



# FINDLAY·HANCOCK COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

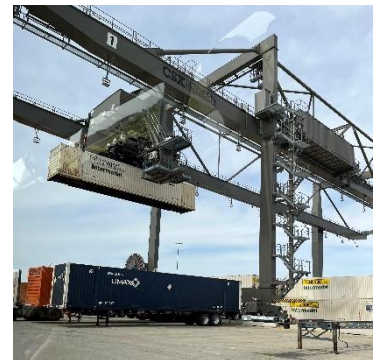
## APRIL 2023 UPDATE

Please see below for a summary of activities undertaken by the Economic Development team during the month of April. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN FOCUS THIS MONTH

#### Retention & Expansion |

- The ED office visited the CSX Intermodal facility in April with colleagues from the Regional Growth Partnership. The facility is a great asset to companies in the Northwest Ohio region, with several Hancock County companies currently utilizing the terminal to move products.
- Foreign Trade Zone #151 remains a value-added program for regional manufacturers. We continue to meet with companies to promote, evaluate and implement tariff savings benefits of the program. For an overview of the FTZ program, please see [this document](#). Companies in the following counties are eligible to utilize FTZ #151: Hancock, Hardin, Seneca, Allen, Putnam, and Van Wert.



CSX Intermodal Facility crane.

#### Attraction |

- The Economic Development office, in coordination with Regional Growth Partnership, hosted a representative from [Project Cayenne](#) to look at an existing building in Findlay. This company works in the battery space for Electric Vertical Take Off & Landing (EVTOL) vehicles, as well as high-end automobiles.
- The annexation hearing for RaceTrac was held in late April. The Hancock County Commissioners are expected to vote on a resolution which would approve the annexation on May 4<sup>th</sup>.
- The ED team submitted for [Project Element](#), a production facility that would manufacture hydrogen fuel cell technologies. The project would result in a \$150M investment and 280 net new jobs.

#### Workforce |

- **WAGE, BENEFITS, AND TRAINING SURVEY.** This is a final reminder for all [manufacturing and logistics companies](#) in Hancock and Wood Counties. Those companies that expressed a willingness to participate in the Wage, Benefits, & Training Survey should have received a link to complete the survey on April 11<sup>th</sup>. If you did not receive the link and should have, please contact Sarah ([sperrigo@findlayecondev.com](mailto:sperrigo@findlayecondev.com)) as soon as possible. If your company would like to participate but has not communicated that to the ED team, there is still time. *The survey will close on May 12<sup>th</sup>.* Remember, **only participating companies will receive the results.**
- The ED team continues to work with a developer on [Project Top Hat](#) to identify programming opportunities and partners in this mixed-use rehabilitation effort.
- ROKI America Co. was featured in a recent Courier article highlighting their turnover rate for temporary employees of 0%. To read the article, please [see this link](#).
- Economic Development partnered with the Center for Advanced Manufacturing to host University of Findlay students in Supply Chain Management at ROKI America and Hitachi Astemo, both local advanced manufacturers.

McLane Company also represented advanced distribution. The students were able to go beyond theoretical classroom work to understand applied logistics via company overviews and tours.

### Downtown |

- The City of Findlay has the Findlay Design Review Board which functions as the decision-making body for the design of new development projects and most exterior changes to existing buildings including signage. To see the guidelines that are enforced by the Design Review Board, please [see here](#).

### Small Business |

- The Economic Development office routinely handles calls and inquiries from existing and prospective business owners. ED is a portal for resources such as legal introductions, product development, financing and accounting connections, and overall business planning. Much of the Findlay-Hancock community's vitality can be attributed to its strong, diverse business base, including our small businesses. However, many emerging businesses make the mistake of not developing a business plan and thus lack the direction to achieve successful outcomes. We are happy to assist small businesses to develop these essential business development practices.

