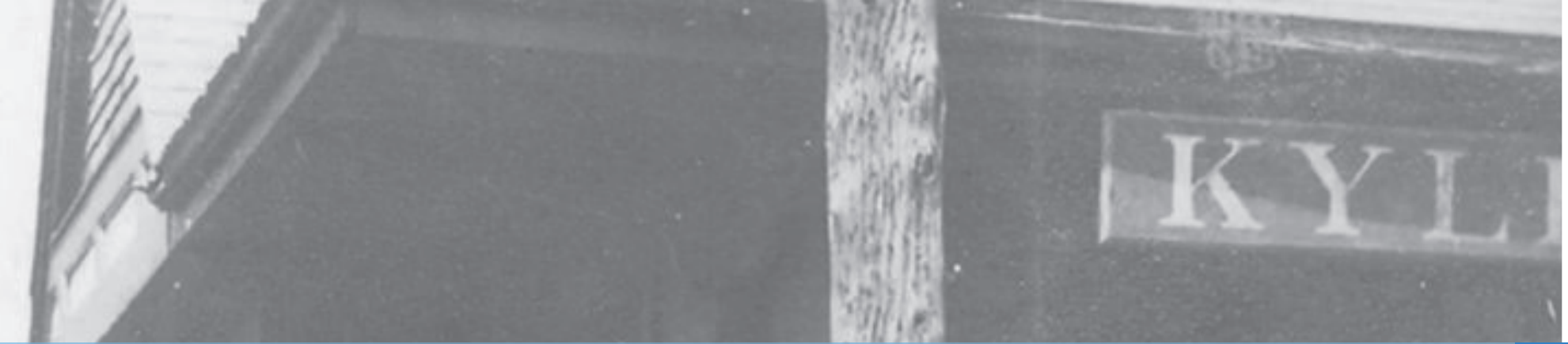


Chapter Two: A Call to Action

The *2020 Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan* is a result of a community-driven and asset-based planning approach. The approach builds upon the existing assets found within the community and mobilizes decision makers, individuals, association, and institutions to come together to identify their strengths, while also responding to key community challenges. This chapter describes the Township's existing strengths and outlines several key challenges as a way to set the stage for crafting the future of Liberty Township.



Provided by Liberty Township Historical Society

COMMUNITY HISTORY

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

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

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

The following decades leading through the late 19th into the early 20th century were times of quiet growth and development for Liberty Township. Many of the old churches, such as Bethany United Methodist Church (1875), were built around this time. Education also began to take off as a new law in 1853 established public schools in the township. While schools had existed within Liberty Township previously, such as Kyles School established in 1858, the new law sparked renewed interest in schools. New and existing schools were built and replaced in the following years (1871, 1887, and 1880's) as the number of students expanded.

Liberty's next major wave of growth appeared in 1924, with the creation of the Horse Shoe Bend subdivision in the Northwest corner of the Township. The small-frame and concrete block homes housed workers from nearby Hamilton industries. This pattern would be seen again with the completion of Interstate 75 throughout the eastern portion of the Township in the 1960's, followed again by the Butler County Veterans Highway in the 1990's. The connections and access that these highways brought kicked off a wave of suburban-style development that continues to this day.

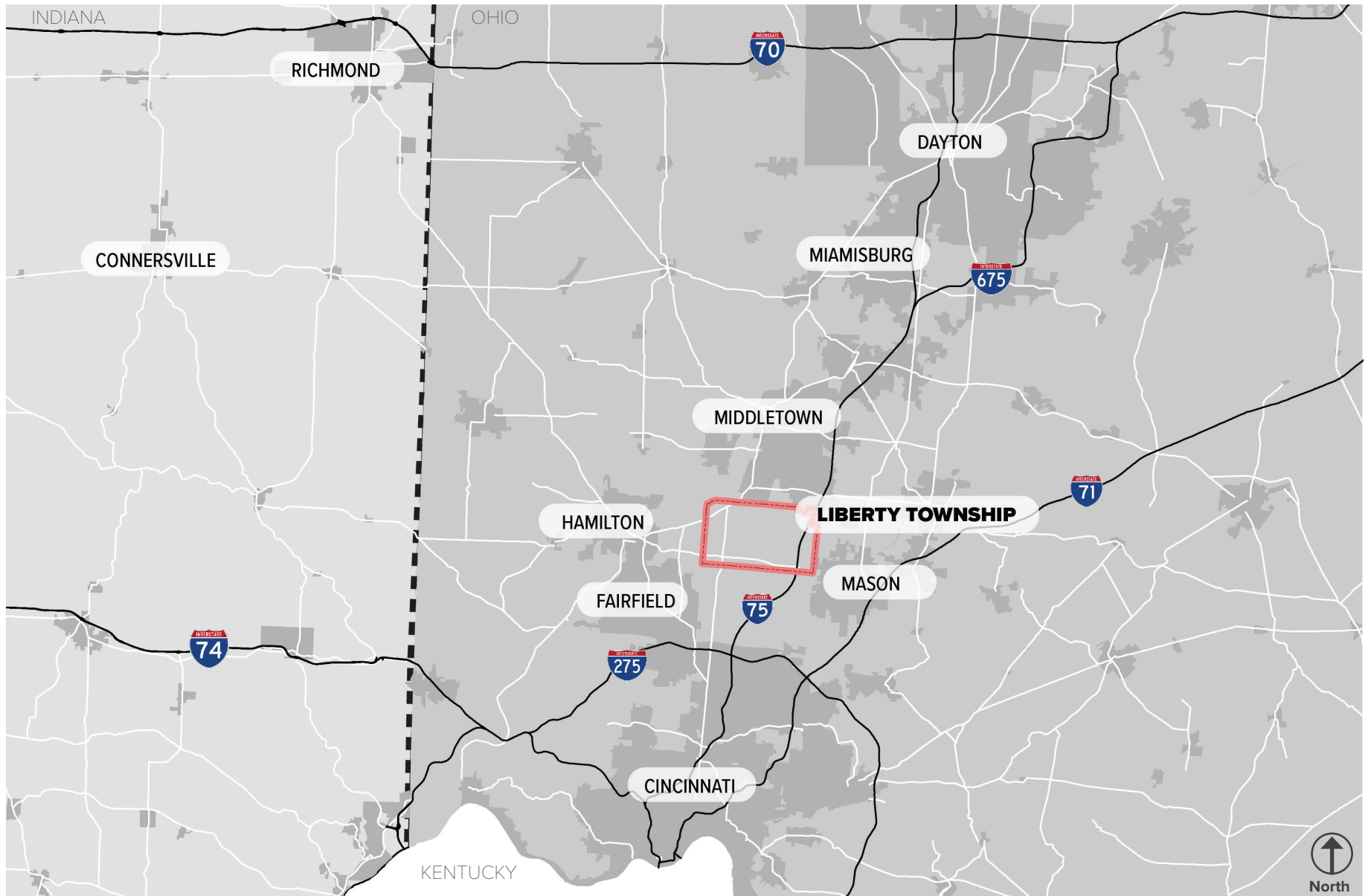
It was between the 1990's and 2010 that the majority of new subdivisions and homes were built in the Township, bringing with them new cohorts of working professionals and their families. While the 2008 housing market crash saw a sharp decline in the construction of new housing, Liberty Township retained its strategic location and proximity to surrounding cities like Cincinnati to the south and Dayton to the north. During the same year, Cincinnati Children's Medical Center Liberty Campus opened up and began the turning point in the attraction of other medical facilities and Liberty Center. Several major developments have resulted in Liberty Township evolving from a bedroom community into a suburban destination with a distinctive identity including when the Cincinnati Children's Hospital with Proton Therapy and Research Center opened along the I-75 in 2008, followed by Liberty Way interchange in 2009, and then a major commercial node at Liberty Center in 2015.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

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

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

Of particular importance to Liberty Township is the Liberty Way Interchange, located in the southeastern corner of the Township. This interchange of the Butler County Veterans Highway (SR 129) and I-75 serves as a primary access point to the community, giving residents easy access to a robust highway network. Capitalizing on this focus point, Liberty Township has seen rapid growth in commercial development near this interchange, especially in the health sector. The more recent addition of the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and their Proton Therapy and Research Center as well as The Christ Hospital Medical Center, UC Health West Chester Hospital, Tri-Health and the mixed-use Liberty Center has introduced an array of opportunities and amenities, where residents can find employment, housing, dining, and recreation in one location. Not only has Liberty Township worked diligently on providing pedestrian trails throughout the township with the local Trails Initiative, it is also connected regionally through the Miami2Miami network of trails.



Regional Context Map

BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

Prior to the start of the *2020 Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan* process, Liberty Township facilitated a community-wide survey to better understand the priorities and preferences of residents. Through this planning process, the project team was able to reconfirm that many of the values identified in the 2018 survey remain the same today.

Over the course of 12 months, through various public engagement opportunities, a series of common themes started to emerge when respondents were asked about community assets and strengths. These elements contribute to Liberty Township's identity and should be used to leverage growth and development.

Geographic setting: **A quiet, upscale community with modern conveniences.**

With approximately 30 miles separating Liberty Township from both Cincinnati and Dayton, residents value the short distance to larger metropolitan areas for entertainment and employment but enjoy coming home to their quiet, up-scale community.

Quality housing: **Premier single-family neighborhoods.**

The overwhelming majority (88.6 percent) of Liberty Township's housing is in the form of single-family, detached units with a median value of \$272,922 in 2019. Residents value, and have come to expect, the high-quality housing that is offered in Liberty Township.

Education: **Great educational programs and facilities.**

The 2018 community survey revealed that 69 percent of respondents identified that quality schools is what either drew them to Liberty Township or what keeps them within the community. This is a huge asset for the Township because school districts are typically the top selling-points for potential home-buyers.

Rural character and natural space: **The ambiance of a rural community.**

Identified as one of the community's greatest assets in both the 2018 community survey and the 2020 planning process, residents value the rural nature and character of Liberty Township. Not only do residents value this unique asset, they want to prioritize the preservation of this character over other amenities such as diverse housing types or commercial development.

RECOGNIZING OUR CHALLENGES

Intended to be a complementary deliverable, the *2020 Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan: Existing Conditions Report* was completed during the first phase of the planning process. This document served as both an interim deliverable that provided an inventory of Liberty Township’s existing demographic, socioeconomic, and market conditions, as well as an inventory of the built infrastructure, amenities, and natural features. Additionally, much of the public engagement opportunities and feedback have been summarized in the report. This provides an opportunity for readers to understand both sides of the community’s story. One side being a black and white version of data and the other side being a more colorful version of how the public perceives the community.

