



THE CITY OF LORAIN

Request For Qualifications (RFQ):

Master Developer for Lorain Harbor West Bank

Issued August 29, 2025

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I. **LEGAL AD**

The City of Lorain is seeking qualifications from firms to be a Master Developer for Lorain Harbor West Bank.

A complete information packet can be obtained by contacting the City of Lorain's Law Department at (440) 204-2250 or by email at Joseph_Pritchard@cityoflorain.org.

Firms or consultants interested in being considered for a contract to provide the requested services should reply with formal qualifications no later than **October 24, 2025, at 3:00 PM**. Qualifications received after this deadline will not be considered. Submittals shall be submitted to:

Lorain City Hall
Law Department – 3rd Floor
ATTN: Joe Pritchard, Assistant Law Director / Contract Administrator
200 West Erie Avenue
Lorain, Ohio 44052

Or by E-mail:
Joseph_Pritchard@CityofLorain.org

Name: FIRM NAME: Qualifications for Master Developer for the Lorain Harbor West Bank

By order of the Director of Safety/Service

TO BE ADVERTISED: September 8 and September 16, 2025

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS:
MASTER DEVELOPER LORAIN HARBOR WEST BANK
LORAIN, OHIO

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Lorain is seeking qualifications from development teams with proven experience as master developers—capable of planning, designing, and delivering a comprehensive master redevelopment plan that includes office, retail, affordable housing, and parking within a mixed-use district. The 13.44-acre site, known as Lorain Harbor West Bank, is located along Lorain’s Black River and Lake Erie and represents a prime opportunity for transformative investment. This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is a critical first step in repositioning this strategic waterfront property as a vibrant, accessible gateway to Lorain’s Central Business District and a catalyst for continued downtown revitalization.

The City invites visionary firms that prioritize sustainable redevelopment, green space, and mixed-use development to create a distinctive, inclusive and affordable market that fosters live, work, and play opportunities. Qualified firms should emphasize innovation, technology, retail, and water-based recreation while incorporating environmentally responsible design principles in their detailed experience.

The redevelopment will complement and seamlessly connect with the Lorain Port and Finance Authority’s adjacent improvements at Black River Landing, including the permanent stage project and broader contiguous site enhancements along the Black River and Lake Erie. This project is envisioned as a vital asset in the ongoing revitalization of downtown Lorain. The City values the interest of qualified firms and/or individuals and looks forward to partnering with a team that shares its commitment to a dynamic and sustainable future.

All qualified firms interested in providing the specified services should respond with a qualifications to the City of Lorain’s Law Department (Criteria is listed on page 14). Final selection of the qualifications will be made in accordance with the policies and administrative directive of the City of Lorain and other State of Ohio Revised Code Regulations. Responses must be received by **October 24, 2025, at 3:00 PM** after which time and date they will no longer be accepted. Late responses will be returned unopened and will not be considered. The City of Lorain shall select the most qualified firm in accordance with Ohio Revised Code (ORC.) 717.02.

Responses must be *hand delivered, mailed, or e-mailed* by **October 24, 2025, at 3:00 PM** to:

Lorain City Hall
Law Department – 3rd Floor
ATTN: Joe Pritchard, Assistant Law Director / Contract Administrator
200 West Erie Avenue
Lorain, Ohio 44052

Email: Joseph_Pritchard@CityofLorain.org

III. THE SITE AND VISION

Overview

The proposed mixed-use development is envisioned as a key component of the broader revitalization of downtown Lorain and its waterfront assets. The site is strategically located adjacent to major landmarks, including Black River Landing, Black River South, Hot Waters Boat Launch, and Broadway, Lorain's historic Central Business District (CBD). Importantly, the site is situated within a Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) Area, underscoring the opportunity for equitable economic growth and community benefits. The general concept for this redevelopment, which includes the proposed mixed-use district with affordable housing components, has been approved and serves as a guiding vision for this opportunity. Strong multi-modal connections are anticipated as part of the project, including new walking paths, sidewalks, streets, and open spaces that will extend north and south through the site, enhancing connectivity with surrounding destinations and neighborhoods.



Background

In January 2022, the City of Lorain, in partnership with the Lorain Port and Finance Authority and JobsOhio, commissioned a comprehensive market study for three key waterfront properties, including the Pellet Terminal parcel, which is the subject of this RFQ.

