order to serve the Lorain Pellet Terminal. These tracks can and must be accommodated in the design of the park. Further study of the park is needed to develop specific plans, and negotiations with the Pellet Terminal will be necessary to accommodate access to the park without compromising the Terminal's operations.

Downtown Revitalization

As an integral part of this strategy of creating linkages between downtown and a revitalized riverfront area, the city should encourage owners of businesses on the east side of Broadway, which currently "turn their backs" toward the riverside, to add retail/restaurant uses (as described above) and new entrance ways on the rear facades of their buildings (facing Riverside Drive). This will create a second "face" for downtown toward the Heritage Park, the Spitzer development and other new development, and toward the river itself. Restaurants and stores that draw upon Lorain's unique ethnic background should be encouraged.

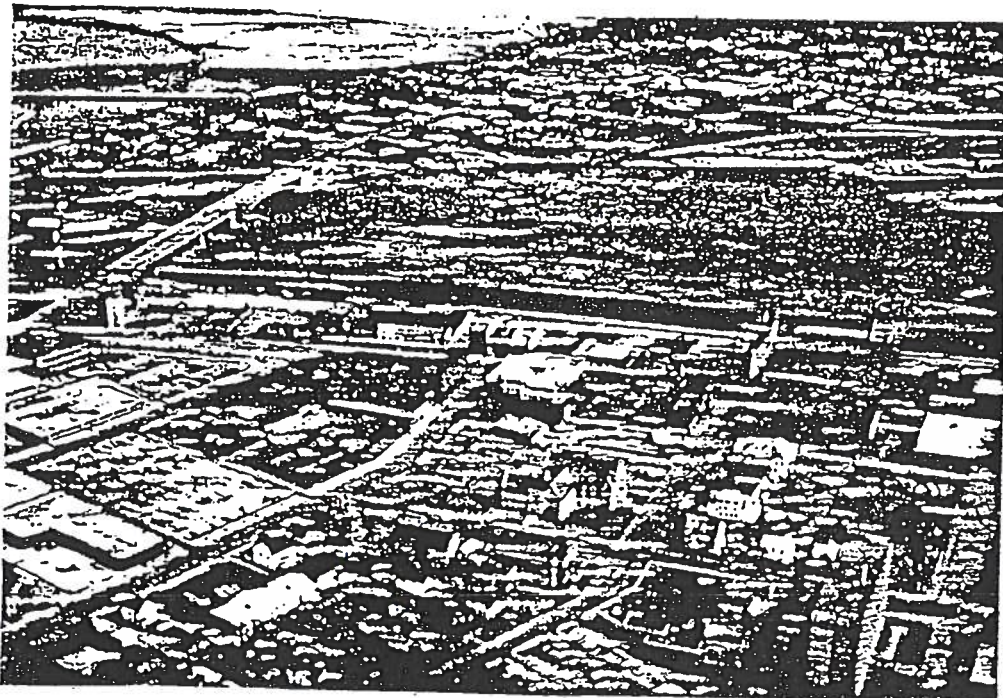
4.3 Area "B" Land Use and Development (See Figure 7)

Three characteristics define Area B. The first of these is that current market pressure for mixed-use development, and for a transition from existing industrial uses to other uses is considerably less in Area B than in Area A. A second characteristic is that the industrial uses currently located in Area B are presently economically viable, and are important to Lorain's continued economic vitality. Finally, the vacant and underutilized sites within Area B are appropriate for types of uses which are less directly tied to downtown's commercial market than those in Area A.



Area B, looking west across the Black River. The N&W Railroad bridge across the river is at right, and the Henderson Drive Bridge is out of the photo at left. On the near side of the river are water dependent uses including (from left to right) Griffith Blacktop, Jonick Dock and Terminal, Falbo Terminal, and the Captain's Quarters Marina. On the far side of the river is the vacant LTV-owned site (also shown below).