Through the completion of the existing conditions report, and initial public engagement events, 11 key challenges were identified ranging from identity and age structure to balancing growth and diverse housing options. These challenges are the primary conclusion statements from the *2020 Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan: Existing Conditions Report*. Because the identified challenges inform the development of the vision, goals, and recommendations in this plan, the summary description for each challenge has been repurposed for this section of the document. The narratives are intended to provide a brief summary description, illustrate supporting data, and outline why finding a solution, or series of strategies to mitigate the challenge, is important to Liberty Township’s success moving forward.



Community Challenge:

IDENTITY

Liberty Township is actively working on establishing a clear community identity.

Summary:

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

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

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

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

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

Impacts:

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

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

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

5 Different zip codes

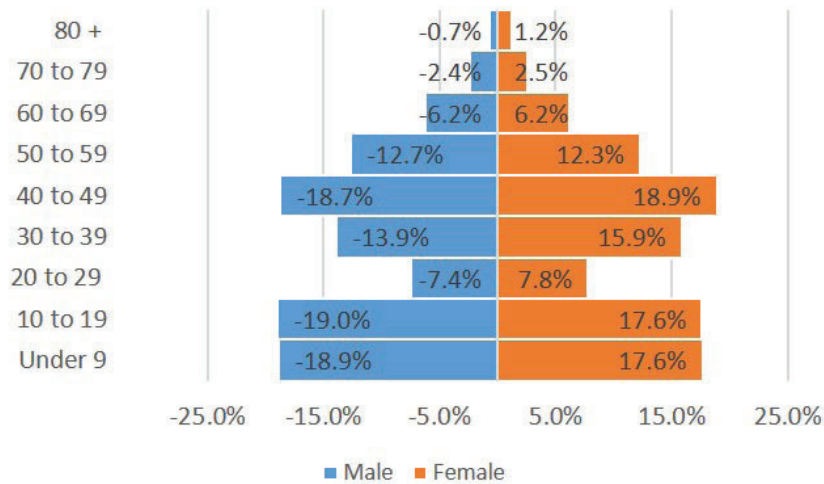
Lakota Local School District spans

OUTSIDE of Liberty Township

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

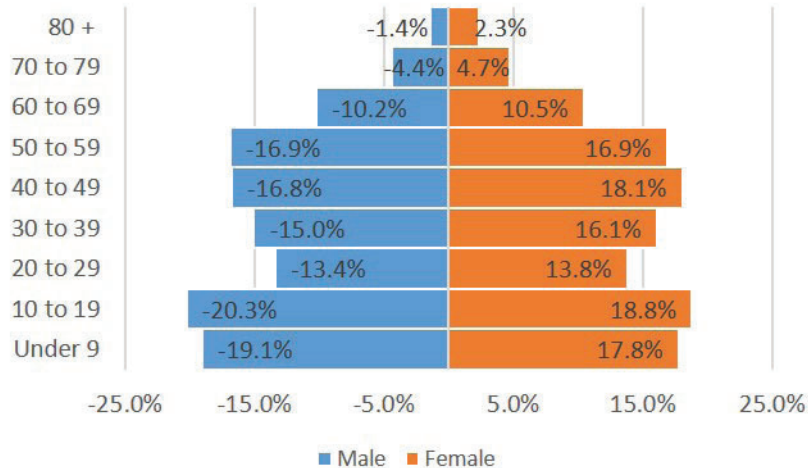
- 2020 Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan

Liberty Township Population Pyramid (2010)



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

Liberty Township Population Pyramid (2019)



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

Community Challenge:

LAND USE DIVERSITY

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

Summary:

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

Liberty Township has been a rural residential community for more than 20 years. Dating back to 1999, over 50 percent of the land area was agriculture with 38 percent single-family residential and 7 percent parks and open space. These three land use categories are really the only categories to experience a significant shift in percentage. As of 2019, there was only 21 percent of land dedicated to agriculture. This decrease in agriculture can mostly be attributed to a 13 percent increase in single-family residential and a shift in how open space was classified. Over the course of 20 years, commercial, industrial, and institutional land has only increased by less than 1 percent. This minimal change in development patterns is noteworthy considering the rapid population growth of a 377 percent increase from 1990 (9,249) to 2019 (44,077). As Liberty Township continues to grow, it will be necessary to expand commercial and institutional uses to provide the necessary goods and services for residents and business owners, otherwise the population will be spending their money outside of the community.

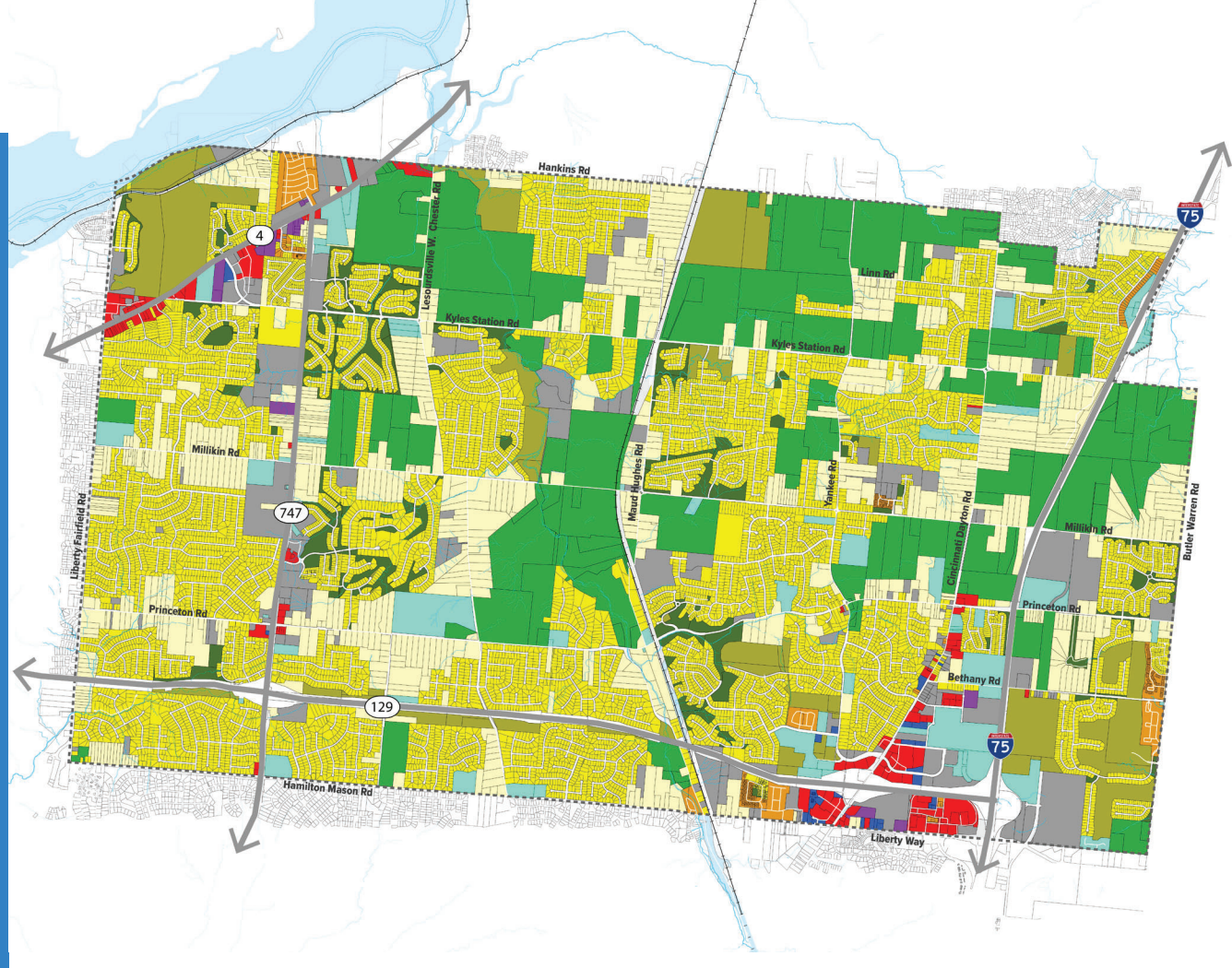
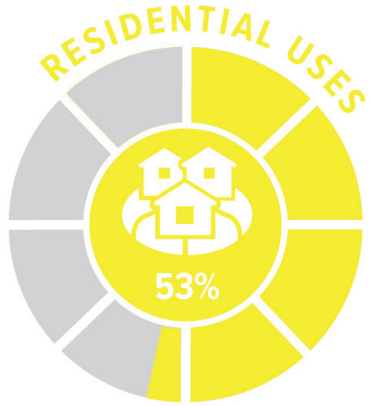
Impacts:

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

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

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

EXISTING LAND USE



EXISTING LAND USE LEGEND

-----	Township Boundary	Yellow	Estate Single-Family Residential	Red	Retail	Light Blue	Public- Institutional	Green	Agriculture
==	Roadway	Light Yellow	Single-Family Residential	Blue	Office	Olive Green	Public-Private Recreation	Grey	Vacant
+	Railroad	Orange	Multi-Family Residential	Purple	Industrial	Dark Green	Open Space		
—	Waterway								

Community Challenge:

AGE STRUCTURE

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

Summary:

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

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

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

Impacts:

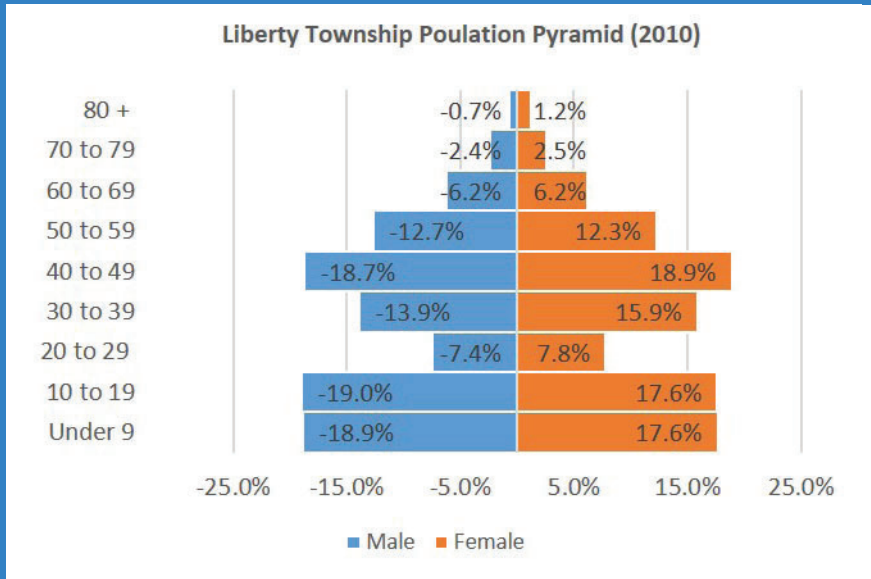
This does not imply that Liberty Township, needs to attract and retain these population segments but rather illustrates what is occurring and the impacts it could have. While each of the age cohorts come with their own opportunities and challenges, young adults and senior adults can be tied

