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2013

Comprehensive Vision Plan

Liberty Township,
Butler County,
Ohio





2013 Comprehensive Vision Plan

Liberty Township, Butler County, Ohio

Approved by the Liberty Township Zoning Commission: December 2, 2013 (Res. #ZC13-019)

Adopted by the Liberty Township Board of Trustees: February 4, 2014 (Res. #2014-027)

Approved by the Butler County Planning Commission:





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Dedication

This plan is dedicated in memory of A. Christian Worrell. Chris volunteered his time serving on the Township Board of Zoning Appeals, Economic Development Committee, and JEDD Board. Chris also worked tirelessly in numerous ways for the betterment of this community and he is truly missed.



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| I: Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 What is the Comprehensive Vision Plan? | 1 |
| 1.2 How the Plan was Drafted | 1 |
| 1.3 Plan implementation, Updating, and Evaluation | 2 |
| 1.4 Vision Statement | 2 |
| II: Liberty Township History & Demographics | 4 |
| 2.1 Concise History of the Township | 4 |
| 2.2 Recent Demographic Trends and Projections | 9 |
| 2.2.1 Population | 10 |
| 2.2.2 Age | 11 |
| 2.2.3 Race | 12 |
| 2.2.4 Education | 13 |
| 2.2.5 Income | 13 |
| III: Housing | 14 |
| 3.1 Existing Housing | 14 |
| 3.1.1 Housing Age | 17 |
| 3.1.2 Housing Values | 18 |
| 3.2 New Housing Development | 19 |
| 3.3 Serving a Broader Demographic | 20 |
| 3.4 Housing Goals and Objectives | 22 |
| IV: Economic Development | 24 |
| 4.1 Existing Business Community | 24 |
| 4.1.1 Recent Growth | 25 |
| 4.1.2 Business Sectors | 26 |
| 4.2 Image and Identity | 26 |
| 4.2.1 Zip Codes | 26 |
| 4.2.2 Community Gathering Spots | 27 |
| 4.2.3 A Sense of Place | 28 |
| 4.3 Key Community Attributes | 30 |
| 4.3.1 Available Land | 30 |
| 4.3.2 Strong Workforce & Educational Assets | 31 |
| 4.3.3 Excellent Accessibility | 31 |
| 4.4 Economic Development Goals and Objectives | 32 |
| V: Parks, Recreation, and Trails | 40 |
| 5.1 Parks and Recreation Master Plan | 40 |
| 5.2 Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Plan | 40 |
| 5.2.1 Existing Conditions | 40 |
| 5.2.2 Needs Assessment | 44 |
| 5.2.3 Trails Plan Vision Statement | 44 |
| 5.2.4 Trails Plan Maps | 45 |
| 5.2.5 Trails Plan Goals and Objectives | 51 |
| 5.3 Parks, Trails, and Recreation Goals | 52 |
| VI: Transportation | 54 |
| 6.1 Roadway Network | 54 |
| 6.1.1 Regional Access | 54 |
| 6.1.2 Roadway Maintenance | 54 |
| 6.1.3 Roadway Improvements | 55 |
| 6.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure | 57 |
| 6.3 Public Transportation | 57 |
| 6.4 Rail Infrastructure | 58 |
| 6.5 Transportation Goals and Objectives | 59 |



| | |
|---|-----------|
| VII: Utilities..... | 61 |
| 7.1 Sanitary Sewer & Water..... | 61 |
| 7.2 Communications..... | 62 |
| 7.3 Gas and Electricity..... | 62 |
| 7.4 Utilities Goals and Objectives..... | 62 |
| VIII: Government & Community Services..... | 67 |
| 8.1 Township Trustees & Administration..... | 67 |
| 8.2 Fire Department..... | 67 |
| 8.3 Police Services..... | 68 |
| 8.4 Services Department..... | 68 |
| 8.5 Schools..... | 68 |
| 8.6 Library and Postal Service..... | 68 |
| 8.7 Shared Services..... | 73 |
| 8.8 Government and Community Services Goals and Objectives..... | 73 |
| IX: Land Use..... | 75 |
| 9.1 Existing Land Use..... | 75 |
| 9.2 Planning Blocks..... | 76 |
| 9.3 Land Use Classifications..... | 81 |
| 9.4 Land Use Plan..... | 89 |
| X: Plan Summary Recommendations..... | 95 |
| 10.1 Expansion of Housing Choice..... | 95 |
| 10.2 Promote Mixed Use Development along Arterial Corridors..... | 95 |
| 10.3 Promote Reinvestment in Neighborhoods..... | 95 |
| 10.4 Keep areas of Rural Character..... | 95 |
| 10.5 Protect Planned Commercial Land and Grow a Base of Highly Skilled Professional Jobs..... | 96 |
| 10.6 Improve Recreation Opportunities..... | 96 |
| 10.7 Further Define Liberty Township's Image and Identity..... | 96 |
| 10.8 Summary Table of Goals, Objectives, and Tasks..... | 97 |

Table of Maps

| | |
|---|----|
| Map 1: 1855 Historic Map of Liberty Township..... | 5 |
| Map 2: Liberty Township Subdivisions..... | 15 |
| Map 3: Trails Plan – Existing Trail and Sidewalk..... | 41 |
| Map 4: Trails Plan – Bicycle and Trail Plan..... | 47 |
| Map 5: Trails Plan – Trail and Sidewalk Plan..... | 49 |
| Map 6: Sanitary Sewer Service Area..... | 63 |
| Map 7: Water Service Area..... | 65 |
| Map 8: Fire Station Locations..... | 69 |
| Map 9: School Locations..... | 71 |
| Map 10: Existing Land Use..... | 77 |
| Map 11: Planning Blocks..... | 79 |
| Map 12: Annotated Land Use Plan..... | 91 |
| Map 13: Adopted Land Use Plan..... | 93 |



I: Introduction

In March of 2012, Liberty Township began the process of updating its Comprehensive Vision Plan which was first adopted in 2006. The plan is referred to when reviewing development, zoning, and land use proposals, and also when setting priorities during budgeting. Periodically, the plan is updated to ensure it remains current with the needs and desires of the community. The Comprehensive Vision Plan was updated under the direction of a steering committee and incorporating public input.

1.1 What is the Comprehensive Vision Plan?

The Comprehensive Vision Plan lays out a future vision for the direction of the Township, and puts forth specific goals and objectives towards accomplishing that vision. The plan covers topics related to development, such as land use, housing, economic development, transportation and other infrastructure. However, the plan also covers quality of life concerns such as delivery of government services, public safety and welfare, recreation, and community events. The document serves several purposes, and is used by the Township in several ways.

As a Vision Statement – The process of updating the Comprehensive Vision Plan is the opportunity for the community to come together and answer the question, “What do we want our community to be in the future?”

As a Guide for Future Decision Making – The Vision Plan is frequently referred to during any decision making process the Township goes through; particularly those involving land use and infrastructure improvements. Consulting the Vision Plan when considering everyday focused decisions ensures that the long-term plans and goals of the

community continue to be embraced and supported in those decisions.

A Means of Communicating the Community Vision to the World – The Vision Plan serves as a means to project the Township’s vision, along with ideas and plans about how to achieve that vision with the community. Even more than that, the document is a way to project that vision out to the wider world. The purpose of this is to generate buy-in from the community and to excite outsiders to the opportunities present in our growing community.

1.2 How the Plan was Drafted

The Liberty Township Comprehensive Vision Plan Update 2013 was drafted over the course of a year and a half by Liberty Township Planning staff working with a 23 member steering committee. The planning process included three interactive public open houses to solicit input from the public on topics of the plan. Furthermore, progress of the plan was charted on a page on the Township’s website, which was also used to gather public input on the plan. Once drafted, the plan was presented at three public hearings where comments from the public were solicited prior to the plan being adopted.



Fig. 1. Vision Plan Public Open House in April 2012



Section I: Introduction

1.3 Plan implementation, Updating, and Evaluation

The Comprehensive Vision Plan has been, and will continue to be implemented through many daily decisions on any number of topics, including land use, zoning, subdividing property, expansion of transportation and utility infrastructure, parks and trails development, and the delivery of government services. Additionally, the plan contains goals, objectives, and tasks designed to contribute towards the overall vision projected in the plan. These goals, objectives, and tasks are listed in each chapter and again summarized in Chapter 10: Plan Summary Recommendations. Goals listed in the plan are overarching results that are called for in the Vision Plan. Objectives are components which must be achieved to realize the result called for in the goals. Finally, tasks are specific actions to be taken to accomplish an objective.

The Comprehensive Vision Plan must continue to reflect the current vision and goals of the Township, and therefore must be periodically updated. This plan is an update of the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. It is recommended that this plan be updated again approximately five years from now, and continue to be updated every five years working with a steering committee.

Occasionally, unforeseen changes or opportunities come up which calls for elements of the Vision Plan to be updated or reconsidered. For such circumstances, a procedure for reviewing these proposed changes shall be as follows:

1. Proposed changes to the Liberty Township Comprehensive Vision Plan shall be submitted to the Director of Planning and Zoning.
2. The Liberty Township Zoning Commission holds a public hearing at the next available meeting and considers the request. The Zoning Commission shall pass a motion to

recommend approval or denial to the Township Board of Trustees.

3. The Township Board of Trustees reviews the application and the Zoning Commission's recommendation, and then votes to approve or to deny the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan.
4. If approved, the changes to the Comprehensive Plan are presented to the Butler County Planning Commission.

1.4 Vision Statement

The Vision Plan Steering Committee drafted the following Vision Statement to broadly outline the focus of the plan and to serve as a guide when evaluating the goals and objectives discussed during the planning process.

Vision Statement

Liberty Township offers families, businesses, and individuals a place to experience an outstanding quality of life, and to prosper in a financially sound community.

Liberty Township is, and will continue to be a place where people choose to spend their lives, raise their families, and enjoy their retirement. It is a hospitable, safe, and pleasant community with a growing complement of activities and amenities, which features both vibrant commercial centers and areas of quaint rural splendor. Liberty Township will maintain a balance between embracing its important natural, historical, and cultural legacy while looking to, and planning for progress that the future brings. In the future, Liberty Township enables families, businesses, and individuals to experience an outstanding quality of life as a place to:



- **Live**

Families and individuals of all age groups grow, live, and retire in attractive, quality housing which is nestled in a safe and inviting community. Living in Liberty Township provides convenient access to amenities and activities with nearby shopping and entertainment, while still preserving a level of rural charm and privacy. As the community grows, the township will continue to provide a level of service and quality of life, which families, individuals, and businesses come to expect, in an efficiently managed and financially responsible way.
- **Work**

Local and regional retail and service businesses, medical and professional office, and manufacturing businesses thrive amongst a highly educated and experienced workforce. Companies with national and international focus rely on the unparalleled access of I-75, the convenience of two local international airports, several local universities with nationally ranked programs, and close proximity to major rail corridors and international air freight operations. These attributes make Liberty Township an ideal location for corporate offices. The township's residential and business population supports a full complement of retail, hospitality, and service businesses.
- **Shop**

Liberty Township's Central Business District (CBD) area becomes a regional shopping and entertainment mecca, while dispersed nodes of locally oriented businesses offer convenient access to everyday goods and services.
- **Play**

Locals utilize parks, ball fields, and trails, participate in youth and adult sports, and congregate in church and social groups. Seasonal events bring the community together and the Township will leverage its natural features such as Gregory Creek for outdoor recreation. Further, the CBD will have opportunities for shopping, dining, and entertainment catering to a regional audience.
- **Learn**

Opportunities for learning at all ages abound. Quality schools are a top priority and continue to be a hallmark of the community. The burgeoning local professional population is serviced by career schools and branch universities, and there are numerous opportunities for recreational education with a branch library, nature walks, social and religious groups.



II: Liberty Township History & Demographics

2.1 Concise History of the Township

In 1803 the Legislature of the State of Ohio divided the Hamilton County, establishing Butler County. The Legislature of the State of Ohio appointed County Commissioners on April 15, 1803, who in turn appointed associate judges. The associate judges in Butler County established five Townships: Liberty, Fairfield, Lemon, St. Clair, and Ross. In 1804 the Legislature passed a law empowering County Commissioners to alter the boundaries of Townships and to set up new Townships. On June 2, 1823 Union Township (now known as West Chester Township) was formed from part of Liberty Township.

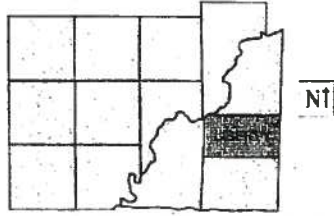
The last decade of the eighteenth century saw the first settlers in Liberty Township. Into the beginning of the nineteenth century, these pioneers, mostly from Maryland and New Jersey, bought large tracts of land for agricultural pursuits. Even by 1840, the land was still owned in quarter and half sections by a relatively small number of people. The early activities in the Township were farming and some commercial and industrial enterprises in the fledging villages. The earliest villages were platted in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century along the turnpike roads. The busy and self-sufficient character of these town's early histories, particularly of Princeton and Huntsville, with such enterprises as shoemaking, brick making, pork-packing, distilleries, and stores, suggest communities in relative isolation from larger centers where they could get such services. These villages served the surrounding agricultural countryside throughout the nineteenth century.



Fig. 2. The restored Hughes School, built 1887

Several churches were in the Township by the mid-nineteenth century. The first church was a Methodist-Episcopal, founded in the Huntsville area in the center of the Township. This M. E. Church was also the first in the county of this denomination. Another M. E. Church was established in Princeton in the 1830's and a third, called the Auburn M. E. Church was built in the northwest corner of the Township. A group called the New Lights built a brick church in Huntsville in the 1830's. In the 1850's a Universalist Church was built in Princeton, but by the Civil War it had languished. An Old School Baptist Church was erected in the mid-nineteenth century on Princeton-Glendale Road, north of Princeton, and appears to have lasted into the early twentieth century.

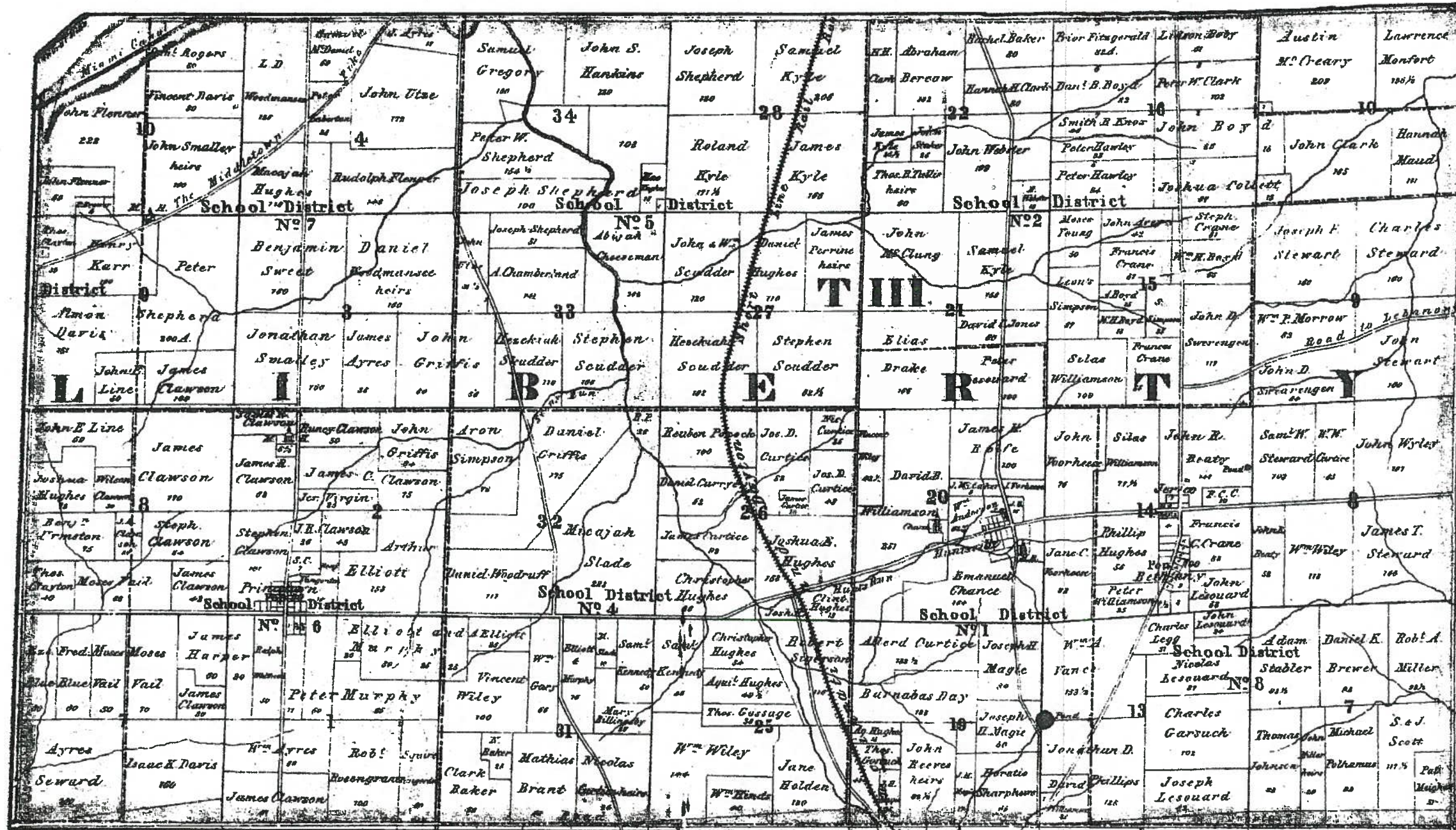
There were rudimentary schools in the Township before the mid-nineteenth century, but it was a very small number. A law establishing public schools in 1853 caused the formation of district schools in the Township. One school dates from nearly this time,



NT

LIBERTY TOWNSHIP
 REPRODUCED FROM MAP OF BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO
 by John Crane, Surveyor, HAMILTON 1855

No. 12



PUBLISHED BY THE BUTLER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 2008



the District No. 5 School or Kyles School on Kyles Station road, which dates from 1858. The other schools, dating from 1871 (two of them), 1887 and one from the 1880's, were replacements of earlier district schools in the same location. Two other schools in the Township, one located on Princeton Glendale Road, north of Kyles Station Road, and one on Yankee Pike in Huntsville, are the only schools that are not in existence today.

The towns were thriving at mid-century, still possessing their early character as agricultural centers and as stops on the turnpike roads. Bethany was becoming the largest village, presumably because the Great Miami Turnpike (now Cincinnati-Dayton Road) on which it was located, was the busiest of the roads throughout the Township. A number of industries including wagon makers, shoemakers, blacksmiths, mason and carpenters, were located in Bethany throughout the nineteenth century as were a variety of stores. By mid-century the Methodist-Episcopal Church in Huntsville, the first in the Township, was moved to Bethany.

Many farmhouses were constructed during the mid-nineteenth century, a fertile period of growth in Liberty Township's history. These farmhouses, many still in existence today, replaced earlier log cabins or brick and frame houses.

After the Civil War, the biggest event in the Township was the construction of a railroad line through this area. The Cincinnati and Dayton Short, also called the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad, was built through the center of the Township in 1872. Two stations, known as Hughes Station and Kyles Station, were established in the Township. Small settlements grew up around both stations, which like the earlier villages served the surrounding agricultural community. Bethany was still growing in the late nineteenth century, probably achieving its peak growth in the 1870's and 1880's. The other early villages were losing their self-sufficient character by this time while Bethany

appears to have become the "town" for the community. A new church building replaced the earlier 1830's structure for the Methodist-Episcopal Church in Princeton in 1859, indicating some vitality here, but the Universalist Church and the Auburn M.E. Church organizations were basically gone by the Civil War. A new brick structure for the Methodist-Episcopal Church was built in Bethany in 1875 (Fig. 3). That same year the Cumberland Episcopal built a church in Bethany, at the south end of the village.

A small number of farmhouses, for the most part of frame construction, were built in the Township during the 1880's and 1890's, but the largest concentration of farmhouses still existing are those dating from before 1870.

A new set of railroad tracks was put through the Township in 1911 that of the New York Central Railroad, and the older tracks removed. Since the new tracks were generally in the same location as the earlier line, the two railroad communities of Kyles Station and Hughes Station remained



Fig. 3. Bethany United Methodist Church, built 1875 in Bethany



Section II: Township History and Demographics

unchanged, although a grain mill and elevator were constructed at both stations. The Township Hall, which was built in the 1890's at Hughes Station, presumably because of its central location and proximity to the railroad, remained here to serve as the community's voting hall.

A small industrial community known as Rockdale, assumed to have been established by either a paper company or an asbestos manufacturing company, appeared in the early twentieth century in the northwest corner of the Township between the Great Miami River and Route 4. Very little is known about the community, except that the industry moved houses here, presumably for its workers. Although the community is shown on the 1810 U.S.G.S. map, the majority of the buildings in this vicinity date from the 1920's – 1940's.

Another small settlement, known as Maustown, grew up along Princeton-Glendale Road in the 1920's – 1950's, named for members of the Maus family who owned the first lots here. Princeton Glendale Road today is heavily traveled, and it is assumed that it had a similar character in the early twentieth century when the small houses with large setbacks were built. A number of workers in Hamilton's many industries were the residents here, perhaps looking

for a more pastoral, suburban location for their homes and yet within easy access to the City of Hamilton.

The district schoolhouses were disbanded in the 1920's, the result of the Rural School code of 1914, which eliminated the sub-district units of organization. The result was the creation of the Liberty School District in Liberty Township. The small schoolhouses were superseded by a large consolidated school on Princeton Pike in 1928, which is now Liberty Early Childhood School. In 1957, the Liberty and Union School Districts were combined into the Liberty-Union School District which was renamed the Lakota Local School District in 1970.

A number of bungalows were built in the 1910's – 1920's, most of them small farm complexes built out of the larger tracts of nineteenth century farm complexes.

The future of Liberty Township's subsequent development was first seen in 1948, with the establishment of the Horse Shoe Bend subdivision along Route 4 in the northwest corner of the Township. The small frame and concrete block houses on the road are assumed to have been built for laborers, who worked in Hamilton's industries.



Fig. 4. Nineteenth century houses in Bethany

Interstate 75 was built through the eastern portion of the Township in the 1960's, sewer was extended north along Gregory Creek in the late 1970's, and the Butler County Veterans Highway opened in 1999. This highway and utility connectivity brought a wave of new suburban housing development to Liberty Township beginning in the 1980's and continuing to this day. Presently, the southern and western portions of the Township are the most developed, while the central and northeastern areas of the Township are more rural in character, but are also experiencing recent development pressure.



Lakota Local Schools' growth in the 1990's and early 2000's mirrors the rapid suburban growth during this time, and has also had a significant impact on the landscape of the community. Between 1992 and 1994, three new schools opened in Liberty Township (Heritage – 1992, Cherokee and Independence – 1994), along with additions to six other schools in the district. Lakota East High School opened in 1997. Then in 2003, Van Gorden Elementary, Lakota Plains Junior School, and the Central Office Building were opened. Finally, in 2008, Wyandot Early Childhood School and Lakota East Freshman Campus were opened (source: Wikipedia). Also during this time, Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School opened its doors in 2002.

Commercial and other non-residential development has been an important component of Liberty Township's recent growth, bringing services, institutions, and employment to compliment the rapidly growing population. Commercial growth over the past decade has been largely focused in two areas: in the southeast corner of the Township, around the Cincinnati-Dayton Road interchange with SR 129 (CBD), and also in the northwest corner of the Township along State Route 4.

In 2009, The Liberty Way Interchange with I-75 and SR 129 was opened, along with the extension of Cox Road, improving access to more than 400 acres of land planned for commercial development in Liberty Township. This area, in which a \$325 million dollar mixed use retail development is currently proposed, along with the SR 747 corridor and possible future Millikin Road interchange at I-75 are seen as the future growth centers for commercial development.

While still a decidedly bedroom community, the recent commercial growth offers the start of Liberty Township becoming more of a complete community where people not only enjoy living, but also where people come to work and shop, where businesses thrive, and where residents come together as a community.

2.2 Recent Demographic Trends and Projections

Today, Liberty Township is a fast growing community characterized by a decidedly family oriented population base. This is not only seen statistically in a high average household size (3.22

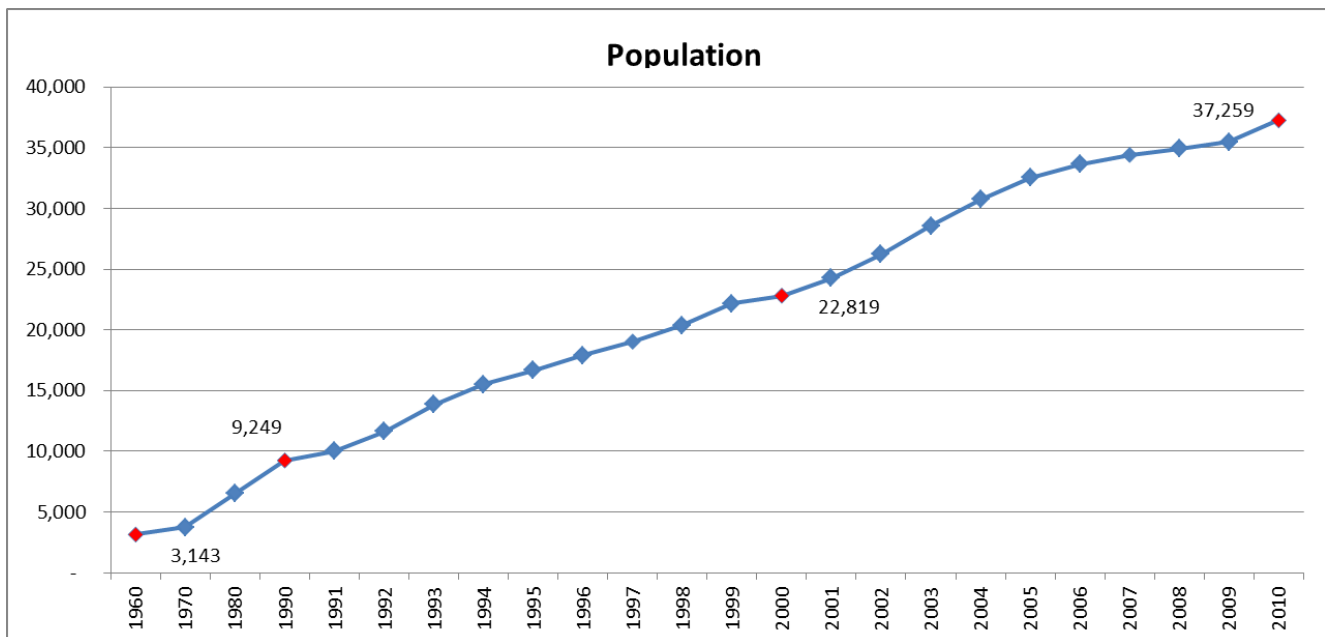


Fig. 5. Population Growth 1960 to 2010. (source: US Census Bureau)



persons per household), but also in the growth of single family detached housing subdivisions, recent boom in school expansion, and numerous youth sports leagues in the community. The recent pace of population growth in Liberty Township is unmatched in the region, and age and income trends suggest that it is an influx of relatively well educated, relatively high household income families with children driving this growth.

2.2.1 Population

Liberty Township has been one of the fastest growing communities in southwest Ohio over the past two decades, growing from a population of 9,249 in 1990 to 37,259 residents in 2010 (fig. 5). This amounts to a 400% increase over that time. As seen in the comparison chart (fig. 6), the only community in southwest Ohio which comes close to matching this growth rate is Hamilton Township in Warren County. However, Hamilton Township's overall population is roughly half that of Liberty Township.

The average persons per household increased from 3.08 in 1990 to 3.22 in 2010. This increase shows that it is primarily an influx of families with children which is driving the population growth in Liberty Township.

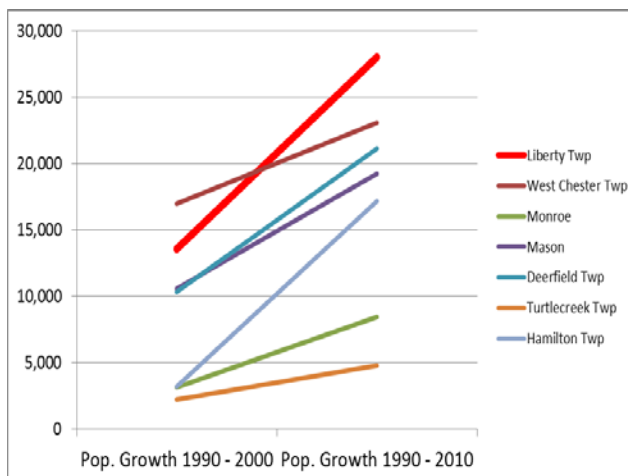


Fig. 6. Population Growth of Communities in Southwest Ohio

While the recent economic downturn has seen a temporary drop off of new housing permits, it has done little more than bring population growth back to the 20 year trend line as shown in the chart of projected population growth (fig. 7). Through the early to mid-2000's, population growth in Liberty Township was accelerating even faster than growth between 1990 and 2000.

