



Today. Tomorrow. Together.

An aerial photograph of Lucas County, Ohio, showing a dense urban area with various buildings, a large body of water (Lake Erie), and a prominent blue suspension bridge in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

# 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

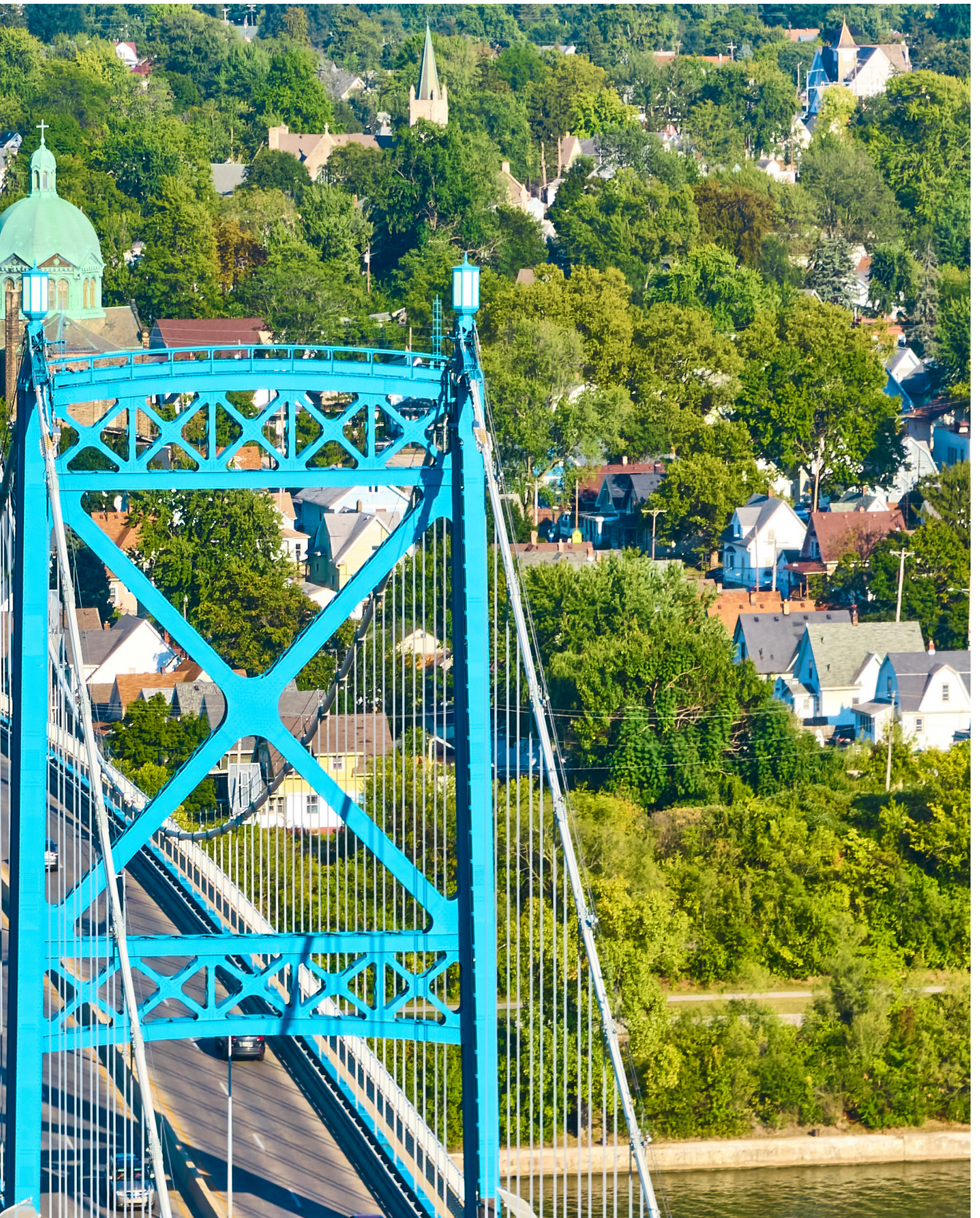
2025 - 2030

[www.co.lucas.oh.us](http://www.co.lucas.oh.us)