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

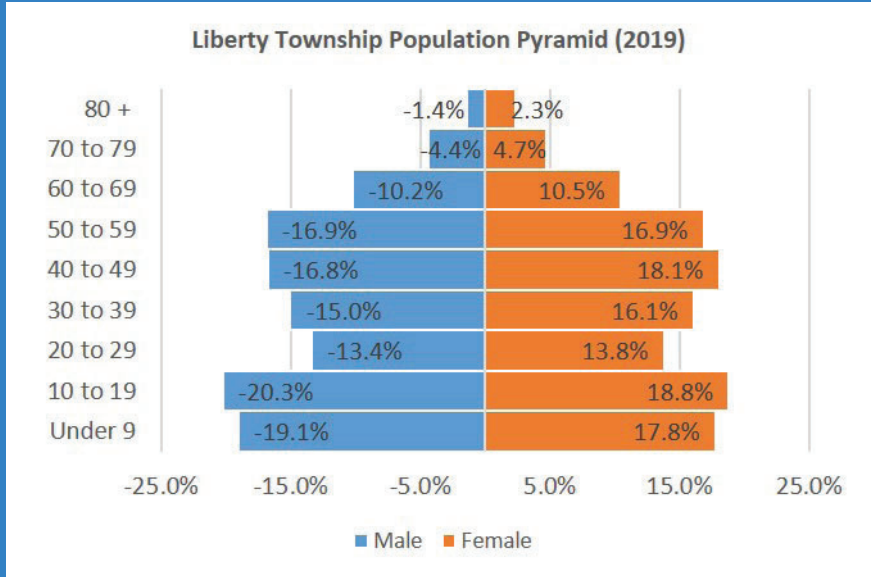
Young adults have expressed their desire for more compact, walkable communities with diverse housing types, pedestrian connectivity, unique experiences, and recreational amenities. A critical step for Liberty Township is to decide if they are willing to provide the amenities and services desired by this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

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

¹ *Millennials and Seniors: More in Common Every Day.* https://www.masc.sc/Pages/newsroom/uptown/August-September-2016/Millennials_and_seniors.aspx



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



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

19%

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

14%

of the 2019 Population was over the age of 60

4%

Increase in senior adults since 2010

Community Challenge:

HOUSING OPTIONS

Liberty Township lacks options in housing.

Summary:

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

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

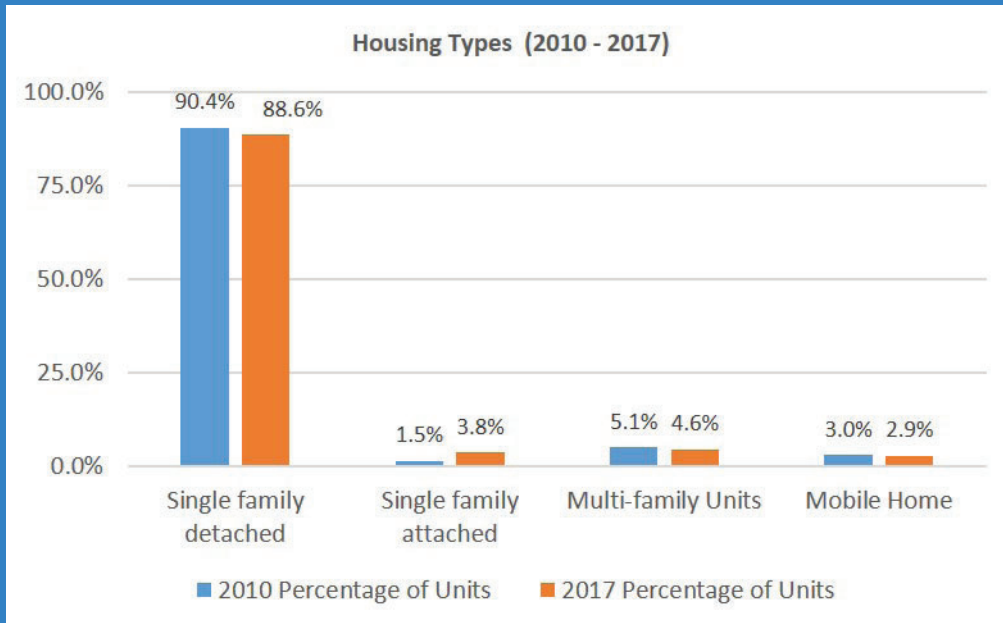
While growing, multi-family residential housing makes up a very small (5) percentage of the total housing stock. The primary focus for multi-family development is Liberty Center Apartments, with rent ranging from \$1,110 - \$2,200 per month. Other examples of multi-family housing option exist at, Lakota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

Impacts:

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

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

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



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

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

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

“Lack of housing diversity.”

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

-Anonymous survey participants

61%

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

89%

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

45%

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

Community Challenge:

BALANCING GROWTH

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

Summary:

Liberty Township is one of the fastest growing communities in southwest Ohio. As of 2019, Liberty Township had a total population of 44,077 residents, which is 11.2 percent of Butler County's total population. This population figure represents a 377 percent increase over the Township's 1990 population figure of 9,249 and nearly an 18 percent increase from 2010. Furthermore, population projections show Liberty Township's total population will increase by nearly 8 percent by 2024.

While it's every community's goal to keep growing and improving, it can become a balancing act for maintaining a high quality of life for local residents. A steady increase in population offers a community the ability to maintain existing services and infrastructure and make strategic improvements through the increase of tax dollars generated. A rapid increase in population is a different story. Liberty Township may have difficulty keeping up with the demand for additional services and infrastructure. This can lead to community leaders becoming reactive rather than being proactive in planning for the future.

Impacts:

According to an article published by the American Society of Public Administration, "There is an increasing recognition that the growth of cities is inevitable and the solution to urban problems depends heavily on effective urban planning, infrastructure development and management."¹ Growth at the pace Liberty Township is seeing can become unsustainable if the community does not continue to strategically plan for it. As more people move into the Township, it will impact much of the built environment and demand for community services. Schools may become overcrowded, public safety personnel will be responsible for protecting a larger population, roadways may become congested, and utilities will need to handle a higher capacity level. All of which requires capital investment for improvements, additional staff, and/or new facilities.

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

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

EXISTING LAND USE	1999		2019	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
Agricultural	8,457	51%	3,577	21%
Estate Residential	2,648	16%	3,008	18%
Single Family Residential	3,602	22%	5,797	34%
Multi-Family Residential	119	1%	200	1.2%
Commercial	200	1%	327	2%
Industrial	19	0.1%	56	0.3%
Public/Semi-Public/Institutional	423	3%	698	4%
Public/Private Recreation	1,145	7%	1,130	7%
Open Space	82	0.5%	503	3%
Vacant	--	--	1,155	7%

*The land use acreage for 2019 was calculated using existing land use map provided by Liberty Township Planning and Zoning.

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

“Lack of diversity within the Township”

- 2019 Anonymous Survey Participant

“Not enough tax revenue and growing too fast.”

- 2019 Anonymous Survey Participant

Community Challenge:

EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

Liberty Township lacks local and/or regional employment centers.

Summary:

The combination of County-level commuting data, Township business data, and public input consistently found that there are few white-collar employment opportunities within Liberty Township. Resident workers are typically well-educated higher-income earners, but travel elsewhere for employment. Similarly, local residents are often traveling outside the Township for weekly shopping trips¹. From a tax base perspective, diversifying the land use pattern to include employment destinations could help with Liberty Township's current and future financial challenges. While recognizing this area is still developing, the Township's section of the I-75 corridor represents a currently underutilized asset in this regard. Stretching nearly 1,800 miles from Canada to Miami, I-75 traverses six states (Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee) making accessibility to and from Liberty Township very easy. Additionally, the planned Millikin Way interchange along I-75 provides an excellent opportunity to leverage the I-75 asset into economic development for the Township.

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

An employment center refers to area dedicated to a concentration of employment generating uses that support the local economy and provide job opportunities for nearby residents. Employment generating uses often include office park, free-standing office buildings, corporate headquarters, and/or research and development facilities.

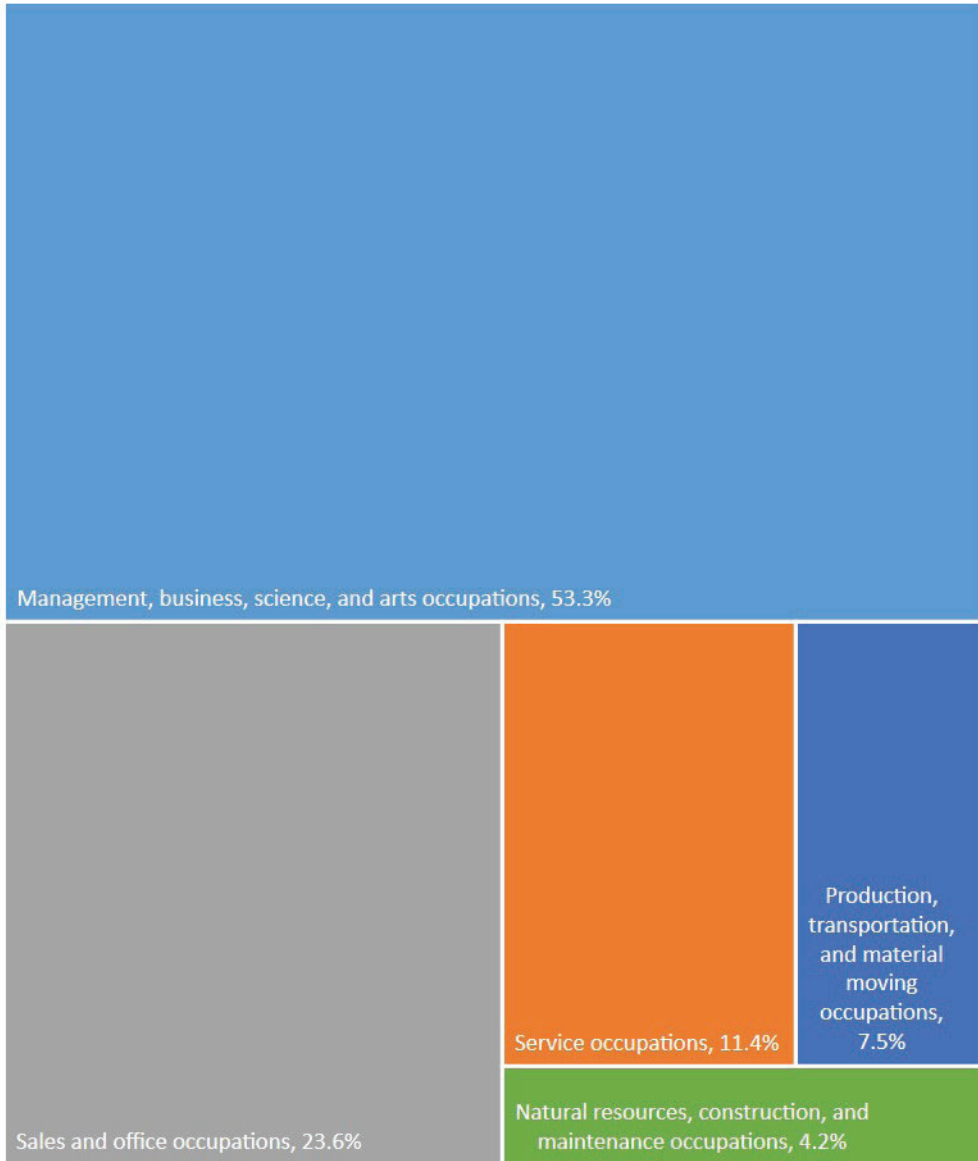
If Liberty Township strives to recruit future employment centers, minimizing conflicts between employment and residential land uses requires careful consideration, particularly in a community like Liberty Township that identifies with quality residential neighborhoods. Employment centers should be sited in areas dedicated for those uses, well-buffered from residential uses. Design and performance standards should also be implemented in order to minimize any noxious impacts on surrounding uses.