Using population growth of the past twenty years as a guide, future population growth can be projected into the future. Looking at the past data, the population growth over this time has been relatively linear. Therefore, projecting this linear trend line forward, anticipated population levels can be estimated for future years. The chart showing Projected Population Growth (fig. 7) shows anticipated population levels every five years out to the year 2035. This chart anticipates a population of 51,000 by 2020, up to 72,000 in 2035. Using these population growth

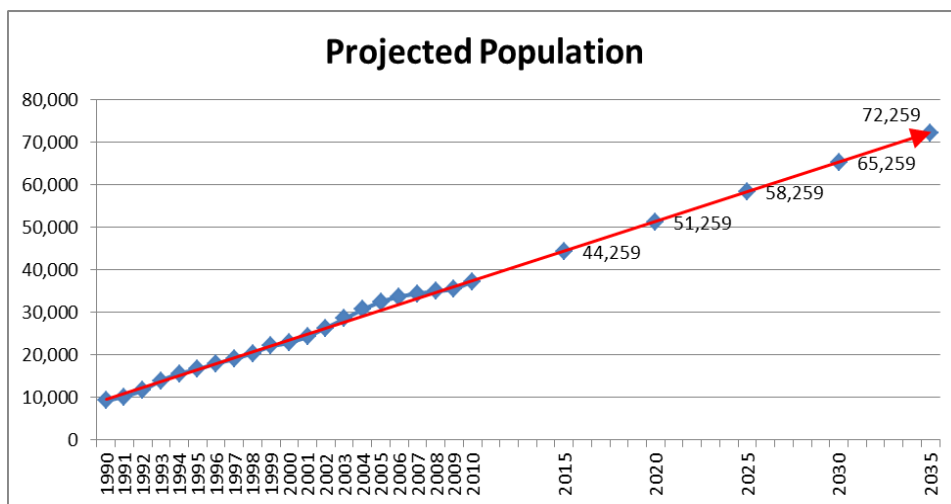


Fig. 7. Projected Population Growth

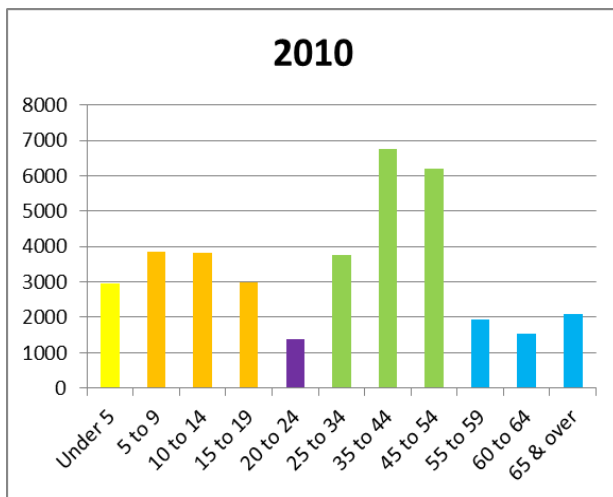
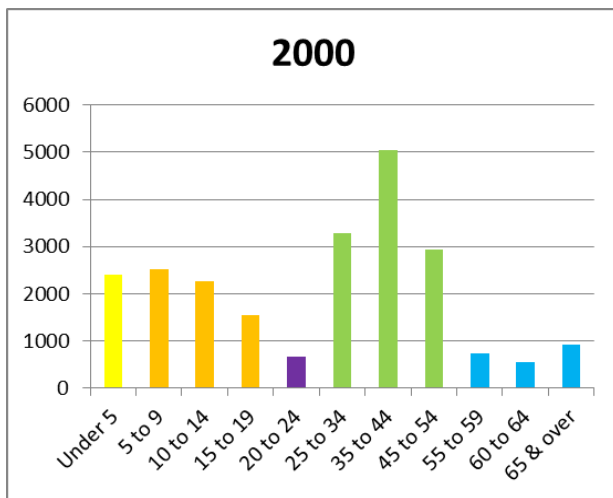
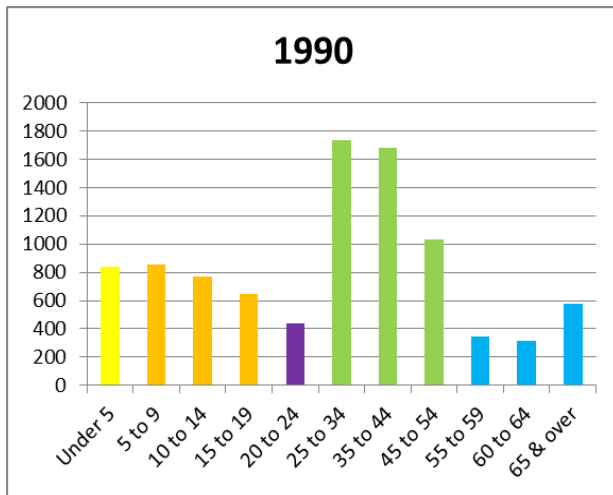


Fig. 8. Population Age 1990, 2000, and 2010

projections, along with the average persons per household, which has remained steady at around 3.22 over the past decade, the additional 35,000 residents anticipated by 2035 will require an additional 10,870 housing units to accommodate the anticipated growth. How these additional dwellings are incorporated into the Township is one focus of this plan.

2.2.2 Age

The strongest evidence of Liberty Township being a family oriented community can be seen by looking at the age demographics of the community. Looking at the charts of age breakdowns of the population (fig. 8), the two strongest groups are children under 19 and adults aged 25 to 54. Conversely, the groups of young adults age 20 to 24 and older adults age 55 and over make-up smaller segments of the population.

The charts use color to categorize the different age cohorts into groups based on typical life stages. Starting with the youngest age group, under 5, which is shown in yellow and represents children who are not yet of school age. The next grouping which includes the 5 to 9, 10 to 14, and 15 to 19 age cohorts are shown in orange and represents school age children. Next, the 20 to 24 age cohort is shown in purple to represent the young adult / young professional age demographic. The next grouping shown in green represent adults in the prime career and childrearing ages, which include the 25 to 34, 35 to 44, and 45 to 54 age cohorts. Finally, the 55 to 59, 60 to 64, and 65 and over age cohorts are grouped together by the color blue to represent empty nester and older adults.

One interesting thing to note is how the age makeup of Liberty Township has subtly gotten older between 1990 and 2010. In both 1990 and 2000, the population under 10 years old was noticeably greater than children between 10 and 19 years old, while in

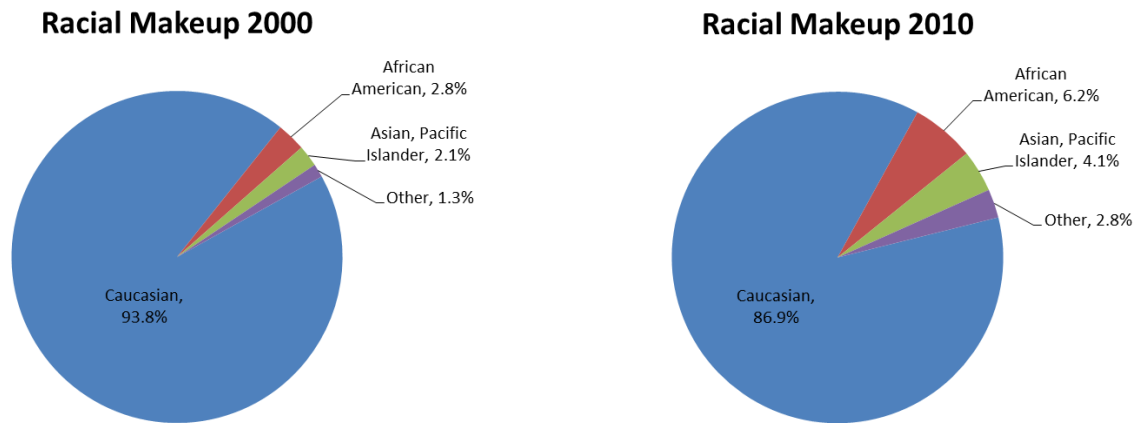


Fig. 9. Racial Makeup, 2000 and 2010

2010 the two age groups are equally balanced. Similarly, in 1990, the 25 to 34 age group was the most populous cohort within the career / childrearing adults grouping, but in 2000 and again in 2010 the age shift progressed to favor the older age cohorts. This age shift is important to note because in the coming decade, more of the population will be progressing into the young adult and empty nester age groups. These are age groups which do not currently have a large presence in the community and tend to seek different housing options and activities than families with children. While Liberty Township's overall demographic makeup will be decidedly family oriented for the foreseeable future, without doing more to accommodate the needs of the young professional and empty nester groups, the Township risks having residents ageing into these groups move away.

minority population groups doubled their percentage of the total Liberty Township population. This shows that over the past decade, the population has become more diverse. This, along with the large overall growth in population of the Township, demonstrates that Liberty Township is a popular destination for families looking to move up within the region, as well as families new to the area.

2.2.3 Race

Statistics on the racial makeup of the Township are available for both the 2000 and 2010 Census. Looking at the data on racial makeup (fig. 9), it shows that

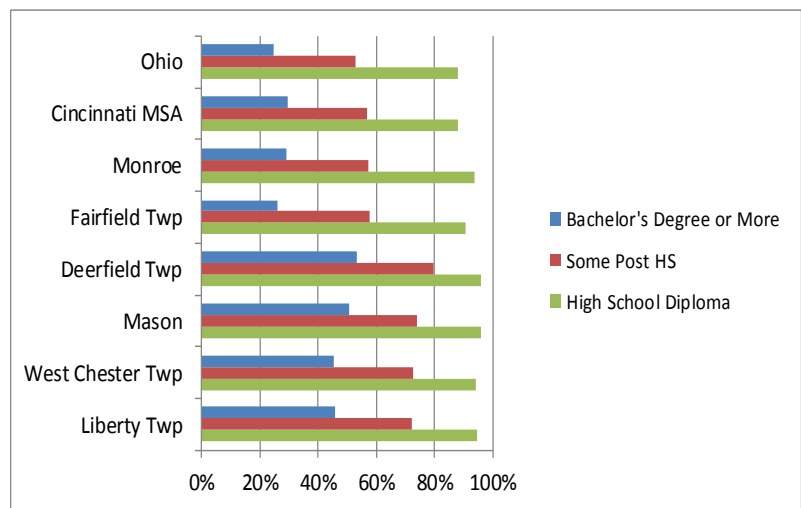


Fig. 10. Educational Attainment by % of residents age 25 and older.



2.2.4 Education

Liberty Township boasts a population with relatively high educational attainment compared with the region (Cincinnati, Hamilton, Middletown MSA) and Ohio as a whole. Looking at the chart showing educational attainment (fig. 10), the Township's population compares well with other peer communities like Mason, West Chester Township, and Deerfield Township. This shows that Liberty Township; along with other adjacent communities provide a large workforce of talented and well educated people as an important resource for businesses in the region.

2.2.5 Income

While the ten years between 2000 and 2010 have not been banner years for the national economy, these years have seen a dramatic increase in median household income for Liberty Township residents. In this time, median household income has increased 31.5% from \$76,341 to \$100,351. Furthermore, looking at the chart of Household Income in 2000 and 2010 (fig. 11), the percentage of households in Liberty Township earning over \$100,000 almost doubled from 27.5% to 50.3%. Astoundingly, the percentage of households earning

over \$150,000 nearly tripled. At this same time, the percentage of households falling into each of the income categories earning below \$100,000 decreased from the year 2000. It is likely that the increase is mostly due to the earning level of incoming residents. Since higher earnings and a higher level of educational attainment typically go hand in hand, the continuation of this trend of attracting higher earning new residents would also lead to a continuing improvement of the level of educational attainment among the Township's population.

In the following chapters on Housing and Economic Development, the Plan looks at how these demographic trends have, and will continue to shape development in the Township. Over the past two decades, new single family subdivisions have attracted highly educated, higher earning families with children. The Housing Chapter looks at factors which has caused this trend, and potential threats to its continuation. The Economic Development Chapter, in part looks at the potential for Liberty Township's resource of highly educated professionals to attract businesses, and even corporations to locate in the Township.

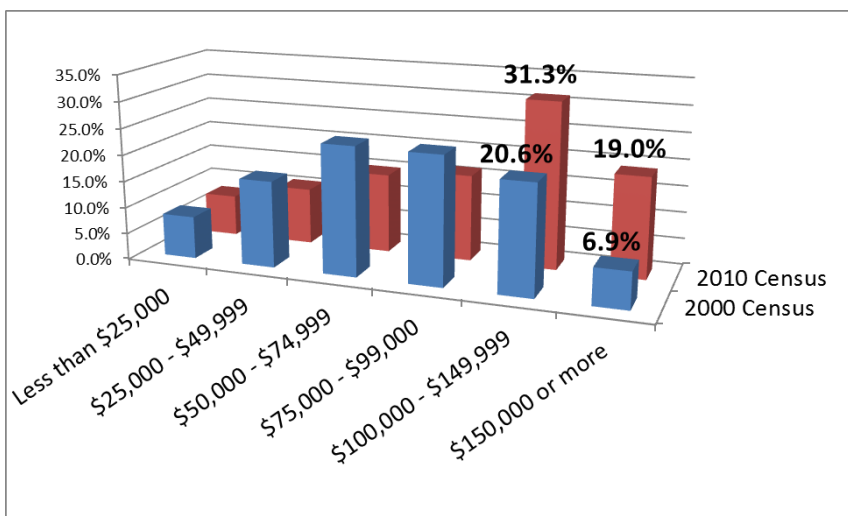


Fig. 11. Household Income 2000 and 2010



III: Housing

Single family detached housing dominates the landscape in Liberty Township. However, a minority of other housing types do exist in Liberty Township. There are smaller-lot, single family detached houses which are marketed more towards empty nester buyers and families, an array of semi-detached duplexes, townhomes, and condos, as well as multi-family apartment buildings. This housing mix is reflective of the strong family with children oriented demographic present in the Township.

3.1 Existing Housing

According to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey most recent three year estimates (Fig. 12), there are currently 11,748 total housing units in Liberty Township. Of these, over 90% are single family detached. Also, looking at recent new housing permits issued (Fig. 13), single family

| <u>Liberty Township</u> | <u>Percent</u> | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------|
| Total Housing Units | 11,748 | |
| Vacant housing units | 486 | 4.1% |
| Occupied housing units | 11,262 | 95.9% |
| <u>Units In Structure</u> | | |
| 1 unit detached | 10,677 | 90.9% |
| 1 unit attached | 205 | 1.7% |
| 2 units | 71 | 0.6% |
| 3 or 4 units | 192 | 1.6% |
| 5 to 9 units | 263 | 2.2% |
| 10 to 19 units | 20 | 0.2% |
| 20 or more | 0 | 0.0% |
| Mobile home | 320 | 2.7% |
| Boat, R/V, Van, etc. | 0 | 0.0% |

Fig. 12. Liberty Township Housing Characteristics, 2011

detached homes continue to be the overwhelming majority of new housing being built in the Township. As the chart shows, the most multi-family units built in a year was 27 in 2000, compared to 410 single family permits issued that same year. Similarly, the number of multi-family permits issued in 2012 was four, compared with 145 single family permits. The overall density of existing residential development, excluding land used for agriculture, is 1.48 dwellings per acre with approximately 60% of the land planned for residential use already developed. Detached single family residential has developed throughout the Township in all residential zoning districts, as well as the A-1 district. As of 2013, there are 107 platted subdivisions in Liberty Township (Map 1).

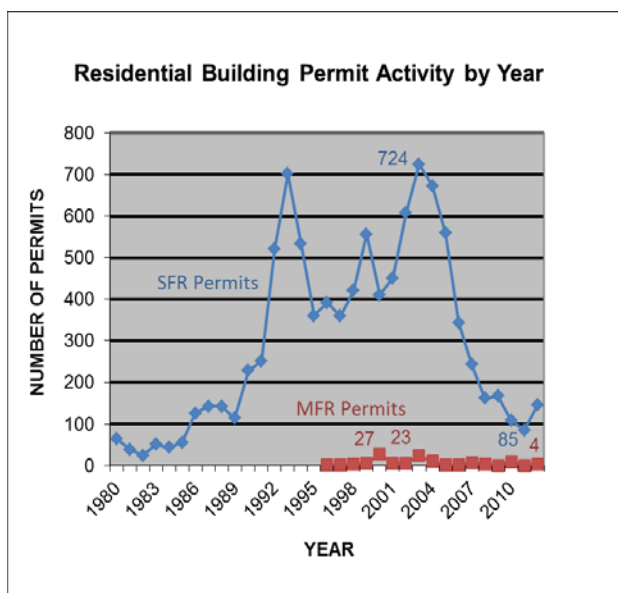
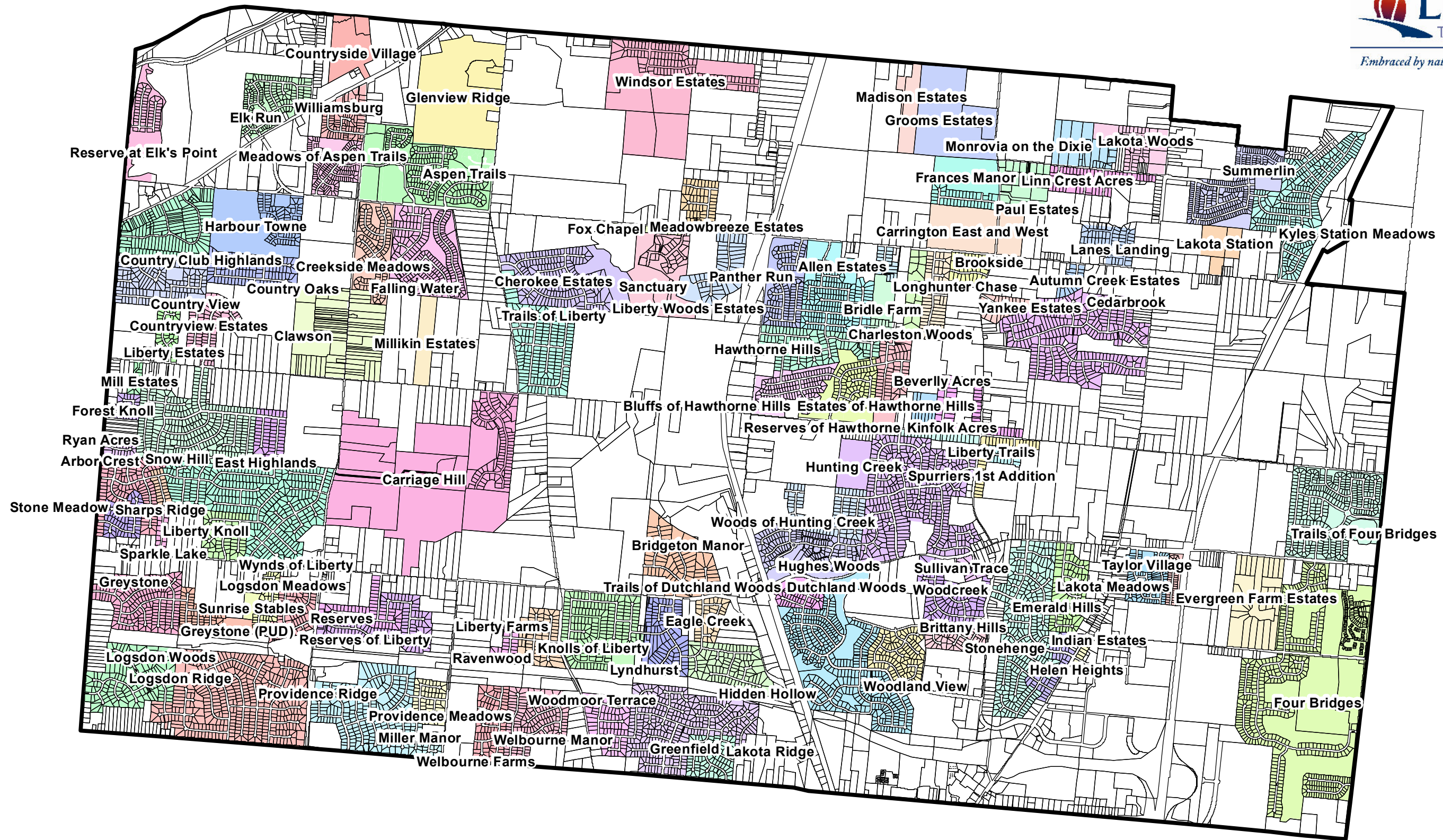


Fig. 13. Single and Multi-Family Residential Permits



Map 2: Liberty Township Subdivisions





houses, semi-detached townhomes in different configurations, and multi-unit apartment buildings. The remaining 2.7% of housing units in the Township are mobile homes, primarily located in one of two mobile home parks.

As stated above, multi-family residential comprises only a narrow fraction (6.4%) of the Township's total number of households. However, that is not the case for some neighboring communities. As seen in the table comparing multi-family residential in different southwest Ohio communities (Fig. 14), West Chester Township, Deerfield Township and the City of Mason all have levels of multi-family dwellings exceeding 30% of total housing units.

3.1.1 Housing Age

Previous chapters have shown the extent of recent residential development in Liberty Township. Over 76% (9,015) of the homes in the Township have been built since 1990, and 40% (4,693) are less than twelve years old. Recently built houses are an important resource for a community. These homes

feature up to date floor plans and amenities, are insulated up to modern standards, and are built with more current technology than older homes. These very practical considerations weigh heavily on a home's, and consequently, a neighborhood's attractiveness in the market.

Along with a large number of newly built homes, Liberty Township has a very large percentage of residents who are relatively new to the current home they live in. Nearly 42% of residents moved into their current home after 2005. Less than 9% of the population has lived in their current home more than twenty years.

Establishing roots in a community is a process. Building connections with new neighbors and with a new community takes time. It is important to recognize that so many of Liberty Township's residents are in the early stages of this process. Anything which serves to bring neighbors and the community together strengthens residents' bonds with the community.

| | Number Multi-Family Units | % Multi-Family (out of total HH) | Avg. HH size Owner Occ. | Avg. HH Size Renter Occ. |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Deerfield Twp. | 5,326 | 37.8% | 2.90 | 2.14 |
| Mason | 3,666 | 32.0% | 2.88 | 2.20 |
| West Chester Twp. | 7,515 | 31.6% | 2.75 | 2.62 |
| State of Ohio | 1,613,922 | 31.5% | 2.54 | 2.24 |
| Butler County | 42,323 | 28.5% | 2.69 | 2.47 |
| Turtlecreek Twp. | 778 | 18.5% | 2.78 | 2.10 |
| Monroe | 695 | 14.9% | 2.75 | 2.21 |
| Liberty Twp. | 1,063 | 9.3% | 3.26 | 2.54 |
| Hamilton Twp. | 820 | 9.2% | 2.77 | 2.70 |
| Fairfield Twp. | 599 | 7.8% | 2.86 | 2.98 |

Fig. 14. Multi-Family Residential in the Region



3.1.2 Housing Values

Since 2008, news has been the fall in home values nationwide. Thankfully, for Liberty Township, the figures in the table of values for owner occupied housing units (Fig. 15) do not reflect much of a drop, but more of a plateau between the 2007 – 2009 estimates and the 2009 - 2011 estimates. The total number of owner occupied units did show a pronounced dip in the 2007 – 2009 timeframe, but rebounded for the most recent 2009 – 2011 estimate. The table comparing the median home values among area communities (Fig. 16) shows that Liberty Township is among the top in the area.

| <u>Value of Owner Occ. Housing Units</u> | <u>2009-2011</u> | | <u>2007-2009</u> | | <u>2005-2007</u> | |
|--|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Less than \$50,000 | 236 | 2.3% | 196 | 2.6% | 313 | 3.5% |
| \$50,000 to \$99,999 | 255 | 2.5% | 108 | 1.4% | 233 | 2.6% |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999 | 565 | 5.5% | 480 | 6.2% | 548 | 6.1% |
| \$150,000 to \$199,999 | 2,334 | 22.6% | 1,582 | 20.6% | 2,025 | 22.5% |
| \$200,000 to \$299,999 | 4,405 | 42.7% | 3,408 | 44.4% | 3,645 | 40.5% |
| \$300,000 to \$499,999 | 2,214 | 21.4% | 1,380 | 18.0% | 1,658 | 18.4% |
| \$500,000 to \$999,999 | 297 | 2.9% | 476 | 6.2% | 543 | 6.0% |
| \$1,000,000 or more | 18 | 0.2% | 53 | 0.7% | 45 | 0.5% |
| Total Owner Occ. Units | 10,324 | | 7,683 | | 9,010 | |
| Median Home Value | \$233,300 | | \$234,900 | | \$225,400 | |

Fig. 15. Household Values in Liberty Township, 2005 - 2011

In 2011, according to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey estimates, Liberty Township’s housing was 95.9% occupied with 486 vacant housing units. While this number is low compared to the 11,748 total number of housing units, vacant houses can be a source of issues within neighborhoods and the community. Vacant houses

will typically show signs of neglect with overgrown grass, weeds taking over landscaping areas, and even gutters, soffits, shutters, and other exterior surfaces of the house showing signs of neglect. Vacant properties can be a significant nuisance to the immediate neighborhood where they are located, have a negative effect on the value of surrounding properties, and can discourage neighboring homeowners from making improvements to their own properties.

| | Median HH Value |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Turtlecreek Twp. | \$240,300 |
| Liberty Twp. | \$233,300 |
| Deerfield Twp. | \$223,600 |
| Mason | \$219,100 |
| West Chester Twp. | \$208,300 |
| Hamilton Twp. | \$202,100 |
| Fairfield Twp. | \$183,700 |
| Monroe | \$163,000 |
| Butler County | \$160,600 |
| State of Ohio | \$136,400 |

Fig. 16. Median Household Value in the Region

To combat this problem, Liberty Township has taken a couple of steps. In 2009, the Township added property maintenance regulations to the Zoning Resolution. These regulations offer specific standards for the upkeep and maintenance of property grounds, landscaping, and structures. These standards are enforced by the Planning & Zoning Department staff in response to official complaints received by residents. Primarily used for vacant properties, the Township also makes use of the provisions under 505.86 and 505.87 of the Ohio Revised Code to address nuisance conditions. These provisions allow the Township, after meeting conditions of the law, to enter the property, abate the



nuisance conditions and assess the costs incurred on the property tax duplicate. Also beginning in 2009, the Township Board of Trustees has periodically held an open information session with representatives from the subdivision Home Owners' Associations. The dialogue created by these meetings has increased the cooperation between the Township and the HOAs in addressing issues within the subdivisions.

Another potential source of maintenance issues within subdivisions can arise from the disbanding of an HOA and abandonment of maintenance of common areas, storm water infrastructure, and other amenities. This can occur in the face of a maintenance issue that is costly to resolve. The HOA can find itself with a bill it can't afford, and decide the best or only option is to disband. In this situation, the community is left with an acute maintenance issue and no clear pathway to correct the problem.

3.2 New Housing Development

As seen in the chart of new housing permits issued (Fig. 13), 2012 saw a 70% increase in new housing starts over the low of 85 in 2011. This trend continues with xxx permits issued in 2013 easily eclipsing the 145 permits issued in 2012. Also, 2013 has seen the beginnings of new lots being platted in several subdivisions. All of this points to a trend, at least in the near future, of a resurgence of homebuilding in Liberty Township following the relative inactivity of the recent recession.

As of 2013, 5,050 acres of undeveloped or under-developed land is planned for future residential development. The table showing characteristics of future residential development (Fig. 17) shows the potential added dwelling units, the potential build-out population and projected year of build-out based on different densities for the remaining planned residential acreage.

| Density | Added Dwelling Units | Added Pop. | Buildout Pop. | Projected Buildout |
|--------------|----------------------|------------|---------------|--------------------|
| @ 1.48 du/ac | 7,475 | 24,070 | 61,329 | 2028 |
| @ 2.0 du/ac | 10,101 | 32,525 | 69,784 | 2034 |
| @ 2.5 du/ac | 12,626 | 40,656 | 77,915 | 2039 |
| @ 3.0 du/ac | 15,152 | 48,789 | 86,048 | 2045 |

Fig. 17. Characteristics of Future Residential Development

All new subdivisions are reviewed by both the Township and Butler County before the subdivision can be platted and developed. The County reviews for compliance with the Subdivision Regulations, and the Township for compliance with the Zoning Resolution. The process the Township uses to review new subdivisions, or any new development, follows one of two paths – “straight” zoned or as a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Currently, when it comes to residential subdivision development, the choice between the two is largely up to the developer.

Under straight zoned review, a developer must meet all applicable requirements specifically listed in the Township Zoning Resolution for the zoning district which the subject property is zoned. These requirements govern minimum lot size, building setbacks, building height, and the number of residential units permitted on one lot or in one building. Because the specific development requirements are already defined by the Zoning Resolution, development plan review is carried out by Planning and Zoning Department staff, and is a relatively quick and straightforward process.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) review offers the developer much more flexibility than straight zoning



Fig. 18. Pedestrian trail and open space in the Carriage Hill Subdivision

allows for lot size, setbacks, and density. Unlike straight zoning, where the review process simply checks that all standard requirements are being met, the PUD process can be best described as a formalized negotiation between the Township and the developer. With this, due process dictates that the review of development proposals and the subsequent terms of zoning approvals granted be decided by elected officials and appointed residents who serve on a zoning commission. Consequently, the process is relatively lengthy, with several steps and public meetings. Also, the list of features of a development plan that is subject to review under the PUD process is much greater than under straight zoning. This is an important benefit to the Township, as it allows the community to see and comment on all aspects of a proposed development plan. However, it is these factors which cause much of the development community to generally feel that the PUD process is onerous and unpredictable.

It is unfortunate that the PUD process is not as attractive to developers because the results seen in recent developments in Liberty Township have been quite positive for the community. The flexibility and detailed review process has allowed for the preservation of natural and historic features, the incorporation of trails, parks, and other amenities, along with the integration of multiple development

products into a cohesive, master planned community in subdivisions like Four Bridges, Trails of Four Bridges, Aspen Trails, Fallingwater, Harbour Towne Park, and Carriage Hill. For the developer, the key to accomplishing results as seen in these subdivisions is allowing flexibility in the permitted lot sizes and setbacks so that financially, such developments perform at least as well as what could be developed on the same property under straight zoning. For the Township, the PUD process results in a diversity of housing products, while providing the means of ensuring that these developments are complimentary to existing development and the development vision of the Township.

In 2008, the Township Trustees held a series of work sessions with area developers focused mainly on the PUD review process and requirements. These work sessions led to some changes to the Township Zoning Resolution. The Vision Plan Steering Committee identified the need to further evaluate ways to make the PUD review process more attractive to developers and encourage its use. The specifics of how this might be accomplished will be the topic taken up by a working group specifically assembled to address the issue.

3.3 Serving a Broader Demographic

This predominance is owing to the heavy tilt towards a family demographic, but also in part to the community's hesitancy to embrace other types of housing development.

As presented in the previous chapter, a gradual aging can be seen in the two largest population groups in the Township: children under 19 years old and adults between 25 and 55 years old. This would mean increasing numbers of residents will be graduating into the young professional and empty nester age groups respectively. Young professionals and empty nesters tend to prefer different options in



housing than the large lot, single family detached homes prized by the families with children.

Young professionals tend to prefer rental properties for a couple of reasons: first, they are very early in their careers and tend to prefer the mobility that renting allows, and secondly, young professionals often do not have the credit history, and many have student debts which may prevent them from taking on a mortgage.

Empty nesters looking to stay in this area are used to being home owners, and living in neighborhoods of primarily owner occupied housing. Unlike the young professional group, rental housing is not as attractive to empty nesters. However, empty nesters typically are looking to downsize – a smaller house to take care of, a smaller yard to take care of, or even a situation where yard maintenance is included. However, empty nesters are not interested in giving up amenities that they are accustomed to enjoying. In fact, many are looking to increase their access to amenities such as walking paths, shopping and dining, golf and social clubs. Currently, there are only a few housing options in Liberty Township targeting these groups.

