



# NEFCO FORUM

December 2022

## Draft 2023-2028 CEDS Plan available for public comment

The [Draft NEFCO 2023-2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#) is now available on the NEFCO website for public review and comment. The Plan includes a demographic analysis and overview of regional economic conditions; a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis; target industry identification; a resiliency component, integrating NEFCO’s recently published Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan; and an Action Plan, including goals, subgoals, and strategies, with associated performance metrics. The draft Plan is the result of a robust planning process that began in April and has included significant input from the Regional CEDS Committee.

The 2023-2028 CEDS Plan is a full update to the current CEDS Plan, which was last published in 2018. Preparation and maintenance of the CEDS Plan maintains NEFCO’s status as a U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) designated Economic Development District, and continues the region’s eligibility for EDA grant funding. The CEDS Plan is fully updated every five years; every other year, NEFCO completes an Annual Performance Report, which evaluates the region’s progress on the goals outlined in the CEDS Plan.

NEFCO staff will be recommending approval of the 2023-2028 CEDS Plan at the January 18, 2023 NEFCO General Policy Board meeting. A final, Board-approved CEDS Plan is due to the EDA by January 31, 2023. Please send comments to [nick@nefcoplaning.org](mailto:nick@nefcoplaning.org) by January 11, 2023.



## Maia Peck receives Statewide Lakes Management Award




In November 2022, Maia Peck, NEFCO’s watershed planner and GIS specialist, was honored at the annual conference of the Water Management Association of Ohio (WMAO) with the President’s Award from the Ohio Lake Management Society. The award recognizes her dedication and hard work in helping to develop a new collaborative, holistic management approach for the Portage Lakes and watershed, as well as service to professional organizations that make up WMAO.

Ms. Peck received the award at the November meeting of the Portage Lakes Technical Advisory Committee/Partners. Ms. Peck acknowledged the efforts of the partners to understand and manage the lakes and watershed as an inter-connected system.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### What’s Inside?

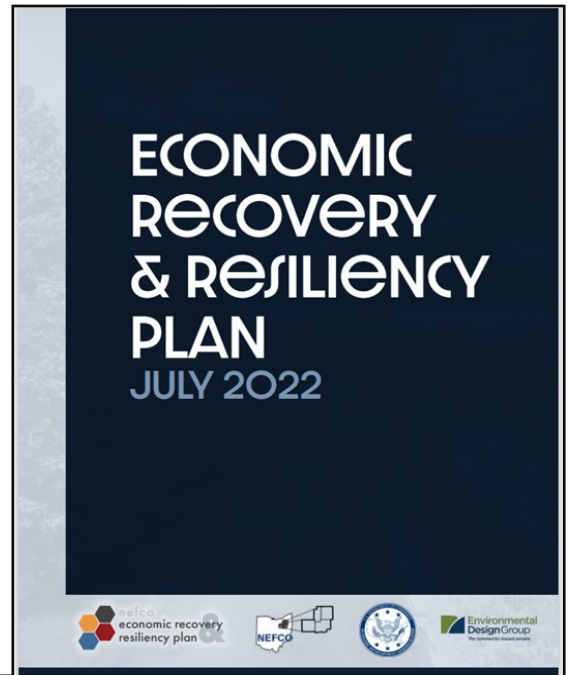


- Economic Recovery & Resiliency Plan Published ..... 2
- Funding Opportunities page added to NEFCO website ..... 2
- Ohio EPA Director, NEDO Chief to retire December 31, 2022 ..... 2
- Federal Communications Commission releases new broadband map ..... 3
- Current EDA funding opportunities ..... 3
- 2023 NEFCO Board meeting dates ..... 4
- 2023 General Policy Board Officers ..... 4

## Economic Recovery & Resiliency (ER&R) Plan published

The NEFCO General Policy Board approved the [Economic Recovery & Resiliency \(ER&R\) Plan](#) on July 20, 2022. The ER&R Plan was funded by a CARES Act Recovery Assistance grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). Through the grant, NEFCO worked collaboratively with communities and organizations in Portage, Stark, Summit and Wayne Counties to develop a comprehensive economic recovery and resiliency plan, including both short-term recovery projects and long-term resilience strategies.