Impacts:

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

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

Liberty Township Industry Breakdown



Source: US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey

Top Counties for In-Commuting Workers (Butler County 2017)

County	# of workers
Hamilton County, OH	30,124
Warren County, OH	12,949
Montgomery County, OH	6,241
Clermont County, OH	5,491
Franklin County, OH	2,590
Preble County, OH	1,664
Greene County, OH	1,055
Kenton County, KY	968
Cuyahoga County, OH	839
Brown County, OH	819

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

Top Counties for Out-Commuting Workers (Butler County 2017)

County	# of workers
Hamilton County, OH	55,732
Warren County, OH	15,510
Montgomery County, OH	7,785
Franklin County, OH	4,967
Clermont County, OH	3,070
Cuyahoga County, OH	7,825
Greene County, OH	1,377
Boone County, KY	976
Delaware County, OH	664
Lucas County, OH	637

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

Community Challenge:

RURAL CHARACTER

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

Summary:

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

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

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

Impacts:

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

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

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



Community Challenge:

ACCESS

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

Summary:

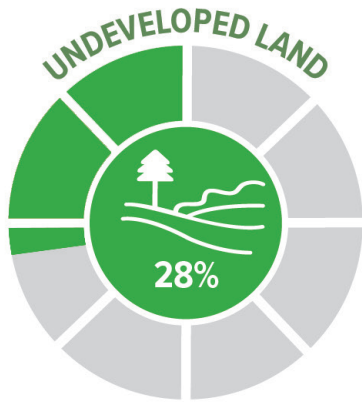
Liberty Township is unique in that a significant portion of the land is undeveloped. These undeveloped areas, known as greenfields, create both opportunities and challenges for the Township. While other communities are facing challenges around redevelopment of existing areas and context-sensitive infill,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

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

Impacts:

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

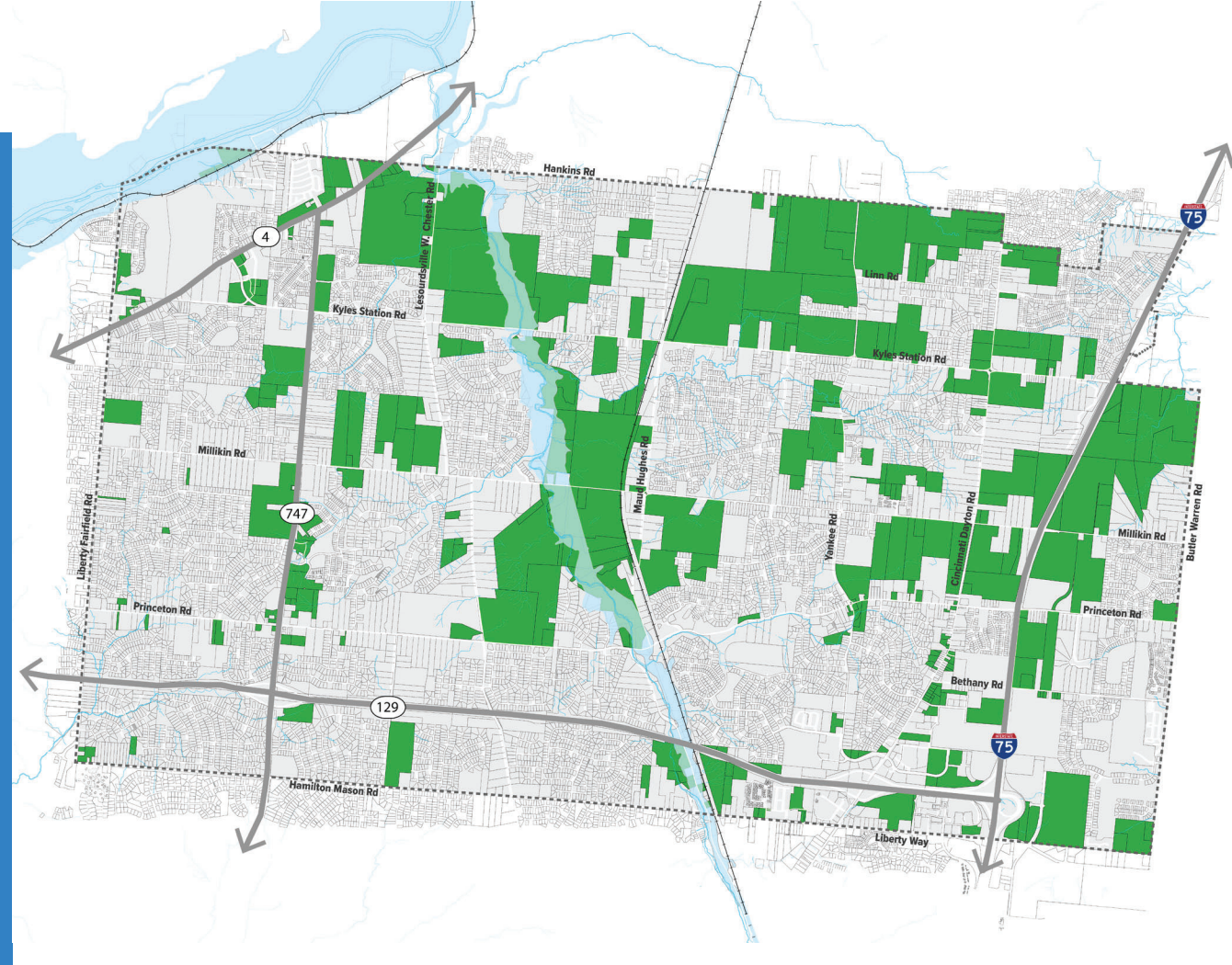
EXISTING UNDEVELOPED LAND



18%

Increase in population between
2010 - 2019

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



UNDEVELOPED LAND MAP LEGEND

- Township Boundary
- ==== Roadway
- + + + Railroad
- Waterway
- Light Blue Floodplain
- Light Grey Developed Land
- Green Undeveloped Land

Community Challenge:

CONNECTIVITY

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

Summary:

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

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

Impacts:

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

80%

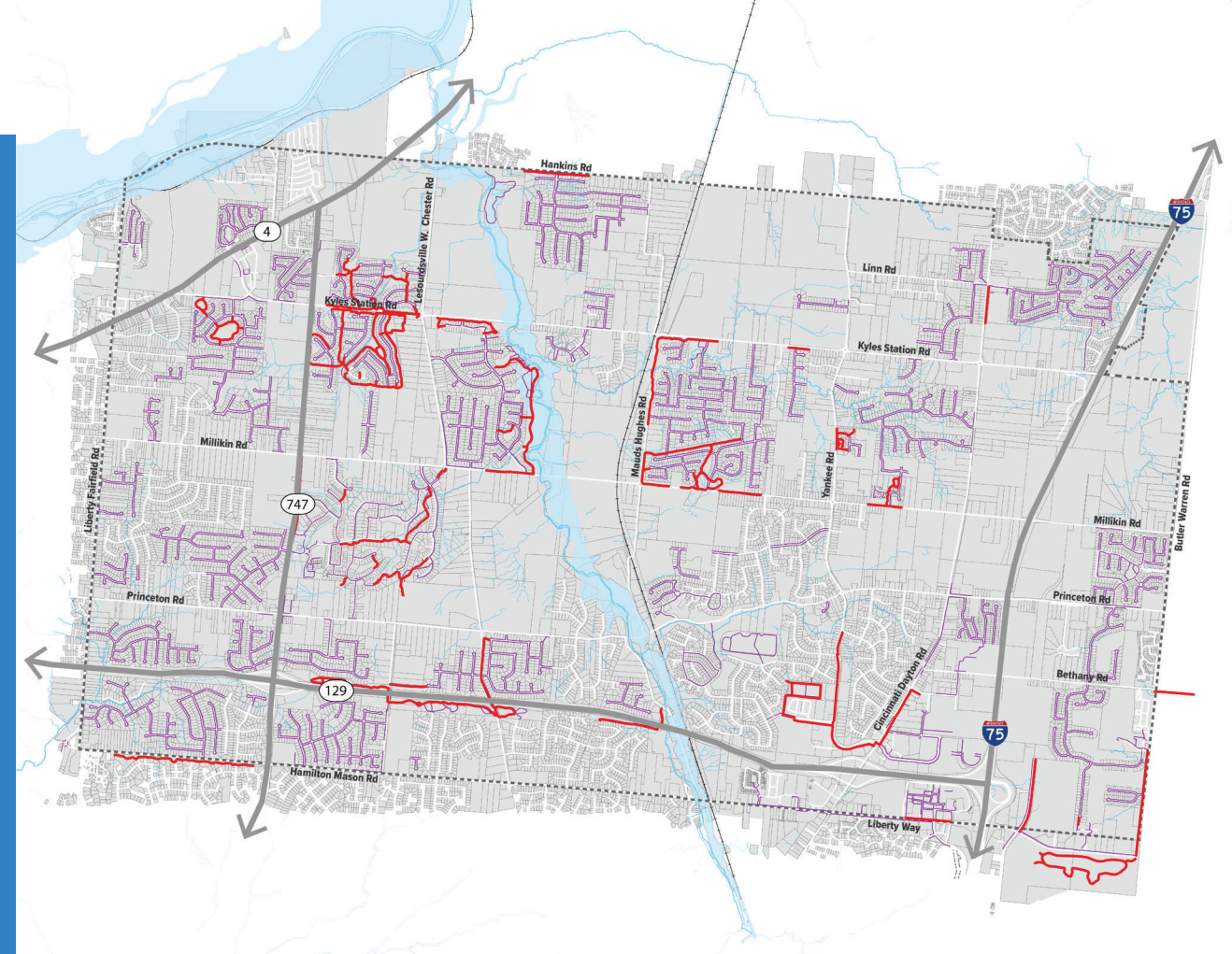
of online survey respondents said they wanted **MORE** sidewalks and multi-use trails.