In recognition of this trend, the Vision Plan Steering Committee discussed how different housing options geared towards these groups might fit into the future vision of Liberty Township. Also, the question was posed at the first public open house meeting addressing this topic: *"Is it important that Liberty Township be a place with a variety of housing options attractive to all age groups, where one should be able to live in Liberty Township during each phase of life: from childhood, young adulthood, raising a family, through retirement; or should Liberty Township be about large single family homes on relatively large lots similar to the current housing stock in the Township?"*

Eighty-four percent of the respondents to the question said that it is more important to have a

variety of housing options available and to be an attractive community to people in all phases of life. The residential landscape of Liberty Township will always be heavily tilted towards large-lot, single family detached homes. However, the vision plan steering committee agreed with the public's assessment to further plan for other housing types. Aside from expanding the offering of housing options in the Township, the inclusion of small-lot single family, townhome, condominium, and apartment development offers some advantages. First, in land use planning, these uses are good transitional uses which could separate single family from commercial uses. Young professional and empty nester groups tend to prefer closer access to shopping, dining, and public transportation. They also tend to be less sensitive to living closer to highly-traveled arterial roadways and commercial development. Second, these types of development are more efficient from a public infrastructure standpoint. More homes are serviced by less lane-miles of road, less distance of sewer, water, gas, and electric cable than larger-lot single family development. Finally, the young professional and empty nester groups are much less likely to have an impact on school enrollment.

Liberty Township does have some housing products, both built and planned, that are marketed to the



Fig. 19. Pinwheel style townhomes at the Liberty Grand Villas development.



Section III: Housing

young professional and empty nester buyer. In addition to the existing apartments at Four Bridges, apartments are planned as a component of both the Carriage Hill and Liberty Center projects. If built as proposed, these developments could add over 400 apartment units in the Township. Also, there are small-lot detached houses targeting empty nesters planned as part of Carriage Hill, Liberty Grand Villas, and Lakeview Cove developments. Attached townhome style units are planned for a future phase of the Liberty Center development and attached “pinwheel” style townhomes (Fig. 19) are proposed as a component of the Glenview Ridge Subdivision to go along with those existing at Liberty Grand Villas.

The common thread with all of these examples of proposed small lot single family homes and multi-family developments is that they are just one component of a larger mixed use development which is master planned as a planned unit development. This situation provides two safeguards: first, it ensures that multi-family development is mixed among other uses in a way that provides walkability and access, and second, it ensures that the multi-family component is executed in a way that is complimentary to the surrounding uses. The Vision Plan Steering Committee expressed that the model of allowing multi-family to develop as part of a mixed use or mixed density planned development should continue. Future multi-family residential and small – lot, empty nester style homes are accommodated under the Land Use Plan in the Planned Community Mixed Use and Planned Residential Mixed Use. Higher density residential also can be a viable use in transition between commercial and lower density residential.

3.4 Housing Goals and Objectives

The following Goals and Objectives related to housing were prepared by the Vision Plan Steering

Committee and presented for comment at a public open house. These goals and objectives are not listed in any particular order of priority.

Goal #1: Encourage re-investment in older neighborhoods.

Objective: Property maintenance standards need to be more actively and effectively enforced in a fair and even-handed way so that no property will be a blight on the community.

Task: Develop policies to ensure fair and even-handed enforcement.

Task: As the need for enforcement of property maintenance grows, proper staff time and attention must be committed to ensure this objective is, and continues to be met.

Objective: Work with HOAs or other community groups to encourage the re-investment in properties.

Task: Consider issuing awards for most attractive yard, most improved, etc.

Task: Continue to foster communication and cooperation between the Township and HOAs.

Objective: Explore other avenues to encourage reinvestment into properties in Liberty Township.

Task: Explore partnering with local banks to provide lower cost home equity loans to residents for home improvements.

Objective: Evaluate the possibility of updating older neighborhoods with sidewalks, streetlights, and street trees to be more consistent with newer developments and to encourage residents to invest in their properties.

Task: Identify a funding mechanism and budget.

Task: Determine locations and phasing.

Task: Coordinate with utilities

Task: Design, bid, and construction



Goal #2: Provide for housing options which are attractive to a wider cross section of demographic, especially young professionals and empty nesters.

Objective: Provide housing products that are desired by young professionals and empty-nesters in areas of the Township that are close to shopping, restaurants, and other related amenities, as determined by the Land Use Plan.

Objective: Provide areas planned for mixed use development to create transitions from commercial to residential and to create attractive, pedestrian friendly developments.

Goal #3: Promote sustainable neighborhoods through the use of quality design and building materials and the inclusion of amenities.

Objective: Encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments to provide higher quality and a cohesive design to new developments, reduce infrastructure, and protect natural features and character, while offering developers more flexibility to meet their goals.

Task: Convene a working group to better define Township's criteria for evaluating residential PUD design.

Objective: Place an emphasis on the inclusion of trails and other amenities as part of residential and mixed-use developments.

Task: Convene a working group to better define the Township's criteria for evaluating residential PUD design.

Task: Evaluate trails and amenities during development pre-application meetings.

Objective: Within areas designated conservation development on the Land Use Plan, the wooded areas, streams, and natural topography should be viewed as unique

features and amenities to be capitalized upon, not lost to development in these areas.

Task: Draft zoning regulations for conservation development with open space and buffers to protect natural features in sensitive areas, such as along Gregory Creek and the Great Miami River, allowing development in these areas to be concentrated on the developable portions of the site.

Objective: In subdivisions under development, protect existing residents' property values and maintain the integrity of neighborhoods by guarding against shifting product type.

Task: Evaluate measures through the Zoning Resolution and/or Subdivision Regulations to offer some review over, public notice, and public opportunity to comment when developers or builders decide to switch to a significantly different housing product than what exists in the subdivision.

Objective: Help preserve farmland / and or natural land, to the extent the property owner wants it preserved through land banking, easements, and transfer of development rights.

Task: To the extent possible, capitalize on donated land as local match towards grants for improvements such as parks and trails.

Task: Publicize to residents the availability of such programs, and the benefits to both land owner and community.



IV: Economic Development

With the hiring of its first department director in 2007 and the creation of a volunteer advisory committee in 2008 to support the Township's efforts, economic development in Liberty Township has become a higher priority. The Township recognizes its strategic location along I-75 – in the center of I-75 Growth Corridor – has the potential to bring unique commercial development opportunities to help balance the primarily residential community. To aid in creating an environment prime for development opportunities, Liberty Township collaborated with Butler County and West Chester Township to open the Liberty Way Interchange in 2009. The full-service interchange off I-75 at Ohio 129 opened up 600 undeveloped acres for commercial development in the area, primarily in Liberty Township with some acreage in West Chester Township. At complete build-out in approximately 20 years, it is projected that roughly 10,000 new jobs will be created as a result of the \$42-million locally-funded infrastructure project.

In Liberty Township's 2006 Comprehensive Plan, construction of the Liberty Way Interchange was the primary goal related to economic development. With the Liberty Way Interchange open and acreage surrounding it being marketing for development combined with additional corridors in the community targeted for commercial growth, Liberty Township is poised to be a significant player in the region's future growth and development.

This chapter gives an overview of Liberty Township's business environment and the opportunities that exist to grow the commercial base.



Fig. 20. Aerial photograph of Liberty Way Interchange at the opening in 2009.

4.1 Existing Business Community

In 2013, Liberty Township's business community includes an estimated 250 businesses operating in commercially developed space 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 for the Township to track and monitor. These 250 businesses employ roughly 5,000 workers. The Township's top employers include Lakota Local School District with 11 schools as well as the Lakota Central Office and Cincinnati Children's Liberty Campus.

Top 5 Employers in Liberty Township

| | |
|--|-----|
| Lakota Local School District | 922 |
| Cincinnati Children's Liberty Campus | 450 |
| The Kroger Co. (2 locations) | 390 |
| Butler Tech Career Development <i>Includes seasonal positions</i> | 261 |
| Four Bridges Golf & Country Club <i>Includes seasonal positions</i> | 250 |

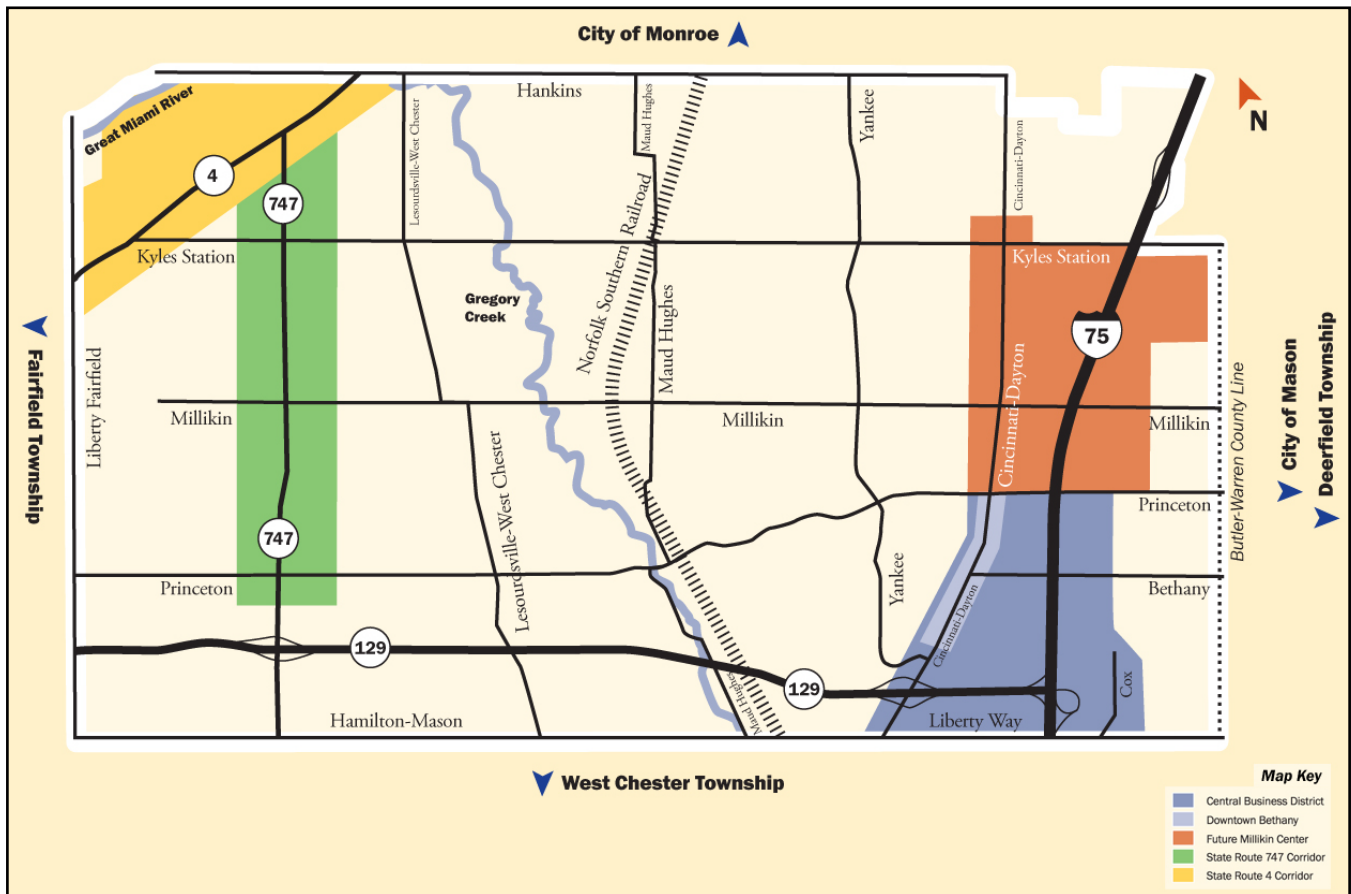


Fig. 21. Map of Commercial Development Corridors

4.1.1 Recent Growth

Previous chapters have shown the recent growth Liberty Township has experienced in terms of population and residential developments. Naturally, increases in population and rooftops translate into business growth too. 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 turned into businesses. The redevelopment of homes into businesses has

occurred most notably in the Downtown Bethany area.

The map above shows the Township's current commercial development corridors – with a fourth corridor identified as an area planned for future commercial growth, referred to as Future Millikin Center. This area is designated on the Land Use Plan for office and limited industrial development and the Township anticipates a future full interchange off I-75 at Millikin Road to access this acreage.



Section IV: Economic Development

4.1.2 Business Sectors

Businesses in Liberty Township today are primarily serving the residents and a growing number of households in the community. Therefore, many can be classified as community or neighborhood business – this includes the retail and service sector serving the population. These businesses exist in the Central Business District, and are also clustered around the State Route 747 and State Route 4 corridors.

The Township also boasts a high number of medical sector businesses and institutions. This, too, can be attributed in part to the population increase the Township has experienced. The central location of Liberty Township equidistant between Cincinnati and Dayton has also played a part in regional facilities wanting a stronger presence in the suburbs. Simply put, the medical industry is looking to grow their service areas and finding success locating north of Cincinnati and south of Dayton to capture the opportunities that exist with the growing number of rooftops. One of the factors that led Cincinnati Children's to selecting the community for their Liberty Campus was the significant number of patients they were servicing from Butler and Warren Counties. The concentration of medical sector businesses is also most prevalent in the Central Business District along I-75.

Light manufacturing and industrial businesses are present along State Route 4. The Township has targeted the future Millikin Center as an area ripe for this type of industry to locate in the future. It represents development opportunities along I-75 for office, more intense manufacturing and light industrial uses. The Township is investigating the infrastructure needs within the future Millikin Center area.

There is currently a shortage of Class A office space in Liberty Township. However, that could change with the opening of Liberty Center. Phase I calls for

75,000 SF of new Class A office with additional planned and encouraged for future phases. Furthermore, hotel(s) are also a component of the Liberty Center project and also may be seen in future developments. The undeveloped land east of the Liberty Way Interchange is planned for office and business park uses. The Township's vision for Cox Road is to attract high profile medical and office users desiring I-75 visibility and easy access.

4.2 Image and Identity

Since the last comprehensive plan, Liberty Township has focused several efforts around improving and enhancing the community's image and creating a sense of place for residents and businesses. Image and identity efforts in the Township center around educating people about the use of "Liberty Township, Ohio" related to zip codes, encouraging community gathering spots and places for people 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 evolving. 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.

4.2.1 Zip Codes

The image and identity discussion typically begins with the Township's zip code – or lack thereof. Liberty Township has a total of five zip codes (45011, 45044, 45069, 45036 and 45050) all served by different post offices. The community is not served by one primary zip code like is the case in many other cities or large townships. However, we are not alone. Other high-growth areas, particularly townships that were once more rural, face similar challenges. Unfortunately the United States Post Office does not follow city and township borders



when creating zip codes and given the challenges they face with decreased usage and shrinking quantities of mail to be delivered, it's unlikely this situation in Liberty Township will change in the near future. Despite many efforts to lobby for a unique zip code, the fact is the electronic era of email, texting, online bill payments and social media has had an impact on the postal industry. That being said, Liberty Township realizes the confusion and impact this has on the community's identity so it remains a long-term goal for Liberty Township to be serviced by a single, unique postal code.

Today, most residents of Liberty Township have either the 45011 (Hamilton) or 45044 (Middletown) with the railroad near Maud-Hughes Road serving as the dividing line. Residents and businesses west have the 45011 zip code and those east of the railroad have 45044. For the past several years, residents with the 45011 and 45044 zip codes have been permitted to use "Liberty Township, Ohio" as the place name.

There is a pocket of businesses along Liberty Way and Cincinnati-Dayton Road north to State Route 129 that carry the 45069 (West Chester) zip code – this group was just recently permitted to use Liberty Township, Ohio with the 45069 zip code. This was critical to future development expected along Liberty Way, primarily the large-scale Liberty Center mixed-use development proposed for the area. It's important to the Township's image and identity for the new businesses opening within Liberty Center to utilize Liberty Township, Ohio 45069 as their mailing address.

A very small pocket of residents located in the northeast quadrant of Liberty Township have been assigned the 45036 (Lebanon) zip code. Another small pocket of residents have 45050 (Monroe) as their zip code. At this time, these residents need to continue using the "default" city name that matches their zip code.

The positive news related to zip codes in Liberty Township is that if you reside or if your business is located in the 45011, 45044 or 45069, you may use "Liberty Township, Ohio" with your designated zip code as your mailing address. This has been approved by the United States Post Office and mail will be received using Liberty Township as the city name. Mail will also be received if the "default city" of Hamilton (45011), Middletown (45044) or West Chester (45069) is used with the approved zip code. In recent years, the United States Post Office has added these addresses to their database as "Liberty Township." Hopefully, being added to the database will translate to internet searches of most Liberty Township addresses being identified with the place name of "Liberty Township, Ohio". While both options work, the Township encourages its residents and businesses to utilize Liberty Township, Ohio and the approved zip code to show pride for the community and help with the identity challenges that exist related to postal codes.

4.2.2 Community Gathering Spots

It has been acknowledged that Liberty Township lacks an identified downtown or gathering area. This was referenced in the previous comprehensive plan, but has also been on the radar of those responsible for land use planning at the Township. Focused efforts to create spaces for community gathering are detailed in the paragraphs below.

Downtown Bethany has been historically considered the "downtown" of Liberty Township, but saw a gradual decline over the years as properties were not maintained, as homes began turning into businesses and as commerce began concentrating further south of Downtown Bethany at SR 129 at I-75 due to more attractive greenfield sites and easier access to the highway system. The result is a mixed area of single and two family homes with scattered commercial properties of various types. One element that has remained consistent is the concentration of



Section IV: Economic Development

social/community institutions with Bethany United Methodist Church, Lakota East High School and Freshman School and Wellspring Community Church. This suggests that with a vision and some business interest, the area can return to a vibrant community hub. To that end, in 2010 the Township adopted a Downtown Bethany Vision Plan which outlines achievable goals for the revitalization of Downtown Bethany into a thriving, community-oriented gathering spot. Recognizing it will take time for the plan to come to fruition, progress has begun with a handful of new businesses locating in Downtown Bethany. The revitalization of Downtown Bethany will give the community local flavor and a local connection point with easy walkability, structures closer to the street and a parking network behind the buildings. Liberty Township continues to encourage development in Downtown Bethany and the Vision Plan is a great resource to illustrate the vision for the area as a community-oriented gathering spot. More information about Downtown Bethany is outlined in the Downtown Bethany Vision Plan.

The Liberty Center mixed-use development along Liberty Way is expected to fill this void as well. Liberty Center is positioned to become a regional gathering point for the community. With Phase I projected to bring 1.1 million square feet of leasable retail, entertainment, residential, office, restaurants and pocket parks, the development is destined to become a popular community and regional destination. Liberty Center has plans to bring community events and programming to their parks and common spaces further demonstrating how it will naturally become a significant gathering space for the residents of Liberty Township and neighboring communities, as well as the region.

Other opportunities exist in the Township for local gathering spots. Along SR 747, the Maustown area has the potential to become a local connection point on the west side of the community – particularly as the Carriage Hill development progresses. With a

commercial element and large pockets of open space planned for the Carriage Hill community, it's worthwhile to explore how these pieces fit together and where opportunities exist to encourage more connectivity along SR 747. As the Township continues to explore the Future Millikin Center and a new interchange off I-75, opportunities exist to encourage more commercial development and connectivity in the northeast quadrant of the Township too. In addition, the Liberty Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan (adopted in 2010) identifies areas around the community where future park and rec opportunities may exist. Growing the Township's access to recreation activities and park land contributes to the overall positive climate of community and encourages connectivity amongst its members. Fort Liberty Playland park, along with other Township parks serve as gathering spots for residents.

Establishing community nodes or gathering spots takes time and vision. Liberty Township has made significant strides in the last several years to establish a vision for Downtown Bethany and hold true to the community's vision for a large-scale, mixed-use development along Liberty Way. The opening of Liberty Center will be a point of celebration for the community in establishing a central gathering space for residents, businesses and visitors to the area as it will represent seeing a vision Liberty Township established in the previous comprehensive plan (adopted in 2006) come to fruition.

4.2.3 A Sense of Place

Image and identity is ultimately about creating a sense of place for residents and businesses. It's important for people living and working in a community to feel pride in their environment – people want to feel safe, they want to feel there are opportunities for growth whether that be personal or professional, they want to feel they made a great



decision in choosing to live here, work here or open their business here.

In the last five years, a new logo/brand mark for Liberty Township has been established. A tagline was created to reflect the brand of Liberty Township. The tagline references the natural beauty and the rural component of the community as well as acknowledges the future development opportunities along I-75. It is meant to show respect and admiration for the past and rural character of the community while recognizing the careful and thoughtful approach to planning for future development in Liberty Township.



Fig. 22. Gateway signage at SR 129 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road.

The Township has also installed gateway signage and landscaping at four significant entry points to the community. The gateway signage is located at the Cincinnati-Dayton Road and State Route 747 exit ramps at State Route 129. In addition, new park signs have been installed, and signage at the community's borders was added to help to welcome people to Liberty Township and identify the Township's boundaries. Hamilton-Mason Road was renamed to Liberty Way in 2009 and decorative vandal screening with the new road name "Liberty Way" was installed as part of the interchange opening. This was done to help brand the



Embraced by nature. ♦ Inspired by progress.

Fig. 23. Township Logo

interchange and the Township's central business district.

It's also worthwhile to note Cincinnati Children's Liberty Campus and their signage along I-75 has helped identify the Township's location. The additional development coming to their campus should only strengthen this message. In addition, the mixed use development along Liberty Way will be named Liberty Center. As that development becomes a reality over the next few years, it will help identify the Township's location along I-75. These two projects alone should significantly improve the name recognition of the community and surely many more people will be exposed to Liberty Township because of the Liberty Campus of Children's and Liberty Center over the next few years.

The overlay districts in place in the Township's Central Business District also contribute to creating a "look and feel" for the community. The proactive work of establishing overlay districts was done as a result of the previous comprehensive planning process which identified improving image and identity as a community priority. The overlay districts set forth architectural standards, building design and material standards, and signage, landscaping and lighting standards. All these factors play an important part in any business environment. Creating standards and common guidelines for materials, architecture, lighting, landscaping, and signage helps to establish a visual look for a certain area and an emotional feeling. A single business or a multi-tenant retail building is about much more than the business itself. The aesthetics play an important



Section IV: Economic Development

role. Liberty Township's overlay districts encourage this idea of a branded, well-planned community where people begin to "feel" they are in the Township due to the architectural style, consistent lighting, and signage standards that subtly reinforce the community's brand and sense of place.

The signage, entryway enhancements and overlay districts are all steps to help create a sense of place, encourage community pride and educate visitors on the location of our community. New businesses and development in the Township will further enhance these efforts. The hope is some of this work has already moved the needle in creating a stronger name recognition and "look and feel" for the community.

4.3 Key Community Attributes

As Liberty Township continues its efforts to grow the commercial tax base, it is important to understand the community's key attributes. Fortunately, the community and larger region have strong attributes to sell and thousands of businesses have found success in the Cincinnati-Dayton Metroplex. Liberty Township's strong demographics were highlighted in a previous chapter. The population growth and average household income are strong selling points to businesses considering the area. In addition, the Township has available land and greenfield sites, a strong workforce, educational assets and excellent accessibility to regional and national markets. These attributes added to low crime and desirable housing has contributed to Liberty Township maintaining a strong showing in *Cincy Magazine's Ranking the Burbs* edition.

4.3.1 Available Land

Approximately 18% of the Township is planned for commercial development, of which only 3% is developed commercially today. Capturing future commercial growth is most important for the

community's growth. The remaining 15% of the Township's gross land area is planned for commercial development and currently undeveloped. Much of this available land planned for commercial growth lacks utilities, access or both. The Land Use Plan is the best resource for viewing where these opportunities exist (Map 13 in Chapter 9 Land Use).

Site readiness is a challenging piece of economic development in Liberty Township. In several areas, infrastructure is lacking therefore making those sites less "ready" and in turn, less desirable for businesses considering a move to the community. For example, the area around Future Millikin Center appears easily accessible to I-75, however until the Millikin Interchange is built, the access is more difficult. Furthermore, this entire area does not currently have sewer or gas infrastructure in place. Another similar area is Maustown along SR 747 between Millikin and Kyles Station roads. Maustown currently lacks sewer infrastructure.

Also, much of the land planned for commercial development is not currently zoned properly for commercial development. Until the land is zoned for a commercial use, it is in jeopardy of developing in a less desirable, non-commercial way. This is a concern when the Township's land use planning efforts have identified a maximum of 18% of land to be commercially developed. This underscores the need to ensure the land planned for commercial uses is developed according to the Land Use Plan. It's also why the Township must focus its efforts on bringing the highest quality, most sustainable developments to the community in order to maximize their impact. Simply put, Liberty Township has a rather small percentage of total ground to work with when it comes to commercial development therefore the vision of development with high aesthetic quality must be the focus. This translates into encouraging and choosing to pursue development opportunities that match the Township's vision over developments that don't meet the vision and quality standards of the



community. It also emphasizes the need to begin dialogue with property owners concerning how their property fits into the Land Use Plan today, even though the land continues to be used by the current property owner in a non-commercial way for several more years. The important point is to protect the land for future development and get the commercial zoning in place. This is critical to the Township's future economic development efforts and the fiscal sustainability of the community.

4.3.2 Strong Workforce & Educational Assets

The Cincinnati-Dayton 19-county metropolitan area – when counted as one – is home to more than 3 million people, making it the 15th largest in the nation. Of this 3 million, it's estimated the combined area boasts a workforce of approximately 2 million. This means Liberty Township, at the center of this combined metro area, has access to a large talent pool.

These numbers are impressive but equally so are the number of Fortune 500 and 1000 companies represented in the region. The Cincinnati-Dayton metroplex has a proven track record for large and small businesses.

- 10 Fortune 500 company headquarters
- 18 Fortune 1000 company headquarters
- More than 400 of the Fortune 500 companies have a presence in the region
- 550+ foreign-owned firms employ more than 65,000 people

Another piece of the workforce equation is the access to education. Southwest Ohio offers diverse educational opportunities. According to the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, there are more than 300 colleges with a student population of over 1.2 million within 200 miles – including about 50 colleges, universities and professional schools in the Cincinnati-Dayton region. More than 100,000

graduates from these 300 colleges join the regional workforce each year. The area's access to colleges, universities and vocational schools helps create a diversified labor force, offering businesses a good source of skilled and qualified workers and opportunities for advanced training. The strength of Lakota Schools, Butler Tech, and other area schools also contribute to the attractiveness of the Township as a place to live and operate a business.

The numbers above demonstrate the strength of the region's workforce, educational access and current business environment. These are important positive factors in Liberty Township's quest to attract sustainable, high quality commercial development to the community's designated growth corridors.

4.3.3 Excellent Accessibility

The I-75 Growth Corridor and Liberty Township in particular, boast an excellent transportation and infrastructure network of international highways and major state routes. Access to two major Class 1 and several short-line railroads gives the regional alternatives when it comes to moving goods.

The Township straddles I-75 almost halfway between Cincinnati and Dayton. Rounding out the other major roadway connections within Liberty Township is the Butler Regional Highway (State Route 129) that connects I-75 to the City of Hamilton and State Route 4 that connects the cities of Hamilton and Middletown. To the south, I-275 provides access to I-71 and I-74 as well as to communities around Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. To the north, I-675 connects the southern part of Dayton and I-70 providing easy access to the Dayton, Columbus and Indianapolis markets.

Liberty Township's location between the two large metros of Cincinnati and Dayton is an important factor in growing the business base. To that end, it's advantageous that the community is easily served by



Fig. 24. Vast interstate connections provide Liberty Township businesses the ability to connect easily and efficiently with about 60% of the North American market in one day's drive.

international and regional airports. Liberty Township is 35 miles to the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG) and 40 miles to the Dayton International Airport (DAY). The Township is located within 30 miles of four regional airports: Butler County Regional Airport/Hogan Field (KHA), Miami University Airport (KOXD), Middletown Regional Airport/Hook Field (MWO), and Warren County Airport (I68).

In addition, Cincinnati is on the Ohio River which provides excellent access to waterways for waterborne commerce. Port Cincinnati is the fifth-largest inland port, and 13.4 million tons pass through on the Ohio River each year.

In summary, the following bullet points are how the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber markets the region's excellent accessibility:

- Cincinnati is within 600 miles of 43 percent of the nation's population and 44 percent of manufacturing establishments
- Cincinnati is a 90-minute flight to half of the U.S. population, half of manufacturing establishments, and to two-thirds of major U.S. markets.
- Cincinnati is a one-day drive or less to 20 major metro markets.

4.4 Economic Development Goals and Objectives

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

Goal #1: Promote a new interchange along I-75 near Millikin Road.

Objective: Encourage the rezoning of property in the vicinity of the proposed Millikin Interchange to commercial zoning to make way for the future roadway and development.

Task: Work with property owners of land near the proposed Millikin Interchange to share the long-term vision for the Township and encourage open dialogue about their future plans.

Task: Township shall consider initiating re-zoning with support of interested property owners and utilize the 95 acre Duke Energy Site Readiness program site as a catalyst.

Task: Market the available land to larger Fortune 500 and 100 firms.

Task: Utilize the 95 acre Duke Energy Site Readiness program site as a catalyst to spark interest in the



Future Millikin Corridor and proactively seek a developer/investor with a vision for the property consistent with the Land Use Plan.

Objective: Coordinate master planning efforts with FHWA, ODOT, OKI, BCEO, adjacent Warren County communities and other similar organizations in order to regionally align interests and priorities.

Task: Initiate the planning process between local governmental entities and begin to outline steps involved with bringing a new Millikin Interchange to Liberty Township.

Task: Work with Butler County Water & Sewer to get adequate water and sewer infrastructure in place to support development.

Task: Begin preparing the environmental, preliminary engineering, traffic studies, etc. to kick-start the major infrastructure project.

Task: Review changing the name of Millikin Road to help market Liberty Township along I-75.

Objective: Identify funding sources for a new interchange at Millikin Road, including developer/land owner participation.

Task: Study the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD) to help fund infrastructure.

Task: Identify other funding sources including New Community Authority, assessments, public-private partnerships, etc.

Task: Work in collaboration with Butler County Engineer's Office/TID to evaluate project costs, scope and funding opportunities.

Task: Analyze the use of public / private partnerships.

Objective: Encourage the development of Cox Road north to State Route 63 in order to provide an alternative north-south roadway to relieve traffic from I-75.

Task: Market the commercial development opportunities that exist with vacant land. This is particularly important because the extension of Cox Road will be developer driven and each section developed as commercial growth occurs.

Task: Encourage the rezoning of property consistent with the Land Use Plan.

