

DECEMBER 18, 2017

The Board of Commissioners of Lorain County, Ohio met this day in a regular meeting, at The Lorain County Transportation Community Center, 40 East Avenue, Elyria, Ohio at 12:00 p.m. with the following members present: Commissioner Lori Kokoski, President, Commissioner Ted Kalo, Vice-President and Commissioner Matt Lundy, Member and Theresa L. Upton, Clerk.

## JOURNAL ENTRY

Commissioners said the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following business was transacted

A.

**Public Hearing**

12:00 PM (NOON) - Lorain County Transit Redevelopment Plan - Timothy Rosenberger with WSP USA

Commissioner Lundy said clearly transit is a jobs issue, issue of great concern, obviously this board has reached out the community on several occasions for support unfortunately those efforts have not been successful not due to a lack of trying. We received a grant from NOACA for a planning grant to take a look at transit in the county and look at recommendations and determinations to see the most efficient and most effective within the current budget and gander support to grow the transit program in the county, moving forward. WSP was selected for the planning grant.

Mr. Rosenberger said the study the routes, rode the busses and recommends the following;

**Project Objective:**

Develop a business case for Lorain County Transit (LCT) to meet the needs of existing and future riders, maximize efficiency of agency and county resources, and aid in the economic and social success of Lorain County.

## ▪ Project Goals:

- ~ Design an efficient and effective transit system that meets the needs of the community within the agency's financial limits.
- ~ Provide greater access to transit for Lorain County residents, including better service and more destinations.
- ~ Identify transit service links to underserved communities and destinations throughout the county and region.
- ~ Provide transit service that enhances the livability of the Lorain County region.

**Transit Market Analysis**

- Demographic analysis
- Existing LCT ridership and service
- Inter-county transit demand
- Peer comparison

**Demographic Analysis**

- Unemployed, low-income, and transit dependent households are concentrated in Lorain and Elyria.
- Greatest population and employment growth is in Avon, Avon Lake, and North Ridgeville.
- Senior population is "aging in place" throughout the county, which will increase future demand for disabled-accessible service in low density areas that are difficult to serve.

**Existing LCT Riders**

- Existing LCT riders are mostly lower income residents traveling for educational, employment, or shopping purposes.
- Most are compelled to use transit by low incomes, lack of a vehicle, or inability to drive.

**Existing LCT Service**

- LCT currently operates four routes using two buses:
- Routes 1 and 2 serve Lorain
- Routes 51 and 52 serve Elyria
- Buses meet each hour at Life Skills High School to transfer passengers.
- Each route operates every two hours from 5:30am to 5:30pm.
- Lorain routes are bi-directional, but Elyria routes are operated as one-way loops.

Several important concentrations of jobs, medical facilities, and shopping centers are not served by the existing LCT system, including:

- Walmart Supercenter in Lorain
- Mercy Health Medical Center in Lorain
- Cleveland Clinic Health Center in Avon
- Avon Commons area

LCT ridership is low and continues to fall – about 120 passengers per day.

- Route productively is relatively low – about 5 trips per hour.
- Infrequent service and lack of night and weekend service pose a challenge to users, particularly students and workers

LCT has the smallest budget and lowest ridership of its peers.

- Several important concentrations of jobs, medical facilities, and shopping are in areas outside the existing LCT service area.
- Service is too infrequent, ends too early, and covers too little of the county. As a result, the service is used only by people who are transit-dependent.

- Infrequent service is probably driving more people to use higher cost dial-a-ride service.

**Inter-County Transit Demand**

- A large and growing number of middle-income Lorain County residents work in Cuyahoga County; however, only about 11% of these work in downtown Cleveland.
- Of these, about 10 percent already use Greater Cleveland RTA park -and-ride buses for their commute trip. More than half of users at the Westlake park-and-ride and one third of users at North Olmsted are Lorain County residents.
- Potential markets exist for service to Crocker Bassett, Cleveland Clinic/University Circle, and Independence-Rockside Road areas.

**Preliminary Recommendations**

- Reduced passenger fare
- Fixed-route service changes
- Cost neutral
- Short term expansion
- Longer term expansion
- Dial-a-ride considerations
- Evening and weekend service options
- Other recommendations

## Passenger Fare

- Prior to December 1<sup>st</sup> fare reduction, LCT had the highest fare of its peers, and possibly the highest fare for any local fixed-route service in the US.
- In response to this finding, Lorain County Commissioners elected to reduce the full fare from \$4.10 to \$2.00. Other passes and fare types were also reduced.

