

II. Planning Context

A. Population Trends

Population History and Projections

An overall understanding of the population trends of Liberty Township is necessary to identify the present and predicted future needs for parks and recreation services and facilities. Tables 1-3 illustrate the population trends for the township from 1990 to 2013. These tables use US Census Bureau data, Liberty Township Planning Department information and projections from ESRI-Bis which is a geographic information systems program and service which provides demographic data. Trends indicate that the population has grown from 9,249 residents in 1990 to 22,819 residents in the year 2000. Projections for 2008 are that the population is approximately 33,180 residents and predicted to go to 38,394 by the year 2013. The Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan indicates the potential for the population to grow to a range of 59,958 to 75,643 residents at the build out of the community. This utilizes a range of 1.6 dwelling units per acre to 2.5 dwelling units per acre. Throughout this report, we have used an average of 67,510 residents as the future buildout condition of the community. This is approximately double the current population of the community which indicates that the current level of services for facilities will need to be increased to meet the demand for the future.

The population history and projections also identify the growth for Butler County. Table 2 identifies that Butler County is the sixth highest growth county in the State of Ohio at 32.8% growth expected from 1995 to 2015.

Table 3 indicates the household and family size from 1990 to 2013 and indicates that in Liberty Township, the average household size increased from 1990 to 2000 but is expected to drop slightly in 2008 and into 2013. The household and family size for residents in Liberty Township is considerably higher than for Butler County, State of Ohio, and the United States as a whole. The 2008 average household size is 3.19 as compared to 2.59 for Butler County and the USA and 2.45 for the State of Ohio.

The U.S. Census Bureau released its findings from the American Community Survey 2005-2007 analysis of communities with a population over 20,000. This is the most comprehensive analysis of census data since the 2000 census. The Cincinnati Enquirer performed an analysis which was published on December 9, 2008 which stated that young families are increasingly clustering in Cincinnati's northern and eastern suburbs. The article went on to state "Among them is one fast-growing Butler County community that can safely be called the Family Capital of Ohio; Liberty Township." The article continued "Liberty Township leads the state and region in almost every measure of young family life:

1. First of 110 Ohio communities in average household size (3.19 people).
2. First in married couples (75.1 percent of households).

3. First in households with children under 18 (53.8 percent).
4. Last in residents older that 65 (4.8 percent).”

Table 4, Median Age, identifies trends throughout Liberty Township, Butler County, Ohio and the USA of the median age becoming higher. The median age was 31.6 in 1990 and is expected to increase to 33.5 in 2013. It should be noted that the median age for Liberty Township is significantly lower than for the County, State, and United States. The median age in 2008 is 33.1 in Liberty Township as opposed to 35.5 for Butler County, 38.1 for Ohio and 36.7 for the USA. The age of the residents is important because the township needs to plan for the appropriate age groups that it will be serving.

Table 1: Population History and Projections (1990-2026)

	1990	2000	2008	2013	2020	2025
Butler County	291,479 ^{1,3}	332,807 ^{1,3}	366,679 ¹	388,292 ¹	403,860 ³	422,150 ³
Liberty Township	9,249 ²	22,819 ^{1,2}	33,180 ¹	38,394 ¹		

Buildout ²

at 1.6 d.u. / acre	59,958	Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan
at 2.0 d.u./ acre	66,929	Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan
at 2.5 d.u./ acre	75,643	Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan
Use an average of	67,510	