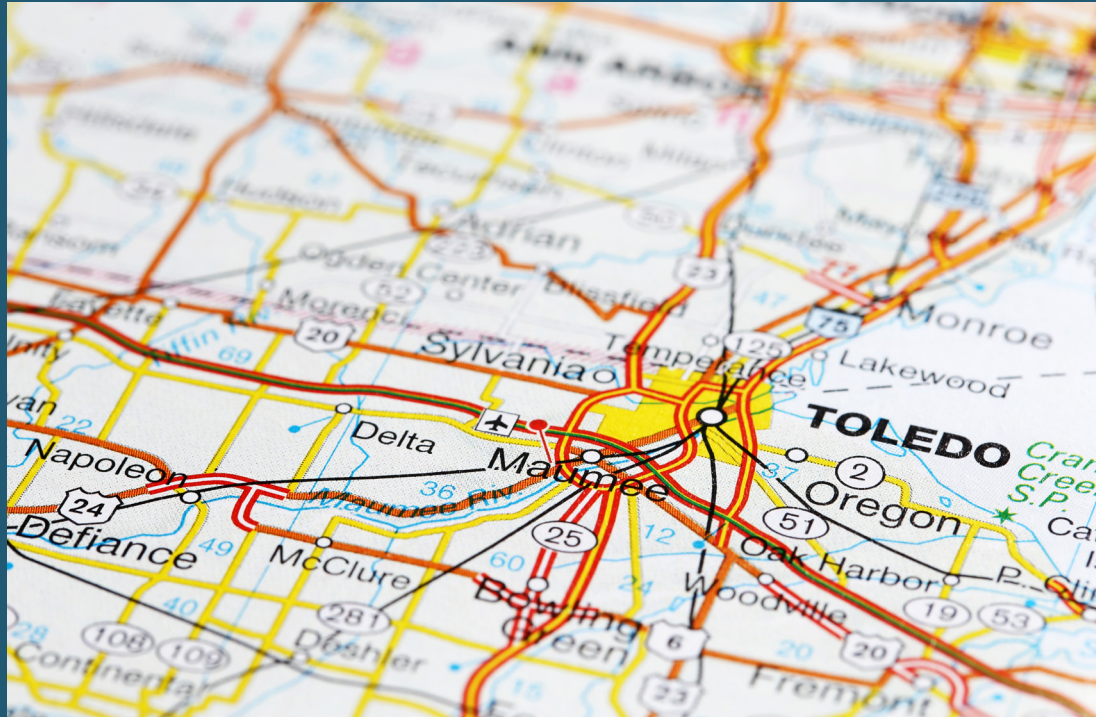


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# ABOUT LUCAS COUNTY



Lucas County is located in Northwest Ohio along the scenic shores of Lake Erie. It was founded in 1835 and named after Robert Lucas, the 12th governor of Ohio.

Home to more than 420,000 residents, the County serves as a dynamic hub for commerce, education, health care, and culture in the Great Lakes region.

Lucas County's economy is rooted in the automotive, glass, and manufacturing industries. While those sectors remain key economic drivers, the County's economy has become increasingly diversified, particularly in the areas of solar and

alternative energy, transportation, logistics, and medical services.

Building on this momentum, Lucas County is positioning itself as the next hub for innovative entrepreneurship, technology, and digital infrastructure, leveraging its strategic location, workforce talent, and growing tech ecosystem to attract new investment and business growth.

The region's flourishing tourism industry brings about 15.9 million visitors to Lucas County each year, driving \$1.8 billion in annual spending. The County



also boasts many amenities such as Metroparks, trails, and waterfront recreation in addition to the world-class Toledo Zoo & Aquarium, Toledo Museum of Art, Imagination Station, and the Toledo Lucas County Public Library system.

The Board of Lucas County Commissioners is the budget appropriating authority for county government, holds titles to all County property, serves as the sole taxing authority for the County, and controls County purchasing. The Board consists of three Commissioners of equal rank who are each elected to 4-year staggered terms.

There are more than a dozen departments under the Board of Lucas County Commissioners that provide a wide range of essential public services, including public works, workforce and economic development, health and human services, and public safety.

Responsibility for County government is shared with the Ohio General Assembly, which has legislative power, and the County courts, which have judicial power. Eight other elected officials, in addition to the Board of Commissioners, have administrative power in County government. Those elected offices are: Auditor, Clerk of Courts, Coroner, Engineer, Prosecutor, Recorder, Sheriff, and Treasurer.

The Commissioners continue to be involved in the National Association of Counties and the County Commissioners Association of Ohio, holding leadership roles in both.



## 5 CITIES

Toledo (County seat) - Sylvania  
Oregon - Waterville - Maumee



## 17 VILLAGES AND TOWNSHIPS

### Villages:

Berkey  
Harbor View  
Holland  
Ottawa Hills  
Swanton  
Whitehouse

### Townships:

Harding  
Jerusalem  
Monclova  
Providence  
Richfield  
Spencer

Springfield  
Swanton  
Sylvania  
Washington  
Waterville





# MESSAGE FROM COMMISSIONERS

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We are pleased to present the inaugural strategic plan for the Board of Lucas County Commissioners.

