



VIII: Government & Community Services

This chapter gives an overview of Liberty Township government and other key community services.

8.1 Township Trustees & Administration

Liberty Township is a township form of government. This form of government is directly governed by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). The ORC dictates the organization and roles of the Board of Trustees, the Fiscal Officer, and the powers and responsibilities thereof. The elected officials in a township form of government are three Trustees and a Fiscal Officer. Unlike cities and counties, townships cannot impose a sales tax or income tax, with the notable exception of a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD). Townships rely on a portion of property taxes as the main revenue source.

Liberty Township is a home rule township. By electing this designation, the Township has more flexibility to formulate legislation. Whereas statutory, or “non-home rule” townships can only operate within the powers expressly granted by the ORC, home rule townships may pursue any legislation unless it is specifically restricted under the ORC.

The administrative operations of the Township are carried out by the Administration, Planning & Zoning, and Economic Development departments. The Administration department is responsible for the day-to-day operations, including budgeting and forecasting, human resources, planning Township events, and other administrative functions. The Planning and Zoning Department coordinates long-range planning efforts, administers and enforces the Township Zoning Resolution, and is funded, in part, by application fees. The Economic Development Department facilitates information and efforts

promoting commercial development in Liberty Township. The Fiscal Office manages the accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, cemetery deeds, record retention, and works closely with Administration.

8.2 Fire Department

The Liberty Township Fire Department is a professional department offering full fire and emergency medical service to the Township. The Fire Department has 33 full-time and 62 part-time personnel that operate out of three fire stations. The department averages between 1,800 and 2,200 calls for service per year, approximately 80% of which are EMS calls. In addition to responding to emergency calls for service, the Fire Department teaches CPR certification classes, performs complimentary car seat checks, performs yearly fire inspections of businesses and other community / public buildings, implements the VIAL of Life program, distributes carbon monoxide monitors, and participates in public outreach, daycare and school group events.

The Fire Department is funded by a dedicated levy.

The Fire Department has mutual aid agreements with the surrounding communities of West Chester Township, City of Monroe, City of Mason, and Fairfield Township. The department also operates on Butler County’s 800 megahertz system, is dispatched by the county’s 911 call center, and is a member of the County’s EMA Board, Technical Rescue Team, and County SWAT Team.

As seen on the map (Map 8), the Fire Department operates in four districts, divided along Millikin Road and Maud Hughes Road. Fire Station 111 is on SR 747 near Mercedes Drive, Station 112 is located on Stumpf Lane near Yankee Road, and Station 113, which serves as Department Headquarters, is located on SR 747 near the interchange with SR 129.



Section VIII: Government & Community Services

Currently, there is no fire station in District 4. However, this District is served by the three existing fire stations and / or by mutual aid from the City of Monroe. With future development planned in the Township, it is anticipated that future demand for service will require a future fire station located in District 4. Also, the map indicates a possible future District 5 with a fire station located in the center of the Township if future demand for service requires it.

8.3 Police Services

Liberty Township contracts police services from the Butler County Sheriff's Office. The contract provides 1 Lieutenant, 2 Sergeants, 18 patrol Deputies, and 1 School Resource Officer, whose cost is shared with Lakota Local Schools. In addition, three detectives operate in Liberty Township. The contract also provides access to any and all of the Sheriff's Office resources if needed. Police Services in Liberty Township are funded by a dedicated Police Levy.

8.4 Services Department

The Liberty Township Services Department maintains the Township's 136 lane miles of roads and the Township's 12 parks. The Service Department also operates and maintains Springhill Cemetery along with several other historic cemeteries.

The Department is funded largely by a combination of gas, motor vehicle, and permissive tax. Cell phone tower leases at Fort Liberty Playland generate some income which is used to supplement maintenance of the Township parks.

8.5 Schools

Liberty Township is served by the Lakota Local School District. The District has 11 of their 23 schools located in the Township: Wyandot and Liberty Early Childhood Schools, Cherokee, Heritage,

Van Gordon, Independence, and Woodland Elementary Schools, Liberty and Lakota Plains Junior Schools, and Lakota East Freshman and High Schools (see Map 9 for locations). Lakota Local School's Central Office Building is also located in Liberty Township.

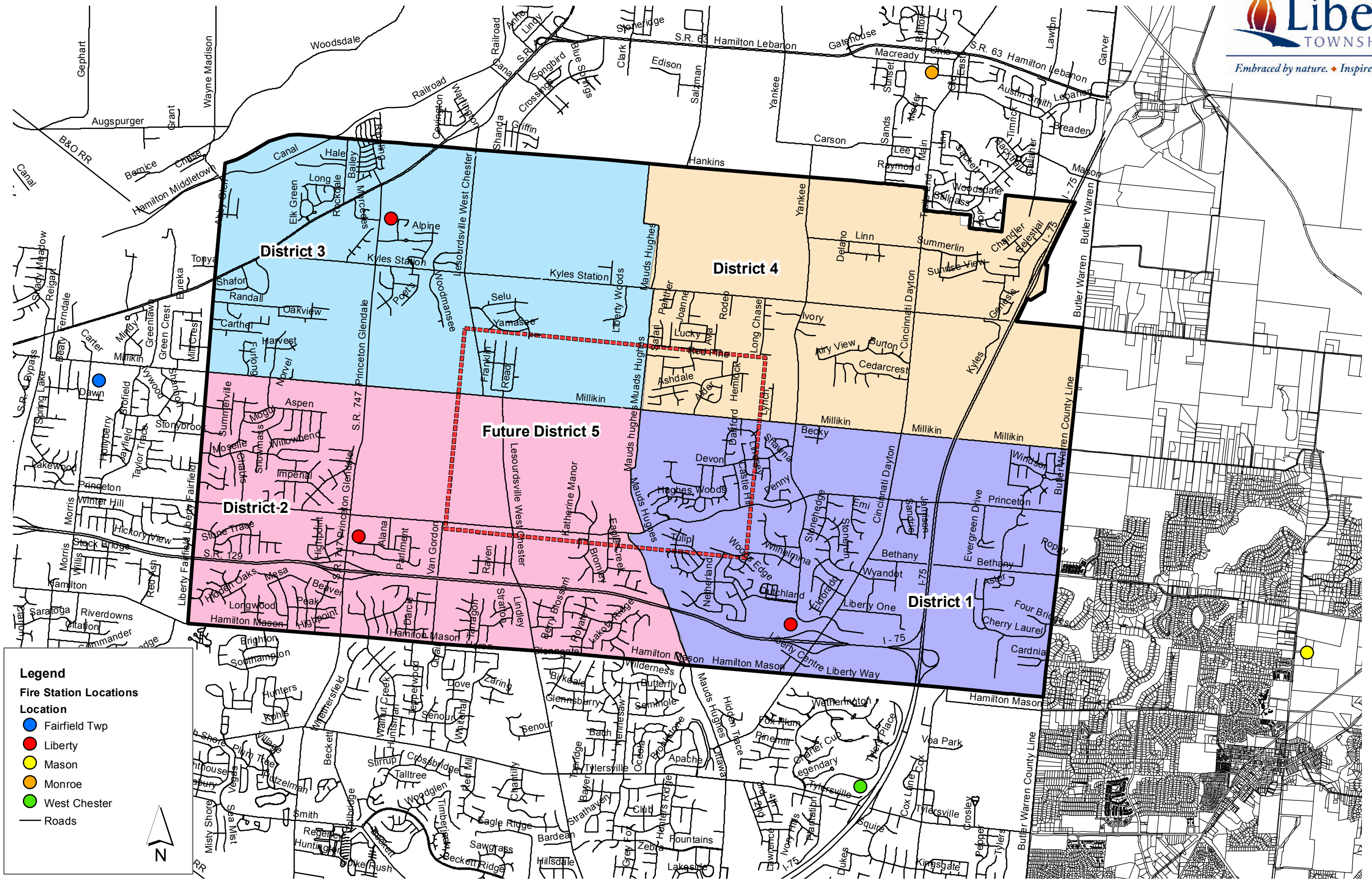
Liberty Township is also home to Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School. The school, which has seen growing enrollment through expansion, is recognized by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, but not affiliated with a parish.

Butler Technology & Career Development Center Regional Public Safety Education Complex is located in Liberty Township at the intersection of SR 747 and SR 4. Also, ITT Tech has a campus in Liberty Office Park off Hamilton-Mason Road.

