



Liberty Township

*Delaware County,
Ohio*

Plan 2040

DRAFT

Initially presented on
October 20, 2022



To be an active and balanced community that preserves our rural heritage and integrates diverse growth opportunities while maintaining a sustainable, welcoming community.

Liberty Township is a great place, and its location makes it well positioned to thrive. The community must be mindful of its legacy and quality of life as it looks toward the future. This is an opportunity for the township to write its story. In January of 2022, the Comprehensive Planning Committee embarked on a community analysis, looking at **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**, the following general focus areas began to emerge.

Rural Character vs. Development

There is a clear tension between the past and future of Liberty Township. There is an opportunity to create balance by identifying areas to be preserved, developed, and redeveloped.

Planning

Concerns exist with the level of planning and an overburden of regulations versus a lack of regulations.

Infrastructure

There is an opportunity to plan for future roadway capacity and broadband infrastructure needs.

Government Services

There are several overlapping governmental entities providing similar services in Liberty Township (ex. township, county, cities). This can create confusion among residents. There is an opportunity to create shared services and improve communication skills.

Amenities

The township is part of a great school district, has access to post-secondary options, the zoo, beautiful parks, excellent fire/EMS services, and easy access to medical facilities.

Community

Liberty Township is a well-educated, caring community that is growing in population but lacks diversity. It needs to plan for demographic shifts. This planning process is an opportunity to create a vision that will allow the township to be a place where residents can live, work, and play.

WHO WE ARE

Who we are

Demographic Profiles

Liberty Township is an affluent, well-educated, mostly white population, two-thirds of whom are 18 or older. Less than one percent is unemployed. Less than one percent is below the poverty level.

Figure 6. US Census Demographic Profile

US Census Category	2010 Township Population	2020 Township Population	2010 Powell Population	2020 Powell Population
Total	14,581 persons	18,271 persons		
White	12,846	14,779		
African American	279	312		
Latino	319	539		
Native American	8	21		
Asian	882	1,951		
Other	25	50		
Two or More	220	616		
Over 18 population	10,124	13,074		
Male population	7,247	9,081		
Female population	7,334	9,190		
Median age	37.4	39.5		
Family households	79.5 percent	N/A		
Non family households	20.4 percent	N/A		
Average household size	2.98 persons	2.86%		
Average family size	3.31	N/A		

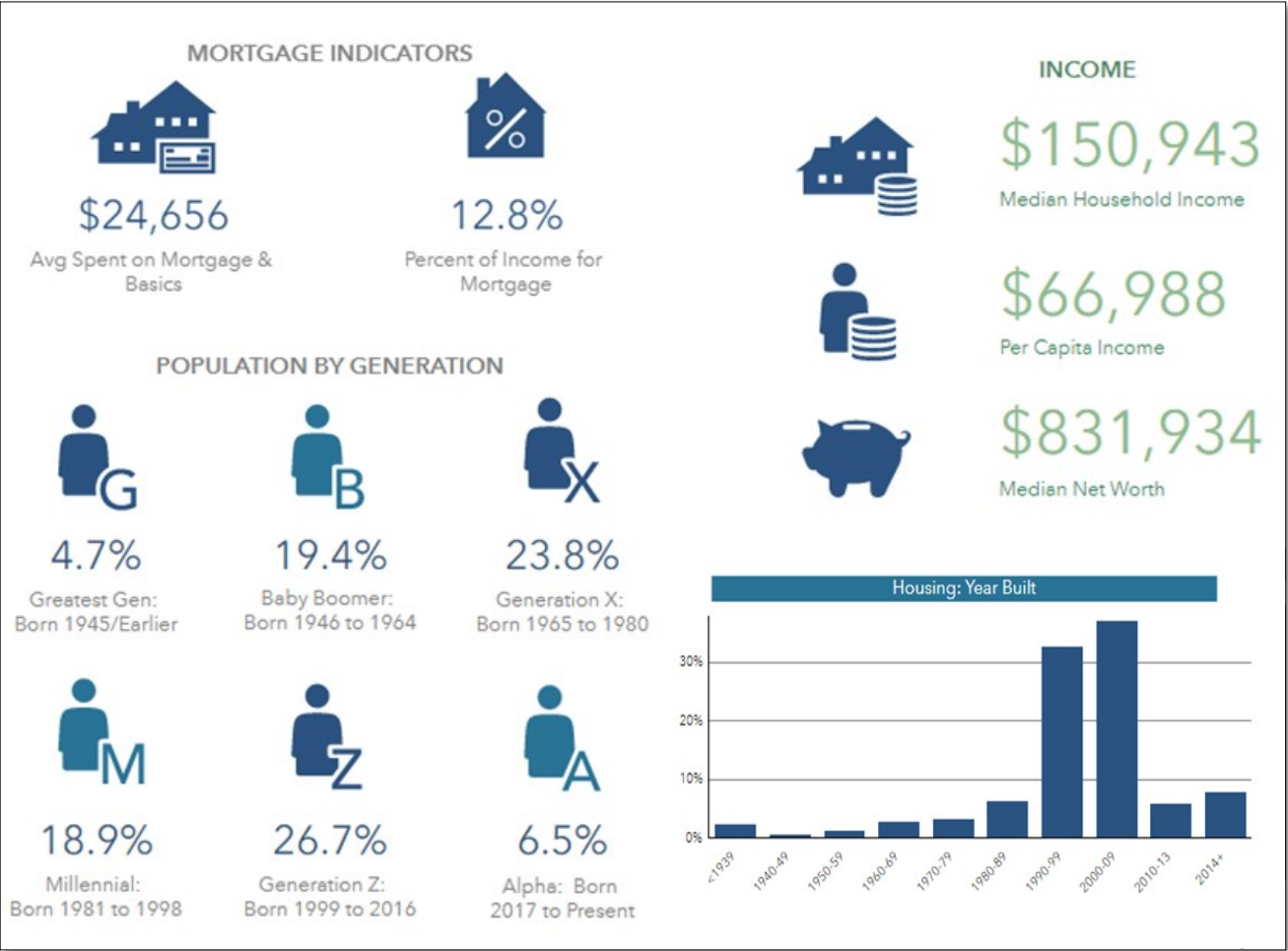
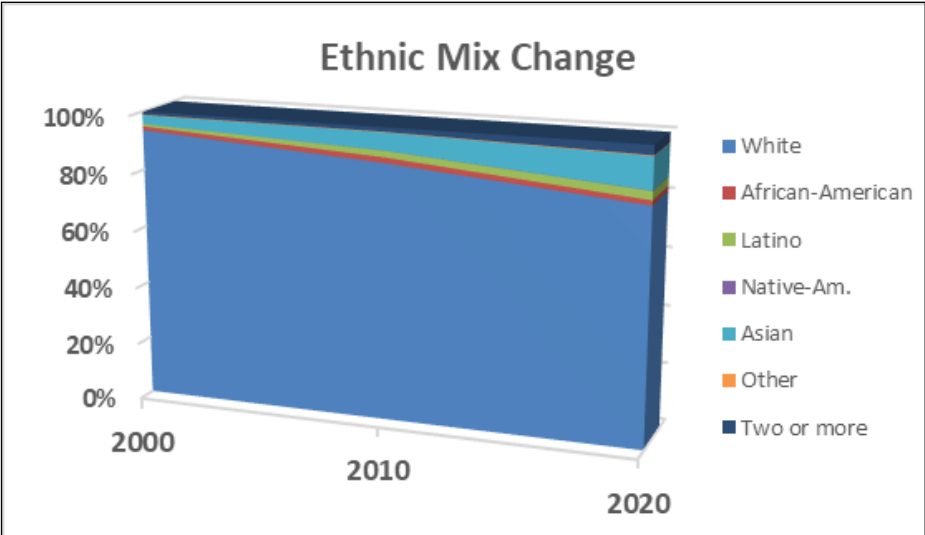


Figure 7. US Census Liberty Township Socio-Economic Profile

US Census 2016-2020 5-year ACS Category	Liberty Township	All Delaware Co Townships	All Delaware Co. Cities and Villages	All Delaware County
Education: Percent H.S. grad or higher	98.1%	94.1%	88.3%	96.8%
Education: Bachelor's degree or higher	70.0%	52.9%	34.2%	55.5%
# Civilian labor force employed	14,752	53,569	33,258	106,393
% Civilian labor force employed	65.5%	95.8%	95.4%	67.5%
# Civilian labor force unemployed	317	2,362	1,620	2,774
% Civilian labor force unemployed	1.4%	4.2%	4.6%	1.8%
Median Household income	\$159,361	\$85,591	\$79,109	\$111,411
Median family income	\$169,632	\$94,641	\$90,843	\$131,292
Per capita income	\$65,492	\$36,764	\$34,944	\$48,312
Number of families below poverty level	142	783	841	1,773
Percent of families below poverty level	1.7%	2.6%	5.0%	3.3%
Individuals below poverty level	784	3,729	4,367	9,700
% Individuals below poverty level	2.6%	3.6%	7.0%	4.8%

Source: US Census Bureau 2016-200 5-year estimates

GROWTH

WITH growth

Recent History

Liberty Township continues to be the third-fastest growing Township in Delaware County. Upscale single-family residential is the most active real estate market, but substantial of commercial services are located along Sawmill Parkway. Sawmill Parkway, planned since the 1980s, was constructed from the Franklin County line to Powell Road by 1997. By 2004 it was extended north to Home Road, built at developer’s expense in return for higher density residential and commercial zonings. The road was further extended to Hyatts Road in 2008 and to U.S. 42 in 2016 by the Delaware County Engineer.

With the development of Golf Village, a 1,000-acre golf course community extending from Seldom Seen to Home Road, Liberty Township had its largest development of single and multi-family housing (approximately 1,500 units). Then, in a bond payoff arrangement, Golf Village annexed into Powell, and subject to Powell’s planning, zoning, and political jurisdiction.

Population and Development

Delaware County’s population grew from 174,214 in April, 2010 to 214,124 in 2020, an increase of 23 percent. Since the official 2020 Census, DCRPC projects an annual 2% increase to 229,933 at the start of 2023.

Liberty Township’s population was determined to be 9,182 by the Census Bureau in 2000. This increased 59% by 2010 to a total of 14,581 residents. The 2020 Census noted the population at 18,271, an increase of 25%. The figure below indicates the building permits in the Township since 2009.

Figure 1. Liberty Township New Residential Building Permits 2009-2022

Yr	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*
SF	30	45	67	104	116	82	64	110	108	119	109	117	301	194
MF	0	4	6	11	17	7	40	7	70	18	6	357	272	56
TI	30	49	73	115	133	89	104	117	178	137	115	474	573	250

*as of October. Single-family detached condos are counted as Multi-Family

Other figures on the page show the permit trend for the township, as well as the trend among the southern-tier townships and within the whole county and just . Finally, the bottom right figure shows the population projections calculated by the DCRPC for communities near the township. These projections are considered more current than the U.S. Census because DCRPC has more current building permit data. The projections are speculative and may change drastically based upon major developments. The maximum build-out population is a true depiction of what the build-out population would be for each community as they are currently planned and zoned. Except in a few cases, no date for such maximum build-out is projected.