This plan will guide our decision-making with a unified purpose and help us better serve the residents of Lucas County.

We want to extend our sincere gratitude to all who helped us develop this plan by participating in our public survey and focus groups. And we want to thank our internal team who brought this plan to life.

We've identified six operational goals. These are things we know we need to do to consistently deliver quality services at a high level.

It is the Board's commitment to you that we will enhance service delivery and accessibility, modernize and optimize County operations and processes, engage communities through collaboration, establish Lucas County as a premier employer, responsibly manage and maintain county finances, and strengthen board governance and procedural efficiency.

We've also identified six advocacy areas. These are priorities the Board recognizes are critical to advance in order to maintain a healthy, prosperous community.

We view this plan as a living document that will grow and evolve with us. We will use this plan to help guide our initiatives of the future.

We are ready to dig in and do the work. Lucas County's future is bright.

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**LISA A. SOBECKI**



**PETE GERKEN**



**ANITA LOPEZ**





## LISA A. SOBECKI

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Lisa is a dedicated public servant and U.S. Navy veteran, who broke barriers as the first female fire safety instructor and served at Guantanamo Bay and Charleston. She served eight years on the Toledo Public Schools Board, including as president, overseeing the construction of 44 schools and the implementation of a strategic plan, all while maintaining a balanced budget. Elected to the Ohio House in 2018, she championed workforce development, education reform, and fair school funding, while serving on several key legislative committees. Lisa also brings experience from her work at Lucas County Job & Family Services and leadership in AFSCME Local 544-01.

## PETE GERKEN

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Pete's commitment to public service and social justice began early, influenced by his mother and shaped through activism during college. After beginning his career on the Jeep assembly line in 1976, he rose through the ranks of UAW Local 12, eventually retiring as Administrator of the National Training Center. His political career started with his 1996 appointment to Toledo City Council, where he championed progressive policies. Elected Lucas County Commissioner in 2005, Pete has been re-elected multiple times. He plays key roles in statewide and local organizations focused on water quality, economic development, and social services.



## ANITA LOPEZ

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Anita Lopez, Esq., is a licensed attorney in the State of Ohio and a graduate of Central Catholic High School, the University of Toledo, and the University of Toledo College of Law. She began her legal career at the Toledo Fair Housing Center and later served as Director of Purchasing, Contract Compliance, and Affirmative Action for the City of Toledo. In 2004, she was elected Lucas County Recorder, and in 2006, she was elected Lucas County Auditor. She was sworn in as a Commissioner on January 8, 2024. She is the first woman elected as Lucas County Auditor and the first Latina elected to the Board of Lucas County Commissioners.



# HOW WE GOT HERE

The Board of Lucas County Commissioners strategic plan would not have been possible without input from the public and from Lucas County employees. Insights from those who live, work, study, and play in our community are incorporated throughout this plan.



248

STAFF SURVEY  
RESPONSES

434

COMMUNITY  
SURVEY  
RESPONSES



52

INTERVIEWS

16

FOCUS  
GROUPS



5

ADVISORY TEAM  
MEETINGS WITH  
DEPARTMENT-LEVEL  
LUCAS COUNTY  
LEADERSHIP

A TOTAL OF 755 POINTS OF  
FEEDBACK COLLECTED





# Strategic Plan Roadmap









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# Mission

Creating a stronger Lucas County by building vibrant communities through public service, innovation, and collaboration.

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# Vision

A County that offers exceptional quality of life and economic opportunity where everyone is proud to live, work, and play.

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# Values

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## Impact

Empowering our employees to make a positive difference in the community.

## Collaboration

Fostering partnerships to create a more efficient and effective government.

## Belonging

Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

## Resilience

Willingness to adapt in order to meet challenges.



# OPERATIONAL GOALS

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These are the day-to-day work areas identified throughout our strategic planning process that will help improve the operations of the Board of Lucas County Commissioners over the next five years.





## **1. ENHANCE SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCESSIBILITY**

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Enrich the quality of life for all County residents by providing exceptional services.



## **2. MODERNIZE AND OPTIMIZE COUNTY OPERATIONS AND PROCESSES**

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Embrace innovation to create a more responsive and efficient government.



## **3. ENGAGE COMMUNITIES THROUGH COLLABORATION**

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Build collaborative relationships to ensure representation and public participation throughout Lucas County.



## **4. ESTABLISH LUCAS COUNTY AS A PREMIER EMPLOYER**

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Cultivate a dynamic workplace that attracts, retains, and empowers employees through training and purpose-driven leadership.



## **5. RESPONSIBLY MANAGE AND MAINTAIN COUNTY FINANCES**

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Champion responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars to promote long-term fiscal health.



## **6. STRENGTHEN BOARD GOVERNANCE AND PROCEDURAL EFFICIENCY**

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Foster effective governance through strategic planning, clear roles, streamlined operations, and open communication with County departments and the public.



# GOAL 1: ENHANCE SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Enrich the quality of life for all County residents by providing exceptional services

1.1

Deliver high-quality services as mandated by the Ohio Revised Code.

1.2

Ensure County services are accessible.

1.3

Improve communication to increase awareness of services.





Lucas County Job & Family Services Community Outreach Liaison Michael Pidosny discusses available public services with a resident.





A rendering of Lucas County Canine Care & Control's care center expected to open in 2025.



# GOAL 2: MODERNIZE AND OPTIMIZE COUNTY OPERATIONS AND PROCESSES

Embrace innovation to create a more responsive and  
efficient government

- 2.1 Elevate stakeholder experiences through the strategic deployment of technology.
- 2.2 Continuously evaluate and improve processes.
- 2.3 Maintain safe and reliable County buildings and infrastructure.

# GOAL 3: ENGAGE COMMUNITIES THROUGH COLLABORATION

Build collaborative relationships to ensure representation and public participation throughout Lucas County

**3.1** Strengthen partnerships to advance regional priorities.

**3.2** Proactively manage public funding processes to align with County operational goals and advocacy areas.

**3.3** Encourage public involvement in local government.





Lucas County Commissioners and community partners cut the ribbon at a second Toledo Urban Federal Credit Union location.





Members of Lucas County's Department of Job and Family Services pose for a photo.



# GOAL 4: ESTABLISH LUCAS COUNTY AS A PREMIER EMPLOYER

Cultivate a dynamic workplace that attracts, retains, and empowers employees through training and purpose-driven leadership

4.1 Attract candidates of all perspectives and experience levels.

4.2 Offer competitive, and equitable compensation, benefits, and wellness packages.

4.3 Empower staff through training and professional development opportunities to foster an inclusive and purpose-driven culture.

# GOAL 5: RESPONSIBLY MANAGE AND MAINTAIN COUNTY FINANCES

Champion responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars to promote long-term fiscal health

5.1

Uphold strong fiscal management practices.

5.2

Pursue cost-saving strategies and shared service models across departments and offices.

5.3

Leverage funding opportunities to grow and sustain programming, services, and infrastructure.





Lucas County's Office of Management & Budget has received numerous awards budget presentation.



The Board of Lucas County Commissioners seal inside One Government Center in Toledo, Ohio.



## GOAL 6: STRENGTHEN BOARD GOVERNANCE AND PROCEDURAL EFFICIENCY

Foster effective governance through strategic planning, clear roles, streamlined operations, and open communication with County departments and the public

6.1

Proactively review and update the Board's strategic plan in response to evolving needs and priorities.

6.2

Strengthen communication between the Board, County departments, and the public to align strategy and support clear, informed policies.

6.3

Clarify and regularly review roles of the Board, its members, and County administration, and streamline meetings and workflows to support timely decisions.

# ADVOCACY AREAS



These are key priorities that the Board actively promotes and invests in through funding, policy support, and cross-government collaboration. These represent the Board's stance on critical issues requiring action beyond internal operations — often at local, state, or national levels to drive systemic change aligned with community values.





## **ENHANCE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

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We believe in expanding access to high-quality education and training that prepares residents of all backgrounds for career success.



## **EXPAND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND PROMOTE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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We believe in stable, affordable housing and vibrant neighborhoods as foundations of well-being and opportunity.



## **PRIORITIZE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

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We believe in driving investments in community infrastructure and programming to support economic growth and improve quality of life.



## **STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SAFETY, RESILIENCE, AND WELL-BEING**

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We believe in creating and maintaining safe, welcoming spaces for all residents by enhancing access to health resources, crisis prevention services, and inclusive public infrastructure.



## **CHAMPION SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

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We believe in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable practices to ensure a healthy future.



## **ELEVATE CULTURAL AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REGION**

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We believe in providing all residents, businesses, and visitors with quality arts, sports, recreation, and cultural opportunities.

# EDUCATION

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Enhance  
education and  
workforce  
development



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We believe in expanding access to high-quality education and training that prepares residents of all backgrounds for career success

- ▶ Promote lifelong learning, including early childhood, K-12, adult education, and training.
  - ▶ Partner with educational institutions and employers to bridge skill gaps and foster upward mobility.
  - ▶ Work collaboratively with partners to identify potential workforce shortages, develop targeted training programs for Lucas County residents, and attract qualified talent to meet local employment needs.
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# HOUSING

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Expand access to  
affordable housing and  
promote  
community  
development



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We believe in stable, affordable housing and  
vibrant neighborhoods as foundations of  
well-being and opportunity

- ◀ Advocate for expanded state and federal funding to support affordable housing initiatives.
  - ◀ Support strong housing and community development through Board leadership and appointments to key housing and community development organizations.
  - ◀ Champion expanding access to affordable housing through public-private partnerships, targeted incentives, strategic land use planning, and the renovation and repurposing of underutilized or blighted properties.
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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Prioritize economic  
development and  
community  
infrastructure



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We believe in driving investments in  
community infrastructure and programming to  
support economic growth and improve  
quality of life

- ◀ Support business growth, attract new investment, and build a strong start-up ecosystem by connecting companies with resources, ready-to-use sites, and workforce partnerships.
  - ◀ Spearhead the effort to streamline and improve local regulations and permitting processes to encourage new development and allow businesses to operate more smoothly.
  - ◀ Support investments in transportation infrastructure to improve connectivity and accessibility.
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# SAFETY



Strengthen  
community safety,  
resilience, and  
well-being



We believe in creating and maintaining safe, welcoming spaces for all residents by enhancing access to health resources, crisis prevention services, and inclusive public infrastructure

- ▶ Foster strong partnerships with agencies that serve aging populations, helping them as they meet growing demands as they promote healthy, fulfilling lives for older adults.
- ▶ Advocate for expanded access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment services for those in need.
- ▶ Work collaboratively with criminal justice partners to advance shared public safety priorities and community well-being.

# SUSTAINABILITY

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Champion  
sustainable land use  
and environmental  
stewardship



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We believe in protecting the environment and  
promoting sustainable practices to  
ensure a healthy future

- ▶ Advocate for clean water and healthy ecosystems by collaborating with regional partners to improve Lake Erie water quality and watershed health and support efforts to hold polluters accountable.
  - ▶ Support environmental education and public engagement through participation in coalitions who deliver vital outreach on efforts to shape a more sustainable and equitable future.
  - ▶ Commit to advancing internal sustainability efforts that will lay the foundation for more efficient use of resources and provide for long-term cost savings across County operations.
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# RECREATION

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Elevate cultural  
and recreation  
opportunities in  
the region



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We believe in providing all residents  
and visitors with quality arts, sports,  
recreation, and cultural opportunities

- ▶ Partner with organizations that promote equitable access to parks and natural areas, ensuring all residents and visitors can benefit from outdoor recreation and wellness opportunities.
  - ▶ Promote community-driven initiatives that celebrate cultural excellence, enrich community life, and strengthen social connections.
  - ▶ Champion a dynamic and inclusive arts community that supports diverse artistic expression.
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# OUR PATH FORWARD



This strategic plan lays out clearly defined goals and objectives to guide the Board of Lucas County Commissioners' governance and day-to-day operations now and into the future.

With these operational goals and advocacy areas in mind, our departments will develop metrics to measure our progress.

Members of the public will be able to track our accomplishments online and department leaders will provide status updates at Board of Lucas County Commissioners meetings, which are open to the public.

We look forward to continuing this important work for the residents of Lucas County.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Board of Lucas County Commissioners extends sincere appreciation to the many individuals and organizations whose time, insights, and dedication helped shape this strategic plan.

This plan reflects the collective input and collaboration of our elected officials, County employees, and community stakeholders — gathered through numerous meetings, interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

Special thanks to the Experience Management Institute and our administrative core team for their leadership and commitment in guiding this process to completion.

We are also grateful to the representatives of various community agencies who generously shared their perspectives on the priorities and challenges facing Lucas County. Your contributions were vital in grounding this plan in the realities and aspirations of our community.

To our department directors, thank you for your ongoing leadership and unwavering commitment to the safety, well-being, and service of our residents, businesses, and visitors.

Alongside the strategic plan advisory team, your expertise and input were instrumental in crafting a plan that will support a strong and vibrant future for Lucas County.

To the dedicated County staff who work tirelessly each day to keep operations running smoothly and deliver essential services — your efforts are the backbone of this County.

Your passion for public service ensures Lucas County remains a place where people are proud to live, work, and thrive.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to the residents of Lucas County for your active participation in public surveys and community events. Your voices are central to this plan. You are — and will continue to be — our top priority. Your continued engagement is vital to the success of this strategic plan and to the future of our County.