The City of Lorain is seeking qualifications from experienced, financially capable master developers or development teams for the commercial, mixed-use redevelopment of this high-potential site located along the Black River, just north of the city's Central Business District.

Historical Use

The site has a long industrial history tied to Lorain's evolution as a port city. Initially used for importing lumber for regional construction, the site evolved into a major coal handling and storage facility under various railroad ownerships.

In 1979, the site was acquired by Republic Steel, which constructed an ore transshipment facility. This shifted the site's use from coal to taconite, offloaded from 1,000-foot lake freighters and stored onsite before being reloaded onto smaller vessels for delivery to Republic's Cleveland mill.

Site Description

The Site is uniquely positioned at the northern terminus of State Route 57 (Broadway) and sits prominently at the mouth of the Black River, extending into Lake Erie and protected by existing break walls forming Lorain Harbor.

- Total Acreage: Approx. 13.44 acres across two parcels
- Submerged Land: Approx. 7 acres leased from the State of Ohio, including the historic Finger Piers
 - Note: The Finger Piers are not structurally suited to support large-scale redevelopment, such as multi-story buildings, but are suitable for lighter commercial, recreational, or public use facilities that complement the broader mixed-use development vision. A portion of the eastern pier, however, can accommodate smaller to medium-sized single-story structures.
- Sublease Opportunity: The City holds lease rights from the State and is able and willing to sublease the submerged land to support redevelopment.
- Waterfront Access: Over 5,000 linear feet of water frontage along the Black River and Lake Erie
- Street Frontage:
 - 550 ft along East Erie Avenue (US RT 6)
 - Over 1,000 ft along North Broadway and First Street

The site is flat and offers unobstructed views of the historic Lorain Lighthouse. With minimal physical constraints, the property is highly suitable for redevelopment. A recent Letter of No Further Action and Covenant Not to Sue issued by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) confirms the site's environmental readiness.

Existing utilities and easements include:

- A utility easement to the City's Utility Department
- An easement for telecommunication infrastructure
- A sanitary sewer overflow tunnel and access shaft, which occupy a small portion of the site and are not anticipated to limit development potential.

The City of Lorain has acquired a wide range of conceptual designs that reflect the community's aspirations and support a shared vision for inclusive, forward-thinking growth. These concepts celebrate Lorain's unique identity while promoting long-term revitalization that benefits residents, visitors, and the regional economy. At the heart of this vision is the transformation of the city's waterfront into an accessible, vibrant, affordable mixed-use district that enhances quality of life and embraces the future. This effort aligns with the City's comprehensive goals to redevelop the waterfront.

Key Vision Pillars

- **Celebration of Culture and Heritage:** Honoring Lorain's rich cultural diversity, international roots, and storied history—defining characteristics of the city's identity.
- **A Thriving Waterfront:** Creating an accessible and dynamic riverfront that leverages the natural beauty of Lake Erie and the Black River as a focal point for recreation, commerce, and community gatherings.

- **Economic and Environmental Sustainability:** Driving regional prosperity through innovative, responsible development that supports a healthy environment, green infrastructure, and long-term resilience.
- **Civic Pride and Quality of Life:** Developing inclusive public spaces that instill pride in residents and offer engaging, enjoyable experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds.
- **Affordable Housing:** Promoting equitable development through the inclusion of high-quality, affordable housing options that serve a diverse range of income levels, helping to ensure long-term community stability and accessibility.

The overarching vision is already in motion. A recent market study identified strong potential for seasonal concessions and recreational businesses along the waterfront. Building on this, the City of Lorain envisions a dynamic mixed-use district that embraces innovation, supports technology-driven markets, creates new employment opportunities, and supports affordable housing opportunities.

The redevelopment plan aims to maximize the site's potential for recreation, entertainment, cultural programming, tourism, retail, hospitality, and business or conference facilities. It will also create strong synergies with Main Street Lorain's downtown revitalization efforts and aligns with the Lorain Port and Finance Authority's Stage project.