	Full Fare		Senior/Disabled		Student	
	Previous	New	Previous	New	Previous	New
Single Ride	\$4.10	\$2.00	\$2.05	\$1.00	\$1.80	\$1.00
Day Pass	\$6.75	\$4.50	NA	\$2.25	NA	\$2.25
10-Ride	\$36.90	\$18.00	\$18.45	\$9.00	\$18.00	\$9.00
Monthly Pass	\$164.00	\$72.00	\$82.00	\$36.00	NA	\$36.00
Dial-a-Ride	\$9.25	\$9.00	\$4.60	\$4.50	NA	\$4.50

## Fixed Route Service Changes

<b>Cost Neutral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes that can be made within the existing LCT budget</li> <li>• Includes minor adjustments (e.g. eliminating a deviation) and major changes (e.g. operating a route bi-directionally)</li> </ul>
<b>Short Term Expansion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes that require limited increase in LCT budget</li> <li>• Increase the frequency of service for existing routes</li> <li>• Lengthen the service day for existing routes</li> </ul>
<b>Longer Term Expansion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes that require larger increase in LCT budget</li> <li>• New routes within Lorain County to connect to new destinations</li> <li>• Commuter service to downtown Cleveland</li> </ul>

### Cost Neutral Service Changes

- Minor route refinements:
  - Make routes more direct, avoid deviations from main roads
  - Connect to more destinations likely to be of interest to transit users
  - Avoid hazardous left turns and other traffic problems
- Major route changes:
  - Operate more of the route on the same street in both directions
- Both minor and major changes can be made within the existing budget, without increasing operating hours, the number of vehicles required to operate the service, or dial-a-ride trips and costs.

#### Route 1 - Minor Route Refinements

- Slight changes to avoid unsignalized left turns and eliminate deviations
- Turn right from Washington at West 6th Street to avoid uncontrolled left at 5th/Washington
- Serve the following destinations from the street (supported by crosswalk improvements at major intersections along North Ridge Road):
  - Mental Health Board (Gathering/Hope House)
  - Marc's/Apples Plaza
  - Job and Family Services

#### Route 2 - Minor Route Refinements

- No major changes to route
- Operate loop in downtown Lorain clockwise, turning at West 6th Street, to avoid potentially hazardous left at West 5th Street
- Traffic lights should be considered at intersections of East 30th & Fulton, Pearl to improve safety of left turning movements

#### Route 51 – Minor Refinements and Major Changes

- Minor route refinements to reduce travel time and avoid potentially hazardous movements in the shorter term:
  - Eliminate segments on Foster, Lorain Boulevard to save time, avoid crossing traffic at Furnace
  - At Hoag Drive and Waterford, operate in and out to Abbe Road on all trips
- Major route changes for the longer term:
  - Operate redesigned route in both directions on same streets, with a small loop at south end
  - Streamline service on Abbe Road to serve LCCC in both directions
  - Serve both Cleveland and Broad Street corridors in addition to downtown Elyria and UH Elyria
  - Suspend “by-request” route deviations to make route faster and more direct

