



**LIBERTY TOWNSHIP**  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT**

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP | BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO  
DECEMBER 15, 2020

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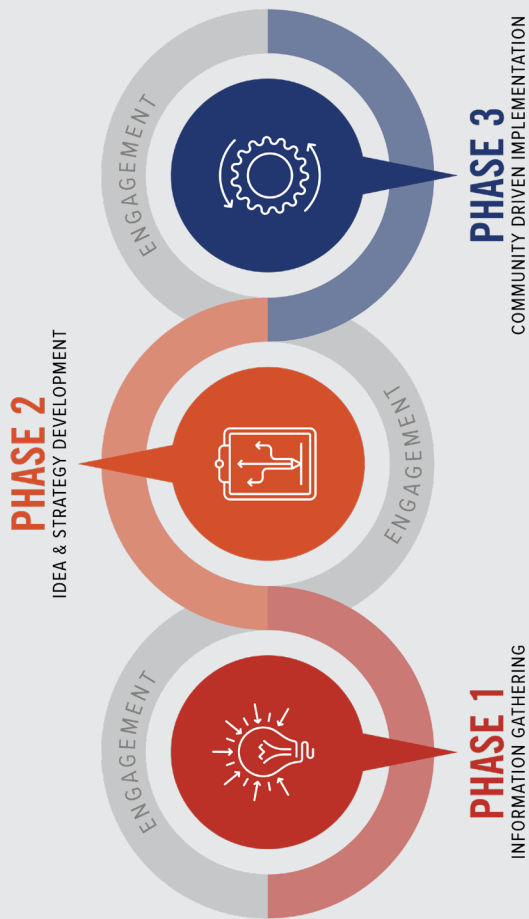


# Chapter One: Introduction

## PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Comprehensive planning is an all-inclusive approach to addressing a community's future growth and aspirations. The final product of the comprehensive planning process is a document that is used as a policy guide regarding community development, land uses and capital improvements such as roadways, public utilities and public services including police and fire protection. Comprehensive plans are prepared to address a range of compatibility issues between various uses of land, including the management of parks and the preservation of natural resources, identification and preservation of historically significant land and/or structures, and adequate planning for infrastructure needs. While at a minimum the comprehensive plan is a tool for land use and development, the final plan can also include strategies to support any number of community initiatives including identity, communication, collaboration, and programming, because often times these softer community topics can greatly influence and support the community's growth, development and investment decisions.

The purpose of this comprehensive planning effort is to make a positive impact on the community by proactively planning for and creating opportunities for growth versus solely reacting to change that occurs. A focus of the comprehensive planning process is to engage the residents and stakeholders of Liberty Township to establish a clear direction for the community over the next ten years. The *2020 Comprehensive Plan* is intended to be used as a tool to help guide and engineer change on elements such as land use, transportation, community facilities and utilities, housing, economic development, and Township identity. The final *2020 Comprehensive Plan* will not only identify the aspirations of the broader community but it will outline the processes, policies and tools that Township leaders need in order to guide the quality, quantity, and location of their growth within Liberty Township and to maintain the high quality of life that currently exists.



## PURPOSE OF THE EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

In March of 2019, Liberty Township kicked off a 12-month process to update the *2013 Comprehensive Plan*. The methodology consists of three key phases of information gathering, idea sharing and strategy development. This process is designed to produce a plan for the community by assessing existing community assets and barriers, identify areas of regional influence, document local and regional demographic and market trends, establish a vision for the community and develop sound strategies and tools that would enable the Township to maintain their success and quality of life well into the future. The resulting plan would be built on a foundation of community input and outreach and has focused on building consensus around community-wide aspirations, concerns and ideas.

The ‘Information Gathering Phase’ of the *2020 Comprehensive Plan* process focuses on confirming the Township’s future vision, identifying the community assets that can be leveraged moving forward, and uncovering the trends and perceptions that could be opportunities or challenges to achieving community goals in the future.

This *2020 Comprehensive Plan* Existing Conditions Report is an interim deliverable which provides an inventory of Liberty Township’s existing demographic, socioeconomic and market conditions, the current public perception of the community and a summary of previous community plans and initiatives. The document also seeks to analyze the community’s needs based on local trends and data and identify community concerns that should be addressed in the final *Comprehensive Plan*. Although much of the information in this interim document will remain in the final *2020 Comprehensive Plan*, some of the material in this document is background information that will not be carried forward.

This interim document will remain on file with the Township and will be used as a foundation for the final Vision Plan strategies and recommendations and can also be used as a tool by Township staff and leaders during final implementation.

This existing condition report is organized into six sections:

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter describes the purpose of a comprehensive plan and the overall planning process.

### **Chapter Two: Context**

This chapter outlines Liberty Township's history and provides a summary of past planning efforts that were reviewed in preparation of this *2020 Comprehensive Plan* process.

### **Chapter Three: Culture**

This chapter uses the 2018 Liberty Township Community Survey to outline the priorities and preferences for those individuals living and working within the community.

### **Chapter Four: Data**

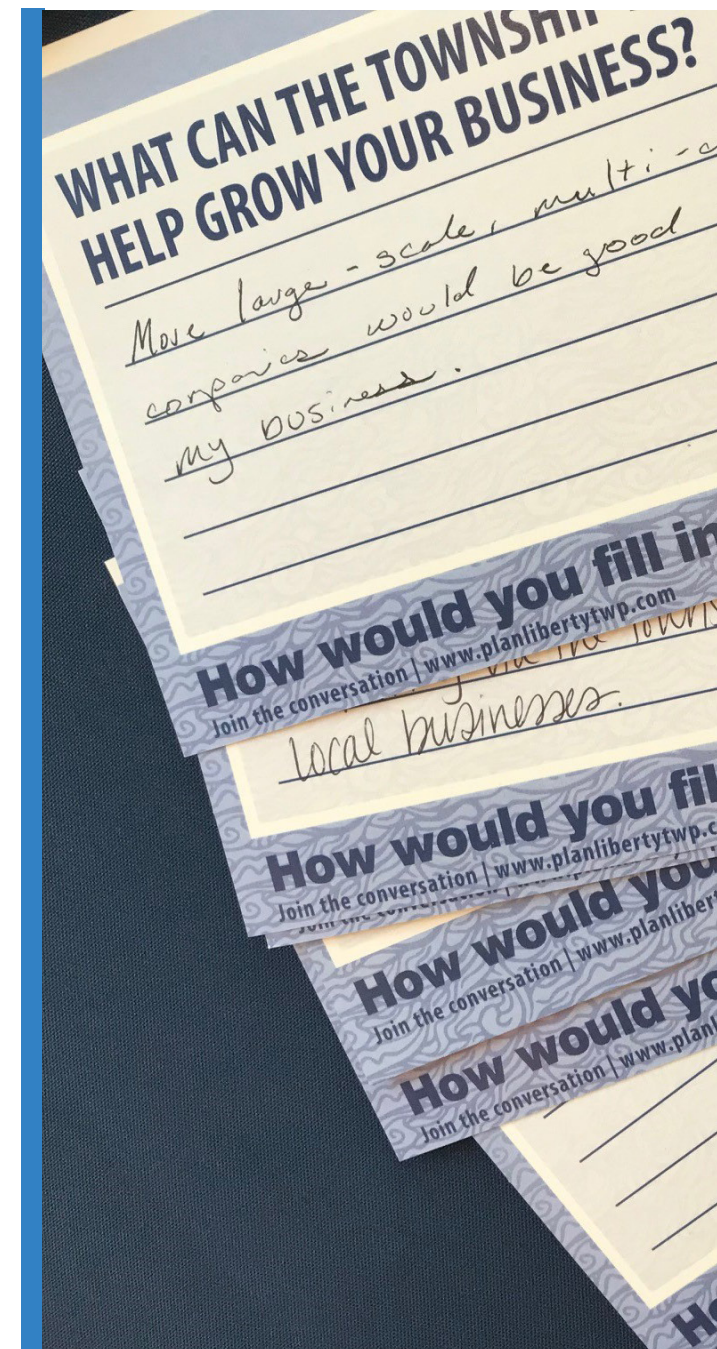
This chapter outlines Liberty Township's existing demographic, socioeconomic and market conditions. This section also establishes a baseline for motorized and non-motorized transportation systems, public infrastructure service areas, public health and safety systems, economic development tools and processes and established parks and open spaces systems.

### **Chapter Five: Perception**

This chapter balances the data driven perspective of Chapter Four by summarizing the input and dialogue from Liberty Township's residents, stakeholders and visitors. This section outlines the public engagement feedback by summarizing each of the public engagement sessions held during the first phase of the planning process.

### **Chapter Six: Community Trends and Challenges**

This chapter acts as the conclusion or key findings to this entire report. This section outlines the major factors that could either accelerate or impede growth, development and success in the future and serves as the basis for discussion in Phase Two of the planning process.





## COMMUNITY HISTORY

The area that would become Liberty Township was first settled by John Nelson in 1796, seven years before Ohio's admittance as an official state by the Enabling Act of 1802. Later formed in 1803 as one of five original Townships in Butler County, Liberty Township was divided in 1823 to create the new Union Township (now West Chester Township). This has left Liberty Township as the fourth smallest of the 13 Townships in Butler County based on geography, with an area of around 29 square miles in the southeast portion of the County.

Early settlers were predominantly from Maryland and New Jersey, buying large tracts of land and forming small, self-sufficient farming villages. These communities were focused around the turnpike roads, were primarily agricultural in nature, and provided services to travelers who were isolated from the services of larger communities. Bethany became one of the largest villages, due to its connection with the Great Miami Turnpike (now known as Cincinnati-Dayton Road, also known as SR. 25).

Following the end of the American Civil War in 1865, the Hughes and Kyles rail stations were constructed in the Township with the laying of the Cincinnati and Dayton Short Line Railroad. While the tunneled connection to Cincinnati was never completed due to financial strains, communities formed around the stations, providing services to the surrounding agricultural communities. These tracks were later removed, and then subsequently reinstalled by the New York Central Railroad.

The following decades leading through the late 19th into the early 20th century were times of quiet growth and development for Liberty Township. Many of the old churches, such as Bethany United Methodist Church (1875), were built around this time. Education also began to take off as a new law in 1853 established public schools in the Township. While schools had existed within Liberty Township previously, such as Kyles School established in 1858, the new law seen renewed interest in schools.

New and existing schools were built and replaced in the following years (1871, 1887, and 1880's) as the number of students expanded.

Liberty's next major wave of growth appeared in 1924, with the creation of the Horse Shoe Bend subdivision in the Northwest corner of the Township. The small-frame and concrete block homes found here housed workers from nearby Hamilton industries. This pattern would be seen again with the completion of Interstate 75 throughout the eastern portion of the Township in the 1960's, followed again by the Butler County Veterans Highway in the 1970's. The connections and access that these highways brought kicked off a wave of suburban-style development that continues to this day.

It was between the 1990's and 2010 that the majority of new subdivisions and homes were built in the Township, bringing with them new cohorts of working professionals and their families. While the 2008 housing market crash saw a sharp decline in the construction of new housing, Liberty Township retains its strategic location and connections with surrounding cities like Cincinnati and Dayton. During the same year, Cincinnati Children's Medical Center Liberty Campus opened up and began the turning point in the attraction of other medical facilities and Liberty Center. With the recent development of a major commercial node at Liberty Center in 2015, Liberty Township is evolving from a bedroom community into a suburban destination with a distinctive identity.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

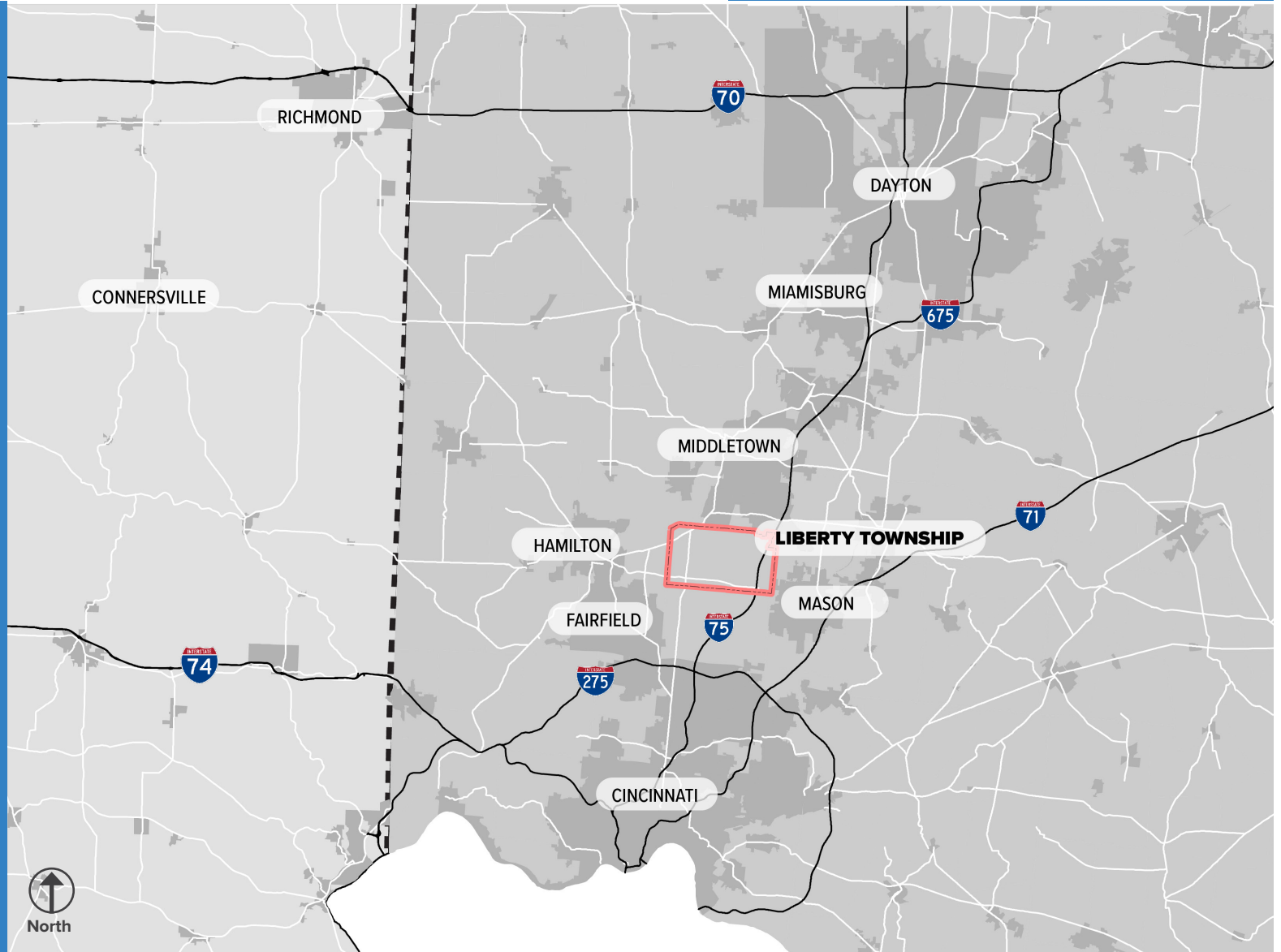
Today, Liberty Township is estimated to be a community of just over 44,000 residents, located in the southeastern corner of Butler County, Ohio. At 29 square miles, Liberty Township is geographically the fourth smallest of the 13 Townships in the County, but has the second highest population. Undergoing rapid changes in the last few decades, Liberty Township is not only forming strong economic connections to larger surrounding cities, but also in taking steps to solidify its own community identity.

Liberty Township has largely remained a bedroom community for professionals working in the cities of Cincinnati to the south, Dayton to the North, and Hamilton to the west, due to the proximity of major roadways, such as Interstate 75 and the Butler County Veterans Highway (SR-129). The presence of these major roadways, and other nearby connections including I-70, I-675, and I-275, cuts the daily commute times to any of the surrounding cities to less than 40 minutes.

Of particular importance to Liberty Township is the Liberty Way Interchange, located in the southeastern corner of the Township. This interchange between the Butler County Veterans Highway (SR-129) and I-75 is the primary access point to the community, giving residents ready access to a robust highway network. Capitalizing on this focus point, Liberty Township has seen a rapid growth in commercial development near this interchange, especially in the health sector with Cincinnati Children's Hospital Liberty Campus and Christ Hospital Medical Center located nearby. The more recent addition of the mixed-use Liberty Center has introduced an array of opportunities and amenities, where residents can find employment, housing, dining, and recreation in one location. Future trail and bikeway plans, made by the Liberty Township Trails Initiative in cooperation with the Miami2Miami Action Plan, have already begun building on this success and have incorporated Liberty Center into their own plans. Over time, these plans will see implementation of a fully interconnected trails system throughout Liberty Township, giving residents full access to this method of recreation and movement.



*Liberty Center Development*



Today, Liberty Township is a community of just over 44,000 residents, located in the southeastern corner of Butler County, Ohio. At 29 square miles, Liberty Township is geographically the fourth smallest of the 13 Townships in the County.

## PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

The comprehensive plan does not exist in a vacuum, but instead is the culmination of information, research, and existing plans coming together into one shared idea. Each document was reviewed and its ideas incorporated into the overall plan. The following discussion summarizes these planning documents, and where appropriate, highlights the influence they had on the current plan's creation.

### REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS

#### Butler County Thoroughfare Plan (March 2007 Update)

A short-, mid-, and long-range plan to address the transportation needs of Butler County residents that was updated and became effective March 17, 2007. The Plan provides planners, engineers, surveyors, administrators, developers, and government officials a central reference document when making decisions that may affect movement throughout the county.

The Plan provided an inventory of roads, trails, and bikeways that Liberty Township currently has, as well as proposed routes the Township hopes to implement in the coming future. This allows reasonable projections on how commuter habits may change with the introduction of this new infrastructure.

#### Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (2016 Update)

Created through the joint efforts of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), its members, and the incorporation of past plans, this federally accepted regional plan outlines the policies, programs, and projects to be implemented over the next 20-years. The purpose of this plan is to create an integrated, intermodal transportation system that allows the efficient movement of people and goods throughout the region. The plan focuses on the region surrounding the Cincinnati area, where the three state borders are in close proximity. Additionally, this regional transportation plan is currently being updated. It is anticipated that the new plan will be adopted in June 2020.

## LOCAL PLANNING AND DESIGN EFFORTS

#### Parks Master Plan (April 2009)

Created in response to extensive public input collected during the creation of the *2006 Comprehensive Plan*, the Parks Master Plan calls for the expansion of parks and recreational facilities within Liberty Township, along with the programs and services to accompany these facilities. Parks, open spaces, trails, and recreation opportunities were all identified as priorities by the community.

#### Downtown Bethany Vision Plan (2010)

This plan specifically targets the historic Bethany Downtown, its preservation, and revitalization. Bethany was the historic community and commercial center of Liberty Township, and the plan's focus is to re-generate interest in the downtown as a destination. Outlined are goals and objectives created with the aim of making Bethany a walkable urban environment, sensitive to the surrounding residential communities.

#### 2013 Comprehensive Plan (2013 Update)

This document is a comprehensive plan adopted on February 4, 2014 by the Liberty Township Board of Trustees. The Plan is intended to help plan and guide future development in Liberty Township for a 20-year time period, while being updated every 5 years. The plan contains information regarding community history, demographics, current housing stock, economic conditions, parks and trails inventories, and a land use plan, as well as the tasks to complete each identified objective.

The *2013 Comprehensive Plan* process included the development of a Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Plan (Trails Plan), established in Section 5.2 of the *2013 Comprehensive Plan*, the *Bicycle, Pedestrian and Trails Plan* seeks to connect the community by updating the network of safe paths and sidewalks to connect subdivisions, parks, businesses, schools, and other community destinations. The *Trails Plan* was made as a functional part of the *2013 Comprehensive Plan*, rather than its own document.

### **Millikin Way Interchange Development Vision - Board (April 2016)**

This project, conducted with the aid of McGill Smith Punshon (MSP) Design, illustrates a potential interchange development layout and the surrounding planned commercial uses. The illustrated commercial uses were based on the adopted *2013 Comprehensive Land Use Plan* and the recommended uses in the area. The plan was intended to provide a visual representation of the planned interchange to allow staff to begin marketing the area.

### **Pedestrian Feasibility Study (March 2017)**

This project, conducted with the aid of LJB Inc. and McGill Smith Punshon (MSP) Design, focuses on the study area in the Township's southeast commercial district. The study outlines several goals and objectives generated from the *2013 Comprehensive Plan* in identifying pedestrian walkways, connecting these existing systems, and encouraging the construction of such systems in future developments. Constraints are identified, solutions suggested, and possible travel networks mapped out. The study also includes an inventory of the conditions of existing systems, and possible investment requirements.

### **Increasing Pedestrian Walkways - Display Board (March 2017)**

This study provides a visual depiction of an area focused on Interstate 75 and State Road 129 to increase pedestrian walk/bike access around the highways. Pedestrian only bridges are illustrated across I-75 between Cincinnati Children's Hospital and The Christ Hospital, and across S.R. 129 between Cincinnati Children's Hospital and Liberty Center; an on-road connection across I-75 on Liberty Way; and, a tunnel across Liberty Way to Voice of America Park.

### **Miami2Miami Action Plan (May 2018)**

An idea originally studied in 2002, this study is an ambitious plan to connect the two longest multi-use trails present in Butler and Warren counties, the Little Miami Scenic Trail and the Great Miami River Trail, respectively. Over 30 percent of the currently planned trail connections have been implemented over the last 16-years, with the pace accelerating as development occurs around trail sites. The trail system is envisioned as both an economic and health driver for communities throughout both counties, with surrounding residents willing to pay upwards of \$9,000 to be located next to the trails. Hopes exist for a 120-mile trail loop connecting Mason, Hamilton, Dayton, and Xenia.

### **SR 129 Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study (October 2018)**

Building on prior studies, this comprehensive and detailed study explores the various construction options of a pedestrian bridge over State Road 129, connecting Liberty Center with the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Liberty Campus. The study includes maps and diagrams of the site, model images of the predicted final product, two alternative construction costs, and funding sources. Costs are generated with the assumption of worst-case structure depth, and minimum aesthetic construction. The study was carried out on behalf of Liberty Township by LJB Inc. and McGill Smith Punshon (MSP) Design.

### **Millikin Road @ I-75 Interchange Study (January 2020)**

Started in 2017 and then updated in 2020, This study was completed in cooperation with the engineering firm LJB Inc., the study explores the feasibility of creating an interchange on I-75 with Millikin Road. The study provides an analysis of current road conditions, previous efforts in exploring project feasibility, and notes the inclusion of the project in other regional plans, including the *OKI 2040 Regional Transportation Plan* and *Butler County Thoroughfare Plan*. This document serves as the "Planning (PL)" phase of ODOT's Project Development Process for the potential installation of a new interchange.

## **New Township Facilities**

### **Liberty Township Administration Building (April 2019, Construction)**

In April of 2019, Liberty Township officials broke ground on the new Administrative/ Police Facility building and site along State Route 747 between Princeton and Millikin Roads. Design of the structure is reminiscent of the Hughes rail station located on the site in the past. The goal is to occupy the new facility by late summer 2020.

### **Fire Station 112 Relocation Project (April 2020, Construction)**

In summer of 2018, the Liberty Township Board of Trustees approved a resolution to enter into a contract for an option to purchase property located at 7655 Princeton Road for the relocation of Fire Station 112, currently located on Stumpf Lane off Yankee Road. The new location will allow the Liberty Township Fire Department (LTFD) to maximize its call response radius. This equates to significantly improving response time to the northeast quadrant of the Township while maintaining the exceptional level of service in the southeast quadrant that the community has come to expect. After being purchased by the Township, demolition of the single existing home on the project site was completed in the late summer of 2019. Construction of the new facility began in the spring of 2020, and are expected to be completed by the spring of 2021. In addition to the construction of the new facility, updates to Fire Stations 111 are planned to ensure that the existing facility remains up-to-date and efficient.

*The new administration building under construction.*





## Chapter Two: Culture

In 2018, prior to the start of the *2020 Comprehensive Plan* process, Liberty Township facilitated a community-wide survey to better understand the priorities and preferences of those living in the community. With the goal of getting feedback both from residents and businesses as an initial input to the upcoming comprehensive planning process, the survey was made publicly available from October 12th of 2018 to January 8th of 2019 through an online website known as SurveyMonkey.

Links to the survey were shared via the Township's Twitter and Facebook page, posted on the Township website, pushed through weekly e-newsletters, and emailed to all Home Owner Associations on the registered contact list. About 2.3 percent of the community (993 residents) responded to the survey, with the average completion time ranging around 5 minutes. In addition to the high response rate, the community survey was successful in identifying the values of the Liberty Township community. By understanding the values of Liberty Township now, the comprehensive planning process can seek to build upon these common themes and interests moving forward and can work to preserve the values and valuable assets of the community.



The 15-question survey distributed to Township residents and stakeholders worked to establish the following community values and priorities:

**Residents value the quality housing in the Township.**

Nearly 70 percent of the survey respondents identified that quality housing is what either drew them to Liberty Township or what keeps them within the community.

**Residents value the community's schools.**

Nearly 69 percent of the survey respondents identified that quality schools is what either drew them to Liberty Township or what keeps them within the community. Schools placed second to quality housing by a margin of only 3 votes.

**Residents value the rural nature of the community.**

Rounding out the community's top three reasons for locating or staying with Liberty Township is the rural nature and character of the community.

**Residents put a priority on the rural nature of the community.**

Within the community survey, residents showed that they not only value the rural nature and character of the community but that they would prioritize the preservation of the character over other amenities such as housing diversity and commercial development. Over 56 percent of the respondents identified that preserving the rural nature of the community was a critical priority. Support of this rural character was also found in the high prioritization of the community parks and recreation system (49.65 percent) and walkable community/ pedestrian and bike connections (49.85 percent).

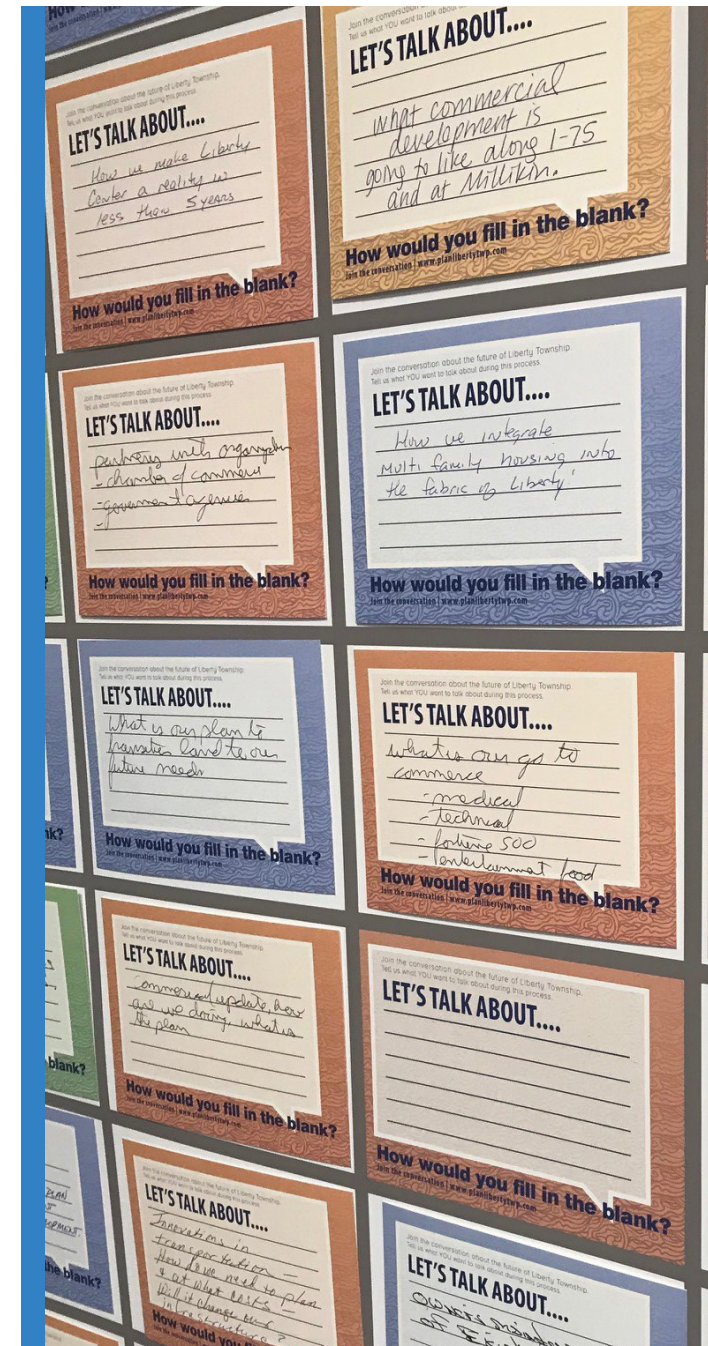
**Residents value infrastructure that enhances the community's connectivity.**

Over 53 percent of the survey respondents prioritized "roads and infrastructure" as a focal point for the community. More specifically the community responded that having a walkable community should be a priority (49.85 percent) and that having a walkable community was important to them (60.02 percent). While broader categories of infrastructure were prioritized specific questions on roadway improvements fell lower on the priority scale (Millikin Interchange specifically), however general roadway maintenance scored higher.

### Residents put a priority on open space instead of development diversity.

Using a scale of one (low) to five (high), respondents ranked varying development types in the community, and prioritized parks and recreation above uses such as new residential homes, diverse housing options, commercial development, and more businesses/ jobs opportunities. While the survey questions did not ask respondents to rank the choices against one another, housing diversity and residential development both ranked low as individual priorities.

At the end of the official survey, residents were invited to make additional comments and leave their thoughts on the current state of the Township. While wide ranging, many of these comments can be classified into four topics: no additional taxes, preservation of the nature and rural character of Liberty Township, maintenance of roadways and the prevention of traffic congestion, and provide more transparent and effective communication channels.





## Chapter Three: Data

An analysis of Liberty Township’s demographic, market conditions, infrastructure and amenities were conducted to guide the planning process and provide the necessary background information for developing policy and improvement recommendations. This section is organized into 10 topics, including demographics, land use, zoning, historical sites, transportation, infrastructure, public services, public facilities, and parks. Each section presents and assesses current trends, and notes important land use, development and infrastructure implications.

For context, data and information for surrounding communities and geographic areas are included to give points of comparison and understanding to the Liberty Township data.

Information used when making these analyses were drawn primarily from the following sources:

### **2017 American Community Survey, 2010 U.S. Census**

In addition to the decennial census (2010), the U.S. Census Bureau continually conducts dozens of other censuses and surveys, including the American Community Survey. The American Community Survey is an ongoing survey that gathers information from a community through a small sample, rather than the large and extensive 10-year survey most are familiar with.

### **ESRI Business Analyst**

ESRI Business Analyst is a powerful tool for analyzing data within a specific geographic location. This allows data to be observed at a very local level, and be compared with surrounding groups.

Data was used from the US 2010 Census, 2017 American Community Surveys, and ESRI-derived projections for the year 2024. Topics included population levels, community demographics, and market analysis for Liberty Township, Butler County, comparable communities, and the State of Ohio.

### **Butler County Engineer’s Office (BCEO)**

Operating under the auspices of Butler County government, this agency is responsible for the design, building, and maintenance of the county’s roadway network. While some responsibility of maintenance is shared with local municipalities and surrounding counties, Butler County itself manages 266-miles of roadways, and the 407 bridges locally.

Information provided includes a map of the 2017 traffic and congestion levels throughout the Township, and the full feasibility 2017 study for the future Millikin Road Interchange.



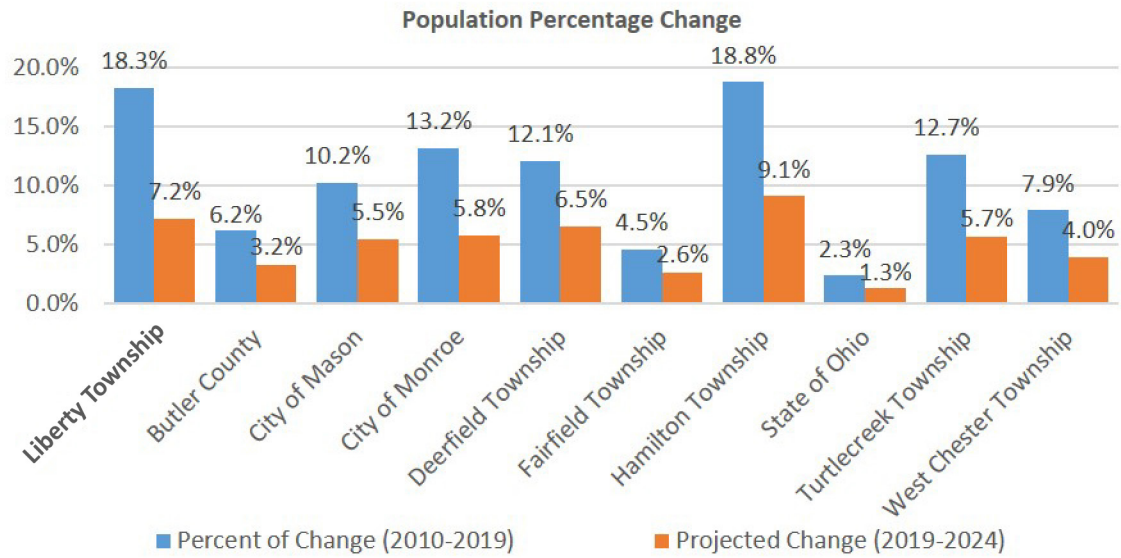
## DEMOGRAPHICS: WHO ARE THEY?