Task: Encourage and connect property owners interested in dedicating right-of-way for future Cox Road to the appropriate developer groups as development progresses

Task: Work with Butler County to provide water/sewer service to land along future Cox Road.

Objective: Identify development opportunities for the 95 acres at 5830 Cincinnati-Dayton Road.

Task: Encourage the rezoning of the 95 acres to a commercial zoning designation in order to protect the land for future commercial development.

Task: Utilize this property as a catalyst to spark interest in the Future Millikin Corridor and proactively seek a developer/investor with a vision for the property consistent with the Land Use Plan.

Goal #2: Create an identified downtown and/or gathering areas for the community.

Objective: Continue to pursue the proposed Steiner + Associates Liberty Center development at Liberty Way and SR 129 and market it as a regional "town center".



- Task: Evaluate identifying a committee to help market the regional town center concept and rally the Central Business District about the benefits of having a town center in the community.
- Task: Convey the message to residents and local businesses that the proposed Liberty Center represents the catalyst for economic development in Liberty Township.
- Task: Market the “town center” concept to existing central business district (CBD) businesses and look for opportunities to showcase what they bring to the CBD in order to complement the mix of tenants Steiner + Associates will seek – opportunities for all businesses to increase profile with added exposure.
- Objective: Promote Downtown Bethany and its redevelopment as a local community gathering area for residents of Liberty Township.
 - Task: Continue to use the Downtown Bethany Master Plan to market and encourage development.
 - Task: Establish and develop community gathering spaces as defined within plan.
 - Task: Evaluate and update Downtown Bethany plan every five years.
 - Task: Review zoning code and update as needed. Consider the use of a form-based zoning code.
- Objective: Identify and promote a small town center type of development at Carriage Hill along the SR 747 Corridor.
 - Task: Build upon Homearama 2013 and 2014 to market and promote the town center concept within Carriage Hill and the quality of life assets of

- the greater Liberty Township community.
- Task: Encourage community facilities/services that may help attract support for town center.
- Task: Market the “Carriage Hill town center” concept to existing businesses in order to create a groundswell of support for the unique residential project that has the potential to increase traffic to and increase the profile of all existing Liberty Township businesses in the 747 Corridor.
- Objective: Encourage community-oriented events, holiday-themed activities and the like at the proposed community gathering spots in Objectives 1-3.
 - Task: Engage the Liberty Township events volunteers to create programming at the town centers and community gathering spots.
 - Task: Identify ways to increase financial and in-kind support from local businesses for community-oriented events.
 - Task: Continue to utilize the West Chester/Liberty Community Foundation to allow local businesses to support community-oriented events at the public gathering spots identified.
- Goal #3: Reinforce the Liberty Township brand and the community’s strengths in order to build community pride for Township businesses and residents.**
 - Objective: Leverage the Liberty Way Interchange proposed developments to improve our identity regionally and take the branding of Liberty Township to the next level.
 - Task: Encourage the word “Liberty” be used in the name of proposed



- developments of regional importance (ie: Children's Hospital Liberty Campus, Liberty Center).
- Task: Develop plans for entry node landscaping enhancements and improvements at I-75 & Liberty Way and Cin-Day & Liberty Way.
- Task: Continue to make landscaping gateway improvements at Cin-Day / SR 747 @ SR 129.
- Objective: Continue to work with the Post Office to address the zip code confusion in Liberty Township and provide better access to post office services in the community.
- Task: Consolidate the number of zip codes and increase the usability of Liberty Township as city name when using zip codes.
- Task: Specifically target Liberty Township businesses to use Liberty Township, OH with pride as opposed to identifying themselves with the zip code defaults of Hamilton, Middletown and West Chester.
- Task: Encourage the use and adoption of Liberty Township, OH by all businesses (includes Liberty Center) & residents within the 45069 zip code.
- Objective: Maximize community branding wherever and whenever possible.
- Task: Develop plans for additional landscaping, signage, entry node enhancements, etc. to continue to implement community branding throughout the Township.
- Task: Utilize parks and public gathering spaces to communicate branding.
- Task: Get Liberty Township name on water towers in the Township.
- Task: Work with Visitor's Bureau to increase directional signage to Liberty Township attractions.
- Task: Work with ODOT to get Liberty Township name on all Interstates at borders and exit ramps (small green signs) along I-75 and SR 129.
- Task: Identify funding strategies to implement community branding like ODOT's gateway enhancement funds and OKI's transportation enhancement funds.
- Task: Investigate the option of using social media to increase the Township's identity and communicate its attributes.
- Objective: Work with West Chester Township on interchange landscaping at Liberty Way.
- Task: Explore public-private partnership between Townships, developers and businesses to designate funds for Liberty Way beautification.
- Objective: Enhance community branding through architectural standards and high aesthetic character
- Task: Continue to adhere to the overlay districts developed for the Central Business District, Downtown Bethany, etc.
- Task: Create a plan and development standards which promote the re-development of Maustown.
- Task: Maintain the rural character of the community by implementing different standards as it relates to setbacks and development between the Central Business District and SR 747.
- Task: Build on the momentum of Carriage Hill being named the host for Homearama 2013 and 2014 and promote Liberty Township as a great community in Greater Cincinnati for residents and businesses and market the area's



quality of life assets, aesthetic character, history and location.

Objective: Be cognizant of the factors that go into community rankings like the Cincy Magazine “Ranking the Burbs” and encourage addressing and supporting the quality of life factors that are important to attracting businesses and residents to the area in order to increase Liberty Township’s scores on these rankings.

Task: Continue to address safety issues as they arise and promote Liberty Township as a safe community with low crime rates.

Task: Continue to support the Lakota Local School District and help connect residents and businesses to appropriate school personnel to get the facts related to school issues (state funding formula, upcoming levies, etc).

Task: Continue to support well-planned neighborhood development, the use of green space, sidewalks and trails within neighborhoods in order to maintain the level of quality currently in Liberty Township’s housing stock and neighborhoods.

Task: Continue to realize the role property taxes have on the community and home selection process and continue to educate residents and businesses on the current tax structure and the need for commercial development in the community to help off-set residential tax burden.

Goal #4: Market the four commercial development corridors and the special attributes of each corridor.

Objective: Utilize the Vision Plan process to re-examine the land use classifications in each

corridor and determine best land use moving forward.

Task: Form a committee to review the Zoning Code to revisit overlay districts, use classifications, and zoning policies in commercial development corridors.

Task: Evaluate updates to the Zoning Code to reduce and/or remove buffer requirements for new commercial development proposed adjacent to existing residential that is planned for future commercial development.

Task: Create a series of four marketing one-pagers to illustrate the corridors and their attributes as well as the businesses currently operating in the area.

Objective: Market the Central Business District (Cincinnati-Dayton Road, I-75, Liberty Way and Cox Road) as a prime location for a Fortune 500 or 100 Headquarters operation.

Task: Develop Class A Office space at Liberty Way, both on west and east sides of the Interchange.

Task: Attract a Fortune 500 or 100 Headquarters operation to Liberty Township.

Task: Create an amenity rich district inclusive of a mixed use town center to support the needs of a Fortune 500/100 operation.

Task: Encourage the development of Cox Road to the north in order to open up additional acreage for commercial growth in this corridor.

Task: Adhere to high aesthetic character and architectural guidelines in the CBD.

Task: Promote high quality housing throughout the community to attract corporate headquarters.



Task: Get infrastructure and zoning in place to support the planned commercial development.

Objective: Identify a sustainable mixture of uses for the State Route 747 Corridor (SR 747 from SR 129 to Route 4) and market the corridor accordingly.

Task: Formulate a development plan for Maustown along SR 747 similar to what was created for Downtown Bethany.

Task: Support and encourage the development of the master-planned community Carriage Hill.

Task: Support the SR 747 widening.

Task: Consult with property owners and potential developers regarding the redevelopment of large properties in the corridor.

Task: Promote planned mixed-use and commercial development for the remaining commercial property as designated on the Land Use Plan.

Task: Get infrastructure and zoning in place to support the planned commercial development.

Objective: Market the State Route 4 Corridor as a destination for a mixture of light industrial, manufacturing, service, and retail businesses.

Task: Encourage the rezoning of property consistent with the Land Use Plan.

Task: –Work with property owners and potential developers regarding the redevelopment of mobile home communities and Elks Golf Course.

Task: Market vacant and available property.

Task: Get infrastructure and zoning in place to support the planned commercial development.

Objective: Market the Future Millikin Center (Cincinnati-Dayton Road from Princeton north to Kyles Station) as a future

commercial development corridor for office/limited industrial.

Task: Encourage the development of Cox Road to the north in order to open up additional acreage for commercial growth in this corridor.

Task: Work with property owners and encourage rezoning property consistent with the Land Use Plan.

Task: Explore routes for infrastructure/utility improvements.

Task: Make the Millikin Road Interchange the highest priority for Future Millikin Center to open up the land for commercial development.

Task: Get infrastructure and zoning in place to support the planned commercial development.

Task: Create a vision plan to market and illustrate the vision for Millikin Center.

Goal #5: Develop, plan and encourage sufficient commercial, industrial, research park, retail, service and office development in Liberty Township to help offset the tax base and increase employment opportunity in the Township.

Objective: Expand the amount of commercially-zoned land in Liberty Township to provide more development ready options for businesses looking to locate here.

Task: Work with property owners and encourage rezoning of property consistent with the Land Use Plan.

Task: Market available land identified for future commercial development.

Task: Be sensitive to adjacent residential uses by providing proper buffer and transition type uses that create a separation and/ or less intense use between proposed commercial or



- high intensity residential and existing residential uses.
- Objective: Be proactive in providing infrastructure to support, attract and expand business.
- Task: Work with county and regional entities to identify commercial site “readiness” with regard to infrastructure in order to develop plans and/or prioritize projects accordingly (ie: Duke Energy Site Readiness program, routine communication with Butler County Water & Sewer, etc).
- Task: Promote sustainable development within the JEDD and consider expansion of the JEDD boundaries or the creation of additional JEDD district(s) in order to create funding for infrastructure to spur additional economic development.
- Task: Proactively encourage the Millikin Interchange project – this is the highest priority infrastructure project for economic development in order to improve access to properties along I-75.
- Task: Proactively encourage the Cox Road north extension which is important to developing the east side of the Liberty Way Interchange in the short-term and will be critical to gaining consensus approval necessary for the Millikin Road Interchange project in the long-term.
- Objective: Educate residents on the need for commercial development to help support taxes and other community costs.
- Task: Work with property owners of land planned for commercial development to share the long-term vision for the Township and encourage open dialogue about their future plans.
- Task: Complete the cost of community services analysis and use as a tool to evaluate the fiscal impact of proposed developments on community services and educate residents on their potential impact.
- Task: Utilize the Township website and evaluate the use of social media to make information available to the public regarding cost of community services and the impacts of development on these costs.
- Objective: Maximize the long-term vision of high-quality development (natural building materials, modest signage, increased landscaping, etc.).
- Task: Analyze the long-term fiscal impact of residential and commercial development being proposed to better understand the direct and indirect effects on the Township’s overall cost of community services to support these proposed development.
- Task: Review the Zoning Code to ensure the Township’s vision of high aesthetic character is encouraged and achieved.
- Task: Encourage sustainable development throughout the Township recognizing many areas are a “blank slate” and we have one chance to “do it right.”
- Objective: Promote and encourage high quality residential development, trails/bike paths connectivity, parks and rec development and the like recognizing that strong quality of life assets help communities attract sustainable economic development.
- Task: Identify more specifically the quality of life assets sought by businesses and explore what kind of economic impact these assets can have.



Task: Look for ways to quantify what good connectivity does for a community from an economic development perspective – economic benefit to having good trail system, parks, etc.

Task: Identify if cost of community services study can evaluate the long-term sustainability of the community by evaluating property values, etc.

Goal #6: To ensure that this chapter remains current with the fast-changing development landscape, in two years (2016 – 2017) the Economic Development Committee will review and update this chapter as necessary



V: Parks, Recreation, and Trails

5.1 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

On April 7, 2009, the Liberty Township Board of Trustees adopted the Liberty Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The plan was coordinated and drafted by Brandstetter Carroll, Inc. working with a dedicated Parks and Recreation Plan Steering Committee. Public input was sought during the planning process through an extensive household survey and three public open house meetings.

Given that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been recently completed, it was determined that the topic did not require further study at this time. Therefore, the entirety of the Liberty Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan shall be incorporated into this Comprehensive Vision Plan, as if fully re-written herein. All of the goals and objectives stated within the Parks and Recreation Master Plan shall be considered equal to the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Vision Plan.

5.2 Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Plan

The Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Plan (Trails Plan) was drafted under the guidance of a subcommittee and then presented to the Vision Plan Steering Committee and also at public open house meetings for comment.

5.2.1 Existing Conditions

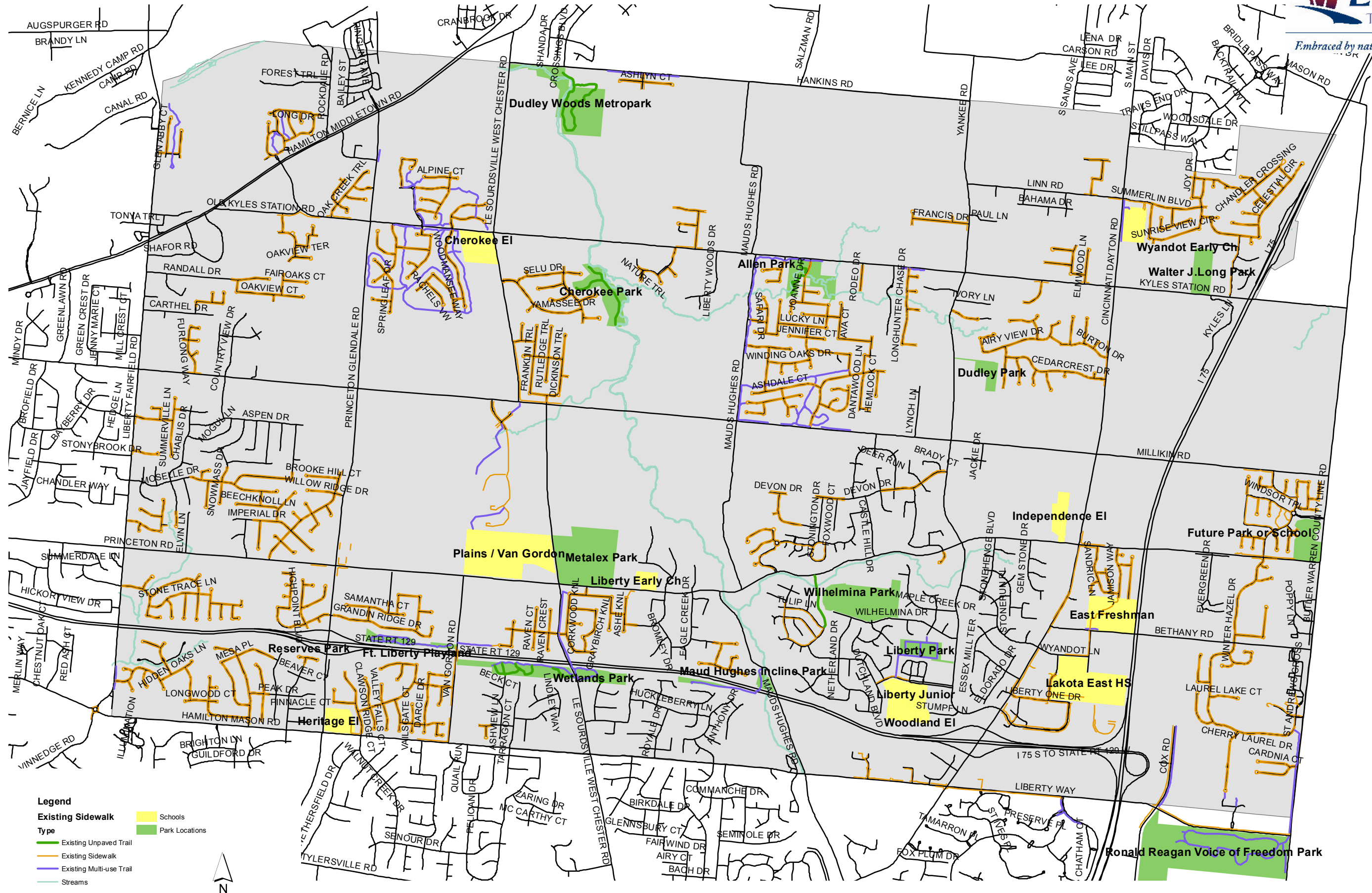
The Existing Trail and Sidewalk Map (Map 3) shows the locations of existing sidewalk and both paved and unpaved trail locations. The map indicates the location of schools and parks, which are popular destinations for pedestrians, trail users, and cyclists.

The map clearly shows that the majority of existing sidewalk infrastructure is located within subdivision developments. There are few sidewalks along the main roads of the Township, which causes the sidewalk systems within the subdivisions to be isolated because they generally do not connect beyond the subdivision. Furthermore, sidewalk has not always been a requirement of development in Liberty Township and several older subdivisions and commercial developments do not include sidewalk. The network of sidewalk and trail in Liberty Township is viewed as a puzzle where the Township fills in pieces of that puzzle as funding or opportunities present themselves.

The trails initiatives in Liberty Township began in the late 1990's with the preparation and adoption of the first Hike / Bike Master Plan. The Township participated in the regional Miami2Miami Trail initiative, and the plans were incorporated into the update of the Hike /Bike Master Plan in 2006. The Butler County Engineer's Office incorporated the Township's Hike / Bike Master Plan into the most recent County Thoroughfare Plan.

Several of the Township's parks feature multi-use trails, most of which are paved, but some are unpaved or surfaced with wood chips. The parks in or adjacent to the Township that feature trails are:

- Dudley Woods Metropark (not paved)
- Cherokee Park (not paved)
- Fort Liberty Playland (paved)
- Reserves Park (paved)
- Wetlands Park (both paved and chipped)
- Incline Park (paved)
- Allen Park (paved)
- Dudley Park (not paved)
- Liberty Park (paved)
- Voice of America Metropark (paved).



Map 3: Trails Plan - Existing Trail and Sidewalk



Some subdivisions also provide paved trails as an amenity within the dedicated open space.

Subdivisions which include trails are:

- Hawthorne Hills
- Panther Run
- Knolls of Liberty
- Windsor Estates
- Aspen Trails
- Falling Water
- Creekside Meadows
- Carriage Hill
- Longhunter Chase
- Elk Run
- Reserve at Elk's Point.

Similar to the sidewalk infrastructure, multi-use trails in Liberty Township in some cases, feature gaps and / or can be described as isolated systems that do not connect neighborhoods with other nearby parks, schools, or commercial centers.

Efforts to identify and bridge gaps in the Township's sidewalk and trail infrastructure have been ongoing and continual. Noted recent connections are:

- Sidewalk and paved trail from the end of Liberty Farms Drive to Fort Liberty Playland
- Paved trail along LeSourdsville West Chester Road near the intersection at Princeton Road with a connection into Knolls of Liberty subdivision to Wetlands Park
- Sidewalk connection along Dutchland Parkway between Dutchland Blvd. and Woodland Elementary and Liberty Junior Schools
- Sidewalk connection between Sandric Lane and existing sidewalk at Walgreens on Cincinnati-Dayton Road
- Sidewalk connection along Cincinnati-Dayton Road from Cimmon Drive to the Liberty Plaza shopping center and a crosswalk at Liberty One Drive.
- Additionally, Lakota Local Schools have installed sidewalk connections through the Safe Routes to School Program connecting

Fallingwater, Creekside Meadows, and Aspen Trails subdivisions with Cherokee Elementary, benefiting from pedestrian crossings included in the Kyles Station Road roundabout project, and connecting the sidewalk on Walnut Creek Drive with Heritage Elementary.

There are also sidewalk and trail connections which are due to be completed in the next couple of years.

These projects include:

- Sections of sidewalk along Dutchland Parkway and Yankee Road which includes crosswalks at the intersection of Yankee Road with Cincinnati-Dayton Road, which is funded by a grant and some of the work being done in conjunction with an intersection improvement project.
- Sidewalk along the west side of Yankee Road from Wyandot Lane to Dutchland Parkway.
- Crosswalk to connect Sidewalk at the Trails of Liberty Subdivision to the Carriage Hill Subdivision.
- Sidewalk along the east side of Van Gordon Road from the SR 129 overpass to Princeton Road.
- A paved multi-use path connection from the Windsor Estates Subdivision to Dudley Woods Metropark.

These projects show that much of the work connecting the Township's fragmented sidewalk and trail network has been, and will continue to be accomplished through targeted small projects, often piggy-backed onto other roadway projects. This reality highlights the importance of communication between the Butler County Engineer's Office and the Township when roadway improvements are being planned, so that opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can be considered.



Section V: Parks Recreation and Trails

5.2.2 Needs Assessment

The Liberty Township Trails Plan recognizes and addresses four distinct user groups, which are: Bicyclists, Residents, Schools, and Businesses. While these distinct groups have their own perspective related to bicycle, sidewalk, and trail infrastructure in the Township, there are also many overlapping interests which are discussed below:

Bicyclists – While anyone who rides a bicycle is technically a bicyclist, the term is being more narrowly defined in this plan as anyone who rides a bicycle throughout the Township on public roads for the purpose of commuting from place to place or for recreation and/or exercise. The main interest of this group is a roadway network that is safe and conducive to bicycle travel for reasonably skilled riders.

Residents – As discussed in Chapter 2, Liberty Township's demographics favor families with children. As part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a survey of Township households was conducted. Respondents ranked walking and hiking trails as the highest need among various recreation facilities, with 85% reporting a need for trails. Paved multi-use trails are versatile community amenities which accommodate walkers, joggers, bike riders of any skill and age level, and much more. These trails are generally separated from roadways and vehicular traffic, offering a wider and safer path than sidewalks or riding bicycles on the roadways.

Schools – Lakota Local Schools has changed its policy regarding students walking or biking to school and does not currently provide bus service to high school students and other students who live within a certain distance of the school they attend. As a result of this shift, many more students have a need or desire to walk or ride bicycles to school. Lakota Local Schools has recognized that this demand requires, among other things, better and safer pedestrian connectivity surrounding their schools.

Businesses – The walkability of a community has been shown to benefit property values, business growth and retention, and retail sales. A study by the Urban Land Institute¹ compared the property values of houses in four newly developed, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with similar houses in nearby neighborhoods. The study reported that homebuyers were willing to pay \$20,000 more for a house in a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. A case study of sidewalk and streetscape improvements in the town center of Lodi, California² showed that the improvements led to a drop in the commercial vacancy rate from 18% to 6% and a 30% increase in retail sales. A survey by Accent Marketing & Research³ in the U.K. found that visitors who arrived on foot to downtown shopping districts spent on average 43% more than those who arrived by car. These studies suggest that improvements in pedestrian connectivity and infrastructure in the Township can benefit the local business community.

5.2.3 Trails Plan Vision Statement

The Liberty Township Trails Plan seeks to improve quality of life and encourage pride in the community by establishing a network of safe paths and sidewalks to connect subdivisions, parks, businesses, schools, and other community destinations. These paths and sidewalks will be designed to meet the needs of a variety of users with the goal of increasing the accessibility of all pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the Township and adjacent communities.

¹ *Valuing The New Urbanism, The Impact of the New Urbanism on Prices of Single Family Homes*, Mark J. Eppli and Charles C. Tu, 1999, Urban Land Institute.

² *The Economic Benefits of Walkable Communities*, 2001, the Local Government Commission, www.lgc.org

³ *Economic Value of Walkability*, Todd A. Litman, 2011, Victoria Transport Policy Institute.



5.2.4 Trails Plan Maps

The improvements called for in the Trails Plan are depicted in two maps: Map 4: Bicycle and Trail Plan, and Map 5: Trail and Sidewalk Plan. The improvements indicated in these maps should not rule out other bicycle, pedestrian, or trail infrastructure in Liberty Township, nor shall the lack of a proposed improvement indicated in an area be grounds to absolve a proposed development of the requirement to provide pedestrian infrastructure called for by the Liberty Township Zoning Resolution or the Butler County Subdivision Regulations.

Map 4: Bicycle and Trail Plan

This Map depicts the proposed Multi-use Path connections and crosswalk improvements needed to further connect and complete the trail network in Liberty Township. The map also shows the proposed network of signed bikeways and connections through neighborhoods.

The area within the rectangle with the note “Also Refer to Downtown Bethany Vision Plan” was studied as part of this plan. The Downtown Bethany Vision Plan includes proposed pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. These infrastructure elements shall be considered in addition to the proposed improvements called for in this Trails Plan.

The map shows the proposed route of the Miami2Miami Trail through Liberty Township. Please refer below for more information about the Miami2Miami Trail.

The map shows Proposed Bicycle Facilities:

Proposed Signed Bikeway – Signed Bikeways are road segments which are to be marked indicating a bikeway using “Share the Road” signage and/or pavement markings, with the purpose of heightening motorist’s awareness of the presence of cyclists and increasing safety.

Future Bikeway (Improvement Needed) – Future Bikeways are road segments that require physical improvements before they can be signed as a bikeway. These road segments may have narrow lanes, narrow shoulders, poor sight distance due to curves or dips, high traffic volumes, and/or high traffic speeds.

Proposed Signed Neighborhood Connection – Signed Neighborhood Connections are routes through neighborhood streets that are to be signed. These routes provide connectivity between different Signed Bikeway segments or connections to parks, schools, and commercial centers.

Future Signed Neighborhood Connection – Future Signed Neighborhood Connections are routes through neighborhood streets that do not currently provide a connection between Signed Bikeway segments, but are projected to do so in the future. These routes will only be signed once they complete a connection.

Map 5: Trail and Sidewalk Plan

This Map depicts the proposed Multi-use Path connections and crosswalk improvements needed to further connect and complete the trail network in Liberty Township. The map also shows the proposed network of sidewalks to provide pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and parks, schools, and commercial centers.

The area within the rectangle with the note “Also Refer to Downtown Bethany Vision Plan” was studied as part of this plan. The Downtown Bethany Vision Plan includes proposed pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. These infrastructure elements shall be considered in addition to the proposed improvements called for in this Trails Plan.

The map indicates large areas of the Township with green, yellow, and red buffers. These buffers cover areas within ½ mile of parks (green), schools (yellow), and areas of the Township currently



Section V: Parks Recreation and Trails

developed, or planned for future commercial development (red). These buffers are meant to indicate areas where pedestrian trips are more likely due to the close proximity to community destinations. Pedestrian connections within these buffers will have a more significant effect on walkability and should be areas of particular focus for planned pedestrian infrastructure.

Miami2Miami Trail Plan

The Miami2Miami Connection is a proposed 84-mile trail system made up of a combination of 10-foot wide separate trails, 5-foot wide bike lanes on roadways, and signed shared roadways to connect the Great Miami River Trail (existing and proposed) with the existing Little Miami Scenic Trail. 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.

The planned route of the Miami2Miami Connection through Liberty Township follows a network of over-the-road routes along main roads and through subdivisions, as well as using existing and proposed trail segments. The planned route also traverses five mid-block crossings, including crossing SR 747 at Grandin Ridge Drive. Given that the Miami2Miami Connection seeks to accommodate less experienced and child bicyclists while minimizing the switching from separate path to bike lane and shared roadway conditions⁴, thought was given to better achieving these objectives through this Trails Plan update. While the original Miami2Miami Connection route through Liberty Township is being left intact, this plan offers some alternate routes that seem to better

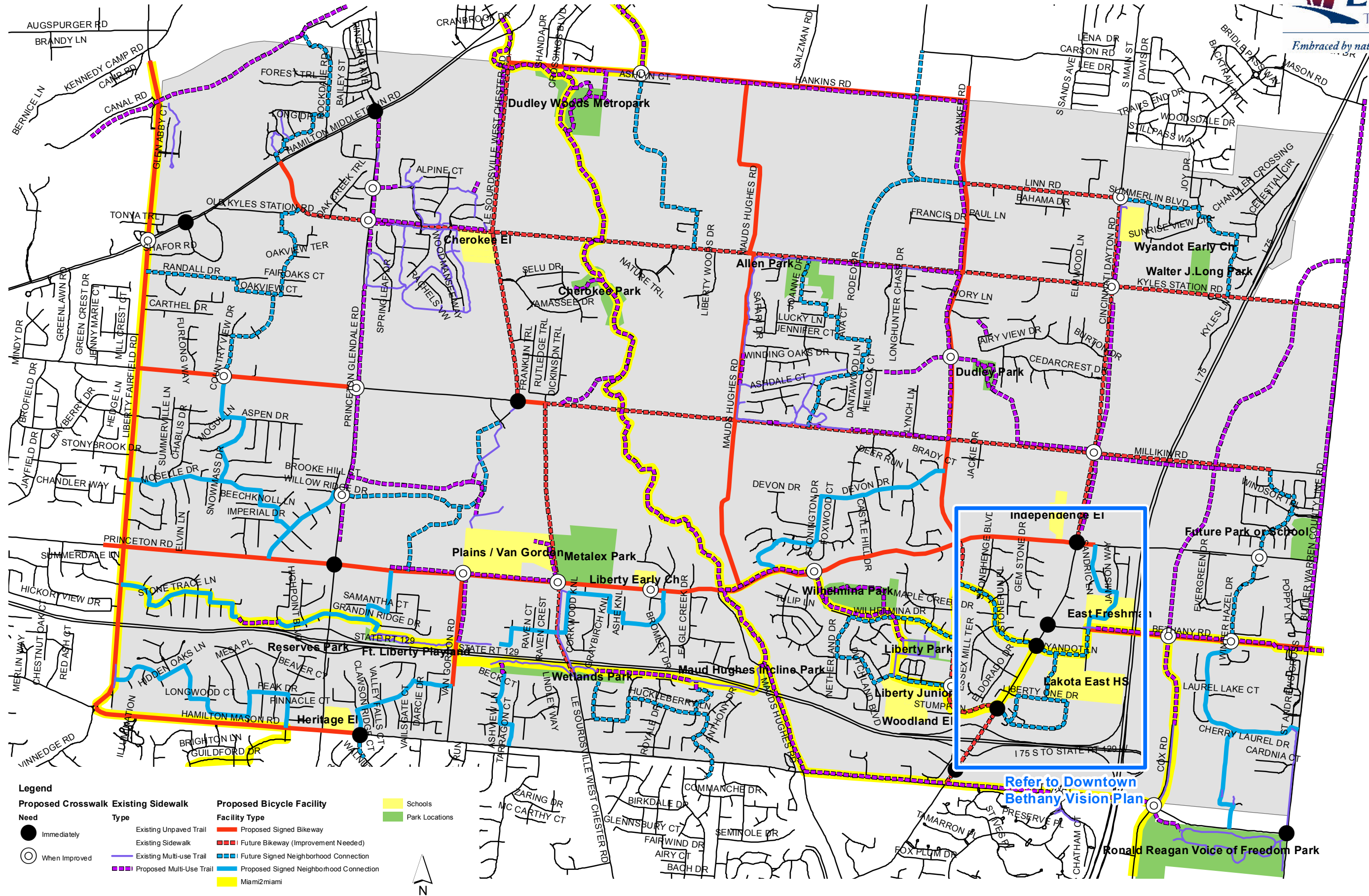
fulfil the stated objectives of the Miami2Miami Connection plan.

The largest of the proposed alternative routes to the Miami2Miami Trail through Liberty Township follows along Gregory Creek, and is often referred to as the proposed Gregory Creek Trail. The previous Liberty Township Trails Plan, adopted in 2006, proposed that the Gregory Creek Trail be a hike / equestrian trail. Due to the trail's central location in the Township and access via three Township Parks, a paved trail would allow it to be more useful to a wider range of residents and be a more prominent centerpiece of the Township's trail system. The route follows the floodplain and the three existing Township Parks could serve as trail heads with parking and bathroom facilities. At the northwest segment of the Gregory Creek Trail, two optional routes are shown for connecting into the Great Miami River Trail. Conversely, in the southeast portion of the Township, two optional routes are indicated for arriving at the proposed trail along Bethany Road, east of I-75. From this point the Miami2Miami Trail will travel east through the City of Mason to its eventual connection to the Little Miami Scenic Trail.

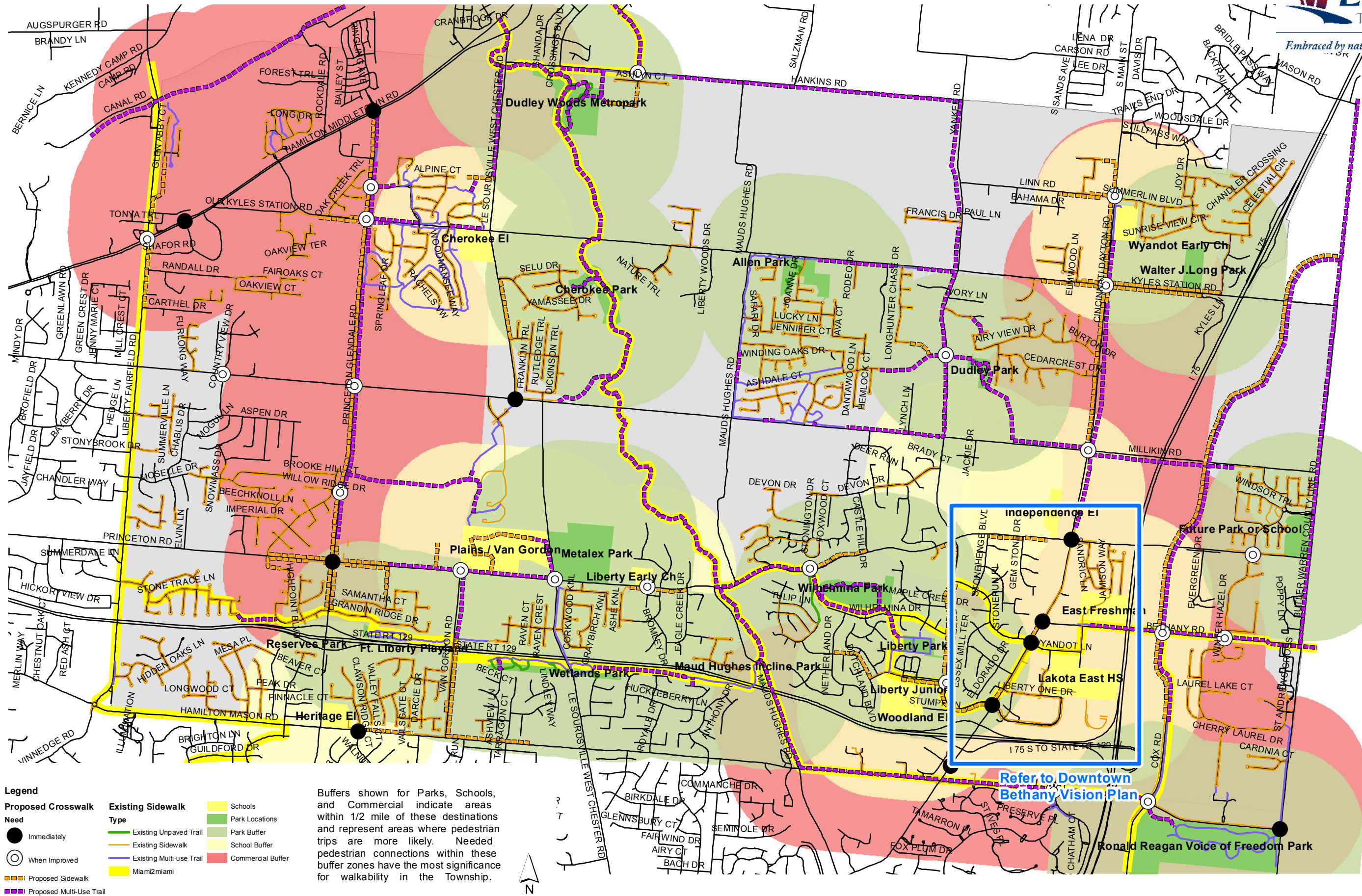
Infrastructure Design

The design and construction of bicycle, pedestrian, and trail improvements shall comply with the standards and guidelines of the Liberty Township Zoning Resolution, Butler County Subdivision Regulations, and any other applicable requirement. Multi-use trail segments that are through connections – which mean that they are segments that are integral to a wider proposed trail system, not local within the proposed development – shall be at least ten (10) feet wide. For any questions over proper trail design and clearances, the most recent edition of AASHTO design guide shall be consulted.

⁴ Miami2Miami Connection Feasibility Study, 2002, Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon, Inc. and Human Nature, Inc.



Map 4: Trails Plan - Bicycle and Trail Plan



Map 5: Trails Plan - Trail and Sidewalk Plan



5.2.5 Trails Plan Goals and Objectives

The following Goals and Objectives related to the Liberty Township Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Plan were prepared by the Trails Plan Steering Committee. These Goals and Objectives were presented to the Comprehensive Vision Plan Steering Committee for inclusion in this document, and for comment at a public open house. These goals and objectives are not listed in any particular order of priority.

Overall Goals

1. Promote awareness of Liberty Township Trails and Bike Routes through maps, flyers, existing Township events, and trail signage.
 - a. Use these same avenues to educate regarding trail safety and etiquette.
2. Get applicable sidewalk, trail, and bike route projects included in the Butler County Thoroughfare Plan, CKI, and ODOT plans.
 - a. Monitor Butler County Engineer's CIP for projects to partner with to accomplish proposed improvements.
3. Coordinate trail efforts with neighboring communities.
 - a. Meet with neighboring communities regarding their trail efforts on a regular basis.
4. Continue to work with and support Lakota Schools in their Safe Routes To School efforts.
5. Work with community groups (Boy / Girl Scouts, HOAs, etc.) to partner with for the implementation of components of the Trails Plan.

Bicycle Goals

1. Obtain recognition as a Bicycle Friendly Community from the League of American Bicyclists
Objective: Submit application for Bicycle Friendly Community designation for review.

2. Develop objective criteria to determine which road segments can currently be a signed bikeway, and which segments require improvements before they can be signed.
3. Sign proposed bike routes.
Objective: Create a line item in yearly CIP for new signs / pavement markings.
4. Include directional signage for parks and attractions.
5. Sign bike route connections through neighborhoods.
6. Add bicycle racks at Township facilities, and encourage local businesses and institutions to do the same.

Pedestrian Goals

1. Make sidewalk connections between subdivisions and to schools and commercial development.
2. Prioritize closing gaps in the existing sidewalk network along main thoroughfares and providing sidewalks where pedestrians currently walk with no sidewalk.
3. Start at destinations (commercial, schools, parks, etc.) and spider out in making sidewalk connection priorities based on a ½ mile walking radius.
4. Whenever possible, promote pedestrian improvements in tandem with planned roadway improvements to minimize cost and disruption.
Objective: Coordinate with BCEO on proposed roadway improvement projects to ensure that planned sidewalk, trail, or bicycle facilities are included in the project.
Objective: Monitor the BCEO's CIP for upcoming projects to include planned pedestrian facilities.
5. Provide for safe pedestrian crosswalks at designated intersections on the plan maps.



Section V: Parks Recreation and Trails

6. Require that new developments provide sidewalk and trail segments in accordance with this plan, along with the Township Zoning Resolution and Butler County Subdivision Regulations.
Objective: Review during development pre-application meetings.

Objective: Conduct a feasibility study of high priority projects. If found infeasible and with no alternatives, consider moving down the list or removing from the plan.

Trails Goals

1. Focus on connections between subdivisions and connecting subdivisions to parks.
Objective: Encourage the construction of trail segments when possible as part of proposed development or roadway projects where indicated in the Trails Plan.
Objective: Utilize ODNR or other grant programs to acquire right-of-way.
Objective: Promote donated right-of-way as a local match to leverage for construction grants.
Objective: Review during development pre-application meetings.
Objective: Identify gaps in existing infrastructure.
2. Establish a desired route among the options shown for the Miami2Miami Trail that utilizes a separate path trail to the extent possible.
Objective: Continue to work with Trails Committee and adjacent communities to identify a preferred route.
3. Establish a Trail along Gregory Creek between Incline Park and connecting to the Great Miami Trail. The Gregory Creek Trail (or part of it) should be looked at as a possible segment of the Miami2Miami Trail.
Objective: Review as properties develop along the Gregory Creek Corridor.
4. Identify planned trail segments on the current plan which are infeasible, remove them and look for alternative routes if necessary.

5.3 Parks, Recreation, and Trails Goals

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

Goal #1: The goals, objectives, and policies outlined in the Liberty Township Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Liberty Township Trails Plan, and Downtown Bethany Vision Plan are incorporated in this Comprehensive Vision Plan as if fully re-written herein.

Goal #2: Provide multi-use paths for recreation within and between neighborhoods. Also use paths to link neighborhoods with parks and schools.

Objective: Adopt a Trails Plan which plans out a network of sidewalk, trail, and bikeways.

Objective: Find ways to finance the construction and maintenance of trail segments through matching grants, private fundraising, public / private, or other in-kind donations.

Objective: Review all development proposals to ensure that required improvements are included per adopted plans or the Zoning Resolution.

Goal #3: Develop the Gregory Creek floodplain as a natural corridor, accessible through a trail and Township parks along the creek. The corridor would be connected



to adjacent neighborhoods through trail as well.

Objective: Continue to work with property owners along the creek to communicate the vision for Gregory Creek, listen to their ideas, and address their concerns.

Task: Organize informal discussions with property owners.

Objective: Acquire right-of way / easements for the trail as opportunities arise.

Objective: Require the installation of trail segments as part of development along the creek corridor.

Task: Identify during development review.

Objective: Work with the Miami Conservancy, Metroparks of Butler County, BCEO and adjacent communities.

Goal #4: Expand upon annual community events.

Objective: Find more reliable and ongoing sponsorship and effective organizing beyond Township staff.

Objective: While still retaining events tailored to families, seek to add events or components to events which attract young adults and empty nesters.

Task: Seek input from residents to identify other activities.

Goal #5: Find funding sources for development and maintenance of park properties.

Objective: Market the fund at Community Foundation for parks development to be able to accept donations and contributions.

Objective: Leverage local funds and donations through use of grant programs.

Objective: Leverage the efforts of volunteers.

Goal #6: Encourage the use of Lakota Schools' Facilities in off-hours to make them true community amenities.

Objective: Work with Lakota School's staff to identify opportunities.

Goal #7: Support the efforts of larger regional trail networks such as the Great Miami River Trail and the Miami2Miami Trail.



VI: Transportation

Transportation is a key component affecting viable land uses, economic development, quality of life, and even the delivery of emergency services. This chapter discusses the Township’s roadway network and access, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, rail, and public transportation service.

6.1 Roadway Network

The roadway network is by far the most used, and therefore, most important piece of transportation infrastructure in Liberty Township. 2011 Census figures estimate that 95% of workers who reside in Liberty Township commute to work, with the remaining 5% working from home (Fig 25). Additionally, nearly all of these trips were by car, with only 3% of workers commuting by bus, bicycle, or walking.

6.1.1 Regional Access

Liberty Township has direct access to I-75, SR 129, SR 747, and to SR 4, providing easy access to

| Means of Commuting | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------|------------|
| Total Workers | 17,357 | 100% |
| Car, Truck, or Van | 15,999 | 92% |
| Drove alone | 15,157 | 87% |
| Carpooled | 842 | 5% |
| Public Transportation | 155 | 1% |
| Motorcycle | 17 | 0% |
| Bicycle | 107 | 1% |
| Walking | 104 | 1% |
| Other | 137 | 1% |
| Work at Home | 838 | 5% |

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Fig. 25. Means of Commuting to Work for Liberty Township Residents.

employment centers in Cincinnati, Dayton, Middletown, Mason, and Hamilton. Census estimates show half of Liberty Township residents work outside of Butler County and the average travel time to work is over 25 minutes. Access to regional highways is essential for many Township residents. In 2009, this access was improved with the opening of the Liberty Way interchange.

Regional access is also important for business. Whether it is a need to ship product, convenient access for customers, travel to cities within the region, or use airports to connect outside the region or even internationally, Liberty Township has the access businesses desire. There are currently 600 acres of land planned for future commercial and professional office development immediately adjacent to the Liberty Way interchange. The proposed Liberty Center development containing up to 2.4 million square feet of retail, office, hotel, entertainment, and residential development at full-build will be built along Liberty Way just west of the interchange. The Liberty Center development and future development is dependent on the access provided by the Liberty Way Interchange.

This plan identifies the Liberty Township Trustees priority to pursue an interchange on I-75 at Millikin Road as a key goal to further enhance the Township’s regional access, and opening up the I-75 corridor in the northern half of the Township for future commercial development.

6.1.2 Roadway Maintenance

Maintenance of 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 the writing of this plan, Liberty Township maintains 136 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
- Van Gordon Road
- Kyles Station Road
- Millikin Road
- Princeton Road
- Bethany Road
- Hamilton-Mason Road
- Liberty Way
- Yankee Road
- Hankins Road
- Cox Road

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

- Linn Road
- Kyles Station Road
- Millikin Road
- Princeton Road
- Hamilton-Mason Road
- 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, and SR 4.

The Township comprehensively assesses the condition and need for roadway maintenance on an annual basis and plans ahead to budget larger roadway maintenance projects. Over the next decade, more subdivision streets will reach the age where more extensive maintenance is needed. As the community ages, roadway maintenance is expected to become a bigger need in the coming decades. The Township is being proactive in addressing this concern and has already begun studying the timing of this expected need for roadway maintenance. The table in Fig. 26 shows

| Roadway Age | Mileage | Percent |
|-------------|---------|---------|
| 0-5 years | 36.6 | 27% |
| 5-10 years | 41.1 | 30% |
| 10-15 years | 35.3 | 26% |
| 15-20 years | 21.3 | 16% |
| 20 years + | 5 | 4% |
| Total | 136.2 | 100% |

Fig. 26. Time since Township maintained roadways were built or last resurfaced

the mileage of Township maintained roadway in different age categories.

The Township road maintenance is funded by several revenue sources. The Ohio Revised Code specifically stipulates how monies from each source can be used. The 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.

6.1.3 Roadway Improvements

Liberty Township coordinates with the Butler County Engineer's Office (BCEO) and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) regarding development proposals and roadway improvements. Development can have an impact on the roadway network. A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) is often performed to analyze these impacts and may propose improvements to mitigate the expected impacts. The BCEO will decide if a TIS is necessary, and determines required improvements based on the results of the study. ODOT may also review the study if the project impacts I-75, SR 129, SR 4, or SR 747. The developer is responsible for the improvements called for in the TIS.



Section VI: Transportation

The Butler County Thoroughfare Plan shall be referred to when reviewing a development plan to ensure that development will not conflict with anticipated future roadway improvements. The development review process is also used to implement the County's Access Management Plan. The Access Management Plan establishes defined points or spacing of driveway access locations along roadways. By controlling the number and spacing of driveways along roads, the ability of the roadway to carry traffic is preserved. Access Management also limits the potential turning conflicts for all modes of traffic, which reduces the potential for accidents. Access to multiple developments and businesses are accomplished through cross access easements.

Sometimes improvements to the system of roadways are not directly tied to a development proposal. These improvements may be required to handle more capacity, improve the safety of a roadway or intersection, or to upgrade a roadway to meet a current design standard. The Butler County Engineer's Office monitors traffic counts and crash data to identify needed roadway improvements. The Township also works with BCEO to address any observed traffic issues. The County Engineer's Office maintains a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to organize and rank the needed improvement projects. More significant projects are also listed in the County Thoroughfare Plan. The Ohio Kentucky and Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) maintains a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that identifies transportation improvement projects for each of its member counties.

Lists of improvement projects are also associated with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Residential Improvement Districts (RID) located in the Township. For reference, the projects listed in these documents are provided in the attached Consolidated List of Planned Transportation Projects. This list may be updated periodically in attempt to keep it relatively current. However, for the most current

information, please refer to the documents listed in this paragraph above.

In addition to the projects included in the attached list, the following projects have been identified by the Township as needed road improvements. The Township will work with BCEO and OKI to get these projects included in their plans as well.

- Hamilton-Mason Rd. at LeSourdsville WC Rd. – intersection improvement
- Millikin Road at I-75 – new highway interchange
- Mauds Hughes Rd. from the Railroad bridge to Princeton Rd. – roadway reclamation and resurfacing
- Hamilton-Mason Rd. at Van Gordon Rd. – grading and sight distance improvements

Liberty Township and the Butler County Engineer's Office work in conjunction to monitor and improve the system of roadways in the Township. It is imperative for the future benefit and growth of Liberty Township that this good working relationship continues. As mentioned earlier, the Ohio Department of Transportation plays a role in planning and improvements along SR 4, SR 747, SR 129, I-75, and all associated highway interchanges in the Township. Liberty Township will work closely with ODOT to achieve an interchange on I-75 at Millikin Road.

There are several ways roadway improvements can be funded, including: developer funded improvements, locally funded improvements, and improvements funded by grants. Developer funding of road improvements has already been discussed. Locally funded projects can be funded out of either the County or Township's capital improvement budget, or from funds generated from TIF, JEDD, or RID districts.

TIFs and RIDs are a funding mechanism used to capture the increase in property tax receipts due to development in a specific area. The increased tax



receipts are then committed to pay for infrastructure improvements which benefit that area. TIFs and RIDs can be a very useful funding tool to address specific infrastructure deficiencies that are hurdles to development. However, these financing methods capture increases in property tax receipts which would otherwise go to local governments and schools to provide services and diverts it into infrastructure improvements. Overuse of this funding method could leave a local government without adequate funding to provide increased police, fire, parks, schools, and maintenance services demanded by the new development.

Finally, most grant funding available for roadway improvement projects is administered through OKI. Projects are submitted and are scored based upon specific criteria. Top scoring projects are funded with the available funds. These grants typically require at least a 20% local contribution to the project cost.

6.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

While it has been shown that transportation in Liberty Township is very car-oriented, pedestrian and cycling modes of transportation should not be overlooked. Pedestrian and bicycle transportation offer many benefits to residents and the community over motor vehicles. They are less costly, offer exercise and health benefits, improved quality of life, are less polluting to the air, the required infrastructure is less costly and requires less physical space than roadways and parking lots. There are also many reasons why cars are the more practical option for the majority of trips that Liberty Township residents make, chief among these being the average travel time to work at 25 minutes. While not every trip can be made by walking or cycling (not even the majority), it is a goal put forth by the Vision Plan Steering Committee that pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should be provided to give residents the option to use these modes of travel for trips

where it is practical or desired. Future infrastructure improvements in Liberty Township should be evaluated for opportunities to provide safe accommodation for pedestrian and bicycle traffic in addition to motorized vehicles.

Specific areas of the Township where safe pedestrian infrastructure is needed are within a comfortable walking distance, generally a ½ mile, of schools, parks, churches, and commercial areas. Safe pedestrian connections are especially important around schools. An increase in children walking to school, along with increased traffic congestion in the vicinity of the schools with parent drop-offs and pick-ups require proper infrastructure to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Efforts to provide safe pedestrian access surrounding the schools are already underway, with Lakota Schools using the Safe Routes To School program to make infrastructure improvements.

Specific details of planned bicycle and pedestrian improvements are shown in Section 5.2 Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Plan.

6.3 Public Transportation

The Butler County Regional Transit Authority (BCRTA) is the only public transportation provider that operates within Liberty Township. BCRTA operates a regular bus service route between Hamilton and Middletown that travels SR 4, but does not make any stops within the Township. The service advertises that the route can deviate or make an unscheduled stop if a prior reservation is made. Additionally, BCRTA runs routes in a triangular formation between Oxford, Hamilton, and Middletown, and offers Dial-a-Ride service throughout Butler County. Customers must call ahead to make a reservation for the Dial-a-Ride. Service is limited to trips which begin and end in Butler County.



Through a contract with BCRTA, the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA), more commonly known as Cincinnati Metro, provides express bus service from the Meijer Park and Ride Lot on Tylersville Road to Downtown Cincinnati during A.M. and P.M. rush hour periods only. In conjunction with the construction of SR 129, a Park and Ride Lot was established on Yankee Road near the intersection with Cincinnati-Dayton Road. However, this Park and Ride lot has never been provided bus service.

Senior citizens and the economically disadvantaged are more likely to need public transportation. Also, the trend among young professionals is a preference for public transportation, along with walking and biking, over driving. A study by the United States Public Interest Research Group⁵ looked at the change in transportation habits of people age 16 – 34 from 2001 to 2009. The study found that vehicle miles traveled (driving) dropped 23% while passenger miles traveled on public transportation increased 40% in the same time period.

Increasing access to public transportation for Liberty Township residents will help meet the transportation needs for the Township’s residents who do not drive, while also providing an amenity which could help attract young professionals to reside in the Township.

6.4 Rail Infrastructure

The Township is bisected by the existing Norfolk Southern rail line. The Norfolk Southern main line through Butler County is the former Conrail Cincinnati Line (previously known as New York Central). It diverges from the New Castle line at Evendale and goes up through eastern Butler County

⁵ *Transportation and the New Generation: Why Young People are Driving Less and What it Means for Transportation Policy*, 2012, U.S. PRIG Education Fund & the Frontier Group

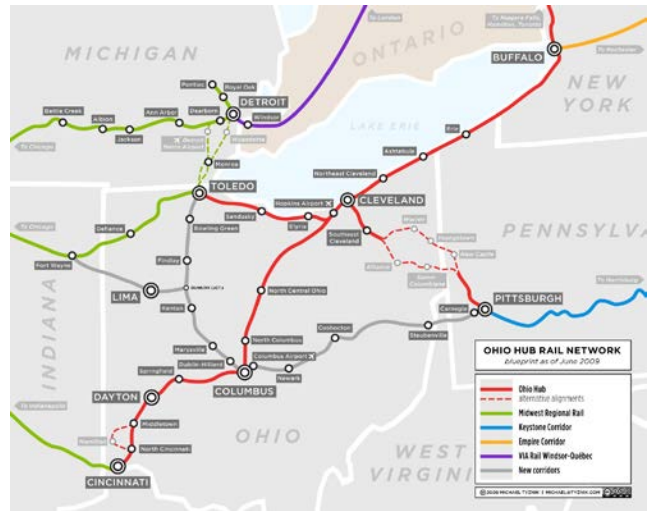


Fig. 27. The Ohio Hub Passenger Rail Plan.

(through Liberty Township) to Middletown and then on to Dayton and Columbus.

Norfolk Southern does not have an intermodal facility in Butler County at the present time. However, Norfolk Southern railroad operates major facilities for trucks and containers on flat cars in the Queensgate Yards area behind and north of the Cincinnati Union Terminal.

Recent changes in clearance requirements for bridges overtop of the rail line require the raising of the Mauds Hughes Bridge. Also, there is great cost and difficulty in expanding the “mouse hole” underpasses at Hamilton-Mason, Princeton, and Kyles Station Roads.

As early as 2004, the State of Ohio began planning for high speed passenger rail, in a plan called the Ohio Hub Rail Network (Fig. 27). The centerpiece and first phase of the Hub Plan was to be the 3C+D Corridor, a line that used primarily existing Norfolk Sothern and CSX lines to provide passenger service from Cincinnati through Dayton and Columbus to Cleveland. While the line would have traveled through Liberty Township, the nearest planned station was in Sharonville, with a planned future



station at Middletown. The project was cancelled indefinitely in 2010.

6.5 Transportation Goals and Objectives

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

Goal #1: Work towards a new interchange along I-75 at Millikin Road.

Objective: Coordinate master planning efforts with FHWA, ODOT, OKI, BCEO, adjacent Warren County communities and other similar organizations in order to regionally align interests and priorities.

Objective: Initiate the planning process between local governmental entities and begin to outline steps involved with bringing a new Millikin Interchange to Liberty Township.

Objective: Work with Butler County Water & Sewer to get adequate water and sewer infrastructure in place to support development.

Objective: Begin preparing the environmental, preliminary engineering, traffic studies, etc. to kick-start the major infrastructure project.

Objective: Promote development along the Cox Road Extension to improve the effectiveness of the Millikin Interchange.

Goal #2: Continue to be proactive and strategic with respect to road improvements to logically route traffic in the Township in such a way as to support areas of current and planned future commercial use, while protecting the quality of life of residents and areas planned to remain more rural.

Objective: The Township shall give formal input regarding updates to the County Thoroughfare Plan.

Objective: Encourage new development access points in locations to direct traffic towards main thoroughfares and away from areas planned for low density residential development.

Objective: Continue working with BCEO and ODOT regarding speed limit reductions as warranted.

Goal #3: Future traffic improvements should support multiple forms of transportation, including pedestrians.

Objective: Continue to create a pedestrian and bicycle network as outlined in the Township Trails Plan.

Objective: The Township will continue to work with Lakota School regarding their Safe Routes to School Plans.

Objective: Liberty Township, along with Lakota Schools and BCEO, will take into account, and seek to mitigate increased traffic at school locations.

Goal #4: Improve public transportation options for Township residents who are unable to afford or cannot operate motor vehicles, or who desire increased commuting options within the region.

Objective: Work with BCRTA to increase areas of service within the Township that includes future job, medical, and shopping sites.

Goal #5: Work with BCEO and ODOT to be more proactive in anticipating transportation needs ahead of development.

Objective: Continue to work with BCEO in projecting future traffic volumes along major



Section VI: Transportation

thoroughfares in the Township, and also applying Access Management regulations to plan for future intersections and access points prior to development happening.

Objective: Request funding for improvements when a future need is identified, rather than waiting for problems to arise.

Task: Ensure that BCEO, ODOT, and OKI are aware of the Township's Land Use Plan and development pace / interest in the township.

Objective: Be cautious about using TIF and RID financing for infrastructure improvements. It can be an important tool to remove roadblocks to development, but also leaves a gap in funding for increased government services demanded by the new development.



VI: Utilities

Like roadway access, the availability of utilities is a key attribute affecting viable land use and economic development in Liberty Township. This chapter discusses sanitary sewer, water, communications, gas, and electric utility service within the Township.

7.1 Sanitary Sewer & Water

Sanitary Sewer availability is a vital component to planning the future development in Liberty Township. The availability of public sewer service has direct implications on growth densities and commercial development. Public sewers within Liberty Township are owned and maintained by Butler County Water and Sewer Department (BCWS).

BCWS policies require that developers install the local sewers within their development. This includes extending to their upstream boundary in order to have the sewer available for the next upstream parcel. There are also policies in place to reimburse developers for oversize sewers if needed to serve the upstream drainage basin and to extend the sewers offsite of their development if needed to gain access to public sewer.

Water availability is also very important to development. Liberty Township is covered with a grid of water mains on most of the major roadways. Since the water is readily available throughout the Township, it has less impact on development planning than sewers. All the public water mains in the Township are owned and maintained by BCWS.

Sanitary sewer service and availability in Liberty Township is shown in Map 6 and water service and availability is shown in Map 7.

Developers are required to install local water mains within their development and to install the water mains across the frontage of the development along the major roadway.

Areas already developed without sewer and/or water service can petition for service. If the petition is favorable to the majority of the properties affected, and property owners agree to the assessment, BCWS will install the sewer and/or water and assess the cost of the project to the property taxes of the parcels gaining availability to the sewer and/or water.

BCWS installs sewers to eliminate lift stations, to relieve capacity issues, or rehabilitate sewers in the existing collection systems. BCWS also performs construction projects to increase treatment capacity of the water reclamation facilities. BCWS installs water transmission mains and replaces existing cast iron water mains. The cast iron mains were installed in the 1970s and are prone to breaks.

Projects increasing the system capacity are funded with capacity fees. Projects to rehabilitate existing sewers and/or water mains are funded with rate revenue obtained from monthly water and sewer service billings.

BCWS periodically updates its Capital Improvement Plan. In doing so, the department evaluates planned future land use to anticipate needed improvements and future demand. The BCWS water system will be able to support the build out of Liberty Township. This plan also evaluates the existing sanitary sewer system capacity and growth projections. The plan identifies any existing trunk sewers projected to have capacity limitations as well as develop a schedule in which additional treatment capacity is needed. BCWS is committed to ensuring the sewer system will also support the build out of Liberty Township.



Section VII: Utilities

7.2 Communications

Liberty Township is served by Cincinnati Bell and Time Warner Cable for wired communication. Telephone and cable infrastructure is 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 and other types of infrastructure can be a key attribute.

7.3 Gas and Electricity

Duke Energy is the gas and electricity service provider in Liberty Township. Duke is proactive in planning their network improvements to accommodate future planned development. Duke also sponsors a Site Readiness Grant Program through which local governments are provided with a comprehensive development consultation for potential development sites. In 2012, a 95 acre site between Cincinnati-Dayton Road and I-75 in Liberty Township was selected for the Site Readiness Program. The report acknowledged the site's superior visibility along I-75 and also the lack of access to sanitary sewer and natural gas service. The report is helpful to identify specific hurdles to potential development.