Area B, looking East. In the background at left are the N&W Railroad Bridge and (on the far side of the river) Spitzer Marine. On the near side of the river is the large vacant LTV-owned site. This site could accommodate a large institution, a research park, or possibly residential development.



In Area B, it is likely (particularly if the casino proposal is approved) that development will occur as a "spin-off" from the changes occurring in Area A. It is also likely that new development and/or redevelopment will take place over a longer time period.

Existing Uses

Over the short term, Area B landowners should be permitted to retain and expand (if desired) their current industrial activities. Transition to non-industrial uses, when desired, should be carefully planned and implemented, to avoid conflict with remaining industrial uses in the area, and also to ensure compatibility with other land uses and development which may be created in Area A.

Development of Vacant Land

The presently vacant site owned by LTV located on the west side of the river in Area B presents an important opportunity for development which can strengthen both the downtown area and the city as a whole. The site is large and reasonably level, has excellent access to highways and rail facilities, has extensive frontage along the river and, because it is elevated above the river, has sweeping and impressive views to the north, east and south.

The site would be ideal for a research and development park associated with an educational institution or a major industry. It would also be very attractive for an educational facility, or for residential development if the residential market strengthens. Clearly, what happens on the Spitzer Great Lakes site will have a bearing on the market for this site, and it is therefore difficult to identify the most appropriate final land use at this time. It would be appropriate now, however, for the city and the Port Authority to begin discussions with area businesses and institutions, to determine their interest in creating new facilities on this site.

Public Boat Launch

It has been suggested that land be acquired in Area B on the west side of the river, north of the Henderson Bridge, for use as a public boat launch. The site is large enough to support the necessary parking for automobiles and boat trailers, but existing wetlands along the river frontage, and the difficulty of gaining vehicular access to the site from any of the adjacent roads may make the use infeasible. It is recommended that the city or the Port Authority investigate the status of the wetland before proceeding with this idea.

4.4 Area "C" Land Use and Development (See Figure 8)

Area C contains vast tracts of vacant and underutilized land, with direct access to the river. Vehicular access to the area from the regional highway network is excellent, and can be accomplished without passing through downtown or using either of the bridges across the river. USX Corporation owns the major vacant tracts within the area, and has in the past entertained development proposals from major industrial users. Sufficient land exists within Area C to allow for the expansion of existing industries in the area and to attract new industry whenever possible. Industries related to the expanding automotive industry in the area may be good candidates.



Area C. looking West. On the near side of the river are the Gold Bond gypsum products facility and the presently unused oil storage tanks. The Henderson Drive Bridge is at right. On the far side of the river are the USX plant and slag dumps.

It is recommended that Area C remain as a major opportunity area for new industrial development. The continued designation of this land for industrial purposes will retain the opportunity for creating new industrial jobs, new tax base for the city, and expansion of Lorain industry.



5.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In evaluating ways to implement the development strategies and recommendations identified above for the Black River area, a number of techniques were examined. A combination of land acquisition and zoning initiatives is recommended as the best course of action for the city, and these recommendations are discussed in detail below.

5.1 Zoning and Land Use Regulation

Existing Zoning

Zoning and land use regulations are put into place by municipalities in order to control and direct the use of private land. The zoning indicates what land uses a municipality has programmed for an area. Lorain's land uses are controlled by the City of Lorain Planning and Zoning Code, dated 1984. The majority of land in the study area is zoned "I-1" (Light Industry) or "I-2" (Heavy Industry).

The "I-2 Heavy Industrial zone" is intended to accommodate "major manufacturing, processing, warehousing, major research and testing operations." Most types of non-noxious manufacturing are allowed, as are petroleum refining, primary metal industries and marine freight terminals. For the most part, the heavy industry designation applies along the edge of the Black River for its entire length.

