



Lakeside CHAUTAQUA

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS
NOVEMBER 2025


KNOWING LAKESIDE

Lakeside is, at its heart, a community that shows up. When something matters, the Lakeside community engages, bringing ideas, energy, and a deep sense of ownership that most places can only imagine. It's a living legacy, and not just a nostalgic one. This is a place that has shaped minds and spirits for generations, yet still wrestles earnestly with what it means to live out a vibrant Chautauqua mission every day, in this modern day.

From the dock to Hoover Auditorium, Lakeside's physical spaces are more than landmarks – they are emotional anchors that tie the community together. The lakefront itself remains part of Lakeside's heartbeat, where inspiration, recreation, and shared purpose can all be found. Around it, the Lakeside ecosystem moves with the energy of a place where generations naturally intersect, and where the rhythms of spiritual life, learning, the arts, and recreation all reinforce a sense of belonging that stretches beyond the summer season.

Lakeside's real power source, though, is the people. Residents and new visitors, team members and seasonal regulars, each with their own Lakeside "origin story," pour their time and talent into making things happen, often with a sense of fierce loyalty. Even when opinions clash, that passion is proof of a shared belief that Lakeside can and should live up to its highest potential. Lakeside's history has always included adaptation and evolution, but what makes it truly special is not just its past, it's the commitment of the community to keep reimagining what this place can be, together.

That same energy – the willingness to listen, question, and imagine together – has been at the heart of this community engagement effort, designed to help Lakeside chart its course for the future with clarity and shared purpose.

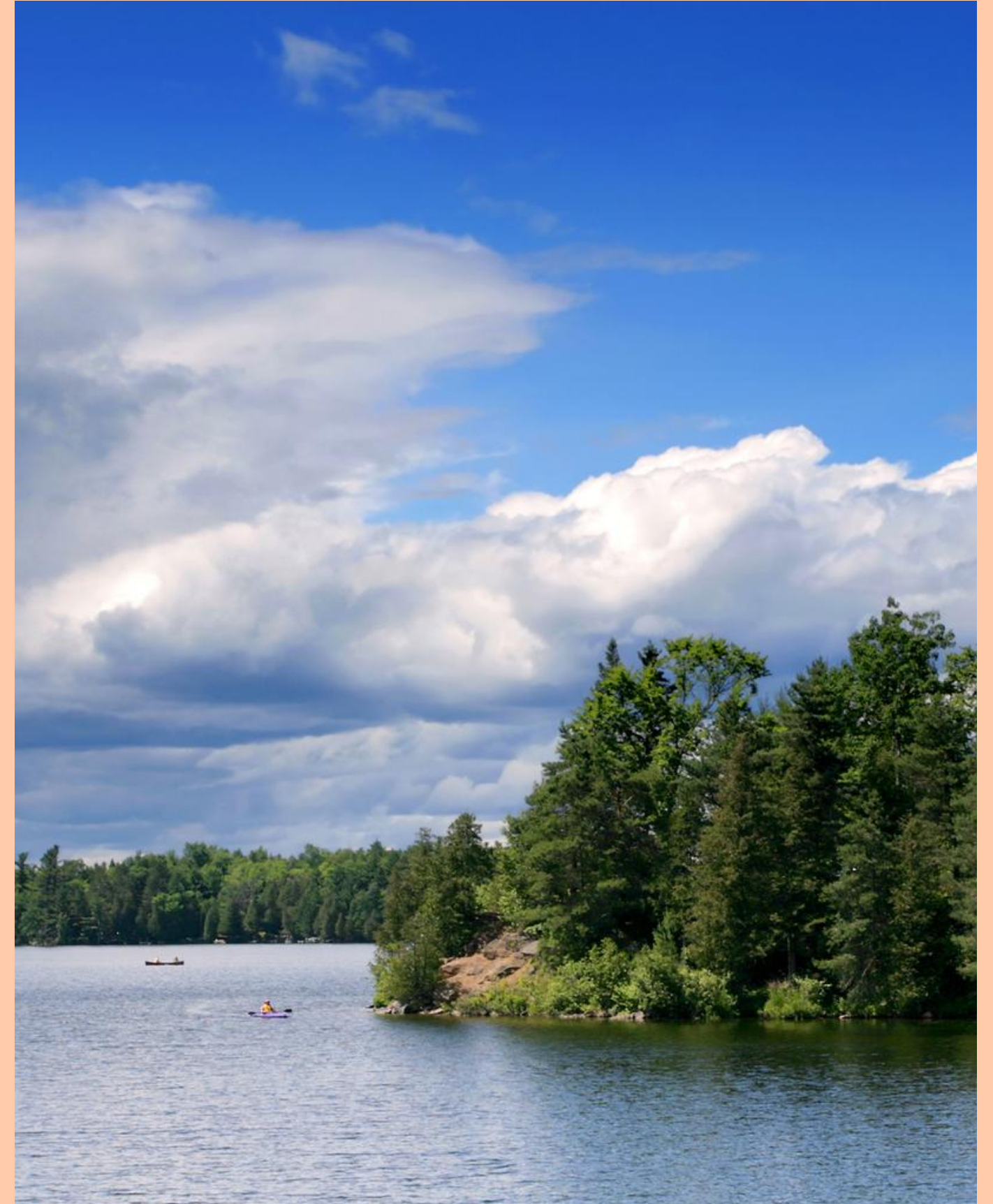
An aerial photograph of a coastal town and harbor. The harbor is filled with numerous small boats, and a larger pier extends into the water. The town is built on a hillside with lush greenery, and a large island is visible in the background. The sky is overcast.

PURPOSE,
PROCESS, &
PARTICIPATION

PURPOSE

- Create a **shared vision** for Lakeside's future
- Define **existing strengths** to carry forward and identify what **needs focused attention**
- **Name factors** impacting Lakeside's effectiveness in delivering the mission

All resulting in a framework for Lakeside's next strategic plan, informed by a broad cross-section of community members, representing a variety of perspectives and experiences.



PROCESS



WE EXPLORED

- What makes Lakeside, Lakeside?
- What do you want to be true for Lakeside 5-10 years from now?
- What are the greatest assets that Lakeside needs to carry forward (or that are currently being underutilized)?
- To make progress toward the future you envision, what's most important for Lakeside to stop doing, start doing, or do differently?
- If Lakeside had one bold move to make as a community in the next 12 months, what should it be?

Note: this effort was not intended to produce detailed actions plans, changes to staffing structures, or attempt to solve every challenge Lakesiders face, but rather to clarify shared vision and direction for Lakeside's next chapter.



PARTICIPATIONS

196 Total Participants*

Participations Methods:

- In-person and virtual facilitated sessions
- One-on-one and small group interviews
- Solicited and unsolicited written feedback
- Lakeside staff survey

* Total number of unique/unduplicated participants.

22 people participated in more than one method (e.g., submitting written feedback and joining in a facilitated session).

PARTICIPATION

Examples of participants by subgroup:

- Association & Foundation Board Members (engagement mapping)
- Business Owners/Merchants
- Community Group Leaders (leaders of societies, clubs, associations, etc.)
- Cottage Owners
- Lakeside Staff
- “Next Generation” Lakesiders (ages approximately 25-45)
- Programming Advisory Committee Members
- Religious Life Advisory Committee Members
- Short-Term Renters
- Stand Up Lakeside Steering Committee
- Year-Round Residents



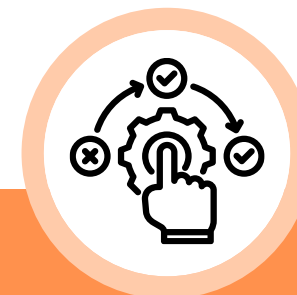
VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Lakeside is a place where all generations find value, belonging, joy, and safety.

The Chautauqua spirit remains alive and visible in every detail.

**SAFE, MULTI-GENERATIONAL
COMMUNITY**

**ALIGNED, ACCOUNTABLE
ACTION**



**LAKESIDE FOR
EVERYONE**



**PURPOSEFUL
PRESERVATION**



**LIVING "THE
LAKESIDE WAY"**

**UNIVERSAL
THEMES IN HOPES
FOR THE FUTURE**



**BALANCED &
ACCESSIBLE
PROGRAMMING**

SAFE, MULTI-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY



“We want our kids to have the experience we had when we were kids.”

- Next Generation Lakesiders virtual session participant



Intergenerational connection is facilitated in a safe and protected setting. Lakeside should be a “safe bubble” where freedom and responsibility coexist, in part because of how connected community members are across generations. The future looks like: children roaming freely, teens gathering independently, welcoming spaces that encourage organic community-building (parks, dock, plazas, porches, places of worship), and robust multi-generational participation in activities.



LAKESIDE FOR EVERYONE

Lakeside should be financially sustainable without being financially exclusive. Cottage owners, renters, and short-term visitors nearly all connect affordability and accessibility with inclusiveness. Complex ticketing structures are gone, strengthening Lakeside's value proposition, improving accessibility, and dampening perceptions of elitism. The future looks like: costs that directly align with value, availability of affordable rental options, revenue strategies that preserve broad access, and a clear commitment to keeping "Lakeside for everyone."