Upcoming Development: Riverwalk and Infrastructure Improvements

With construction currently underway, the City has secured grant funding to redevelop a key section of the waterfront. A major feature of this transformation is the construction of a 2,500-foot lighted riverwalk, connecting the historic Finger Piers to Black River Landing. This new pedestrian corridor will dramatically enhance access, walkability, and public engagement with the riverfront.

Additional infrastructure investments will include:

- Roadway right-of-way improvements
- New water lines
- Sanitary and storm sewer installations
- Reconstruction of the adjacent public boat launch
- State-of-the art fish cleaning station building with leasable bait show space

Together, these efforts represent a capital investment of more than \$6 million, intended to increase the site's reliability, accessibility, and visibility—unlocking its full potential for public and private redevelopment.

Future Plans: Public Park and Private Development Opportunities

Looking ahead, the City is actively planning a new 7-acre public park at the Finger Piers, envisioned as a signature destination anchoring Lorain's broader waterfront redevelopment. While the Finger Piers are not structurally suited to support large-scale redevelopment, such as multi-story buildings, a portion of the eastern pier remains well-positioned for smaller to medium-sized single-story structures. This makes them suitable for lighter commercial, recreational, or public use facilities that complement the park and align with the broader mixed-use development vision. Priority will be given to projects that:

- Enhance long-term economic development
- Preserve and expand public access
- Protect the integrity of key viewsheds

These initiatives are designed to reinforce Lorain's status as a dynamic, inclusive, and accessible waterfront city—one that honors its past while embracing the opportunities of the future. With thoughtful planning, strategic investment, and community collaboration, Lorain is poised to become a model for 21st-century urban revitalization where culture, commerce, and community flourish together.



CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLES



CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLES



Goal of the RFQ Process:

The goal of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is to identify and engage a qualified and experienced master developer or development team for the redevelopment of the Lorain Harbor West Bank site in the City of Lorain, Ohio.

Eventually, the City seeks to enter into a sale or long-term ground lease agreement with a partner that shares its vision for transforming this key waterfront property into a vibrant, mixed-use destination that:

- Enhances public access to the waterfront
- Supports economic development and job creation
- Integrates seamlessly with downtown Lorain and surrounding assets
- Preserves important viewsheds and natural features
- Contributes to the long-term sustainability and vitality of the community

This RFQ process will be used to evaluate respondents based on their qualifications, relevant experience, development approach, and financial capacity. Based on the submissions received, the City may proceed to a short-listing process or begin negotiations with a selected respondent.

IV. CONTEXT AND SITE INFORMATION

The following section outlines the facts about the property. Interested parties should separately verify all information and not solely rely on this information. All data is provided for informational purposes only.

Property Setting:

The property is located in the City of Lorain, Ohio, which had an estimated population of approximately 66,000 residents in 2022, making it the ninth largest city in the state. Within a 30-minute drive of the site, there are approximately 417,000 residents, with a median household income of nearly \$63,000. The intersection of West Erie Avenue and Broadway sees an average daily traffic volume of approximately 13,415 vehicles.

The site is situated about 35 minutes by car from downtown Cleveland and 30 minutes from Sandusky, Ohio.