Figure 2. Building Permit Trends in Liberty Township

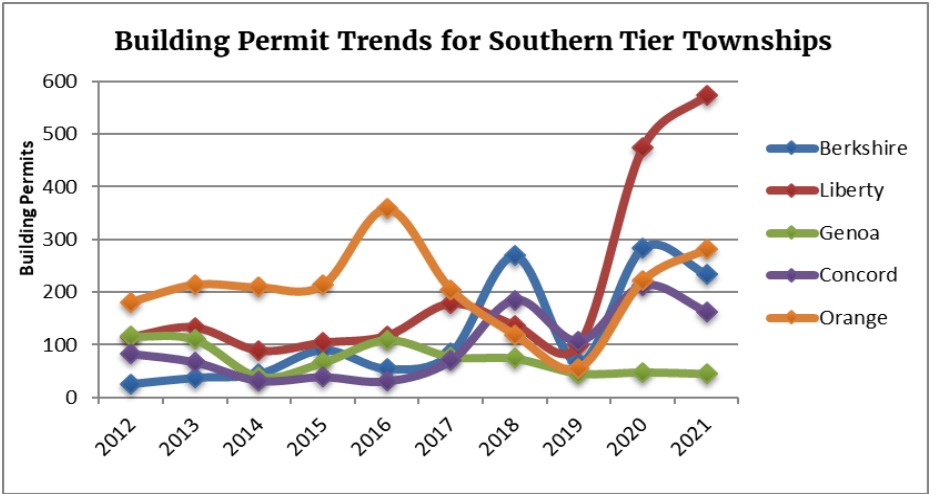
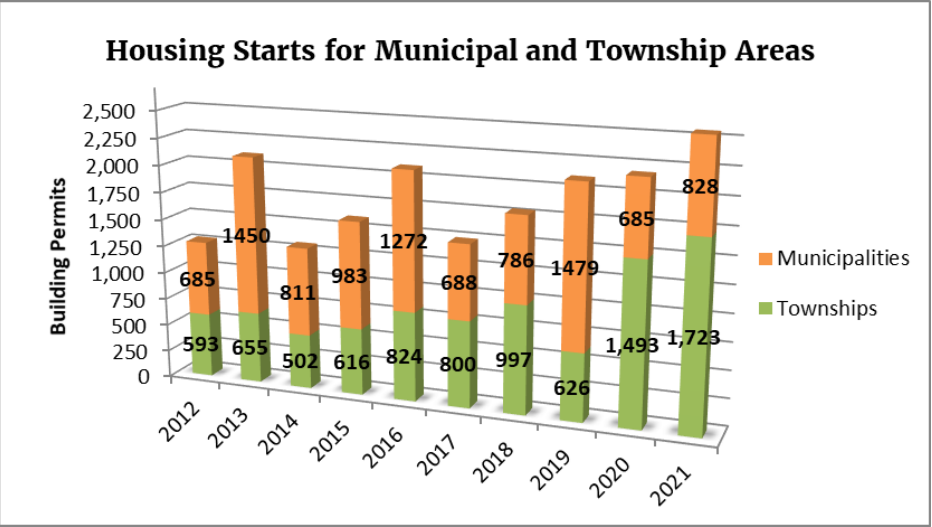
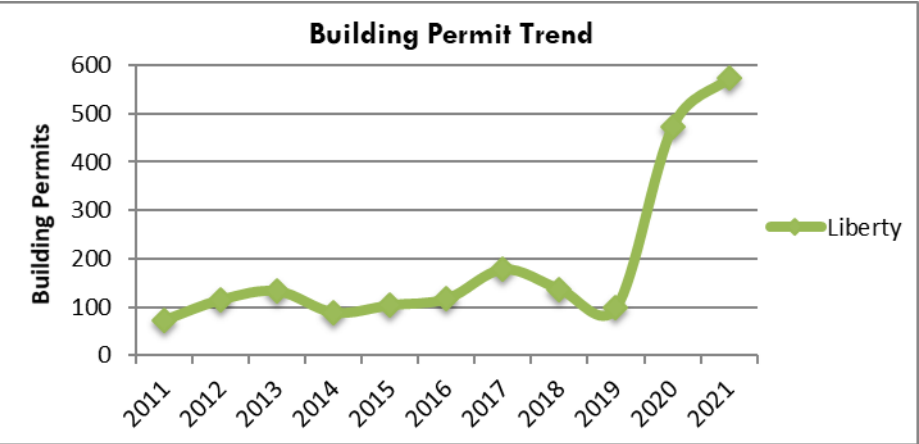


Figure 4. Township Population Projections for Liberty Township and neighboring communities

	2010 US CENSUS	2020 US CENSUS	2021	2022	2025	2030	2035	2040
Concord Township	9,294	10,951	11,623	12,101	13,391	15,392	17,418	19,116
Delaware Township	1,964	2,138	2,172	2,205	2,275	2,390	2,508	2,607
Genoa Township	23,090	24,806	25,058	25,237	26,085	27,266	28,454	28,454
Liberty Township	14,581	18,270	19,952	21,261	22,492	25,464	28,669	29,900
Orange Township	23,762	30,516	31,691	32,509	34,793	38,156	41,490	41,505
Scioto Township	2,350	2,648	2,737	2,845	2,985	3,272	3,574	3,827
Powell City	11,500	14,163	14,554	14,847	15,632	15,826	15,826	15,826
Delaware City	34,753	41,302	42,898	43,952	46,314	49,264	52,368	55,404

Development Patterns

Development can take place in a variety of ways, but zoning always applies. But what is zoning? The following table indicates the various zoning districts in the Liberty Township Zoning Resolution:

Farm Residence District (FR-1)

Minimum lot size is one acre, but most FR-1 zoned property uses on-site waste treatment systems, meaning that they will typically need more than one acre to accommodate both the primary and secondary treatment systems. Minimum frontage is 150 feet, or 60 feet widening to 150 feet. Individual lots on rural roads are typically FR-1. New subdivisions can be created by building roads and creating new frontage for each lot. Open Space is not required in such subdivisions and the township is limited in preserving trees and other natural features. Lots merely have to conform to size, frontage, and setback requirements.

Neighborhood Apartment District (R-3)

This is a rarely-used district. Parcels must be at least 21,780 square feet. Frontage is 100 feet.

Planned Residence District (PR)

Most neighborhoods in the township are in Planned districts, where the Zoning Commission and Trustees approved a layout as well as a density and lot configuration. The density within the regulations is 1.5 dwelling units per net developable acre. Some unbuildable features are subtracted to determine this developable acreage. Open space of 20% is required. The Comprehensive Plan is referenced to determine the lot size and there is no minimum lot width.

Planned Multi-Family Residence (PMFR)

This district was a fairly recent amendment to direct Multi-Family uses in a specific zoning district, rather than the previous approach of including it within the PR language.

Recent developments include Sara Crossing, Hyatts Crossing, and Courtyards at Hyatts.

Planned Elderly or Retirement Res. Comm. (PERRC)

The PERRC was created to accommodate the various uses typically required in age-restricted development. It allows independent living as well as nursing care and institutionalized health care. One undeveloped site at Manning Parkway and S.R. 315 is zoned with this designation.

Planned Residence Conservation (PRC)

The PRC is similar to the PRD, but with 50% open space. Maximum density is 1.5 units per net developable acre. The Comprehensive Plan is referenced to determine the lot size and there is no minimum lot width.

Neighborhood Retail (C-2)

This district is not currently used, but could be utilized for single-site commercial development when a Planned district is not necessary.

Planned Commercial (PC)

PC is the typical location for township commercial and retail property. Land within Wedgewood and other locations along Sawmill, as well as commercial development on the north side of Manning Parkway is zoned Planned Commercial. Several apartments are also zoned PC, from a time when that was the preferred zoning for apartments.

Industrial (I)

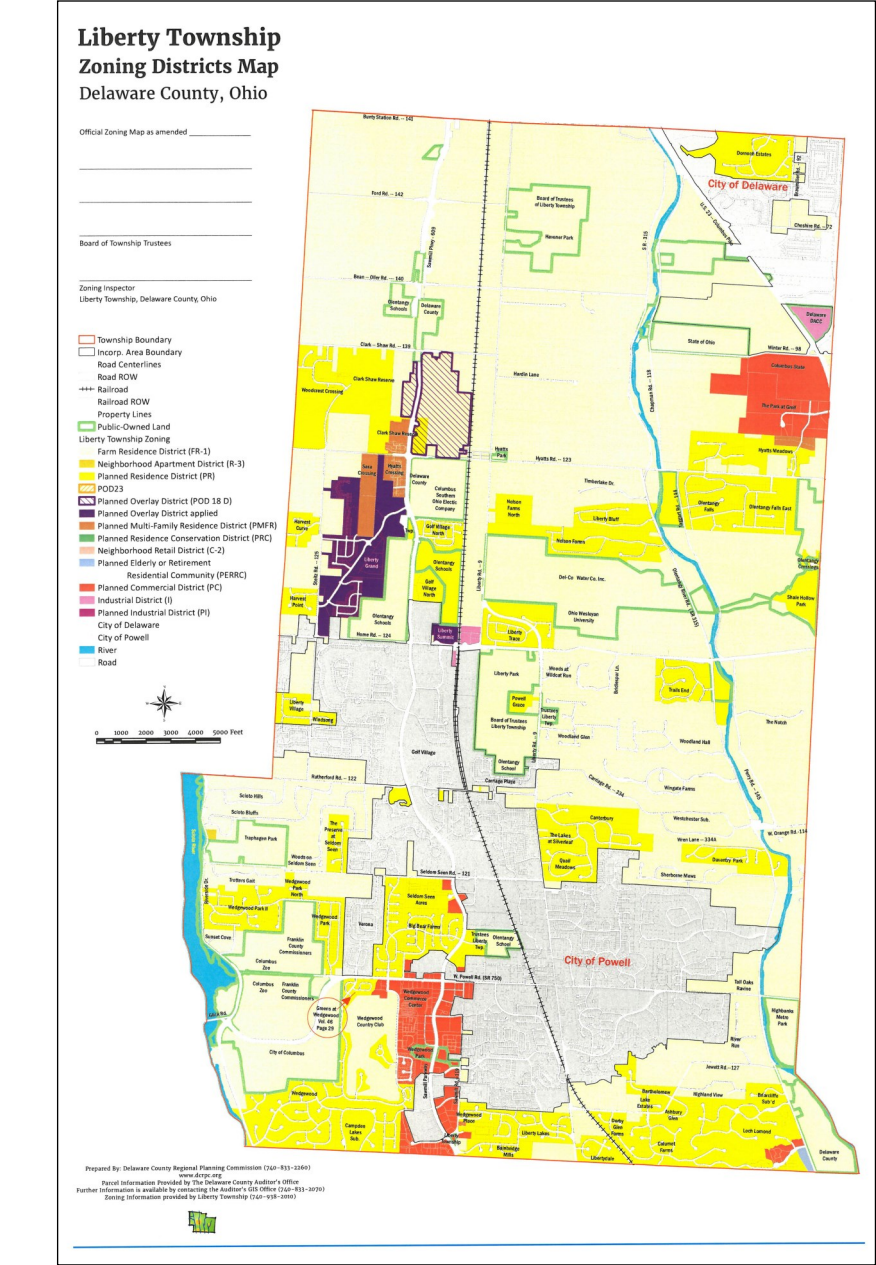
All land zoned Industrial is located along the railroad at Home Road. Land north of Home Road and also west of the tracks will remain in the township, but the 35 acres south of Home Road is currently in pre-annexation development review for multi-family in the City of Powell.

Planned Industrial (PI)

No land is zoned Planned Industrial but the district is provided for a cohesive business-park-type development of commercial uses.