PURPOSEFUL PRESERVATION



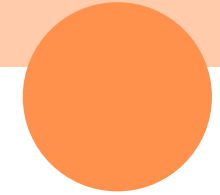
“The magic of Lakeside’s classic traditions will appeal to multiple generations if the right systems and staffing are in place to make participating easy.”

- General Community/All
Welcome virtual session
participant



Honor Lakeside’s heritage, while embracing modernization where it enhances the experience and offers potential to draw visitors in. Lakesiders hope for historic charm and architectural beauty alongside thoughtful modernization that improves functionality and experience. The future looks like: completing deferred maintenance, keeping buildings well-cared-for and the grounds gorgeous, and upgrading technology infrastructure, without losing Lakeside’s distinctive character.

ALIGNED, ACCOUNTABLE ACTION



The administration, board, and community operate in structural and relational alignment, with shared purpose and clear communication. Decisions should be connected to an overarching strategy, with leadership swiftly analyzing and prioritizing emerging needs against that overarching strategy. The future looks like: a trusting relationship between administration, board and community, a compelling master plan used internally (by board and team) and externally (with community), consistent (and borderline over-) communication of decisions, priorities, and progress, and a culture of relentless follow-through.

BALANCED & ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMMING



Offer a lively season* with activities that balance the interests – and unique constraints – of families, young adults, and retirees. Effective programming will fuel Lakeside’s value proposition across the generations, particularly when it’s easy to “opt in” or drop by activities. The future looks like: differentiated programming purposefully designed with needs, constraints, and the four pillars in mind, as well as systems, staffing, and physical accommodations that make participation easier.

* See page 16 for feedback on the “season.”

LIVING “THE LAKESIDE WAY”



“Lakesiders engage with and care for one another, grow meaningful relationships and create a sense of belonging in the community...Lakesiders often say when they enter through the gates, they feel like they have arrived ‘home.’”

- excerpt from the Epilogue of *LAKESIDE OHIO: From Camp Meeting to Chautauqua* (The Lakeside Heritage Society Sesquicentennial Book Committee, 2023)



Lakeside lives up to its Chautauqua ideals through a recognition of shared humanity. “The Lakeside Way” maintains a sort of unspoken social contract where people take shared responsibility for community well-being and individual ownership for engaging with civility and respect. The future looks like: high standards for civil public engagement, recognition of common ground/shared interests, and “A place where the practice of the awareness of God lives for all people.” (General Community/All Welcome virtual session participant)

VISION RESPONSE VARIANCES

The following notes summarize topics that were frequently raised and deeply discussed, but where participants did not reach clear agreement or consensus.

DEFINING “THE SEASON”

Participants offered a wide range of ideas and opinions – from a traditional Memorial Day-to-Labor Day season “done exceptionally well” to expanded shoulder season with a focus on engagement of communities from the surrounding peninsula to year-round programming exclusively led by volunteers – but no clear consensus emerged. There was notable agreement on one thing: Lakeside should define the official season based on a well-rounded ROI analysis (simple revenue/expense identification is not sufficiently contextualized), communicate it clearly, and then commit to doing it with excellence.

CENTERING CHRISTIANITY

Although there was strong agreement that, as one of the four pillars, religion must remain a cornerstone of Lakeside’s future identity, there was significant variability in how that should look or take shape. In particular, participants wrestled with prioritizing Christianity, versus a broader and more inclusive or multi-denominational approach to spirituality. Lakesiders fully recognize and largely celebrate the significance of Christianity in Lakeside’s founding, much of its history, and its significant present day context, which contributes to this challenge. Perspectives tended to diverge along generational lines: though there were exceptions within each subgroup, more seasoned generations tended to emphasize the importance of Christianity maintaining a central role, while younger generations were likelier to describe religion more as a valued part of Lakeside’s heritage and in broadly inclusive ways. The variability in feedback reflects both deep respect for tradition and also a desire to welcome a wide range of faith experiences.



EXISTING STRENGTHS & ASSETS

Leveraging Lakeside's people, physical spaces, heritage, and deep sense of purpose will propel us forward toward a shared vision for the future.

EXISTING STRENGTHS TO LEVERAGE & GROW

LAKESIDE'S DEEP TALENT POOL

- The single most frequently mentioned asset is Lakeside's people, including residents, staff, young people, faith leaders, and team/seasonal workers.
- With structure, communication, and trust, Lakeside's deep and untapped well of talent and goodwill could power volunteer efforts far beyond performing physical tasks.