8.6 Library and Postal Service

Liberty Township is served by MidPointe Library System, which currently has branch locations in Middletown, Trenton, and West Chester Township. MidPointe Library is currently exploring expanding their services to reach more Liberty Township residents.

Postal service has been a main battlefield in Liberty Township's struggle for identity. The Township is carved up among five different zip codes, the main two being 45044 (Middletown) and 45011 (Hamilton). Since the mid 1990's, efforts have been underway to gain a post office and a unified single zip code for the Township. In 2006, Liberty Township received permission from the US Postal Service to allow the use of the place name of Liberty Township, Ohio for the zip codes of 45011 and 45044. In 2013, this was also extended to addresses in Liberty Township within the 45069 zip code. However, a post office location with a unified zip code for Liberty Township remains elusive.




Legend

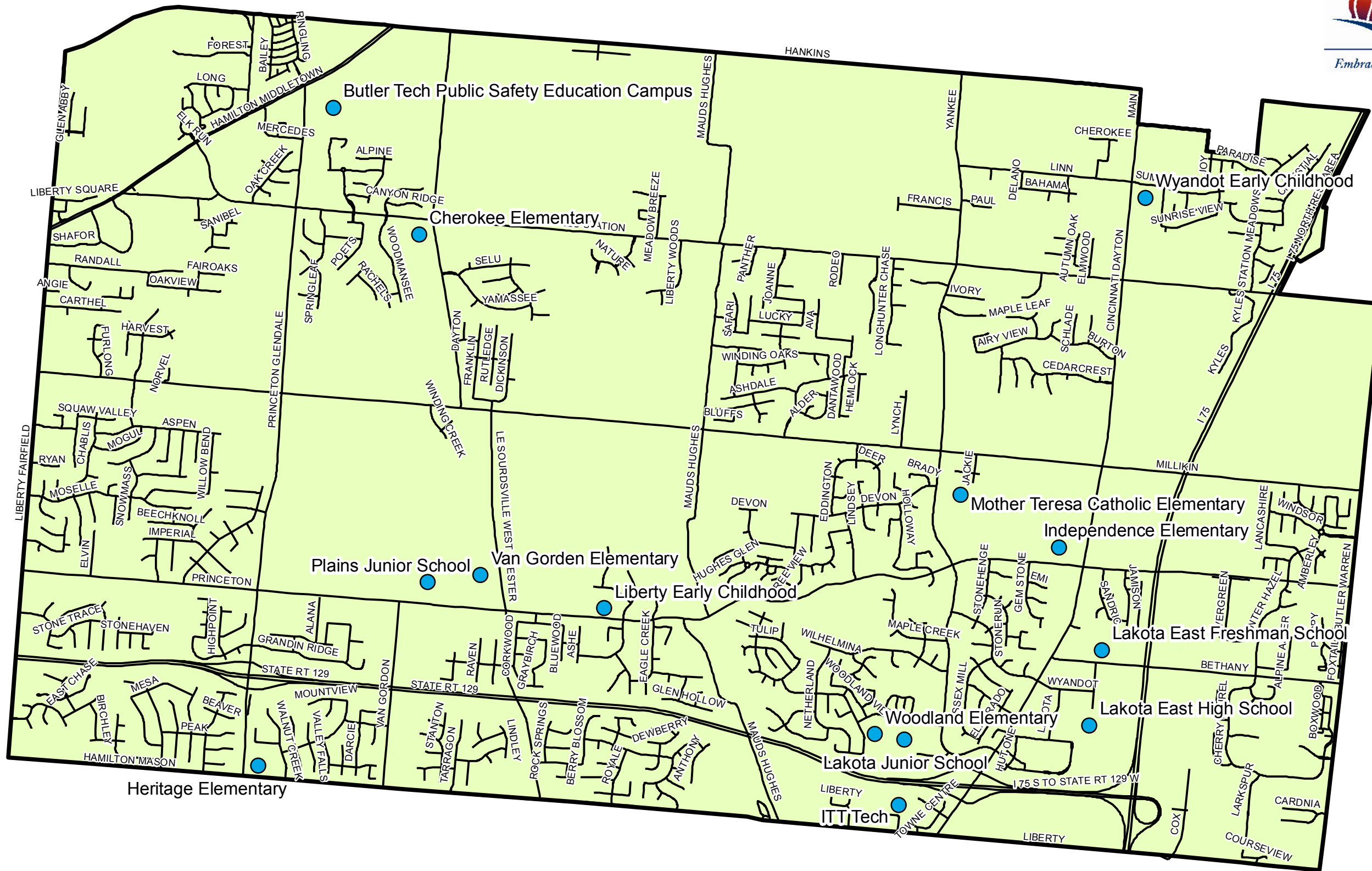
Fire Station Locations

Location

- Fairfield Twp
- Liberty
- Mason
- Monroe
- West Chester
- Roads



Map 8: Fire Station Locations



Map 9: School Locations

Legend
● School Locations





8.7 Shared Services

In 2010, state legislators approved a budget which significantly reduced state funding to local governments throughout Ohio. This has left many local governments scrambling to figure out how to continue to provide services to their residents with significant cuts to funding.

One idea which is gaining traction is the concept of shared services. Shared services are where different government entities collaborate or share the costs of services or materials. Liberty Township has been employing this idea in several ways for some time. The most significant example of shared services is the police contract between the Township and the Butler County Sheriff's Office. Through the contract, the Township is able to provide police service at a much lower cost than if the Township were to staff and administer its own police department with equal staff.

Another example is that every fall, the County Engineer's Office groups with other local cities, villages, and townships to solicit bids for road salt for the upcoming winter. By grouping the orders, the quantity is enough to attract more competitive bids, resulting in savings for all of the local government entities involved. Also, the BCEO occasionally loans townships services and equipment.

The Liberty Township Fire Department participates in mutual aid agreements with all of the Township's neighboring jurisdictions. These agreements allow the closest available rescue unit to respond to a call, regardless of jurisdiction, which results in the quickest available response times and avoids unnecessary duplication of services. Also, the Fire Department participates in group purchases of supplies and equipment whenever possible to lower costs.

The aim of shared services is to avoid duplication of efforts and/or personnel, gain economies of scale, and provide better service for less cost than can be otherwise delivered on one's own. While efficiencies and cost savings evident from shared services can be significant, these arrangements can be complex to ensure the relationship is, and remains beneficial and balanced for all entities involved. Usually, when government entities share or combine services, there is some sacrifice of local autonomy because control of the shared service must also be shared.

While the Township employs shared services in several ways, additional opportunities for sharing services should be considered.

8.8 Government and Community Services Goals and Objectives

The following Goals and Objectives related to government and community services were prepared by the Vision Plan Steering Committee and presented for comment at a public open house. These goals and objectives are not listed in any particular order of priority.

Goal #1: Continue to expand economic development efforts to attract business growth.

Objective: Work to increase the inventory of development ready commercial sites.

Objective: Continue to maintain a list of available commercial properties in the Township.

Objective: Project a professional image to attract economic development, especially large regional players and the Fortune 500 types.

Task: Need an adequately sized and more professional looking Administration Building.

Objective: Continue to look for ways to improve the development review process as a way to make developing in Liberty Township more streamlined and efficient, without sacrificing



Section VIII: Government & Community Services

quality, thoroughness, and rights to due process.

Objective: Continue to reach out to development groups and the real estate community to increase the awareness of opportunities in Liberty Township.

Goal #2: Expand government services in concert with growth of Township and residents' expectations.

Objective: Continue to periodically evaluate the need for increased services, especially fire and police as population and the number of businesses increase.

Task: Plan for a new fire station in the northeast quadrant to provide increased fire and EMS service as future development demands.

Objective: As the Township and surrounding area becomes more urban, continue to be aware of residents' needs and demands for new services.

Task: Regularly update the Township's plans, including the Comprehensive Vision Plan and the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Task: Create a formal procedure to update these long-range plans as needed between the regular updates.

Goal #3: Liberty Township needs to be competitive with other communities in the region in providing services, quality of life, and cost.

Objective: Benchmark our attributes and services against our peer communities.

Objective: Continue to seek creative and practical ways to more efficiently maintain or improve services to residents.

Objective: Lakota Schools is a large factor in the strength and stability of the Township, and we should continue to partner with and support the schools to benefit the community.