The ER&R Plan is the culmination of a two-year planning effort, including dozens of meetings with regional partners to discuss pandemic related impacts, issues, opportunities, and obstacles; four widely distributed surveys reaching over 1,000 contacts; and deep dives completed by subcommittees targeting three key areas affecting regional recovery and resiliency. The Regional Business, Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship, and Community Development Subcommittees included approximately 40 individuals collectively, comprised of experts from municipalities, nonprofit organizations, business organizations, small business assistance providers, workforce development entities, funders, and academic institutions. NEFCO staff worked with the ER&R planning consultant, Environmental Design Group, on the development of the final ER&R Plan.



## Funding Opportunities page added to NEFCO website

Resources / Funding Opportunities

### Funding Opportunities

Please see the following funding opportunities applicable to communities and organizations in the NEFCO region in the seven categories listed below. Each category includes several funding opportunities listing funding agency, program summaries, eligibility information, available funding, local match requirements, application deadlines, and links to additional program information at the respective funding agency's website. The funding opportunities listed are provided for general informational purposes. NEFCO does not guarantee the accuracy of the information listed. Please consult the appropriate funding agency for additional information. NEFCO staff will maintain the list of funding opportunities, updating information as necessary. Please contact NEFCO staff with questions on any of the funding opportunities or to discuss projects.

#### Program Categories

|   |   |                                      |                          |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <br>Broadband & Telecom                 | <br>Brownfields & Environmental Remediation | <br>Community Development & Planning | <br>Parks & Recreation   |
| <br>Public Works & Economic Development | <br>Transportation                          | <br>Water Quality & Conservation     | <br>Additional Resources |

NEFCO has added a comprehensive list of funding opportunities to its website. The funding opportunities page includes information on scores of grant and loan programs in seven categories applicable to communities and organizations in the NEFCO region. The program categories include broadband and telecommunications; brownfields and environmental remediation; community development and planning; public works and economic development; parks and recreation; transportation; and water quality and conservation. Each category includes several funding opportunities, listing program summaries, eligibility information, available funding, and links to additional program information at the respective granting agency's website. The funding opportunities listed are for informational purposes only; NEFCO does not guarantee the accuracy of the information listed and encourages communities and organizations to contact the grantor agency for the most current information. The information will serve as a first-stop hub for communities seeking information on funding sources for projects. NEFCO staff will maintain the list of funding opportunities, updating information as necessary. Click [HERE](#) to view the funding opportunities page. Please contact Nick Lautzenheiser at [nick@necoplanning.org](mailto:nick@necoplanning.org) with questions on any of the funding opportunities or to discuss projects.

## Ohio EPA Director, NEDO Chief to retire December 31, 2022

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) Director Laurie Stevenson and Northeast District Office (NEDO) Chief Kurt Princic will be retiring on December 31, 2022. Director Stevenson will be retiring after a 34-year career at the agency. During her tenure as Ohio EPA Director, she provided the Areawide Planning Agencies (including NEFCO) with fiscal support at a time when Ohio EPA was being asked to trim its budget by at least 20 percent. District Chief Princic has been a valued NEFCO Board member, always willing to discuss and offer assistance for any environmental issues facing the NEFCO region. Staff warmly wishes both Director Stevenson and Chief Princic a happy retirement!



(Continued from page 1)

The partners have provided valuable expertise and insights that guided Ms. Peck in developing the 2020 Draft Portage Lakes Management Plan. The plan characterizes the lakes and watershed, identifies concerns, priorities, and potential management measures, presented in the context of the lakes system.

Through numerous discussions led by Ms. Peck, the partners have developed a new approach to managing the Portage Lakes. Individuals working on focused areas have come together to build a shared understanding of the lakes, their watershed and community, priorities, management needs and opportunities. The partners are continuing their coordinated efforts, starting to carry out the recommendations the plan: obtaining grants for stormwater management projects; establishing a watershed coordinator position; conducting an aquatic plant inventory to guide aquatic plant management; monitoring water quality of the streams and lakes; and outreach. The continued collaboration will improve the partners' abilities to sustain the health and uses of the Portage Lakes as an environmental and community resource.

Ms. Peck appreciates the privilege of working with the partners to improve the understanding and management of the Portage Lakes. She is proud of the work that she and the partners have done and the award that acknowledges this important collaborative effort. Her work on the Portage Lakes Management Plan was financed through grants from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, with funds from the State of Ohio; and with funds from NEFCO's dues-paying members.



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## Federal Communications Commission releases new broadband map

On November 18, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released the first draft of its new National Broadband Map, a comprehensive, location-by-location view of high-speed Internet availability across the nation. The map is a more detailed and precise reflection of the availability of fixed and mobile broadband services in all 3,069 counties, parishes, and boroughs. Unlike its previous census block-based maps, this updated map is built on a location-based model developed through the FCC's Broadband Data Collection process. The map will be continuously updated with each filing period's set of data, with the next cycle expected to span from December 31-March 1. Each filing window will then take place six months thereafter. The new National Broadband Map and its future iterations are expected to be instrumental in determining the flow of funds for billions of dollars for broadband deployment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), including the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. The BEAD program will provide over \$42 billion to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs in all 50 states and Washington D.C. NTIA has required states to conduct local coordination to receive these funds, and local governments and regional organizations are encouraged to contact their state broadband office to begin this process. Local governments are encouraged to review and validate the availability data presented on the map to determine whether to submit a challenge. If your community determines that a challenge is needed, the FCC has provided steps to follow. Click [HERE](#) to access the new map.

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## Current EDA funding opportunities

Although funding for the next Federal fiscal year has not yet been appropriated, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is accepting applications on a rolling basis for the Public Works/ Economic Adjustment Assistance (PW/EAA) grant program. The notice of funding opportunity for the FY23 PW/EAA program will be published as soon as funding is confirmed. The EDA estimates that approximately \$5 million will be available for projects in Ohio. Applications will be accepted, reviewed, and queued for funding consideration upon its availability. The PW/EAA program supports construction, non-construction, planning, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects. Applicant communities must qualify as "distressed" per EDA metrics: have a per capita median income of 80-percent or less than the national average, or an unemployment rate of one percent or greater than the national average. A non-federal match of 50-percent is required. Eligible applicants include political subdivisions, nonprofit organizations (acting in cooperation with a political subdivision), and institutions of higher education. Eligible applicants must apply at [grants.gov](https://grants.gov). Projects must be consistent with the NEFCO Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and EDA Investment Priorities. The EDA is stressing the importance of equity and recovery and resiliency as key investment priorities. Applicants must demonstrate economic distress. Please contact Nick Lautzenheiser at [nick@nefcoplanning.org](mailto:nick@nefcoplanning.org) if you have questions regarding the PW/EAA program or would like to discuss projects. For more information, please visit <https://eda.gov/funding-opportunities/>.



## 2023 General Policy Board Officers

**Chair:** Richard Regula, Commissioner, Stark County

**First Vice-Chair:** Thomas A. Tatum, Manager, Housing and Community Services Division, City of Akron

**Second Vice-Chair:** Jonathan Hofstetter, Commissioner-elect, Wayne County

**Secretary:** Todd Peetz, Director, Portage County Regional Planning Commission

**Treasurer:** Craig Stanley, Director of Administrative Services, Summit County

At its December 21, 2022 meeting the General Policy Board elected a new slate of officers.

**Congratulations and thank you, 2023 officers!**

| 2023 NEFCO Board Meeting Dates   |              |
|--|--------------|
| January 18   | July 19      |
| February 15  | August 16    |
| March 15   | September 20 |
| April 19   | October 18   |
| May 17   | November 15  |
| June 21  | December 20  |
| These meetings are held in the City of Green, Council Chambers or Community Hall/Central Park at 8:30 a.m. Please check NEFCO's website to confirm details for these meetings. |              |

### NEFCO FORUM

The *NEFCO Forum* is published by the Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization  
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www.nefcoplanning.org

NEFCO is a regional council serving Portage, Stark, Summit and Wayne Counties and the city, village and township governments and citizens within the four-county area. The *NEFCO Forum* was prepared using Federal funds under award ED19CHI3020021 from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, USEPA, the Ohio EPA, and NEFCO's dues-paying members. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Economic Development Administration or the U.S. Department of Commerce. We welcome comments, ideas and editorial contributions for future issues from our readers. Please submit these to the address shown above.

Richard Regula  
NEFCO General Policy Board Chairman

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#### MISSION STATEMENT

*To improve the region's quality of life, through collaborative planning efforts with NEFCO's area governments, in order to ensure environmental quality, orderly growth, and economic and community development*