7.4 Utilities Goals and Objectives

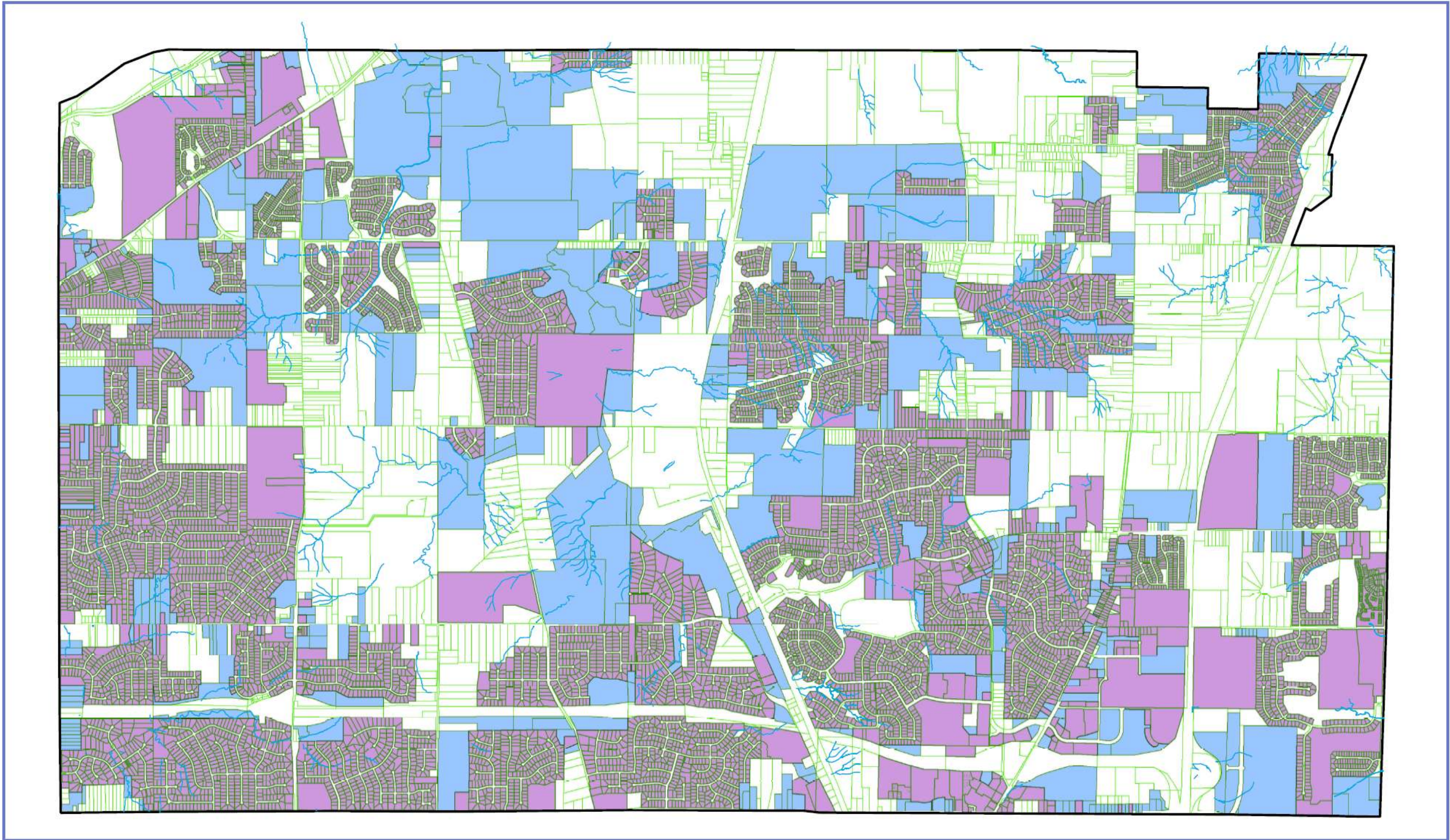
The following goal and objective and tasks related to utilities were prepared by the Vision Plan Steering Committee and presented for comment at a public open house. These goals and objectives are not listed in any particular order of priority.

Goal #1: Help open up land planned for commercial development by making those areas accessible to utility service.

Objective: Create an infrastructure plan for key areas to identify hurdles to providing needed infrastructure and services for planned development.

Task: Develop a public / private partnership and overall plan for water, sewer, and other infrastructure needs for Millikin Center in coordination with BCWS, Duke Energy, and other appropriate entities.

Map 6: Sanitary Sewer Service Area



BUTLER COUNTY WATER AND SEWER
FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY
NOT INTENDED FOR USE AS A SURVEY
BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO

LEGEND

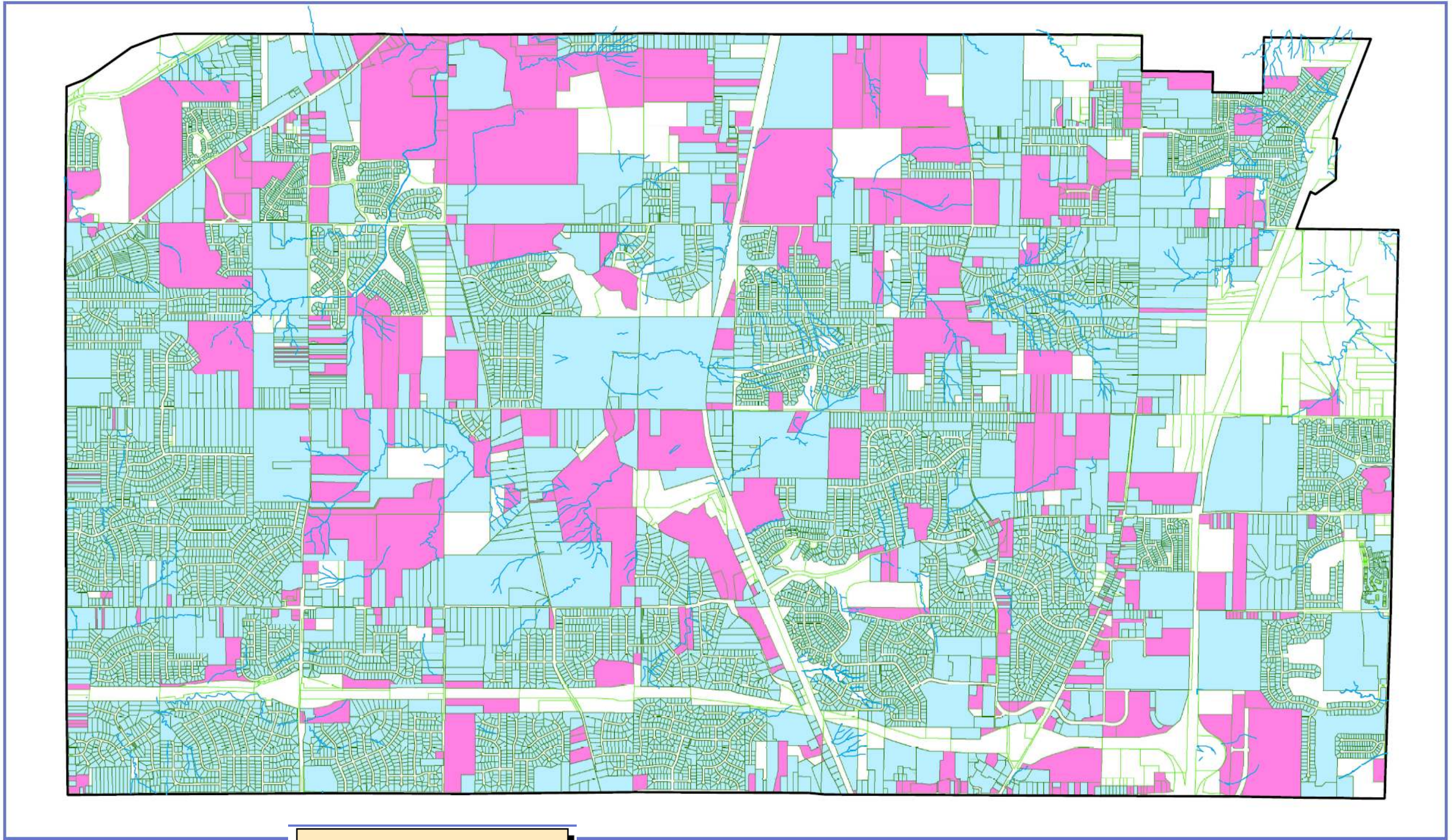
| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| PARCELS | SEWER AVAILABLE AREA |
| STREAMS | EXISTING SEWER SERVICE AREA |
| LIBERTY TWP. | |



1 inch = 2,500 feet








Map 7: Water Service Area



BUTLER COUNTY WATER AND SEWER
FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY
NOT INTENDED FOR USE AS A SURVEY
BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO

LEGEND

| | |
|--|---|
|  PARCELS |  WATER AVAILABLE AREA |
|  STREAMS |  EXISTING WATER SERVICE AREA |
|  LIBERTY TWP. | |



1 inch = 2,500 feet





VIII: Government & Community Services

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

8.1 Township Trustees & Administration

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

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

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

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

8.2 Fire Department

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

The Fire Department is funded by a dedicated levy.

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

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



Section VIII: Government & Community Services

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

8.3 Police Services

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

8.4 Services Department

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

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

8.5 Schools

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

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

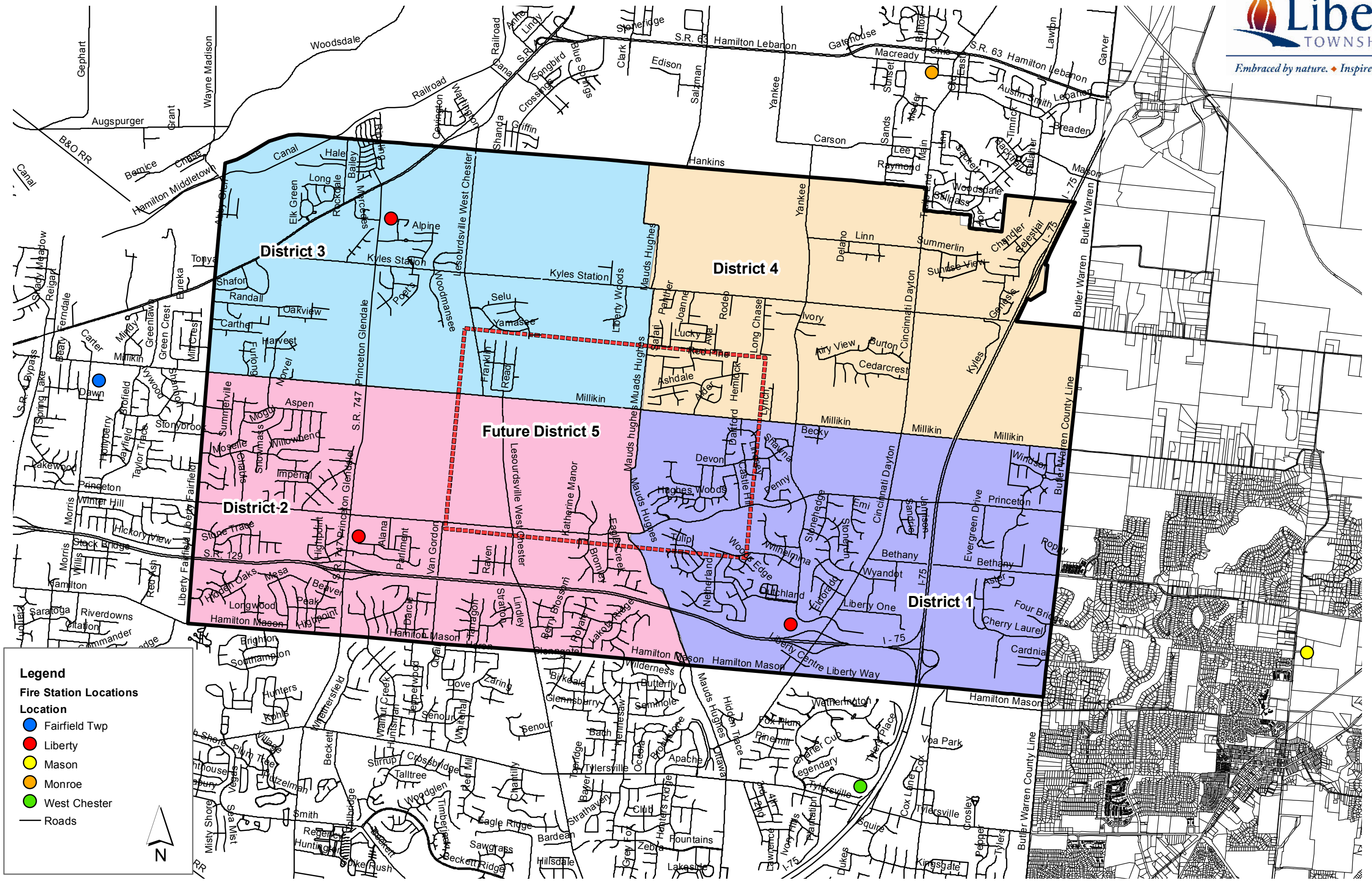
Liberty Township is also home to Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School. The school, which has seen growing enrollment through expansion, is recognized by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, but not affiliated with a parish.

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

8.6 Library and Postal Service

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

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




Legend

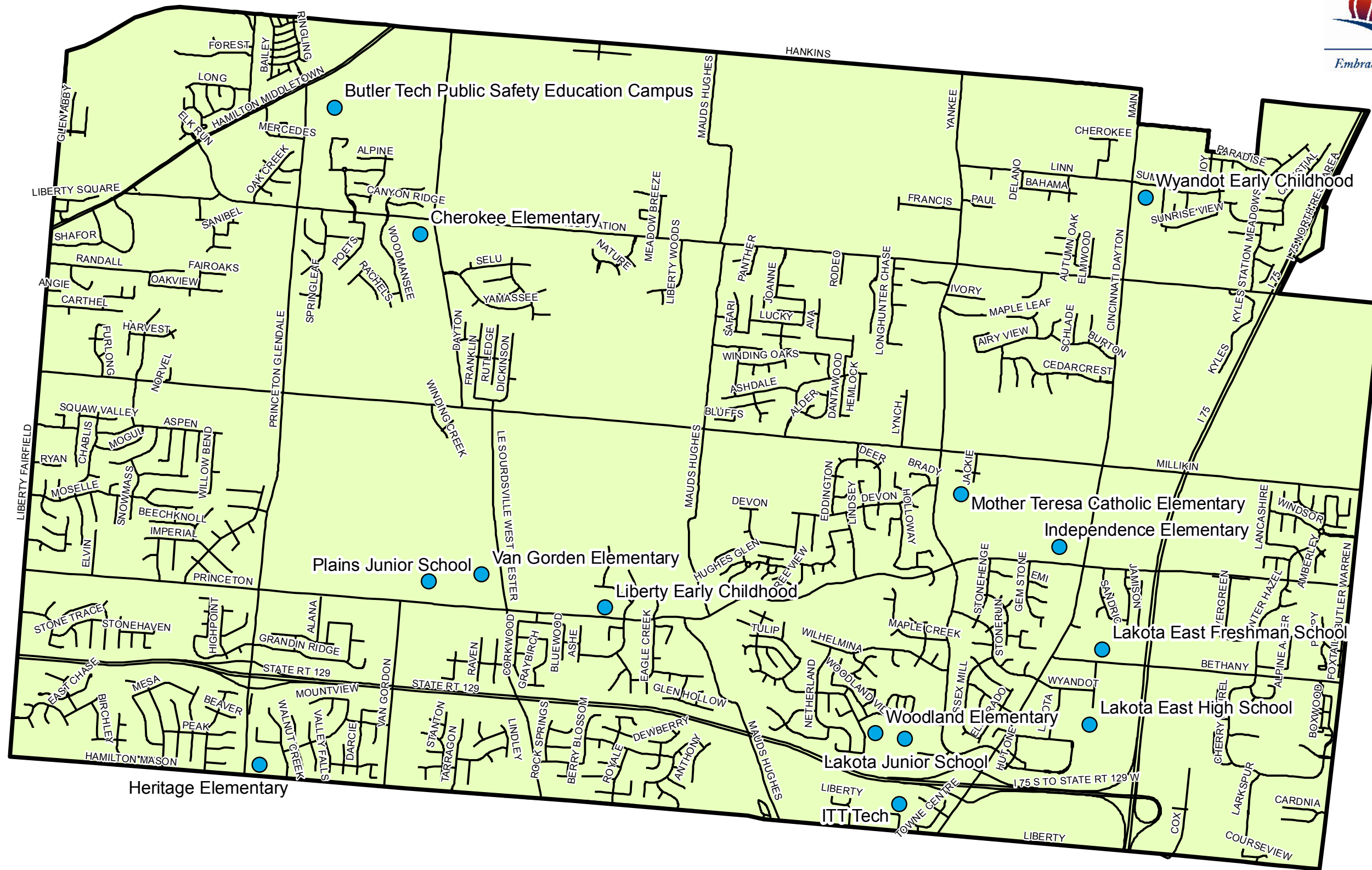
Fire Station Locations

Location

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



Map 8: Fire Station Locations



Map 9: School Locations

Legend
● School Locations





8.7 Shared Services

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.8 Government and Community Services Goals and Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



quality, thoroughness, and rights to due process.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



IX: Land Use

The Land Use Plan is a key component of the Comprehensive Vision Plan. The Land Use Plan presents a map of future land uses which the Township feels would be the most beneficial uses as development progresses.

9.1 Existing Land Use

Existing land use in Liberty Township has shifted over the past number of years from largely agricultural to a decidedly suburban pattern. As seen in the chart of land use in 1999, 2006, and 2011, the percentage of land in existing agricultural use has declined steadily while single family and estate residential has increased.

In 2013, approximately 38% of the Township's land can be considered undeveloped or under-developed. Of this undeveloped / under-developed land, nearly 75% is currently planned for future residential uses, with the remaining 25% planned for commercial uses. Overall, this allows for only 18% of the gross land area of the Township to be developed for commercial use.

This is important because of implications on the cost of community services. Cost of community services is the balance of the costs to provide services to the community compared with the taxes and fees paid by the community to cover those costs. Different land uses require different levels of service, and therefore costs to provide services vary depending on land use. Also, land uses do not all generate the same revenues through taxes and fees.

The previous Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan evaluated the Cost of County Community Services (average net fiscal impacts of existing land uses on local budgets) as part of the review and analysis during the preparation of the Land Use Plan. The data used to evaluate the cost of county level community services came from a study prepared by the American Farmland Trust (AFT) for Butler County that compared the net fiscal impacts of farm/open land uses to residential and commercial/industrial land uses. AFT analyzed the revenues generated by each of these land uses and compared them to the expenditures with county services. The study was prepared in October 2004. County services include education, public health and safety, public works, local government and courts.

| Existing Land Use Category | 1999 | | 2006 | | 2013 | | % Change 1999 - 2013 |
|--------------------------------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|----------------------|
| | Acres | % of Total | Acres | % of Total | Acres | % of Total | |
| Agricultural | 8457 | 51% | 5850 | 36% | 4977 | 30% | -41% |
| Estate Residential | 2648 | 16% | 2544 | 15% | 2976 | 18% | 12% |
| Single Family Residential | 3602 | 22% | 4853 | 30% | 5112 | 31% | 42% |
| Multi-Family Residential | 119 | 1% | 129 | 1% | 172 | 1% | 45% |
| Commercial | 200 | 1% | 200 | 1% | 288 | 2% | 44% |
| Industrial | 19 | 0.1% | 17 | 0.1% | 30 | 0.2% | 58% |
| Public / Semi-Public / Institutional | 423 | 3% | 737 | 4% | 657 | 4% | 55% |
| Public / Private Recreation | 1145 | 7% | 1208 | 7% | 1236 | 7% | 8% |
| Open Space | 82 | 0% | 308 | 2% | 381 | 2% | 365% |
| Vacant | ** | | 598 | 4% | 805 | 5% | |

** 1999 Land Use did not study this category

Fig. 28. Existing Land Use: 1999, 2006, and 2013



Section IX: Land Use

The findings of the Cost of County Community Services Study presented a snapshot in time of revenues versus costs of providing services to major land uses. The findings show:

- 85 percent of county revenue was generated by residential land uses, 13 percent by commercial/industrial land uses, and 2 percent by farm/open lands.
- 93 percent of expenditures were used to provide services to residents, 6 percent for services to the commercial/industrial sector and 1 percent for farm/open lands.
- For every \$1 of revenue generated by the residential sector, \$1.12 was spent to provide county-level services to residents.
- For every \$1 of revenue generated by commercial/industrial land uses, \$.45 was spent to provide county-level services to businesses and industries.
- For every \$1 of revenue generated by farm/open lands, \$.49 was spent to provide county-level services to farm and undeveloped lands.

The findings show that farm/open and commercial/industrial land uses are important to fiscal equilibrium. Together these uses offset the shortfall associated with providing county-level services to residential development. The findings suggest that decisions that retain and enhance commercial, industrial and agricultural land uses can help improve the long-term fiscal stability of the community.

9.2 Planning Blocks

As in the previous Comprehensive Plan, the Vision Plan Steering Committee divided the Township into “Planning Blocks” (Map 11) to better analyze existing conditions, market factors, and anticipated future development potential specific to these different areas. For each Planning Block, notes have

been identified as a step towards arriving at edits to the Land Use Plan. The purpose was to identify desired development characteristics before considering specific adjustments to the Land Use Plan.

Planning Block Notes

Canal Town Commercial Corridor

- Good location for industrial use
- Opportunity for residential set back off of Rt. 4 on golf course.
- Area looked at for Office and Limited Industrial Development.
- Broaden available uses in this area – be more flexible.

West Acres

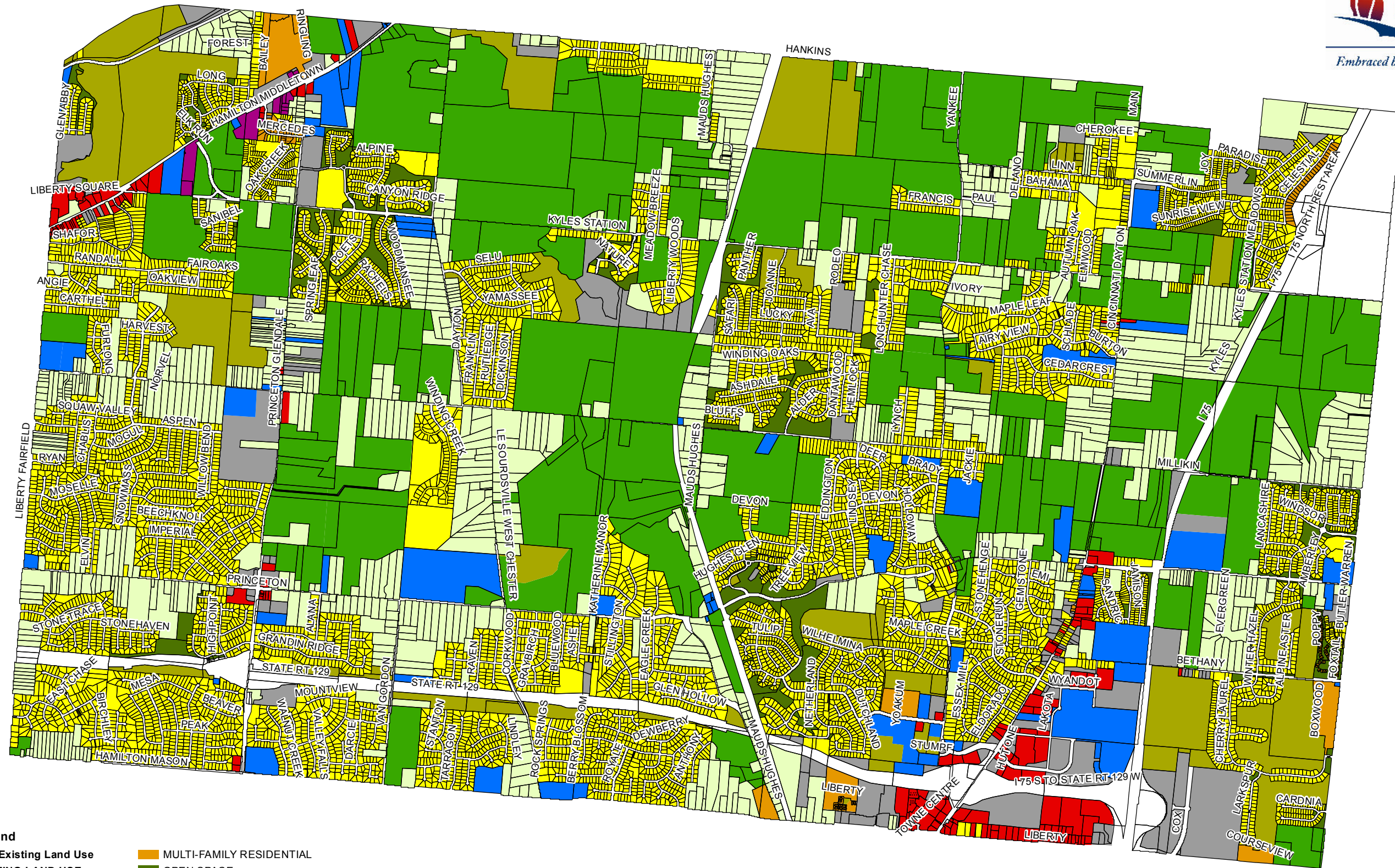
- Infill single-family residential development
- Vista Verde Golf course offers possibility for a larger planned mixed residential use development.

SR 747 Mixed Use Corridor

- Mix of office and service retail uses
- Reed Hartman concept – center medians, business parks.
- Increase the lot depth available for commercial development where possible.
- Consider alternatives and new concepts appropriate to the location.
- Possibly merits a more focused corridor development study






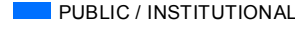



Central Station

- Develop as single family residential
- Pedestrian connectivity important – walk to school.
- Access to green space and Gregory Creek is important.



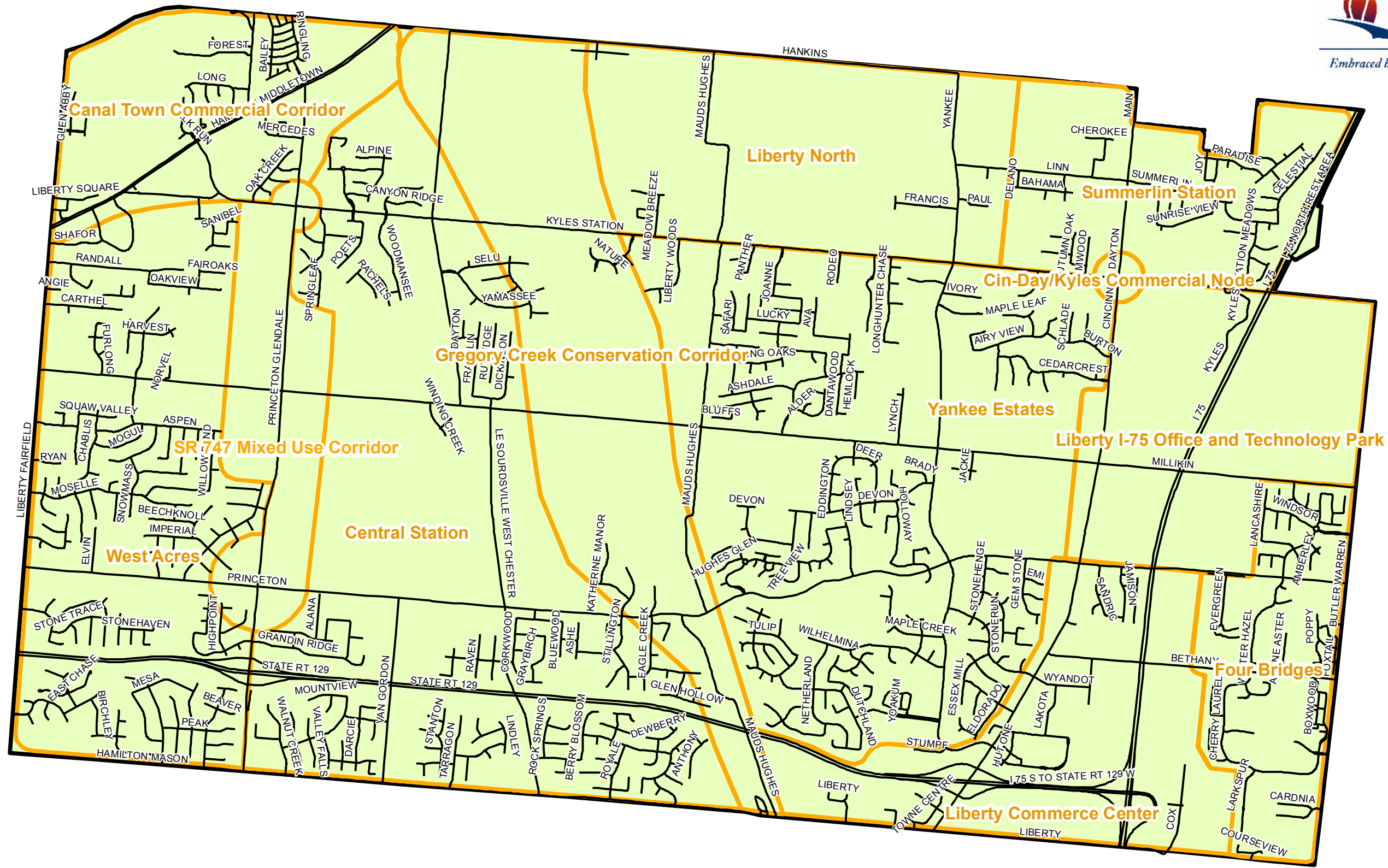
Legend

2013 Existing Land Use

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | AGRICULTURE |  | MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL |
|  | COMMERCIAL |  | OPEN SPACE |
|  | ESTATE RESIDENTIAL |  | PUBLIC / INSTITUTIONAL |
|  | INDUSTRIAL |  | PUBLIC / PRIVATE RECREATION |
| | |  | VACANT |



Map 10: 2013 Existing Land Use



Map 11: Planning Blocks



Gregory Creek Conservation Corridor

- Trail along the length of the creek to be located on existing Township parkland, open space, and within easements.
- Township parks act as trailheads and parking areas for the Gregory Creek Trail.
- Single family residential development outside of floodplain and steep slope areas.
- Identify ways to preserve floodplain corridor for open space and Gregory Creek Trail.

Liberty North

- Access to Rt 4 and SR 63 via Salzman Road is good for Light Industrial use, but other infrastructure currently lacking.
- Necessary to buffer current and future residential uses from any proposed commercial development.
- Identified as a possible location for a future community park, county park, or open space by the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Yankee Estates

- Infill residential development.
- Wilhelmina Park and one new small community park or open space near the Maud Hughes and Millikin Road intersection.
- Build upon existing pedestrian / trail network in the area.
- Designate mixed use development along Millikin Road between Yankee and Cin-Day Roads in anticipation of increased traffic from planned Millikin Interchange.