#### Route 52 - Minor Refinements and Major Changes

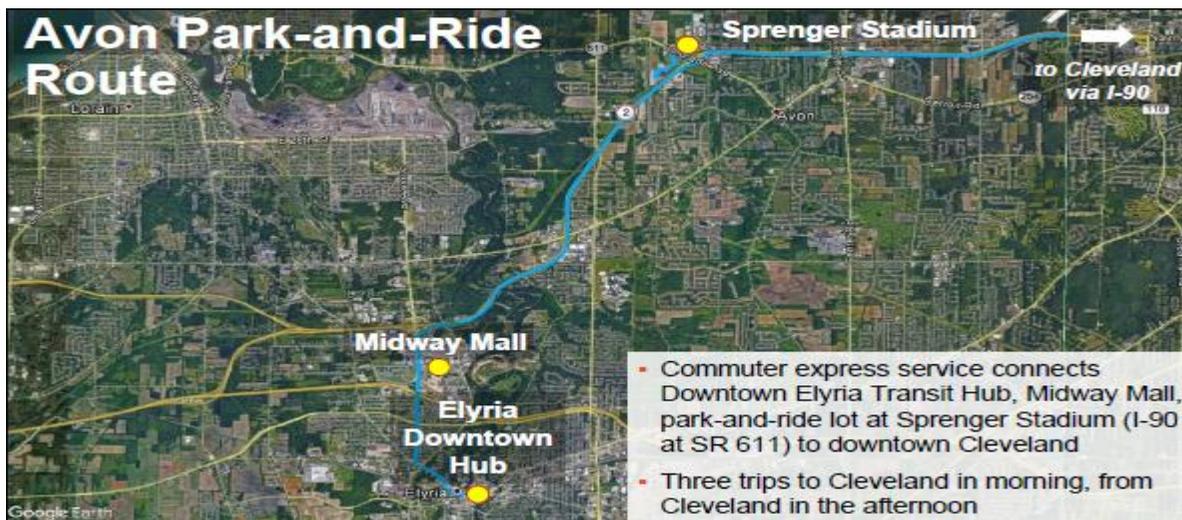
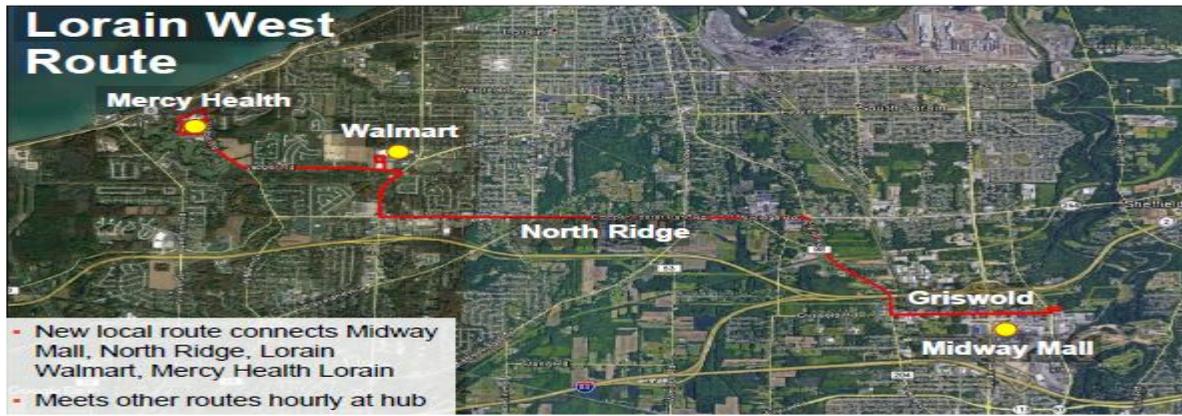
- Minor route refinements:
  - Extend all trips to serve Walmart and shopping center on Chestnut Ridge
  - Operate on SR 57 between Chestnut Ridge and Cleveland Street to reduce travel time
  - Operate on perimeter road within Midway Mall to reduce travel time and interactions with pedestrians
  - Eliminate “by request” route deviations to make route faster, more direct
- Major route changes:
  - Convert route to operate in both directions on same streets
  - Streamline service on West River Road to reduce deviations
  - Serve Midway Mall/Market Square on outbound trips only

### Short Term Expansion

- Two recommendations for short term expansion:
  - Operate each of the four existing fixed routes hourly from 5:30am to 6:30pm
  - Extend hourly evening service to 10:30pm
- Together these changes would increase LCT's budget by about \$1 million per year
- Half of these costs (less than \$500,000) would be funded locally, the remainder by Federal grants.
- Would require two additional vehicles.

### Longer Term Expansion

- Individual improvements that could be implemented independently over time.
- Improvements build on the proposed short term expansion and assume those improvements are already in place.
- Includes new and extended local routes and the addition of commuter service to Cuyahoga County.



### Longer Term Expansion

- Each of the new local routes would increase the budget by about \$350k per year and would require an additional bus.
- Each of the commuter routes would increase the budget by about \$370k per year and would require two additional buses.
- Commuter service could require capital investments for park-and-ride lots and amenities.
- Together all of the longer term expansion recommendations would increase the budget by approximately \$1.7 million and would require seven additional vehicles.
- Half of these costs (about \$900,000) would be funded locally, the remainder by Federal grants.