Planned Overlay (POD 18B & 18C)

POD 18B and 18C were adopted in 11/19 and applied specifically to the area

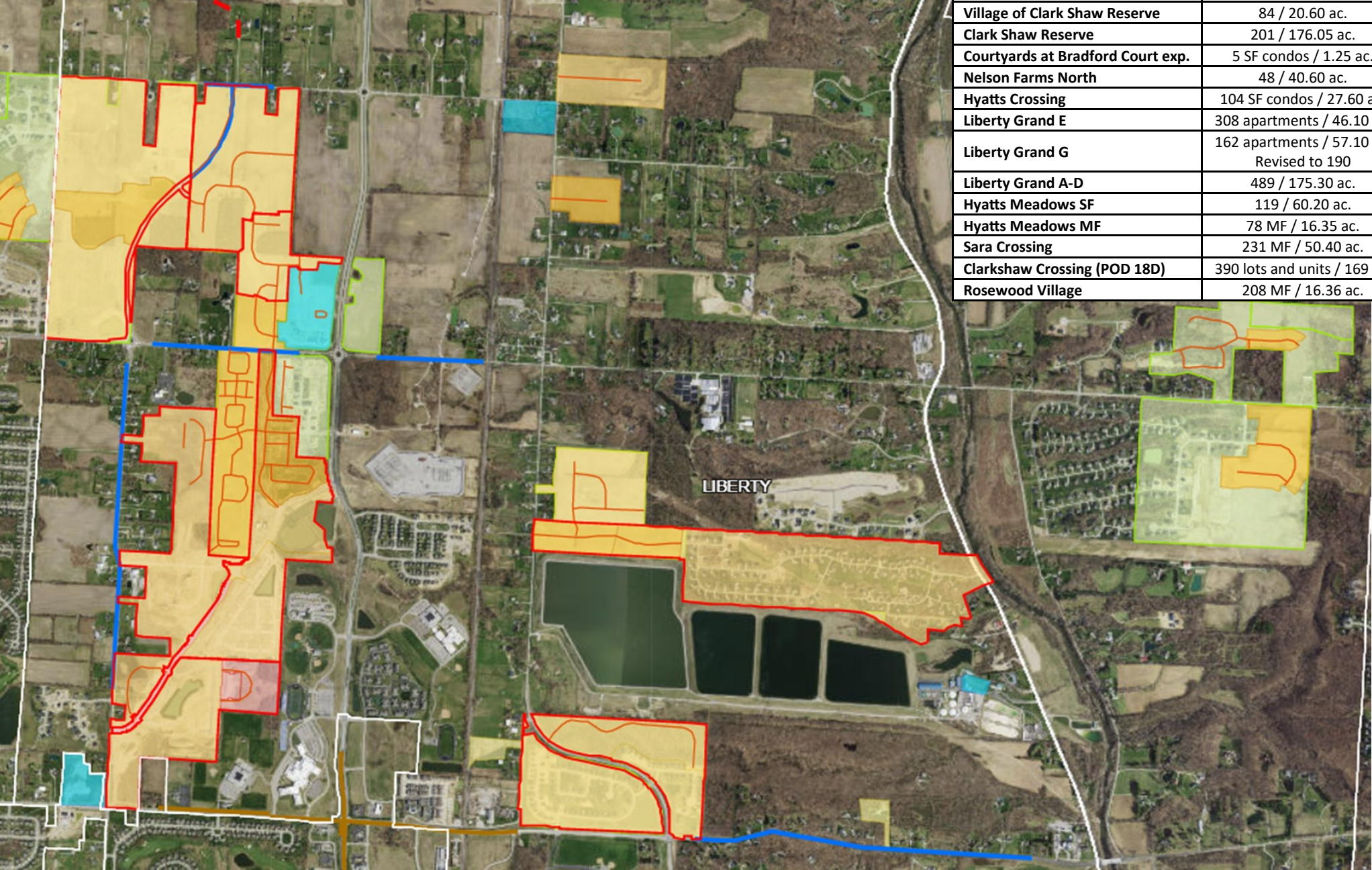


Zoning Districts	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE
FR-1 Farm Residence District	11,137.70	71%
R-3 Neighborhood Apartment	3.77	0.02%
PR Planned Residence	3,315.45	21%
PMFR Planned Multi-Family Residence	118.51	0.8%
PERRC Planned Elderly or Retirement Res. Comm.	7.29	0.04%
PRC Planned Residence Conservation	0	0%
C-2 Neighborhood Retail	0	0%
PC Planned Commercial	591.83	3.7%
I Industrial	53.76	0.3%
PI Planned Industrial	0	0%
POD 18B and 18C Planned Overlay	267.29	1.7%
POD 18D Planned Overlay (not yet applied)	189.72	1.2%
Total in Zoning Districts	15,685.32	100%

that would eventually be developed as “Liberty Grand” and the “Liberty Summit” apartments. The maximum number of units was defined for each Sub Area as follows:

- Sub Area A allowed 120 single-family units.
- Sub Area B allowed 180 single or attached homes.
- Sub Area C allowed 52 single or attached units.
- Sub Area D allowed 210 single or attached units.
- Sub Area E allowed 308 single, attached, or multi-family.
- Sub Area F was limited to open space.
- Sub Area G allowed 190 single, attached, or multi-family.

Figure X. Current development activity in Liberty Township (to be updated)



Project	Lots/Acres	Zoning Approval	Preliminary Subdivision	Status
Nelson Farms	158 / 154.3 ac.	December, 1993	May, 2006	41 lots remaining
Olentangy Falls East	150 / 146.94 ac.	November, 2014	September, 2014	19 lots remaining
Heathers @ Golf Village North	360 / 47.39 ac.	June, 2013	July, 2013, revised from original approval of 2004	Built out
Liberty Trace	139 / 114.5 ac.	December, 2013	April, 2014	25 lots remaining
Olentangy Falls Sections 4 and 5	37 / 62.93 ac.	March, 2004	November, 2013	19 lots remaining
Liberty Bluff	68 / 81.4 ac.	November, 2014	February, 2015	23 lots remaining
Wedgewood Park N.	14 / 14.02 ac.	November, 2014	July, 2015	2 lots remaining
Harvest Curve	34 / 36.52 ac.	September, 2013	February, 2016	34 lots remaining
Allington Estates	45 / 102.86	October, 2014	July, 2016	Withdrawn
Villas at Loch Lomond	27 SF condos / 15.06ac.	April, 2015	N/A	Built out
Courtyards at Bradford Court	69 SF condos / 9.78ac.	December, 2015	N/A	Built out
Woodcrest Crossing	190 SF, 60 MF / 170 ac.	September, 2016	December, 2019	148 SF, 44 MF remaining
Village of Clark Shaw Reserve	84 / 20.60 ac.	March, 2017	N/A	57 MF remaining
Clark Shaw Reserve	201 / 176.05 ac.	March, 2017		173 lots remaining
Courtyards at Bradford Court exp.	5 SF condos / 1.25 ac.	December, 2017	N/A	Built out
Nelson Farms North	48 / 40.60 ac.	March, 2018	March, 2022	37 lots remaining
Hyatts Crossing	104 SF condos / 27.60 ac.	January, 2019	N/A	58 MF remaining
Liberty Grand E	308 apartments / 46.10 ac.	September, 2019	N/A	Built out
Liberty Grand G	162 apartments / 57.10 ac. Revised to 190	September, 2019 December, 2021	October, 2019	190 MF remaining
Liberty Grand A-D	489 / 175.30 ac.	October, 2019	November, 2019	78 remaining
Hyatts Meadows SF	119 / 60.20 ac.	January, 2020	September, 2020	Roads in, no houses built
Hyatts Meadows MF	78 MF / 16.35 ac.	January, 2020	September, 2020	Roads in, no units built
Sara Crossing	231 MF / 50.40 ac.	March, 2022	March, 2022	No activity
Clarkshaw Crossing (POD 18D)	390 lots and units / 169 ac.	Pending	Sketch Plan reviewed 9/22	No activity
Rosewood Village	208 MF / 16.36 ac.	Pending	Sketch Plan reviewed 10/13	No activity

Sub Areas E and G are currently being developed as apartments, with the other areas as single-family lots. Lots have 50-foot widths with 10-foot building separation.

POD 18C allowed 236 apartments on 17.24 acres at Home Road and the railroad.

Planned Overlay (POD 18D not yet applied)

POD 18D was adopted in 4/21 and applied specifically to a 190-acre area between Hyatts and Clark Shaw roads, mostly east of Sawmill. As of 9/22, no specific development plan has been approved.

Sub Area A (19.4 ac.) allowed 208 attached or multi-family.

Sub Area B (19.47 ac.) specific commercial.

Sub Area C (30.76 ac.) allowed 75 single-family or attached units.

Sub Area D (18 ac.) allowed healthcare and professional uses.

Sub Area E (102.56 ac.) allowed 315 single or attached homes.

Lots have 50-foot widths with 10-foot building separation.

Existing Land Use

The existing land use of Liberty Township, its surrounding jurisdictions, and the area within the historical Township boundary is displayed and analyzed by type according to the County Auditor’s Geographic Information System and tax code.

Figure 8. Liberty Township Land Use 7/2016

LAND USE	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE
Single-Family	6,650	37.7%
Multi-Family	217	1.2%
Commercial	581	3.3%
Industrial	83	0.5%
Institution	965	5.5%
Agricultural	3,121	17.7%
Residential Vacant Land	2,200	12.5%
Other Uses Vacant Land	349	1.9%
Parks	1,506	8.5%
Golf Course	425	2.4%
ROW	1,241	7.0%
River	310	1.8%
Total	17,646	100.0%

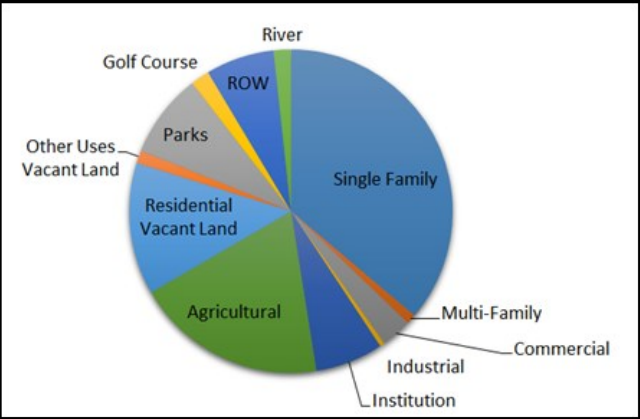


Figure 9. Powell Land Use 7/2016

LAND USE	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE
Single-Family	1,596	46.2%
Multi-family	207	6.0%
Commercial	310	9.0%
Industrial	21	0.6%
Institution	105	3.0%
Agricultural	3	0.1%
Residential Vacant Land	192	5.6%
Other Uses Vacant Land	114	3.3%
Golf Course	321	9.3%
Parks	106	3.1%
ROW	481	13.9%
River	2	0.1%
Total	3,456	100.0%

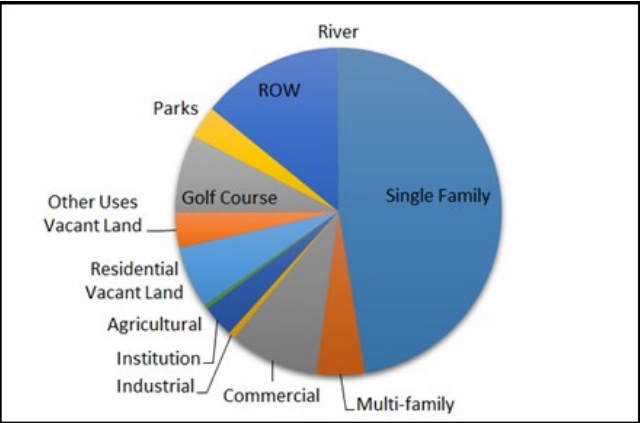
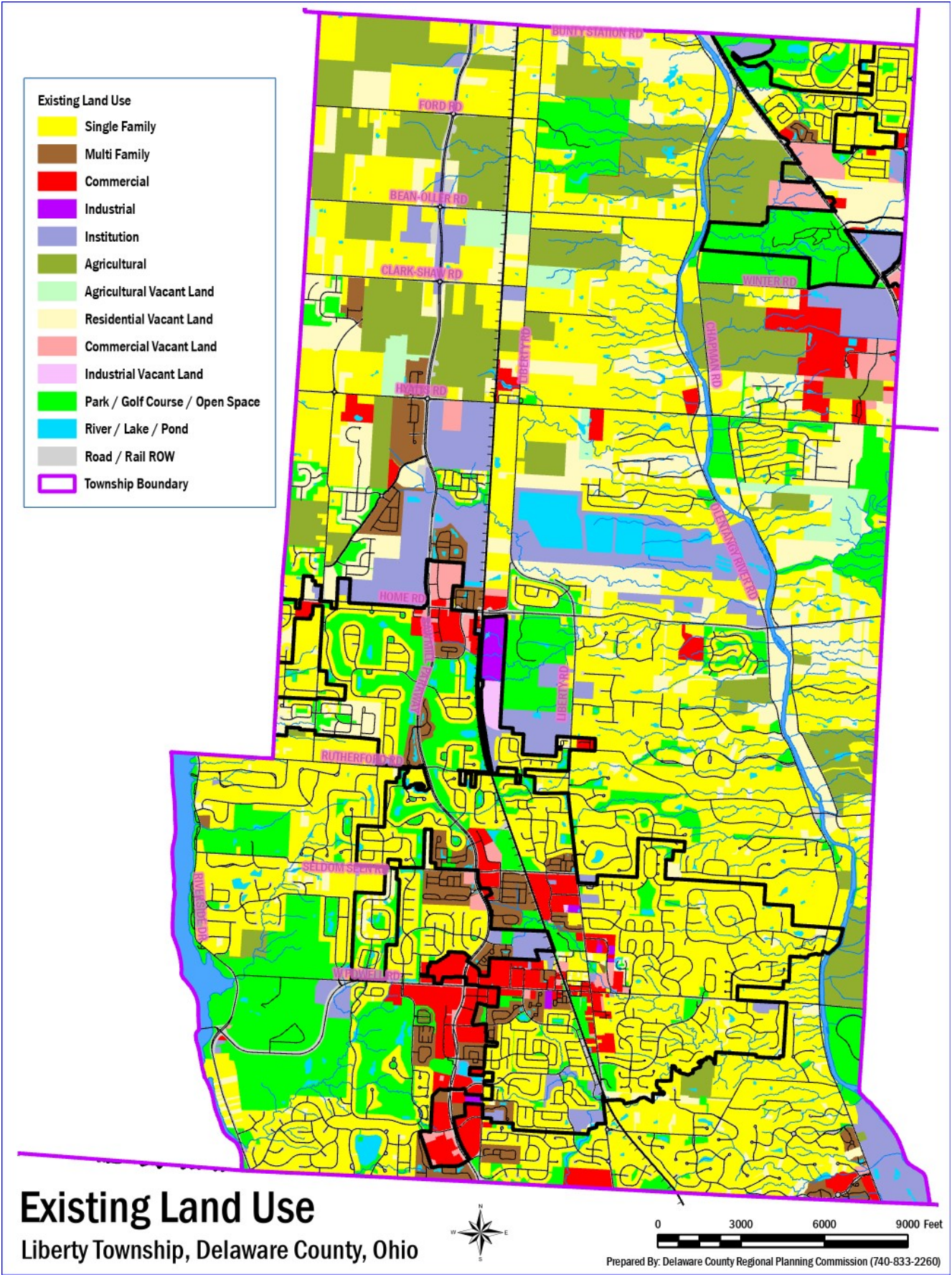
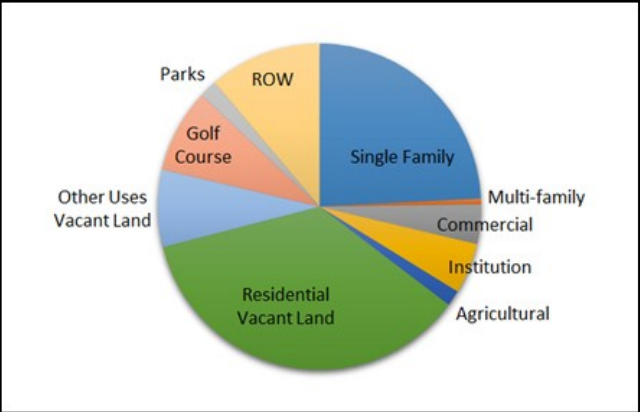