Summerlin Station / Cin-Day Kyles Commercial Node

- Properly transition from commercial development into existing and future planned residential.

Liberty I-75 Office and Technology Park

- Remove Kyles Lane from Office and Limited Industrial Development use and designate as estate residential since it is unlikely to redevelop.

- Change the estate residential on the north side of Millikin Road to Office & Limited Industrial, with the frontage adjacent to Trails of 4 Bridges designated Transitional or Professional Office.
- Show Planned General Business designation on east side of Cin-Day Road having a depth of 500 feet.
- Consider expanding the JEDD into this area. Land must be rezoned commercial first.
- Plan for potential Millikin Road widening going west from Cin-Day Road in conjunction with Millikin Interchange.
- Extension of Cox Road to increase access.

Liberty Commerce Center

- Difficulty in widening Hamilton-Mason Road at the railroad bridge chokepoint.
- Expand available uses in Liberty Office Park. West Chester side of Hamilton-Mason is planned for office.
- Encourage the Liberty Center Development
- Promote available land along the Cox Road Extension.

Four Bridges

- Buffering concerns on Davis property. Work with West Chester to coordinate possible uses.

9.3 Land Use Classifications

The following provides a description of the development characteristics of each of the land use designations shown on the Land Use Plan (Maps 12 & 13):

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)



Section IX: Land Use

while balancing landowner rights to develop their property at a low gross density with clustered home sites and large amounts of open space.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Located along sensitive stream corridors, steep slopes, woodlands, wetlands, and flood plains;
- Maximize the potential for each residence to have direct physical and visual access to inter-connected open space;
- Gross density shall be one (1) dwelling unit per acre;
- Houses shall be concentrated where the best home sites are located;
- Open space shall be at least 40% with the focus on the preservation of natural features;
- Open space shall protect natural environment that provides wildlife habitat and undisturbed natural vegetation to absorb and slow water runoff; reduce soil erosion, stream sedimentation, and flooding; improve on-site and downstream water quality; and enhance infiltration and groundwater recharge; and
- Density Bonus: 40% open space minimum will be required with one (1) additional dwelling unit granted for each additional one percent (1%) of open space up to 50% open space (for an additional 10 dwelling units. maximum).

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 in order to:

- 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 their use and enjoyment of their property;

- Preserve the streetscape along the roadways, maintaining the character, and promoting safe pedestrian movement;
- Reduce traffic congestion;
- Improve the appearance, usefulness, and signage; and
- Extend Cox Road Overlay District to Millikin Road to protect Trails of Four Bridges Subdivision.
 - In the Cox Road Overlay District, building heights are regulated to create a step-down effect with taller buildings fronting I-75 and stepping down to a maximum height of 35 feet when adjacent to a residential subdivision.
 - More intense uses are relegated to zones adjacent to I-75 and uses are more restricted adjacent to existing residential subdivisions.

Estate Residential 1-5 Acre Lot Size

Large parcels of land with country-like characteristics, containing low density detached single-family homes.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Large lots – between one (1) to five (5) acre(s) per dwelling unit;
- Significant amount of open space – rolling fields, pasture; and
- Significant amount of road frontage (200 feet minimum) and yard setbacks (100 feet minimum front yard).

Redevelopment Criteria

- One dwelling unit per acre gross density and



- Significant setback from existing public roads (100 feet minimum) to preserve rural character.

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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Shall not be located adjacent to residential districts unless situated on a collector or arterial road;
- Uses adjacent to residential shall provide significant mounding and buffering;
- Uses shall serve the community or regional market; and
- Shall be developed according to a unified development plan (PUD) taking advantage of shared amenities including parking, vehicle and pedestrian access, signage, and landscaping.

Multi-Family Residential

Medium density detached or attached housing (apartments, townhouses, condominiums, landominiums, and row houses).

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Densities consistent with surrounding uses, but generally not exceeding six (6) units per acre;
- Access shall be provided to a collector or arterial road, or in close proximity to high volume traffic area;
- Shall serve as a buffer between high intensity commercial uses and single family residential uses;

- Building and parking areas shall be screened and buffered;
- Typically will be one or two story structures with exceptions for three story structures where there will be no impact on adjacent uses;
- Unique development and architectural design characteristics are encouraged;
- Common vehicular access and parking shall be provided;
- Common open space and recreation shall be provided; and
- Designed to encourage easy pedestrian access.

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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Road frontage on or near Collector or Arterial road, or at major intersections;
- Small or unique sites developed as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) on sites between three (3) and ten (10) acres;
- Adjacent to or near residential areas;
- Buildings and structures designed at a residential scale maximizing the use of natural materials (brick, stone, hearty plank, cedar shake), sloping roofs with dimensional shingles to be compatible with adjacent residential uses;
- Buildings and parking areas shall be buffered and screened from adjacent residential areas and rights-of-ways; and
- Designed to encourage easy pedestrian access.



Section IX: Land Use

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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Developed as a Planned Unit Development or Community Mixed Use Development with controlled access, adequate internal street network, and common / shared parking areas;
- Open space areas to serve the needs of the employees and community;
- Internal and perimeter landscaping shall be maximized; and
- Multiple building layouts shall consist of coordinated architectural design and building materials.

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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Large scale office / industrial developments should be clustered, open settings with adequate access to a collector or arterial road;
- Planned large scale developments with internal street network, common / shared parking areas, and a high degree of internal landscaping and open space; and

- Multiple buildings with coordinated architectural design features and building materials.

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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Open space areas shall include but not limited to: wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, steep slopes, and woodlands;
- Open space areas may contain walking trails, bike / hike trails, or other recreational (active and passive) and natural uses;
- Development of adjacent parcels shall provide connecting open space to allow for larger expanses of open space lands;
- Open space areas shall remain in their natural state or improved / maintained as recreation areas with the goal of minimizing impacts to existing natural areas;
- Open space areas shall be maximized to promote a high quality of life for the residents; and
- Promote the use of conservation easements.

Planned Business Park

Large scale corporate, research, medical, technical, and limited industrial uses, with limited and compatible commercial uses.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Campus style layout;
- Unified and extensive landscaping and open space plans;



- Attractive entrance treatments;
- Controlled vehicle access and parking areas;
- Shared amenities including parking, vehicle and pedestrian access, signage, and lighting; and
- Unified building materials.
- When located adjacent to existing residential development, open space / parkland should be used to maximize the buffer between the commercial and residential developments.
- When located in an existing or proposed Overlay District, the criteria of the "Overlay Districts" land use classification are also applicable.

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 economical development. Neo-traditional street and pedestrian patterns shall be maximized to achieve a community oriented urban lifestyle.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Large sites, generally 20 acres or more;
- Developed as Mixed Use Planned Unit Development;
- Max building height three (3) stories or 45 feet, whichever is greater;
- Retail uses are only permitted on the first floor;
- Office and residential uses are permitted on all floors;
- Commercial (retail / office) uses shall be at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the overall development;
- Residential buildings may be freestanding from other uses;

- Mixed Use Buildings (Residential / Commercial) shall not exceed twelve (12) dwelling units per acre;
- Residential density that is free standing within the mixed use development shall not exceed six (6) dwelling units per acre and have at least 30% open space;
- Detached residential units shall not exceed two (2) dwelling units per acre;
- Minimum open space shall be thirty percent (30%);
- Streetscape design shall be included in development plan;
- The sidewalks and parkways must be tree lined;
- Parking rations must conform to the zoning resolution except when common / shared parking areas can be provided;
- Community gathering areas and/or focal points shall be provided at all major nodes;
- Uniform building materials, signage, lighting, and landscaping shall be provided throughout the development or divided by neighborhood district; and
- Buffering shall be provided between existing adjacent divergent or less restrictive uses.

Planned Residential Mixed Use

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

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Large sites, generally 20 acres or more;
- Developed with both single family and multi-family residential uses;
- Max building height three (3) stories or 45 feet, whichever is greater;



Section IX: Land Use

- Entry to the development accessed from an arterial roadway or major collector;
- Overall density shall not exceed 5 dwelling units per acre;
- Common open space, recreational facilities, and pedestrian walkways shall be provided and maintained as part of the 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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Located along a collector or arterial road;
- Located between residential uses and other types of development;
- Professional office uses designed to fit in with adjacent residential character including pitched roofs, compatible building materials and scale;
- Landscaped buffers and berms located between the residential use and the Professional Office use that effectively screens the use and parking areas; and
- Max building height of two (2) stories or 35 feet (whichever is greater).

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.

Public / Private Recreation

Public, semi-public, and private park and recreation facilities.

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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Located on sites near or adjacent to community services for ease of transportation;
- Developed according to a unified Planned Unit Development Plan;
- Located in areas that shall serve as a transition between single-family residential uses and more intense uses;
- Located along or adjacent to arterial or collector roads; and
- Developments shall be heavily landscaped and provide passive recreation options for the residents.

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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Developed as Planned Unit Development (PUD);



- Densities shall be consistent with surrounding development as approved on a PUD plan;
- Developments shall be unique and creative in the design of how the subdivision is laid out;
- Common open space, recreational facilities, and pedestrian walkways shall be provided and maintained as part of the development;
- Existing historic resources as identified on the Historic Properties Map (Map 1 in Chapter 2) may be preserved and become an integral part of the character of the development;
- Consideration for connectivity to adjacent open space, park lands, natural features, and historic resources shall be considered for the location and character of open space provided;
- Developments are encouraged to preserve as many natural features (streams, wetlands, woodlands) as possible; and
- Usable open space is encouraged.

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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Densities shall not exceed 2.25 dwelling units per acre;
- Minimum lot size shall not be less than 15,000 square feet unless part of a Planned Unit Development;
- Developments are encouraged to provide lot widths not less than 100 feet to allow for side entry garages; and
- Developed as part of a recorded subdivision.

Single Family Residence ½ Acre Minimum 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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Densities shall not exceed 1.7 dwelling units per acre;
- Minimum lot size shall not be less than 20,000 square feet unless part of a Planned Unit Development;
- Developments are encouraged to provide lot widths not less than 110 feet to allow for side entry garages and to provide an “estate” feel to the development; and
- Developed as part of a recorded subdivision.

Single Family Residence 2.52 Dwelling Units Per Acre Maximum 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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Located adjacent to a major thoroughfare;
- Located between more intense and less intense uses to serve as a transition; and
- Developed as part of a recorded subdivision.



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.

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Located between more intense and less intense uses (e.g. commercial and single-family residential) and
- Buffering shall be provided between more intense and less intense uses unless the development itself provides adequate buffering.
- Development shall relate to adjacent residential

uses in size and scale. The architecture of buildings adjacent to residential uses shall include pitched roofs and residential details and materials.

- Uses considered appropriate for transitional use will be dependent on the nature of adjacent uses. Possible transitional uses could be: higher density single family residential, multi-family residential, office, agriculture, parks or open space, or other non-residential uses that have compatible hours of operation and activities with adjacent uses.

| Land Use | Previous Adopted Land Use Plan Acreage | Current Land Use Plan Acreage | Net Change Acreage |
|---|--|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Conservation Development (1 du/ac) | 767 | 767 | 0 |
| Estate Residential 1-5 acre lots | 2109 | 1583 | -526 |
| Single Family Residence 1/2 acre min. lots (1.7 du/ac) | 3569 | 4139 | 570 |
| Single Family Residence Planned Development (2.0 du/ac) | 1357 | 1604 | 247 |
| Single Family Residence Suburban (2.25 du/ac) | 2376 | 2343 | -33 |
| Single Family Residence 2.52 du/ac max density | 40 | 40 | 0 |
| Two Family Residences | 16 | 16 | 0 |
| Multi-Family Residential (6 du/ac max) | 85 | 85 | 0 |
| Planned Residential Mixed Use | 0 | 160 | 160 |
| Planned Community Mixed Use (25% Commercial) | 862 | 489 | -373 |
| Transitional | 241 | 268 | 27 |
| Planned General Business | 194 | 106 | -88 |
| Planned Neighborhood Business | 157 | 157 | 0 |
| Planned Business Park | 665 | 727 | 62 |
| Planned Professional Office | 26 | 26 | 0 |
| Office and Limited Industrial | 1189 | 1265 | 76 |
| Office / Retail / Light Industrial | 97 | 137 | 40 |
| Senior Independent / Assisted Living | 28 | 28 | 0 |
| Public / Institutional | 477 | 465 | -12 |
| Public / Private Recreation | 659 | 557 | -102 |
| Open Space | 384 | 384 | 0 |
| Commercial | 2813 | 2836 | |
| | 18.38% | 18.48% | |

Fig. 29. Comparison of Land Use Acreage: Current Land Use Plan vs. Previous



Two-Family Residence

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

General Location and Development Characteristics

- Located adjacent to arterial or collector roads and single family residences, which serve as a transition between the more intense and less intense uses and
- Shall be developed as part of a recorded subdivision and include public water and sewer, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and other amenities;

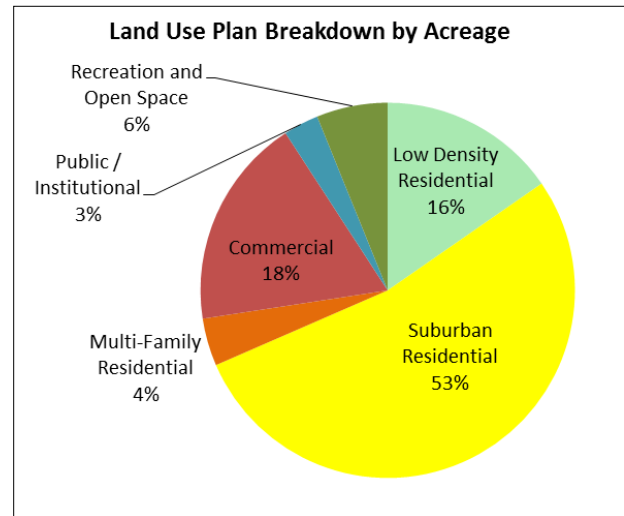


Fig. 30. Land Use Plan Breakdown by Acreage

9.4 Land Use Plan

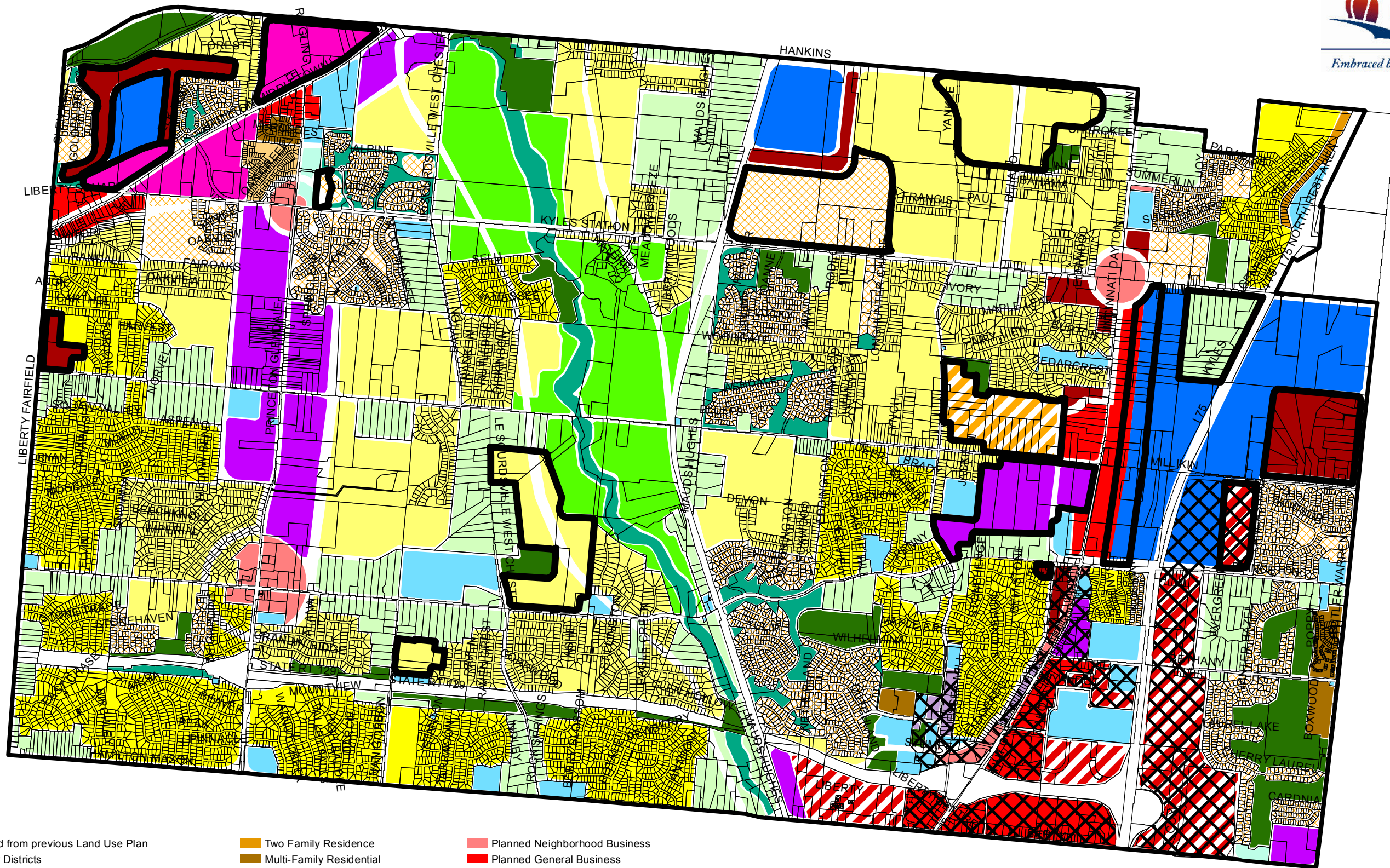
The Land Use Plan is the basic planning tool used to guide future development and policy decisions to achieve the desired vision for the future of Liberty Township looking at a 20 year build-out scenario. The Land Use Plan makes recommendations of future land use classifications and densities and provides “General Location and Development Characteristics.” It should be noted that the Land Use Plan is a vision for the future and is to be used as a guideline for making recommendations. The Township Zoning Commission and Liberty Township Board of Trustees shall have the ability to analyze specific proposals and uses based on current market conditions and impact to adjacent properties while making future land use decisions.

The Land Use Plan designates areas of future land use proposed by the Vision Plan Steering Committee and the Township which is believed to produce the most beneficial, attractive and fiscally balanced pattern of land use and development for the Township as a whole. The Annotated Land Use Plan (Map 12) highlights the specific areas where the Land Use Plan has changed from the previous adopted plan. The Adopted Land Use Plan (Map 13)

simply shows the currently adopted Land Use Plan without the changes highlighted.
























The table comparing Land Use acreage between the current Land Use Plan and the previous Land Use Plan (Fig. 29) provides a breakdown of approximate acreage of each land use and how that acreage may have changed between the previously adopted Land Use Plan and the current Land Use Plan. Furthermore, the pie chart above (Fig. 30) shows the breakdown of general land uses for the adopted Land Use Plan.

The Vision Plan Steering Committee recommended that the Township carefully evaluate Land Use decisions as they relate to the fiscal impact such uses may have on the community.

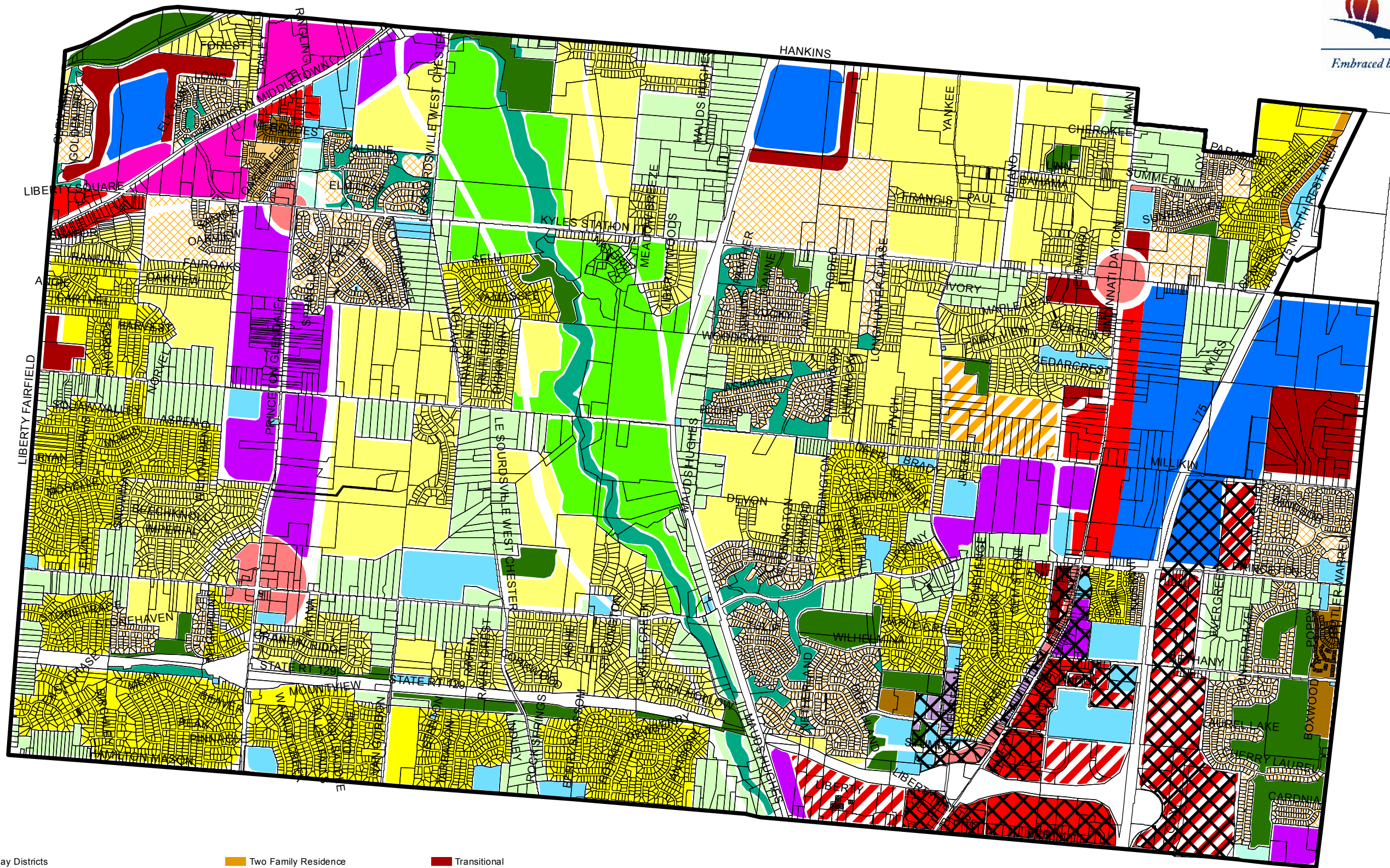


Map 12: Annotated Land Use Plan


















Legend

-  Updated from previous Land Use Plan
-  Overlay Districts
- Adopted Land Use Plan 02.04.14**
- Proposed Land Use**
-  Estate Residential 1-5 Acre Lot Size
-  Single Family Residence 1/2 acre min lots
-  Single Family Residence - Suburban
-  Single Family Residence - Planned Development
-  Single Family Residence 2.52 d.u./acre max density
-  Two Family Residence
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Planned Residential Mixed Use
-  Conservation Development
-  Open Space
-  Public / Private Recreation
-  Planned Community Mixed Use
-  Senior Independent / Assisted Living
-  Transitional
-  Planned Neighborhood Business
-  Planned General Business
-  Professional Office
-  Planned Business Park
-  Office and Limited Industrial Development
-  Office / Retail / Light Industrial
-  Public / Institutional





Map 13: Adopted Land Use Plan

- Legend**
-  Overlay Districts
 - Adopted Land Use Plan 02.04.14**
 - Proposed Land Use**
 -  Estate Residential 1-5 Acre Lot Size
 -  Single Family Residence 1/2 acre min lots
 -  Single Family Residence - Suburban
 -  Single Family Residence - Planned Development
 -  Single Family Residence 2.52 d.u./acre max density
 -  Two Family Residence
 -  Multi-Family Residential
 -  Planned Residential Mixed Use
 -  Conservation Development
 -  Open Space
 -  Public / Private Recreation
 -  Planned Community Mixed Use
 -  Senior Independent / Assisted Living
 -  Transitional
 -  Planned Neighborhood Business
 -  Planned General Business
 -  Professional Office
 -  Planned Business Park
 -  Office and Limited Industrial Development
 -  Office / Retail / Light Industrial
 -  Public / Institutional





X: Plan Summary Recommendations

This chapter highlights some of the key areas of emphasis included in the Comprehensive Vision Plan. The items listed here serve as a short summary, and do not constitute a complete listing of the Vision Plan's content. This chapter also includes a summary table of the goals, objectives, and tasks included in the Comprehensive Vision Plan.

10.1 Expansion of Housing Choice

Currently, the representation of young professional and empty nester age groups among Liberty Township residents is relatively small compared to children under age 19 and adults between the age of 35 and 54. Demographic trends show the ageing of two key age groups among current Township residents. These are school age children aging into the 20 to 24 year old young professional age group and the 45 to 54 age group graduating into the empty-nester group.

Young professionals and empty nesters have different preferences in housing compared to families with children who are attracted to the larger lot single family homes that make up the majority of housing in the Township.

To help retain current Township residents who are graduating into the young professional and empty nester age groups, and to increase the Township's attractiveness to potential residents of all ages, the Vision Plan Steering Committee has set a goal to increase the amount of housing that is targeted towards young professionals and empty nester age groups in areas that provide a good fit for these housing types.

10.2 Promote Mixed Use Development along Arterial Corridors

The small lot single family and higher density lifestyle development that is attractive to young professional and empty nester demographic is expected to be a key component in planned mixed use development designated along portions of the SR 747, SR 4, and Cincinnati Dayton Road corridors. Mixed use developments integrate commercial and residential uses within a master planned development featuring pedestrian walkways, open space, and amenities. These types of developments provide the pedestrian connectivity, access to shopping, services and restaurants, parks, trails, recreation, and convenient access to main roadways and highways that these target demographics value. Furthermore, mixed use development also can serve as a transition from a busy commercial arterial street to single family residential development. The larger scale and variety of uses incorporated in mixed use developments will also help to avoid the commercial "strip" type development along the Township's arterial streets.

10.3 Promote Reinvestment in Neighborhoods

While attracting high quality new development is important, it is also key for the Township to promote reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and commercial areas. The Township's strategy in doing this includes being more proactive in addressing property maintenance issues, encouraging homeowners to make improvements to their properties, and by considering sidewalk, street trees, and streetlight improvements in neighborhoods that do not have those amenities.

10.4 Keep areas of Rural Character

Evidence of Liberty Township's past as a rural community can still be seen in areas throughout the Township. The Vision Plan Steering Committee feels that it is vital to maintaining the Township's



Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations

image and identity to preserve the connection to its rural past. This can be accomplished through the incorporation of aesthetic cues such as development setbacks and berms along main roadways, the use of horse fencing along stretches of roadway, and the keeping of homes and buildings of historic character.

Also, the Township will support property owners' decision to preserve natural or agricultural land to the extent that these property owners' want it preserved. There are several means and programs designed to accomplish the preservation of agricultural or natural land, and the Township can help willing owners navigate the options these programs afford.

10.5 Protect Planned Commercial Land and Grow a Base of Highly Skilled Professional Jobs

Liberty Township boasts a population of relatively highly educated, high earning professionals. The great majority of these residents work outside of the Township. It is a goal of the Township to attract high skilled, high paying jobs. This effort would include attracting additional medical development, class A office, high-tech companies, and a Fortune 100 / 500 company.

To accommodate this development, effort must be made in increasing the amount of available commercially zoned land with adequate utility service. Also, increasing the Township's highway access along I-75 with a new interchange at Millikin Road and continuing the extension of Cox Road are key to opening up additional land planned for commercial development. In addition, the SR 747 and SR 4 corridors also feature land planned for commercial development.

10.6 Improve Recreation Opportunities

Quality of life is very important in attracting and retaining both residents and businesses alike.

Central to quality of life is fostering community attachment through events, community and social organizations, and recreation opportunities. This plan calls for the expansion of community events, including the addition of events that are attractive to young professionals and/or empty nesters. Quality of life will also be improved through the expansion of a network of walking paths, bicycle infrastructure, and improvements in the Township's parks. Connecting destinations within the Township with pedestrian infrastructure increases access within the community and promotes positive neighbor interaction and quality of life.

10.7 Further Define Liberty Township's Image and Identity

Significant strides have been made in bolstering Liberty Township's image and identity within the community and region. The following are avenues the Township will employ to further this goal:

Liberty Township will continue efforts to increase the use of Liberty Township as a place name by businesses, signage, street names, and on mail. While the ability to use "Liberty Township, Ohio" with the main zip codes of 45011, 45044, and 45069 for addresses within the Township has been accomplished, the Township still seeks a unified zip code.

The Township will continue to seek the inclusion of "Liberty Township" on road and place identifier signage along major roadways and highways traveling through the Township. Welcome signage, landscaping, and gateway enhancements will continue to be added.

The Township's image and identity will also continue to be built through notable new developments, as it has been with the Cincinnati Children's Liberty Campus, Carriage Hill development, and Liberty Center Development. This image and identity will be



further reinforced by development standards that create a high quality, cohesive aesthetic through consistent lighting, signage, and streetscaping.