1 - Source: ESRI Bis Forecast

2 - Source: Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan 2006

3 - Source: Source: Ohio Department of Development

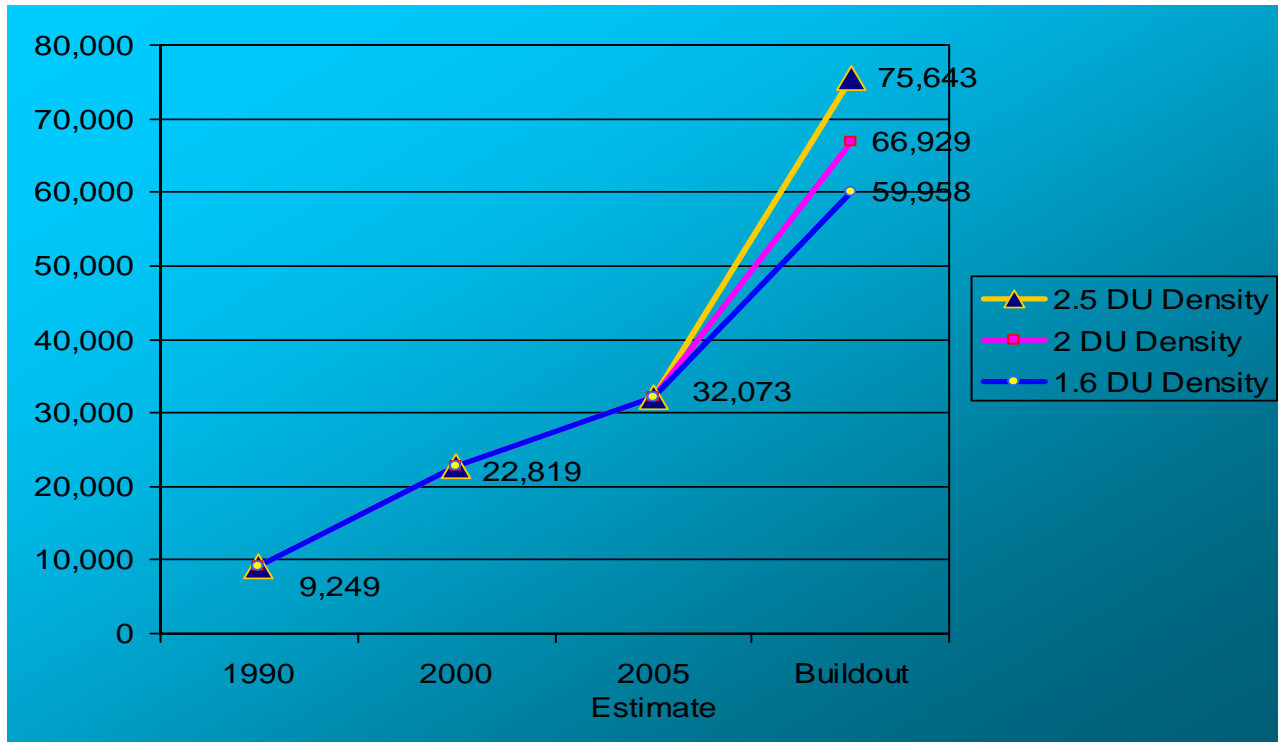


Table 2: Fastest Growing Counties in Ohio – (1995-2015)

	1995	2015	Percent Change
Delaware County	77,480	118,550	53.0%
Warren County	128,010	183,290	43.1%
Holmes County	35,520	48,260	35.8%
Clinton County	37,640	50,310	33.6%
Fairfield County	115,460	153,880	33.2%
Butler County	314,750	418,040	32.8%
Medina County	134,020	175,920	31.2%
Nobel County	11,880	15,400	29.6%
Highland County	38,730	49,120	26.8%
Morrow County	29,840	37,760	26.5%
Brown County	38,550	48,720	26.3%

Table 3: Household and Family Size – 1990 to 2013

	Housing Units	Average Household Size		Average Family Size		Average Household Size	
		1990	2000	1990	2000	2008	2013
USA	105,480,101	2.63	2.59	3.16	3.14	2.59	2.58
Ohio	4,445,773	2.59	2.49	3.12	3.04	2.45	2.43
Butler County	129,793	2.68	2.61	3.12	3.07	2.59	2.58
Liberty Township	7,062	3.08	3.23	3.32	3.43	3.19	3.17

1 - Source: ESRI Bis Forcast

Table 4: Median Age (1990-2013)

	1990 ¹	2000 ¹	2008 ²	2013 ²
USA	32.9	35.3	36.7	37.6
Ohio	33.3	36.2	38.1	39.1
Butler County	31.5	34.1	35.5	36.0
Liberty Township	31.6	32.1	33.1	33.5

1 - Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2 - Source: ESRI Bis Forcast

Table 5 indicates the population over age 65 from 1990 to 2013 and indicates that this age group dropped in percentage from 1990 to 2000 from 6.4% to 4% of the population in Liberty Township and is expected to increase to 5% in 2008 and 5.7% in 2013. All of the other jurisdictions including Butler County, Ohio and the USA have indicated a significantly higher percentage of the population on this age cohort with the county currently at approximately 11.2%, the state at 13.7%, and the USA at 12.6% of the population. Again, the numbers of persons over age 65 is significantly lower than the other jurisdictions.

Table 5: Population Over Age 65 (1990-2013)

	1990 ¹		2000 ¹		2008 ²		2013 ²	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
USA	31,241,831	12.6%	34,991,753	12.4%	39,159,251	12.6%	43,792,111	13.3%
Ohio	1,406,961	13.0%	1,507,757	13.3%	1,586,640	13.7%	1,681,888	14.3%
Butler County	29,713	10.2%	35,557	10.7%	40,823	11.2%	45,688	11.7%
Liberty Township	596	6.4%	915	4.0%	1,681	5.0%	2,207	5.7%

1 - Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2 - Source: ESRI Bis Forcast

Table 6 identifies the population age 19 and under from 1990 to 2013. The table indicates that there was a significant rise in this percentage from 1990 to 2000 with 33.5% to 38.2%. This is expected to have dropped to 36.2% in 2008 and drop again in 2013 to 35.8%. This corresponds to the previous table which identified the growing population over age 65. It should be noted that the percentage of the population age 19 and under is significantly higher than for the County, State, and USA. Currently Liberty Township has 36.2% of the population within this age cohort as opposed to 28% for the county and 26.6% for the state. This is nearly 10% higher than the average throughout the state within this age group.

All of this information indicates that the population of Liberty Township is significantly younger, has a larger family size with more children than for Butler County, State of Ohio and the United States in terms of their percentages.

Table 6: Population 19 and Under (1990-2013)

	1990 ¹		2000 ¹		2008 ²		2013 ²	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
USA	71,321,886	28.7%	80,473,265	28.6%	62,088,173	27.2%	86,901,020	26.5%
Ohio	3,141,025	28.9%	3,215,955	28.3%	3,087,224	26.6%	3,057,893	25.9%
Butler County	88,300	30.3%	99,063	29.8%	102,754	28.1%	106,409	27.3%
Liberty Township	3,141	33.5%	8,706	38.2%	12,051	36.2%	13,732	35.8%

1 - Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2 - Source: ESRI Bis Forcast

B. Land Use Trends

Land use trends are of significant importance to the parks and recreation master plan process due to the fact that residents want parks close to home. Therefore, identifying the existing and proposed residential areas becomes extremely important. Liberty Township needs to ensure that adequate land is set aside to serve the population growth. The 2006 Liberty Township Comprehensive Plan identifies land use comparisons from 1999-2006. This indicated that currently there is 27.9% of the population in agricultural land use which is 39% less than in 1999. The estate residential, single family residential and multi-family residential percentage of the land base totals 55.8% of the current land use within the township. The estate residential has grown by 14%, single family residential by 50% and multi-family residential by 21% from 1999-2006. There is only 2.1%

dedicated open space currently. The acres of public/private recreation remain the same at 1,208 acres but dropped from 6.8% to 5.5% of the land use.

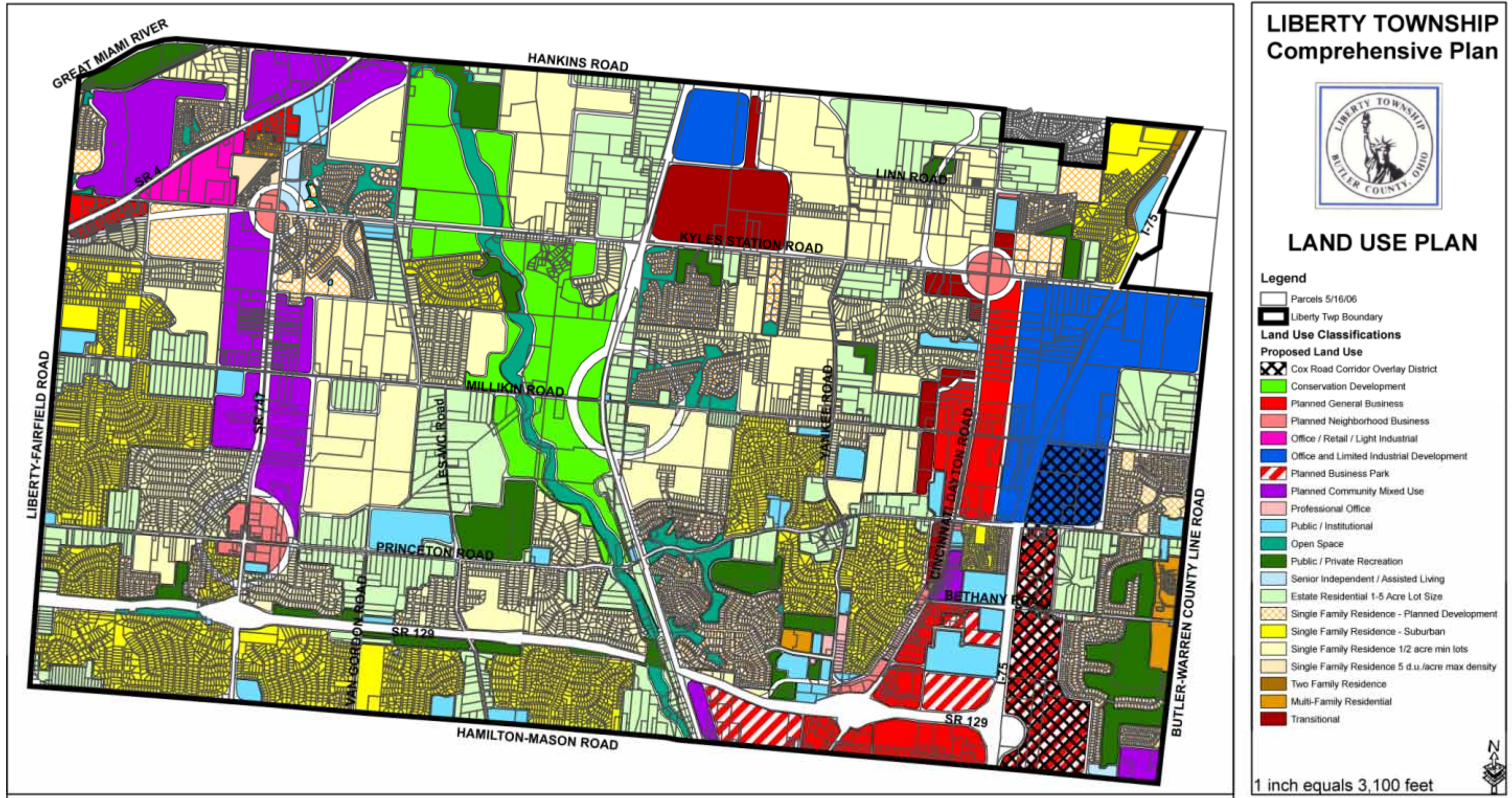
There are three primary areas of existing commercial development including the Cincinnati Dayton Road at State Road 129, State Route 747 and Princeton Road Intersection, and the State Route 4 Corridor. Single family residential development has progressed from the south to the north and is still mostly rural in character with the northern third of the township undergoing a transformation from agricultural production to single family residential development.

Residential building permits have continued to increase steadily on average since 1990. It is anticipated that this residential growth will continue to occur into the future and that additional land will be utilized for residential development until the build out condition. It is very difficult to predict the year of the build out at this time because of the fluctuation in the market and other factors that drive residential development.

Table 7: Residential Building Permit Activity 1990-2008

Year	Single Family Unit
1990	228
1991	251
1992	521
1993	701
1994	534
1995	360
1996	392
1997	359
1998	420
1999	556
2000	410
2001	451
2002	607
2003	724
2004	673
2005	559
2006	344
2007	238
2008	171
Total	8499

Figure 1: Liberty Township Land Use Plan



C. Existing Programs

Programming for recreation and leisure activities is provided by a variety of organizations. The activities of Liberty Township are limited primarily to annual events and festivals which are primarily held at Liberty Park. These activities include an Easter Egg Hunt in Liberty Park, 4th of July Festival which includes a 5K race and parade. Another event is the Fall Festival which is also held in Liberty Park in October.

MetroParks of Butler County provide a variety of programs at sites within or immediately adjacent to Liberty Township at Dudley Woods MetroParks and at the Voice of America (VOA) Park. The proposed amphitheater at VOA Park will allow additional programs for music and other performances at this scenic venue. The 435 acre park was conveyed to the MetroParks in 2000 through the Federal Lands to Parks Program. A portion of the park was dedicated in October of 2004. Current facilities include a 65 foot sledding hill, Ronald Reagan Lodge and Boathouse which includes a reception hall, meeting room, and rental facility, picnic shelters, and other facilities. The MetroParks have recently adopted an Enhancement Plan for the entire property which included a 256 acre portion of the park originally under the jurisdiction of West Chester Township which was transferred to MetroParks in April of 2008.

The Lakota YMCA, which is located adjacent to Liberty Park, provides extensive and diverse recreation programs for residents. Their primary market area is within a five mile radius which includes most of Liberty and West Chester Townships. They currently have approximately 13,000 members. This is an independent YMCA. The YMCA runs after-school programs in conjunction with the Lakota School District, summer camp program, aquatic programs at their indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities and a wide variety of other programs and opportunities. Their facility encompasses approximately 80,000 square feet of building which includes indoor/outdoor swimming pools, an indoor play land, a fitness area, craft area, aerobics/spinning room, large open multi-purpose room, climbing wall (both indoors and outdoors), two racquet ball courts, and a nursery room.

A variety of non-profit organizations provide for the active recreation and athletic needs of the community. Some of the primary organizations include Lakota Sports Organization (LSO), Lakota Stallions Football, Lakota Tomahawks, West Chester Outlaws Football Cheerleading, Cincinnati United Select Soccer, Lakota Thunderbirds Youth Basketball, and other organizations.

D. Budget Overview

Liberty Township has an annual budget of approximately \$17,600,000 (2007). The budget for maintenance of the parks is included in the Township Services Department. In 2008, \$491,000 was budgeted for maintaining the parks. Actual expenses for parks maintenance in 2008 was \$243,000. Note that many of the 2008 expenses were covered by the Services Department and not identified specifically for park maintenance.

The township budgets approximately \$40,000 each year for the special events offered in the community.

In 2009, Liberty Township has budgeted \$371,000 for the maintenance of parks and \$40,000 for special events. The budget for both park maintenance and special events continue to be under the supervision of the Services Department.