### Dial-a-Ride Considerations

▪ Adding service hours or expanding LCT's service area will increase dial-a-ride demand and costs. All cost estimates include potential increases in dial-a-ride costs.

▪ Changes proposed to be made within existing budget would have little impact on dial-a-ride costs.

In the short term, increasing the frequency of existing routes would not increase dial-a-ride costs.

▪ Extending service to 10:30p m would increase dial-a-ride costs.

In the longer term, new local routes will generate significant increases in dial-a-ride costs

▪ Commuter services do not trigger ADA paratransit requirements and would not increase dial-a-ride costs.

### Evening and Weekend Service Options

▪ A small number of transit customers need evening, overnight, and weekend service.

▪ However, this service is expensive and often carries very few riders, even at larger transit agencies.

The estimated cost of extending hourly service to 10:30pm for only the existing routes is about \$370k.

▪ This cost could be reduced by ending service earlier (at 8:30 or 9:30pm), or operating evening routes every two hours.

▪ Possible alternatives include subsidized taxi or Uber/Lyft service, or non-profit participation.

▪ Daytime service should be improved before evening/weekend solutions are considered.

## Other Recommendations



### Vehicle Recommendations

- Equip future LCT buses with:
  - Bike racks to allow customers to use bikes to complete their trips.
  - Registering fareboxes, record payment by type (cash vs. pass), and passenger counts; allow for future deployment of electronic fare collection by phone.
  - Automatic passenger counter and vehicle location systems, which provide data for both planning and management.
- In the longer term, transition to larger, diesel-powered buses for some fixed-route service to reduce maintenance costs.
- Longer-distance commuter routes should use buses outfitted for longer and higher speed trips, for improved passenger comfort and safety.

### Signage and Amenities Recommendations

- Establish policies for locations of bus stops, shelters, and amenities.
- Place shelters at higher ridership locations, including Life Skills hub.
- Establish bus stop sign program to identify safe and convenient bus stop sites, replace missing signs, remove misplaced signs, and update stop database.
- Consider relocating hub location within Midway Mall area.
- Work with cities to install or improve crosswalks, sidewalks, and pedestrian paths to provide safe access to stops for LCT customers

### Organizational Recommendations

- Establish and periodically update service and performance standards to help in manage the system and plan improvements.
- After fixed-route service is improved, make dial-a-ride qualifications more stringent to encourage customers to use fixed-route service.
- Conduct passenger counts annually until automatic counting systems are in place.
- Conduct passenger surveys periodically to provide customer input to route planning and service refinements.
- Student/staff pass program with LCCC would dramatically increase transit use.

### Staffing Recommendations

- LCT needs at least one more paid staff member
- Establish and manage bus stop sign and shelter programs
- Establish service standards and performance management system
- Establish and manage disability certification for dial-a-ride service
- Provide travel-training to encourage disabled customers to use fixed-route system
- Implement new technology programs (passenger counters, electronic fare payment)
- Work with cities to improve crosswalks and pedestrian environment
- Coordinate with local, regional and state transportation and planning agencies
- Perform ongoing planning and organizational development tasks

# Cost Summary

Improvement	Annual Operating Cost and Vehicle Requirements					Increase in Maximum Vehicle Requirement
	Fixed-Route	Dial-a-Ride	Total	Federal Share	Local Share	
<b>Changes Within Existing Budget</b>						
Changes to existing routes	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Short Term Expansion</b>						
One hour headway all routes	\$620,000	-	\$620,000	\$310,000	\$310,000	2
Extend service to 10:30 PM	\$310,000	\$34,000	\$344,000	\$172,000	\$172,000	-
<b>Total Short Term Expansion</b>	<b>\$930,000</b>	<b>\$34,000</b>	<b>\$964,000</b>	<b>\$482,000</b>	<b>\$482,000</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Longer Term Expansion</b>						
Lorain West	\$310,000	\$42,000	\$352,000	\$176,000	\$176,000	1
Avon Connector	\$310,000	\$42,000	\$352,000	\$176,000	\$176,000	1
Elyria Central	\$310,000	\$42,000	\$352,000	\$176,000	\$176,000	1
Subtotal-Local Service	\$930,000	\$128,000	\$1,058,000	\$529,000	\$529,000	3
Avon Park-and-Ride	\$370,000	-	\$370,000	\$185,000	\$185,000	2
North Ridgeville Park-and-Ride	\$370,000	-	\$370,000	\$185,000	\$185,000	2
Subtotal-Park-and-Ride Service	\$740,000	-	\$740,000	\$370,000	\$370,000	4
<b>Total Longer Term Expansion</b>	<b>\$1,870,000</b>	<b>\$128,000</b>	<b>\$1,998,000</b>	<b>\$988,000</b>	<b>\$988,000</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total Short and Long Term</b>	<b>\$2,800,000</b>	<b>\$160,000</b>	<b>\$2,960,000</b>	<b>\$1,380,000</b>	<b>\$1,380,000</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>New LCT Administrative Staff</b>			<b>\$75,000</b>		<b>\$75,000</b>	
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$2,835,000</b>	<b>\$1,380,000</b>	<b>\$1,455,000</b>	<b>9</b>