10.8 Summary Table of Goals, Objectives, and Tasks

The tables on the following pages outline the goals, objectives and tasks listed in this plan:

| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
|--|--|---|
| Property maintenance standards need to be more actively and effectively enforced in a fair and even-handed way. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policies to ensure fair and even-handed enforcement. Proper staff time and attention must be committed to ensure this objective is, and continues to be met. | Housing #1: Encourage re-investment in older neighborhoods |
| Work with HOAs or other community groups to encourage the re-investment in properties. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider issuing awards for most attractive yard, most improved, etc. Continue to foster communication and cooperation between the Township and HOAs. | Housing #1: Encourage re-investment in older neighborhoods |
| Explore other avenues to encourage reinvestment in properties in Liberty Township. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore partnering with local banks to provide lower cost home equity loans to residents for home improvements. | Housing #1: Encourage re-investment in older neighborhoods |
| Evaluate the possibility of updating older neighborhoods with sidewalks, streetlights, and street trees to be more consistent with newer developments and to encourage residents to invest in their properties. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a funding mechanism and budget. Determine locations and phasing. Coordinate with utilities Design, bid, and construction Coordinate with HOAs | Housing #1: Encourage re-investment in older neighborhoods |
| Provide housing products that are desired by young professionals and empty-nesters in areas of the Township that are close to shopping, restaurants, and other related amenities, as determined by the Land Use Plan. | Provided for in edits to the Land Use Plan | Housing #2: Provide for housing options which are attractive to a wider cross section of demographic, especially young professionals and empty nesters. |
| Provide areas planned for mixed use development to create transitions from commercial to residential and to create attractive, pedestrian friendly developments. | Provided for in edits to the Land Use Plan | Housing #2: Provide for housing options which are attractive to a wider cross section of demographic, especially young professionals and empty nesters. |
| Encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments to provide higher quality and a cohesive design to new developments, reduce infrastructure, and protect natural features and character, while offering developers more flexibility to meet their goals. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene a working group to better define Township's criteria for evaluating residential PUD design. | Housing #3: Promote sustainable neighborhoods through the use of quality design and building materials and the inclusion of amenities. |



Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations

| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
|---|---|--|
| Place an emphasis on the inclusion of trails and other amenities as part of residential and mixed-use developments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene a working group to better define Township's criteria for evaluating residential PUD design. • Evaluate trails and amenities during development pre-application meetings. | Housing #3: Promote sustainable neighborhoods through the use of quality design and building materials and the inclusion of amenities. |
| Within areas designated conservation development on the Land Use Plan, the wooded areas, streams, and natural topography should be viewed as unique features and amenities to be capitalized upon, not lost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft zoning regulations for conservation development with open space and buffers to protect natural features in sensitive areas, such as along Gregory Creek and the Great Miami River, allowing development in these areas to be concentrated on the developable portions of the site. | Housing #3: Promote sustainable neighborhoods through the use of quality design and building materials and the inclusion of amenities. |
| In subdivisions under development, protect existing residents' property values and maintain the integrity of neighborhoods by guarding against shifting product type. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate measures through the Zoning Resolution and/or Subdivision Regulations to offer some review over, public notice, and public opportunity to comment when developers or builders decide to switch to a significantly different housing product than what exists in the subdivision. | Housing #3: Promote sustainable neighborhoods through the use of quality design and building materials and the inclusion of amenities |
| Help preserve farmland / and or natural land, to the extent the property owner wants it preserved through land banking, easements, and transfer of development rights. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the extent possible, capitalize on donated land as local match towards grants for improvements such as parks and trails. • Publicize to residents the availability of such programs, and the benefits to both land owner and community. | Housing #3: Promote sustainable neighborhoods through the use of quality design and building materials and the inclusion of amenities |
| Coordinate master planning efforts with FHWA, ODOT, OKI, BCEO, adjacent Warren County communities and other similar organizations in order to regionally align interests and priorities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate the planning process between local governmental entities and begin to outline steps involved with the project. • Work with Butler County Water & Sewer to get adequate water and sewer infrastructure in place to support development. • Begin preparing the environmental, preliminary engineering, traffic studies, etc. to kick-start the project. • Review changing the name of Millikin Road to help market Liberty Township along I-75. | <p>Economic Development #1: Promote a new interchange along I-75 near Millikin Road.</p> <p>Transportation #1: Work towards a new interchange along I-75 at Millikin Road.</p> |



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Encourage the rezoning of property in the vicinity of the proposed Millikin Interchange to commercial zoning to make way for the future roadway and development.</p> <p>Identify development opportunities for the 95 acres at 5830 Cincinnati-Dayton Road.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with property owners of land near the proposed Millikin Interchange to share the long-term vision for the Township and encourage open dialogue about their future plans. • Township shall consider initiating rezoning with support of interested property owners and utilize the 95 acre Duke Energy Site Readiness program site as a catalyst. • Market the available land to larger Fortune 500 and 100 firms. • Utilize the 95 acre Duke Energy Site Readiness program site as a catalyst to spark interest in the Future Millikin Corridor and proactively seek a developer/investor with a vision for the property consistent with the Land Use Plan. | <p>Economic Development #1: Promote a new interchange along I-75 near Millikin Road.</p> |
| <p>Identify funding sources for a new interchange at Millikin Road, including developer/land owner participation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD) to help fund infrastructure. • Identify other funding sources including New Community Authority, assessments, public-private partnerships, etc. • Work in collaboration with Butler County Engineer's Office/TID to evaluate project costs, scope and funding opportunities. • Analyze the use of public / private partnerships. | <p>Economic Development #1: Promote a new interchange along I-75 near Millikin Road.</p> <p>Transportation #1: Work towards a new interchange along I-75 at Millikin Road.</p> |
| <p>Promote Downtown Bethany and its redevelopment as a local community gathering area for residents of Liberty Township.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use the Downtown Bethany Master Plan to market and encourage development. • Establish and develop community gathering spaces defined within plan. • Evaluate and update Downtown Bethany plan every five years. • Review zoning code and update as needed. Consider the use of a form-based zoning code. | <p>Economic Development #2: Create an identified downtown and/or gathering areas for the community.</p> |

Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Encourage the development of Cox Road north to State Route 63 in order to provide an alternative north-south roadway to relieve traffic from I-75.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market the commercial development opportunities that exist with vacant land. This is particularly important because the extension of Cox Road will be developer driven and each section developed as commercial growth occurs. • Encourage the rezoning of property consistent with the Land Use Plan. • Encourage and connect property owners interested in dedicating right-of-way for future Cox Road to the appropriate developer groups as development progresses • Work with Butler County to provide water/sewer service to land along future Cox Road. | <p>Economic Development #1: Promote a new interchange along I-75 near Millikin Road</p> <p>Transportation #1: Work towards a new interchange along I-75 at Millikin Road.</p> |
| <p>Continue to pursue the proposed Steiner + Associates Liberty Center development at Liberty Way and SR 129 and market it as a regional “town center”.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate identifying a committee to help market the regional town center concept and rally the Central Business District about the benefits of having a town center in the community. • Convey the message to residents and local businesses that the proposed Liberty Center represents the catalyst for economic development in Liberty Township. • Market the “town center” concept to existing central business district (CBD) businesses and look for opportunities to showcase what they bring to the CBD in order to complement the mix of tenants Steiner + Associates will seek – opportunities for all businesses to increase profile with added exposure. | <p>Economic Development #2: Create an identified downtown and/or gathering areas for the community.</p> |



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Identify and promote a small town center type of development at Carriage Hill along the SR 747 Corridor.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build upon Homearama 2013 and 2014 to market and promote the town center concept within Carriage Hill and the quality of life assets of the greater Liberty Township community. • Encourage community facilities/services that may help attract support for town center. • Market the “Carriage Hill town center” concept to existing businesses in order to create a groundswell of support for the unique residential project that has the potential to increase traffic to and increase the profile of all existing Liberty Township businesses in the 747 Corridor. | <p>Economic Development #2: Create an identified downtown and/or gathering areas for the community.</p> |
| <p>Encourage community-oriented events, holiday-themed activities and the like at the proposed town center locations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the Liberty Township events volunteers to create programming at the town centers and community gathering spots. • Identify ways to increase financial and in-kind support from local businesses for Liberty Township’s community-oriented events. • Continue to utilize the West Chester/Liberty Community Foundation to allow local businesses to support community-oriented events at the public gathering spots identified. | <p>Economic Development #2: Create an identified downtown and/or gathering areas for the community.</p> |
| <p>Leverage the Liberty Way Interchange proposed developments to improve our identity regionally and take the branding of Liberty Township to the next level.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the word “Liberty” be used in the name of proposed developments of regional importance (ie: Children’s Hospital Liberty Campus, Liberty Center). • Develop plans for entry node landscaping enhancements and improvements at I-75 & Liberty Way and Cr-Day & Liberty Way. • Continue to make landscaping gateway improvements at Cr-Day / SR 747 @ SR 129. | <p>Economic Development #3: Reinforce the Liberty Township brand and the community’s strengths in order to build community pride for Township businesses and residents.</p> |

Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| <p>Continue to work with the Post Office to address the zip code confusion in Liberty Township and provide better access to post office services in the community.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate the number of zip codes and increase the usability of Liberty Township as city name when using zip codes. • Specifically target Liberty Township businesses to use Liberty Township, OH with pride as opposed to identifying themselves with the zip code defaults of Hamilton, Middletown and West Chester. • Encourage the use and adoption of Liberty Township, OH by all businesses (includes Liberty Center) & residents within the 45069 zip code. | <p>Economic Development #3: Reinforce the Liberty Township brand and the community's strengths in order to build community pride for Township businesses and residents</p> |
| <p>Maximize community branding wherever and whenever possible.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans for additional landscaping, signage, entry node enhancements, etc. to continue to implement community branding throughout the Township. • Utilize parks and public gathering spaces to communicate branding. • Get Liberty Township name on water towers in the Township. • Work with Visitor's Bureau to increase directional signage to Liberty Township attractions. • Work with ODOT to get Liberty Township name on all Interstates at borders and exit ramps (small green signs) along I-75 and SR 129. • Identify funding strategies to implement community branding like ODOT's gateway enhancement funds and OKI's transportation enhancement funds. • Investigate the option of using social media to increase the Township's identity and communicate its attributes. | <p>Economic Development #3: Reinforce the Liberty Township brand and the community's strengths in order to build community pride for Township businesses and residents</p> |
| <p>Work with West Chester Township on interchange landscaping at Liberty Way.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore public-private partnership between Townships, developers and businesses to designate funds for Liberty Way beautification. | <p>Economic Development #3: Reinforce the Liberty Township brand and the community's strengths in order to build community pride for Township businesses and residents</p> |



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| <p>Enhance community branding through architectural standards and high aesthetic character</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to adhere to the overlay districts developed for the Central Business District, Downtown Bethany, etc. • Create a plan and development standards which promote the re-development of Maustown. • Maintain the rural character of the community by implementing different standards as it relates to setbacks and development between the Central Business District and SR 747. • Build on the momentum of Carriage Hill being named the host for Homearama 2013 and 2014 and promote Liberty Township as a great community in Greater Cincinnati for residents and businesses and market the area's quality of life assets, aesthetic character, history and location. | <p>Economic Development #3: Reinforce the Liberty Township brand and the community's strengths in order to build community pride for Township businesses and residents</p> |
| <p>Be cognizant of the factors that go into community rankings like the Cincy Magazine "Ranking the Burbs" and encourage addressing and supporting the quality of life factors that are important to attracting businesses and residents to the area in order to increase Liberty Township's scores on these rankings.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to address safety issues as they arise and promote Liberty Township as a safe community with low crime rates. • Continue to support the Lakota Local School District and help connect residents and businesses to appropriate school personnel to get the facts related to school issues. • Continue to support well-planned neighborhood development, the use of green space, sidewalks and trails within neighborhoods in order to maintain the level of quality currently in Liberty Township's housing stock and neighborhoods. • Continue to realize the role property taxes have on the community and home selection process and continue to educate residents and businesses on the current tax structure and the need for commercial development in the community to help off-set residential tax burden. | <p>Economic Development #3: Reinforce the Liberty Township brand and the community's strengths in order to build community pride for Township businesses and residents</p> |

Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Utilize the Vision Plan process to re-examine the land use classifications in each corridor and determine best land use moving forward.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a committee to review the Zoning Code to revisit overlay districts, use classifications, and zoning policies in commercial development corridors. • Evaluate updates to the Zoning Code to reduce and/or remove buffer requirements for new commercial development proposed adjacent to existing residential that is planned for future commercial development. • Create a series of four marketing one-pagers to illustrate the corridors and their attributes as well as the businesses currently operating in the area. | <p>Economic Development #4: Market the four commercial development corridors and the special attributes of each corridor.</p> |
| <p>Market the Central Business District (Cincinnati-Dayton Road, I-75, Liberty Way and Cox Road) as a prime location for a Fortune 500 or 100 Headquarters operation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Class A Office space at Liberty Way, both on west and east sides of the Interchange. • Attract a Fortune 500 or 100 Headquarters operation to Liberty Township. • Create an amenity rich district inclusive of a mixed use town center to support the needs of a Fortune 500/100 operation on the west side of I-75. • Encourage the development of Cox Road to the north in order to open up additional acreage for commercial growth in this corridor. • Adhere to high aesthetic character and architectural guidelines in the CBD. • Promote high quality housing throughout the community to attract corporate headquarters. • Get infrastructure and zoning in place to support the planned commercial development. | <p>Economic Development #4: Market the four commercial development corridors and the special attributes of each corridor.</p> |



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Identify a sustainable mixture of uses for the State Route 747 Corridor (SR 747 from SR 129 to Route 4) and market the corridor accordingly.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate a development plan for Maustown along SR 747 similar to what was created for Downtown Bethany. • Support and encourage the development of the master-planned community Carriage Hill. • Support the SR 747 widening. • Consult with property owners and potential developers regarding the redevelopment of large properties in the corridor. • Promote planned mixed-use and commercial development for the remaining commercial property as designated on the Land Use Plan. • Get infrastructure and zoning in place to support the planned commercial development. | <p>Economic Development #4: Market the four commercial development corridors and the special attributes of each corridor.</p> |
| <p>Market the State Route 4 Corridor as a destination for a mixture of light industrial, manufacturing, service, and retail businesses.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the rezoning of property consistent with the Land Use Plan. • Work with property owners and potential developers regarding the redevelopment of mobile home communities and Elks Golf Course. • Market vacant and available property. • Get infrastructure and zoning in place to support the planned commercial development. | <p>Economic Development #4: Market the four commercial development corridors and the special attributes of each corridor.</p> |
| <p>Market the Future Millikin Center (Cincinnati-Dayton Road from Princeton north to Kyles Station) as a future commercial development corridor for office/limited industrial.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the development of Cox Road to the north in order to open up additional acreage for commercial growth in this corridor. • Work with property owners and encourage rezoning property consistent with the Land Use Plan. • Explore routes for infrastructure/utility improvements. • Make the Millikin Road Interchange the highest priority for Future Millikin Center to open up the land for commercial development. • Get infrastructure and zoning in place to support the planned commercial development. • Create vision plan to market the future built environment to help illustrate the vision for this future commercial area. | <p>Economic Development #4: Market the four commercial development corridors and the special attributes of each corridor.</p> |

Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| <p>The relatively small number of commercially zoned properties leaves few options for businesses looking for property which is development ready. Expand the amount of commercially-zoned land in Liberty Township to provide more development ready options for businesses looking to locate here.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with property owners and encourage rezoning of property consistent with the Land Use Plan. • Market available land identified for future commercial development. • Be sensitive to adjacent residential uses by providing proper buffer and transition type uses that create a separation and/ or less intense use between proposed commercial or high intensity residential and existing residential uses. | <p>Economic Development #5: Develop, plan and encourage sufficient commercial, industrial, research park, retail, service and office development in Liberty Township to help offset the tax base and increase employment opportunity in the Township.</p> |
| <p>Be proactive in providing infrastructure to support, attract and expand business.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with county and regional entities to identify commercial site “readiness” with regard to infrastructure in order to develop plans and/or prioritize projects accordingly (ie: Duke Energy Site Readiness program, routine communication with Butler County Water & Sewer, etc). • Promote sustainable development within the JEDD and consider expansion of the JEDD boundaries or the creation of additional JEDD district(s) in order to create funding for infrastructure to spur additional economic development. • Proactively encourage the Millikin Interchange project – this is the highest priority infrastructure project for economic development in order to improve access to properties along I-75. • Proactively encourage the Cox Road north extension which is important to developing the east side of the Liberty Way Interchange in the short-term and will be critical to gaining consensus approval necessary for the Millikin Road Interchange project in the long-term. | <p>Economic Development #5: Develop, plan and encourage sufficient commercial, industrial, research park, retail, service and office development in Liberty Township to help offset the tax base and increase employment opportunity in the Township.</p> |



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| <p>Educate residents on the need for commercial development to help support taxes and other community costs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with property owners of land planned for commercial development to share the long-term vision for the Township and encourage open dialogue about their future plans. • Complete the cost of community services analysis and use as a tool to evaluate the fiscal impact of proposed developments on community services and educate residents on their potential impact. • Utilize the Township website and evaluate the use of social media to make information available to the public regarding cost of community services and the impacts of development on these costs. | <p>Economic Development #5: Develop, plan and encourage sufficient commercial, industrial, research park, retail, service and office development in Liberty Township to help offset the tax base and increase employment opportunity in the Township.</p> |
| <p>Maximize the long-term vision of high quality development (natural building materials, modest signage, increased landscaping, etc.).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the long-term fiscal impact of residential and commercial development being proposed to better understand the direct and indirect effects on the Township's overall cost of community services to support these proposed development. • Review the Zoning Code to ensure the Township's vision of high aesthetic character is encouraged and achieved. • Encourage sustainable development throughout the Township recognizing many areas are a "blank slate" and we have one chance to "do it right." | <p>Economic Development #5: Develop, plan and encourage sufficient commercial, industrial, research park, retail, service and office development in Liberty Township to help offset the tax base and increase employment opportunity in the Township.</p> |
| <p>Promote and encourage high quality residential development, trails/bike paths connectivity, parks and rec development and the like recognizing that strong quality of life assets help communities attract sustainable economic development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify more specifically the quality of life assets sought by businesses and explore what kind of economic impact these assets can have. • Look for ways to quantify what good connectivity does for a community from an economic development perspective – economic benefit to having good trail system, parks, etc. • Identify if cost of community services study can evaluate the long-term sustainability of the community by evaluating property values, etc. | <p>Economic Development #5: Develop, plan and encourage sufficient commercial, industrial, research park, retail, service and office development in Liberty Township to help offset the tax base and increase employment opportunity in the Township.</p> |

Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| To ensure that this chapter remains current with the fast-changing development landscape, in two years (2016-2017) the Economic Development Committee will review and update this chapter as necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Economic Development Committee will review and update as necessary. | Goal #6: To ensure that this chapter remains current with the fast-changing development landscape, in two years (2016-2017) the Economic Development Committee will review and update this chapter as necessary. |
| Promote awareness of Liberty Township Trails and Bike Routes through maps, flyers, existing Township events, and trail signage. Use these same avenues to educate regarding trail safety and etiquette. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create maps and flyers Create / update trail signage Distribute information at Township events | Trails Plan Overall Goals |
| Get applicable sidewalk, trail, and bike route projects included in the Butler County Thoroughfare Plan, OKI, and ODOT plans. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Butler County Engineer's CIP for projects to partner with to accomplish proposed improvements. | Trails Plan Overall Goals |
| Coordinate trail efforts with neighboring communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with neighboring communities regarding their trail efforts on a regular basis. | Trails Plan Overall Goals |
| Continue to work with and support Lakota Schools in their Safe Routes To School efforts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Lakota Schools on a regular basis regarding planned pedestrian improvements within the vicinity of school locations. | Trails Plan Overall Goals |
| Work with community groups (Boy / Girl Scouts, HOAs, etc.) to partner with for the implementation of components of the Trails Plan. | | Trails Plan Overall Goals |
| Obtain recognition as a Bicycle Friendly Community from the League of American Bicyclists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit application for Bicycle Friendly Community designation for review. | Trails Plan Bicycle Goals |
| Sign proposed bike routes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop objective criteria to determine which road segments can currently be a signed bikeway, and which segments require improvements before they can be signed. Create a line item in yearly CIP for new signs / pavement markings. Include directional signage for parks and attractions. Sign bike route connections through neighborhoods. | Trails Plan Bicycle Goals |



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| Add bicycle racks at Township facilities, and encourage local businesses and institutions to do the same. | | Trails Plan Bicycle Goals |
| Make sidewalk connections between subdivisions and to schools and commercial development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start at destinations (commercial, schools, parks, etc.) and spider out in making sidewalk connection priorities based on a ½ mile walking radius. • Prioritize closing gaps in the existing sidewalk network and providing sidewalks where pedestrians currently walk with no sidewalk. • Provide for safe pedestrian crosswalks at designated intersections on the plan maps. | Trails Plan Pedestrian Goals |
| Whenever possible, promote sidewalk projects in tandem with planned roadway improvements to minimize cost and disruption. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with BCEO on proposed roadway improvement projects to ensure that planned sidewalk, trail, or bicycle facilities are included in the project. • Monitor the BCEO's CIP for upcoming projects to include planned pedestrian facilities. | Trails Plan Pedestrian Goals |
| Require that new developments provide sidewalk and trail segments in accordance with this plan, along with the Township Zoning Resolution and Butler County Subdivision Regulations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review during development pre-application meetings. | Trails Plan Pedestrian Goals |
| Focus on connections between subdivisions and connecting subdivisions to parks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the construction of trail segments when possible as part of proposed development or roadway projects where indicated in the Trails Plan. • Utilize ODNR or other grant programs to acquire right-of-way. • Promote donated right-of-way as a local match to leverage for construction grants. • Review during development pre-application meetings • Identify gaps in existing infrastructure. | Trails Plan Trails Goals |
| Establish a desired route among the options shown for the Miami2Miami Trail that utilizes a separate path trail to the extent possible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with Trails Committee and adjacent communities to identify a preferred route. | Trails Plan Trails Goals |

Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| Establish a Trail along Gregory Creek between Incline Park and connecting to the Great Miami Trail. The Gregory Creek Trail (or part of it) should be looked at as a possible segment of the Miami2Miami Trail. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review as properties develop along the Gregory Creek Corridor. | Trails Plan Trails Goals |
| Identify planned trail segments on the current plan which are infeasible, remove them and look for alternative routes if necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a feasibility study of high priority projects on the project list. If found infeasible and with no alternatives, consider moving down the list or removing from the list and plan. | Trails Plan Trails Goals |
| Adopt a Trails Plan which plans out a network of sidewalk, trail, and bikeways. | Accomplished with the adoption of this Plan | Parks Recreation and Trails #2: Provide multi-use paths for recreation within and between neighborhoods. Also use paths to link neighborhoods with parks and schools. |
| Find ways to finance the construction and maintenance of trail segments through matching grants, private fundraising, public / private, or other in-kind donations. | | Parks Recreation and Trails #2: Provide multi-use paths for recreation within and between neighborhoods. Also use paths to link neighborhoods with parks and schools. |
| Review all development proposals to ensure that required improvements are included per adopted plans or the Zoning Resolution. | | Parks Recreation and Trails #2: Provide multi-use paths for recreation within and between neighborhoods. Also use paths to link neighborhoods with parks and schools. |
| Continue to work with property owners along the creek to communicate the vision for Gregory Creek, listen to their ideas, and address their concerns. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize informal discussions with property owners. | Parks Recreation and Trails #3: Develop the Gregory Creek floodplain as a natural corridor, accessible through a trail and Township parks along the creek. The corridor would be connected to adjacent neighborhoods through trail as well. |



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| Acquire right-of way / easements for the trail as opportunities arise. | | Parks Recreation and Trails #3: Develop the Gregory Creek floodplain as a natural corridor, accessible through a trail and Township parks along the creek. The corridor would be connected to adjacent neighborhoods through trail as well. |
| Require the installation of trail segments as part of development along the creek corridor. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify during development review. | Parks Recreation and Trails #3: Develop the Gregory Creek floodplain as a natural corridor, accessible through a trail and Township parks along the creek. The corridor would be connected to adjacent neighborhoods through trail as well. |
| Find more reliable and ongoing sponsorship and effective organizing beyond Township staff. | | Parks Recreation and Trails #4: Expand upon annual community events. |
| While still retaining events tailored to families, seek to add events or components to events which attract young adults and empty nesters. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek input from residents to identify other activities. | Parks Recreation and Trails #4: Expand upon annual community events. |
| Market the fund at Community Foundation for parks development to be able to accept donations and contributions. | | Parks Recreation and Trails #5: Find funding sources for development and maintenance of park properties. |
| Leverage local funds and donations through use of grant programs. | | Parks Recreation and Trails #5: Find funding sources for development and maintenance of park properties. |
| Leverage the efforts of volunteers | | Parks Recreation and Trails #5: Find funding sources for development and maintenance of park properties. |
| Encourage the use of Lakota Schools' Facilities in off-hours to make them true community amenities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Lakota School's staff to identify opportunities. | Parks Recreation and Trails #6 |
| Support the efforts of larger regional trail networks such as the Great Miami River Trail and the Miami2Miami Trail. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Miami Conservancy, Metroparks of Butler County, BCEO and adjacent communities. | Parks Recreation and Trails #7 |

Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| Coordinate master planning efforts with FHWA, ODOT, OKI, BCEO, adjacent Warren County communities and other similar organizations in order to regionally align interests and priorities. | | Transportation #1: Work towards a new interchange along I-75 at Millikin Road. |
| Initiate the planning process between local governmental entities and begin to outline steps involved with bringing a new Millikin Interchange to Liberty Township. | | Transportation #1: Work towards a new interchange along I-75 at Millikin Road. |
| Work with Butler County Water & Sewer to get adequate water and sewer infrastructure in place to support development. | | Transportation #1: Work towards a new interchange along I-75 at Millikin Road. |
| Begin preparing the environmental, preliminary engineering, traffic studies, etc. to kick-start the major infrastructure project. | | Transportation #1: Work towards a new interchange along I-75 at Millikin Road. |
| Promote development along the Cox Road Extension to improve the effectiveness of the Millikin Interchange. | | Transportation #1: Work towards a new interchange along I-75 at Millikin Road. |
| The Township shall give formal input regarding updates to the County Thoroughfare Plan. | | Transportation #2: Be more proactive and strategic with respect to road improvements to logically route traffic in the Township in such a way as to support areas of current and planned future commercial use, while protecting the quality of life of residents and areas planned to remain more rural. |
| Encourage new development access points in locations to direct traffic towards main thoroughfares and away from areas planned for low density residential development. | | Transportation #2: Be more proactive and strategic with respect to road improvements to logically route traffic in the Township in such a way as to support areas of current and planned future commercial use, while protecting the quality of life of residents and areas planned to remain more rural. |



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| Continue working with BCEO and ODOT regarding speed limit reductions as warranted. | | Transportation #2: Be more proactive and strategic with respect to road improvements to logically route traffic in the Township in such a way as to support areas of current and planned future commercial use, while protecting the quality of life of residents and areas planned to remain more rural. |
| Develop a pedestrian and bicycle network as outlined in the Township Trails Plan. | | Transportation #3: Future traffic improvements should support multiple forms of transportation, including pedestrians. |
| Reduced bussing has created the need for pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the vicinity of schools. The Township will lend support to Lakota School's Safe Routes to School Plans. | | Transportation #3: Future traffic improvements should support multiple forms of transportation, including pedestrians. |
| Liberty Township, along with Lakota Schools and BCEO, will take into account, and seek to mitigate increased traffic at school locations. | | Transportation #3: Future traffic improvements should support multiple forms of transportation, including pedestrians. |
| Work with BCRTA to increase areas of service within the Township that includes future job, medical, and shopping sites. | | Transportation #4: Improve public transportation options for Township residents who are unable to afford or cannot operate motor vehicles, or who desire increased commuting options within the region. |
| Continue to work with BCEO in projecting future traffic volumes along major thoroughfares in the Township, and also applying Access Management regulations to plan for future intersections and access points prior to development happening. | | Transportation #5: Work with BCEO and ODOT to be more proactive in anticipating transportation needs ahead of development. |
| Request funding for improvements when a future need is identified, rather than waiting for problems to arise. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that BCEO, ODOT, and OKI are aware of the Township's Land Use Plan and development pace / interest in the township. | Transportation #5: Work with BCEO and ODOT to be more proactive in anticipating transportation needs ahead of development. |

Section X: Plan Summary Recommendations



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| <p>Be cautious about using TIF and RID financing for infrastructure improvements. It can be an important tool to remove roadblocks to development, but also leaves a gap in funding for increased government services demanded by the new development.</p> | | <p>Transportation #5: Work with BCEO and ODOT to be more proactive in anticipating transportation needs ahead of development.</p> |
| <p>Create an infrastructure plan for key areas to identify hurdles to providing needed infrastructure and services for planned development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a public / private partnership and overall plan for water, sewer, and other infrastructure needs for Millikin Center in coordination with BCWS, Duke Energy, and other appropriate entities. | <p>Utilities #1: Help open up land planned for commercial development by making those areas accessible to utility service.</p> |
| <p>Work to increase the inventory of development ready commercial sites.</p> | | <p>Govt & Community Services Goal #1: Continue to expand economic development efforts to attract business growth.</p> |
| <p>Continue to maintain a list of available commercial properties in the Township.</p> | | <p>Govt & Community Services Goal #1: Continue to expand economic development efforts to attract business growth.</p> |
| <p>Project a professional image to attract economic development, especially large regional players and the Fortune 500 types.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need an adequately sized and more professional looking Administration Building. | <p>Govt & Community Services Goal #1: Continue to expand economic development efforts to attract business growth.</p> |
| <p>Continue to look for ways to improve the development review process as a way to make developing in Liberty Township more streamlined and efficient, without sacrificing quality, thoroughness, and rights to due process.</p> | | <p>Govt & Community Services Goal #1: Continue to expand economic development efforts to attract business growth.</p> |
| <p>Continue to reach out to development groups and the real estate community to increase the awareness of opportunities in Liberty Township.</p> | | <p>Govt & Community Services Goal #1: Continue to expand economic development efforts to attract business growth.</p> |



| Objective | Tasks | Related Goal(s) |
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| Continue to periodically evaluate the need for increased services, especially fire and police as population and the number of businesses increase. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for a new fire station in the northeast quadrant to provide increased fire and EMS service as future development demands. | Govt & Community Services Goal #2: Expand government services in concert with growth of Township and residents' expectations |
| As the Township and surrounding area becomes more urban, continue to be aware of residents' needs and demands for new services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly update the Township's plans, including the Comprehensive Vision Plan and the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Create a formal procedure to update these long-range plans as needed between the regular updates. | Govt & Community Services Goal #2: Expand government services in concert with growth of Township and residents' expectations |
| Benchmark our attributes and services against our peer communities. | | Govt & Community Services Goal #3: Liberty Township needs to be competitive with other communities in the region in providing services, quality of life, and cost. |
| Continue to seek creative and practical ways to more efficiently maintain or improve services to residents. | | Govt & Community Services Goal #3: Liberty Township needs to be competitive with other communities in the region in providing services, quality of life, and cost. |
| Lakota Schools is a large factor in the strength and stability of the Township, and we should continue to partner with and support the schools to benefit the community. | | Govt & Community Services Goal #3: Liberty Township needs to be competitive with other communities in the region in providing services, quality of life, and cost. |



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