Figure 10. Delaware City Land Use (within Twp) 7/2016

TYPE	ACREAGE	PERCENTAGE
Single-Family	158	28.6%
Multi-Family	14	2.6%
Commercial	22	3.9%
Institution	27	4.9%
Agricultural	9	1.5%
Residential Vacant Land	153	27.6%
Other Uses Vacant Land	47	8.4%
Golf Course	45	8.2%
Parks	10	1.7%
ROW	70	12.6%
Total	554	100.0%



Natural Resources

Liberty Township is divided into two major drainage basins: the Olentangy River and the Scioto River. Numerous small tributaries flow through wooded ravines, which contribute to the beauty of the two river valleys.

Both valleys are bordered by relatively steep bluffs, some exhibiting rock outcroppings, up to an elevation of approximately 900 feet above sea level. The center of the Township is a relatively flat plateau that has been cultivated. Forests have generally been sacrificed to agriculture and/or development. Wooded areas continue to provide wildlife habitat, erosion control, water and air quality, energy conservation, and a visual amenity.

Elevation

Slopes over 20% are typically found in ravines running to creeks and rivers, and their preservation is important to preserve clean surface water, to retain the natural landscape, prevent erosion and sedimentation, and retain rural character.

Floodplains

Floodplains are located along the Olentangy and Scioto Rivers and tributary streams, providing storage and water conveyance and they reduce flood velocities, peak flows, and sedimentation. Floodplains also moderate stream temperature fluctuations, provide groundwater recharge, and breeding and feeding grounds for fish and wildlife.

For all these reasons floodplains are (partially) protected by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Delaware County is a member, which makes low cost flood insurance available in Liberty Township. In order to maintain eligibility, floodways cannot be filled or blocked. The floodway fringe can be filled, although nationwide experience suggests this should not be allowed. In order to fully protect the 100-year floodway fringe, Liberty Township would have to adopt floodplain zoning.

The Ohio Environmental Projection Agency (OEPA) has developed a permit that applies to development within the Olentangy watershed. Based on stream type (Perennial, Ephemeral, or Intermittent) stream buffers must be maintained or mitigated if impacted. Protection of the floodplain is also required along the main-stem of the river.