Costs are in addition to existing budget (\$2.1 million in 2017) and fleet, and includes no fleet replacement or other capital investments. Estimates are based on 2017 cost of service from First Transit, in 2017 dollars.

## Your Comments

- These recommendations are preliminary; final recommendations will be approved by Lorain County Commissioners in 2018.
- We want to hear what you think about these proposals, and will consider all comments before the recommendations are finalized.
- Please fill out a comment card or provide your comments online at

Commissioner Lundy asked for any public comments.

Theresa Shea, Elyria represents the poor, elderly and disabled residents. She asked why not have Walmart or Cleveland Clinic pay for services or make donation since all the routes look like they are going that way. The elderly, poor and disabled can't go to Wal-Mart. She can go into the front door but that is it, she can't walk that is her problem, she would go to Apples. She said what about medical appointments with other doctor facilities. She lives south of East Avenue and Middle Avenue at least a mile away from Broad Street, how would she carry her groceries home. There needs to be more expansion. Just like in the summer to be able to go to the farmers market or go to Cleveland see art museums, etc. there are so many things to do. We need to start with a big picture and have knowledge of grants. Mr. Rosenberg said RTA has funding of grants, which this county does not have. He asked her to submit her recommendations.

Jeff Baxter, Elyria said he is looking for transparency on this. This was a wonderful presentation, good slides and would like to see it on the county website and be able to get comments by face book, twitter, etc. and what we heard today was great but wants more. He asked if the county owns any land in the Midway Mall area, Griswold where Job Family Services? Work with new owners of Midway Mall to get a stop inside mall. Mr. Rosenberger said there are stops but need hubs. Mr. Baxter said the pass program to LCCC is good but maybe Wal-Mart can sell the cards/passes and maybe reduce the rate of 10 passes are bought, even other employers like Mercy Health, this would reduce the costs. Mr. Rosenberg said these are great ideas but Commissioners will have to review with service to customers and contribution factor.

Pastor Rosey Rivera, First Lutheran Church, Lorain we are a coop of 8 churches together in downtown Lorain and Sue Perry, her coordinator for Front Door Ministry. She said they provide the bus passes to get people to various things, like jobs, medical and they pay full price and they would like to see consideration for nonprofit organizations to lower the rate. They spend about \$5,000 family on passes and with the Commissioners reducing the fare will help with some of the costs but they continuous help with people and downtown has become more severe and would like to see some cooperation form the city to provide passes in the area. Mr. Rosenberg said this would be a policy to review.

Sue Perry, Front Door Ministry thanked the Commissioners for the reducing the rates. She runs the nonprofit under the First Lutheran Church, providing gas, prescriptions and driver licenses fee as well as many other things to help the vulnerable population. In order to get senior rate or disable rate, you need to have an id card and the only place to get that is the administration building in Elyria as well as purchase tickets. She asked if there could be another location.

Commissioner Kokoski asked Pam Novak. Mrs. Novak said there is no other location right now. Pastor Rivera said she would be more than willing to provide her church for a periodic service.

Jeff Baxter, Elyria said how about change 65+ and older and reducing nonprofit rates

Marco Cuevas, N. Olmsted said he is from Lorain County and looking to move back to Lorain County. He asked if transit is an expense or economic. Mr. Rosenberger said economic driven, for jobs, medical and get people off welfare for economic.