### Other |

- The ED team, along with several representatives from the City of Findlay, attended the Regional Growth Partnership's Annual Meeting where economic developers and other participants from northwest Ohio came together to celebrate collective accomplishments and anticipate future growth. Findlay-Hancock County was recognized several times for the continued investment and expansions being undertaken by our businesses.
- Sheaffer attended the Japan-America Society of Central Ohio gala alongside Tim Mayle (Center for Advanced Manufacturing), Mayor Christina Muryn, Dr. Katherine Fell and Dr. Hiroaki Kawamura (University of Findlay), and Superintendent Greg Denecker (Bluffton School Dist.). Findlay-Hancock County Economic Development remains committed to fostering our community's relationship with Japan and the Japanese companies located in Findlay.
- The Japan-America Society of Central Ohio (JASCO), along with Findlay-Hancock County Economic Development, the University of Findlay, and other partners, will host the annual Japan-America Grassroots Summit in Fall 2023 to celebrate the historic friendship between Japan and the United States. JASCO is dedicated to celebrating this friendship in Ohio where Japan is the largest foreign direct investor and where nearly 11,000 Japanese residents live and work. Our office will have more to share regarding this event in future updates.

### Community Planning | Special Edition – Findlay Catalytic Opportunities Plan (CP)

Over the past year, much has been written and spoken about the Catalytic Plan, both inside and outside the context of City and County government. Misconceptions about the CP, which was drafted in 2017, have circulated in the community. So, for the benefit of our stakeholders, here is a brief history of the plan.

First and foremost, the CP was and is a plan that was created by the business community for the business community and led and funded exclusively by Findlay-Hancock County Economic Development. ED organized its approach to the catalytic plan around a four-step stakeholder engagement process we call the Findlay Formula. The CP process intentionally involved key stakeholders, including representatives from City and County government, education, private business, and nonprofit organization. The goals of this process were to align and coordinate past planning efforts and projects, recognize immediate or short-term development opportunities, identify new catalytic projects for key districts (W. Main Cross corridor, N. Main Street to Center St.), and prepare a project chronology and implementation plan for development. The stakeholder engagement process was organized into the following four steps: **1) Who:** Gather the needed stakeholders into the room, **2) Why:** Help the stakeholders understand the process, **3) What:** Co-create solutions for development, and **4) Design the Catalytic Plan.** During these four meetings over the four-week stakeholder engagement process, Economic Development, along with its consultants, reviewed existing plans, policies, and codes, including the following: zoning ordinances, the Findlay Design Review District guidelines, the City of Findlay's Community Reinvestment Area program, the Ohio Department of Transportation's Transportation Alternatives Program, the University of Findlay's

Master Plan, the Blanchard River and Eagle Creek flood mitigation designs, the City of Findlay recreation plans, the Hancock County Park District Plan, the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area, and a downtown residential study. Additionally, the ED office gathered existing conditions information through GIS mapping systems, topographical information, aerial photographs, etc.

From these meetings, the following was accomplished:

### **1) Who and 2) Why**

The Economic Development office facilitated discussions with stakeholders to explain, find consensus, and adopt the purpose of the catalytic planning process and to discuss recent, current, and ongoing planning efforts. Together, this method developed a catalog of potential catalyzing projects for Downtown Findlay and its surrounding areas. The stakeholder engagement effort enabled ED to discuss a current vision for Findlay and understand and identify current and future opportunities for business development.

### **3) What**

Following a review of catalytic sites with stakeholders, ED helped to create a catalytic plan that encapsulated existing and future opportunities and projects. Potential project types to be recorded would include infill and redevelopment concepts, connections between downtown and the University of Findlay, riverfront and open space opportunities, and streetscape and public realm improvements.

### **4) How**

Economic Development utilized a prioritized list of projects and recommendations created by the stakeholders and illustrated early opportunity sites to demonstrate their value to the community. The resulting Findlay Catalytic Opportunities Plan therefore summarized discussion and input, provided organization and project recommendations, and identified and guided the necessary next steps for Hancock County, the City of Findlay, the University of Findlay, and other strategic partners to begin work on catalytic projects and improvements.

### **Applying the Catalytic Plan:**

The flood mitigation efforts led by the Economic Development office, which began roughly at the same time as the CP, are approaching completion. These efforts, including river benching, floodway acquisitions, road improvements, Norfolk Southern Bridge improvements, and the creation of the Eagle Creek Storage Basin, will successfully mitigate a 100-year flood event and reduce flooding by 36 inches during those events. The Findlay Catalytic Opportunities Plan was created to help guide development upon successful completion of flood mitigation.

To view Findlay-Hancock County Economic Development's Catalytic Opportunities plan, please [see this link](#).