60%

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








90%

of online survey respondents agreed that Liberty Township should support the expansion and maintenance of a safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian transportation network.



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

EXISTING SIDEWALK AND TRAILS LEGEND

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

Community Challenge:

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

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

Summary:

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

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

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

Impacts:

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

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

¹ Esri and Infogroup. Esri 2019 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace.

70%

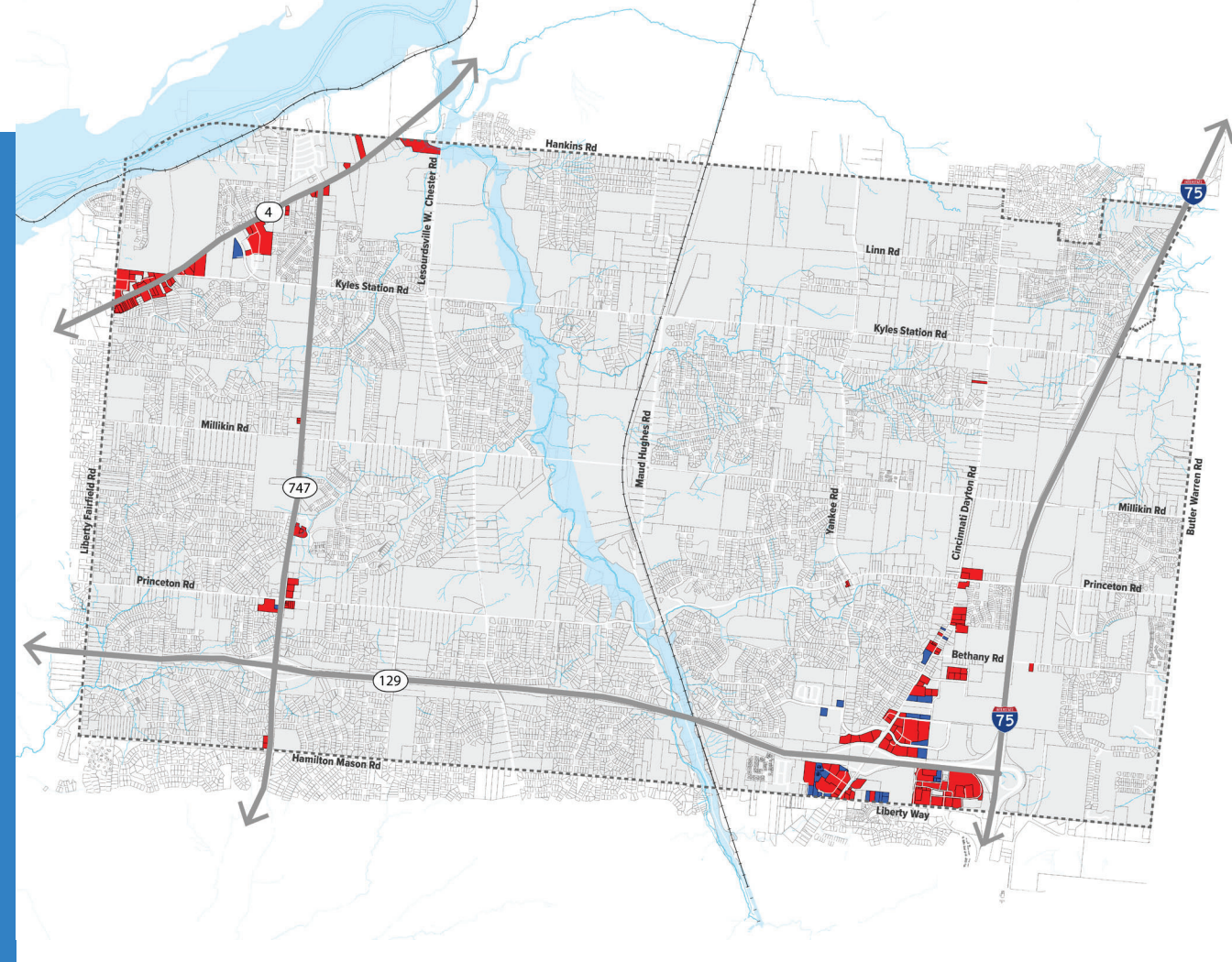
of online survey respondents said the township needed **MORE** neighborhood scaled commercial development in strategic locations.

<5%

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

77%

of online survey respondents **AGREED** that Liberty Township should have nodes of locally oriented commercial development to serve the needs of residential neighborhoods.



EXISTING COMMERCIAL MAP LEGEND

- | | | | |
|-------|-------------------|------------|---------------------|
| ----- | Township Boundary | Light Blue | Floodplain |
| ==== | Roadway | Red | Existing Commercial |
| + + + | Railroad | Blue | Existing Office |
| ~~~~ | Waterway | | |

Community Challenge:

RECREATION

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

Summary:

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

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

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

Impacts:

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

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

70%

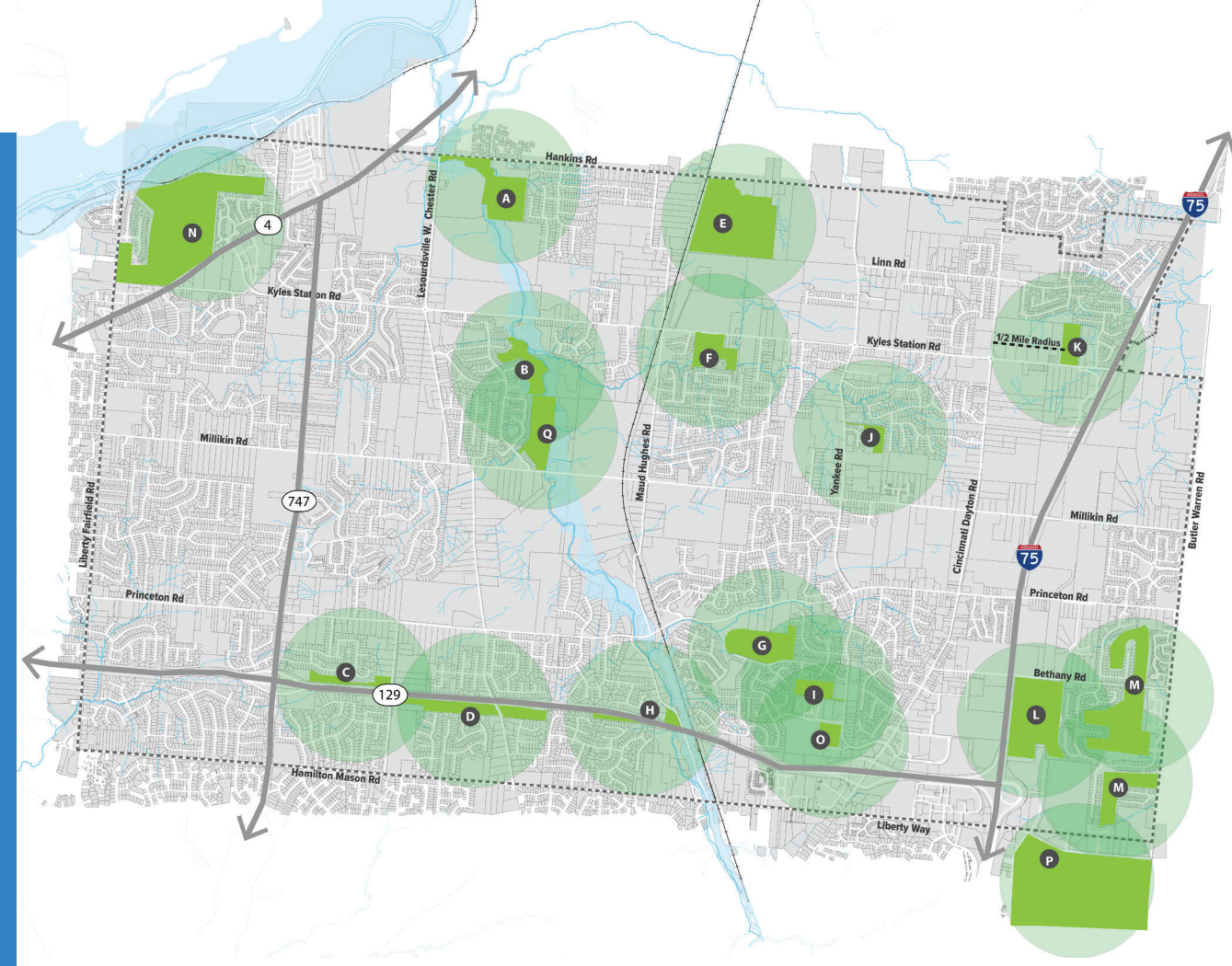
of online survey respondents said they wanted to see MORE outdoor event venues.

318

acres of park land

92%

of online survey respondents AGREE that Liberty Township should support the expansion of its parks and recreation system by exploring funding resources