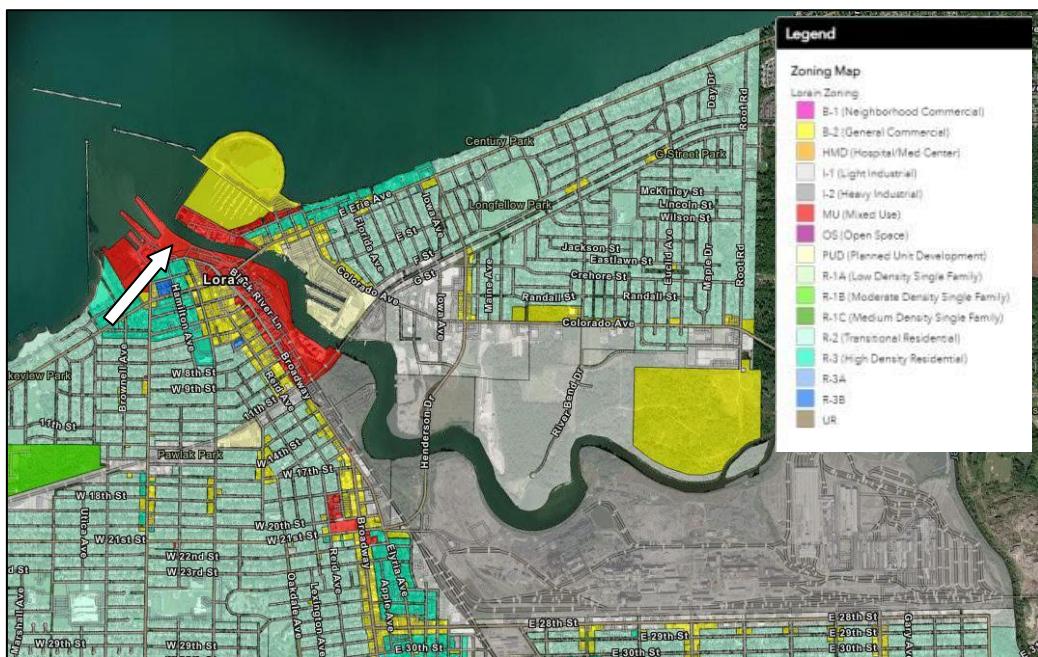
The property offers scenic views of the historic Lorain Lighthouse—listed on the National Register of Historic Places—the Charles Berry Bascule Bridge, and an active riverfront and lakefront area. This waterfront hosts over 1,000 boat slips and welcomes three to five lake freighters weekly during the shipping season. These neighboring features contribute to a vibrant maritime cultural experience that enriches the overall setting.

Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning:

The subject land area containing the Pellet Terminal is located along the Black River in Lorain, Ohio. It is situated just outside Lorain's Central Business District and established residential neighborhoods, encompassing a mix of Mixed-Use and Heavy Industrial zones.

Adjacent to the Pellet Terminal is the City of Lorain City Hall, located at 200 W. Erie Avenue, which is also available for redevelopment consideration.

The Pellet Terminal site is currently zoned MU (Mixed Use) under the updated Lorain City Planning and Zoning Code. The recent zoning revisions provide greater flexibility and opportunities for advantageous uses of the site to support the City's redevelopment goals.



Access to Transportation:

The subject area is served by two major state routes:

- SR-57 – 6 miles south for an East/West connection to I-90/I-80
- SR-611 – 7 miles east for an East/West connection to I-90
- The North/South connection to I-75 is 88 miles west via I-80/I-90 West; and the North South connection to I-71/I-77 is 25 miles east via I-80/I-480 East

There are six exits off SR 2 that run directly to the area: SR 611; SR 57; South Broadway; SR 58; Oak Point Road; and Baumhart Road. In addition, there is a limited access highway and three exits from the Ohio Turnpike: SR 57; SR 58; and Baumhart Road. Local traffic circulation to the area is served by two major collector streets, North Broadway which is the extension of SR 57 and Oberlin Avenue (both intersect West Erie Avenue or US RT 6).

Cleveland-Hopkins International Airport is roughly 26 miles to the east of the subject area. There is also major access (although not directly on the sites) to CSX and Norfolk and Southern railroads, as well as Deep Water Port access.

Utilities:

The site is currently serviced by all requisite utilities. The City will work to ensure that the site has sufficient capacity for a proposed restricted residential / mixed use redevelopment project. Specifically, known utilities include:

- Water – City Owned and Operated
- Sewer – City Owned and Operated
- Gas – Columbia Gas of Ohio
- Electric – First Energy – Ohio Edison
- Telecommunications – Lumen and Spectrum
- Internet – Lumen (DSL 7.8 mbps) and Spectrum (Cable 100 mbps)

Environmental Status:

An Ohio Department of Development Brownfield Redevelopment Grant was awarded to the City of Lorain in June 2022. This grant was awarded for a total of \$4,025,899 and includes the completion of soil remedial activities to comply with Ohio VAP residential standards for a restricted residential land use scenario, as well as infrastructure upgrades and utility improvements. Activity and use limitations exist on the Property (i.e., groundwater uses restriction, land use restriction, and a building occupancy [remedy or demonstration obligation] restriction) to comply with Ohio VAP restricted residential standards. Given that there was no development plan in place at the time the ODOD BRP grant was awarded, additional vapor intrusion sampling will need to be completed to support occupancy of any future buildings.