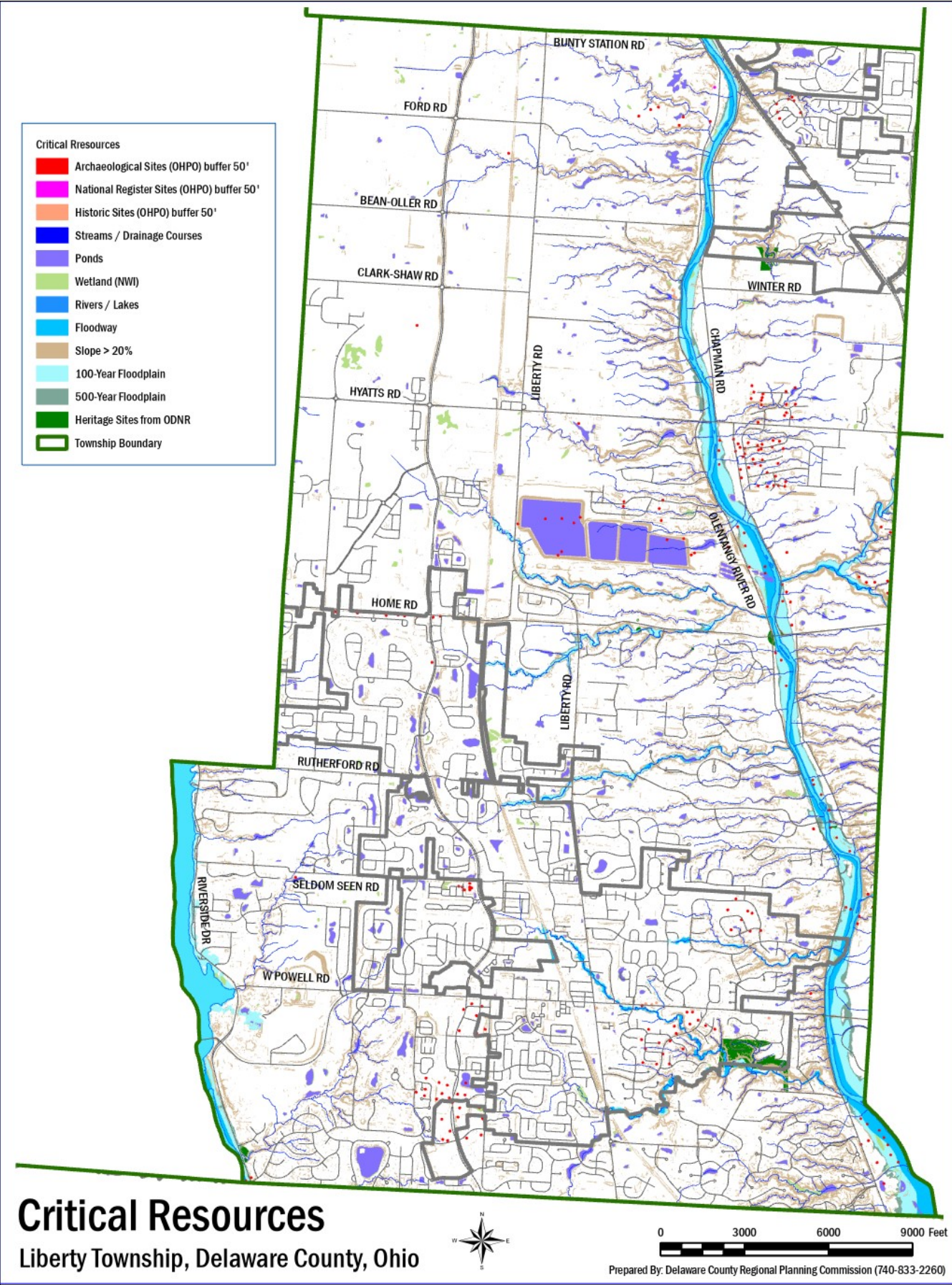
Wetlands

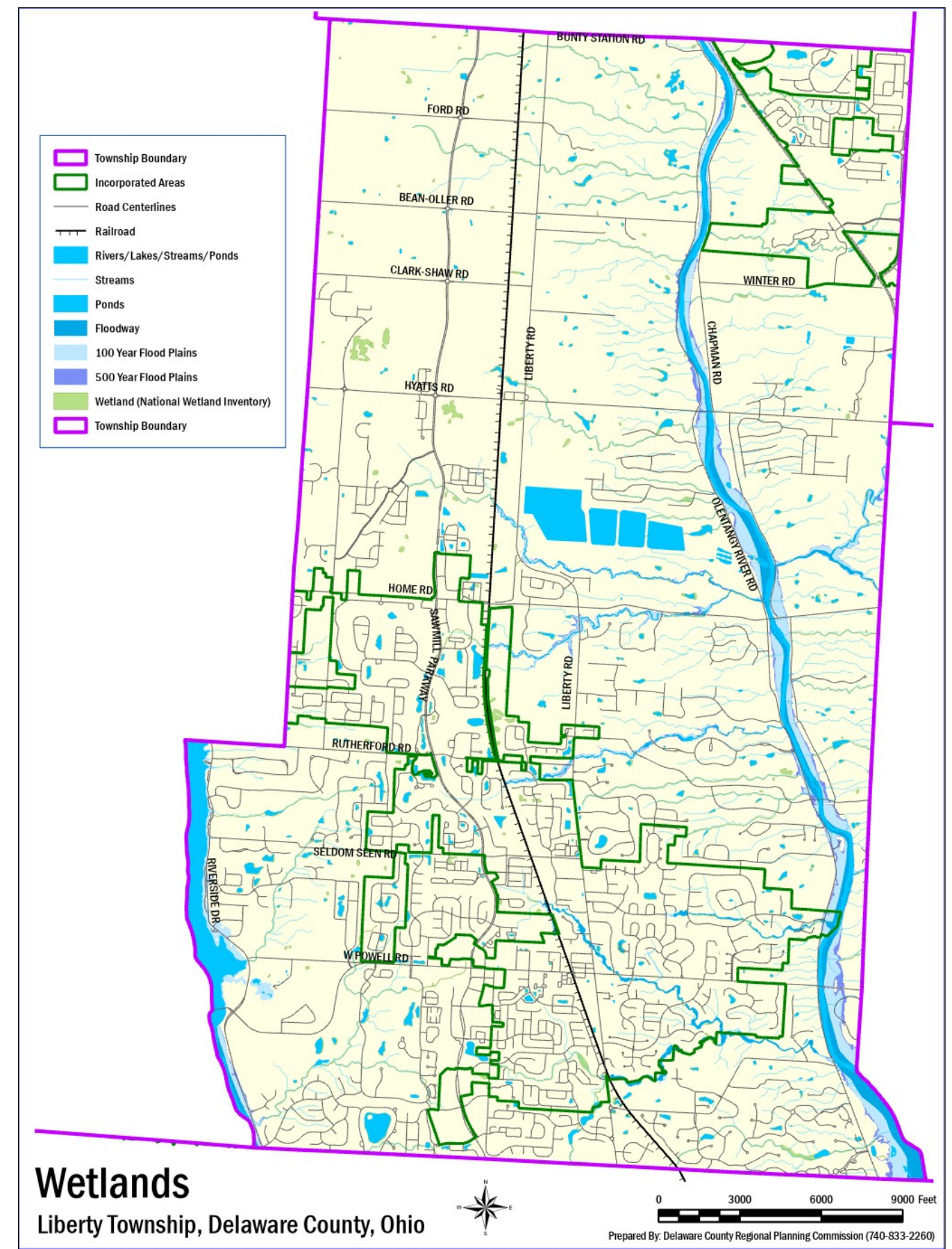
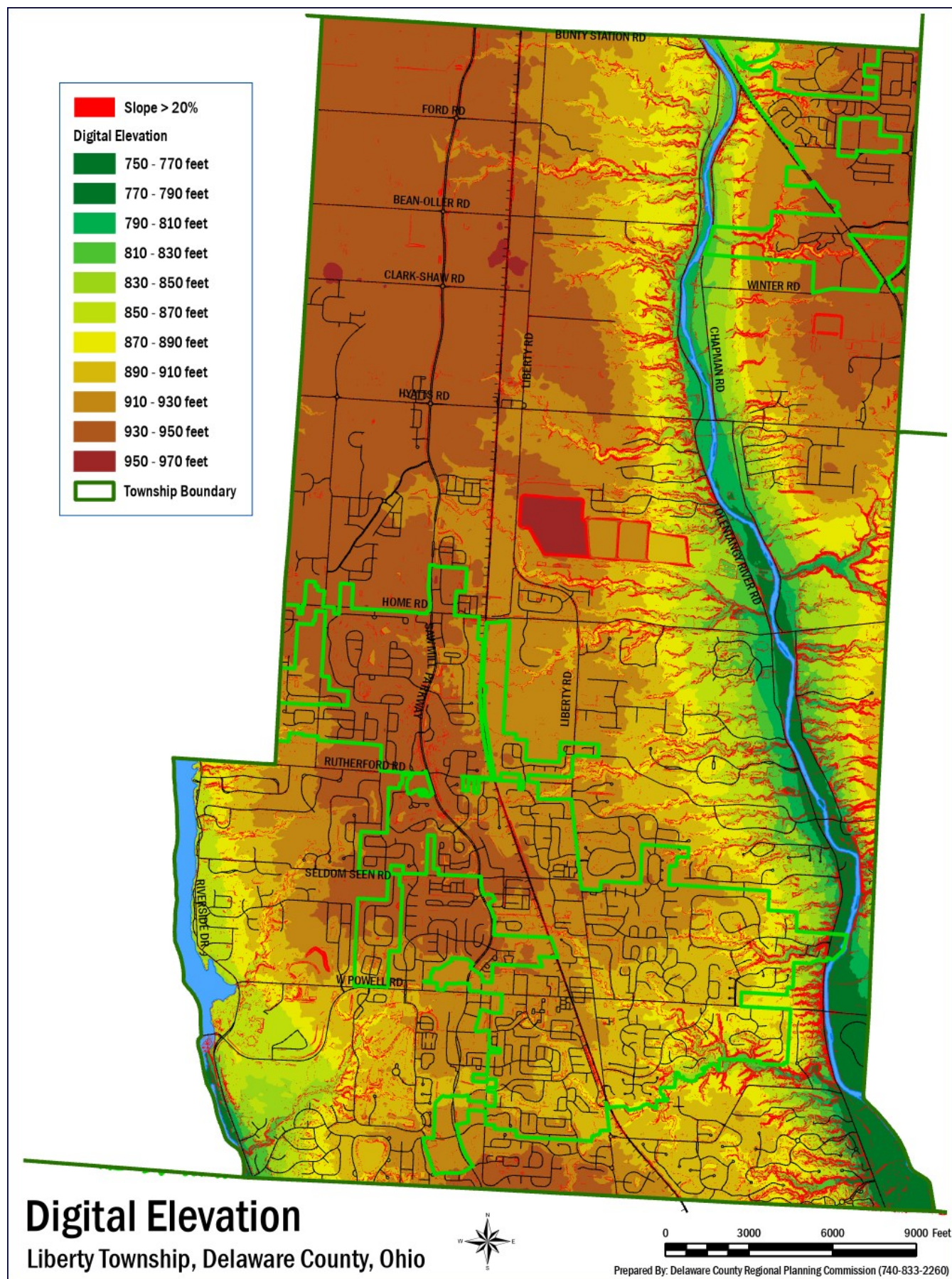
Liberty Township has pockets of wetland soils. Some of these may be jurisdictional wetlands, which are regulated. Wetlands are generally defined as soils that support a predominance of wetland vegetation, or are under water at least two weeks per year.

Wetlands are natural stormwater detention systems that trap, filter, and break down surface runoff. In Liberty Township some former wetlands are now agriculturally-drained (tiled) fields or low-lying areas by existing ponds and waterways.

Soils

Liberty Township contains heavy clay soils that are slowly permeable and often contain high ground water. Many of these wet clay soils also present problems for full-depth basement foundations due to high ground water. In areas of the Township not served by sanitary sewer, soil suitability for on-site sewage disposal systems is critical. The dominant soils in Liberty Township include Blount (Bo), Glynwood (Gw), Pewamo (Pw), Lybrand (Ly), and Scioto (Sc), all soils that are not ideal for on-site traditional septic and leach systems.





HOUSING

In a high-growth region, new housing is the index of growth. Planning for a range of housing in a developing community can be complicated. Many factors are involved, such as the availability of utilities, raw land values, market demand, proximity to major employment, and the existing and proposed transportation network.

There are also legal considerations related to non-discrimination in housing, and “fair share” provision of the regional housing needs, to the extent necessary services can be provided.

The majority of the undeveloped parts of the Township is zoned Farm Residential (FR-1), which permits single-family residences on a minimum lot size of 1 acre with 150 feet of frontage on a public road. Flag lots with 60 feet of frontage may also be permitted in the FR-1 district, or the frontage may be created on a platted Common Access Drive. Lands within the FR-1 district have traditionally been located in areas not served by centralized sanitary sewer. Minimum square footage for a single-family home in FR-1 is 1,100 square feet.

Landowners served by centralized sanitary sewer may apply for the Planned Residential (PR) zoning district, which permits a variety of housing types and lot sizes, though it has traditionally been used for single-family development. Densities for Planned Residential Developments (PRD) range from a density neutral one unit per acre to 1.5 units per net developable acre. In the Planned Multi-Family Residence District, minimum square footage is at least 900 square feet.

Values in Liberty Township have been typically some of the highest in the County, as evidenced by the Home Value by Market Total map which uses the County Auditor’s “market total” valuation.

Future Housing

To make housing projections, a community might anticipate what services they can provide, then anticipate their share of the future area population and allocate the distribution of housing types. Few communities attempt such an analysis, leaving the housing mix up to the traditional power of zoning, which is seldom so analytical. In a high-growth area such as Delaware County, it is impossible to anticipate what the County’s share of the State’s population will be, and distribute that amount among the townships, villages, and cities.

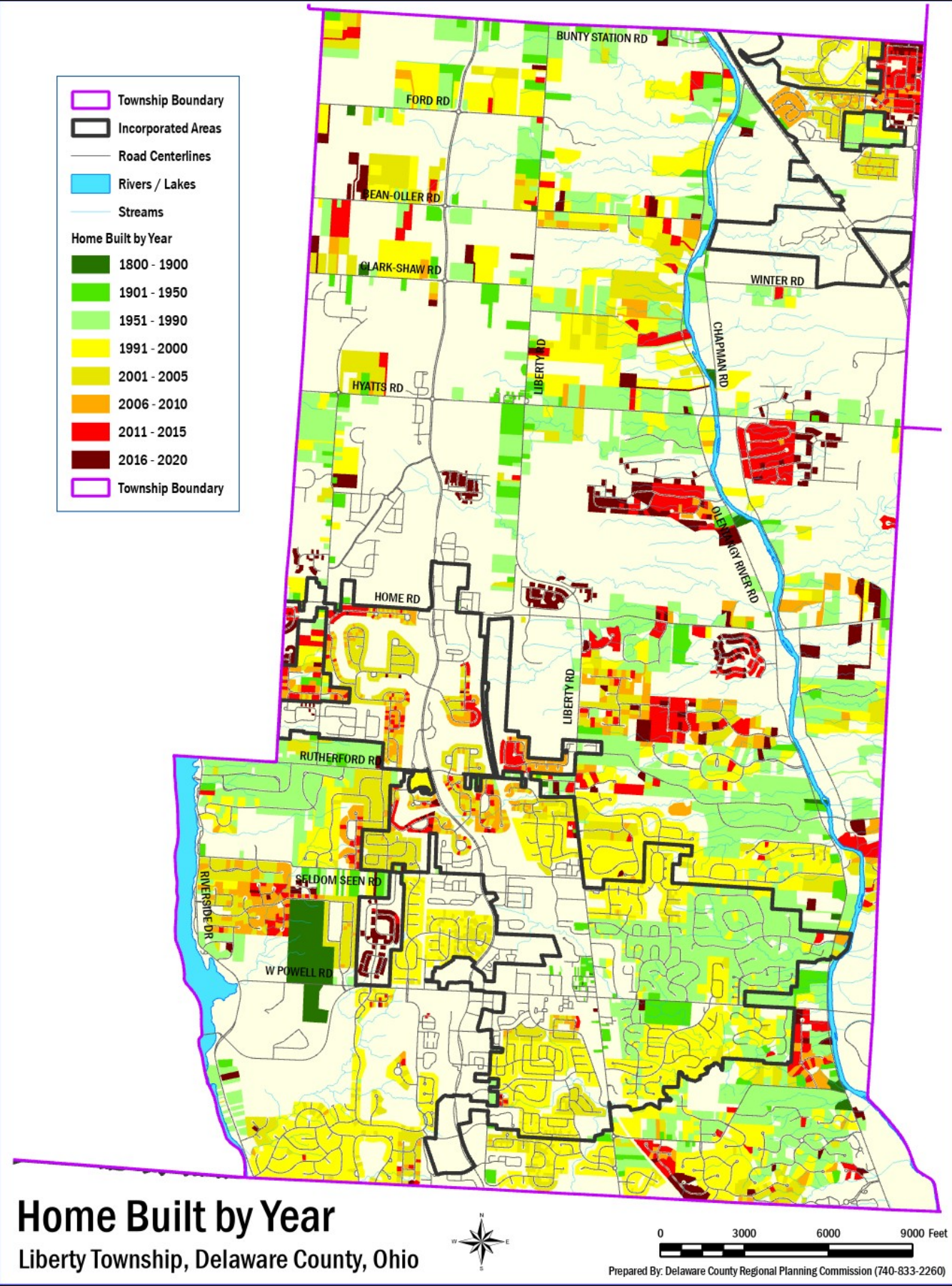
Zoning battles over density sometimes occur along the edges of municipal areas. Where the possibility of annexation exists, townships cannot be certain of their future boundaries. For that reason, it is impossible to assess fair share allocations of housing to be provided by the township when a city or village with separate services may annex land and provide housing at a higher density. A more pragmatic approach to housing distribution is for the township to:

1. determine how the community wants to look when it is all built out (vision);
2. determine what services it can and should provide;
3. anticipate its fair share of the County’s projected population;
4. permit a variety of housing that relates to the other items above.

Age-Based Housing

An emerging trend in the housing market is the recognition that communities need to respond to different generational needs based on the age and lifestyle of its current and future residents. Single-family suburban development typically appeals to families with children. As children age and leave home, many parents no longer want the maintenance and responsibility related to the single-family home and yard. The desire to downsize is met with the reality that there is no available product in their community and they must look elsewhere. This group of empty nesters is a demographic group that will continue to grow in the coming decades.

In response to this trend (and the recent challenges in the single-family market), developers have proposed several “age-restricted” or “age-targeted” residential developments. These projects seek densities that are not necessarily comparable to those reflected on the local Comprehensive Plan. Those densities are factored on impacts to



traffic, schools, services, and utilities. For example, the average single-family home generates approximately 10 trip ends per day while “detached senior housing” generates approximately 3.71 trip ends per day (source: Institute of Transportation Engineers). For sewage use, an institutional residential unit can use a fourth of the average single-family residence (source: EPA). Delaware County calculates one-bedroom facilities at 60% per unit versus that of a single-family home. However, non-institutional uses are calculated on the same sanitary use as a single-family home.