### POPULATION

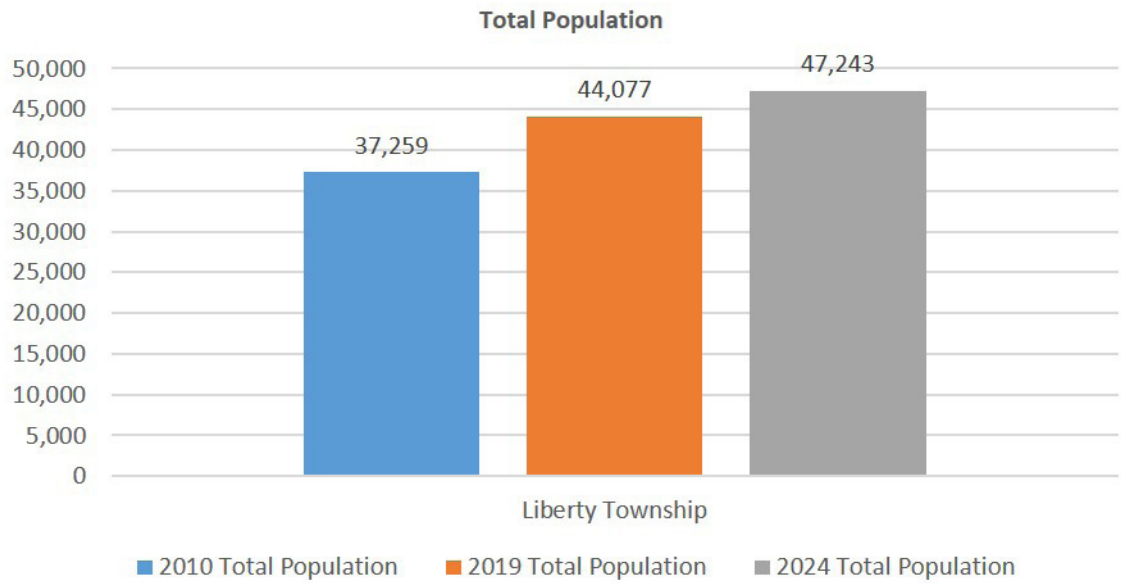
**Liberty Township continues to be one of fastest growing communities in Southwest Ohio.** Liberty Township had an estimated 44,077 residents in 2019, which is 11.3 percent of Butler County's total population. This population figure represents a 377 percent increase over the Township's 1990 population figure of 9,249 and over an 18 percent increase from 2010. The population is fairly evenly split between male (49.7 percent) and female (50.3 percent).

For comparison Hamilton Township (18.3 percent), while smaller than Liberty Township, has experienced an increase in their total population since 2010 that is similar to Liberty Township. The projected population growth for both City of Mason and the City of Monroe is projected to either slow or level off between 2019 and 2024 while Liberty Township's population however is projected to grow at a rate of 7.2 percent. Deerfield Township, a community to the northeast is also expected to grow by 6.53 percent by 2024.

The population growth within the Southwest Ohio communities is significant. While Liberty Township and its neighboring communities have seen considerable growth, Butler County as a whole has only grown by six percent between 2010 and 2019. The County is projected to increase by 3.2 percent by 2024. The State of Ohio, in comparison, experienced a 2.3 percent of change from 2010 to 2019 and is projected to grow less than 1.5 percent by 2024.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Community Profile Report.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Community Profile Report.



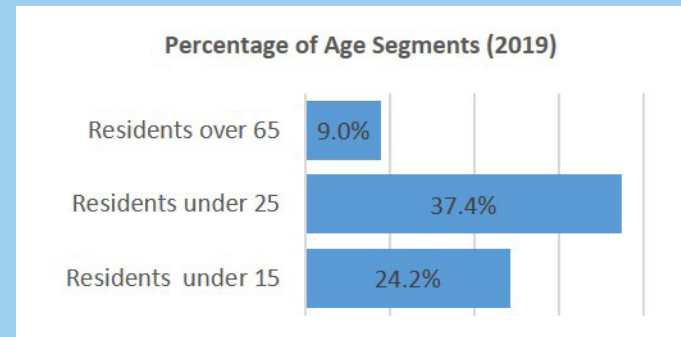
## HOUSEHOLDS

**Liberty Township is a family-oriented community.** Liberty Township was home to 13,536 individual households in 2019, increasing by 14 percent since 2010. In 2017, 86 percent of Liberty Township households were identified as being family households. In comparison, of Butler County’s 142,861 households, only 69 percent were identified as being family households. Only Hamilton Township in Warren County approaches Liberty Township’s proportion of family households, at 82.6 percent.

The average Liberty Township household size is 3.25 residents, which is much higher than the surrounding communities who have an average household size of anywhere between 2.61 to 2.87. Average household size accounts for a wide array of living options, including single family occupancy, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements. Liberty Township’s higher average household size indicates that the Township is made up predominately of families, demonstrated by the high percentage of youth within the community. Approximately 37 percent of Liberty Township’s population is under the age of 25, with a little over 24 percent being under the age of 15. In contrast, 9 percent of the population is over the age of 65, indicating that Liberty Township’s households are largely one or two parent households living with one or more children.

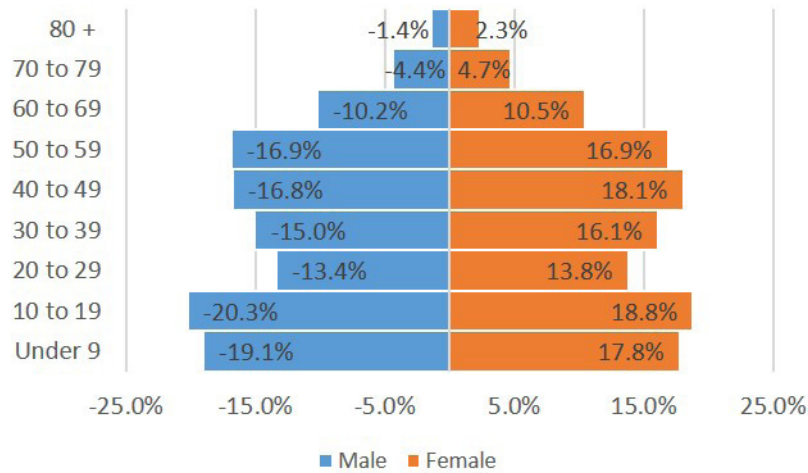
Average Household Size	2010	2019
City of Mason	2.77	2.78
City of Monroe	2.63	2.63
Deerfield Township	2.69	2.69
Fairfield Township	2.87	2.87
Hamilton Township	2.77	2.76
<b>Liberty Township</b>	<b>3.22</b>	<b>3.25</b>
Turtlecreek Township	2.65	2.61
West Chester Township	2.73	2.76
Butler County	2.63	2.65
State of Ohio	2.44	2.43

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Age by Sex Report.



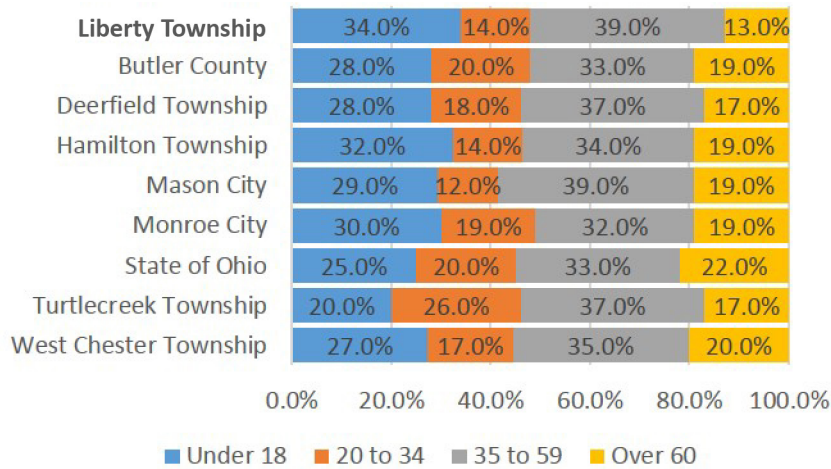
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Age by Sex Report.

**Liberty Township Population Pyramid (2019)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Age by Sex Report.

**Age Comparison**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Age by Sex Report.

## MEDIAN AGE

**Liberty Township is a young community, but is growing older.** Liberty Township’s median age is 35.1, which is a 1.14 percent increase since 2010. The Township has aged in all age groupings, including children, young adults, those of working age and the elderly. While Liberty Township’s population is aging, they remain, on average, younger than the surrounding communities.

Liberty Township has about 40 percent of its 2019 population being of working age (ages 30 to 59), and nearly 32.1 percent of this total being made up of children and young adults (ages 0 to 19). These age cohorts are much larger than Butler County, which has 21.3 percent of its population being of working age, and 28.6 percent being children. These percentages have shifted from 2010. Between 2010 and 2019 Liberty Township’s working age population remained relatively the same while the percentage of children decreased by 4.4 percent.

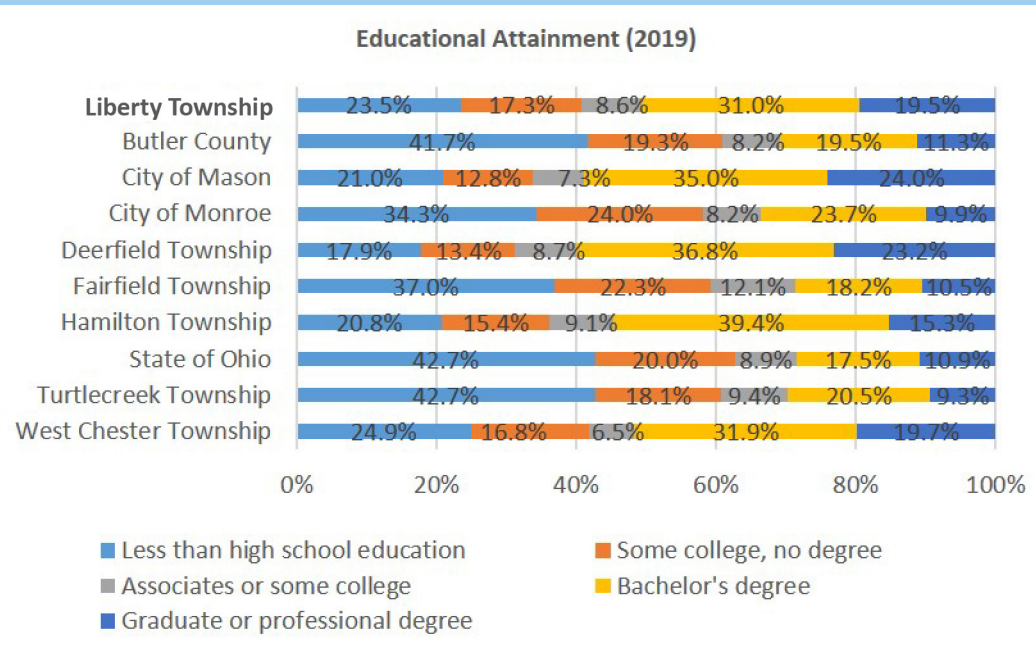
Liberty Township was underrepresented in young adults (ages 20 to 34) in 2010, but has grown in 2019 to match the average of its neighbors at 17.8 percent of the total population. Nearby communities including West Chester Township (16.6 percent), Deerfield Township (17.9 percent) and the City of Monroe (17.4 percent) all have comparable percentages of young adults represented within their residential populations. Even with this comparative gap, Liberty Township’s young adult population has continued to grow and has increased by 6 percent since 2010.

The elderly (over 60) population is also relatively underrepresented in Liberty Township with only 14 percent, relative to the Butler County’s 21.2 percent. The communities surrounding Liberty Township including West Chester Township (21.4 percent), Deerfield Township (17.3 percent) and the City of Monroe (21.6 percent) also have higher instances of elderly populations. While the elderly population is under represented, this age cohort has increased over four percent since 2010.

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

**Liberty Township is slowly becoming more diverse.** The majority of Liberty Township residents in 2019 identified as Caucasian, which is comparable to the City of Mason (77.5 percent) and West Chester Township (75.4 percent). Liberty Township has a higher proportion of African Americans (7.9 percent) when compared to the surrounding communities of Hamilton Township (2.5 percent), the City of Monroe (5.3 percent), Deerfield Township (4.1 percent) and the City of Mason (4 percent). The Township's proportion of Asian residents (6.1 percent) is significantly higher than Hamilton Township (2.3 percent), Fairfield Township (3.4 percent) and the City of Monroe (3.1 percent) but is less than half the percentage of reflected in the City of Mason (15.4 percent) and Deerfield Township (15.7 percent). The total proportion of the population that identifies as Hispanic is 2.8 percent, and is comparable to the average found in most adjacent communities. West Chester Township has a considerably higher percentage than its surrounding neighbors (5.9 percent).

While still a small percentage, Liberty Township is becoming more diverse as time goes on. From 13.1 percent in 2010 to 17.7 percent in 2019, the number of non-white residents has increased by 4.6 percent. This growing diversity is gradually occurring as the original wave of primarily white immigrants are joined by other groups from surrounding communities.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Community Profile Report.

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

**Liberty Township is home to highly educated and high earning residents.** Individuals of Liberty Township enjoy a high level of education, with over 31 percent of the population having obtained a bachelor’s degree, and another 19.5 percent of the population having attained a graduate or professional degree. Combined with those who have attained an associate degree or at least some level of college, the residents with some level of higher education reach 76.4 percent of the population. Butler County (30.8 percent) and the State of Ohio (28.4 percent) both trail Liberty Township by more than 18 percent in those with higher education. In neighboring communities, the proportion of adults with at least some college education range from a low of 57.3 percent (Turtlecreek Township) to 82.1 percent (Deerfield Township).

The level of education attainment is a good indication of the job security and financial resilience of a community. Those with higher degrees can expect a higher salary, more job security, and to have more discretionary income to spend locally. Between 2010 and 2019 the median household income of Liberty Township increased by 8.4 percent, and today Liberty Township’s median household income stands at \$105,845, substantially higher than the median income of both Butler County (\$65,398) and the State of Ohio (\$54,966). The figure is also nearly 25 percent higher than that of the City of Monroe (\$79,838). While City of Mason (\$103,021), Hamilton Township (\$103,996), West Chester Township (\$89,561), and Deerfield Township (\$97,797), all surpass the median income range of Butler County and the State of Ohio, they all fall below Liberty Township in terms of income earned.

While Liberty Township has a high median income level, there are portions of the population hovering at or below the poverty line. As of 2019, 4.4 percent of Liberty Township’s population was reportedly under the poverty line, which is significantly lower than both Butler County (17.3 percent) and the State of Ohio (22.5 percent). While low when compared to the County and the State, in comparison to surrounding communities Liberty Township sits right in the middle with the fourth highest poverty rate. Turtlecreek Township (4.7) sits just above Liberty Township, while West Chester Township (7.3) and Fairfield Township (8.2) have a significantly higher number of households below the poverty line, nearly twice that of Liberty Township.

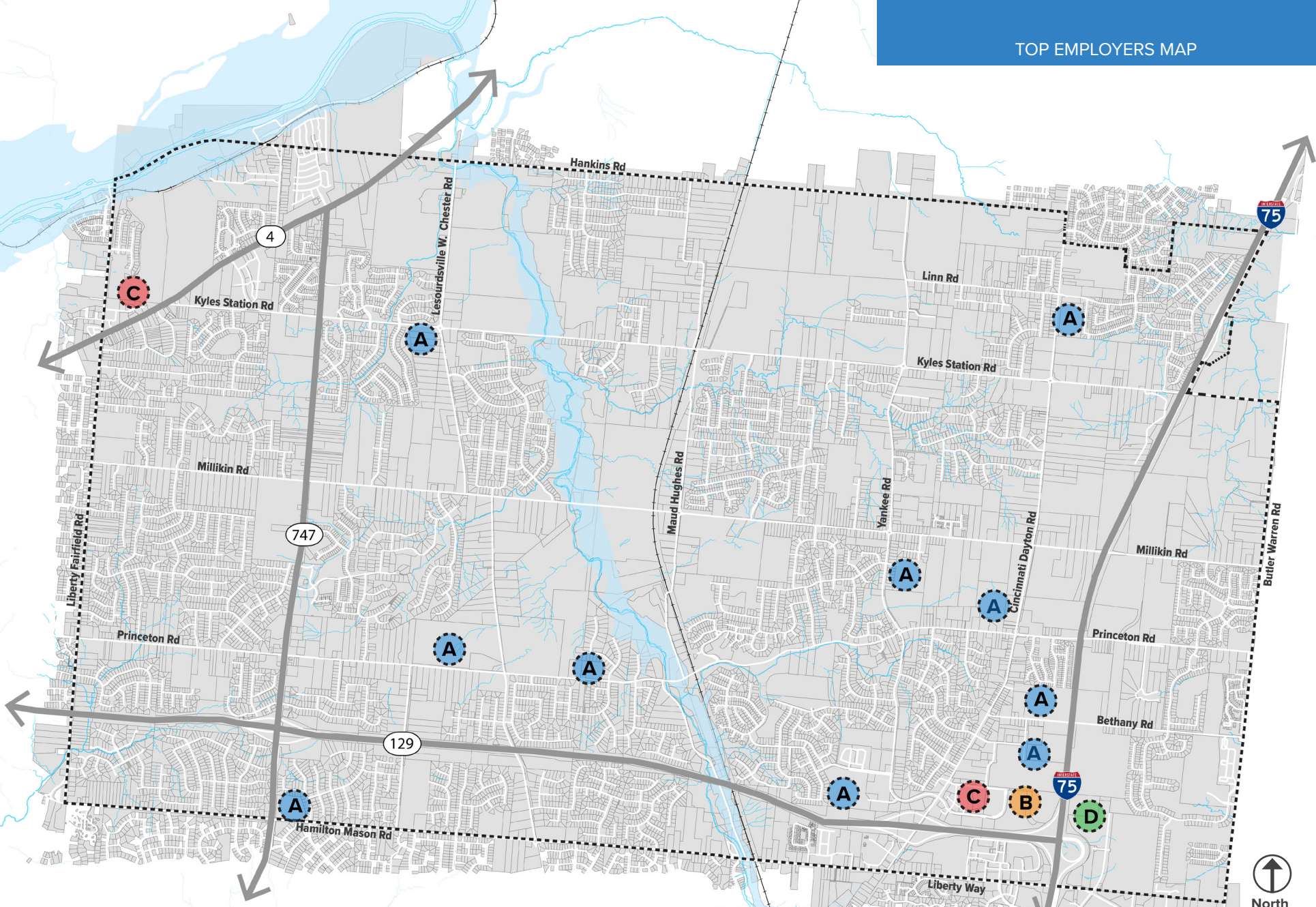


## EMPLOYMENT & INDUSTRY: WHERE DO THEY WORK?

### TOP INDUSTRIES

**Liberty Township's residents are employed in high level positions, often within educational institutions and health care facilities.** Fifty-four percent of Liberty Township's population actively participates in the workforce. As non-working children between the ages of 0-16 make up 35.8 percent of the population, only 24 percent of the population is classified as non-working. This percentage includes those who are unemployed (2 percent), stay at home spouses, and retirees (roughly 9 percent).

For those in the workforce, the predominate positions are within management, business, science and art occupations, as well as general sales and office occupations. The Township residents typically work within the educational services, and health care and social assistance industries, aligning with Liberty Township's top employers being Lakota Local School District and Cincinnati Children's Hospital: Liberty Campus. Additional employment industries included manufacturing (17.4 percent) and administrative and waste management services (10.9 percent).



TOP EMPLOYERS LEGEND

- |  |                   |  |                   |           |                               |
|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
|  | Major Roadway     |  | Waterway          | <b>A.</b> | Lakota Local School District  |
|  | Township Boundary |  | Floodplain        | <b>B.</b> | Cincinnati Childrens Hospital |
|  | Parcel            |  | Park / Open Space | <b>C.</b> | The Kroger Co.                |
|  | Railroad          |  | Major Employer    | <b>D.</b> | Christ Hospital               |

While the identified occupations and industries are not indicative to employment sectors within the Township, Liberty Township’s business community includes an estimated 756 businesses operating in the developed spaces around the community. This figure does not fully capture the businesses operating out of homes, which is a practice that exists yet is more challenging to track and monitor. These 756 businesses employ roughly 9,461 workers. The Township’s top employers include Lakota Local School District, Cincinnati Children’s Liberty Campus, and the Kroger Company, located at two separate locations.

The community has seen new commercial developments in three primary areas of the Township – in the Central Business District around I-75, along State Route 747, and along State Route 4. The new developments have taken shape over the last few years in the form of office buildings, retail strip centers, medical offices, restaurants, as well as the redevelopment of homes that have been converted into businesses. The redevelopment of homes into businesses has occurred most notably in the Downtown Bethany area.

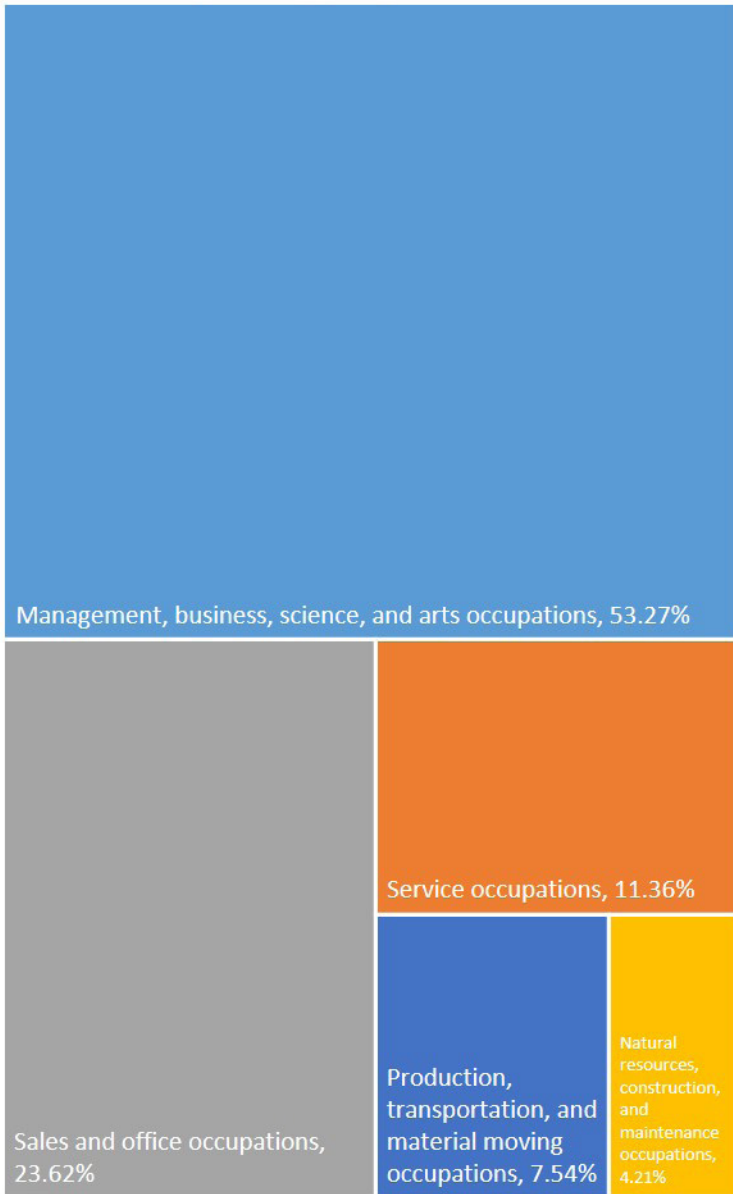
Liberty Township Top Employers	
Employers	Number of Employees
Lakota Local School District	967
Cincinnati Childrens Hospital	700
The Kroger Company	425
The Christ Hospital	300

Source: 2019 Liberty Township

2019 NEW Business Openings
Venture Medical, LLC (Downtown Bethany)
Amstan Logistics (Liberty Center)
Vigilant Technologies (Liberty Center)
LeMacaron (Liberty Center)
Innovative Security Products (Downtown Bethany)
Jersey Mike’s Subs (CBD – Kroger Marketplace retail center)
Bank of America (CBD – Liberty Falls Retail)
SpotOn (Downtown Bethany)
Dairy Queen (SR 4)
Arthritis & Rheumatology (CBD)
Liberty Firehouse Storage (SR 747)
Spinning Forchetta (Restaurant within the Elks - Route 4)
iFLY (Liberty Center)
Molly’s Cupcakes (Liberty Center)
Unique Nails (Route 4) – expanding within same retail center
Tracker Boats Sales & Service (CBD – old Moe’s)
Cozy’s Café & Pub – patio enclosure (Downtown Bethany)
Mercy – Liberty Falls X-ray tenant finish/expansion (CBD – CinDay)
Mercy Health Liberty Medical Center (SR 4)
Burger King (Route 4)
Honey Baked Ham Co. (Lakota Pointe Retail Center)
Agave & Rye (LC)
Graydon (LC office building)
Global Salon (LC)

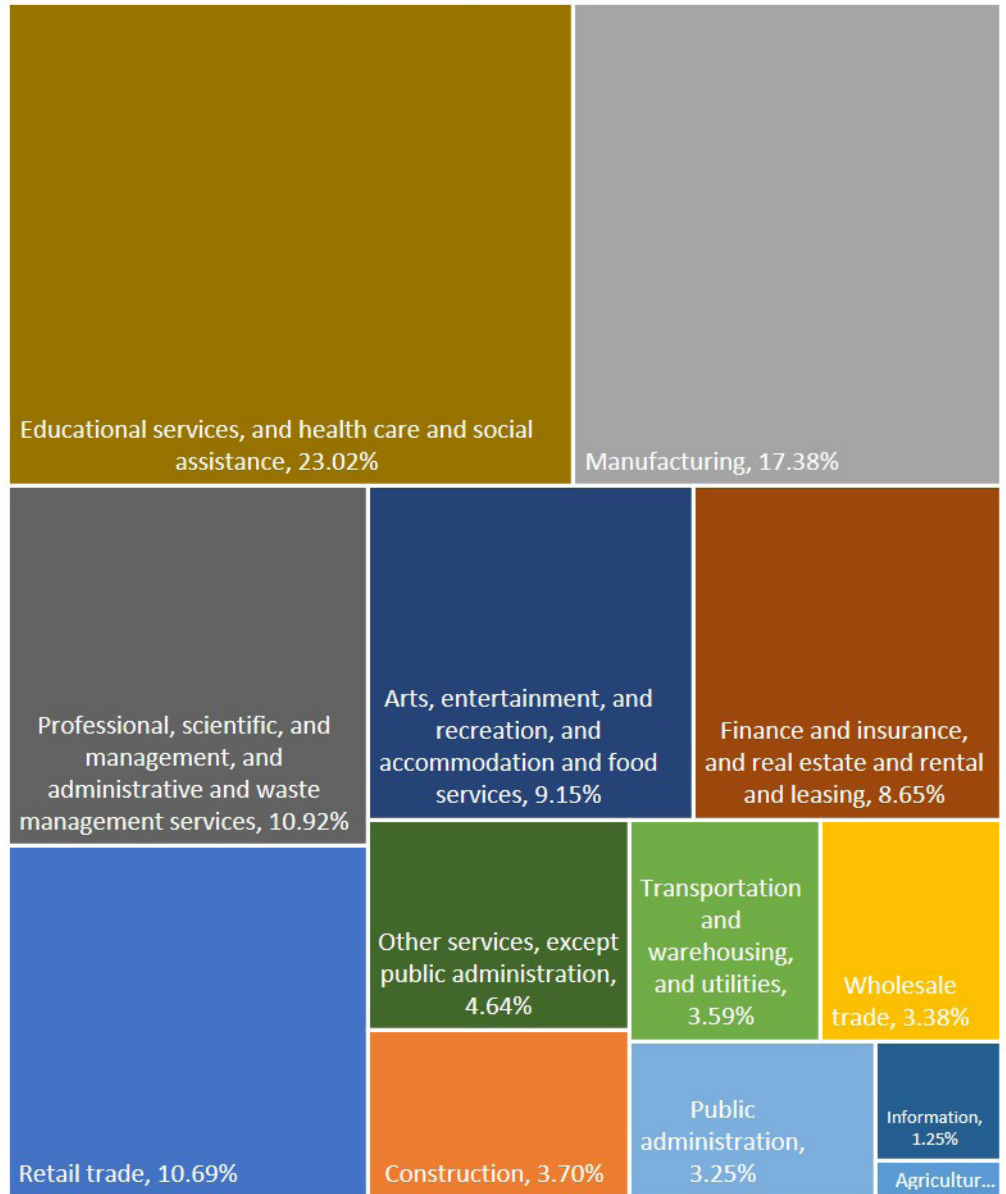
Source: 2019 Liberty Township Economic Development Report.

**Liberty Township Occupational Breakdown**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey

**Liberty Township Industry Breakdown**



Source: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey

## COMMUTER BEHAVIOR

Butler County has a net outflow in workforce, with 44 percent of its workers being employed outside of the County. While Liberty Township specific data was not available, it is likely that a large portion of the population works outside of Liberty Township. The largest external destination is Hamilton County, most likely the City of Cincinnati. Despite the Township's good accessibility to Dayton (Montgomery County), only a small portion of the workforce (~8 percent) is employed there.

Butler County businesses do rely upon local residents to fill job positions, but the majority of employees (about 56.6 percent) come from outside of the County. Such strong in- and out-commuting flows have significant implications for the methods and maintenance of the transportation systems that service the Township, including roads, transit, and alternative transportation (bicycle and pedestrian modes).

Residents of Liberty Township are very auto-centric, like much of the County and State, with 87 percent of residents commuting to work in a car, truck, or van. Butler County and the State of Ohio have very similar rates at 92.3 percent and 91.1 percent respectively. Additionally, under seven percent of workers carpooled and under one percent chose to take public transportation. Over 90 percent of households in Liberty Township own two or more vehicles.

Currently, almost no residents in Liberty Township walk (0.1 percent) or bike (0.0 percent) to their place of work. This is reflected in the lack of needed infrastructure, something Liberty Township has plans to deliver in the coming future. These figures closely resemble the 1-2 percent numbers of the County and the State.

Top Home Counties for In-Commuting Workers (Butler County 2017)				
County	# of workers	29 or younger	30-54	55 and older
Hamilton County, OH	30,124	26.1%	53.2%	20.7%
Warren County, OH	12,949	20.1%	58.7%	21.2%
Montgomery County, OH	6,241	25.7%	54.5%	19.8%
Clermont County, OH	5,491	22.6%	54.9%	22.5%
Franklin County, OH	2,590	29.8%	53.7%	16.5%
Preble County, OH	1,664	21.3%	54.0%	24.6%
Greene County, OH	1,055	29.6%	51.8%	18.6%
Kenton County, KY	968	16.4%	63.0%	20.6%
Cuyahoga County, OH	839	27.7%	49.7%	22.6%
Brown County, OH	819	21.5%	60.0%	18.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau -- American Community Survey 2017

Top Work Counties for Out-Commuting Workers (Butler County 2017)				
County	# of workers	29 or younger	30-54	55 and older
Hamilton County, OH	55,732	21.0%	56.9%	22.2%
Warren County, OH	15,510	26.1%	53.7%	20.1%
Montgomery County, OH	7,785	23.5%	56.2%	20.3%
Franklin County, OH	4,967	26.1%	54.7%	19.2%
Clermont County, OH	3,070	28.5%	52.0%	19.5%
Cuyahoga County, OH	7,825	19.1%	58.5%	22.4%
Greene County, OH	1,377	32.9%	50.3%	16.8%
Boone County, KY	976	18.4%	60.1%	21.4%
Delaware County, OH	664	23.3%	58.4%	18.2%
Lucas County, OH	637	25.0%	57.8%	17.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau -- American Community Survey 2017





## HOUSING: WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

### EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Liberty Township's housing base is overwhelmingly single-family neighborhoods and subdivisions. The majority of the 113 total residential subdivisions are along the western boundary (near Liberty Fairfield Road), the southern boundary (near West Chester Township), and scattered along the eastern portion of the Township (adjacent to Butler Warren Road). Of these 113 subdivisions, 24 have home owners associations that enforce additional covenants, or regulations tied to the property. Each of the subdivisions is unique in their development pattern and character. Many of these subdivisions create a neighborhood within the broader community and include amenities intended only for the residents located within the development.