Mr. Cuevas asked about the capital improvement of Park n Rides, would you link up with Westlake RTA. Mr. Rosenberger said operations were looked at with RTA but less attractive, there are over 300+ people that drive to park n rides and ride RTA. To have an attractive service you need to guarantee riders a more convenient park in ride in the county instead of Cuyahoga and take them all the way to their destination.

Mr. Cuevas asked about slower expansion and perception that it maybe not be successful as it was presented here, rather than larger inventory. Mr. Rosenberger said next step is to have the commissioner's review all the comments received from the public.

Mr. Cuevas said Oberlin was not addressed at all with additional cost and he works for a nonprofit with low income population and there is no bus service in the southern part of the county for the low income, closest is Chestnut Commons.

Mr. Rosenberg said consider looking at it just like Amherst but it would be closer to \$2 million but will review everything.

Sharon Pearson, Oberlin with MOVE Lorain County asked what the time line was to get this out to the county. She said Move of Lorain County would help solicit information in the county and thanked for all the work that has been done, she knows she has been involved in the past 4 years and happy to see something is being reviewed but would be happy to solicit the need to make this great plan happen. Mr. Rosenberger said any changed could be made but based on funding and gets the bus out there.

Theresa Shea, Elyria asked about the comment form. Mr. Rosenberg said yes you can fill out the form today. You can email transit.

Dave Smith, Director, Lorain County Academy, Lorain said there are 5 locations within the service. The Centers employee over 100 people and serve 700 families and most of employees are low moderate income. Services are very important to have. He said he went to San Francisco and he used his phone to pay for his transportation tickets, showed the phone to the bus driver and rode the bus.

He asked about the following:

- Technology apps, to see where the buses are.
- Sign up email to get information
- FAQ's to see what this is
- Transportation map, he said there are 4-5 centers within blocks but you are not hitting the poverty. A lot have to walk within 10-20 blocks and looks like you went down commercial routes. East Lorain there is no service. West Lorain is a housing project, poor people and no routes.
- Nothing south Lorain
- 6<sup>th</sup> ward is dense poverty and trailer park in Elyria on south end
- Subsidize with Lyft. Maybe have Lorain County make a Lyft program as a work program because this is cheaper than dial a ride
- Put into bike racks
- Routes circulate to low income neighborhoods

Mr. Rosenberg said these will be reviewed. They tried to focus on destinations, people walking in bad weather is a problem and tried to serve shopping center and medical facilities. He stated that Mrs. Novak is easily accessible by phone or email and to do this technology would be a big upgrade to the fare boxes.

Bill Harper, Director, United Way, Lorain thanked everyone for the focus on the need to get people to medical, shopping and service. He said the United Community Assistance Network has 10 case managers that serve the county and make bus passes available to several folks. He said he is also with MOVE group. He said in the past there has been criticism about the empty buses and people don't need the service but he tends to believe there is a threshold under which a public transit system is convenient to folks that actually use it and look at the plans will we reach our goal with this expansion or do we have a further way to go to see people using it.

Mr. Rosenberger said they rode the buses for several days and in the later trips not empty but it was not heavy reserved. He stated the county is underserved not serve less it's the 2 hours service that is a deterrent. By changing some rates and eliminate turn deliation and speed up somewhat services, make more ridership and the ridership like 10 years ago could be the future.

\_\_\_\_\_ (discussion was held on the above)

JOURNAL ENTRY

With no further business before the Board, Motion by Kokoski seconded by Kalo to adjourn at 1:13 p.m. Ayes: Kokoski, Kalo & Lundy / Nays: None.

Motion carried.

The meeting then adjourned.

_____	)Commissioners
Lori Kokoski, President	)
	)
_____	)of
Ted Kalo, Vice-president	)
	)
_____	)Lorain County
Matt Lundy, Member	)Ohio

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_, Clerk  
Theresa Upton, Clerk

Please note that the Commissioners' meetings are open to the public. **The scheduled air times for the meetings will be shown on Saturday at 12:00 Noon and Monday at 11:00 p.m.** subject to change at the discretion of the Lorain County Community College. The meetings might be also broadcasted in additional time periods as scheduling permits. If anyone wants to purchase a copy of the Commissioners Meeting Tapes, please call Lorain County Records Center at 440-326-4866.