While these numbers cannot be consistent in every case, it is fair to consider higher densities for age-restricted uses than those identified on the typical Comprehensive Plan. If the application can 1.) truly be limited through zoning or deed to be age restricted, 2.) consider employees (if any) for traffic purposes, 3.) justify that the use fits the location (arterial street, access to other uses), and 4.) meet all other design standards, it may be appropriate to grant a higher density than the one noted on the Comprehensive Plan. This is only acceptable if such density number was originally based on the impacts of single-family residential uses.

This plan will recommend that the Township at least consider a policy that allows slightly adjusted densities in age-restricted developments that are either standalone developments or incorporated as a part of a larger, more diverse community (usually a single-family PRD). Such uses should be situated on arterial streets with access to community services and retail uses. The Township may wish to monitor the status of these projects through an occasional census of demographic information.

Workforce, or Affordable Housing

“Affordable housing” usually refers to housing that is purposefully constructed for those that cannot afford to live in the average residential unit, but it can also refer to housing types that fill a need for a diverse population that are older, are downsizing, or are in a service-oriented field with lower wages.

Affordable housing as a percentage is diminishing in the County. National trends are showing an increasing population, while the number of all new housing units being built is constantly decreasing. This trend is accompanied by a decreasing household size and an increase in the market price for those units that are being built. HUD seeks to offer assistance to those households that are paying more than 30% of their gross household income toward housing without a choice. The low-skilled job market is not raising salaries to meet the needs of those employees where the cost of living is increasing significantly.

The Central Ohio Region is experiencing rising property values and an increased cost of living. As high-growth development continues, costs will rise and the impact on schools, public facilities, and infrastructure will be significant. As these costs of living increase, many local residents face job

markets that cannot financially meet their needs. Low-skilled employees are forced into other market areas for housing that may meet their budget. If housing is unavailable, these individuals are forced to relocate. This can cause service sector unemployment to increase locally, thus affecting the entire community.

A lack of Affordable Housing as population increases is unavoidable unless developers are encouraged and/or granted incentives to develop more reasonably priced units. The housing market is driven by developer’s profits, which increase with housing market values.

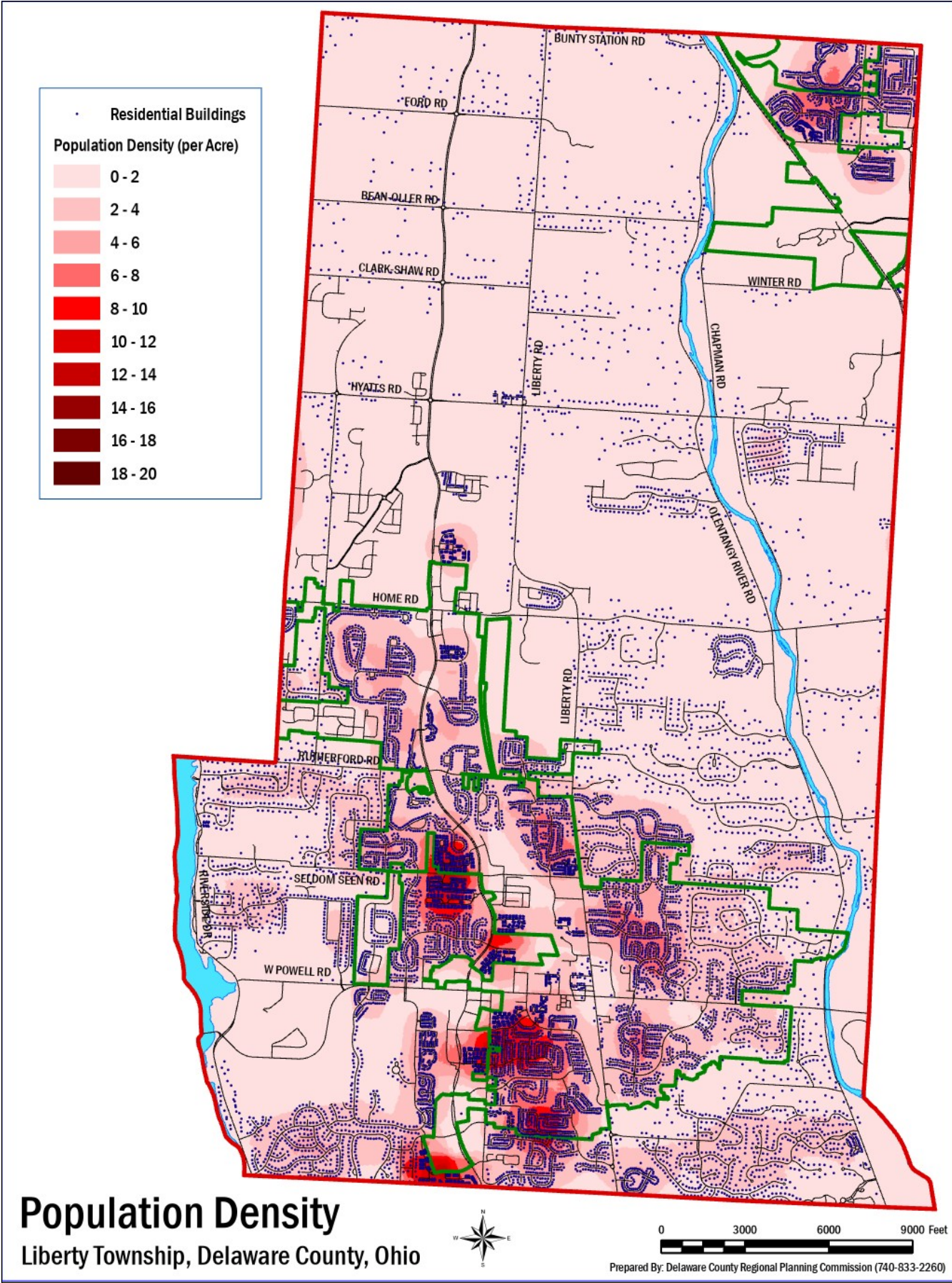
Development Approaches

Residents of the township generally express the desire to retain the rural character of the area. There are several way to accomplish this, including retaining small pockets of agriculture while economically viable; preserving open space through parks, areas of large lots, as part of Planned Residential subdivisions; and through the encouragement of Conservation Subdivisions.

Understanding each of these approaches is important as the Township considers large-scale zoning proposals, most of which will be limited to the larger parcels noted in the Land in Speculation Map.

Large-Lot Development

Prior to the extension of sanitary sewer to an area, residential development generally occurs along existing roads. Lots larger than 5 acres can be created without any review while splits smaller than 5 acres use a process known as the “No Plat” or “minor” subdivision. This large -lot development is sometimes accepted as preserving open space and lower densities, although no protections are typically put in place to prevent further development of the land or guarantee conservation of any undeveloped land. It will continue to be a





Large lots, mostly over 5 acres, along Ford Road

viable alternative so long as state law permits such No Plat subdivisions. Liberty Township allows a minimum lot size of 1 acre throughout the FR-1 zoning designation. There has been a market for such development where sewer service is unavailable or prior to its availability.

Conventional Subdivisions

As road frontage is used up by No Plat lot splits, new access has to be created. This can be done with a Common Access Driveway (CAD) Subdivision, which uses a private driveway to access lots. Delaware County allows CAD subdivisions to serve three to five lots in situations where there will be no extension of the private drive, and where a regular subdivision street might be unfeasible. CAD subdivisions can preserve rural character if done properly. A good example of a well-designed CAD subdivision is Thornton Woods at the southwest corner of Bean Oller Road and S.R. 315. This land is steep and wooded. Public subdivision streets would have been very costly and topographically challenging.

CAD subdivisions follow the procedure that includes a Sketch Plan, Preliminary Plan, and Final Plat. Standards are defined by DCRPC and include a maximum of five lots, maximum grade of 10%, passing areas every 350 feet, tree and shrub removal specifications, and an easement width of 60 feet along the driveway. Additional standards may be applied by the local fire department, based on the access requirements of local emergency equipment. A private maintenance agreement must be recorded with the County and referenced on the plat.

In addition to CADs, larger subdivisions can be developed with private or public streets built to county standards. Such larger-scale subdivisions also follow the full subdivision process. The developer or consulting engineer takes each project through an approval process with the DCRPC staff as well as an engineering process with the oversight of the County Engineering staff.

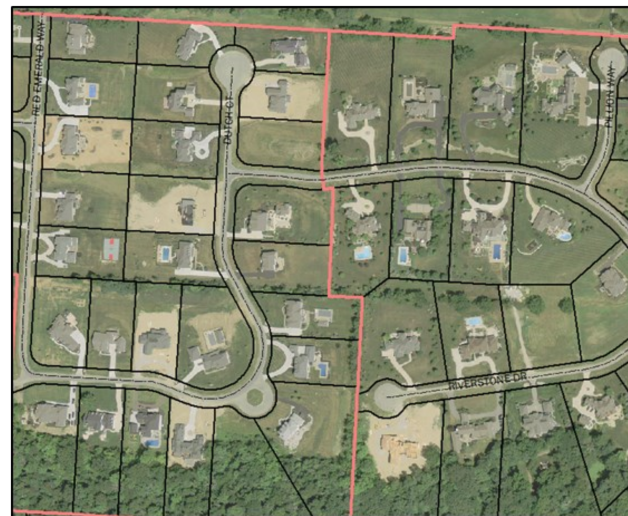
In such subdivisions, there are typically no community features (places to walk to, central green, riverbank for community use, etc.) because the land is parceled out to individual landowners. Such subdivisions do not create interconnected open space, nor do they preserve critical natural areas. Conventional subdivisions can, however, provide for easements and no-build/no-disturb areas across a number of individual residential lots, but these can be problematic over the course of time and often do not achieve preservation goals that they seek.

Cluster Subdivisions

Cluster subdivisions, or PRDs, are an improved alternative to the conventional subdivision. In areas with sewer service, higher densities within Planned Residential zoning has been approved. Typical lot sizes range from 0.6 acre to 0.75 acre.



A five-lot Common Access Driveway on Liberty Road



Conventional subdivisions (Woodland Hall/Woodland Glen)

In PRDs, greater design flexibility is gained by reducing lot size and width. PRD language must be sufficient to fulfill community expectations for:

- **Open Space** - required open space calculated from the gross area. Must specify type of open space (active or passive) and how much environmentally-sensitive area (wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, stormwater detention basins, and utility easements) counts toward the required open space. Management of common open space is often an afterthought. Guidance should be provided toward protecting critical features through conservation easements, environmental covenants, or HOA management.
- **Design** - PRDs need a pedestrian-oriented design, with a possible local commercial and service core, active recreation area, and sidewalks/bike paths to reduce induced traffic.
- **Architectural Standards** - to make higher density cluster subdivisions work, considerable thought needs to be given to the architecture, materials, facades, detailing, and landscape features that will bind the neighborhood into a cohesive unit. Although such criteria are often generally required, seldom does a land developer, who intends to sell the subdivision to a builder or builders, bother to provide significant criteria. The result is either a hodge-podge of different builders' production houses with no continuity of material or architecture or a blandness that results from a single builder using a limited number of home design options. Without specific criteria, a zoning commission must negotiate these details on an individual (and therefore, inconsistent) basis. Cluster housing demands greater advance planning and significant landscape architecture and architectural design elements.
- **Density calculation** - Over the past few years, several townships have adopted a "net" density calculation within their PRD standards, resulting in a hybrid model that does not require the typical 50% open space of a Conservation Subdivision but results in open space



A portion of Trail's End subdivision Although developed under the PR standards, the project includes many features of a Conservation Subdivision (see next section).

of a higher quality than the typical PR zoning.

The Liberty Township Planned Residential District language includes the following design characteristics:

- 1.5 dwelling units per net developable acre;
- Open space of 20% gross acreage, designation of “Common Open Space,” “Open Space,” and “Natural Green Space,” based on definition of use;
- Walkways, street trees, bikeways and bike paths, and screening and buffering;
- Preservation Areas: wetlands, steep slopes, ravines are preserved to the greatest extent possible;
- Other general design features such as landscaping, parking, signage, lighting, etc.

Alternative Development Patterns

The FR-1 district, which requires a minimum 1-acre lot, has been the prevailing development pattern in areas without sewer service. The Planned Residential and Planned Commercial districts have been the prevailing development patterns in areas with sewer service. There are alternative development patterns to consider.