## EXISTING MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL AREAS

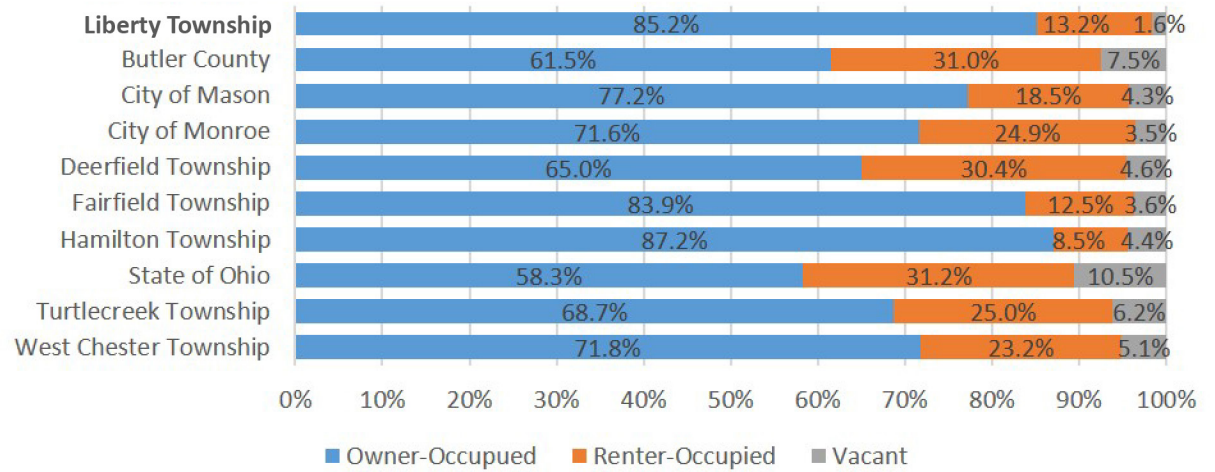
The predominance of single-family detached housing dovetails with community demographics that lean heavily towards concentration of families with children. There are however, other housing options within the Township that cater to varying needs of local residents. Currently, the primary focus for multi-family development is Liberty Center Apartments, constructed as part of Liberty Center. For 1, 2, and 3-bedroom units, monthly rents range from \$1,135 for 645 sq. feet, to \$2,185 for 1,277 sq. feet. The units were built in conjunction with Liberty Center to provide residents will all needs and amenities. It is currently reported that all Liberty Center Apartment units are rented.

In addition to Liberty Center Apartments, there are three other apartment style complexes located in Liberty Township including the Springs at Liberty on Hamilton-Mason Road, Lakota Pointe Apartments on Dutchland Parkway, and Four Bridges Apartments near the intersection of Bethany Road and Butler Warren Road. Also, there are two mobile home parks located in Liberty Township. Gregory Creek is located on Hamilton-Mason Road, just west of Mauds-Hughes Road and Countryside Village, a sizable mobile home park is located near the intersection of SR 4 and SR 747. The community is well buffered from surrounding development and has one single access point across from SR 747. Individual units are well maintained, with landscaping and improvements showing a level of ownership commitment and pride.





**Housing Unit Summary (2019)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Community Profile Report.

## HOUSING UNITS

**Liberty Township’s single-family neighborhoods are continuing to grow.** In 2017, Liberty Township had 12,705 housing units, which represents an increase of 729 units (6.08 percent) since 2010. This number is expected to continue to rise to 14,697 units (15.6 percent increase) by 2024. The overwhelming majority (88.6 percent) of Liberty Township housing is in the form of single family detached, or stand alone, housing. While there is a clustered community of mobile homes, this represents a small minority in comparison with the rest of the Liberty Township community. Single-family housing as a proportion of total housing in neighboring communities ranges from a low of 58.4 percent (Deerfield Township) to 91.9 percent (Hamilton Township). The predominance of single-family detached housing is a reflection of local demographics, with a high concentration of families with children.

While growing, multi-family (or multi-unit) housing still makes up a very small percentage (4.4 percent) of Liberty Township’s overall housing unit stock. Multi-family housing as a proportion of total housing in neighboring communities ranges from a low of 4.5 percent (Hamilton Township) to 32.7 percent (Deerfield Township).

With Liberty Township having roughly 13,353 agricultural, estate residential, single family and multi-family residential acres (see land use section, below) and having 12,705 residential structures within its borders, Liberty Township has a current residential density of .95 units per acre.

## New Construction (# of permits)

Reviewing the number of new construction permits issued each year is a way to analyze how and when the community was growing. An increase in permits can be related to economic stability and demand for growth. Since 2013 the number of single-family residential permit has varied between 250-300 permits per year. For commercial, data reveals when Liberty Center came into play for the community with an increase of commercial permits in 2014-2015. The same is true for the tenant finish/use change category. In 2015, Liberty Township experiences an unusual increase in the number of these permits. While 2016 and 2017 were slow growth years in terms of commercial development, Liberty Township is starting to see a higher demand for commercial.

Number of New Construction Permits			
Year	Single Family Residential	Commercial	Tenant Finish /Use Change
2007	238	17	29
2008	171	22	39
2009	166	2	25
2010	110	9	22
2011	95	2	23
2012	145	2	20
2013	255	3	21
2014	294	30	18
2015	252	28	152
2016	263	3	49
2017	290	5	34
2018	263	19	52
2019	280	7	21

Source: Liberty Township 2007 - 2018 Zoning Report





## Home Ownership

**Liberty Township homes are predominately owner occupied, but rental occupancy is growing.** A higher percentage of home ownership is a reflection of a community's desirability and long-term stability. While rental units offer more flexibility in terms of location and movement, high home ownership is a sign that residents have expectations of remaining in the community and of its future success. Home ownership is not only a more permanent form of residence, but is often the single largest financial asset individuals can own, meaning owners take a very strong interest in any action that may affect its value.

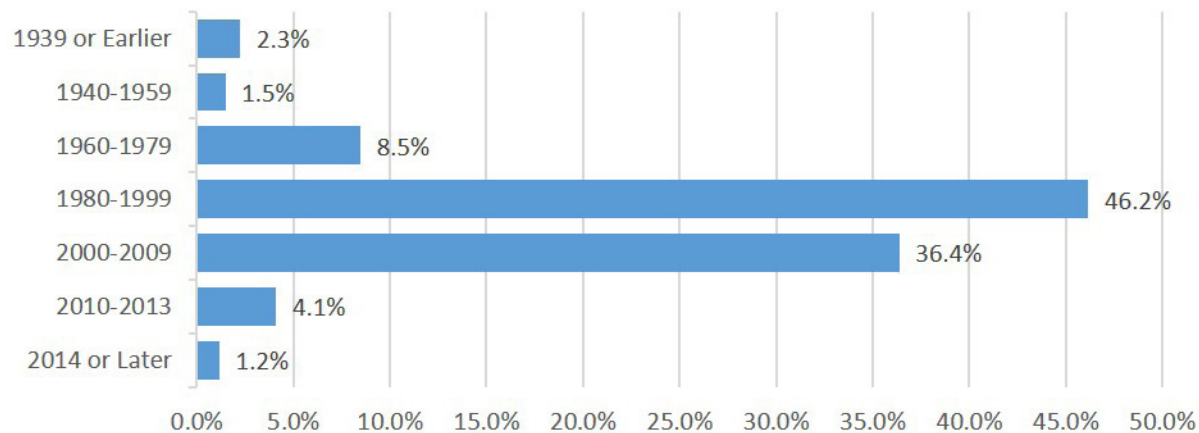
In 2019, of Liberty Township's 13,760 housing units, 85.2 percent were occupied by home owners, 13.2 percent were renter occupied, and 1.6 percent were vacant. While Liberty Township does possess a much higher percentage of owner-occupied housing compared to adjacent communities, the county and state, all three areas have seen a decrease of around 2-4 percent from 2010 to 2019. This is not the result of owner-occupied housing being removed, but rather the sharp increase of rental housing being built and becoming a larger portion of the market. An increase in rental units is common in communities with high desirability, as perspective residents are willing give up ownership if it means gaining access and becoming a part of the community. Vacancy is a double edge sword in the housing market, with both too much and too little each causing problems within a community. As can be expected, high vacancy leads to falling property values, possible increases in crime, and less vibrancy in the community. However, a very low vacancy rate can mean a housing shortage in the market, limiting growth the community would have otherwise enjoyed. While it is dependent on the community, its size, and surroundings, a general rule of thumb to keep vacancy between 5-8 percent. This gives residents the opportunity to upgrade and downgrade their housing as needed, and provides opportunity for new residents to move into the community.

## Housing Age and Value

**Liberty Township homes continue to increase in value.** Nearly 83 percent of the existing housing units in Liberty Township were built between the year 1980 and 2009, with the majority of the housing stock being built between 1980 and 1999. Housing built before this time period only makes up nearly 12 percent of the current housing stock. The majority of the Liberty Township community can be seen as a recent development, despite the community's long history, and reflects the recent surge in population. A large influx of new residents has implications for the financing and delivery of public services; many of the Township's recent projects, including development/relocation of facilities for fire, police, and administrative services, can be interpreted as trying to improve overall accessibility to a geographically changing customer base.

Liberty Township is mainly comprised of homes with values ranging between \$150,000 and \$400,000, making most of the housing stock tailored to the upper middle class and higher income earners. Nearly 45 percent of the Township's homes are valued above \$250,000. Very few homes exceed a value of over \$400,000, and little exists in the way of housing below a valuation of \$150,000. This is a trait in line with Liberty's identity as a bedroom community, with professionals being able to afford higher cost homes and the commute out of the Township for work.

Liberty Township Housing Age (2012-2016 ACS)

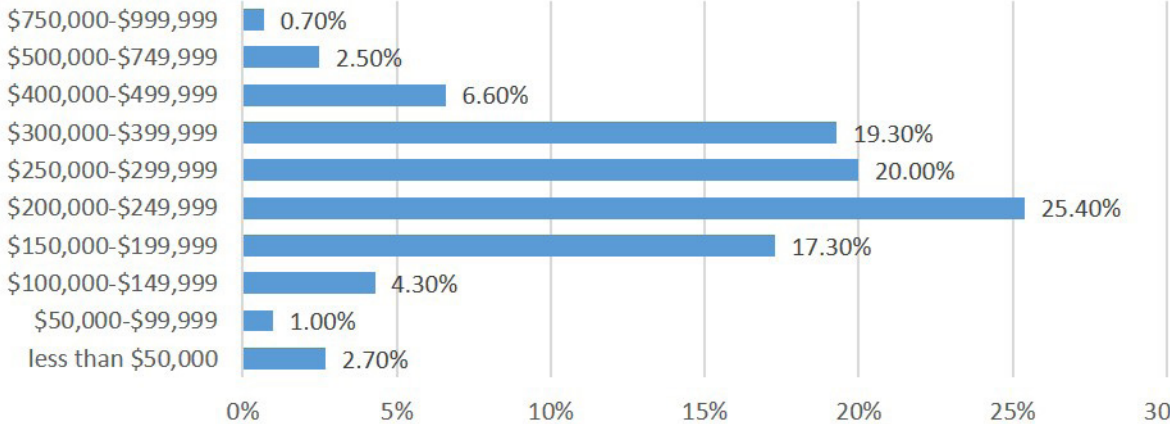


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Housing Summary Report.





**Liberty Township Home Values (2019)**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Housing Summary Report.

The median value of owner-occupied housing stock was \$272,922 in 2019 for Liberty Township, compared to \$209,852 for the County as a whole and \$279,121 for the State of Ohio. Liberty Township median home values out pace that of the surrounding communities which range from a low of \$192,239 in the City of Monroe, to a high of \$320,299 in the City of Mason. Despite the high relative value of Liberty Township housing, there has been negligible growth in the number of new housing units since 2010, when the median housing value was \$216,875.

Liberty Township homes are not only increasing in value, they are selling at consistently high price points. As of September 2019, Liberty Township property owners have sold a total of 84 homes in 2019, yielding an average sale price of \$288,000 (a 4.2 percent decrease from 2018) and averages a value of \$116 per square foot (a 6.4 percent increase since 2018). Less than one percent were sold below their listing price, usually remaining on the market for 53 days before being sold with some homes seeing multiple and competitive offers.

While high values and demand are signs of a healthy market, an economic good does not always translate to community good. High home values can be a barrier to community growth as new residents are unable to find affordable housing, or those already within the community are pushed out. Young adults and retirees are particularly vulnerable (two groups Liberty Township is missing), as limited financial resources force them to look outside the community for their housing needs. Without a variety of price points, Liberty Township could gradually begin to segregate itself, and stifle the energy financial investment brings.

*Townhomes facing the street*





## MARKET CONDITIONS

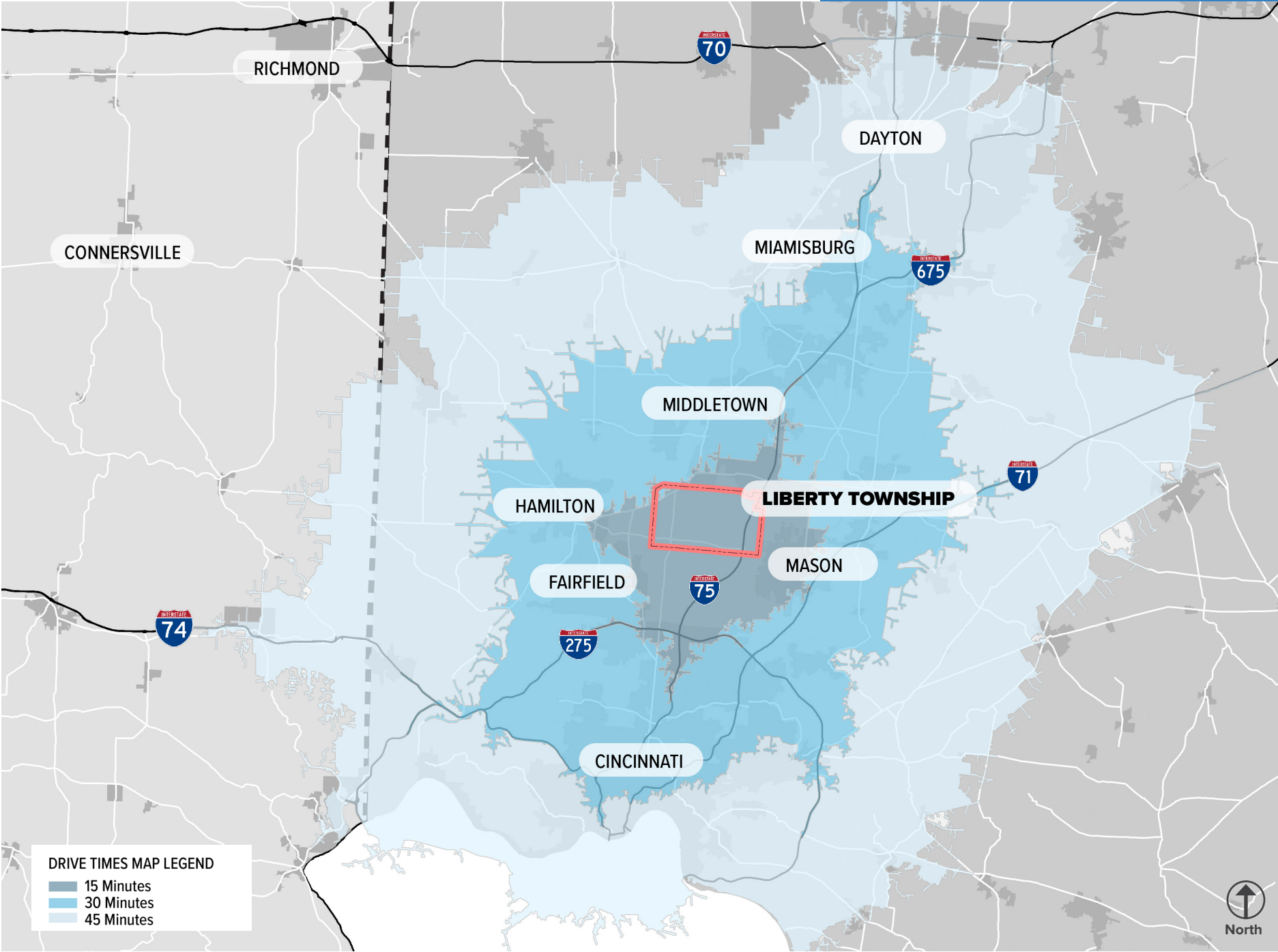
### Retail Market Analysis

A retail market suitability analysis was done using ESRI's Business Analyst Online (BAO). This tool synthesizes population, income, and consumer survey data from 2017 (the most recent year available) to estimate what potential sales would be for a defined commercial sector, and then compares that result to actual sales for that sector. The BAO tool was applied to areas corresponding to 15-, 30-, and 45-minute driving times from Liberty Township. The center point used for this exercise was the proposed Millikin Road Interchange.

At the 15-minute drive range, it is clear that there is a general shortage of local-serving businesses. Annual demand for grocery, food, and liquor products (\$519M) is greater than actual sales (\$408M), indicating that households living within this area buy more than 20 percent of their groceries from elsewhere. Similarly, annual demand for gasoline (\$329M) is not being met locally (sales of \$204M).

At the 30-minute drive range (community-serving businesses), there are supply gaps for pertinent industries including general merchandise stores (demand of \$633M, supply of \$600M) which includes warehouse supercenters and other non-clothing, non-department stores and books and periodicals (demand of \$50M, supply of \$45M).

At the 45-minute drive range, the general picture is one of retail saturation; regional-serving businesses' sales generally exceed demand within this radius. Supply gaps do seem to exist for motor vehicle dealers (demand of \$580M, supply of \$454M), which includes recreational vehicles and motorcycles, jewelry, luggage, and leather goods stores (demand of \$294M, supply of \$274M) and department stores (demand of \$3.4B, supply of \$2.8B).





In summary, there appears to be considerable demand for local-serving businesses within the study area. Demand is expected to increase as population within the study area grows. There is some potential for regional-serving retail businesses (department stores and jewelry); to the extent that these uses are desirable for Liberty Township, planning and coordination should begin at the earliest opportunity.

### **Existing Retail and Office Areas**

Liberty Township has several retail and office areas that support both local and regional shopping and employment. Primary areas include:

#### *Liberty Center*

Completed in October of 2015, Liberty Center is a multi-use facility established in the Township's southeast corner, to help introduce commercial development and an urban core into the community. The site combines retail, living, and office space into a densely built urban environment. Today, Liberty Center is the focus of many of the Township's major projects, including the expansion of roadways, a cross-highway pedestrian bridge, and the incorporation of trails and sidewalks throughout the Township. Liberty Center currently has room to expand within the currently developed area and to the undeveloped area west of Taylor Drive although there is no timeline for the development expansion.

#### *Downtown Bethany*

Bethany, located along Cincinnati-Dayton Road, south of Princeton Road, has historically been considered the "downtown" of Liberty Township. Home to historic social institutions, including Bethany United Methodist Church, both Lakota East High School, and Freshman School, redevelopment within this area is a focal point for the community. As described in the 2010 Downtown Bethany Vision Plan, the area is envisioned to become a thriving community oriented gathering spot including commercial development and residential opportunities. To date, (re)development within Downtown Bethany has been challenging due to the small lot sizes, existing building stock found throughout the area, a lack of shovel ready sites and number of existing property owners. Currently, Delhi Flower and Garden Center marks the northernmost boundary of the Bethany Downtown.

While redevelopment is a focus for this area in the future, there are existing retail and office opportunities available currently. Neighborhood scaled development can be found south west of the intersection of Princeton Road and Cincinnati- Dayton Road, along portions of Cincinnati-Dayton Road near Bethany Road and along the east side of the Cincinnati- Dayton Road corridor between Wyandot Lane and Liberty One Drive.

*Cincinnati Dayton Road and Butler County Veterans Highway (SR 129)*

As a primary entrance into Liberty Township, the development adjacent to the Cincinnati-Dayton Road and Butler County Veterans Highway intersection is primarily composed of low-density development tailored to vehicle accessibility. Most businesses and services within the area are tailored to local customer base, and include destinations such as Kroger, PNC Bank, health and beauty-oriented businesses and small scaled restaurants and coffee shops. In addition to the local destinations the area also is home to Cincinnati Children’s Hospital which is located in the northwest corner of the I-75 interchange with Butler County Veterans Highway.

The *2013 Comprehensive Plan* identified this area to be a key commercial corridor that would feature a mix of uses including larger scale corporate, research, medical, and technical uses. Portions of this area are within the Cincinnati Dayton Business District overlay zone.

*Princeton Road and Princeton Glendale Road (SR 747)*

While still in the early phases of development, Princeton Road currently has a small cluster of commercial development around its intersection with State Road 747. With the introduction of the Townships new administration building, new premiere residential development of Carriage Hill, and a new fire station, local demand will continue to spur new development. SR 747’s direct connection to the Butler County Veterans Highway also provides the site with quick access to the Butler County’s seat of Hamilton.

The *2013 Comprehensive Plan* identified this area to be a key commercial corridor that would feature a mix of uses including office, retail, recreational and residential developments that are walkable and more urban in character.

*Liberty Fairfield Road and Hamilton Middletown Road (SR 4) Corridor*

Clustered within the Township’s northwest corner, the development at the Liberty Fairfield Road and SR 4 intersection seeks to capitalize on traffic passing through Liberty Township between the cities of Hamilton and Dayton. While the development surrounding the intersection is predominately made up of smaller-scale dining and commercial services, the development within Liberty Township is currently focused along the southern side of SR 4 and includes fast food restaurants, banks, gas stations and convenience stores.

The *2013 Comprehensive Plan* and previous plans identified this area to be a key commercial corridor that would feature a mix of professional and corporate offices, warehouses and research and development uses. Additionally, supporting development such as restaurants, retail and service-oriented uses would be encouraged. Demonstrating the areas support for retail and office uses, Mercy Health opened a new medial office just north at the intersection of Kyle Station Road and SR 4 in October of 2019.



## **Existing Township “Centers”**

From the early 2000’s, leading up to the of the *2013 Comprehensive Plan*, Liberty Township has focused on leading several efforts around improving and enhancing the community’s image and creating a sense of place for residents and businesses. Image and identity efforts within Liberty Township center focus around educating people about the use of “Liberty Township, Ohio” in relation to zip codes, encouraging community gathering spots and places to connect, and creating a sense of place utilizing signage, landscaping and overlay districts to establish a consistent look and feel for the community. This is an area of work that is continually adapting to the changing community environment. Enhancing the image and improving the community’s name recognition is important to growing the commercial base and attracting new businesses and residents to the Township. Existing and perceived centers of activity include the following:

### *Bethany- Downtown*

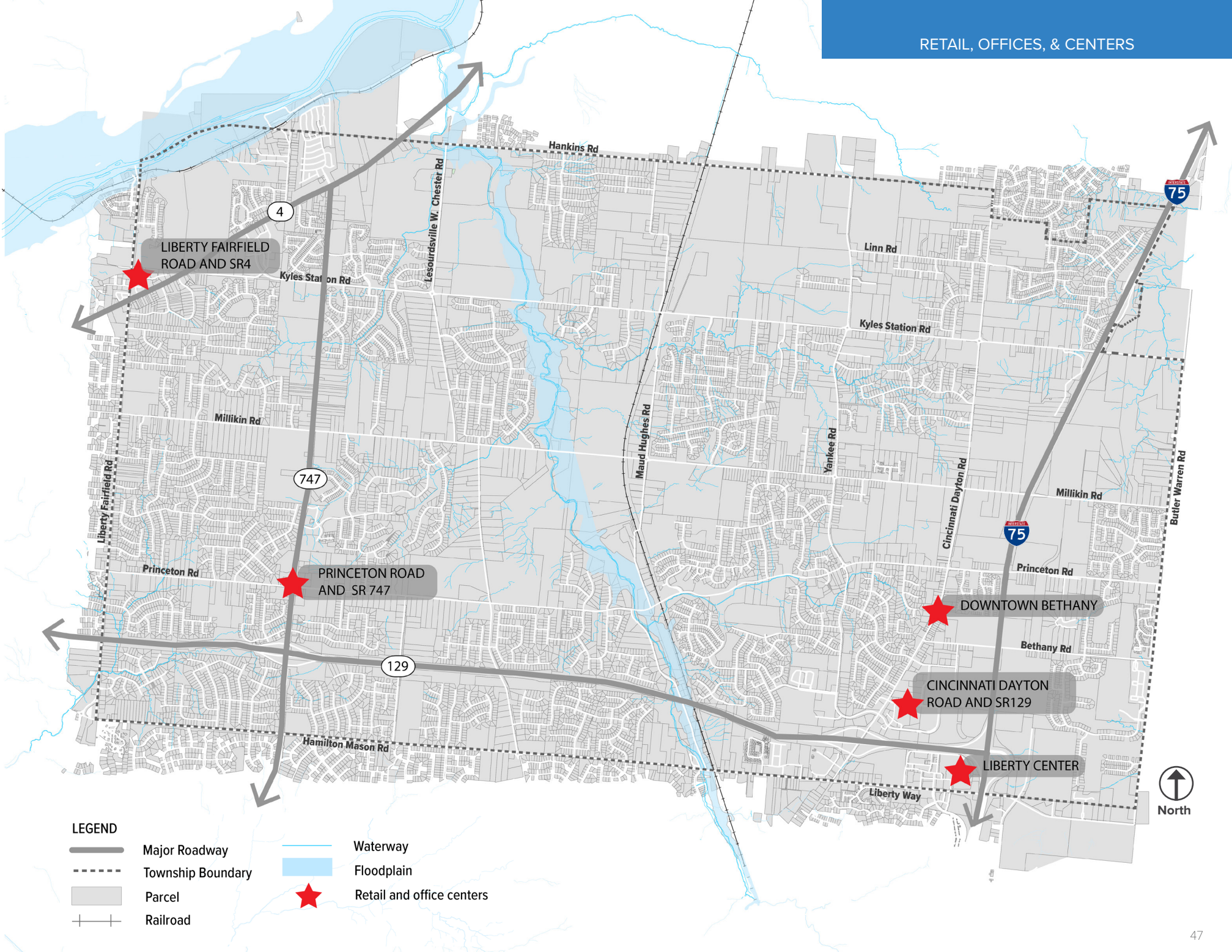
The community of Bethany was until recently considered the “downtown” of Liberty Township, where most shops, dining, and schools were located. However, the last few decades this area has started to transition into a prime location for redevelopment. It is an opportunity for businesses that wish to locate in a quaint area of Liberty Township.

Despite any transition, Bethany has continued to function as the cultural and economic hub of Liberty Township. Most civil institutions choose to keep their presence here, and the old community center has slowly been developing a commercial corridor to take advantage of its strategic location. The Cincinnati-Dayton Road corridor also provides quick access to rapidly get in and out of the community center without the congestion most others face.

The recent influx of development, as well as its close proximity to the massively successful Liberty Center, have revealed Bethany as a prime target for reinvestment. Future plans for pedestrian and biking infrastructure outline strong connections between Bethany, Liberty Center, and surrounding communities.

### *Liberty Center*

Liberty Center is a mixed-use development established in the southeast corner of the Township, along the strategic Liberty Way Interchange of I-75. The site opened in 2015, and combines retail, living, and office space into a densely built urban environment, and hosts a number of community events on a regular basis. It is anticipated that this area will continue to expand into the surrounding undeveloped area.



- LEGEND**
- Major Roadway
  - Township Boundary
  - Parcel
  - Railroad
  - Waterway
  - Floodplain
  - Retail and office centers





## 2013 FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES AND MAP

Land use is the term used to describe the type of activity that occurs on a parcel or in a structure located on a parcel. This section provides a high-level description of each land use category, with the language being pulled from the *2013 Comprehensive Plan*.

**Overlay Districts:** The purpose of Overlay Districts is to provide certain design standards which are unique to a particular area. The standards are specifically created to address the unique existing and desired physical and architectural characteristics which are inherent to a particular area

**Estate Residential 1-5 Acre Lot Size:** Large parcels of land with country-like characteristics, containing low density detached single-family homes.

**Single Family Residence - 1/2 Acre Min Lots:** Areas existing or proposed for single-family detached residential uses which are generally provided with a higher level of urban services, including: public water and sewer, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and other amenities.

**Single Family Residence – Suburban:** Areas existing or proposed for single-family detached residential uses which are generally provided with a higher level of urban services, including: public water and sewer, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and other amenities.

**Single Family Residence - Planned**

**Development:** Variable residential densities that are developed and maintained with integral recreational uses and protection of historic and natural resources on land set aside for open space use only.

**Single Family Residence - 2.52 D.U./Acre**

**Max Density:** Medium density detached residential uses that provide a transition between more intense and less intense uses which are generally provided with a higher level of urban services, including: public water and sewer, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and other amenities

**Two Family Residence:** Two-Family attached housing (townhouses, condominiums, landominiums, duplexes).

**Multi-Family Residential:** Medium density detached or attached housing (apartments, townhouses, condominiums, landominiums, and row houses).

**Planned Residential Mixed Use:** Planned Residential Mixed Use is an area which develops with a mixture of single family and multifamily residential products that are master planned as part of an overall cohesive development.

**Conservation Development:** Conservation Development is intended to maximize the protection and preservation of existing natural features (wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, steep slopes, agriculture, forestry, and woodlands) while balancing landowner rights to develop their property at a low gross density with clustered home sites and large amounts of open space.

**Open Space:** Areas designated to remain in their natural state, areas set aside or designated as open space in an approved PUD Development Plan, areas which contain natural environmental features which shall be preserved, and active and passive recreation areas

**Public / Private Recreation:** Public, semi-public, and private park and recreation facilities.

**Planned Community Mixed Use:** Planned Community Mixed Use includes areas that develop with a mix of uses (office, retail, recreational, and residential) which maintain a more vibrant, walkable, and economic development. Neo-traditional street and pedestrian patterns shall be maximized to achieve a community oriented urban lifestyle.

**Senior Independent / Assisted Living:**

Senior Independent / Assisted Living are areas that provide an alternative for seniors who are looking to remain in the community. Independent senior living shall provide distinctive retirement living for seniors in a full-service club residence. Assisted Living shall provide independent senior living and private retirement living with up to 24-hour healthcare services available.

**Transitional:** Transitional shall be a development of a blend of adjacent uses, or uses that provide a transition between a more intense use and a less intense use.

**Planned Neighborhood Business:** Low intensity neighborhood-oriented retail, office, and service uses that provide a transition between residential uses and other types of development or that achieve compatibility with and provide services to the adjacent residential areas.

**Planned General Business:** The purpose of the General Business use is to reserve certain land areas for a broader range of retail, service, and office uses serving a greater population than those uses permitted in the Neighborhood Business Classification. These areas shall accommodate the most intensive commercial and office development.



**Professional Office:** Low rise office uses (including the conversion of single-family homes to offices) that provide a transition between residential uses and other types of development.

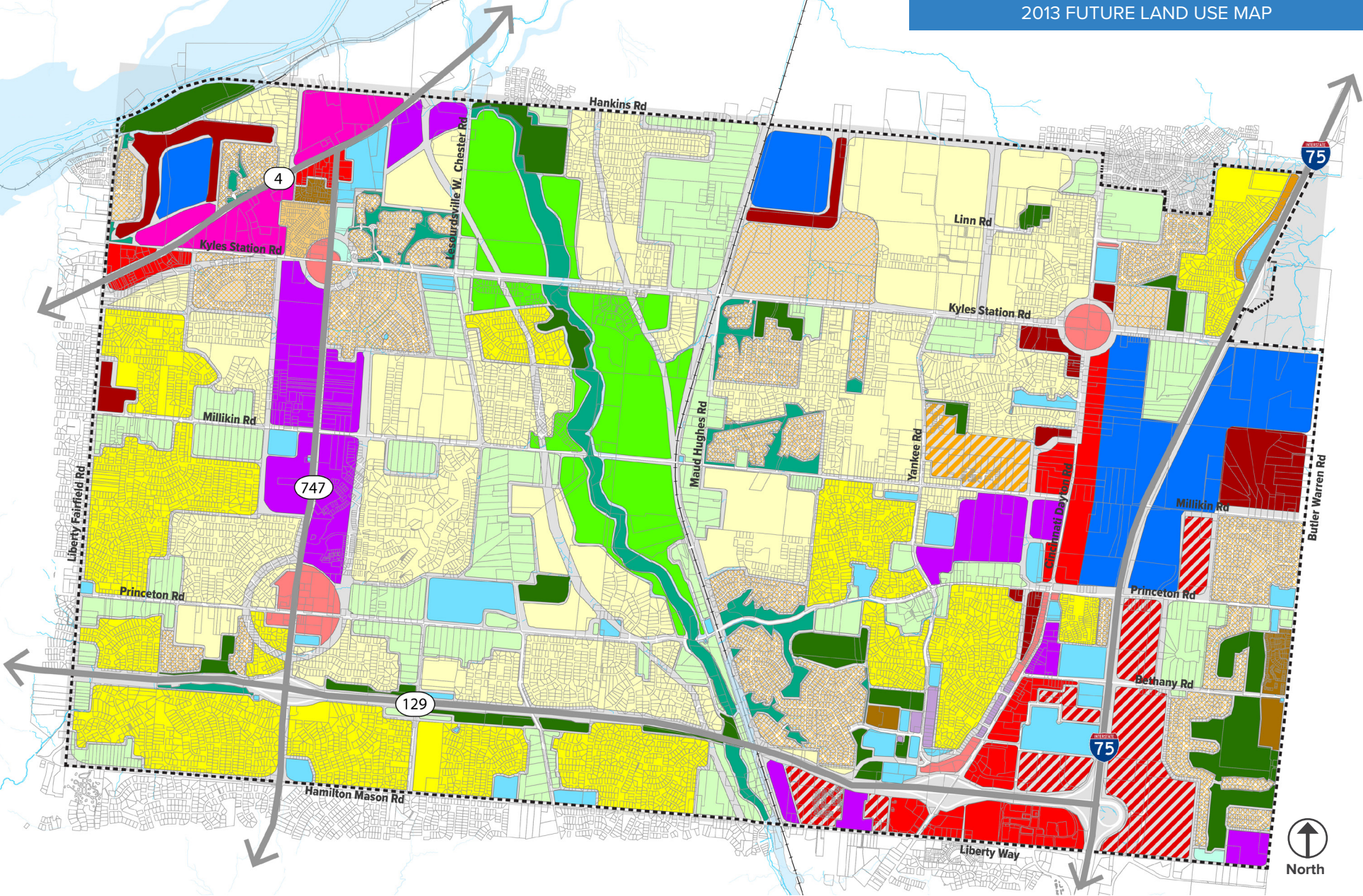
**Planned Business Park:** Large scale corporate, research, medical, technical, and limited industrial uses, with limited and compatible commercial uses.