The City of Lorain complete full site remediation in 2023 and in 2025 received both a Letter of No Further Action and Covenant Not to Sue for the property from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. The site is cleaned to Mixed-Use VAP standard.

Prior to the initiation of remedial activities and the issuance of the 2025 NFA/CNS, several key environmental actions were undertaken.

- The City of Lorain was granted an Urban Setting Designation in 2005 for groundwater underlying the approximately 114-acre lakefront area which includes the Pellet Terminal Site. A ground water use restriction is in place on the property to prevent future potable ground water use.
- An Area Wide Assessment 2 was completed in December 2017 to identify potential areas of environmental concern within the subject land area identified for potential redevelopment. It was not intended to be a complete limited Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) in accordance with ASTM E 1527 and federal All Appropriate Inquiry, but reviews and inquiries were conducted in accordance with these requirements. The Area Wide Assessment identified high risk of potential environmental impacts due to the historical use of the site as the former Lorain Pellet Terminal ore yard and railroad, and Lorain County Electrical Co. Plant #2.

- The Lorain Port Authority engaged a consultant, and a Phase II for the study area was completed in November 2018 to supplement Phase II activities previously conducted in 2003. A soil, groundwater, and soil gas investigation were completed within a portion of the study area. Based on a review of the data collected and data associated with the historical investigation, remedial activities were recommended.
- An Ohio VAP Phase I was completed for the City of Lorain in November 2021 to evaluate potential environmental concerns under the ASTM E 1527-13 and Ohio VAP. Analytical results associated with the Phase II activities were also reviewed to determine remedial activities necessary to comply with a VAP restricted residential land use scenario to allow for flexibility in redevelopment options for a portion of the subject site (excluding the finger piers). A Remedial Action Plan (RAP) was prepared in January 2022 that presents the remedy intended to be completed to prepare a large portion of the subject property for development.

Available Financial Incentives:

The City of Lorain has a robust offering of financial incentives including but not limited to Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) tax abatement, Tax Incentive Financing (TIFs), Enterprise Zones (EZs), and New Community Authorities (NCAs). The Lorain Port and Finance Authority also has the ability under its statutory authority to issue bonds on behalf of the Respondent to finance the Respondent's project if that is desirable and beneficial to the Respondent. If bonding through the Lorain Port and Finance Authority is requested, please include this in the response. The City of Lorain and the Lorain Port and Finance Authority recognize that interested Respondents may wish to seek incentives for their Proposals and have several programs that could benefit redevelopment of the site. Each program has specific eligibility requirements and Respondents should complete their own due diligence as to availability of these and other incentives, eligibility, and potential cost savings. The City of Lorain and the Lorain Port and Finance Authority will work expeditiously with Respondents towards financing goals, if deemed necessary.

Disposition Process:

Transactions with the selected Respondent or Respondent Teams will be structured as a ground lease or sale agreement. Subject to the scale and type of the proposed residential development, the agreement could be for a portion of the Pellet Terminal site.

The negotiation process and ultimate agreements made will describe and provide the terms for the ground lease agreement under which the Successful Respondent(s) will negotiate with the City of Lorain, to develop either a portion of or the entire site. Final executions will occur following the negotiation of binding documents between the City of Lorain, for the site and the Successful Respondent(s) completion and affirmation of the submitted project plan.

After the negotiation process and conditional agreements, the City anticipates entering into a development agreement, ground lease agreement, and operating agreement with the Successful Respondent for the site.

The development agreement negotiated by the City will delineate the responsibilities of the City and Successful Respondent(s) for on-site improvements and maintenance of improvements. It is the desire of

the City to have the Successful Respondent(s) be responsible for as much of the improvements as possible without jeopardizing the economics of the deal.

V. SUBMITTAL AND EVALUATION PROCESS

The selection of a qualified master developer will be based on the following criteria:

- A. Quality of development team and its experience;
- B. Financial ability to fund development;
- C. Demonstrated success financing and developing relevant projects;
- D. Demonstrated ability working on a successful public-private development project involving new construction;
- E. Experience working with communities on highly political development projects;
- F. Vision and development Strategy;
- G. Ability to manage projects within schedule and budget; and
- H. References.

The selection committee will evaluate the submittals and proceed with either a formal RFP process or negotiations.