The American Planning Association, the Urban Land Institute, and the National Association of Home Builders all support “Smart Growth” types of development. Smart Growth is a term intended to represent more compact and efficient designs that reduce sprawl and reduce individual automobile trips. “New Urbanism” is a Smart Growth alternative for urban densities in urban and sub-urban settings. The “Conservation Subdivision” is a Smart Growth alternative for rural areas.

Conservation Subdivisions: A Way to Preserve Rural Character

Conservation Subdivisions are compact residential neighborhoods that save rural character by preserving open space in a natural setting. They are typically developed at densities of less than one unit per acre. The following descriptions and graphics are presented with permission of Randall Arendt from his book *Conservation Design for Subdivisions* (1996, Island Press).

Conservation Subdivisions incorporate the following elements:

- The design is typically “density-neutral,” meaning the overall number of dwellings allowed is the same as would be permitted in a conventional subdivision layout.

- 50% or more of the buildable land area is typically designated as open space.
- “Primary” conservation areas (wetlands, vegetated corridors, steep slopes, and floodplains) are protected.
- “Secondary” Conservation Areas such as woodlands, meadows, wildlife habitats, historic, archaeological or cultural features, and views are preserved to the best extent possible.
- Compact house lots are grouped adjacent to the open space.
- Streets are interconnected to avoid dead ends wherever possible.
- Open space is connected by trails or walkways.

In its 2015 Zoning Resolution amendments, Liberty Township added the Planned Residence Conservation District (PRC) as an option for landowners. It requires the typical rezoning process as the Planned Residence District. The basic standards include:

- 1.5 units per net developable acre;
- Open space requirement of 50%, 15% of which shall be suitable for active recreation purposes.

New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Design

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a reaction to conventional suburban sprawl by a school of architects. Known as “The New Urbanism,” principles of planning and architecture work together to create human-scale, walkable communities similar to neighborhoods that were typical in the United States before World War II, such as Delaware’s north end historic district and old Sunbury. Benefits of this type of development include reduced auto trips, more compact infrastructure, more efficient land-consumption, and potentially positive fiscal impact as values per acre tend to be much higher.

An authentic “New Urban” neighborhood contains most of these elements:

- A discernible center—a square or a green and sometimes a busy or memorable corner. A transit stop would be located at this center.
- Most dwellings within a five-minute walk of the center, an average of



Site before development



Identifying conservation areas



Typical layout with acreage lots



End result, same number of houses

roughly 2,000 feet.

- A variety of dwelling types — houses, townhouses, and apartments — so that younger and older people, singles and families, and various economic levels may find places to live.
- A school close enough so that most students can walk from their home.
- Small playgrounds accessible to every dwelling — not more than a tenth of a mile away.
- Streets form a connected network, dispersing traffic by providing a variety of pedestrian and vehicular routes to any destination.
- Streets are relatively narrow



Clark's Grove, a development with a mixture of lot sizes in Covington, Georgia, is a small-scale TND surrounding a school and park site.

- Parking lots and garage doors rarely front the street. Parking is to the rear of buildings, accessed by alleys.
- Shops and offices of sufficiently varied types to supply the weekly needs of a household located at the edge of the residential area.
- Buildings in the neighborhood center are placed close to the street, creating a well-defined outdoor room.
- Certain prominent sites at the termination of street vistas or in the neighborhood center are reserved for civic buildings. These provide sites for community meetings, education, and religious or cultural activities.

In 2016, the rezoning process began on Evans Farm in Orange and Berlin Townships. The overall plan covers more than 1,100 acres and proposes over 2,000 single-family parcels of varying sizes, more than 500 other types of housing units (townhouses, multi-family over retail), two commercial areas, a school site, parks, trails, and recreational features. It will also be the site of a 54-acre Jennings Sports Park.

A smaller-scale town center is a viable option for Liberty Township if a sizeable site with adequate access can be served with sanitary sewer. Such a site could include a small, walkable commercial area surrounded by a core of residential units that would help create a core group of close-by customers.



For Liberty Township to permit a traditional neighborhood design, its zoning code could be amended to provide for additional flexibility and density, unless the new Planned Multi-Family Residence District and current Planned Commercial zoning were creatively designed with the features listed previously. Design standards are critical for such a mixed-use approach, with specific architectural details as part of the regulating language.

Figure X. Evans Farm as of March, 2022



Figure X. Evans Farm Development Plan, Orange and Berlin Townships

Economic Development Tools

The process of actively seeking new businesses and encouraging existing businesses to grow is performed on the county and municipal level. The following is a list of economic tools and development-related issues that the Township should be aware of.

Enterprise Zones

Enterprise Zones allow for tax abatements on industrial projects conducted within the zone. Abatements can be made for improvements on the real property as a result of the project. Personal property abatements can be taken on machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, and inventory that is new or first-used in the State of Ohio. A three-member negotiation team reviews and negotiates the project.

Delaware County currently has three active zones: the City of Delaware Enterprise Zone, the Orange Township Enterprise Zone, and the Village of Sunbury Enterprise Zone. Tax levels can be abated up to a percentage for a defined number of years. This program has a requirement of job creation associated with any abated project. If properly managed, this program has proven to be an engine of growth.

Finance Authority (Port Authority legislation)

Port Authorities are political subdivisions created by statute for the purpose of enhancing and promoting transportation, economic development, housing, recreation, research, and other issues within the jurisdiction of the authority. They can acquire and sell property, issue bonds, loan monies for construction, operate property in connection with transportation, recreation, government operations, or cultural purposes, engage in activities on behalf of other political subdivisions, among many other functions. It may issue revenue bonds, apply for grants and loans, and even levy a property tax not exceeding one mill for a maximum period of five years. In short, the Authorities can accomplish much more in a competitive fashion than a government entity which is limited by disclosure requirements.

New Community Authority

The “New Community Authority” (NCA) is a tool defined by ORC 349. It is a process where a district is created for the “conduct of industrial, commercial, residential, cultural, educational, and recreational activities, and designed in accordance with planning concepts for the placement of utility, open space, and other supportive facilities.” The establishment of the Authority can identify sources of revenue, such as a community development charge, or a dollar amount determined on the basis of the assessed valuation of real property.

The New Community district is an area of land described by the developer in a petition and approved by the County Commissioners. The ORC allows the addition of land to the district by amendment by request of landowners.

A New Community Authority may do many things as defined in the Ohio Revised Code, including:

- acquire and dispose of property;
- engage in educational, health, social, vocational, cultural, beautification, landscaping, and recreational activities and related services primarily for residents of the district;
- collect and receive service and user fees;
- adopt rules governing the use of community facilities;
- employ managers and employees;
- sue and be sued;
- enter into contracts, apply for and accept grants, and issue bonds;
- maintain funds or reserves for performance of its duties;
- enter agreements with boards of education for the acquisition of land or other services for educational purposes; and
- engage in planning efforts.

Two New Community Authorities currently impact or have the potential impact within Liberty Township. The Liberty/Powell CA was established to help fund improvements in and around Golf Village. That NCA includes Scioto Reserve in Concord Township, as well as Liberty Village at Steitz Road. The Concord/Scioto NCA was created to accompany the development of the Lower Scioto Wastewater Treatment Plant. Projects that include extension of infrastructure into that plant may petition to be part of that NCA. Liberty lands

include Clark Shaw Reserve South, Harvest Curve, and Harvest Point. Liberty Grand also includes a new Community Authority.

Community Reinvestment Areas

Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs) are designated zones where tax abatements are allowable on improvements made as a result of a business expansion or relocation project. Job creation is an additional requirement for participation in the Community Reinvestment Area program.

Only one CRA exists in Delaware County, located in the City of Delaware with the same boundaries as the Delaware Enterprise Zone. The available abatement rate can extend up to 100% on the real property improvements for a term of up to 15 years. The abatement rate and term is a unique negotiation for each project, considering such factors as job creation numbers and real and personal property investment levels.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a program to finance public infrastructure by redirecting new real and personal property tax to a debt retirement fund. The value of the property tax exempted is paid as a Service Payment-in-Lieu of Taxes (equal to the amount of exempted value), due at the same time property taxes are due. The portion of the property tax on *improvements* to a site may be up to 75% for 10 years.

TIFs can be created prior to development or after. If existing businesses are involved, a county negotiating committee meets with businesses and discusses if the TIF program can be utilized for a proposed project. If so, the committee will work with the business to reach an agreed exemption level. The Delaware County Economic Development Office works with both the business and negotiating committee to facilitate the process. TIFs are used generally in commercial and industrial settings. Residential TIFs should only be applied where related infrastructure meets a larger public purpose and should be approved only if a number of conditions are met. TIFs should be supported by the local jurisdiction, the applicable school district (unless the district is “made whole”), local fire district, and county representatives.

Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit

The Ohio Department of Development administers this program in conjunction with local incentive program participation. This program allows a business to receive a tax credit or even a refund against its corporate franchise tax based upon the number of new jobs created with the project.

The requirements of the program are that at least 25 new, full-time jobs must be created within three years of the beginning of the project, and that the new employees must be paid a minimum of 150% of the federal minimum wage.

The Job Creation Tax Credit is a direct credit against a business’ corporate franchise tax. The basis of the credit lies in the state income tax withholding

per new employee. The tax credit will be figured from the state income tax withheld for the new employees. A percentage of the withheld tax will be credited against the business’ corporate franchise tax each year for the term of the agreement. This rate can be up to 75% with a term of up to 10 years.

The Delaware County Economic Development Office will work with businesses interested in this program and put them in contact with the Ohio Department of Development’s representative.

Impact Fees

With increased costs due to rapid growth, many communities would like to impose impact fees on new development. Models for estimating the fiscal impact of new development were developed by Robert Burchell, David Listokin, and William Dolphin in *The New Practitioner’s Guide to Fiscal Impact Analysis*, (Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University, 1985), and the *Development Assessment Handbook*, Urban Land Institute, 1994).

Ohio planning and zoning legislation does not empower townships to charge impact fees that offset costs of service expansion (roads, schools, parks, etc.). It has been generally held, however, that if road improvements are needed immediately adjacent to the development, and can be directly attributable to the project, and if the benefit of contributing to the improvement outweighs the burden of such improvement for the development in question, a “fair share” contribution to the improvement can be requested by the community.

Alternatively, if large proposed developments do not reasonably mitigate their own impacts, they may impose an undue burden on the township. In such cases the rezoning may be premature.

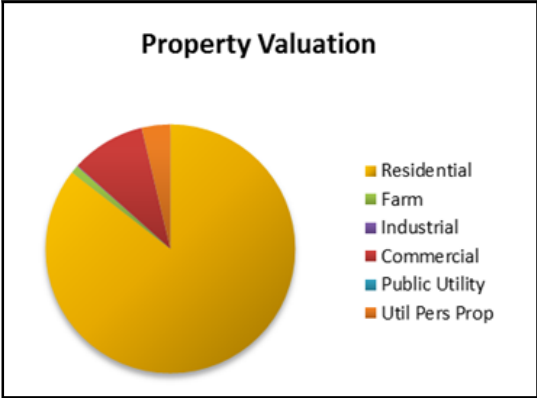
Under the current legal system in Ohio, townships must be aware of the need to encourage a mix of commercial, industrial, and a variety of residen-

Rates of Taxation and Revenues

Property Valuation

The unincorporated areas in the County are funded primarily with property taxes. As of Tax Year 2021, Liberty Township’s residential property was valued at \$961,524,610, which is third behind Orange (\$1.1 billion) and Genoa (\$1.06 billion) Townships. The City of Powell’s residential value is \$546 million. The Township has seen steady growth in its residential land value, with a 9.1% growth rate between 2019 and 2020 and 2.9% from 2020 to 2021. Liberty Township’s farm value is \$8,713,990.

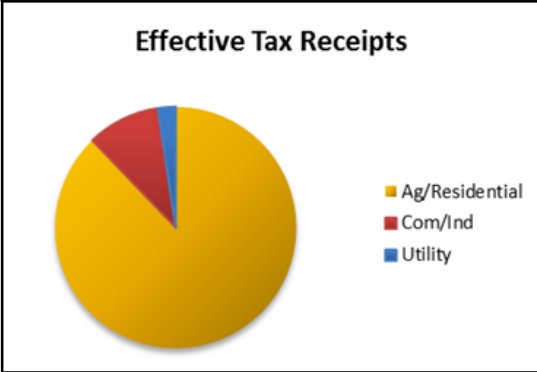
The Township’s commercial, industrial, and utility real properties are valued at \$94,478,820, which is second behind only Orange Township with \$227 million. The next highest is Berkshire Township at \$28 million. Powell’s non-residential land is valued at \$55 million.