**Office and Limited Industrial Development:**

The purpose of this district is to provide space in the Township for more intensive office development, research facilities, and limited commercial and industrial activity, provided it is compatible with the more intensive office development and related compatible uses including restaurants, retail, and service uses provided to support the adjacent development. It is also intended to provide space for larger employment centers without traffic congestion and for certain community facilities.

**Office / Retail / Light Industrial:** Professional and corporate office, warehouse, and research and development uses, and related compatible uses including restaurants, retail, and service uses, provided to support the adjacent development.

**Public / Institutional:** Public or semi-public uses such as government buildings, churches, schools, utilities, cemeteries, and historic properties or structures that should be preserved, that possess a unique character representative of the past and/or a feature which plays an important role to the identity of the area, and/or possesses historical or architectural value.



2013 FUTURE LAND USE LEGEND

- |                   |   |                               |   |   |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Major Roadway     | Estate Residential 1-5 Acre Lots              | Two Family Residential        | Planned Community Mixed Use                 | Professional Offices                    |
| Township Boundary | Single Family Residential 1/2 acre mini. Lots | Multi-family Residential      | Senior Independent Living / Assisted Living | Planned Business Park                   |
| Roadway           | Single Family - Suburban                      | Planned Residential Mixed Use | Transitional                                | Office / Limited Industrial Development |
| Railroad          | Single Family Planned Development             | Conservation District         | Planned Neighborhood Business               | Office / Retail / Light Industrial      |
| Waterway          | Single Family 2.52 D.U./Acre                  | Open Space                    | Planned General Business                    | Public / Institutional                  |

## Land area- Past and Present

Within Liberty Township the largest single land-use category is single-family residential, followed closely by agriculture/open space. These two land use categories together account for about 79 percent of the total net (excluding rights-of-way) land area of the county.

Single-family residential uses continue to grow, a finding which is consistent with the population growth noted previously; multi-family residential uses have shown modest growth as well. Commercial and industrial uses have not exhibited much growth. Agriculture/ estate residential, which once comprised more than half of the Township’s land use, now comprises about a third.

One of Liberty Township’s greatest draws over the past few decades has been its “rural” character, with large tracks of woodland and farmland. As commercial and residential development continues to occur and agricultural land continues to decrease, this “rural” character could be facing rapid changes.

EXISTING LAND USE	1999		2006		2013		2020*	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
Agricultural	8,457	51%	5,850	36%	4,977	30%	3,577	21%
Estate Residential	2,648	16%	2,544	15%	2,976	18%	3,007	18%
Single Family Residential	3,602	22%	4,853	30%	5,112	31%	5,797	34%
Multi-Family Residential	119	1%	129	1%	172	1%	200	1.2%
Commercial	200	1%	200	1%	288	2%	327	2%
Industrial	19	0.1%	17	0.1%	30	0.2%	56	0.3%
Public/Semi-Public/Institutional	423	3%	737	4%	657	4%	698	4%
Public/Private Recreation	1,145	7%	1,208	7%	1,236	7%	1,130	7%
Open Space	82	0.5%	308	2%	381	2%	502	3%
Vacant	--	--	598	4%	805	5%	1,155	7%

*\*The land use acreage for 2020 was calculated using the existing land use map provided by Liberty Township Department of Planning and Zoning. Total acreage for each land use code was calculated using ArcGIS and Excel, and then aggregated into the land use categories used in the 2013 update of the Township’s Comprehensive Plan.*

*Liberty Center is located on Foundry Row*





## EXISTING ZONING

Unlike land use which identifies the site's activity, zoning actually establishes the rules governing the use of land. It is the term used to describe the type of activity that occurs on a parcel or in a structure located on a parcel.

The Township's Zoning Resolution regulates the usage, density of land, as well as signage, subdivision development, parking and site amenities. These regulations have the expressed purpose of promoting the health, safety, convenience, order, and general welfare of the people of Liberty Township. Liberty Township contains 18 zoning classifications and 6 overlay/ special purpose districts. This section provides a high-level description of each land use category, with the language being pulled from the *2013 Comprehensive Plan*.

## ZONING CLASSIFICATIONS

The following existing zoning classifications are used in Liberty Township:

**Agricultural District (A-1):** Primarily to reserve land exclusively for agricultural uses, very low-density residential development and other activities that are basically rural in character

**Residential-Agricultural District (RA-1):** Primarily to for very low-density residential that allows for agriculture uses. These areas provide a transition between large agricultural tracts and land used exclusively for single family houses.

**Residential Estate District (R-E):** Primarily to provide for certain agricultural uses, very low-density residential development and other activities that are basically rural in character. These areas provide a transition between large agricultural tracts and land used exclusively for single family homes.

**Residential Rural Estate District (R-RE):** Primarily provide for very low-density residential development and other activities that are basically rural in character to create and preserve a rural atmosphere while providing some of the advantages of suburban development.

**Residential Suburban Estate District (R-SE):** Primarily provide for low density residential development and to provide for a variety of rural and suburban housing types and densities.

**Suburban Residence District (R-1):** Primarily provide for one family homes on lots containing a minimum of 20,000 square feet. These areas constitute residential development and will remain semi-rural in character.

**Single-Family Residence District (R-2):** Primarily provide for one-family homes on lots containing a minimum of 15,000 square feet. These areas constitute residential development at higher densities.

**One and Two-Family Residence District (R-3):** Primarily provide for one-family homes on lots containing a minimum of 12,000 square feet and two-family homes on lots containing a minimum of 15,000 square feet. These areas constitute residential development at high densities.

**Multiple Family Residence District (R-4):** Primarily provide for multiple-family residential development. These areas are designated for residential development at the highest permitted densities.

**Neighborhood Business District (B-1):** Primarily provide for convenience and personal uses. These areas will constitute concentrations of neighborhood business uses located in convenient and close relationship to areas of surrounding residential development.



**General Business District (B-2):** Primarily provide for a broader range of retail, service, and office uses serving a greater population than those uses permitted in the B-1 District. These areas shall accommodate the most intensive commercial and office development.

**Office District (O-1):** Primarily provide for primarily small to medium scale office development and limited commercial uses. These areas shall accommodate development that may require access to a primary thoroughfare.

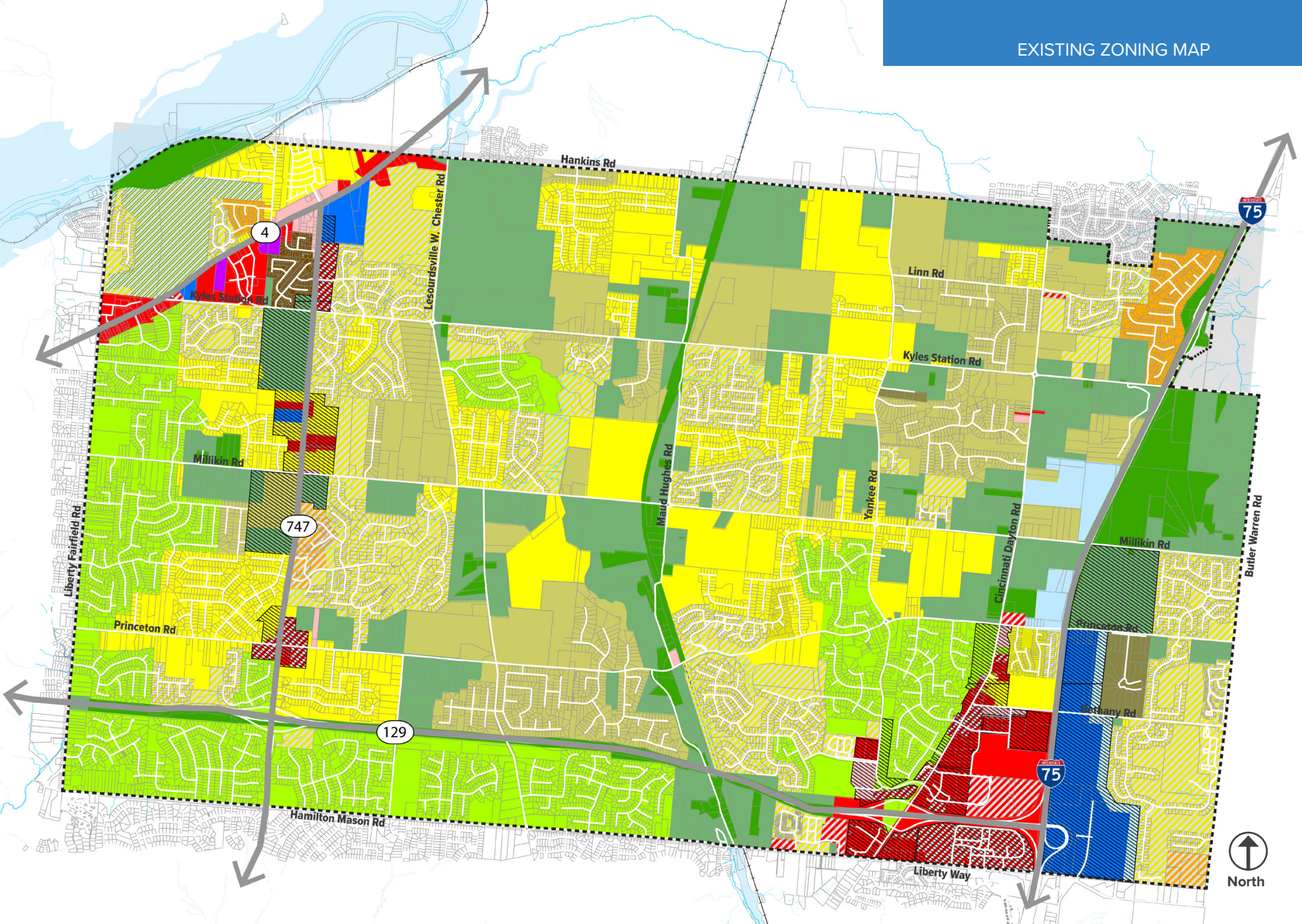
**Office/Limited Industrial District (O-2):** Primarily provide for more intensive office development, research facilities, and limited commercial and industrial activity. This district is intended to provide space for larger employment centers without traffic congestion and for certain community facilities.

**Light Industrial District (M-1):** Primarily provide for industrial development, wholesaling, and warehousing uses, and limited commercial use, which will not adversely affect their surroundings. These areas must have the necessary utilities and access to major thoroughfares linking them to the interstate highway system.

**Residential Planned Unit Development District (R-PUD):** The Residential Planned Unit Development District (R-PUD) is intended to provide an alternative zoning procedure for residential development in the Township when accomplished under an approved overall Preliminary PUD Plan for each section of the total landholding. Based on greenspace preservation, architectural and other features to be established during the review and approval stage of the PUD, the allowable number of residences may exceed that permitted under conventional zoning.

**Mixed-Use Planned Unit Development District (MU-PUD):** The Mixed-Use Planned Unit Development (MU-PUD) is intended to provide for areas that develop with a mix of uses (office, retail, recreational and residential) which maintain a more vibrant, walkable, and economic development. Neo-traditional street and pedestrian patterns shall be maximized to achieve a community-oriented lifestyle. The district is intended to promote the utilization of different land uses that may act as a transition between conflicting uses in a planned development taking advantage of unified landscaping, buffering, access, and parking.

**River Recreation District (R-CO):** Primarily provide for types of uses that are oriented toward the Great Miami River



EXISTING ZONING LEGEND

- |                   |                           |                                    |                               |                             |                                     |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Major Roadway     | Waterway                  | B-PUD Business Planned Unit Dev.   | O-2 Office/Limited Industrial | R-1 Suburban Residential    | R-PUD Residential Planned Unit Dev. |
| Township Boundary | Floodplain                | MU-PUD Mixed Use Planned Unit Dev. | A-1 Agricultural              | R-3 One and Two Family Res. | R-RE Residential Rural Estate       |
| Parcel            | B-1 Neighborhood Business | M-1 Light Industrial               | RA-1 Residential Agricultural | R-4 Multi-family Res.       | R-SE Residential Suburban Estate    |
| Railroad          | B-2 General Business      | O-1 Office                         | R-CO River Recreation         | R-E Residential Estate      | Overlay Districts**                 |

## ZONING OVERLAYS

Zoning Overlays are additional use and/or design standards placed on designated areas in addition to standard zoning requirements. These additional standards are often put in place to preserve the existing character of a community, or to better manage development that might be taking place. Such standards may include landscaping requirements, beautifying pedestrian/biking infrastructure, architectural design styles, or other such visual elements. The following is a list of the various zoning overlays of Liberty Township and the intended purpose of their existence.

### **Cox Road Corridor Overlay District (CRC-OD)**

- Improve the compatibility between residential and non-residential uses;
- Mitigate the detrimental effects concerning intensity of use within the Corridor concerning the safety of residents and the use and enjoyment of their property;
- Preserve the streetscape along the roadways, maintaining the character and promoting safe pedestrian movement;
- Reduce traffic congestion; and
- Improve the appearance, usefulness, and signage of the District.

### **Cincinnati-Dayton Business District Overlay (CDBD-O)**

- Benefit the property owners within and adjacent to the district;
- Provide for the long-term sustainability of the business district and the character of the community;
- Guide appropriate change that will enhance the character and business climate; and
- Promote redevelopment of the corridor in a coordinated manner.

### **Bethany Downtown Business District Overlay (BDBD-O)**

- Establish an identity for Downtown Bethany and promote that identity through a cohesive vision or aesthetic;
- Provide for proper transitions between the commercial corridor and adjacent residential uses;
- Create a connective and walkable Downtown Bethany; and
- Find ways to promote business sustainability within the Downtown Bethany area.

### **Yankee Road West Business District Overlay (YRWBD-O)**

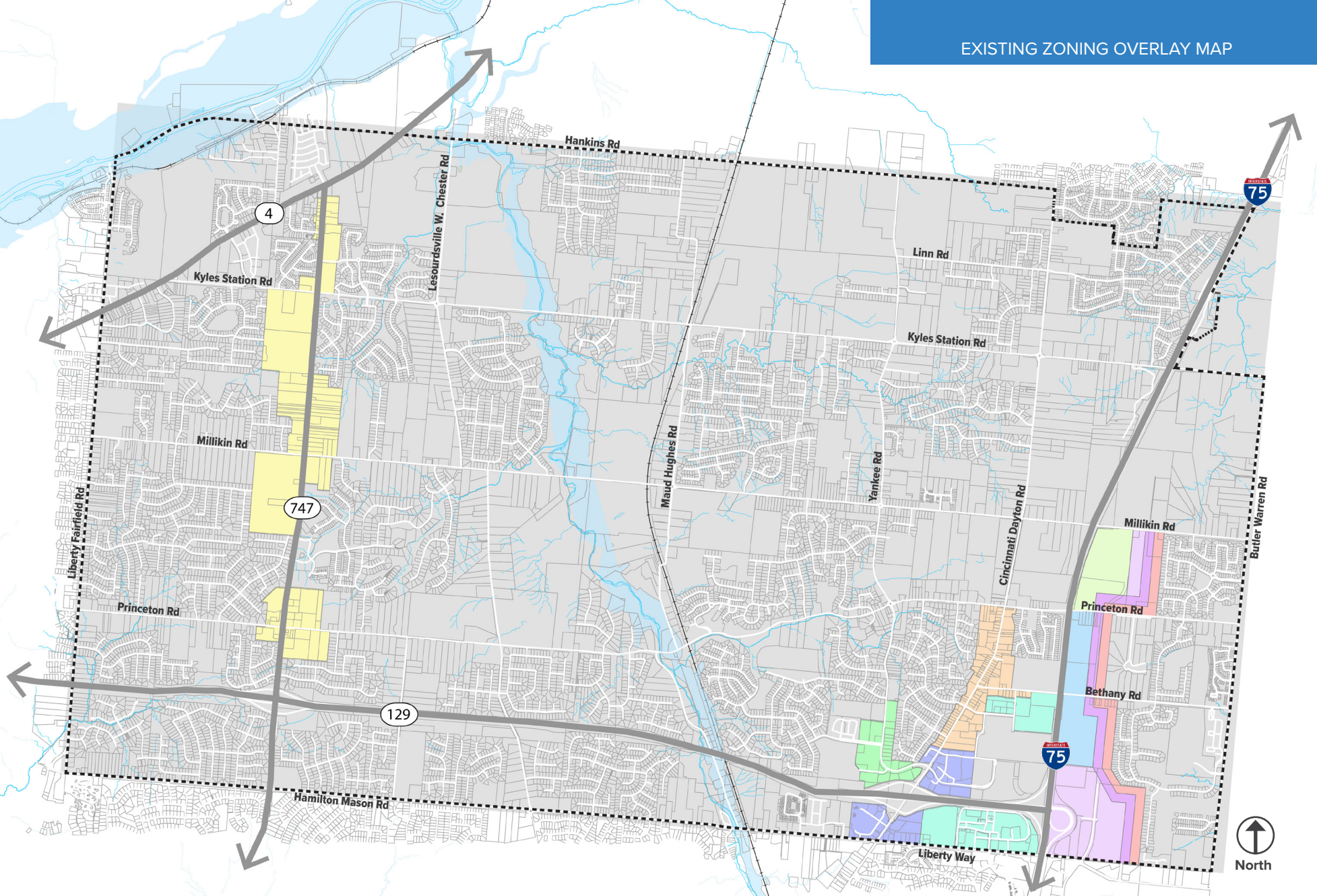
- Establish an identity for Downtown Bethany and promote that identity through a cohesive vision or aesthetic;
- Provide for proper transitions between the commercial corridor and adjacent residential uses;
- Create a connective and walkable Downtown Bethany; and
- Find ways to promote business sustainability within the Downtown Bethany area.

### **Highway Commercial/Entertainment District Overlay (HCED-O)**

- Benefit the property owners within and adjacent to the district;
- Allow for uses that serve the community, as well as the region.
- Guide appropriate change that will enhance the character and sustainability of the business climate; and
- Promote development of the area adjacent to the interstate in a coordinated manner.

### **Princeton Glendale Business District Overlay (PGBD-O)**

- Benefit the property owners within and adjacent to the district;
- Provide for proper transitions between the commercial uses within the corridor and adjacent residential uses.
- Provide for the long-term sustainability of the business district and the character of the community;



EXISTING ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICTS

- |                   |   |   |                               |
|-------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Major Roadway     | Waterway                                  | Highway/Commercial Entertainment District | Cox Road Corridor- Sub-area B |
| Township Boundary | Floodplain                                | Yankee Road West Business District        | Cox Road Corridor- Sub-area C |
| Parcel            | Princeton-Glendale Road Business District | Bethany Downtwon Business District        | Cox Road Corridor- Sub-area D |
| Railroad          | Cincinnati-Dayton Business District       | Cox Road Corridor- Sub-area A             | Cox Road Corridor- Sub-area E |



## HISTORIC ELEMENTS

With Liberty Township's long history and close proximity to major cities like Cincinnati and Dayton, there are many historic elements of the community that are worth preserving. History, specifically physical assets, play a crucial role in defining the character of a space, outlining where it has been, and where it will go.

### Historic Sites and Districts

#### Dixie Highway

One of the early automobile highways in the US, planning for this project began in 1914, with construction running from 1915-1929. The idea, inspired by the Old Lincoln Highway, was to create a continuous paved road system running north and south from the top of Michigan down to the southern tip of Florida. While the highway was eventually split into two routes, one ran through Liberty Township from Cincinnati to Dayton, and the other only skimmed the northwest edge along SR 4. As the US highway system was established, many segments of this old highway were incorporated or had their names changed. In Liberty Township, it was renamed to the Cincinnati Dayton Road.

#### Hughes Schoolhouse

Located at 6010 Princeton Rd, the Hughes Schoolhouse was built in 1887. Retaining many of its authentic furnishings, the one-room schoolhouse was one of six school houses in Liberty Township area. The iron rod desks still remain, where students ranging from 1st to 8th grade took lessons together from a single instructor. The schoolhouse remained in use until 1922 when the two-room Bethany Schoolhouse, that would eventually become the Liberty Early Childhood School, opened next door. After a period of use as a home for the Bethany School janitor and storage, the schoolhouse was refurbished and saved by what would later become the Liberty Township Historic Society.

#### Gregory Log Cabin (Dudley Woods Park)

Located in "The William F. and Cora Dudley Memorial Park", or Dudley Woods Parks, the reconstruction and furnishing of the Gregory Log Cabin (circa late 1700s) provides visitors an opportunity to experience the early heritage of Liberty Township.



## REDEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A key component to planning for future growth and development requires addressing the unique opportunities and needs of older or transitioning parts of the Township. These areas present an opportunity to conserve land resources, leverage existing infrastructure, and repurpose existing structures. This section is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of redevelopment sites in the Township but instead identify the benefits and areas of focus for redevelopment. The following sites and/ or areas are potential redevelopment assets for the community:

### **Bethany- Downtown**

The community of Bethany was until recently considered the “downtown” of Liberty Township, where most shops, dining, and schools were located. However, the last few decades have seen continued shrinking as many shops and commercial businesses have left or shut down, leaving behind the Lakota East Freshman and High Schools, and several local community churches.

The recent influx of development, as well as its close proximity to the massively successful Liberty Center, have revealed Bethany as a prime target for reinvestment. Future plans for pedestrian and biking infrastructure outline strong connections between Bethany, Liberty Center, and surrounding communities. Additionally, this area is home to many residential structures that haven’t been converted into commercial yet. These structures could present an opportunity for redevelopment in the future.

### **State Route 4 Corridor (Hamilton Middletown Road)**

Running through the northwest corner of the Township, State Route 4 offers the Liberty Township community an alternative route to the City of Dayton and City of Hamilton. The road intersects with State Route 747, which runs north-south along the length of the Township. The biggest features located along SR 4 include the Butler Tech campus, commercial development anchored by Kroger, the Hamilton Elks Golf Club, and the new Mercy Health Kyles Station Medical Center.

### **State Route 747 Corridor**

State Route 747, also known as Princeton Glendale Road, runs north-south through the western side of the Township, and connects with SR 4 in the Township’s northwest. Running through the community of Princeton, SR 747 offers connection with the Butler County Veterans Highway, which is a primary east-west road in the region.

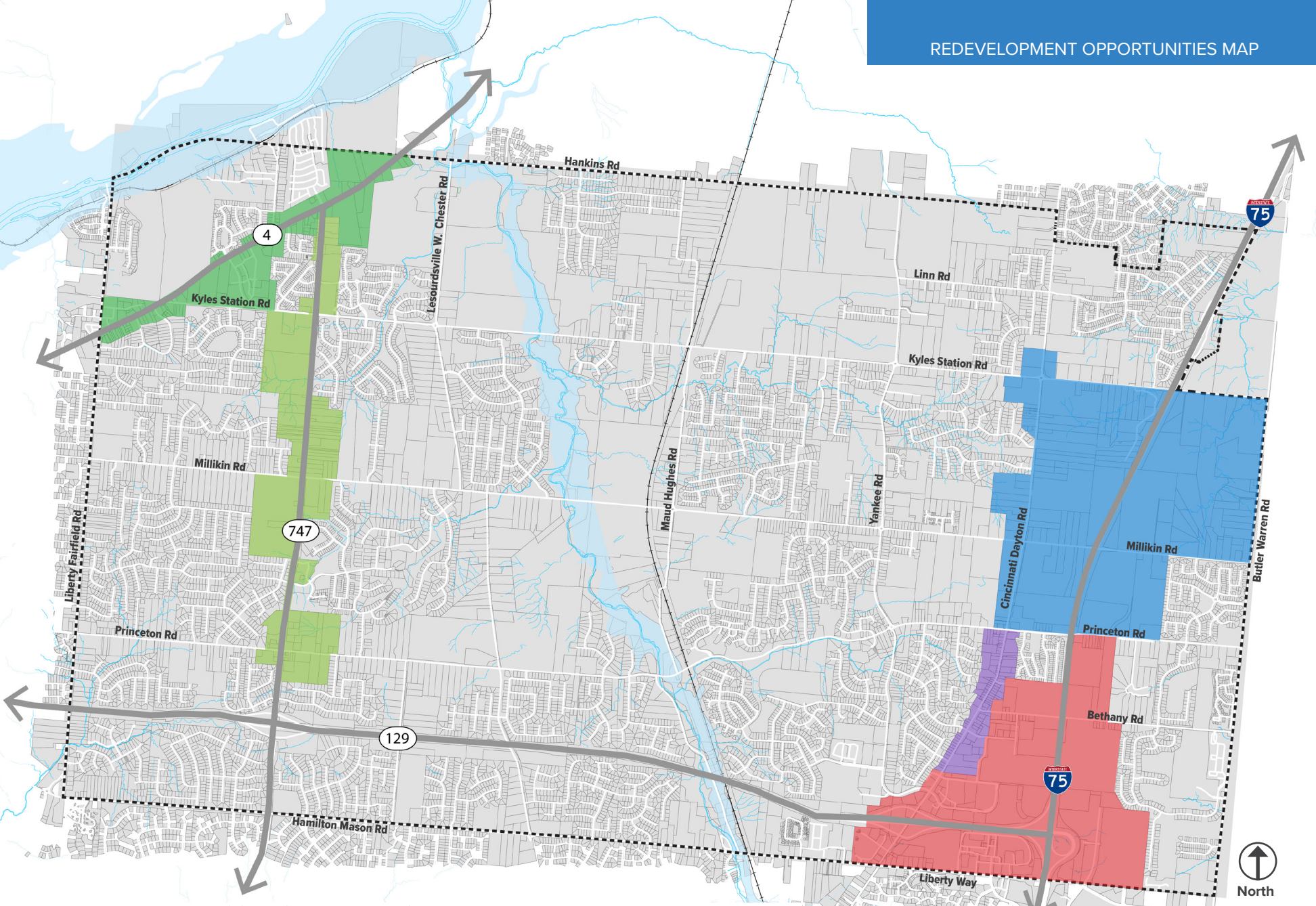
The area surrounding SR 747 was identified in the previous *2013 Comprehensive Plan* as a “planning block” for the community, where it was an ideal location for the further development of a mixed-use corridor. At the time of the previous plan, the corridor had already begun developing a commercial presence, with restaurants and small-scale convenience stores. The plan called for the further development of this area with business parks and for the increase in lot depth for commercial development where possible.

### **Future Millikin Center**

The Future Millikin Center area can be loosely defined as the corridor around I-75 north of the Liberty Township Central Business District leading up to Kyles Station Road and relies on the development of a new interchange at I-75 and Millikin Road. The area surrounding the proposed interchange is identified in the *2013 Comprehensive Plan* to be a mix of office and limited industrial uses.

### **Central Business District**

The Central Business District has seen the bulk of Liberty Township’s recent commercial development, being home to both the recent Liberty Way interchange and Liberty Center. Identified as the area surrounding both sides of I-75 up to Princeton Road, the district also surrounds the Downtown Bethany, the traditional “downtown” of the Township. This area has received the majority of attention by developers in recent years, as commercial development follows commuters north along I-75 from Cincinnati.



REDEVELOPMENT/DEVELOPMENT AREA LEGEND

- |  |                   |  |                           |  |                          |
|--|-------------------|--|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
|  | Major Roadway     |  | Waterway                  |  | Future Milikin Center    |
|  | Township Boundary |  | Floodplain                |  | State Route 747 Corridor |
|  | Parcel            |  | Central Business District |  | State Route 4 Corridor   |
|  | Railroad          |  | Downtown Bethany          |  |                          |

## DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT TOOLS

As a public, municipal body of government, Liberty Township has access to a variety of economic development tools to incentivize properties and garner additional revenue for specific capital improvement project implementation. Currently the Township, and land within the Township utilizes the following economic development programs:

### **Liberty Township Joint Economic Development District I- JEDD Tax**

A Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) was formed in 2006 with the partnership of Liberty Township, City of Middletown, and City of Mason. The intent was to support infrastructure improvements to encourage commercial development around the Liberty Way Interchange. A JEDD tax is a contract of cooperation, unique to the State of Ohio, between multiple municipal corporations (cities, counties, Townships). While terms are generally situational, generally a JEDD tax is used to collect an income tax from a district where the borders are defined by involved parties. This revenue is then shared between the parties of the contract to be used for a pre-designated purpose, usually a project that supports economic development.

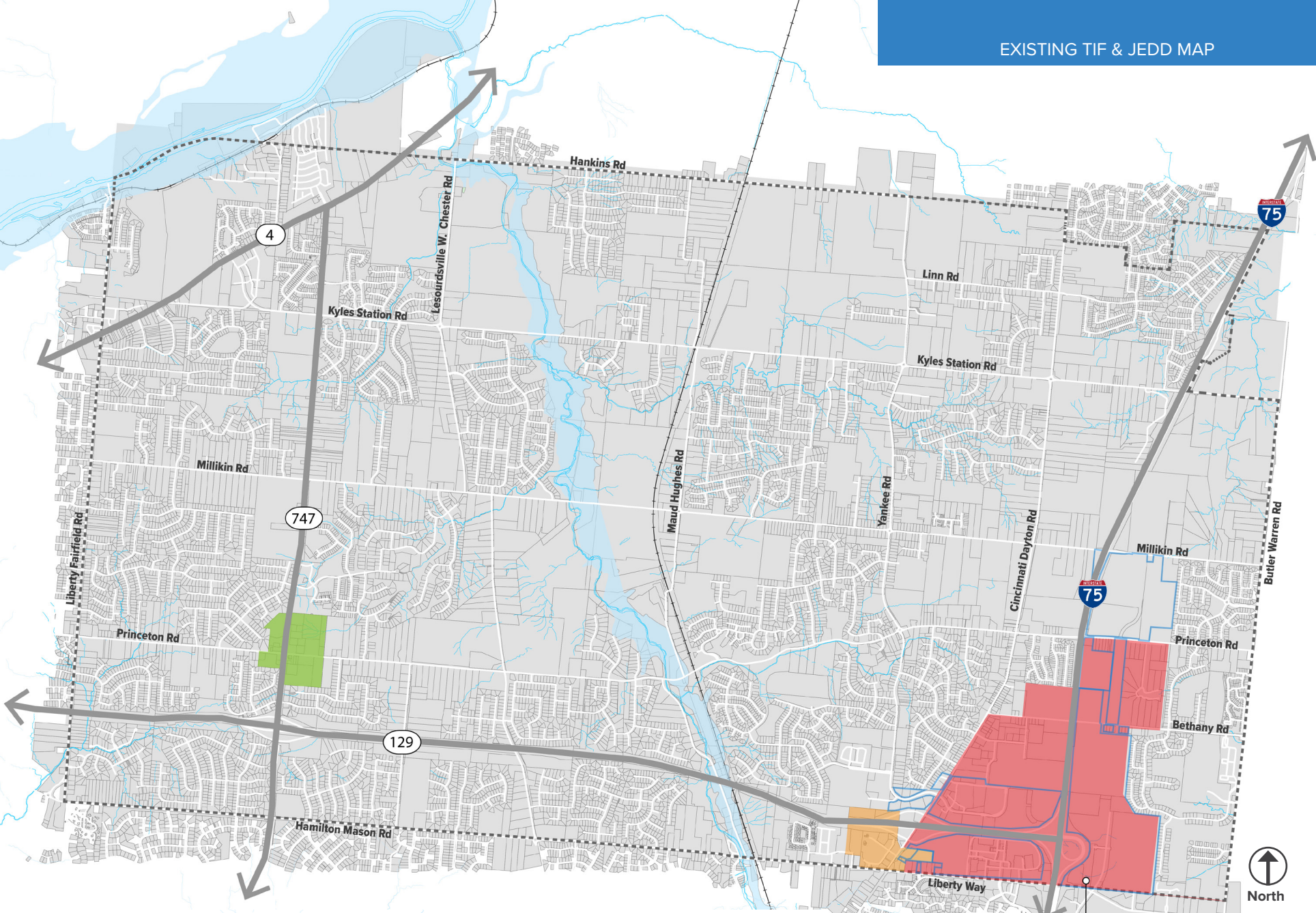
The JEDD outlines that a 1.5 percent tax income tax can be applied to those individuals that work and produce business profits within the JEDD area. Outlined on the map, the JEDD contains 685 acres around the Liberty Way Interchange and the intersection of Cincinnati- Dayton and Yankee Roads. Within Liberty Township, JEDD properties are concentrated around the Liberty Way Interchange, and run north along the east side of I-75. Taxes on parcels inside the Township are collected by the City of Middletown on behalf of Liberty Township.

### **Liberty Township Tax Increment Financing District- TIF**

Generally used for infrastructure improvements, a TIF is a predefined district where a portion of local property taxes are diverted, collected and used for a specific purpose rather than collected for general use. There is no additional tax on properties within the district, and the TIF does not affect a property's value. Additionally, the TIF district does not impact the base portion of tax fees being allocated for the community, instead it only captures the increment (the additional property tax gained) within the district when development or improvements are made and sets it aside for improvements within the identified area.

The development in Liberty Township that has occurred around I-75 is included within a defined TIF District; however, the captured increment has had limited impact on Township revenues with regard to property taxes. This area, which includes Liberty Center and surrounding development, is currently in a Butler County TIF until 2032, therefore any increase in property tax value goes directly to Butler County and not Liberty Township. The Butler County TIF revenue has helped pay for the Liberty Way Interchange, and future funds are committed to infrastructure improvements within the TIF area.