"We have people who are more than capable of doing so much, but simply don't get asked."

- Year-Round Resident

THE WATERFRONT

- Lake Erie and the waterfront aren't just scenery, they're viewed as symbolic and literal centerpieces.
- Consensus is that the waterfront is both revered and underused, with enormous potential to support key elements of the future vision, including multi-generational connection, purposeful preservation, and balanced/accessible programming.

"There's no stronger asset to be found than our Chautauqua mission and traditions that have persisted across actual, literal generations."

- Former Lakeside Association Board Member

CHAUTAUQUA PILLARS & LAKESIDE HERITAGE

- The Chautauqua mission is considered the soul of Lakeside, and an asset that differentiates it from any other lake community.
- History and heritage, particularly around the four pillars, are and should continue to be leveraged as inspiration and not inertia.

ICONIC VENUES & ARCHITECTURAL CHARM

- Lakeside's historic buildings and architectural charm are viewed as existing assets and also key levers in advancing a shared future vision.
- The continued strength and perceived value of these assets is currently under threat by incomplete deferred maintenance and infrastructure gaps.

"I would like to see the Association's buildings in as good a shape as the surrounding cottages."

- Third Generation Lakesider



COMMUNITY VOICES: STOP DOING, START DOING, DO DIFFERENTLY, & BOLD MOVES

Lakesiders see opportunities for restoration of trust, greater focus, and bold action on the horizon.

A NOTE ABOUT TRUST & CONFIDENCE

By now it should be clear that challenges related to trust and confidence in Lakeside's governance and, to an extent, Lakeside's administration, have not been separated out as standalone items in this document. This choice was deliberate. While they are not the only challenges facing Lakeside, rebuilding trust and restoring confidence in governance and leadership are urgent, persistent, and affect the potential success of all other change efforts.

However, just as it took a series of actions and lapses over time for trust and confidence to erode, repairing trust and restoring confidence will require intentional and sustained effort over time. Some progress has already been made to move toward repair – effort that has been necessary, but is not sufficient. Positive change moves at the speed of trust, and rarely in a straight line, so it's important to be clear that there is no single, recommended fix. Instead, the cumulative impact of taking action on the feedback and recommendations that follow, along with consistent follow-through beyond, will create the environment in which trust and confidence can be restored.

A hand is shown balancing several colorful wooden blocks (orange, blue, white, red) on a light blue surface. The blocks are arranged in a slightly curved line, and the hand is positioned behind them, supporting them. The background is a soft-focus image of a person's face.

STOP

RAISING COSTS WITHOUT IMPROVING VALUE

Fee increases without consistently accessible amenities and necessary aesthetic improvements fuel the perception that Lakeside is charging more, for less.

RELYING ON OUTDATED SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES

Practices like paper tickets, age restrictions, blanket prohibition of beer/wine, and limited operating hours for key amenities create barriers to participation, dampen the visitor experience, and signals resistance to modernization (whether or not it is intended).

TRYING TO BE EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE

Efforts to please every preference and soothe the loudest voices dilute Lakeside's organizational focus, set the default operating mode to "react," and impact Lakeside team members' ability to effectively follow up and follow through.

START DOING & DO DIFFERENTLY



ESTABLISH ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY ALIGNED TO A CLEAR VISION

Integrate meaningful key measures, then use them all the time internally and externally as an accountability mechanism that drives prioritization and focus.

OVER-COMMUNICATE

Assume there is no such thing in Lakeside as over-communication, particularly with respect to decisions, projects, and progress. This applies equally to keeping internal staff and external community in the know.

CREATE EFFICIENT FEEDBACK-TO-ACTION LOOPS THAT REPLACE VAGUE REASSURANCES LIKE “WE HEAR YOU.”

Establish an easy and reliable pathway for community input to reach the people empowered to act on it, then follow it through to full completion (communicating all along the way).

EVOLVE LAKESIDE’S GOVERNANCE

Continue and build on recent efforts at creating lines of sight into Lakeside’s governance practices. Calls for “governance reform” and “transparency” aren’t only about process, they are proxies for rebuilding trust and improving communication.

PRIORITIZE MAINTENANCE AND SUMMER SEASON READINESS

Complete deferred maintenance and maintain ongoing upkeep to ensure buildings, grounds, and key infrastructure remain safe, functional, and welcoming. The importance of season-readiness to Lakesiders cannot be overemphasized.

MODERNIZE LAKESIDE’S OPERATIONS

Leverage advances in data and IT functionality to create a more integrated, seamless experience across Lakeside rentals, programming, scheduling, and communications. Technology should complement – not replace – paper/fixed resources.