



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

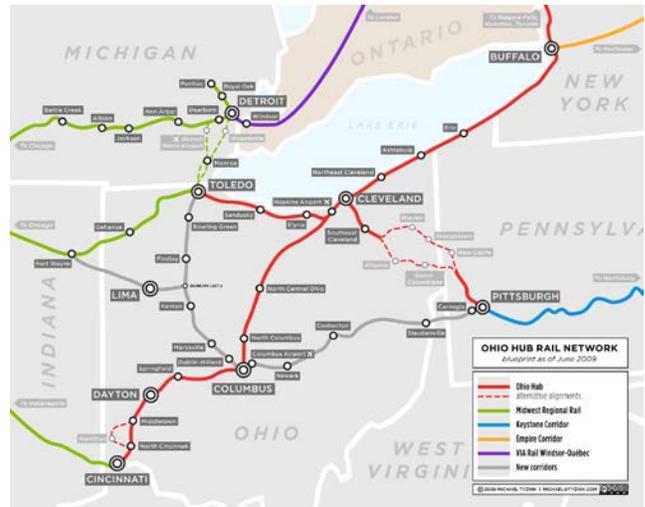


Fig. 27. The Ohio Hub Passenger Rail Plan.

(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.