Adding in farm uses, utilities, and personal tangible value, the total valuation for Liberty Township is \$1,109,776,220. This represents 19% of the unincorporated total \$5,823,004,280.

Effective Tax Receipts

The County Auditor estimates the effective tax receipts from each community, based on land use type. Unfortunately, there are only three broad categories listed: Agricultural/Residential (\$10,312,157), Utilities (\$420,009), and All Others, which are displayed as Commercial/Industrial (\$1,087,347). (2020)



The revenue is divided among four categories in Liberty Township: Road (\$1,316,574), General (\$1,540,652), Bond (\$393,717), and Fire and EMS (\$8,568,569). (2020)

Millage Paid by Property Owners

The County Treasurer maintains a list of all mills levied on each dollar of property within the County. Individual taxes are based on the rate multiplied by the property valuation of each property. Ohio law limits the amount of taxa-

tion without a vote of the people to what is known as the “10 mill limit” (\$10 per thousand of assessed valuation). Any additional real estate taxes for any purpose must be voted by residents.

Several school districts lie within Liberty Township, so there are several calculations for tax rates throughout the unincorporated Township. The Township’s 2016 effective tax rates include the following, based on the Auditor’s online property report function:

Residential

The figures in the table are taken from a sample property within the unincorporated portion of Liberty Township in the Olentangy district.

The total market value of this example is **\$418,000**, which is slightly higher than the overall County average. Total tax paid was **\$10,068.44**.

Agency	Eff. Rate	Amount	Percent
Olentangy	56.597	\$7,477.94	74.3
DACC	2.22	\$285.39	2.8
Health	0.486	\$62.25	0.6
Preservation Parks	1.12	\$156.68	1.6
Library	0.77	\$99.37	1.0
*Liberty Twp. (twp)	1.2	\$153.62	1.5
Liberty Twp.	5.622	\$719.66	7.1
**County Agencies	4.915	\$637.28	6.3
Mental Health	0.781	\$100.03	1.0
911	0.545	\$73.29	0.7

Commercial/Office

Townships also receive a portion of the commercial and industrial taxes collected by the County. As noted previously, non-residential uses play a vital role in the fiscal health of any community. While they generate taxes for the community, they do not generate any costs to the school district. Tax rates within townships are different based on the school district boundaries, at rates slightly above the residential rate.

Agency	Eff. Rate	Amount	Percent
Olentangy	64.081	\$13,425.61	76.4
DACC	2.283	\$478.44	2.7
Health	0.621	\$130.19	0.7
Preservation Parks	1.243	\$260.45	1.5
Library	0.93	\$194.93	1.1
*Liberty Twp. (twp)	1.2	\$251.41	1.4
Liberty Twp.	6.446	\$1,350.50	7.7
**County Agencies	5.44	\$1,140.82	6.5
Mental Health	0.935	\$195.79	1.1
911	0.638	\$133.58	0.8

The figures in the table are taken from a large single-use commercial property in the unincorporated portion of Liberty Township, Olentangy district. The total market value is **\$598,600**. Total tax paid in this scenario was **\$17,561.70**.

*Incorporated areas do not pay this. **Includes Sourcepoint, DCBDD, Bond, and General Funds.

Sources of Property Tax

The following tables and map indicate the highest-paying commercial and industrial uses within the unincorporated areas and within Powell. Each use displays the Taxable Total from the Auditor’s information, the total Taxes Paid in 2021, and the portion of that tax that came to Liberty Township. For the unincorporated areas, this tax includes both effective rates of 1.2 and 5.622 as indicated in the table to the left.

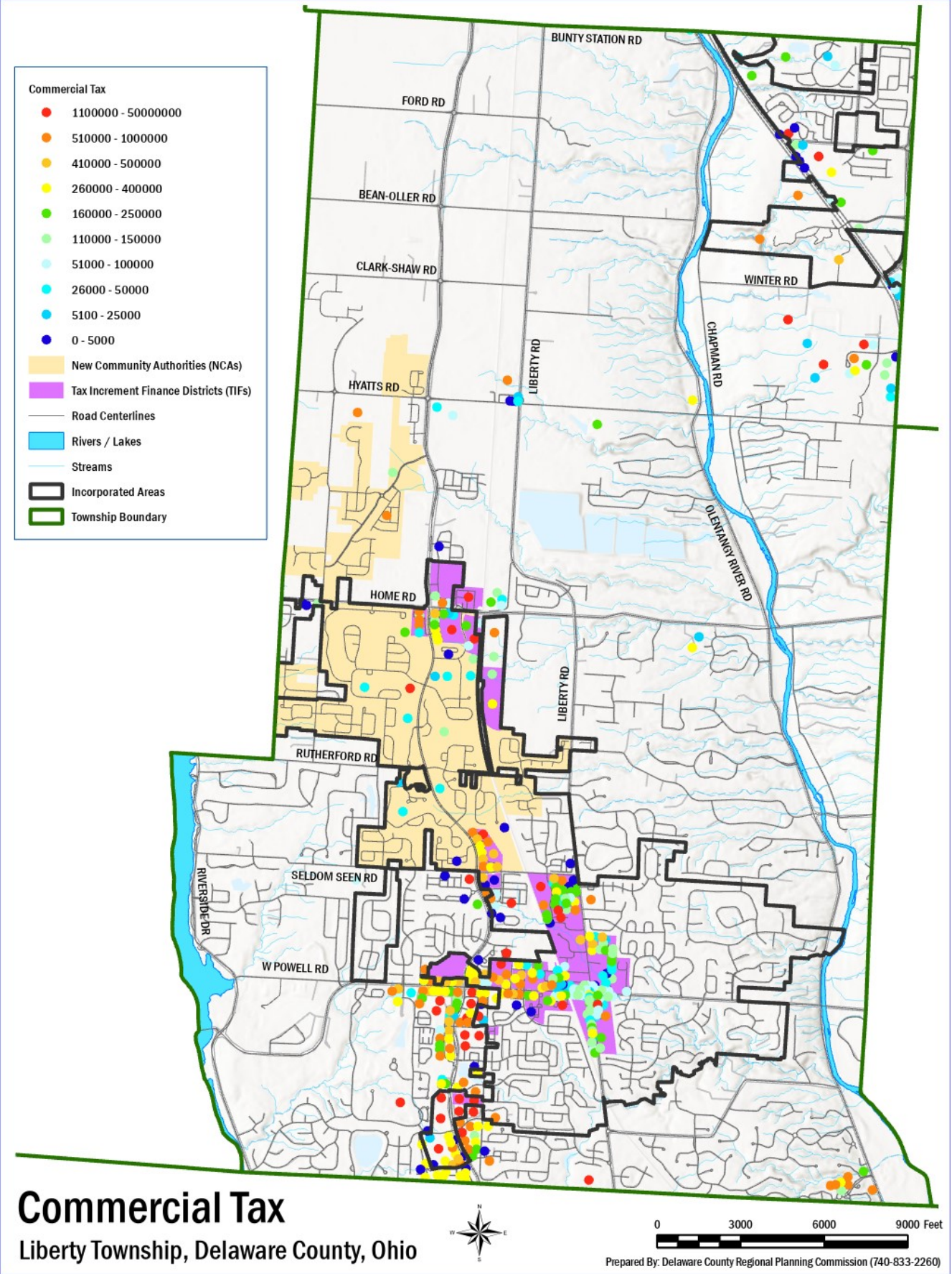
Highest-value Commercial Taxed Properties in Unincorporated Liberty Township

OWNER NAME	Address	Taxable Total	Taxes paid 2021	Twp portion (calc)
Citigroup Technology Inc	306 Greif Parkway	\$58,069,690	\$2,056,213	225,566.56
Liberty Summit Apartments	3156 Home Road	\$3,396,820	\$285,059	25,972.06
Greif Bros Corp of Ohio Inc	366 Greif Parkway	\$2,770,710	\$232,427	21,184.75
SJSS Powell (Kroger strip center with Pet Supplies Plus)	9820 Brewster Lane	\$2,577,510	\$216,208	19,707.56
Rennob Inc. (Wedgewood Golf and Country Club)	9600 Wedgewood Blvd	\$2,275,000	\$190,697	17,394.65
Powell Plaza Holdings LLC (Drug Mart and retail)	9965 Sawmill Parkway	\$1,927,210	\$161,544	14,735.39
Wedgewood Office Park LLC	3751 Attucks Drive	\$1,836,700	\$155,577	14,043.35
Greif Bros Corp of Ohio	425 Winter Road	\$1,749,410	\$146,640	11,276.64
Greensview Apartments LLC	3800 Greensview Drive	\$1,659,390	\$139,094	12,687.64
The Kroger Company	3975 W. Powell Road	\$1,645,000	\$138,124	12,651.17
Fred Fitzgerald Ohio Apartments LLC (Bear Pointe Apts.)	3301 Bear Pointe Circle	\$1,590,120	\$133,289	12,229.12
Ramar Land Corp (State Auto) (partial abatement)	268 Greif Parkway	\$1,551,520	\$43,251	4,744.63
Scarlet Investments LLC (Sheetz)	3641 Seldom Seen Road	\$1,312,500	\$110,017	\$10,035.34
Retail Rocks II LLC (Liberty Crossing Shopping)	9711 Sawmill Parkway	\$1,296,120	\$109,673	\$9,910.17
Sawmill Business Park II LLC	3934 North Hampton Dr	\$1,159,060	\$97,155	\$8,862.13

Highest-value Commercial Taxed Properties in the City of Powell

OWNER NAME	Address	Taxable Total	Taxes paid 2021	Twp portion (calc)
Benchmark Investments (Powell Senior Living)	10351 Sawmill Parkway	\$4,812,640	\$427,099	\$31,022.13
Powell Grand Communities	3400 Club Way Court	\$3,639,510	\$308,229	\$23,460.17
Target Corporation	10560 Sawmill Parkway	\$2,922,500	\$253,682	\$18,838.41
Benchmark Investments XII LP	3872 Attucks Drive	\$2,778,020	\$253,682	\$18,838.41
SROA 422 Village Park (Storage Rentals of America)	422 Village Park Drive	\$2,268,600	\$192,292	\$14,623.32
Powell Crossing Apartments	46 Crossing Street	\$2,200,840	\$186,329	\$14,186.55
Ganzhorn Real Estate of Powell	10272 Sawmill Parkway	\$1,964,830	\$167,418	\$12,665.24
The Kroger Company	7525 Guard-Well Street	\$1,642,030	\$163,642	\$10,584.48
Mt. Carmel Health System	10330 Sawmill Parkway	\$1,594,920	\$135,030	\$10,280.80
Kinsale Golf and Fitness Club LLC	3737 Village Club Drive	\$1,523,760	\$144,625	\$9,822.17
Store Master Funding IV LLC (Enchanted Care Kids)	8761 Moreland Street	\$1,470,000	\$139,521	\$9,475.57
Nightingale Ventures LTD (Abbotsgate)	177 Penny Lane	\$1,372,630	\$116,210	\$8,847.93
LDH 2000 Family LLC (Wolf Commerce Park)	489 Village Park Drive	\$1,260,000	\$106,675	\$8,121.92
Simply Storage Powell LLC (Mini-Storage)	7533 Woodcutter Drive	\$1,118,640	\$106,173	\$7,210.72
PS Mid-West Two Cardinal 2020 LLC (Mini-Storage)	72 Industrial Parkway	\$1,093,510	\$93,534	\$7,048.73

The map indicates all uses that are in the tax category of commercial and industrial. This map is created with the “Taxable Total” figure and includes some uses that do not pay taxes or are taxed at a much lower rate. These can include churches, schools, and other public uses. *(RPC continues to work on this map to remove these uses for a clearer picture of taxable properties.)*



County-Wide Tax District Comparison

The following maps use County Auditor data to compare the total millage paid by each tax districts. The primary determination of tax districts are the township, incorporation area, and school district. Libraries can also affect boundaries. These maps do not take into account Tax Increment Financing districts and other special tax situa-tion. Income tax is also not a factor.