Liberty Township has 4 established TIF districts, 3 of which were initiated by Butler County. The TIFs created by Butler County include the Voice of America TIF, University Pointe TIF, and the Hamilton-Mason TIF, all of which are located in the southeast corner of the Township. The single TIF initiated by Liberty Township, the Princeton and 747 TIF, is located alone on the western side of the Township. Exact boundaries can be reviewed on the TIF and JEDD map.



**TIF & JEDD MAP LEGEND**

- |  |                   |  |                 |  |                       |
|--|-------------------|--|-----------------|--|-----------------------|
|  | Major Roadway     |  | Waterway        |  | University Pointe TIF |
|  | Township Boundary |  | Floodplain      |  | Princeton 747 TIF     |
|  | Parcel            |  | JEDD Properties |  | Hamilton-Mason TIF    |
|  | Railroad          |  |                 |  |                       |

This TIF extends further south than shown.



## TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

This section of the Existing Conditions Report assesses the Township’s transportation network of roadways, rails, public transportation and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. This background information identifies key planned initiatives that will serve as the foundation upon which to build the Comprehensive Plan’s transportation recommendations.

### MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

#### Regional Access

On the east side of the Township, I-75 is the primary facility connecting residents to the rest of the region and several other states as the primary north-south artery in the mid-west. Downtown Bethany and the Central Business District, located at the southeast corner of the Township, is 35-45 minutes from both Downtown Cincinnati and Downtown Dayton via I-75. A ten-minute drive south on I-75 connects to the I-275 Beltway, which in turn provides access to multiple regional destinations in the Greater Cincinnati area. I-71, parallel to and east of I-75, serves as a north-south reliever to Cincinnati if traffic conditions on I-75 are heavy. Additionally, I-75 north connects travelers to I-675 and I-70 providing access to Indiana and Columbus. Roughly 40 miles from Liberty Township, commuters can access I-74 towards Indianapolis.

Running east-west, SR 129, aka Butler County Veterans Parkway, is a controlled access facility providing access to key north- south corridors

including SR 747 and Cincinnati- Dayton Road within the Township.

### **Roadway Maintenance**

Maintenance of public roadways in Liberty Township falls under the responsibility of one of three entities: Liberty Township, the Butler County Engineer's Office, or the Ohio Department of Transportation. As of 2020, Liberty Township maintains 149.7 lane miles of roadway. The majority of these miles are subdivision streets. However, the Township also maintains all or portions of the following:

- Mauds Hughes Road
- LeSourdsville-West Chester Road
- VanGordon Road
- Kyle Station Road (between Cincinnati-Dayton Road and Butler Warren Road)
- Millikin Road (between Butler Warren Road and Cincinnati-Dayton Road)
- Princeton Road (Cincinnati-Dayton Road and Butler Warren Road)
- Bethany Road
- Hamilton-Mason Road (between Maud Hughes Road and Cox Road)
- Liberty Way
- Cox Road

Butler County maintains all or portions of the following roads in Liberty Township:

- Linn Road
- Kyles Station Road (between SR 4 and Cincinnati-Dayton)
- Millikin Road (between Liberty-Fairfield Road and Cincinnati-Dayton Road)
- Princeton Road (between Liberty-Fairfield Road and Cincinnati-Dayton Road)
- Hamilton-Mason Road (between Liberty-Fairfield Road and SR 747)
- Cincinnati-Dayton Road
- Yankee Road
- Liberty Fairfield Road

The Ohio Department of Transportation maintains I-75, SR 129, all highway entrance and exit ramps, SR 747 (Princeton-Glendale Road), and SR 4 (Hamilton Middletown Road).

Warren County maintains Butler Warren Road, the boundary line between Butler and Warren County and Liberty Township's eastern boundary.

The Township comprehensively assesses the condition and need for roadway maintenance on an annual basis and plans ahead to budget larger roadway maintenance projects. As the community ages, roadway maintenance is expected to become a bigger need in the coming decades. The Township road maintenance is funded by several revenue sources. The Ohio Revised Code specifically stipulates how monies from each source can be used. These funding sources include: Motor Vehicle Tax, Gas Tax, Permissive Tax, and inside millage designated to the Road & Bridge fund from the General fund. Motor Vehicle Tax and Permissive Tax are taxes levied on motor vehicles, including personal autos and trucks, mobile homes, recreational vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers. Gas Tax taxes are levied on motor fuel. JEDD revenues are also a source of funds for maintenance of roadways within the JEDD area.

## Roadway Classifications

In 2007, the Butler County plan commission formally adopted their updated thoroughfare plan, which was used to describe the existing roadway classifications within this report. The different levels of roadways and connections have been classified into functional classifications based on the service they provide. These classifications make it possible to manage an extensive transportation network, and identify recipients for federal funding. Classification of highway systems is necessary for establishing a hierarchy which allows engineers, planners, administrators, and other public agencies to develop their plans and strategies for maintaining adequate roadway facilities for present and future use by the traveling public .

Each classification is a specific level of balance between mobility and access, with levels ranging from favoring one extreme to the other. Mobility indicates the speed at which users can realistically move through a system, and access refers to the number of destinations made available. These two principles, mobility and accessibility, often work at cross purposes; for example, an interstate offers a high level of mobility covering great distances quickly, but it is difficult to get off this system or access storefronts that may be adjacent to the corridor. By contrast, a local neighborhood street offers consistent access to all the surrounding homes and businesses, but frequent intersections drastically reduce mobility. All other classifications are somewhere between these two extremes. The Butler County Thoroughfare Plan accounts for 8 different classifications.

### Interstates and Freeways/Expressways

Interstate 75, running north and south along the eastern edge of the Township, is classified as an interstate-freeway. The corridor offers very few points of access with a high level of continuous driving. Within Liberty Township, the only point of access is the Liberty Way Interchange in the southeast corner of the Township.

State Road 129, also known as Butler County Veterans Highway, running east and west along the Township's southern border is also classified as an interstate-freeway. The Veterans Highway was built in 1999 and runs directly to I-75 from Hamilton, without any other connections or ramps, this being the key difference from an interstate.

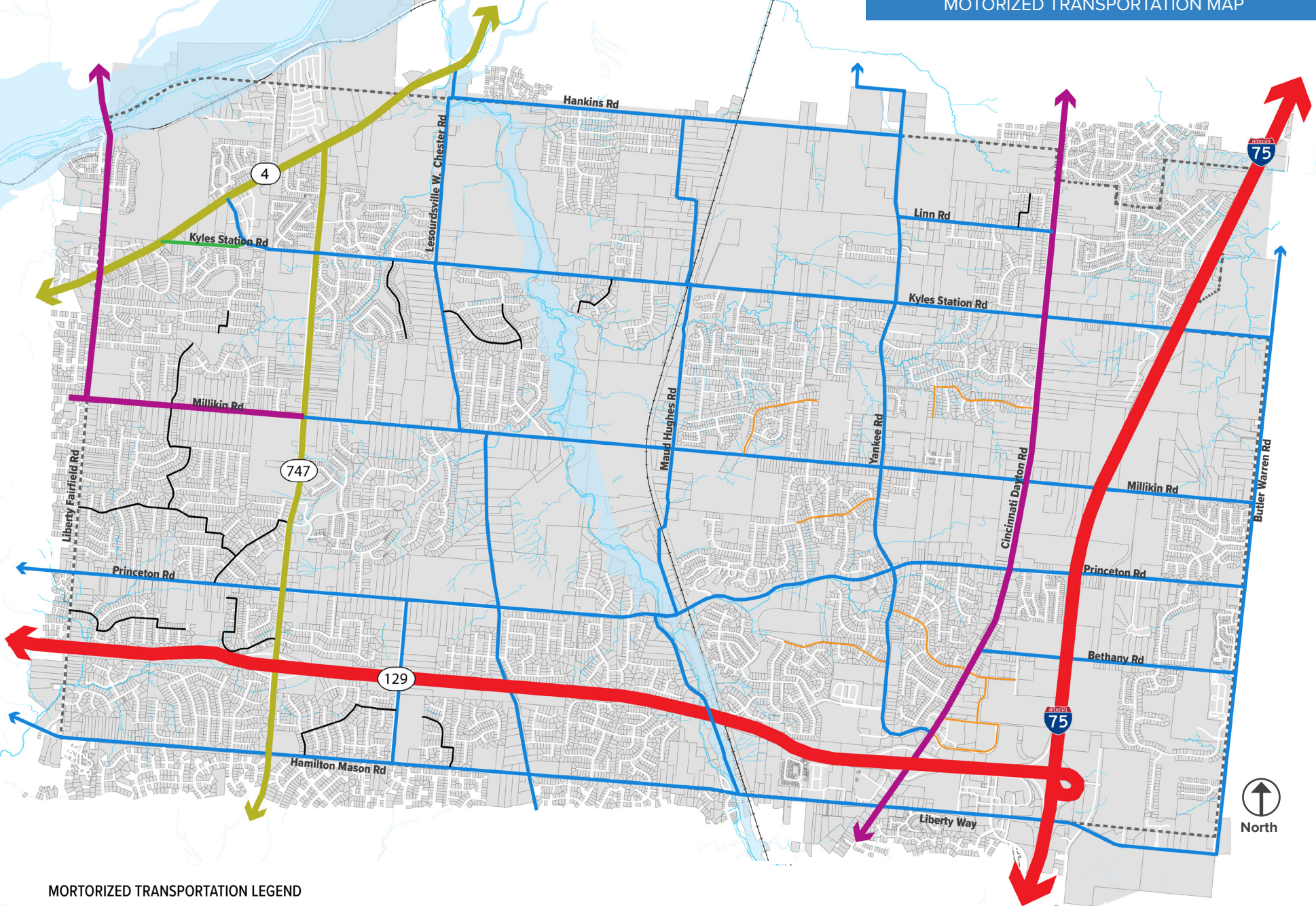
### Arterials

The Butler County Thoroughfare Plan classifies several roadways as principal arterials including SR 747, and SR 4. These are the main roadways of movement around and through metropolitan areas, and the highest classification that allows abutting land uses to have direct access via driveways and intersections, though this is less common in an urban environment.

Minor arterial roads are those that connect the principal arterials in an urban environment, and as connectors between population centers in a rural environment. The only minor arterial roads in Liberty Township are Liberty Fairfield Road, north of Millikin Road, Millikin Road between Liberty Fairfield Road and SR 747, and Cincinnati Dayton Road.

### Collectors and Local Roads

Major collectors cross much of the Township, feeding minor collectors and local road traffic into the higher roadways. These major collectors move residents through the Township, enjoying a high degree of continuity with moderate connections from minor collectors and local roads. These local roads are the highest in volume compared to the other classifications, running through neighborhoods and communities, mapping out the urban fabric.



MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION LEGEND

- |       |                   |  |                    |  |                             |
|-------|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| ----- | Township Boundary |  | Floodplain         |  | Major Collector             |
|       | Parcel            |  | Interstate-Freeway |  | Minor Collector             |
| —+—+— | Railroad          |  | Principal Arterial |  | Minor Collector - 2nd Class |
|       | Waterway          |  | Minor Arterial     |  | Neighborhood Collector      |



## Roadway Improvements

Liberty Township coordinates with the Butler County Engineer's Office (BCEO) and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to both maintain and improve its roadway system. Officials from Liberty Township and the BCEO are largely responsible for many of the local roads running through the community, while ODOT generally becomes actively involved with state and federal roads, such as I-75, SR 129, SR 4, and SR 747.

Developer are often required to make improvements to the roadways surrounding their site, a policy put in place not only to encourage responsible development, but also to allow a financially limited community to continually make road improvements. As any change can have a larger effect on the overall road network, traffic impact studies (TIS) can be required by the Butler County Engineer's Office to determine what effects a development may have on the road network, and what costs the developer can be expected to shoulder.

Some improvements to roadways are intended to improve mobility and/or safety, and do not result directly from new development. These projects often take place over the course of multiple years, as evaluations are made, projects are prioritized, and funds gathered. The primary methods of funding these projects, outside of development, are federal funding, state funding, and local taxes. When it comes to federal support, the Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) evaluates and awards funds to projects that can make a positive regional impact. This also ties into state funding as federal funds, combined with state collected funds, are distributed to state agencies such as the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) and Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) for local use. For local funding, tax increment financing (TIF's), joint economic development districts (JEDD's), and residential improvement districts (RID's) are the financial tools of choice. While they behave differently, each tool dedicates local funding generated by properties within a defined district, and sets the funding aside specifically for predetermined improvements.

## Anticipated Improvement Projects

### Proposed Millikin Interchange

Local advocates have been promoting the construction of a new interchange at I-75 and Millikin Road for over a decade. In 2009, the Ohio Department of Transportation confirmed that a new interchange at that location would be consistent with its existing spacing policy for urban interchanges. Currently the project is still in the planning phase; documents filed by OKI, the regional metropolitan planning organization that plans and programs federal funds for such projects, roughly estimates the project cost to be around \$40 million. However, the estimate in the Purpose and Needs study complete by LIB is closer to \$75 million including local improvements. There are no known timelines for design or implementation phases of this project.

### Butler County Veterans Highway (SR 129) and I-75 Interchange

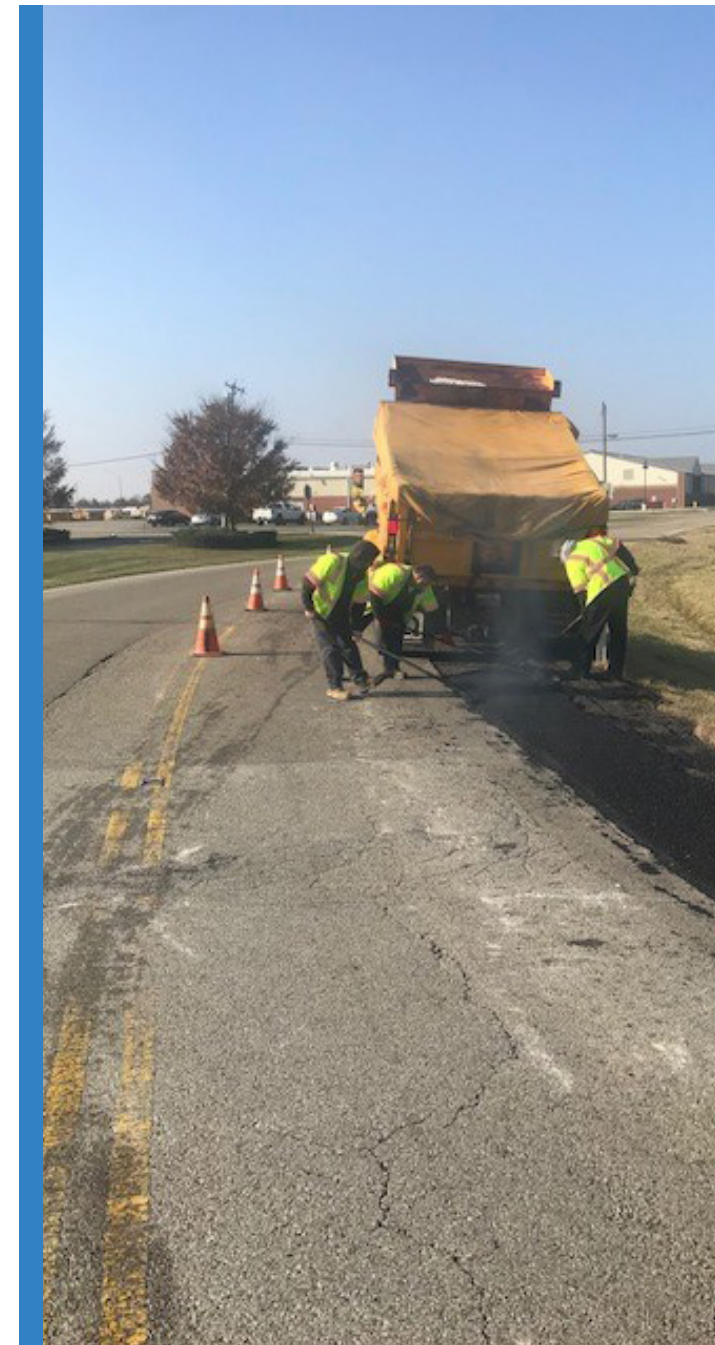
The BCEO and the Ohio Department of Transportation are currently undertaking planning and design efforts to reconfigure the Liberty Way and Interstate 75 interchange. The purpose of the project is to improve the movement of traffic so that safety is improved and traffic congestion is reduced. When complete the project will:

- Extend SR 129 to the east and provide a new roundabout intersection at Cox Road;
- Provide improved local road connectivity between Liberty Way and SR 129;
- Remove the existing ramp connections between SR 129 and Liberty Way;
- Widen Liberty Way and Cox Road to provide additional through lanes; and
- Widen the SR 129 westbound ramp to Cincinnati- Dayton Road.

As of June 2019, the project has secured nearly \$12 million in federal funds and the county commissioners committed to a 50 percent match. The project is currently listed on the BCEO list of future projects for a construction year of 2021.

### Other planned/ pending projects

Outside of the proposed Millikin Interchange and the SR 129 and I-75 Interchange improvements, the BCEO has identified a series of improvement projects through construction year 2023. The projects currently listed include a series of intersection upgrades, drainage improvements, and pavement resurfacing efforts.





### **Rail Corridor**

Liberty Township is bisected from north to south by the Norfolk Southern rail line, running through the Township between the cities of Cincinnati, Middletown, Dayton, and Columbus. Primarily used for freight shipping, the line operates the Queensgate Yards in the area surrounding Cincinnati's Union Terminal.

Liberty Township has inherited the aged infrastructure of the old railway system. With crossings on bridges crossing narrow roadways, these narrow underpasses, or "mouse holes" continued to pose challenges to travelers. Their old age means maintenance is a constant ongoing battle of repair and replacement, and their narrow width frequently results in traffic bottlenecks.

While the Township has acknowledged the issue as a problem for residents, the significant costs of bringing these crossings up to date with current clearance requirements has prevented any action from being taken. Attempts have been made to work with Norfolk Southern and other rail entities to resolve these conflicts, but the rail industry has traditionally had a very slow reaction speed. Roads that possess these "mouse holes" include Hamilton-Mason, Princeton, and Kyles Station Roads.

## Public Transportation

Prior to the 2008 and as early as 2004, the State of Ohio had begun laying the groundwork for the creation of a regional high-speed passenger rail line, dubbed the Ohio Hub Rail Network. This plan would have incorporated the Norfolk Southern and CSX rail lines into the proposed state-wide rail system, with the local segment through Butler County referred to as the 3-C Corridor providing a passenger rail line from the City of Cincinnati to the City of Columbus. While the project was cancelled in 2010 and federal funding redistributed to other state rail projects, interest in high speed rail has continued to simmer in Ohio as a proposed high-speed rail line from Columbus to Chicago gains significant support from local cities.

Today, Liberty Township is served by the Butler County Regional Transit Authority (BCRTA), which provides both fixed-route and on-demand transit services. Service is Monday through Friday, from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM. Only one of the fixed routes, the R1 Hamilton/Middletown Shuttle, actually enters the Township, intersecting its northwest corner along State Route 4. Additionally, this route stops at the Meijer Park and Rise in West Chester on Tylersville Road, which is fairly close to Liberty Township. The hub for the fixed routes is in the City of Hamilton, and connections can be made to go south to Springdale. From there, a passenger can then transfer to Metro, the Cincinnati bus service, to go to Downtown Cincinnati. A complete journey to Downtown Cincinnati via public transit would take between 45 to 75 minutes one-way, depending on the time of travel.

The City of Forest Park, located southwest of Liberty Township, currently provides a bus route to the City of Cincinnati via route 23X at 1160 Kemper Meadow. The bus line runs Monday through Friday, from 5:54 AM to 6:44 PM, and contains a wheelchair lift. While not available for weekend recreation, the bus line offers a possible alternative to those unable to travel via automobiles, such as senior citizens and youth. A park and ride location was also planned near the intersection of Yankee Road and Cincinnati-Dayton Road but service was never extended to this location.

Bus Route 42X (West Chester Express) and 42 (West Chester Job Connection) is another bus route in the area providing access to downtown Cincinnati. This is probably the bus route most Liberty Township residents would use since there is a Park and Ride at the Meijer at 7390 Tylersville Road which is just south of Liberty's boundary.



## NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

### Sidewalks

Liberty Township currently has a limited inventory of sidewalks, generally with short and isolated segments. Often installed with the creation of new subdivisions, sidewalks can be found throughout most of the Township, as they were made a development requirement during the original building boom. However, they have not yet been joined into a broader community-wide system due to their scattered nature but the Township has been working to drastically improve connectivity over the last 20 years.

There has been significant community interest in building up the current sidewalk inventory, especially in the areas within the old Bethany Downtown. While there are some sidewalk connections, the present shops, restaurants, local churches, and Lakota schools in close proximity to residential housings makes the area a prime target for concentrated investment. The opportunity for increased safety for children traveling to school on foot is also a strong consideration for future projects.

### Trails/ Multi-use Paths

Liberty Township has been working on trail initiatives since 1999, and maybe even longer. Adopted with the 2013 Vision Plan, the Trail Plan seeks to establish a network of safe paths and sidewalks. Today, there are multi-use trails that extend from several local parks, but most do not yet join significant destinations. Fortunately, the Trails Plan provides Liberty Township the roadmap for improve connectivity. One of the most continuous segments of trail can be found in Wetlands Park, running along the Butler County Veterans Highway. In 2019 the Township installed over a mile of pathways along the Gregory Creek corridor in Turnbridge and Cherokee Park area. Once these pathways connect to community centers, other regional trails such as the Miami2Miami, and other communities like Hamilton, alternative methods of transportation will open up to residents.

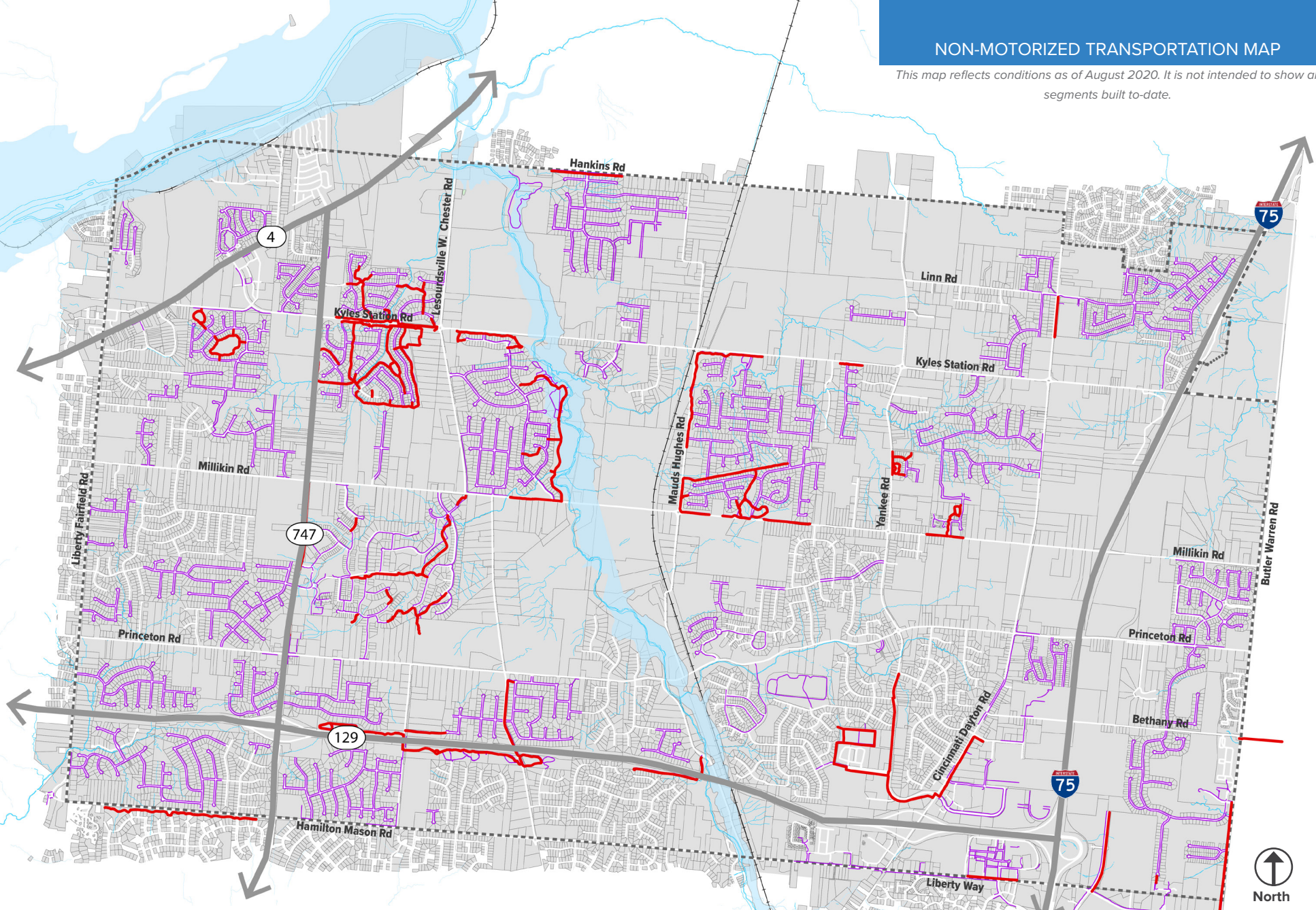
### Bicycle Infrastructure

Currently, very little active biking infrastructure exists within the Township. With Liberty Township being a relatively young community, the feasibility and destinations for biking have only recently developed, as the population grew large enough to sustain such investments. As mentioned previously the Township has been planning for a wide network of routes for bicycles and pedestrians for many years but infrastructure takes time and money. Because of this, only significant path segments have been the high priority. Liberty Township will continue their efforts on working toward connecting these segments throughout the Township. Partnering with developers and exploring different funding options could assist in implementing the Trails Plan.

A major elements to the trails initiative is the Miami2Miami trail. This includes multi-use trails proposed to run the width of the Township, connecting Liberty Center to communities like the City of Hamilton. The most recent update to the Miami2Miami plan included the Gregory Creek corridor as a scenic route that would connect the existing and planned paths along SR219 to the path that is existing and planned along the Great Miami River.

# NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION MAP

This map reflects conditions as of August 2020. It is not intended to show all segments built to-date.



## EXISTING SIDEWALK AND TRAILS LEGEND

- |   |                   |   |                          |
|---|-------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Major Roadway     |  | Waterway                 |
|  | Township Boundary |  | Floodplain               |
|  | Parcel            |  | Existing Multi-use Paths |
|  | Railroad          |  | Existing Sidewalks       |

## Future Initiatives and Improvements

Liberty Township has been pursuing interconnectivity of the community since the adoption of the Liberty Township Trails Initiative in 1997 (with several updates). Today, there are some gaps, but as development occurs, the gaps are slowly being filled. The plan calls for building upon existing trail systems within the various parks and subdivisions, implementing biking infrastructure along key Township roadways, and working in conjunction with the Miami2Miami Trail Plan. The Miami2Miami Trail is an 84-mile proposed trail system, made up of a combination of 10-foot wide separate trails, 5-foot wide bike lanes, and shared roadways with abundant signage. The purpose of the trail is to connect the Great Miami River Trail (both existing and proposed- which will eventually connect to Dayton's system of trails), and the Little Miami Scenic Trail (to the east near Loveland/Lebanon- which connects to Cincinnati to its south and to Columbus to its north). The multi-use system will offer transportation and recreation opportunities for walking, jogging, cycling, skating, and wheelchair use. When completed, the trail system will not only connect two large north/south trails, but with those connections, will provide links to more than 400 miles of multi-use trails across the state of Ohio.

For Liberty Township specifically, the trail plan outlines long-term goals in providing pathways along the SR 129 corridor, and the Gregory Creek Trail. This would provide the Township with major corridors running both north-south, and east-west. Providing an alternative to vehicular traffic, these major pathways would activate many of the sidewalk systems isolated within individual subdivisions. This is especially important in connecting the western edge of the Township with the developing eastern edge.

The plan has encountered some obstacles to its implementation, one of which is West Chester Township's reconsideration of its support for the trail. Comments from the West Chester Board of Trustees cast doubt as to whether such a 'luxury' was needed, and raised concerns over funding the project.

While one of the two proposed routes relevant to Liberty Township avoids passing through West Chester, the Miami2Miami Trail system has always been envisioned as a community connector. Other cities and Townships in the plan have already begun the process of applying for federal grants.

In addition to the Miami2Miami Trail, the Liberty Township Trails Plan calls for the piecemeal implementation of various trails as a component of engineering projects, which would be implemented as funds become available. These various smaller installments will gradually connect and join into one connected system for pedestrians and bikers. Also, the Liberty Township Trails Plan states that future development may be required to install a portion of a pathway with their development.

Currently, both trails and bikeways are very limited within the Township, with one of the longest continuous bike systems located between Reserves and Wetlands Parks. This system is rather isolated from most Liberty Township residents, as it is located along the far southern border, with only two relative points of access across the Butler County Veterans Highway. Most recently, Liberty Township installed over a mile of pathway along the Gregory Creek corridor in the Turnbridge and Cherokee Park area.

*Wide sidewalks enhance the pedestrian experience*





## PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Public infrastructure and services ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of Liberty Township residents is a priority. Liberty Township provides several key services to its residents. These services are provided either directly by the Township, or are subcontracted from the County. This section describes the infrastructure systems and the key service providers within Liberty Township with a focus on public infrastructure and safety.

### UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

#### Sanitary Sewer and Water

Liberty Township water and sewer services are both owned and maintained by the Butler County Water and Sewer Department (BCSW). These basic, but critical services are requirements for any modern household to function, and can be a primary limiting factor to a community's growth and commercial development. This is especially true for certain manufacturing and commercial enterprises, as well as the health and sanitation of the health and dining industries.

Developers are expected to bear the installation cost of any local sewer system for their developments, as well as any possible extensions upstream to make connections available to neighboring parcels. However, there are reimbursement policies in place if the required system installation must be oversized to serve the connecting system, or if the developer must extend the system off-site to connect to the public system.

Water is provided through a grid of water mains on most major Township roads. Due to pre-existing access, the availability of water has a much smaller impact on proposed developments than required sewer lines. When developers are expected to install a local water main, the location must be along the frontage of the property near the closest major roadway.

If at any time an existing development wishes for a connection to the central system, a petition can be made with the support of the majority of properties effected. The cost for the initial assessment and later installation will be levied in the form of an additional property tax on the parcels in question.

### **Communications**

Liberty Township is served by Cincinnati Bell and Spectrum for wired communication. Telephone and cable infrastructure are available along all main roadways and to most commercial and residential properties in the Township. There is also high speed and capacity fiber optic cable running through the Township. As the Township desires to attract more corporate, medical, and technology-oriented development, the availability of fiber optic

infrastructure will be a key asset.

### **Gas and Electricity**

Gas and electricity for the Township are provided by the company Duke Energy, one of the largest electric power companies in the United States. Serving 7.7 million customers in over six states, the company currently possesses a capacity of 51,000 megawatts of electric power. For a rough comparison, a single megawatt can be expected to power between 400-900 homes, depending on usage. Duke Energy is a publicly traded company, and has recently made expansions to explore new energy sources in the form of green energy.

Since 2010, Duke Energy has also supported the Site Readiness Program, an initiative that aims at providing local government and officials with the feedback of trained personnel to help evaluate feasibility of site development. Services include site identification, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of a site, and site mitigation methods. Duke Energy selects 10 sites annually, and invests up to \$25,000 for site evaluation or as a possible matching for a grant.