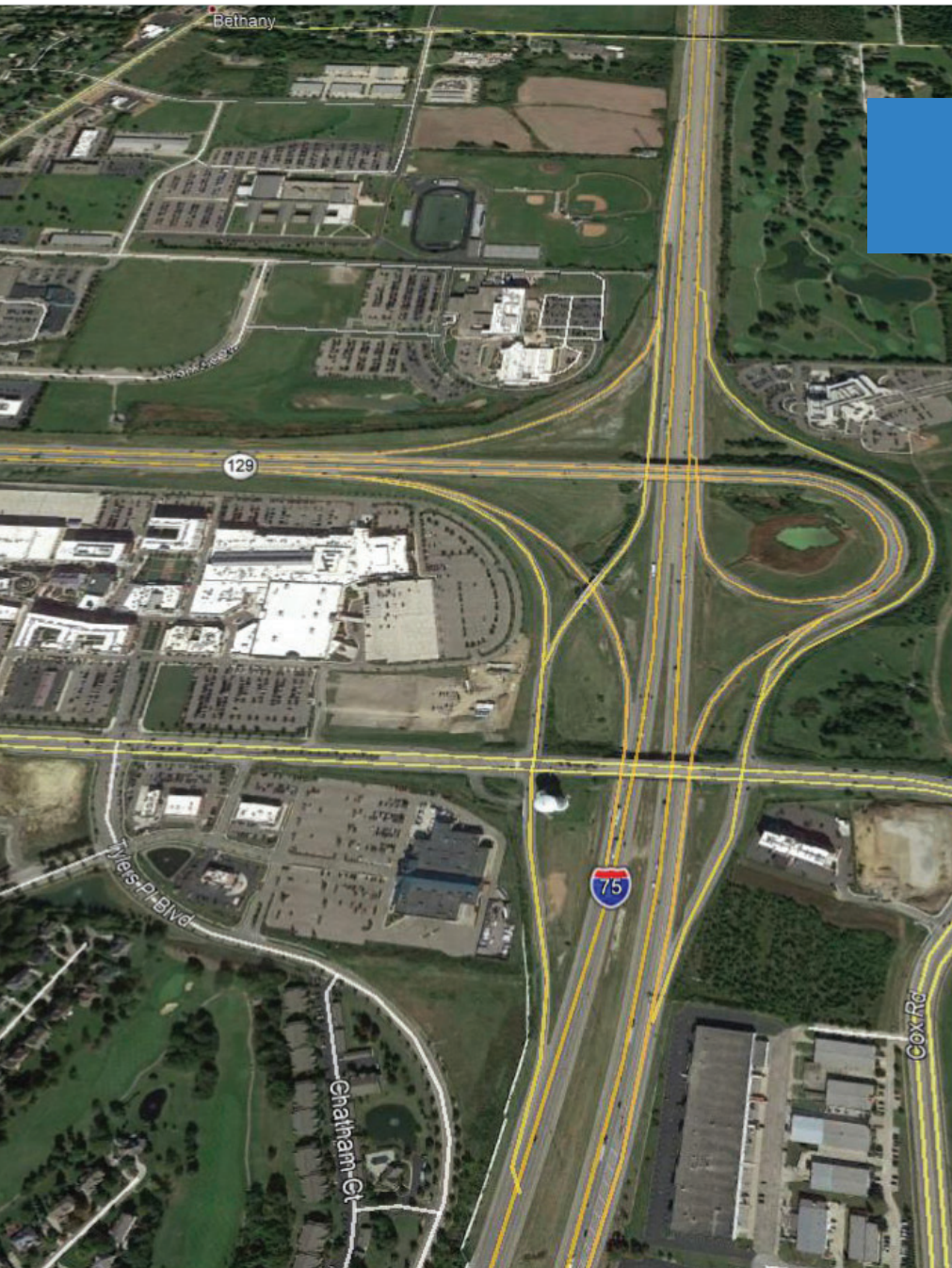


PARKS AND RECREATION MAP LEGEND

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

LETTER LEGEND

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



CRAFTING OUR FUTURE

During the *2013 Vision Plan* process, Liberty Township worked extensively to craft a vision statement that resonated with the community, provided specific details, and served as a guide when evaluating the goal and objectives that were born out of that planning process. While the statement is lengthy, the Township feels the statement still rings true today.

During this planning process, the project team confirmed through an online survey and public meeting exercise that there was still community-consensus around the vision statement. The project team made only minor revisions in an effort to simplify ideas and provide a more direct statement.

2020 VISION STATEMENT

Liberty Township offers individuals, families, and businesses, 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 be life-long residents. 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

Liberty Township will continue to offer resident's attractive, quality housing 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.

WORK

Local and regional retail and service businesses, medical and professional office, technology campuses, and light industrial thrive amongst a highly educated and experienced workforce. Attributes such as the unparalleled access of I-75, the convenience of two local international airports, and several local universities with nationally ranked programs make Liberty Township an ideal location for corporate offices.

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.

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.

2020 Focus: Diversification

The 2013 Vision Statement stated “As the community grows, the Township will continue to provide a level of service and quality of life, which residents and businesses come to expect, in an efficiently managed and financially responsible way.” Nearly 7 years have passed since this statement originated. Since then, Liberty Township has experienced a 17 percent in population growth and developed a significant community asset, Liberty Center. Because of this, defining what it means to be “efficiently managed and financially responsible” is critical to the future of Liberty Township. The *2020 Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan* explores the idea of diversification as a tool for efficient and responsible growth management.

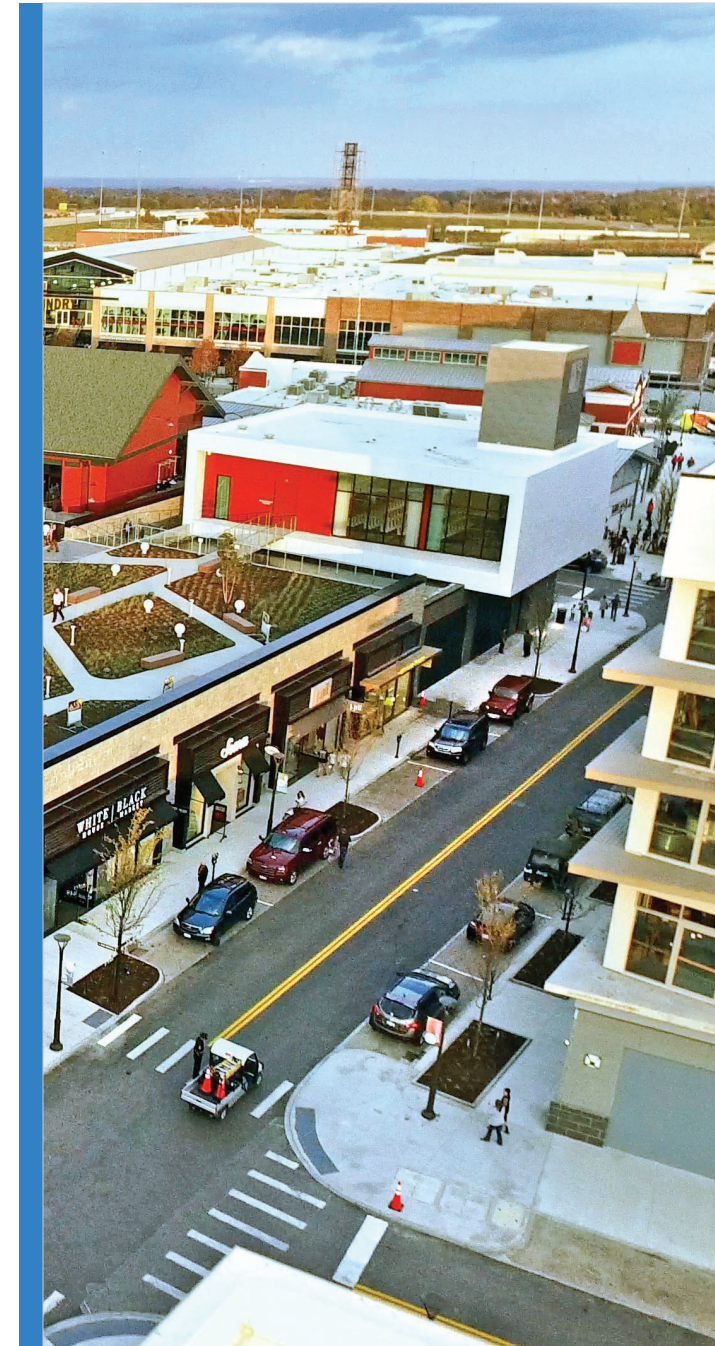
In economics, diversification is a management strategy to reduce risk by investing in a range of assets rather than depending on one specialization or market. This concept can be applied in Liberty Township as an approach to efficient and financially responsible growth. A vibrant, economically successful community requires diversity, meaning variety in different elements that make up a community including demographics, housing types, amenities, jobs, and much more. Liberty Township is home to high quality residential areas, great schools, excellent healthcare, and natural environment but it has the opportunity to be even more. Diversification will allow the Township to enhance its existing assets while exploring opportunities for a dynamic mix of land uses and amenities.

**2020 FOCUS:
LIBERTY TOWNSHIP WILL SEEK RESPONSIBLE AND PURPOSEFUL
GROWTH THAT ENHANCES QUALITY OF LIFE, PROVIDES A DYNAMIC
MIX OF LAND USES, AND PRESERVES ITS SCENIC BEAUTY.**

A key component to diversification is community-consensus. This planning process was intended to inform residents, businesses, and community leaders on the importance of diversification and the benefits associated with it, while also building consensus around the idea. In order for this to be a successful growth management approach, Liberty Township should focus on the following to help promote diversification:

- Be an adaptable community that is capable of welcoming change.
- Provide quality housing, amenities and connectivity to residents in various stages of life including professionals, families, and retirees.
- Be an employment center focusing on technology and health care, company headquarters, and key satellite campuses.
- Have amenities that support regional tourism and entertainment including hotels, entertainment venues, destination restaurants, breweries, wineries, arts and culture, public gathering areas, and outdoor event venues.
- Have nodes of locally-oriented commercial development to serve the needs of residential neighborhoods.
- Have an enhanced public realm with exceptional places for people including high-quality buildings, public spaces, streets, and pedestrian facilities.
- Be a premiere place to raise a family by supporting local, high quality educational facilities and programs, workforce development and training programs, and opportunities for lifelong learning.

Through this planning process, Liberty Township residents have expressed their support for this 202 Focus of diversification. An online survey was opened from February 18, 2020 – March 20, 2020 that asked participants if they agreed or disagreed with the 2020 Focus Statement and corresponding aspirational statements listed above. Results show that 75 percent of survey respondents AGREED that Liberty Township will seek responsible and purposeful growth that enhances quality of life, provides a dynamic mix of land uses, and preserves its scenic beauty. Additionally, majority of respondents (70 percent or more) AGREED with all of the corresponding aspirational statements.



2020 Topic Themes and Goals

The following sections in this chapter, “A Call to Action” make up the regulatory framework. This framework is organized around four topic themes that represent this plan’s most important concepts and actions. Through various community input opportunities and conversations, the key themes were revealed. Liberty Township strives to:

- **MAINTAIN** their existing neighborhoods and community assets.
- **GROW** the community’s neighborhoods, businesses, and employment centers.
- **EXPAND** infrastructure, public services, amenities, and programs to meet the needs of the community.
- **MANAGE** the community’s needs through promoting the community brand and identity, enhancing the quality of life, and sustaining efficient and transparent township government processes.

MAINTAIN	Liberty Township will continue to be a community primarily comprised of residential neighborhoods that support the Township’s commercial and business areas.
	Liberty Township will maintain its natural beauty by embracing development design standards that promote the natural environment and contribute to the health of native systems.
	Liberty Township will protect the unique natural environment by advocating for sustainable growth and development.
	Liberty Township will preserve the quality and upkeep of existing neighborhoods, and their amenities, to ensure long term sustainability.
	Liberty Township will retain and support the growth of existing businesses.
	Liberty Township will proactively manage and maintain a superior quality built and natural environment.

GROW	Liberty Township will provide a variety of coordinated land uses to meet the needs of a diverse and sustainable community with thriving residential neighborhoods, active commercial and retail areas, high-quality business areas, and civic places.
	Liberty Township will support the development and maintenance of planned neighborhood communities that blend a mix of housing types to meet the needs of both current and future residents.
	Liberty Township will support the (re)development of key areas including the Central Business District, Downtown Bethany, Millikin Center, the State Route 747 corridor and the State Route 4 corridor and will market the special attributes of each area.
	Liberty Township will attract and retain new businesses by creating a climate for entrepreneurial ventures and investment.