VI. REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS PROCEDURES

Non-binding proposals must be submitted electronically **no later than October 24, 2025, at 3:00 PM** to the following address:

Lorain City Hall
Law Department – 3rd Floor
ATTN: Joe Pritchard, Assistant Law Director / Contract Administrator
200 West Erie Avenue
Lorain, Ohio 44052

Or by E-mail:

Joseph_Pritchard@CityofLorain.org

Inquiries

Questions that arise from respondents prior to proposal submission shall be submitted to BHP. The point of contacts for this project are:

Name	Title	Email	Phone
Matt Kusznir	Director BHP	Matt_kusznir@cityoflorain.org	(440) 204-2020
Hannah Kiraly	Program Manager of Community and Economic Development	Hannah_kiraly@cityoflorain.org	(440) 204-2087

Schedule of Events:

The City of Lorain expects to undertake the selection process according to the following schedule:

Advertise Intentions	September 8 and September 16, 2025
Inquiries Due	September 26, 2025
Responses Due	October 24, 2025, at 3:00 PM
Evaluation Period:	October 27 – 31, 2025
Interviews/Presentations:	November 10 – 21, 2025
RFP/ Negotiations:	TBD
Selection and Agreement:	TBD

Right to Reject and Modify:

The City of Lorain reserves the right to accept any qualifications, reject any or all submittals, and waive any irregularities or informalities when to do so is in the best interest of the City.

A submittal that is in the possession of the City may be altered by letter bearing the signature of the person authorized for offering, providing it is received prior to the date and time of opening. Submittals which are incomplete, not properly endorsed, do not follow the requested format, or otherwise are contrary to the guidelines of the RFQ may be rejected as non-responsive at the City of Lorain's discretion. The City of Lorain reserves the right to request clarification from any or all respondents submitting qualifications. The City of Lorain may select a qualified respondent even if a sole proposer responds.

Disposition of Submittals:

All submittals become the property of the City of Lorain and will be returned only at the City of Lorain's option and at the expense of the requesting respondent. One copy of each submittal will be retained for the City's official files.

Withdrawal of Qualifications:

Qualifications and all conditions therein shall remain in effect for a minimum of sixty (60) days from the submission date. Any submittal may be withdrawn or modified by written request of the respondent, provided that the City receives such a request before the deadline for submissions and at the address specified in "Right to Reject and Modify".

Next Steps:

1. RFQ Release:

- a. The City of Lorain will publicly release the RFQ to solicit interest from qualified master developers. The RFQ will be distributed through appropriate channels and posted on the City's website.

2. Pre-Submission Inquiries (Optional):

- a. Interested parties may submit written questions or requests for clarification by the specified deadline. Responses will be shared with all known respondents to ensure a transparent process.

3. Submission Deadline:

- a. All RFQ responses must be submitted by the stated due date and time. Late submissions will not be accepted.

4. Review and Evaluation:

- a. A selection committee comprised of City representatives and partners will evaluate all submissions based on:
 - i. Relevant experience and qualifications as a master developer: Financial capacity and development track record
 - ii. Vision alignment with the City's goals and guiding plans
 - iii. Responsiveness to RFQ requirements

5. Shortlisting:

- a. Based on the evaluation, the City may select a shortlist of qualified development teams for further engagement. Shortlisted teams may be asked to:
 - i. Participate in interviews or presentations
 - ii. Submit additional information or refined qualifications
 - iii. Collaborate on preliminary concept development

6. Request for Proposals (RFP) or Negotiation Phase:

- a. At its discretion, the City may proceed in one of two ways:
 - i. Issue a formal RFP to shortlisted teams requesting detailed proposals, including project concepts, financial models, and timelines; or
 - ii. Enter into exclusive negotiations with one or more teams to advance toward a development agreement.

7. Developer Selection and Agreement:

Following the RFP or negotiation phase, the City may select a development partner and enter into an Exclusive Negotiation Agreement (ENA), Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA), or Ground Lease, depending on the structure of the deal.

Available Reports:

- Three Site Market Study
- City of Lorain Comprehensive Plan
- Environmental Reports
- Balancing Broadway Plan
- Historic District
- Comprehensive Housing Study
- NFA
- CNS