## **PUBLIC SERVICES**

### **Fire Department**

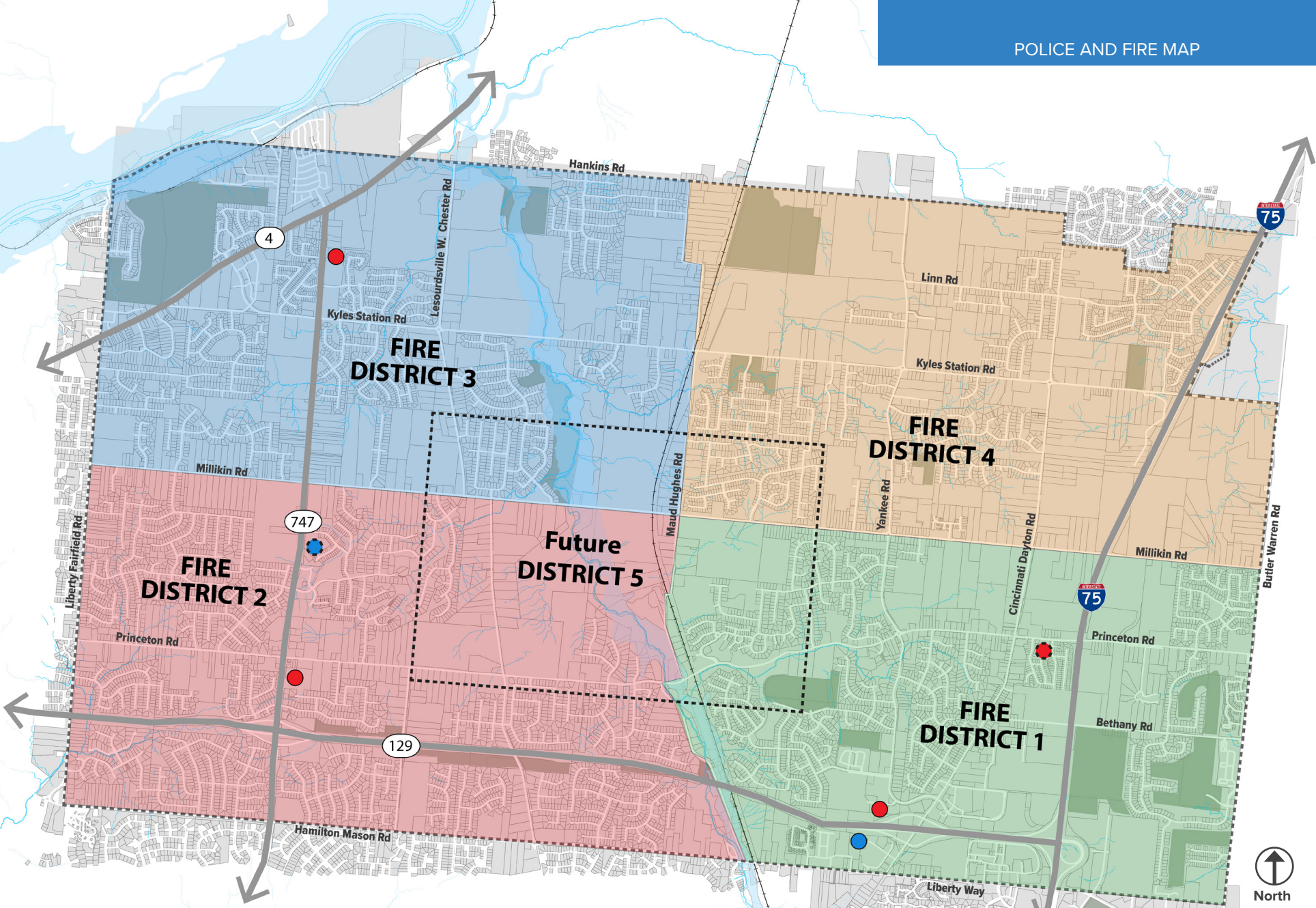
Currently, the Liberty Township Fire Department (LTFD) consists of 56 full-time career, and 54 active part-time fire fighters. There are no volunteer firefighters. All fire department personnel are cross-trained as a firefighter/paramedic, or a firefighter/emergency medical technician (EMT). The Fire Department is staffed 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Fire apparatus are often seen responding with the ambulance to provide additional medical treatment, if necessary. All fire and medical services are provided by Township employees, or mutual aid from adjacent communities, if necessary. Currently, the fire department contracts out billing services for ambulance runs to a third-party vendor.

Crews can often be seen out in the community driving the fire apparatus to pick up supplies, performing commercial inspections, checking fire hydrants, area familiarization and/or attending public education events. By taking the fire apparatus on these details, it allows the crews to remain intact to respond to emergencies within the Township. Firefighters operate out of three facilities located in the Township, including fire station 111 (District 111) at 5170 Princeton Glendale Road (near SR 4); fire station 112 (District 112) at 6957 Yankee Road; and, fire station 113 (District 113) at 6682 Princeton Glendale Road (near SR 129), which also serves as the department headquarters. Fire station 112 is currently undergoing a relocation process, which will move the station to 7655 Princeton Road to provide better coverage for the residents and visitors of Liberty Township. Currently there is no fire station within District 114. This area is served by the three existing fire stations and through a partnership with the City of Monroe. As outlined in the *2013 Comprehensive Plan*, as growth continues within Liberty Township a fourth fire station may be warranted near the center of the Township. Additionally, a new district may need to be established to ensure that additional resources and response times meet the needs of the community.












The fire department is currently funded by a direct levy, or property tax, which is spread over all Township properties. The most recent levy was put to a popular vote by Liberty Township residents in November of 2017. Funds are used to maintain operations, expand services, and minimize response time for all Township residents.

### **Police**

Liberty Township police services are contracted out from the Butler County Sheriff's Office, with 27 deputies permanently assigned to the Township under Lieutenant Morgan Dallman. Currently, they are based out of the Liberty Township substation located at 7162 Liberty Centre Drive, and provide 24/7 response times. The substation itself is not staffed around the clock, and is used as more of a relay than a dedicated station. Officers stationed here are dedicated to Liberty Township specifically, rather than Butler County as a whole. It is anticipated that police services will be relocated to their new building at 5021 Winners Circle Drive in June of 2020. These services, like fire protection, are funded by a public levy which was renewed in November 2019 election.



**POLICE AND FIRE LEGEND**

-  Major Roadway
-  Township Boundary
-  Parcel
-  Railroad
-  Waterway
-  Floodplain
-  Park / Open Space
-  Butler County Police Sub-station
-  Future Butler County Police Sub-station
-  Existing Fire Stations
-  Future Fire Station

## **Shared Services**

Liberty Township has been committed to shared services for many years where it makes fiscal and practical sense. Partnerships with the Butler County Engineer's Office, adjacent communities and other local and state agencies have been key to Township operations. In 2010, state legislators approved a budget which significantly reduced state funding to local governments throughout Ohio. These cuts left many local governments scrambling to figure out how to continue to provide services to their residents. As a response to the initial budget reduction, and the continued budget constraints being seen across the state, the movement of consolidation or shared services has gained traction. Shared services are instances where different government entities collaborate or share the costs of services or materials. While many communities are just beginning to establish these partnerships, Liberty Township has been employing this idea for some time. The most significant example of shared services as outlined previously is the police contract between the Township and the Butler County Sheriff's Office and the shared fire protection services with the City of Monroe and West Chester. 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.





## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities provide the services and amenities that support local quality of life. This section describes the key service providers within Liberty Township with a focus on the municipal government, education and health services.

### GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

Currently, the Township government offices are located off of Cincinnati Dayton Road, just south of Butler County Veterans Highway. In an effort to centralize the Township staff and offerings, the Township has been proactively planning for the construction of a new administration facility that would house not only government and Township offices but also the Butler County Sheriff's Office substation. On April 16, 2019 construction began on the new facility which is located along State Route 747 between Princeton and Millikin Roads. The goal is to occupy the new facility by June 2020.

Butler County government offices are located in the County seat of Hamilton, to the west of the Township.

## SCHOOLS AND LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Liberty Township has a mix of both public and private education facilities spread throughout the Township, with a higher number of preschool and elementary education facilities. The available schools located in Liberty Township include 6 private pre-schools, 7 public and 1 private elementary school, 2 public middle schools, the public Lakota East High School and Butler Tech campus. An important thing to note is that even though a student lives in Liberty Township, it doesn't mean they attend a school in the Township. For an example, some high school students attend Lakota West. Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School is included as both a private elementary and middle school. The aforementioned public-school facilities fall under the Lakota School District, which oversees schools in both Liberty and West Chester Townships.

All academic programs within the Lakota School Corporation utilize a STEAM2 curriculum. STEAM2 is an approach that modernizes and strengthens academic programs to better prepare students for their future. The intent is to encourage the students to be innovators and creative problem-solvers. The program focuses on Science, Technology, Applied

## CIVIC/ ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES

Given Liberty Township's young age and ongoing development, organizations for civic engagement and entertainment are still in their early phases. Currently, the most successful civic organization is the Lakota Family YMCA. Located on Yankee Road near Liberty Junior High School and the historic Bethany Downtown, the Lakota Family YMCA is a strong pillar in the center of the community for both young and adult residents. The facility has gained national recognition with the "bubble" that is seasonally built up

## LIBRARY AND POSTAL SERVICES

Liberty Township is served by MidPointe Library System, which currently has a branch location within Liberty Center. Additional locations can be found in Middletown, Monroe, Trenton, and West Chester Township.

Arts and Design, Mathematics and Medical topics. The curriculum builds each year and culminates at the high school level. During their high school education, students can pursue one of two pathways to strengthen both workforce development and college readiness: an engineering pathway or a biomedical pathway. Each pathway consists of four rigorous courses which can culminate in internship positions with local companies. The STEAM2 curriculum not only readies students for the workforce but creates partnerships within the community.

In the matter of preparing for higher education, Liberty Township has Butler Tech, Liberty Township Campus. Butler Tech is a vocational school where students and adults can take classes for college credit, and begin training for employment. Fields of study available for students include: bioscience, business, engineering, service, construction, manufacturing, transportation, natural science, public safety, and the arts. Fields of training for adults include: CDL training, healthcare, law enforcement, manufacturing, industrial technology, public safety, and personal enrichment courses.

covering the pool, opening an outdoor pool for year-round use. This feature is in addition to the variety of water features the facility offers, including a lap pool, water slide, and shallow beach area. Additionally, Lakota Sports Organization provides opportunities for residents to engage in physical activities. While it is an organization, they will typically use the Township parlors for their activities.

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, the goal of a post office location with a unified zip code for Liberty Township remains elusive.

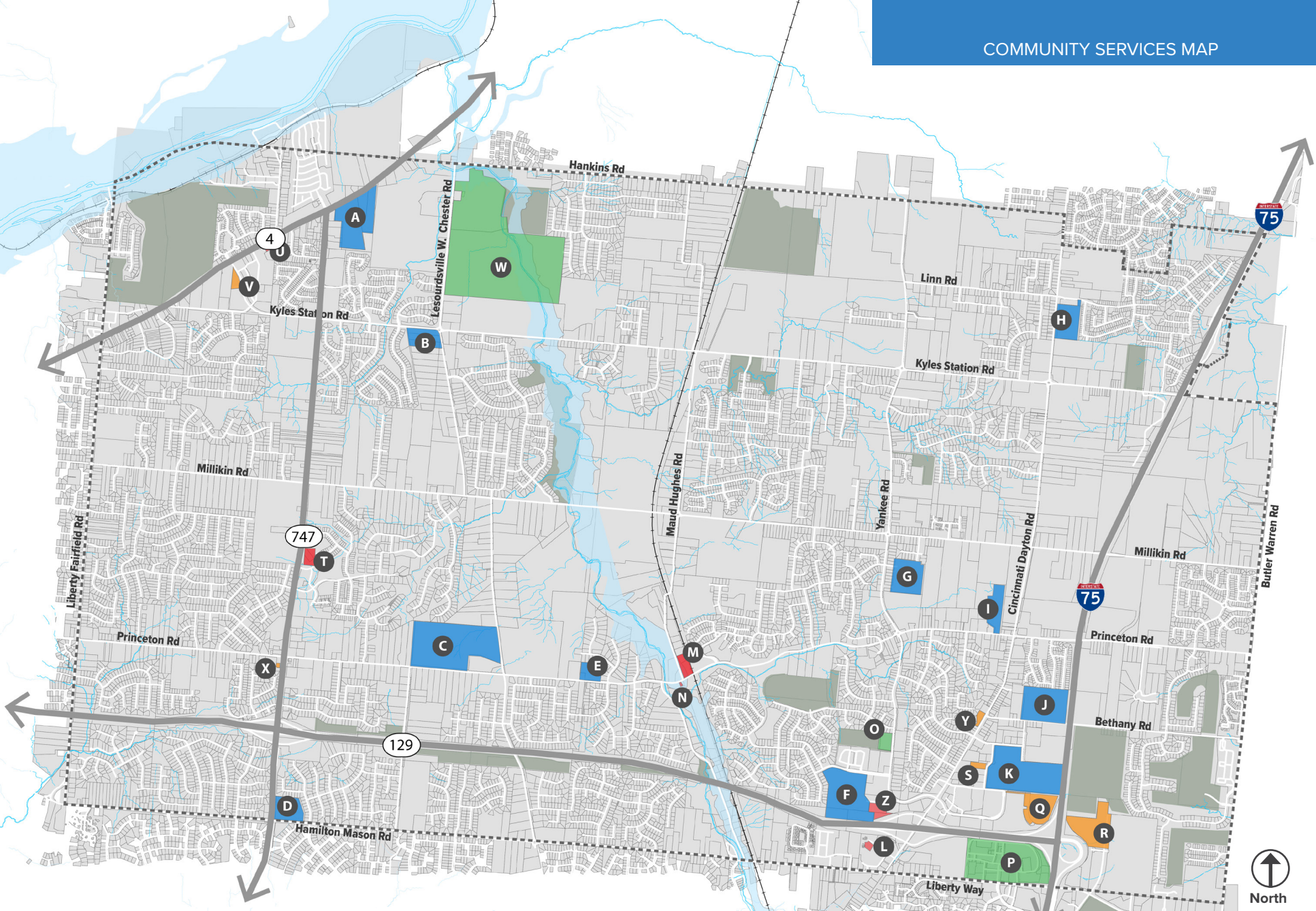
## PUBLIC HEALTH

Liberty Township has a robust and growing healthcare industry, with much of the Township’s southeastern development focusing on general and specialized healthcare. The Christ Hospital Medical Center- Liberty Township, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital- Liberty campus, and Mercy Health- Liberty Falls Medical Center are all major medical centers surrounded by specialist health facilities.

The Christ Hospital Medical Center, located at 6939 Cox Road, is the most recent addition to this sector and has quickly become the most resident-preferred due to its robust array of services. A \$62 million-dollar project was completed in January of 2018, and provides inpatient surgery and care, emergency medicine, a family birthing center, cardiac rehabilitation, cardiovascular testing, cardiopulmonary rehabilitation, imaging services, outpatient surgery, physical and occupational therapy, and testing services.

Cincinnati Children’s Hospital- Liberty Campus is a full service, 24/7, hospital with 42 in-patient beds. Primarily geared to child care and research, the hospital does offer general consultations and specialized care to adult patients. This facility has a Proton Therapy and Research Center with three gantries including one for children, one in coordination with UC Health for adults, and one dedicated to research. Cincinnati Children’s Hospital is a non-profit organization, ranked within the top 10 of all 10 pediatric (childcare) specialties, and 3rd out of 10 for the nation’s best children’s hospitals. 2016 also seen the completion of a \$120 million-dollar proton and cancer research facility at their Liberty Campus, one of

COMMUNITY SERVICES LETTER LEGEND	
Letter	Name of Destination
A	Butler Tech Liberty Township Campus
B	Cherokee Elementary
C	Lakota Central Office, VanGorden Elementary, Lakota Plains Junior High School
D	Heritage Early Childhood
E	Liberty Early Childhood and Historic Hughes Schoolhouse
F	Liberty Junior High School and Woodland Elementary
G	Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary
H	Wyandot Early Childhood
I	Independence Elementary
J	Lakota East Freshman Campus
K	Lakota East High School
L	Butler County Sheriff’s Office / Current Administration Building
M	Liberty Township Meeting Center
N	Liberty Township Historical Society
O	Lakota Family YMCA
P	Liberty Center & MidPointe Library
Q	Cincinnati Children’s Hospital
R	Christ Hospital Medical Center
S	Mercy Health- Liberty Falls Medical Center
T	Future Liberty Township Administration Building
U	Ohio State Highway Patrol
V	Mercy Health- Kyle Station Medical Center
W	Niederman Farm
X	UC Physicians
Y	Premier Health- Liberty Family Medicine
Z	Liberty Township Service Department



COMMUNITY SERVICES MAP LEGEND

- |  |                   |  |                          |  |                       |
|--|-------------------|--|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|
|  | Major Roadway     |  | Waterway                 |  | Government facilities |
|  | Township Boundary |  | Floodplain               |  | Destinations          |
|  | Parcel            |  | Park / Open Space        |  | Healthcare facilities |
|  | Railroad          |  | Educational Institutions |  |                       |

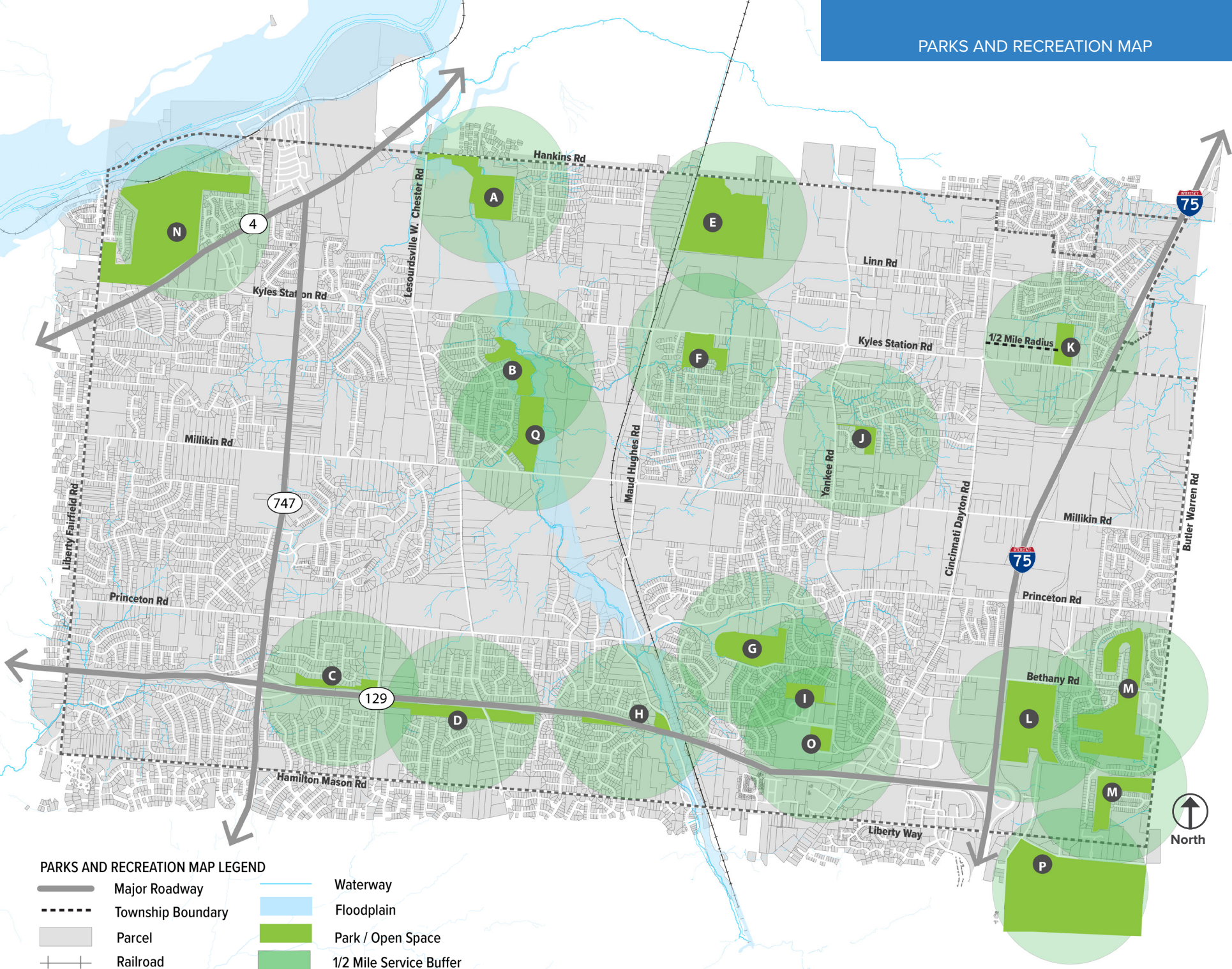


## PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND NATURAL FEATURES









Parks, open spaces, and environmental features play a vital role in shaping a community’s quality of life. Parks provide opportunities for social activity, physical exercise, and interaction with natural. The presence of rivers, streams, wooded areas, strengthens biodiversity, beautified the landscape, and supports healthy lifestyles. This chapter provides a detailed overview of Liberty Township’s parks, open spaces and environmental features.

**PARKS MAP: LETTER LEGEND**

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| A. Dubley Woods Park                     | I. Liberty Park / Lakota Family YMCA |
| B. Cherokee Park                         | J. Dudley Memorial Park              |
| C. Reserves Park / Fort Liberty Playland | K. Walter J. Long Sports Complex     |
| D. Wetlands Park                         | L. Green Crest Golf Course           |
| E. Pleasant Hill Golf Course             | M. Four Bridges Golf Course          |
| F. Allen Park                            | N. Hamilton Elks Golf Course         |
| G. Wihelmina Park                        | O. Yankee Fields                     |
| H. Maud Hughes Incline Park              | P. Voice of America MetroPark        |
|  | Q. Turnbridge Park                   |



**PARKS AND RECREATION MAP LEGEND**

-  Major Roadway
-  Township Boundary
-  Parcel
-  Railroad
-  Waterway
-  Floodplain
-  Park / Open Space
-  1/2 Mile Service Buffer



## PARKS AND PARKS FACILITIES

Liberty Township owns an estimated 318 acres of land, of which roughly 73 are developed park lands. These are provided and cared for by the Liberty Township Services Department. Park land in Liberty Township plays a unique role in the community in not only offering space for the various youth sport organizations to operate, but acting as community focus points for residents to gather together and socialize.

The following is a list of Liberty Township's parks and green spaces, their size, location, and when they joined the Township.

### Allen Park

- Acres: 26
- Address: 5440 Joann Drive, Liberty Township, OH 45044
- Inventory: Gazebo, Hiking Trail, Picnic Tables, Panther Run Creek
- Site: Parkland transferred to Liberty Township in 2003. Donated by developer Lucky Allen along with maintenance funding through the West Chest Liberty Community Foundation and a donation to the Township. Surroundings contain housing subdivisions and single-family housing. The park is predominantly dirt trails and woodland. Plans for the park are currently in the development stage.

### Cherokee Park

- Acres: 30.5
- Address: 4616 Watoga Drive, Liberty Township, OH 45044
- Inventory: Fishing, Gregory Creek, Paved Bike Trail, Hiking Trails, Parking, Picnic Tables, Pond, Wildlife viewing
- Site: Donated by Cherokee Estates developer Bob Hutsenpillar in 2002, and located within the Cherokee Estates subdivision. Fishing is allowed, those above the age of 16 require a license from the State of Ohio. Swimming and skating are not permitted. Grass pathways pass through woods and open fields and a paved bike trail connects Cherokee Park to Turnbridge Park to the south, and to Shannon Ridge to the north.

### **Dudley Memorial Park**

- Acres: 11.4
- Address: 5700 Yankee Road, Liberty Township, OH 45044
- Inventory: Charcoal Grills, Fishing, Hiking Trail, Parking, Picnic Tables, Playground, Restrooms, Shelter, Wildlife Viewing
- Site: Acquired at a reduced price from the Bob and Myra Ferber Family, the park was established in 1990, containing mulched hiking trails, mowed open space, and a pond for fishing. All fishers above the age of 16 are required to have a fishing license issued by the State of Ohio. A new protective fence was installed by local Eagle Scout Chase Oswald, with funding raised by the MOMS Club of Liberty Township. The project was a public initiative, with collaboration between several local donors and volunteers.

### **Dudley Woods Park (Originally named William F. and Cora Dudley Nature Preserve)**

- Acres: 63
- Address: 5591 Hankins Road, Liberty Township, OH 45011
- Inventory: Benches, Charcoal Grills, Fishing, Hiking Trails, Permitted Parking, Picnic Tables, Restrooms, Shelter, Wildlife Viewing
- Site: Originally named the William F. and Cora Dudley Nature Preserve, the land was purchased in 1994 from Jim Dudley with additional donations by Greg and Sue Amend at the total of \$115,119. Roughly 1/3 of this amount was paid with the donation by Greg and Sue Amend. The park is used primarily as a nature preserve. With a 1-mile loop of dirt and grass trails, the site is an extensive riparian habitat, with Gregory Creek running through much of the park. The Gregory Log Cabin was recently moved to and restored on site, home to some of Liberty Township's early pioneers.

### **Fort Liberty Playland**

- Acres: 7.5
- Address: 6845 Van Gorden Road, Liberty Township, OH 45011
- Inventory: Bike Trail, Bocce Ball Court, Picnic Tables, Playground, Restrooms, Shelters
- Site: Beginning with a land donation by Greg Amend and Carlos Todd, the park was formally established in 2000. Fort Liberty Playland contains a state-of-the-art playground built in 1999 with help from Friends of Liberty Parks and Recreation (FLPR) and community contributions. There are also two shelters on site available for private party rental. The site is made up of built facilities, paved bike trails, and an expansive mowed lawn.





### **Liberty Park**

- Acres: 16.5
- Address: 6757 Yankee Road, Liberty Township, OH 45044
- Inventory: Bike Trail, Hiking Trail, Picnic Tables, Playgrounds, Shelters, Soccer Fields leased and maintained by the LSO
- Site: Land for the park was donated to Liberty Township by Greg Amend and Carlos Todd when the park was established in 1995. The park is predominately made up of multiple soccer fields, it is surrounded by a nearly a mile-long paved pathway, with markers every 1/10th mile. It is home to two separate shelters and playgrounds. Its location is in close proximity to the local YMCA, Liberty Junior High School, and several residential subdivisions of single-family housing.

### **Maud Hughes Incline Park**

- Acres: 11.3 (estimate)
- Address: 6791 Maud Hughes Road, Liberty Township, OH 45011
- Inventory: Bike Trail, Bike Stairway, Hiking Trail, Picnic Tables
- Site: Formed under phase 4 of the Liberty Township Trails Initiative with land donated by Welsh Development, Maud Hughes Incline Park is the easternmost link in a chain of parks running parallel to and then under Ohio State Road 129, one of which includes Wetland Park. The park received its name due to the extensive bike accessible stairway that makes up the most prominent park feature. Construction began in July of 2002, and was dedicated in October of 2003.

### **Reserves Park**

- Acres: 8.6
- Address: 5119 Grandin Ridge Drive, Liberty Township, OH 45011
- Inventory: Bike Trail, Disc Golf Course, Fishing, Hiking Trail, Picnic Tables, Playground, Restrooms, Shelter, Wildlife Viewing
- Site: A pocket park designed for family use, the park was established in 1997 with land donated by Greg Amend and Carlos Todd. Located within the Reserves of Liberty Subdivision, the park contains a mile of paved surface trails, a rubber surfaced playground, a nine-hole disc golf course installed in 2015, and a fishable pond. Fishing license from the State of Ohio required for all those above the age of 16.

### **Turnbridge Park**

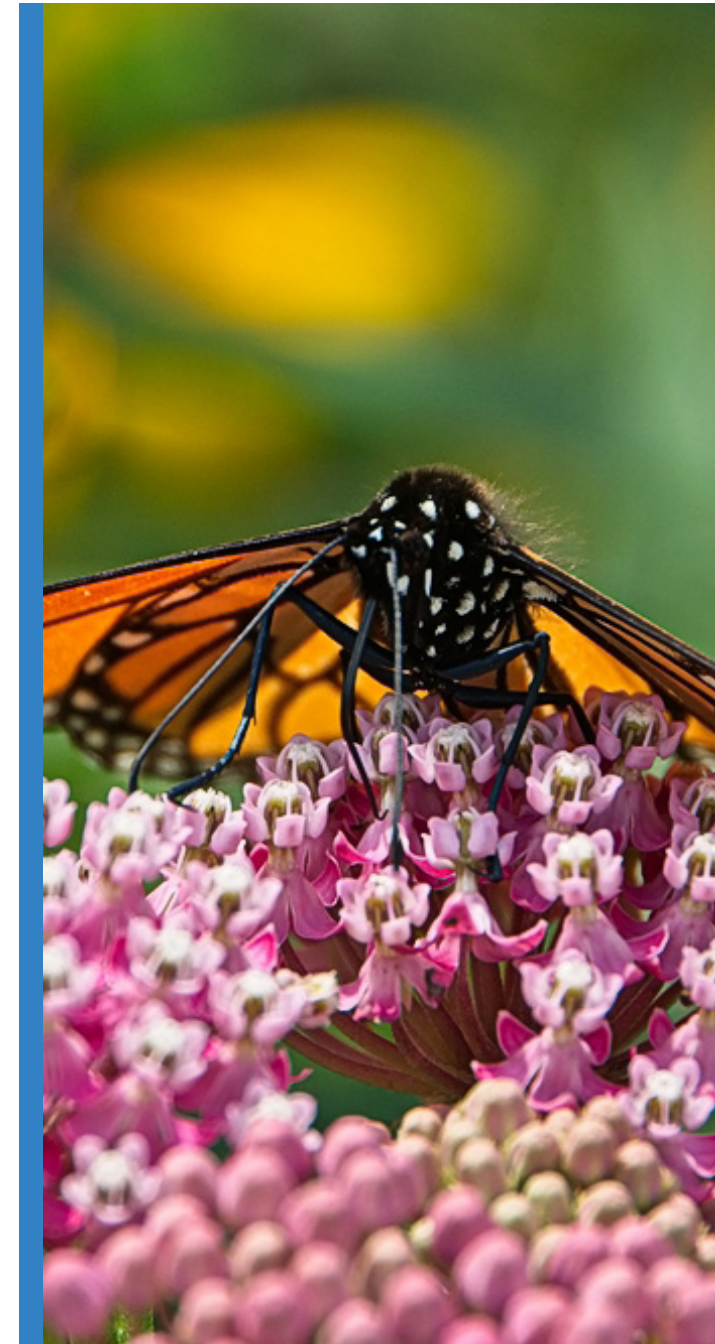
- Acres: 45
- Address: 5889 Laurel Run Drive, Liberty Township, OH 45044
- Inventory: Gregory Creek, Bike Trail, Hiking Trails, Parking, Wildlife Viewing
- Site: Donated by the Turnbridge subdivision developer M/I Homes in 2018, which allowed the Township to install the bike trail with grant dollars. Primarily a conservation area with significant floodplain areas, there is a paved trail that extends from Millikin Road through the conservation area to Cherokee Park. There are also grass pathways that allow access to Gregory Creek.

### **Wetlands Park (East + West)**

- Acres: 42
- Address: 6950 Lesourdsville West Chester Road (East), Liberty Township, OH 45044 and 6906 Van Gorden Road (West), Liberty Township, OH 45044
- Inventory: Bike Trail, Fishing, Hiking Trail, Picnic Tables, Wildlife Viewing
- Site: Wetland Park, both east and west side, was established in 2000 after a donation of land by the Butler County Transportation Improvement District following the construction of the Butler County Regional Highway. Four separate ponds can be found along the park trail with fishing permitted, with those above the age of 16 required to have a license issued by the State of Ohio.

### **Wilhelmina Park**

- Acres: 54.5
- Address: 6900 Wilhelmina Drive, Liberty Township, OH 45044
- Inventory: Open Space, Grass Pathway, Wildlife Viewing
- Site: Currently undeveloped, the park was established by Wilhelmina Property in 2002 when the land was purchased at a slightly reduced price. The purchase was done with the help of a \$200,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Bordered by a housing subdivision and woodland, with open grass fields and grass cut pathways.





### **Other Recreation Spaces**

Liberty Township also benefits from a variety of private facilities and parks owned, operated and maintained by other entities. The following facilities are notable because of their location, amenities and accessibility.

#### **Walter J. Long Multi Sports Complex**

This 20-acre facility located on Kyles State Road, east of Cincinnati- Dayton Road features four baseball fields, soccer fields, a small playground, a picnic shelter and gravel parking areas. The facility is owned and maintained by the Lakota Sports Organization.

#### **Yankee Fields at Liberty Junior**

The 6.3-acre facility located west of Yankee Road and adjacent to Woodland Elementary School features six baseball fields (with practice soccer facilities in the outfield), two soccer fields, a concession building and parking areas. The facility is owned and maintained by the Lakota Sports Organization.

#### **Voice of American Metro Park**

While outside of Liberty Township, the Voice of America MetroPark plays a critical role in the community's parks and open space network. The 435 acre park, located south of Liberty Way between Cox Road and Butler Warren Road, features a 35-acre stocked lake, nine miles of combined paved and natural trails, the Ronald Reagan Lodge Banquet Facility, Voice of America Athletic Field Complex, historic transmission museum, Chill Hill Sledding hill, a Cricket Field, a

large natural meadow area, and Wiggly Field Dog Park. An important thing to note is that this land has a federal restriction that prohibit the land from being developed, meaning this recreational asset will not go away any time soon.

#### **Lakota Family YMCA**

This 5.6-acre facility is located at 6703 Yankee Road in Liberty Township. This community asset serves as a community center, fitness facility, and provides a year-around pool for visitors. Complete with the standard fitness facilities, community leagues, workshops, and additional outdoor facilities. Surrounded by residential subdivisions, and in close proximity to Liberty Junior High School and Woodland Elementary.

#### **Green Crest Golf Course**

One of four golf courses located in Liberty Township, this 110-acre facility opened in 1972 under Harter Family ownership, with 18-holes upon completion. Converted from farmland, the course started to take form in 1969 when Mitch and Richard Harter convinced their parents, George and Delene Harter, to embark on a new business. The course celebrated 47 successful years in 2019, and is now under the safe leadership of third-generation family Jason Harter.

### **Four Bridges Golf Course**

Opening in 2000, this 18-hole championship golf course was designed by Robert E. Cupp. The private Four Bridges Country Club offers a variety of appealing membership opportunities including Family Golf, Individual Golf, Corporate Golf, Sports, Athletic/Clubhouse and Racquet Sports memberships. In addition to the course, members have access to a sports complex and clubhouse.

### **Hamilton Elks Golf Course**

These 270-acre, 27-hole private golf course is located where the Butler County Country Club once presided. Eighteen of the course holes were designed by golf course architect Donald Ross, with an additional 9 more added by architect Michael Hurdzan.

### **Pleasant Hill Golf Course**

An 18-hole golf course located to the North of the Township, opened in 1969 and designed by Dr. Michael Hurdzan and Jack Kidwell. The site is mostly surrounded by currently in-use farmland.