The "I-1 Light Industrial zone" is intended to encourage clean and quiet manufacturing and business. General business, general manufacture, warehousing, and research and development firms are among the permitted uses. Heavy industrial uses and most forms of residential uses are prohibited. The Light Manufacturing District applies to the land immediately inland of the Heavy Manufacturing District.

Also relevant is the zoning that applies to the downtown area. The "B-4" Central Business District permits a variety of uses, including business, institutional, public, residential and cultural uses. Most general and local businesses are allowed, subject to review by the Central Business District Review Committee.

Limitations of Existing Zoning

The present industrial zoning along the Black River is not a sufficient tool for the city's use in guiding either the type of development proposals which are currently before the city, or the types of proposals which are likely to inundate city agencies should the proposed casino be approved. This is the case because in Lorain's present zoning the "I-1" and "I-2" industrial districts permit development "by right" of nearly all land uses which are allowed in the other zoning districts. This means that except for residential development, which is specifically forbidden, the city has little control over what land uses can be developed in any industrial district.

The Heavy Industry and Light Industry designations were appropriate in the past, and remain appropriate in certain sections of the city even now. However, a number of non-industrial uses are beginning to appear in areas abutting the Black River. An example is the Spitzer Great Lakes development, a mixed use project including a marina and restaurant. This type of use should be encouraged since it is a desirable reuse for the site and is also a water-related use. Potential conflicts with industrial uses could occur in the future, however, as more of these mixed use developments are proposed. What is needed is a means for allowing this type of development in certain areas, while assuring that heavy and light industry are protected in the remainder of the industrially zoned districts where they are appropriate.

Present day development proposals are complex, and it is increasingly difficult to determine accurately the benefits and costs of a development to the city. Evaluating and refining the myriad details of a sizeable development proposal must be done via a negotiating process between a developer and the community, based upon a full reporting of the scope and the details of the proposed development. In Lorain, current zone change requirements are quite lenient, and this gives the city little control over what it can require of a developer.

New Growth Management Mechanisms

Two possible implementation mechanisms have been evaluated for use by the city -- the imposition of zoning "overlay" districts over the existing industrial districts, and the creation of new zoning districts for sections of the Black River area. These are discussed below.

Creation of overlay districts for the Black River would have two advantages:

- They would leave the underlying Industrial zoning in place, affording maximum protection to existing conforming industrial uses.
- They would permit development of other land uses desired by the city, as specified by the overlay, under certain conditions -- one of which could include establishment of a formal development review process to ensure that development is appropriate and does not conflict with other uses in the district.

The overlay district mechanism, however, as applied under Lorain's zoning, would have very limited effectiveness. As described above, the underlying Industrial zones, which would remain in place, already permit development of almost any land use in the area by right, and a developer would in most cases be unlikely to opt for the overlay process. Also, changes to the underlying zoning would affect other Industrial districts throughout the city, where they might not be appropriate.

New Zoning Districts

The experience of numerous cities demonstrates that a combination of zoning flexibility, together with a well managed development review process within City Hall, is the most desirable approach for controlling future development.

We therefore recommend, as the most appropriate growth management mechanism for Lorain, the creation of at least two new "Waterfront Mixed Use" districts, with development

proposals above a certain size threshold being subject to a new "Development Impact Review" process.

This approach requires the preparation of highly specific dimensional and land use controls for the districts, which when adopted become the legal basis for the Development Impact Review and zoning approval process.

The advantages of this approach to zoning are:

- The unique problems and opportunities of waterfront sites can be specifically addressed.
- "By-right" and Conditional uses are specified, and are limited to those specifically allowed by the city.
- Existing industrial uses can be protected and encouraged.
- Water-related and water-dependent land uses can be protected and encouraged.
- Water-related amenities and public access and views of the water can be protected. Development densities and building heights can be specified, and adequate landscaping, etc., can be required.
- Increased public information and public review can ensure that the city's goals are achieved on each site.

The main disadvantage of this approach is that it requires careful implementation by the city, and may require an expanded planning staff and/or the use of professional review consultants. However, this is not an unreasonable requirement, when faced with complex mixed use development proposals.