TOPIC THEMES ICONS



MAINTAIN



GROW



EXPAND



MANAGE

EXPAND

Liberty Township will support the expansion and maintenance of a safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian transportation network.

Liberty Township will support the expansion of transportation and utility infrastructure to and through the Township's greenfield development areas.

Liberty Township will explore the development of local and regional public transportation options to meet the needs of both current and future residents.

Liberty Township will work with their allied community partners to responsibly manage and thoughtfully expand public safety services, as well as support the expansion of public health, education and religious institutions to meet the changing needs of their growing population and demographics.

Liberty Township will support the expansion of its parks and recreation system by exploring funding resources for providing high quality, diversified park amenities including, trail connections, recreational facilities and programming experiences for all users.

MANAGE

Liberty Township will reinforce the community brand and promote the community's strengths in order to build community pride for Township businesses and residents.

Liberty Township will utilize the built environment to create a distinct sense of place and identity that can be recognized by visitors and reflects the interests of Liberty Township residents.

Liberty Township will ensure that all administrative processes, procedures, and regulations continue to reflect the vision and values of Liberty Township.

Liberty Township will continue to increase and diversify revenue sources by exploring the different options available.

Liberty Township will Increase its capacity to properly administer and enforce local regulations as the Township continues to grow.



The new administration and Sheriff's building under construction.



Regulatory Framework

To further understand how Liberty Township and its strategic partners can MAINTAIN, GROW, EXPAND, and MANAGE the Township, each theme has a dedicated section that outlines a series of goals and policy statements. Together, this regulatory framework is intended to inform the development review and approval process for Liberty Township and be the Township's primary planning and development tool.

The guiding goals, policy statements, and action steps are aspirational, yet achievable targets to guide the community towards its future goals. They were created using a variety of data and input including past planning documents, conclusions for the existing conditions report, as well as feedback received from public engagement.

For the purpose of this plan, the goal statements, policy statements, and actions steps align in a hierarchy pyramid meaning each component has its own purpose and level of detail. Goal statements are at the top and are broad in nature. Goals are statements that outline a desired outcome. These statements work to answer the question, "where do we want to go?"

Under each goal statement, there are a series of policy statements that provide the necessary bridge between the broad goal statements and the specific action steps. The policy statements can vary in detail but generally are more specific than goals and identify the Township's position in regards to implementing the goals. Policy statements are intended to be consistent and applicable across all planning and development efforts. If the Township were to decide to change their definitive course of action, it could result in the need for an amendment or larger update of the comprehensive plan.

Located at the bottom of the pyramid, action steps are detail-orientated. These statements identify either a program, project, or standard for the Township to lead. By doing so, the Township will be working to implement the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan. As the Township works to complete the various action steps, the list can evolve like a to-do list. The following sections provide a brief description of the overarching theme and then outline the related goals, policy statements, and action steps.



MAINTAIN

Existing neighborhoods and community assets



This theme recognizes the importance of MAINTAINING the high-quality areas and community assets that already exist in Liberty Township. There are 6 goal statements that fall under this theme. In order to MAINTAIN the existing areas, the Township will need to continue to be a residential community while retaining and supporting the growth of existing businesses. Furthermore, Liberty Township will need to MAINTAIN existing community assets by embracing development standards that promote the natural environment, advocating for sustainable growth, ensuring long-term sustainability. As a result, Liberty Township will be proactively managing and MAINTAINING a superior quality built and natural.



GOAL 1

Liberty Township will continue to be a community primarily comprised of residential neighborhoods that support the Township's commercial and business areas.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Promote identities for individual neighborhoods, or groups of neighborhoods, to allow residents a sense of community and for wayfinding purposes.
2. Build upon existing neighborhood facilities and services, such as parks, schools, fire stations, and churches to help define and maintain neighborhood identity and vitality.
3. Consider and encourage the development of informal meeting places and neighborhood support centers as building blocks for neighborhoods.

GOAL 2

Liberty Township will maintain its natural beauty by embracing development design standards that promote the natural environment and contribute to the health of native systems.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Encourage high quality and well-designed landscaping to help beautify the Township and promote healthful environments.
2. Promote the planting and care of canopy trees throughout Liberty Township.
3. Aggressively protect the riparian corridor and floodplain along Gregory Creek from encroachment.
4. Reinforce rural character including tree lines, fence rows, pockets of open space, and preservation of significant natural vegetation through either land preservation efforts or site development standards such as increased property setbacks, and landscape buffering.
5. Provide educational tools and opportunities for property owners to preserve open space.



GOAL 3

Liberty Township will protect the unique natural environment by advocating for sustainable growth and development.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Focus development efforts within strategic areas as identified on the future land use map.
2. Place an emphasis on the inclusion of trails and other amenities as part of residential and mixed-use development.
3. Encourage both small-and large-scale employers to install pedestrian and bicycle amenities to support the development of a local pedestrian network.
4. Consider the life cycle cost of construction for all new built projects, and the benefits of investment in multi-generational infrastructure systems that can evolve over the long term.

GOAL 4

Liberty Township will preserve the quality and upkeep of existing neighborhoods to ensure long term sustainability.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Actively enforce property maintenance standards in a fair and consistent manner.
2. Partner with HOA's and other community groups to encourage the reinvestment of residential properties, shared amenity spaces and pedestrian amenities.
3. Work to align streetscape elements including sidewalks, streetlights, and street trees within all neighborhoods to provide for maintenance and upkeep efficiencies.



GOAL 5

Liberty Township will retain and support the growth of existing businesses.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Encourage communication and collaboration between business owners, community leaders, and local organizations.
2. Explore increased engagement opportunities with businesses, such as an annual survey, business appreciation program, and/or awards program in an effort to maintain and increase local business retention and expansion.
3. Promote existing tourism opportunities, including agritourism, in Liberty Township.

GOAL 6

Liberty Township will maintain a superior quality built and natural environment by proactively managing the community's built environment.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Discourage homogeneous development and corporate brand prototypical architecture.
2. Encourage the use of durable materials and construction methods that prolong the life of buildings.
3. Continue to evaluate the pros and cons of design-oriented regulations, such as setbacks, parking regulations and building materials into the zoning resolution.
4. Recognize the uniqueness within each area of the township and establish regulations, subarea plans, and/or pattern books as appropriate to preserve these unique features.
5. Minimize conflicts between new development and natural or open space areas by encouraging the development of appropriate open spaces, landscape buffers, and architectural scale transitions. Discourage unplanned or harsh contrasts in height, building orientation, character, land use, and density. If contrast exists, utilize multiple design principles to soften transitions.



ACTION STEPS	PRIORITY <i>Low - Medium - High</i>
Explore establishing a business owner outreach program to share ideas, information etc.	
Continue to foster communication and collaboration between the Township and HOAs.	
Evaluate the need and applicability of partnering with local HOA organizations to update established neighborhood amenities such as shared use paths, street lights and landscaping.	
Evaluate the need for a Township level zoning regulation for conservation development with an emphasis on open space and vegetation buffers in order 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 to preserve the conservation areas.	
Explore partnering with local banks to provide lower cost home equity loans to residents for home improvements	
Publicize to residents the availability of land conservation programs, and clearly outline the benefits to both the land owner and community.	





GROW

Neighborhoods, businesses, and employment centers



This theme encompasses all things related to land use development and addresses three overarching categories including neighborhoods, businesses, and employment centers. Each of these things are related and depend on each other. In order to GROW into a diverse and sustainable community, Liberty Township must provide a variety and coordinated land uses. This theme is directly related to the plan's focus of diversification, meaning GROWING the mix of land uses including various housing types and employment centers, and GROWING a climate for entrepreneurial ventures and investment to attract and retain new businesses.



GOAL 1

Liberty Township will provide a variety of coordinated land uses to meet the needs of a diverse and sustainable community with thriving residential neighborhoods, active commercial and retail areas, high-quality business areas, and civic places.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Use strategic and planned development to guide growth.
2. Provide areas planned for mixed use development to serve as transition between land uses and to create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment.
3. Promote the development of new commercial, retail, medical, healthcare and high-tech light industrial uses along I-75 near the planned Millikin Way interchange.
4. 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.
5. Encourage collaboration between development groups and the real estate community to increase the awareness of opportunities in Liberty Township.
6. Protect and enhance tourism destinations in Liberty Township.

GOAL 2

Liberty Township will support the development and maintenance of planned neighborhood communities that blend a mix of housing types to meet the needs of both current and future residents.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Provide housing products that are desirable to various demographic groups in areas of the Township that are close to shopping, residents, and other related amenities, as determined by the future land use map.
2. Encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments in key areas to provide high quality, cohesive design to new developments, while offering developers more flexibility to meet their goals.



GOAL 3

Liberty Township will support the (re) development of key areas including the Central Business District, Downtown Bethany, Millikin Center, the State Route 747 corridor and the State Route 4 corridor and will market the special attributes of each area.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Utilize the future land use map to determine the appropriate mix of uses for each area within the township.
2. Allow mixed-use in response to market demand and consumer preferences, and only in areas as identified on the future land use plan.
3. Encourage the future rezoning of property in the vicinity of the future Millikin interchange to make way for future infrastructure and development.
4. Promote Downtown Bethany and its redevelopment as a local community gathering area for residents of Liberty Township.
5. Align economic development tools and practices to key commercial areas such as existing TIF and JEDD districts to encourage activity.

GOAL 4

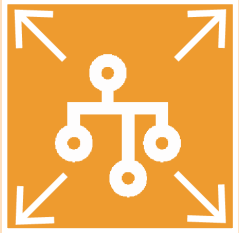
Liberty Township will attract and retain new businesses by creating a climate for entrepreneurial ventures and investment.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Be proactive in providing infrastructure to support, attract, and expand businesses.
2. Work in collaboration with organizations like REDI Cincinnati, West Chester Liberty Chamber Alliance, and others to attract employers related to infrastructure technology, medical fields and research and development industries.
3. Recognize the importance of offering a strong quality of life as a tool for economic development.
4. Align business attraction and workforce development policies, goals, and actions with the Township's desired target industries including healthcare, technology, and professional services.
5. Encourage, welcome, and support entrepreneurs and innovators as they test, create, and develop startup businesses, services, and products.



ACTION STEPS	PRIORITY <i>Low - Medium - High</i>
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.	
Work with and assist both local and regional developers to identify local opportunities and help navigate them through the development process.	
Review the Township's Zoning Resolution against the findings and recommendations included in this 2020 Comprehensive Plan to identify if there are potential conflicts.	
Create an online database of available development sites and properties and market the available land to developers and Fortune 500 and 100 firms.	
Encourage the rezoning of property so that it is consistent with the future land use plan.	
Work with Butler County to proactively plan for expanded water and/or sewer services within key commercial development areas.	
Update the Downtown Bethany Vision Plan to ensure that plan goals reflect the recommendations of this 2020 Vision Plan. Following a plan update continue to use the Downtown Bethany Vision Plan to market and encourage development, and then reevaluate the plan every five years.	
Routinely, review the Township's Zoning Resolution to remove any potential hidden barriers to new development or redevelopment efforts.	
Conduct a market study and/or business sector composition study to pinpoint the types of existing businesses and evaluate opportunities for business expansion.	
Plan for future development by completing sub-area plans, as appropriate for key development areas.	



EXPAND

Infrastructure, public services, amenities, and programs



This theme explores how Liberty Township should be EXPANDING transportation systems, utility infrastructure, public safety services, and parks and recreation facilities in alignment with population growth and subsequent demand. In an effort to better connect residents to their destinations, Liberty Township should be EXPANDING transportation networks including both vehicular and pedestrian infrastructure. By EXPANDING utilities, the township will be supporting greenfield development in strategic locations. By EXPANDING its parks and recreation system, Liberty Township will be providing residents and visitors a diverse set of open spaces and recreational facilities that help contribute to the sense of place, quality of life, and natural beauty offered in Liberty Township.



GOAL 1

Liberty Township will support the expansion and maintenance of a safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian transportation network.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Enhance a bicycle- and pedestrian-connected community through expanded installation of sidewalks, bike lanes and multi-use paths.
2. Encourage the development of Cox Road north to Millikin Road, and potentially further north to State Route 63, in order to provide an alternative north-south roadway to relieve traffic from I-75.
3. Support investment in the vehicular transportation network to consistently improve capacity and safety along the Township's primary corridors.
4. Advance the development of a new interchange at I-75 and Millikin Road.
5. Partner with Butler County, OKI, and ODOT to align efforts and priorities for vehicular and non-vehicular transportation projects.
6. Partner with private developers to align efforts and priorities for vehicular and non-vehicular transportation projects.
7. Coordinate vehicular and non-vehicular transportation projects with neighboring communities through efforts such as the OKI 2050 Plan, the Butler County Thoroughfare Plan and the Miami2Miami Plan.
8. Encourage the incorporation of multiple modes of transportation during future traffic improvements.

GOAL 2

Liberty Township will support the expansion of transportation and utility infrastructure to and through the Township's greenfield development areas.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Continue to build upon the economic benefits of the I-75 Corridor by further maximizing its development potential as a key commercial and employment corridor.
2. Require new developments to provide sidewalks and trail segments in accordance with the findings of this 2020 Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan, the Trails Plan, along with the Township Zoning Resolution, and Butler County Subdivision Regulations.
3. Work with BCEO and ODOT to be proactive in anticipating transportation needs ahead of development.
4. Partner with appropriate agencies to strategically provide utility services to undeveloped areas as an enticement for future commercial development.
5. Ensure that all applicable regulations are an accurate reflection of the need to effectively deliver sustainable utility infrastructure.



GOAL 3

Liberty Township will explore the development of local and regional public transportation options to meet the needs of both current and future residents.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Plan for local and regional transit by encouraging transit opportunities through site design decisions within new developments where it would benefit the community.
2. Encourage ongoing and open dialogue with the Butler County Regional Transit Authority, Cincinnati Metro and the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority to ensure that future system and route changes are reflective of local needs.

GOAL 4

Liberty Township will work with their allied community partners to responsibly manage and thoughtfully expand public safety services, as well as support the expansion of public health, education and religious institutions to meet the changing needs of their growing population and demographics.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Continue to evaluate the needs for increased public safety personnel, facilities, and/or equipment.
2. Continue to work with Lakota Schools, as necessary, to identify appropriate areas for facility expansion and/or accessibility to accommodate the growth of the community.



GOAL 5

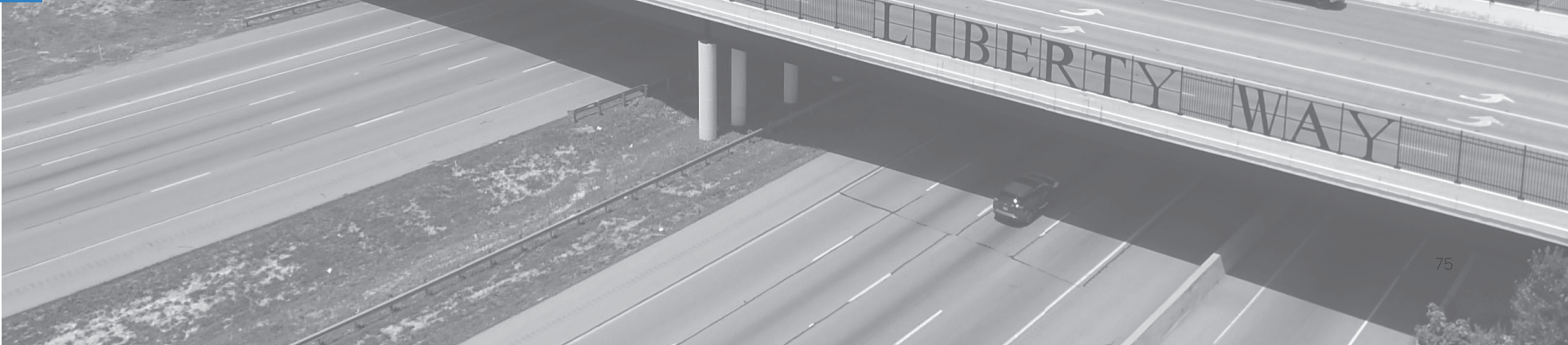
Liberty Township will support the expansion of its parks and recreation system by exploring funding resources for providing high quality, diversified park amenities including, trail connections, recreational facilities and programming experiences for all users.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Ensure that all existing and future Township residents are within walking distance (0.5 miles) of a park and/or open space environment.
2. Encourage the connection of park facilities, local destinations and residential neighborhoods through sidewalks, multi-use paths and bikeways.
3. Provide ADA-compliant facilities and equipment to ensure equal access for all people.
4. Encourage partnerships between the township, local developers, Butler County MetroParks, Lakota Schools and community organizations to acquire, develop, operate and manage community parks and facilities, as desired by the township.
5. Support the efforts of larger regional trail networks such as the Miami2Miami Trail and the Great Miami River Trail.
6. Coordinate with other organizations and businesses to provide activities, events and programs that serve the Liberty Township community.



ACTION STEPS	PRIORITY <i>Low - Medium - High</i>
Work with ODOT, Butler County and OKI to identify funding sources, and applicable next steps for a new interchange at Millikin Road, including developer/land owner participation.	
Work with Butler County to proactively plan for the upgrade of major corridors to alleviate congestion, manage traffic and improve safety as outlined in the Chapter 3: Growth Framework.	
Continuing working with the Liberty Township Trails Committee to plan for the Miami2Miami and Great Miami River Trail, including applicable local connections.	
Update the Trails Plan for the purpose of planning and prioritizing a network of sidewalk, trails and multi-use paths. Once complete, use the plan to identify applicable funding resources, and to guide private development investments.	
Coordinate with Butler County, OKI and ODOT to ensure the vehicular and non-vehicular projects are included within their long-range planning documents.	
Identify and study the use of funding sources such as potential levies, as well as TIF and JEDD districts to help fund transportation and utility infrastructure improvements.	
Work with Butler County to update the 2007 Thoroughfare Plan to ensure that the vehicular and non-vehicular findings and recommendations of this 2020 Comprehensive Plan are prioritized appropriately.	
Proactively work with Butler County officials to identify and apply for funding to support the expansion of the community's non-vehicular transportation system.	
In partnership with Butler County officials, map and prioritize the construction of missing pieces of the non-vehicular transportation system.	
Update the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan to proactively plan for future park land and amenities. Following a comprehensive update to the plan, review and update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, as needed.	
Identify and study funding sources for development and maintenance of park properties.	



Liberty Way Interchange



MANAGE

The community's needs and resources



This theme draws attention to the Township's responsibility to promote the community and MANAGE government efficiencies including administrative processes, procedures, finances, and regulations. Reinforcing the brand and promoting the community works to MANAGE public perceptions of Liberty Township. By MANAGING the built environment, Liberty Township can create a distinct sense of place that reflects the interests of residents and visitors. As the Township continues to grow, staff will need to MANAGE revenue source and service capacities to ensure proper administration and enforcement of regulations and processes.



GOAL 1

Liberty Township will reinforce the community brand and promote the community's strengths in order to build community pride for Township businesses and residents.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Continue to use the "Liberty" brand to promote the community.
2. Continue to work with the Post Office and educate the public to address the zip code confusion in Liberty Township.
3. Utilize marketing opportunity such as the Cincy Magazine "Ranking of the burbs" to evaluate where Liberty Township could or should improve.

GOAL 2

Liberty Township will utilize the built environment to create a distinct sense of place and identity that can be recognized by visitors and reflects the interests of Liberty Township residents.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Encourage community-oriented events and activities in local parks and gathering spaces throughout the year.
2. Ensure that the future Millikin Way interchange is developed as an attractive and welcoming gateway to the community.
3. Look for opportunities to improve gateway signage and landscaping enhancements throughout the community.
4. Enhance community identity and branding through architectural standards and high-quality aesthetic character.
5. Look for opportunities and potential funding sources to install placemaking features within the community.



GOAL 3

Liberty Township will ensure that all administrative processes, procedures, and regulations continue to reflect the vision and values of Liberty Township.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Continue to regularly report progress and accomplishments to residents, while providing opportunities for them to express questions and concerns.
2. Continue to streamline applications, permitting, and inspection processes by using digital, online systems.
3. Continue to coordinate with Butler County Departments and their regulations to provide a convenient and efficient process for residents and businesses.

GOAL 4

Liberty Township will continue to increase and diversify revenue sources by exploring the different options available.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Develop, plan, and encourage a diverse mix of land uses in Liberty Township to help offset the tax base and increase employment opportunities.
2. Educate residents on the need for commercial development to help support taxes and other community costs.
3. Continue to utilize tools such as TIF and JEDD districts to diversify the Township's revenue sources.



GOAL 5

Liberty Township will increase its capacity to properly administer and enforce local regulations as the Township continues to grow.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Continually evaluate the need for additional staff and process enhancements.
2. Ensure the zoning resolution aligns with the goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan.
3. Determine if and when additional training for elected, appointed officials, appointed boards and/or committee members are needed.



ACTION STEPS	PRIORITY <i>Low - Medium - High</i>
Create a media relations and marketing plan for the promotion of Liberty Township that incorporates both online platforms and printed methods.	
Create a Gateway and Wayfinding Signage master plan.	
Create and promote a Community Scorecard to track metrics such as cost of living, education rates, home values, housing costs, school rankings, and crime rates.	
Identify and study the use of revenue sources such as potential levies, taxes, incentive districts (TIF and JEDD) and/or possible fees to help generate and increase Township revenues.	

Ground breaking for the new administration / Police Facility