## Parks Programming

In addition to maintaining over 300 acres of park space, the Liberty Township Parks Department partners with community organizations and institutions to offer a variety of community programs throughout the year. As outlined in the Liberty Township 2018 Annual Report, Liberty Township features the following events:

- The Township partners with MidPointe Library System to host the Storytime in the Park series which features a 20-minute story followed by time in MidPointe's 30-foot bookmobile packed with library materials. They are held monthly April through October at various Liberty Township parks. Members of the Fire Department serve as guest readers at some of the events.
- In June, the Township Parks Committee holds its annual School of Fish event over Father's Day Weekend. More than 90 kids and parents have attended the popular event.
- The Township partners with the Lakota Family YMCA to hold the Sunset Yoga series in Dudley Memorial Park.
- The Parks Committee leads several nature walks in the parks, attends the Fall Festival in Liberty Park, and participates in the Clean Sweep of the Great Miami in October.
- The Fitton Center partners with Liberty Township to host Arts in the Parks during the spring and summer.

## Natural Features

Liberty Township is relatively flat in terms of geography, with the rare series of low hills providing a break from the flat landscape. Minor creeks and storm water collectors' network throughout the Township, draining into Gregory Creek, where the water then, in turn, feeds into the Great Miami River. Gregory Creek is one of the few waterways that flows to the north making it a unique feature and important environmental asset to the community. Additionally, Mill Creek Headwaters begins in Liberty Township and flows south into West Chester, continuing on to the Ohio River. Mills Creek Preserve is 13 acres of undeveloped land located near the SR 129 and SR 474 interchange.

The only land within any type of flood zone are properties along Gregory Creek, running in a relatively strait line toward the northwest through the Township. This narrow strip of land running along the borders of Gregory Creek are subject to regular flooding, as well as to more extensive 100-year flooding. A small section of the northwest corner of the Township is also within the flood plain of the Great Miami River. This area while restricted by limits of the floodplain is also identified to be 'Conservation Development' or 'Open Space' per the *2013 Comprehensive Plan*. Development in this area would need to not only meet the needs of the floodplain requirements but would also need to be focused on low density, residential and open space uses as outlined in the 2013 Plan.







## Chapter Four: Perceptions

There are almost always two sides to a story and this can be true for understanding the existing conditions of a community. While Chapter Three works to tell the analytical side of the story and represents facts compiled from data and field inventory, Chapter Four is intended to tell the story from the public's vantage point. This section works to outline the public engagement sessions held during the first phase of the project and summarize the key takeaways to-date.

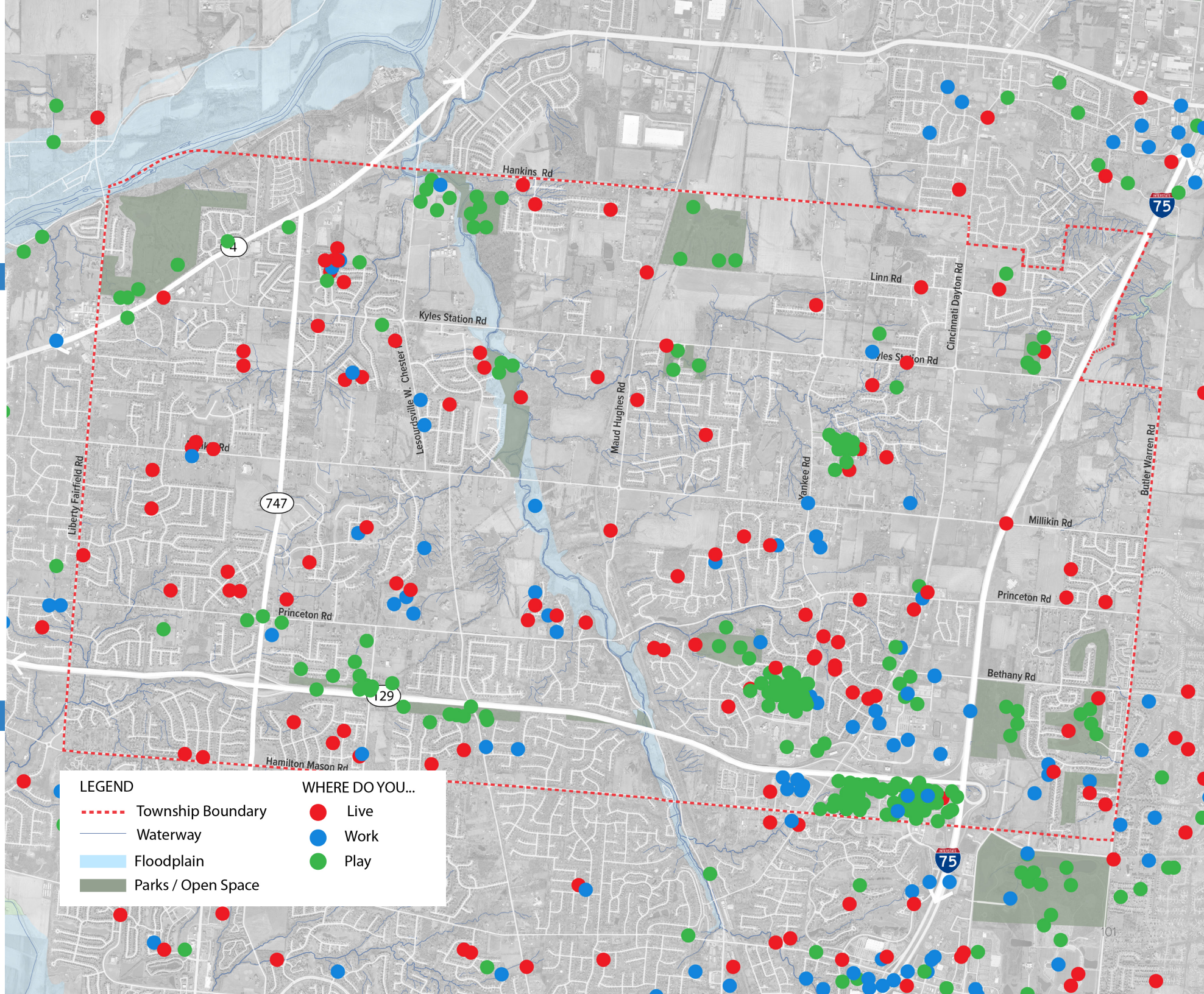


## SUMMARY OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Liberty Township comprehensive planning process included an extensive communications and engagement strategy for public participation. In addition to a project website and social media channels, this strategy encompasses a variety of engagement efforts including a project steering committee, planning ambassador program, stakeholder interviews, public open house meetings, community festivals and events, and online community survey. The primary goal for public engagement was to hear from a broad cross section of the Township which meant reaching as many residents, business owners, and stakeholders as possible. The project team was able to measure the success of the public engagement efforts by carrying around a Live, Work, and Play dot location map to each in-person event and asking people to identify where they lived on the community surveys. The location points were compiled to generate the Public Engagement Heat Map.

This map illustrates that people from all four corners of the Liberty Township and nearly every neighborhood participated in the planning process. The following sections provide an overview of the logistics and purpose of each engagement activity.

LIVE. WORK. PLAY. MAP



**LEGEND**

- Township Boundary
- Waterway
- Floodplain
- Parks / Open Space

**WHERE DO YOU...**

- Live
- Work
- Play



## STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The project steering committee worked in collaboration with the project consulting team to guide the process and ultimately decide the direction of the final plan. Selected by the Liberty Township Trustees and staff, nearly 20 individuals from a variety of backgrounds including Township officials, residential developers, private design consultants, economic development committee members, zoning commission members, county engineers and local business owners, will have met a total of 5 times over the course of the planning process. The meetings were strategically scheduled for two meetings during Phase One: Information Gatherings, two meetings during Phase Two: Idea and Strategy Development, and one meeting during Phase three: Community-driven Implementation.

### Steering Committee Meeting #1 | June 17, 2019

The project kickoff meeting was intended to outline the purpose of a comprehensive plan and the roles and responsibilities of the steering committee. Three activities were used to gather input during this meeting including a live, work, play map and two postcard exercises that asked participants to write down their one-word wish and complete the sentence “Let’s talk about…” The following points serve as some of the major themes that came out of the activities.

- Activity 1: “\_\_\_\_\_ Liberty Township”  
Manage, sustain, respect, engage, preserve, connect, and market.
- Activity 2: “Let’s talk about…”  
Innovation in transportation- how do we need to plan and at what cost?  
Keeping our zoning expectations doable in today’s commercial development climate.  
Sustainability- ensuring the plan takes into account sustainable development.  
Creating a bigger splash on I-75  
Technology and how to incorporate for future growth and economic development attraction  
Making Liberty Township more pedestrian friendly and reducing the need to rely on cars to get to destinations within the Township.  
Preserving the country feel with tomorrows growth and innovations.  
Collaborative development opportunity with surrounding communities.

### **Steering Committee Meeting #2 | August 14, 2019**

The second steering committee meeting consisted of a brief presentation over the preliminary findings of the existing condition data analysis and then the committee went through a series of small group activities. They were asked to identify things they loved, places or infrastructure that needed to be preserved or improved, and potential challenges and barriers.

### **Steering Committee Meeting #3 | October 23, 2019**

During the third steering committee meeting, the project team provided an update on recent public engagement efforts include a public open house and community survey. Additionally, the committee was asked to complete an online survey regarding the draft vision and goal statements. During the meeting, the group reviewed the results and discussed the feedback provided. The second portion of the meeting was focused on future land use mapping. Using land use stickers, the committee was able to convey their initial thoughts on where future development should or could go.

### **Steering Committee Meeting #4 | January 22, 2020**

The fourth steering committee meeting was intended to review the preliminary future land use map and draft land use category descriptions. The project team walked the committee through each land use category and facilitated discussion around the location and description. Also, the committee was introduced to the transportation map component that illustrates various corridor characters. After the meeting, the project team followed up with an online survey for both the land use and transportation elements.

### **Steering committee Meeting #5 - XXX**

[Enter summary here]





## PLANNING AMBASSADOR MEETING

The planning ambassadors serve as liaisons between the project steering committee meeting and the broader Liberty Township community. Nearly 60 individuals ranging from elected and appointed officials to local HOA presidents and community residents were invited to participate in the planning ambassadors program. This group will have met three times by the end of the planning process. The meetings were strategically scheduled for one meeting during Phase One: Information Gatherings, one meeting during Phase Two: Idea and Strategy Development, and one meeting during Phase three: Community-driven Implementation. Similar to the steering committee meetings, the first planning ambassadors meeting included orienting them to the purpose of a comprehensive plan and their roles and responsibilities of being a planning ambassador. After the presentation, the group participated in interactive activities focused on identifying Liberty Township’s assets, opportunities, and challenges. This group was then empowered to engage with their neighborhoods, friends, and family by sharing information and gathering additional input. Each planning ambassador was given an “Engagement in an Envelope” activity to take home with them.

## STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The project stakeholders are individuals who represent a wide array of community interests including major employers, developers, community organizations, and Township leadership. By facilitating one-on-one interviews and group discussions the project team was able to learn more about the community and the specific opportunities, challenges and trends impacting Liberty Township. Nearly 90 stakeholders were invited to participate in conversations around specific areas of interest. On July 31, 2019, the project consulting team facilitated seven group discussions focusing on the following topics:

- Housing, Real Estate and Neighborhoods
- Commercial Development
- Community Organizations and Special Interest Groups
- Business Owner Needs
- Public Infrastructure
- Public Serving Infrastructure Education, Economic and Workforce Development

Additionally, the project team held two other separate meetings with individuals from the adjacent communities and elected and appointed officials. If stakeholders were not able to attend the scheduled meeting and wanted to provide feedback, the project team followed up with individual phone interviews.

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE AND WORK SESSIONS

On August 14, 2019, the first public meeting was held at the Lakota YMCA. The public meeting was advertised through postcards, flyers, and social media invitations. In total 52 individuals signed in using the meeting sign-in sheets. The event was set up as an open house which allowed attendees to filter through a series of activities. Each station provided an opportunity for feedback. The open house featured four key activity areas including a welcome station, existing conditions, aspirations, and community word search.

The final two public open house meetings are scheduled to occur in January and then April of 2020. In January, the public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan components including preliminary goals, objectives, strategies, and future land use scenarios. The April meeting will be a community celebration in honor of a successful planning process and final plan.





## COMMUNITY SURVEY

Shortly after the public meeting, a complementary community survey opened up as a secondary opportunity to provide feedback. The survey was opened from August 14 – October 6, 2019 and collected over 900 responses. This impressive level of participation is a result of a successful social media push and passionate, engaged community citizens. The survey was intended to help the project team understand the public's perception of Liberty Township's assets, challenges, and desirable development types and location.

### Overall Community Conditions

The overarching goal for the information gathering phase of the planning process is to identify and understand the community's assets and challenges. Assets are things Liberty will need to maintain but also continue to expand upon and enhance in the future, while challenges are constraints that are limiting or threatening to the community.

The community survey asked participants to describe Liberty Township's strongest assets. While nearly 530 people answered this question, the responses were similar enough to be grouped into six categories.

- 1. Location-** Residents value convenient access to Interstate 75 and proximity to Dayton and Cincinnati.
- 2. Education-** Residents feel the high-quality education offered within the local schools is an asset to the community.
- 3. Neighborhoods-** Residents recognize the importance friendly, safe neighborhoods with quality housing units and welcoming residents.
- 4. Parks and Open Space-** Residents value the local parks for their recreational amenities and their contribution to the rural character.
- 5. Natural Setting-** Probably the most popular response, residents feel the natural, undeveloped land is one of Liberty Township's greatest assets.
- 6. Safety-** Residents value the sense of security offered in Liberty Township.

In addition to identifying assets, the community survey asked respondents to describe things that may be impeding Liberty Township's success. While phrased differently, the two most common responses deal with the community vision and the on-going debate about whether Liberty Township needs more or less development. These challenges reflect what the project team has heard through steering committee, stakeholder, and public meeting engagement too. While different, these concerns are tied together and impact one another. The following statements work to describe the most common concerns expressed in the survey.

- **Lack of consensus on development-** Residents disagree about development in Liberty Township. On one side, residents feel that development is necessary to bring jobs and income into the Township. This group wants more commercial development, and sees the value in employment centers. On the other hand, residents feel Liberty Township is being reactive to development instead of proactive. These residents feel development will threaten the rural character of Liberty Township.
- **Roadway Infrastructure-** Residents feel that roads are congested and could benefit from improvements such as additional lanes and a new interchange.
- **Pedestrian connectivity-** Residents described the lack of sidewalks and trails as something that could impede the success of the community.
- **Rapid growth-** Going back to reactive versus proactive development, residents recognize that high levels of rapid growth isn't always sustainable. Liberty Township should be considering the future impacts on community services, amenities, and infrastructure.





## Community Aspirations: Development

As mentioned in the previous section, public engagement efforts revealed that the most controversial topic in Liberty Township is regarding the type, location, and intensity of future development. The project team has made continuous efforts to understand the underlying issues by encouraging the community to be specific about desirable and undesirable development and transportation patterns. This section outlines the majority responses from the public open house results, community survey results and business breakfast input.

### DEVELOPMENT DIVERSITY:

**Residents are starting to understand that development diversity is important for the fiscal well-being of Liberty Township.**

#### *Public Open House Feedback*

- 72 percent of public meeting attendees agreed Liberty Township needs more locally oriented entertainment venues including theatres, libraries, and museums.
- 57 percent of public meeting attendees agreed Liberty Township needs more regional tourism related venues such as hotels, restaurants, shops and meeting venues.
- 61 percent of public meeting attendees agreed Liberty Township needs more commercial development in the form of business parks, employment centers and corporate headquarters.

#### *Community Survey Results*

- 50 percent of survey respondents think the Township should work to diversify the land use and development types within the community. A small portion (19 percent) of the survey respondents didn't have enough information to answer. The remaining 30 percent of respondents don't want to diversify.
- Nearly 20 percent of survey respondents didn't have enough information to answer the question about diversifying land use and development types. This could be interpretative as they might be ok with diversification at strategic locations.

#### *Business Breakfast Input*

- Business owners feel that business parks, employment centers, and tech flex options should be the Townships highest development priority over the next 2 years.

## LOCATION OF DIVERSITY:

Residents are in favor of development in strategic locations.

### *Public Open House Feedback*

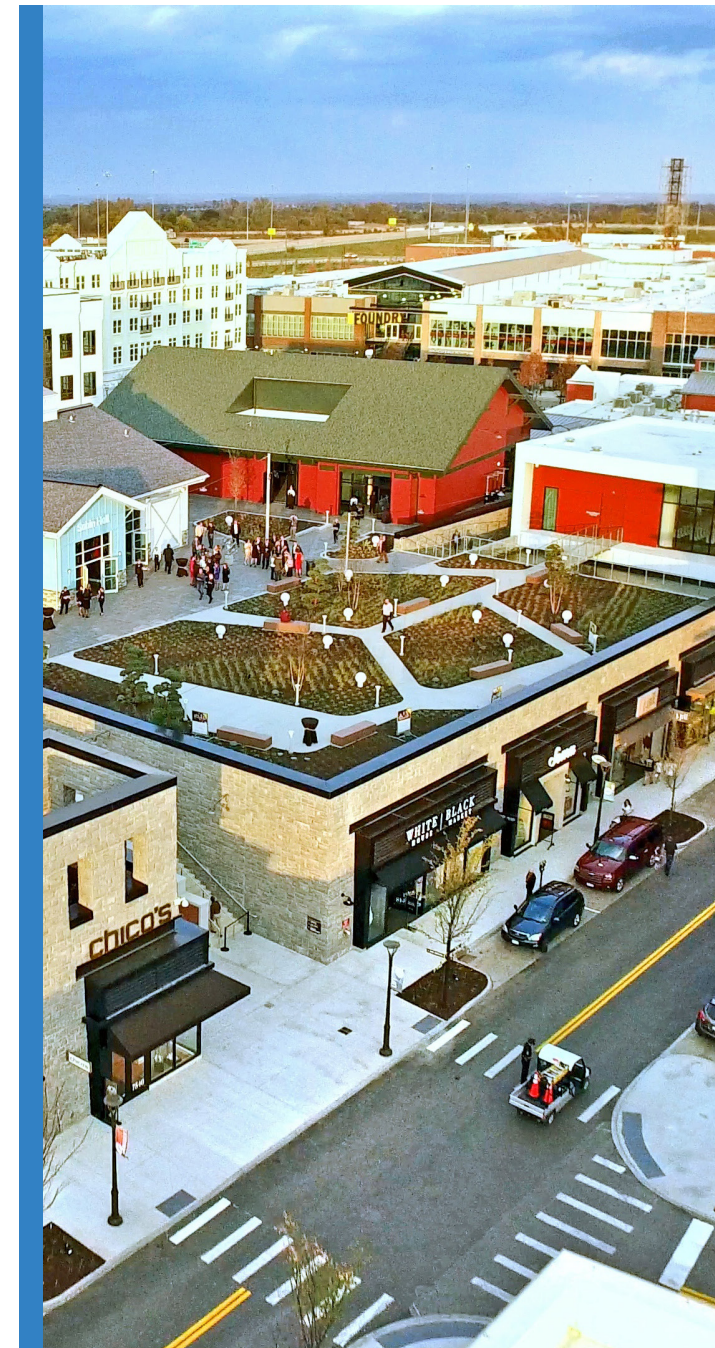
- When meeting attendees were asked to identify locations that should be used for development, the future Millikin interchange area and the 747 corridor were the most popular areas.

### *Community Survey Results*

- Only 16 percent of survey respondents said they didn't want to see any new development occur.
- In comparison to the other major corridors and downtown Bethany, the future Millikan Interchange area was identified as the most desirable location for development.
- Thirty percent of survey respondents would support development along the State Route 4 corridor, State Route 747 corridor, downtown Bethany, and the Central Business District. (This does not suggest that 70 percent of respondents would NOT support development, this question was simply a "check box" question to identify desirable locations.)

### *Business Breakfast Input*

- Business owners feel the future Millikin Interchange area is the best area positioned for business expansion.





## **HOUSING:**

**Residents feel the Township could benefit from more single-family homes and senior housing options but are not in favor of apartments.**

### *Public Open House Feedback*

- 74 percent of public meeting attendees agree Liberty Township needs more single-family neighborhoods and homes.
- 74 percent of public meeting attendees feel Liberty Township does not need more multi-family housing options such as apartments or condominiums.
- 61 percent of public meeting attendees agree Liberty Township needs more starter housing options for new graduates, young families, or emerging professionals.

### *Community Survey Results*

- Nearly 50 percent of survey respondents feel Liberty Township needs more senior housing.
- The most popular responses related to single-family homes was to keep as is.
- 40 percent of survey respondents feel Liberty Township should keep apartments with rent over \$1,000 per month, condominiums, and townhomes as is.
- 54 percent of survey respondents feel Liberty Township does not need apartments with rent under \$1,000 per month.

### *Business Breakfast Input*

- Business owners feel that single-family residential neighborhoods support their business the most.
- When asked, “What can the Township do to help grow your business?” several responses focused on encouraging more senior living development and continued single-family residential growth.

## **EMPLOYMENT:**

**Residents are generally accepting of most types of employment centers.**

### *Public Open House Feedback*

- 61 percent of public meeting attendees agreed Liberty Township needs more commercial development in the form of business parks, employment centers and corporate headquarters.

### *Community Survey Results*

- Over 50 percent of survey respondents voted that Liberty Township needs more of regional and local office developments.
- Technology focused industries and service-oriented developments (restaurants and retail) are the most desired type of employment.
- Nearly 50 percent of survey respondents said Liberty Township doesn't need any more manufacturing and warehouse developments.

### *Business Breakfast Input*

- Business owners feel that business parks, employment centers, and tech flex options should be the Township's highest priority of the next 2 years related to development.





## **SHOPPING AND ENTERTAINMENT:**

**Residents will welcome a wide variety of entertainment development types.**

### *Public Open House Feedback*

- 72 percent of public meeting attendees agreed Liberty Township needs more locally oriented entertainment venues including theatres, libraries, and museums.

### *Community Survey Results*

- Nearly 50 percent of survey respondents feel neighborhood scaled commercial development is needed in limited amounts and strategic locations.
- The most popular entertainment categories include outdoor event areas (72 percent) and destination restaurants (64 percent).
- Nearly 20 percent of survey respondents feel the Township needs less chain and fast food restaurants. Fifty-five percent of survey respondents feel the Township should keep chain and fast restaurants as is.

### *Business Breakfast Input*

- Some business owners expressed that opportunities for commercial development and existing sports and entertainment options brought their business to Liberty Township.

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## **TOURISM:**

**Residents want more tourism development, with the exception of fast food and chain restaurants.**

### *Public Open House Feedback*

- 57 percent of public meeting attendees feel that Liberty Township needs more regional tourism related venues such as hotels, restaurants, shops, and meeting venues.

### *Community Survey Results*

- Majority of survey respondents think Liberty Township needs more destination restaurants, event/meeting spaces, outdoor event venues, and active recreational facilities.
- 56 percent of survey respondents voted to keep hotel development as is.
- Nearly 20 percent of survey respondents think Liberty Township needs less fast food restaurants and chain restaurants. Fifty-five percent of survey respondents feel the Township should keep chain and fast restaurants as is.

### *Business Breakfast Input*

- This input opportunity did not include specific questions related to this topic.





## **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION:**

**Residents have not expressed a strong desire for regional transit.**

### *Public Open House Feedback*

- 55 percent of public meeting attendees feel the Township does not need more commuter services such as park and ride stops to better connect residents to employment centers.

### *Community Survey Results*

- Only 30 percent of survey respondents voted in favor of regional commuter routes. These results are not surprising considering most of Liberty Township owns a vehicle and is financially well-off.

### *Business Breakfast Input*

- This input opportunity did not include specific questions related to this topic.

## **MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION:**

**Residents feel that Liberty Township could improve access and capacity of roadways.**

### *Public Open House Feedback*

- This input opportunity did not include specific questions related to this topic.

### *Community Survey Results*

- 53 percent of survey respondents think Liberty Township could improve or enhance roadways. Common responses including the following corridors
  - 129, Liberty Way, and I-75
  - State Route 747
  - Cincinnati-Dayton Road between Princeton and 129
  - The curve on Yankee Road north of Princeton
- 47 percent of survey respondents think Liberty Township could benefit from improved intersections. Common responses included the intersection of:
  - State Route 747 and Millikin
  - State Route 747 and State Route 4
  - I-75 and Millikin Way
  - Maud Hughes & Hamilton-Mason
- 60 percent of survey respondents think Liberty Township could benefit from a second interchange at Millikin Road and I-75.

### *Business Breakfast Input*

- Business owners feel investment in public infrastructure improvements (roads, intersections, curbs, storm drainage, etc.) would support their business the most.
- When asked, “What can the Township do to help grow your business?” many comments focused on improving roadway infrastructure.





## **PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION:**

**Residents have a strong desire to improve connectivity through sidewalks, trails, and bicycle lanes.**

### *Public Open House Feedback*

- This input opportunity did not include specific questions related to this topic.

### *Community Survey Results*

- 80 percent of survey respondents agree Liberty Township needs more sidewalks and multi-use trails.
- 60 percent of survey respondents agree Liberty Township needs to improve or enhance existing sidewalks and multi-use trails.
- 47 percent of survey respondents would like to see bike lanes improved or enhanced.

### *Business Breakfast Input*

- When asked, “What can the Township do to help grow your business?” a few business owners commented on connectivity and walkability.

## **ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION (COMMUTER ROUTES):**

**Residents find commuter services to be important for senior residents but generally not in favor of commuter routes.**

### *Public Open House Feedback*

- 87 percent of public meeting attendees said Liberty Township needs more commuter services such as call ahead transportation to better connect senior residents to local destinations.
- 55 percent of public meeting attendees said Liberty Township does not need more commuter services such as park and ride stops

### *Community Survey Results*

- Only 18 percent of survey respondents voted in favor of internal, local commuter routes but as mentioned above this is not surprising given the existing demographics of Liberty Township. As the population begins to age, local commuter routes will become more important for the senior demographic.

### *Business Breakfast Input*

- This input opportunity did not include specific questions related to this topic.





## Chapter Five: Trends and Challenges

Through the completion of Phase 1: Information Gathering, the project team was able to identify several key challenges that Liberty Township is or will be facing in the future. The following 12 challenge descriptions serve as the conclusion statements that were drawn from the data collection and public engagement feedback described in previous chapters of this report. Additionally, these challenges will inform the goals, objectives, and recommendations that will come later on during Phase 2: Idea and Strategy Development. As Liberty Township works to GROW, EXPAND, MAINTAIN, and SUSTAIN its development patterns, infrastructure, services, and amenities they should be mindful of these top challenges and work to address them in the future. The following sections include a direct statement that identifies the challenges and a summary description that outlines what the challenge is, why it's important, and how it was identified.

## Community Challenge:

# IDENTITY

## Liberty Township is actively working to establish a clear community identity.

### Summary:

Liberty Township is facing ongoing challenges related to establishing a community-wide identity that resonates with its current residents. For over a decade, Liberty Township has actively been working to establish a clear community identity and improve the sense of place for residents and businesses by increasing the focus and attention on parks, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and attracting high-quality businesses and development. While efforts have been ongoing and progress has been made, during the comprehensive planning process stakeholders and residents were varied in their responses regarding the community's core identity and focus.

Given its history as a bedroom community, it is only through recent development efforts that Liberty Township has begun to set itself apart from its neighbors. In 2008, the Cincinnati Children's Medical Center Liberty Campus opened up paving the way for development interest.

In 2015, Liberty Center and the surrounding area was developed as a gathering place for shopping, dining, entertainment and health and wellness institutions such as Cincinnati Children's and The Christ Hospital. This successful, vibrant destination started to set a new tone and build momentum on the desire for establishing a clear, distinct community identity. Some community residents and leaders would even say Liberty Center, and the surrounding development is symbolic in that it represents the Township drawing the metaphorical line in the sand to distinguish itself from West Chester, Cincinnati, and Dayton.

Other recent efforts related to establishing a community identity include gateway signage and branding. The Township has explored the idea of adding additional and enhanced gateway signage along major entry points and is proactively considering and evaluating the costs versus the benefits for residents.

Additionally, Liberty Township has begun branding various community spaces and events with the word, "Liberty." This idea can be seen around the community, such as Fort Liberty Playland, Liberty Park, Liberty Way, and in the name of community events, such as the Liberty Fall Festival. Additionally, some private development has recognized the brand including Liberty Center and Liberty Inn.

### Impacts:

If Liberty Township hopes to continue to grow, especially given the proximity and competition from other surrounding communities in the Cincinnati area, a strong identity is needed to give the community a competitive edge. While its strategic location as a mid-point between the cities of Cincinnati and Dayton can play in its favor, Liberty Township will need to continue to take proactive steps to prevent itself from being swallowed by its neighbors.

It is time for Liberty Township to build upon previous efforts to determine what will set them apart. Through local development policies and building community assets, Liberty Township can establish an identity that makes them unique, gives them character, and increases their ability to attract potential visitors and residents, all while maintaining the rural character and community amenities that residents value and appreciate.

Without further defining a community identity, the Township will find itself "spinning its wheels" on what type of developments to allow, people to attract, and amenities to offer. It creates the potential for conflicting priorities and unintended consequences. The Township should be working to establish and build consensus around a community identity that gets everyone working to achieve the same goal.

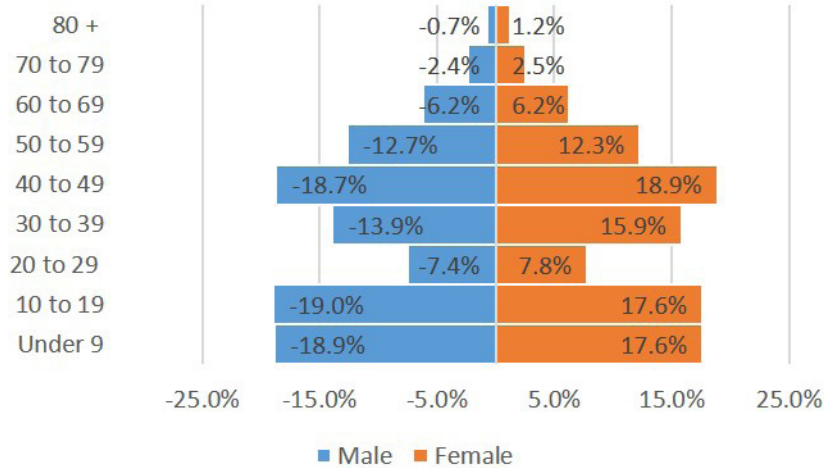
# 5 Different zip codes

Lakota Local School District spans

# OUTSIDE of Liberty Township

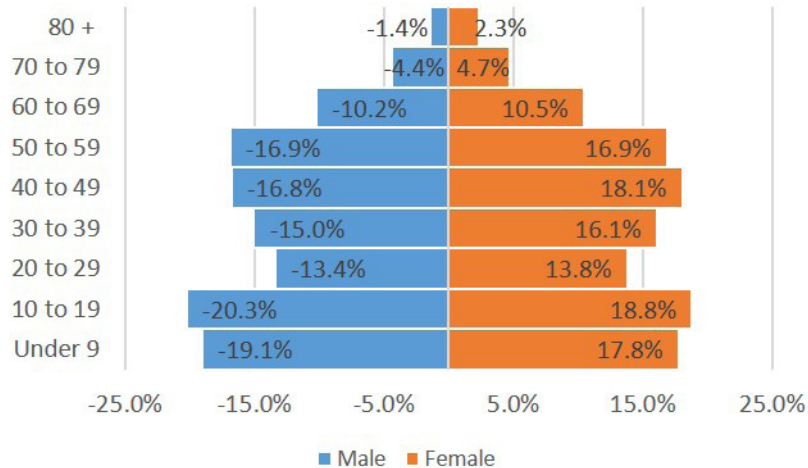
Without establishing a community identity, the Township will find itself “spinning its wheels” on what type of developments to allow, people to attract, and amenities to offer.

Liberty Township Population Pyramid (2010)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Age by Sex Report.

Liberty Township Population Pyramid (2019)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Age by Sex Report.

## Community Challenge:

# LAND USE DIVERSITY

**Liberty Township lacks diversity in its current land uses and development types.**

### Summary:

Today, nearly 50 percent of the developed land in Liberty Township is classified as single-family residential development. Similar to most things in life, there are opportunities and challenges related to this land use pattern. As described in the previous chapters, residents value the rural, natural character that is created from single-family residential homes and undeveloped land. Thus, depending on how it's phrased, these development characteristics have been identified as both an asset and a challenge.

Liberty Township has been a rural residential community for more than 20 years. Dating back to 1999, over 50 percent of the land area was with 38 percent single-family residential and 7 percent parks and open space. These three land use categories are really the only categories to experience a significant shift in percentage. As of 2019, there was only 21 percent of land dedicated to agriculture. This decrease in agriculture can mostly be attributed to a 13 percent increase in single-family residential and a shift in how open space was classified. Over the course of 20 years, commercial, industrial, and institutional land has only increased by less than 1 percent. This minimal change in development patterns is noteworthy considering the rapid population growth of a 377 percent increase from 1990 (9,249) to 2019 (44,000). As Liberty Township continues to grow, it will be necessary to expand commercial and institutional uses to provide the necessary goods and services for residents and business owners, otherwise the population will be spending their money outside of the community.

### Impacts:

Understanding the public perception and the economic impacts of land use patterns is critical for Liberty Township, it may appear misleading to describe the Township's character as one of the greatest community assets but then classify it as a contributing factor to a top challenge. Because Liberty Township is funded primarily through property tax revenue, having the majority of land developed for residential uses poses fiscal constraints in the short and long-term.