In the following section, this implementation option will be described in greater detail.

5.2 Recommended Zoning Strategy

The recommended implementation strategy is to put in place three new zoning districts. The specific areas to be rezoned are unique because they are adjacent to the Black River, and have significant influence upon the river and its use. In addition, they are areas where substantial new development can be anticipated, which the present zoning is insufficient to control. The city has a responsibility to guide development in these areas, for the betterment of the Black River area and the city as a whole. The proposed zoning will not force out existing uses, but will encourage new uses of specific types, and will ensure that growth is properly evaluated and coordinated.

Recommended land uses in each proposed district, which are described in more detail below, vary according to current conditions within each district and according to each district's ability to efficiently absorb development of various types.

The rezoning process will require the city to describe the specific land uses which will be allowed and prohibited within each of the districts, as well as specific types of public improvements and amenities which are desired within each of the districts. The developer of a site can then propose the most feasible mix of uses for a particular site (from among those permitted in the area), and a package of public amenities which are satisfactory to the city and will achieve its goals for the area.

The Development Impact Review process, which is outlined below in section 5.2.D, would require that a prospective developer submit detailed preliminary information to the city describing the proposed development, and then participate in a project review process much like an environmental impact review process.

Area A Recommendations

The Waterfront Mixed Use (WMU) district in Area A, which for convenience we will refer to as "WMU-A" would apply to the land from the railroad bridge downstream to Lake Erie, between Colorado Avenue on the east and Broadway on the west.

Support for Non-Industrial Uses. In this WMU district, a variety of uses including residential, hotel, restaurant, entertainment, office, and specialty retail would be permitted, and mixed-use development would be strongly encouraged.

Uses prohibited would include manufacturing, refining, printing, trucking, wholesaling, industrial research and development, shopping centers and strip shopping development, automobile sales or service, agriculture, communications facilities, retail fuel facilities (except in marinas) and similar uses.

Controlled Density of Development. Development densities for WMU-A should be set at levels which are reasonable in light of three constraints:

- A small-scaled single family residential neighborhood exists directly across the street from WMU-A on the east side of the river.
- Vehicular access to new development on the east side of the river is currently severely constrained by the capacity of Colorado Avenue, the railroad crossing of Colorado Avenue at grade, and the existence of only two bridges across the river to the west (one of which is a lift bridge, which interrupts traffic periodically).
- The limited capacity of the Black River to accept additional recreational boating activity in the immediate vicinity of the Erie Avenue Bridge and the Lorain Pellet Terminal.

Strengthening of Residential Areas. So that development is not simply diverted by these controls to the residential area on the east side of Colorado Avenue, the City should strengthen

the residential zoning in the area (to limit the size and type of development allowed in the neighborhood) simultaneously with the enactment of WMU-A.

Area B Recommendations

The Waterfront Mixed Use district in Area B ("WMU-B") would apply from the railroad bridge upstream to the Henderson Bridge, between Colorado Avenue and Broadway. The zoning mechanism would be the same as that for Area A, but the permitted land uses would be slightly different, recognizing the existing differences in the areas. For instance, research facilities should be permitted, and perhaps "clean" light manufacturing as well.

Existing Uses Protected. The WMU district for Area B will enable viable industrial uses presently located in the area to remain, and (via the Development Impact Review process) will ensure that their viability is not compromised by incompatible development on adjacent sites.

Introduction of Non-Industrial Uses. With WMU-B in place, no industrial uses will be "pushed out" of the area, but when they choose to change to non-industrial uses, there will be a mechanism in place to ensure that the change takes place via a well planned and public process.

This evolution to non-industrial uses could take place over a period of years. If the proposed casino is approved, however, it is anticipated that development pressure would be immediate and intense throughout the city, including Area B, which is immediately adjacent to the proposed casino site.

Strengthening of Residential Areas. As with Area A, strengthened zoning on the east side of Colorado Avenue will be required in order to forestall the diversion of speculative development pressure into the neighborhood.

Area C Recommendations

Area C has been described above as an appropriate area for future industrial development in the city, and it is important that the area be available for such uses. The present Industrial zoning of the area permits these uses but, as described above, also permits development by-right of virtually all other uses.

Industrial Potential Not Assured. It is therefore entirely possible that this area could be lost as an industrial resource and instead developed as a sprawling mix of shopping centers, automobile sales and service dealerships, small scaled strip retail, trucking facilities, warehouses, bulk storage facilities, and similar uses. Several of these uses have in fact expanded or moved into the area very recently, and the area has characteristics (such as good highway access) which will be attractive to others.

The recent approval of a shopping mall development in this area may also ultimately have an impact on the downtown. Other commercial developments of this nature should be given careful review. In general, the attraction of commercial and retail development to the downtown area should be encouraged.

Establishment of New Zoning. One option for controlling development of the underutilized land in Area C would be to establish a third Waterfront Mixed Use district ("WMU-C"), in which light and heavy manufacturing uses would be encouraged, but non-manufacturing uses would be prohibited. Development projects would be subject to the Development Impact Review process.

A second option, which already exists in the Lorain Planning and Zoning Code, is the establishment of an "I-3 Industrial Park District". This type of district could accommodate the desired industrial uses while prohibiting the less desirable uses described above. It is recommended that the city consider changing the zoning of the major part of Area C to "I-3", and if that is not desirable that it be designated as "WMU-C".

Strengthening of Residential Areas. As in Areas A and B, downzoning on the east side of Colorado Avenue may be desirable to control and direct growth to Areas A and B.

5.3 Development Review Process

A cornerstone of the recommended plan is the establishment of a process to further encourage and facilitate new development by "streamlining" and simplifying the City's normal development approval procedures, while strengthening control to ensure suitable development in the Black River area. This involves the establishment of a special "Development Review" process, with a single entity designated to both oversee this review process and coordinate all other necessary city approval processes. The intention is to encourage new development which is high quality development compatible with the City's long-run plans and interests in the riverfront area.

The Development Review process should apply to all new development or substantial rehabilitation of an existing structure in Areas A, B and C which exceed a specified minimum size of development. It is recommended that the specified minimum size be set as some point in the range of 30,000-50,000 sq. ft. of building area and 1-5 acres of land area. Single family homes should also be exempted. The process represents a "streamlining" and strengthening of the city's normal development evaluation process, and as such it may also be desirable to apply a variation of it in certain other zoning districts. Many cities have done so.

Topics Covered By Review Process

For a proposed development which exceeds the threshold size, the Development Review process would require that a prospective developer submit detailed preliminary information on the proposal and then participate with the appropriate city departments and boards in a project review process much like an environmental impact assessment process. The Development Review requirements would cover eight topics:

1. Massing, design of buildings, and design of site improvements.
2. Traffic, parking, roadways and other transportation issues.
3. Utilities and other infrastructure systems.

4. Identification of public amenities and other public benefits.
5. Impacts upon the environment and mitigative measures to be taken.
6. Impacts upon shipping, navigation and other use of the Black River, and upon water dependent land uses.
7. Impacts upon existing industrial uses in the area.
8. Identification of fiscal impacts upon the community, both costs and benefits.

Scoping of Reviews

The eight topics for review, the general scope of each item, and a time limit for each step in the review process should be laid out in the zoning code text amendment which establishes the Waterfront Mixed Use Districts and the Development Review Process. The requirements for a particular development proposal, however, would be determined individually. For smaller development proposals, the review process could be quite simple, but for more complex projects a very serious and thorough analysis should be required.

Agency Participants and Roles

The Development Review process for projects in Waterfront Mixed Use districts should be coordinated by the Lorain Port Authority, with the concurrence of the City in order to recommend approval of a proposed development to the Zoning Board. Other city boards and departments (conservation, engineering, etc.) from which approvals are necessary should also be involved formally in this review process, along with relevant non-city agencies from which approvals are necessary (for instance, State agencies, US Coast Guard or the US Army Corps of Engineers), as appropriate. The Development Review process should be utilized as a means for coordinated consideration of all necessary approvals. Any inter-agency conflicts can then be resolved internally. A public hearing should be held regarding each proposal, and a time period should be established for receiving written public comment regarding a proposal.

Sequence of Steps In Process

The steps in the process should be straightforward.

1. A prospective developer of a project above the threshold size within one of the WMU districts would be required to submit a "Project Notice" containing certain basic information (to be specified in the zoning code) to the Port Authority.
2. After review of the Notice by all appropriate agencies (for which a time limit should be established) the scope of each of the 8 topics, and specific issues or questions to be addressed, would be established by the Port Authority and City.

3. The developer would then prepare and submit a Draft Project Impact Report responding to the issues raised and identifying methods for eliminating or reducing negative impacts.
4. After review and comment on the draft report, and after at least one public hearing is held, the developer would prepare and submit a Final Project Impact Report.
5. The Port Authority and the City would then jointly agree:
 - a. To recommend approval of the project to the Zoning Board, or
 - b. To recommend disapproval, or
 - c. To allow the prospective developer an opportunity to make further revisions to the project and resubmit the Draft report. The three agencies would again review the proposal and invite public comment prior to making a final recommendation to the Zoning Board.

When approved or conditionally approved by the Zoning Board, the developer could proceed, provided that other required permits and approvals had been obtained.

5.4 Initial Steps for Implement the Black River Master Plan

Implement Heritage Park

Work should begin on implementing the Heritage Park proposed for Area A. The park does not depend upon market forces in order to proceed, and will be important in increasing land values.

- a. The Port Authority should begin negotiations with LTV to acquire land in Area A for a public park, marine facilities, and related purposes .
- b. Possible funding for design and construction of the park, boat launches and other recreational facilities in Area A should be explored by the Port Authority and the city with the State, the County, the National Park Service, and other potential sources, both public and private.
- c. Further study of the park design and access issues will be needed.

Implement Waterfront Mixed Use Zones

Both the Waterfront Mixed Use zones and the Development Review Process should be implemented by the city now -- in advance of anticipated development pressures. Implementation will require adoption of an amendment to the Planning and Zoning Code.

- a. Text for a Zoning Code amendment to establish the WMUs and the Development Impact Review process should be prepared, reviewed and adopted.
- b. Development Review Process guidelines should be prepared for each of the eight topics required under the development review procedure.

Strengthen Zoning in Residential Areas

The city should downzone or otherwise strengthen the zoning in residential and other areas east of Colorado Avenue adjacent to areas A, B and C in advance of anticipated development in these areas.

Identify Interested Participants

The Port Authority and the city, in coordination with the state, should identify corporations, institutions and other groups which could participate in the development for educational, research, and R&D purposes, of some of the vacant land in Area B on the west side of the river.

Establish Wetland Status

The city should confirm as soon as possible the status of the alleged wetlands along the west bank of the river, northwest of the Henderson Bridge. The ownership of these lands should also be confirmed, since both questions are crucial to a determination of whether or not new boat launches could be constructed in the area.

Improve Colorado Avenue

The city should take all possible steps to ensure that reconstruction of Colorado Avenue through the entire study area takes place. The existing street is not sufficient to support the existing land uses, and would be completely inadequate to support higher densities and new uses in Areas A or B.

Evaluate Railroad Underpass

Preliminary cost estimates should be obtained for constructing an underpass for Colorado Avenue under the Norfolk and Western tracks on the east side of the river, similar to the one under construction on Broadway. The existing grade-level crossing will be a major impediment to substantial development in both Areas A and B.