In 2004, the American Farmland Trust completed a Cost of Community Services study to determine the fiscal contribution of existing local land uses from a County services perspective. Although the study is dated and is not from a Township perspective, the concept still applies today. For example, if a county's revenue was broken down to be 85 percent residential, 13 percent commercial, and 2 percent farm or open space and the county's expenditures are 93 percent residential, 6 percent commercial, and 1 percent farm or open space, it is clear that residential land use is costing more money than its bringing into the county. The expansion and diversification of Liberty Township's land use pattern could contribute to the ongoing support of residential development, community services and residential amenities in the future.

While the community values the current land use development pattern, some residents may not fully recognize the economic constraints associated with it. To mitigate negative public reaction to development, Liberty Township should be working to raise awareness of the benefits of having a diverse land use pattern and the impacts that occur without one.

# WHAT IS THE #1 ISSUE LIBERTY TOWNSHIP IS FACING TODAY?

LAND USE REVENUE VS. OPERATIONS	DOLLARS IN	DOLLARS OUT	GAIN/ LOSS
Residential	\$850,000 (85%)	\$930,000 (93%)	-\$80,000
Commercial/ Industrial	\$130,000 (13%)	\$60,000 (6%)	\$70,000
Farm or Open Lands	\$20,000 (2%)	\$10,000 (1%)	\$10,000

Source: 2004 American Farmland Trust. This is intended to be used only as an example and not tied to any one community.

EXISTING LAND USE	1999		2020	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
Agricultural	8,457	51%	3,577	21%
Estate Residential	2,648	16%	3,007	18%
Single Family Residential	3,602	22%	5,797	34%
Multi-Family Residential	119	1%	200	1.2%
Commercial	200	1%	327	2%
Industrial	19	0.1%	56	0.3%
Public/Semi-Public/Institutional	423	3%	698	4%
Public/Private Recreation	1,145	7%	1,130	7%
Open Space	82	0.5%	502	3%
Vacant	--	--	1,155	7%

\*The land use acreage for 2019 was calculated using the land use codes for individual parcels provided by the Butler County Office of the Assessor.

**“Lack of diversity within the Township”**  
 - 2019 Anonymous Survey Participant

**“Not enough tax revenue and growing too fast.”**  
 - 2019 Anonymous Survey Participant

## Community Challenge:

# AGE STRUCTURE

**Liberty Township has two population segments that are underrepresented including young adults (ages 20-34) and seniors (ages 60+).**

### Summary:

While Liberty Township's total population is growing, there are two population segments that are underrepresented: young adults and seniors. Young adults can be defined as individuals between the ages of 20 to 34. As of 2019, only 18 percent of the Liberty Township's population fell within this age category, which reflects only a 3 percent increase from 2010.

The 2019 population pyramid illustrates that Liberty Township has a high percentage (32 percent) of children between the ages of 0-19. This data reveals the young adults are likely leaving the Township after high school and are either not returning or are waiting until they are ready to start a family to move back to Liberty Township.

The second observation pulled from the population pyramid focuses on the elderly population, also known as senior adults over the age of 60. This age group is relatively underrepresented in Liberty Township with only 14 percent, relative to Butler County's 20 percent. The difference with this age cohort is that Liberty Township has experienced a 4 percent increase in senior adults since 2010. As this age group expands and grows older, the demand for a variety of housing options, alternative modes of transportation, and community services will continue to increase.

### Impacts:

This does not imply that Liberty Township, needs to attract and retain these population segments but rather illustrates what is occurring and the impacts it could have. While each of the age cohorts come with their own opportunities and challenges, young adults and senior adults can be tied

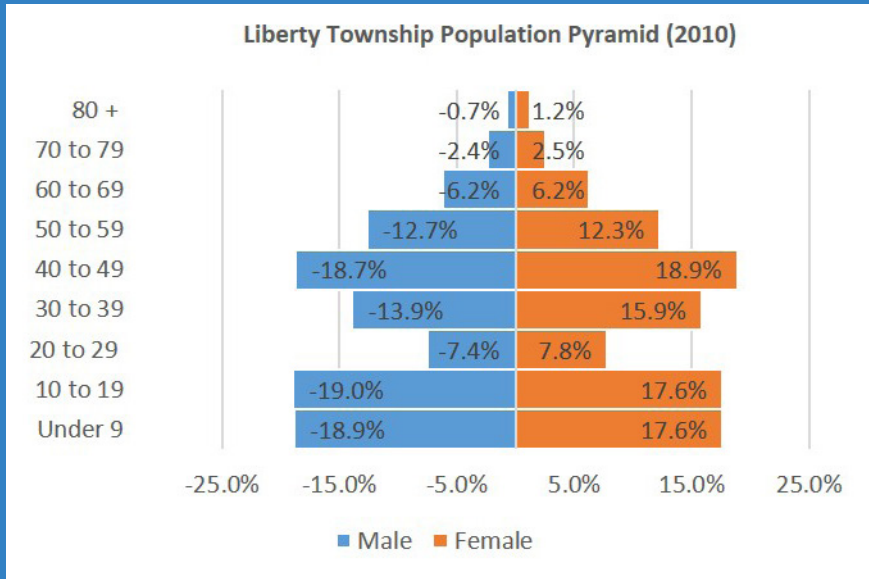
together. "Millennials and seniors often want the same things from their community—walkability, cost-efficient housing, a vibrant food scene—but at different times of day!" By catering to one generation, a community can attract another generation.

Young adults have expressed their desire for more compact, walkable communities with diverse housing types, pedestrian connectivity, unique experiences, and recreational amenities. A critical step for Liberty Township is to decide if they are willing to provide the amenities and services desired by this age group. Without providing the things that meet the needs and wants of the age group, Liberty Township may not be able to attract and retain young adults. Ultimately, the underrepresentation of young adults could have a negative impact on the labor force. This age group is essential for entry level / production staff positions and as workers grow older, Liberty Township could struggle to find qualified workers to fill the available positions.

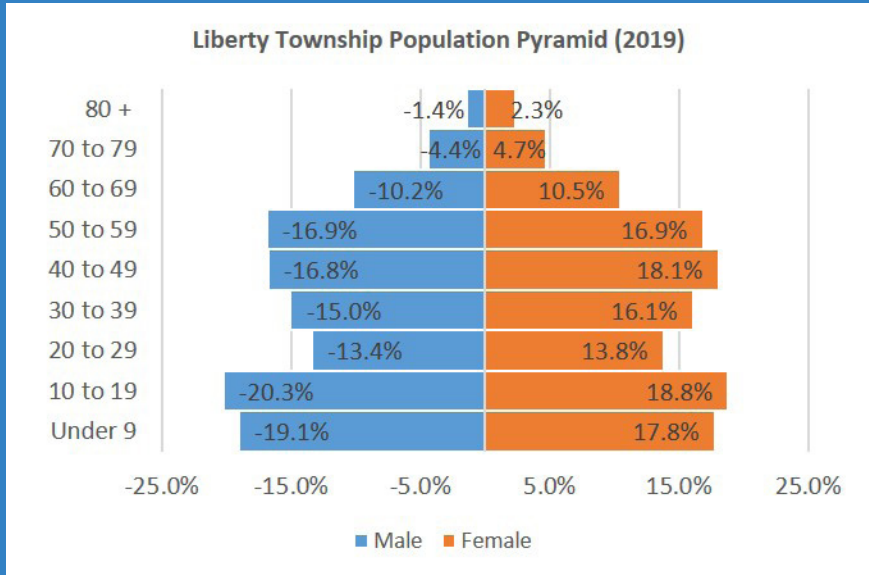
Another potential impact of not providing the necessary amenities, services, and housing types that are needed for the aging population is that residents will not be able to age in place. This could mean that people who have lived in Liberty Township for most of their life may have to relocate to somewhere different, which could impact the Township population as a whole.

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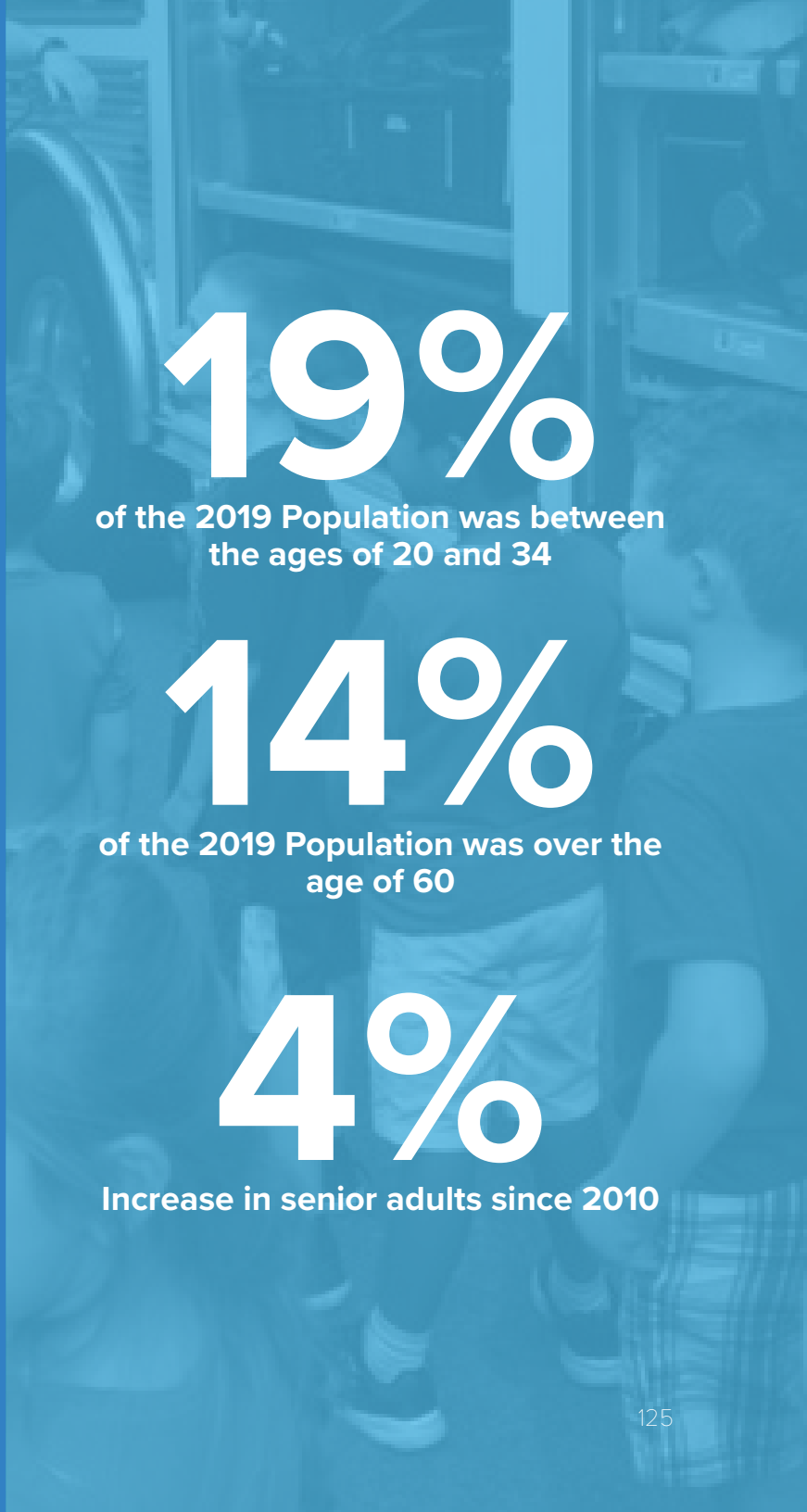
<sup>1</sup> *Millennials and Seniors: More in Common Every Day.* [https://www.masc.sc/Pages/newsroom/uptown/August-September-2016/Millennials\\_and\\_seniors.aspx](https://www.masc.sc/Pages/newsroom/uptown/August-September-2016/Millennials_and_seniors.aspx)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Age by Sex Report.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Age by Sex Report.



# 19%

of the 2019 Population was between the ages of 20 and 34

# 14%

of the 2019 Population was over the age of 60

# 4%

Increase in senior adults since 2010

## Community Challenge:

# HOUSING OPTIONS

## Liberty Township lacks options in housing.

### Summary:

A vibrant, economically-successful community requires diversity, meaning variety in different elements that make up a community including demographics, housing types, amenities, jobs, and much more. The 2017 American Community Survey reveals that nearly 89 percent of Liberty Township's existing housing stock was single-family, detached homes with a median value of \$219,131. Of the nearly 10,000 owner-occupied units, 45 percent of units were valued above \$250,000. Currently, the housing stock ranges in value from \$150,000 – \$400,000. Because of this, the housing stock is tailored towards the upper middle class and higher income earners.

Liberty Township is experiencing a concept known as the “missing middle” meaning the community lacks variety in both price and types of units. Missing middle housing units are building types, such as duplexes, fourplexes and bungalow courts, that provide diverse housing options to support walkable communities, locally-serving retail, and public transportation options.

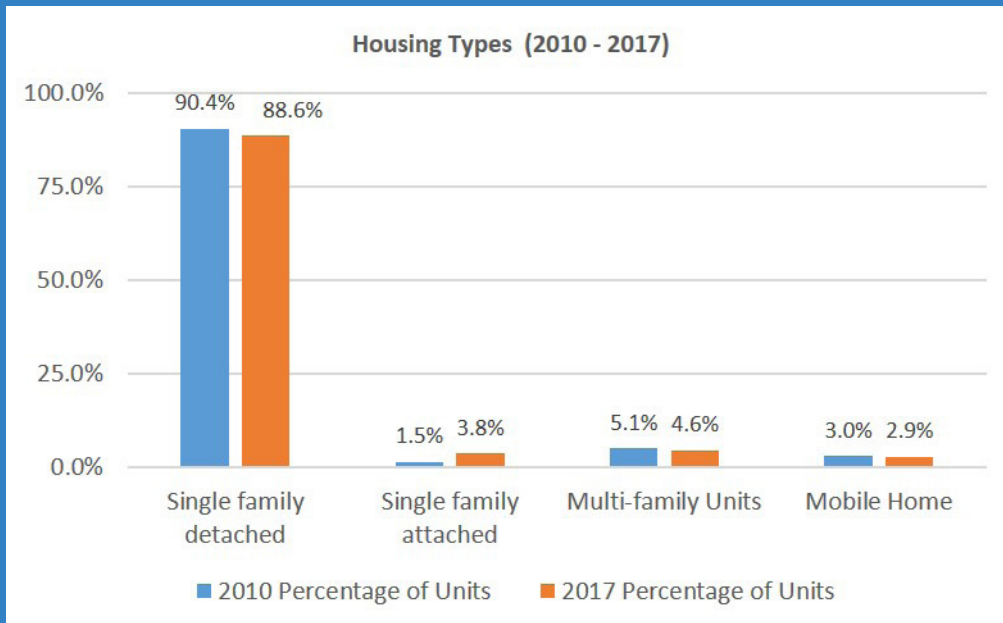
While growing, multi-family residential housing makes up a very small (5) percentage of the total housing stock. The primary focus for multi-family development is Liberty Center Apartments, with rent ranging from \$1,110 - \$2,200 per month. Other examples of multi-family housing option exist at, Lakota Pointe Apartments, Four Bridges, and Springs at Liberty. This list is not intended to serve as an exhaustive list of multi-family housing options but instead to provide a few examples.

### Impacts:

The lack of variety in both type and price could be a determining factor in whether the population increases or decreases over time, especially within certain age demographics. Additionally, the age structure of Liberty Township's population and the available housing types within a community can be related. Although not always certain, common themes can be identified for the desired housing type of each age group. Middle-aged residents may look at long-term stability and desire large homes with many bedrooms for children.

Retirees and empty nesters may look to downsize later in life, finding their own retirement home, moving for the sake of convenience, or possibly joining their children's households. While there are existing options for empty nesters and seniors such as Liberty Grant Villas and portions of the Fieldstone Farms and Carriage Hill developments, if Liberty Township strives to attract and retain young professionals, newly established families, and in addition to senior adults, additional mixed-use developments with a variety of housing types, including apartments and condominiums, should be supported moving forward. Housing diversity is also a critical component in allowing the Township's senior population to age in place.

There is even more diversity when you consider the other factors that feed into where a person lives such as income and employment. Each individual has their own desires, needs, priorities, and preferences when choosing their home. If they cannot find a home that meets their criteria in Liberty Township, they may look to live elsewhere. This is likely true for the underrepresented group of young adults. In order for Liberty Township to grow this segment of the population, the community will need to provide a variety of high-quality housing options.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey

## WHAT IS THE #1 ISSUE LIBERTY TOWNSHIP IS FACING TODAY?

“Housing is too high, roads are not conducive to the traffic for the constant new developing neighborhoods. Retirement here is difficult due to the fact that builders build very few Ranch homes these days, why is that?”

“Lack of housing diversity.”

“Need more affordable ranch homes, baby boomers are about to retire and two stories are hard to negotiate.”

-Anonymous survey participants

# 61%

of Public Meeting Attendees voted YES for MORE starter housing options for new graduates, young families or emerging professionals.

# 89%

of Liberty Township’s existing housing stock was single-family, detached homes.

# 45%

of owner-occupied units were valued above \$250,000

## Community Challenge:

# BALANCING GROWTH

**Liberty Township is growing and public services and amenities will need to be expanded to keep pace with the growth.**

### Summary:

A vibrant, economically-successful community requires diversity, meaning variety in different elements that make up a community including demographics, housing types, amenities, jobs, and much more. The 2017 American Community Survey reveals that nearly 89 percent of Liberty Township’s existing housing stock was single-family, detached homes with a median value of \$219,131. Of the nearly 10,000 owner-occupied units, 45 percent of units were valued above \$250,000. Currently, the housing stock ranges in value from \$150,000 – \$400,000. Because of this, the housing stock is tailored towards the upper middle class and higher income earners.

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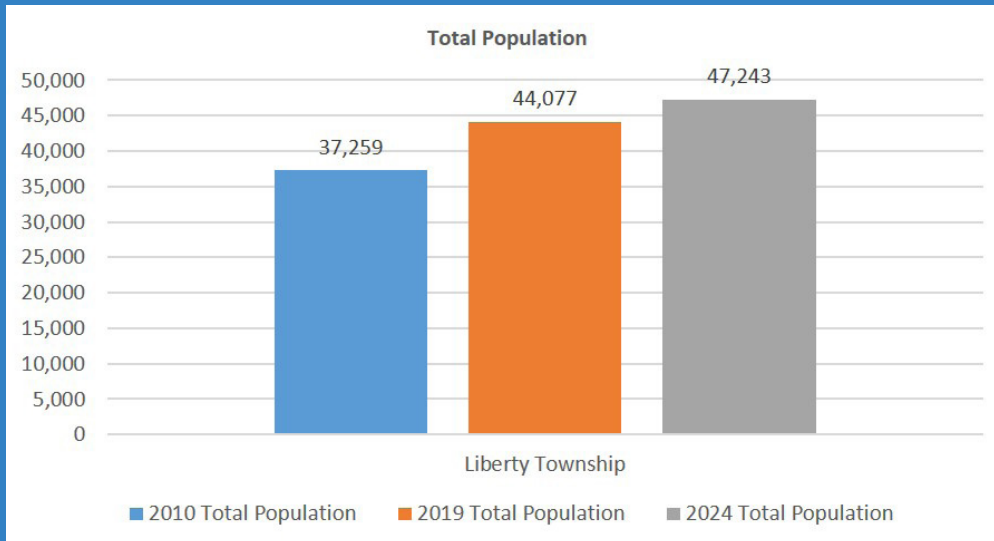
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Community Profile Report.

**377%**

Increase in population between  
1990 - 2019

**44,077**

total estimated residents in 2019

### WHAT IS THE #1 ISSUE LIBERTY TOWNSHIP IS FACING TODAY?

“Roads and overcrowding the whole Township with more housing. It puts too much strain on roads and infrastructure.”

“Growth faster than infrastructure can support.”

“Explosive growth. school budget strain is affecting the quality of education”

“Roads and schools keeping up with the ever increasing number of residents. Maintaining green space.”

*-Anonymous survey participants*

As more people move into the Township, it will impact much of the built environment and demand for community services.

## Community Challenge:

# EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

## Liberty Township lacks local and/or regional employment centers.

### Summary:

The combination of County-level commuting data, Township business data, and public input consistently found that there are few white-collar employment opportunities within Liberty Township. Resident workers are typically well-educated higher-income earners, but travel elsewhere for employment. Similarly, local residents are often traveling outside the Township for weekly shopping trips<sup>1</sup>. From a tax base perspective, diversifying the land use pattern to include employment destinations could help with Liberty Township's current and future financial challenges. While recognizing this area is still developing, the Township's section of the I-75 corridor represents a currently underutilized asset in this regard. Stretching nearly 1,800 miles from Canada to Miami, I-75 traverses six states (Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee) making accessibility to and from Liberty Township very easy. Additionally, the planned Millikin Way interchange along I-75 provides an excellent opportunity to leverage the I-75 asset into economic development for the Township.

In comparison, Liberty Township's neighbors to the north (Monroe) and south (West Chester) along I-75 both have employment centers within their boundaries. This provides an opportunity for people to live and work within their communities which benefits the workers and the community from a fiscal stability standpoint.

If Liberty Township strives to recruit future employment centers, minimizing conflicts between employment and residential land uses requires careful consideration, particularly in a community like Liberty Township that identifies with quality residential neighborhoods.

<sup>1</sup> Esri and Infogroup. Esri 2019 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.

Employment centers should be sited in areas dedicated for those uses, well-buffered from residential uses. Design and performance standards should also be implemented in order to minimize any noxious impacts on surrounding uses.

### Impacts:

For Ohio communities, employment land uses represent both a property and income tax base that can be used to subsidize services to resident households. For example, 27 percent of property taxes collected in the State of Ohio comes from real and personal property collected from businesses.<sup>2</sup> In general, the tax revenues collected from business land uses exceeds the costs of providing public services to those businesses.

A lack of local employment opportunities generally means that members of resident households have longer-than-average commutes. First, residents have to travel out of the Township for work. Second, shopping trips frequently have out-of-Township destinations. These factors result in higher trip costs and less available time for resident workers and shoppers. Since these trips are typically via motor vehicles (as opposed to transit or alternative modes), higher-than-average environmental impacts are incurred as well. The recently-developed Liberty Center represents new opportunities for employment and shopping, yet its location at the southeast corner of the Township somewhat dilutes its benefits with regards to accessibility.

<sup>2</sup> Ohio Department of Taxation. [https://www.tax.ohio.gov/tax\\_analysis/tax\\_data\\_series/publications\\_tds\\_property/PR6CY11.aspx](https://www.tax.ohio.gov/tax_analysis/tax_data_series/publications_tds_property/PR6CY11.aspx)



## WHAT IS THE #1 ISSUE LIBERTY TOWNSHIP IS FACING TODAY?

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**“Employment of professionals  
locally.”**

*- 2019 Anonymous Survey  
Participant*

**“Adding more high paying  
jobs by attracting more  
investment along the I-75  
corridor.”**

*- 2019 Anonymous Survey  
Participant*



## Community Challenge:

# RURAL CHARACTER

**Liberty Township residents want to preserve the rural character of the community.**

### Summary:

In 2018, prior to the start of the *2020 Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan* process, Liberty Township facilitated a community-wide survey to better understand the priorities and preferences of those living in the community. One of the key takeaways from this effort was that residents of Liberty Township want to preserve and protect its rural character. As many residents moved to the community specifically to escape the urban and suburban environment of the larger metropolitan areas, increased development can pose a danger to one of Liberty Township's greatest assets: nature. Through this 2019-2020 planning process, public input has reflected the same mentality.

It has been proven that greenery and open spaces are beneficial in maintaining a healthy mind and low-stress lifestyle. Away from the congested traffic and cramped spaces of city living, Liberty Township offers the promise of individual freedom, wide open spaces, and reconnecting with nature. Americans have romanticized rural life for more than a century, with popular trends urging city residents to escape and claim their own piece of the dream on the city's edge.

To maintain Liberty Township's current image, very careful planning and management of future growth is needed, especially in regards to economic development. Special care should be given to where development takes place so as to minimize the impact on the rest of the Township. As new development, especially in greenfield areas, start to take shape it will impact the rural character residents enjoy.

### Impacts:

So far, Liberty Township has been able to maintain a balance of urban amenities with a rural landscape, protecting open space spread throughout the Township and keeping businesses concentrated along major roadways. Too much unmanaged development, both in businesses and homes, can begin to erode and remove the rural feel of the community. As trees and open spaces are replaced with homes and structures, the feeling of a "natural" environment is slowly replaced by that of a suburban to urban town or city.

As many residents chose to move to Liberty Township due to its rural character, eroding or removing this from the community may lead to unhappy home owners, who see their home value tied to its surroundings. Open space and private spaces are two elements that many city escapees search for when home buying. If Liberty Township begins to lose this impression with owners and home buyers, they may begin searching for an alternative community. This is the same reason Liberty Township had such success with the housing boom that began in the 90's. Liberty had been on the edge of development, a quiet community with few people and lots of space, encouraging many to come and join the community.

Today, a ring of increasing development can be seen circling Liberty Township, much of it spreading from neighboring communities including the City of Hamilton, West Chester Township, and the City of Monroe. As the Cincinnati metro area continues to expand, Liberty Township will have to consider how it will handle the coming changes, which opportunities to capitalize on, and which ones to leave for other communities.



## WHAT ARE LIBERTY TOWNSHIP'S STRONGEST ASSETS

**“Rural setting near metropolitan areas. Safe community, excellent schools, close proximity to shopping and businesses. Numerous family activities.”**

*- 2019 Anonymous Survey Participant*

**“Combination of rural land pockets among great neighborhoods, good schools and a strong business core”**

*- 2019 Anonymous Survey Participant*

## Community Challenge:

# ACCESS

**Liberty Township's greenfields lack efficient transportation and utility access.**

### **Summary:**

Liberty Township is unique in that a significant portion of the land is undeveloped. These undeveloped areas, known as greenfields, create both opportunities and challenges for the Township. While other communities are facing challenges around redevelopment of existing areas and context-sensitive infill, Liberty Township has a large amount of greenfield space that lacks efficient transportation and utility access.

With the growth that Liberty Township has and will be experiencing, there could likely be a development demand for these areas. Greenfield development could help address some of the challenges discussed in this chapter such as the lack of locally-orientated development and employment centers. The challenge with many of the greenfields in Liberty Township is the lack of more localized connectivity such as access points or curb cuts off of the primary roadway. Additionally, these areas lack utility infrastructure which involve the need to install water and sewer lines, power supply, and telephone cables. In this situation these costs are passed on to the developer making it difficult for them to be able and willing to develop the land.

### **Impacts:**

Accommodating for growth in Liberty Township includes strategically planning for the development in some of these areas. In order to attract a wide range of interest from the development world, Liberty Township will need to explore ways to help offset the costs associated with transportation and utility infrastructure. Additionally, this will help communicate the Township's priorities. As opposed to being reactive by approving greenfield development as it comes through the door, Liberty Township can be proactive by identifying specific focus areas and working with developers to find ways to make development more feasible.



# 18%

Increase in population between  
2010 - 2019

# 50%

of Liberty Township's land area is  
undeveloped

Liberty Township can be proactive by identifying specific focus areas and working with developers to find ways to make development more feasible.

## Community Challenge:

# CONNECTIVITY

**Liberty Township's neighborhoods and subdivision lack connectivity to destinations.**

### **Summary:**

Walking and biking connections within and between neighborhoods make important contributions to neighborhood quality, improved transportation options, and public health. Currently, the township's proximity to other metropolitan areas creates several opportunities for future alternative transportation connectivity, particularly the Miami2Miami trail, which would run parallel to Gregory Creek and along State Route 129. The creek's tributaries, including Hunts Creek and Panther Run, provide opportunities to connect a substantial number of Township subdivisions to this trail and to each other. Most recently, the Township installed a portion of this trail within Cherokee Park and Turnbridge Park with plans to connect to the north with Shannon Ridge. Additionally, a large number of Township parks would be encompassed by such an expanded trail system, allowing for increased utilization of these facilities.

Certainly, the desire to integrate alternative transportation options within new development is strong. The Township's Trails Plan, which outlines a number of projects intended to extend the reach and scope of the alternative transportation system, similarly demonstrates the local support for expanding these opportunities.

### **Impacts:**

There are few, if any downsides to implementing alternative transportation connections within and between neighborhoods. While retrofitting facilities (sidewalks and pathways) for existing streets can be moderately expensive, incorporating them as components of larger roadway design and/or reconstruction projects usually results in minor incremental costs. Pathways along stream corridors utilize land that has few other economic purposes. While long-term maintenance might be the most common downside, the benefits can far exceed this challenge. The impacts on public health are positive, as indicated by the usual increase in adjacent property values resulting from the implementation of these projects.



80%

of online survey respondents said they wanted **MORE** sidewalks and multi-use trails.



60%

of online survey respondents said they wanted **IMPROVED** sidewalks and multi-use trails.

## Community Challenge:

# NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

## Liberty Township lacks locally oriented development within the residential areas of the community.

### Summary:

A strict separation of residential from non-residential land uses has important implications for a community's transportation system. The further these land uses are separated from one another, the longer the trip lengths become, and the likelihood that alternative transportation modes would be used in place of motor vehicles declines.

This finding takes on special importance in Liberty Township where, a significant portion of residents' retail needs are served by areas outside of the Township.<sup>1</sup> There are few areas for local convenience shopping, and those that exist are generally along the Township's outer edges (e.g., SR 4, Downtown Bethany and the vicinity of Liberty Center). Locally oriented development offers residents quick, convenient services without having to travel very far from their homes.

Existing data reveals that gasoline stations are a reasonable indicator of local retail availability, particularly considering that they are usually paired with some convenience retail and grocery functions. Retail analyses conducted using ESRI's Business Analyst Online (BAO) show that of the estimated \$65M that Township residents spend each year on gasoline sales (2017 estimate), annual sales in the Township total only about \$19M, indicating an annual sales leakage of around \$46M. Meaning the demand for more local convenience and retail goods already exists and as population within the Township continues to grow, the demand for local convenience and retail goods will continue to increase.

### Impacts:

The most straightforward question of locally-oriented development is where it should be placed. Ideally, the site(s) should be well served by the roadway system, presumably by placement on one of the arterial streets, or intersections of arterials. Although not yet a large factor, future alternative transportation access should also be considered, perhaps by identifying areas near existing or planned trails development.

Design standards for such development will require consideration, including the provision of sidewalks, signage, lighting, parking (both automobile and bicycle), setbacks, and building orientation. Turning movements into and out of commercial development will be particularly important, and while supporting infrastructure (roadway improvements, turn signals, signage, etc.) can be implemented via developer dedications, ultimately the County and Township will be responsible for operations and maintenance of these facilities. Special consideration should be paid to buffering surrounding residential developments from potentially negative impacts from the site's operations.

<sup>1</sup> Esri and Infogroup. Esri 2019 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.



# 70%

of online survey respondents said the Township needed **MORE** neighborhood scaled commercial development in strategic locations.

# <5%

of Liberty Township's existing land use is dedicated to commercial development.

## Community Challenge:

# RECREATION

**Liberty Township lacks public recreation areas in portions of the community.**

### **Summary:**

Recreational facilities are a key component of the quality residential environment to which Township citizens aspire. A web survey conducted as part of the 2020 planning process showed that Township residents placed a high priority on community parks and recreation system (50 percent) and walkable community/ pedestrian and bike connections (50 percent). However, such opportunities are not evenly available, with fewer facilities being present in the western portion of the Township.

The Township's parks system generally relies on a volunteer group, the Township Parks Committee, to conduct its programs, including organized walks in the parks. Various youth and sports organizations also utilize the parks. The Lakota Family YMCA, Fitton Center for Creative Arts, Lakota Sports Organization, and Midpointe Library also provide programming support to the parks system.

Parks can have a significant impact on the elderly, which is generally an underrepresented group within the Township. Programming is especially important to consider for quality of life for seniors, as parks represent an opportunity for physical exercise and social interaction that may otherwise be lacking in seniors' lifestyles. Although not located directly within Liberty Township, the Voice of American Park in West Chester is a noteworthy facility. It is located along the southern border of Liberty Township and is highly accessible to the community. Public input revealed that residents feel this recreation facility is a great asset.

### **Impacts:**

Parks have a number of beneficial impacts upon public health and quality of life; these benefits extend to all age groups, but are particularly important for children under the age of 18. Playgrounds, athletic events, and general outdoors recreation provide important opportunities a child's physical development.

Current deficits in parkland availability can only be addressed through the implementation of new parks facilities, particularly in the western part of the Township. The 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan calls for the development of a 150-acre community park in the western portion of the Township. Such a facility will require property acquisition; the longer the Township waits to acquire the land, the more expensive it will become. Acquisition costs aside, the actual implementation costs for this park would total around \$9M in 2009 dollars, which translates into 10.8M in 2020 dollars. The Township's current recreational model depends on outside organizations, such as the Library, YMCA, Fitton Center, LSO, and Parks Committee, for programming support. This model may need to be revisited as the Township's population, and subsequent demand for recreational services, continues to increase.



**70%**

of online survey respondents said they wanted to see **MORE** outdoor event venues.

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**73**

acres of developed park lands

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Parks and open space was identified countless times as one of Liberty Township's strongest assets.



**LIBERTY TOWNSHIP**  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN