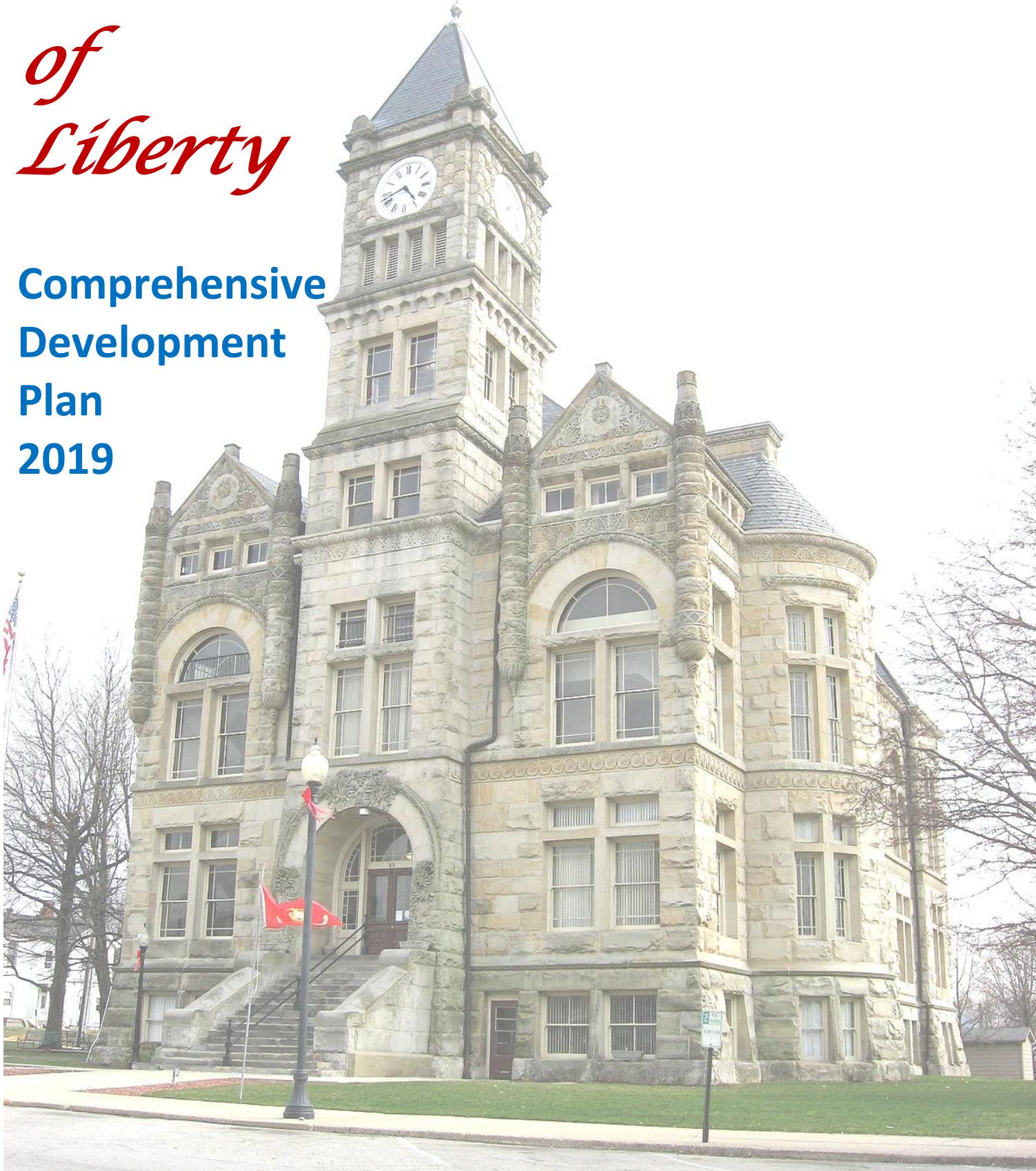


Town of Liberty

Comprehensive Development Plan 2019



KIESER CONSULTING GROUP, LLC

Planning . Environmental Studies . Grants . Water Quality



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TOWN of LIBERTY
Comprehensive Development Plan



Liberty Comprehensive Development Plan: Executive Summary

Purpose of the Comprehensive Development Plan:

The Liberty Comprehensive Development Plan, henceforth known as the Plan is to be used as a guide for future growth and planning for the town as well as for town officials, decision makers, developers and residents. The Plan is to be used as a guiding document for future decisions and plans for the town and represents how the Town of Liberty would like to grow and expand in the future.

The Town of Liberty in conjunction with the Union County Development Corporation decided to initiate this planning study largely due to the fact that they currently had no reasonable document to charter the future of the community. The last comprehensive planning effort was accomplished in the late 1960's and was woefully out of date. There have been many changes to the town since that time and new leadership dictated a new plan and vision for the future of the town.

The vision that the Town of Liberty has for itself can also be communicated in the Plan. This vision can be turned into a reality with the help of the goals, objectives and strategies that are also outlined in the plan. These goals, objectives and strategies will be used as a way to support future growth for the Town of Liberty and provide some direction for anyone looking to help with this growth.

The condition of the Town of Liberty is also assessed in the Plan. Considering the current state of the Town helps to set up the goals, objectives and strategies and then ensures that the Town will build on its current assets to create future opportunities. Assessing things such as roads, parks, and community buildings helps give the Plan a basis for what the Town can use to grow and what they should work on to grow in the future.

The Plan for the Town of Liberty is a living plan and reflects the current community goals and objectives. Being a living document this Plan shall be updated in order to represent the



changing community of the Town of Liberty. Ideally, updates should be yearly to assess which objectives have been met and to add new objectives to each Section. In the least, the Plan should be updated every five years. This Plan's goals, objectives and strategies shall also change as new improvements and innovations are made in economic development.

Guiding Goals and Objectives of the Plan:

The guiding goals, objectives and strategies of the Plan focus on several categories that are seen as a priority for the Town of Liberty. These categories include, but are not limited to utilities, industry and jobs, transportation infrastructure, land uses, education system, community attractions, quality housing, and historic sites and buildings. These categories look to improve the quality of life for the current residents of the Town of Liberty.

The goals, objectives and strategies also provide solutions to making improvements as a way to attract new people and businesses to the community by encouraging industry and job growth as well as looking at land uses and plan for future uses and development. By doing this the town is able to bring out the community's identity and character.

All of these categories are part of the vision statement for the Town of Liberty which is "Liberty is focused on increasing the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors through preserving the town's past and promoting economic growth. By connecting people, places, and destinations, we will improve upon our community assets for a successful future."

Structure of the Plan:

The Plan for the Town of Liberty includes five sections that address the priorities of the community. These sections outline the goals, objectives and strategies of the Town and provide ways for the Town to grow and achieve these goals. The Plan also includes an assessment of the Town and its needs, assets and liabilities. The structure of this Plan was designed to be easily used and read for anyone looking to support the growth and planning goals of the Town of Liberty.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Development of the Plan:

The Town's Plan explains the community's vision and needs for the future. The Town of Liberty's residents and town officials were consulted through meetings and continued corroboration to ensure that the Town's needs and wants were properly represented. The Plan looked to answer these four questions:

- “Where are we now?”
- “Where are we going?”
- “Where would we like to go?”
- “How do we get there?”

The Plan in Action:

The Town of Liberty's Plan is meant to be a flexible guide document for the Town. The Plan is to be used as a way for town officials, decision makers, developers and residents to ensure that the Town is moving toward future growth development. These parties should look to actively pursue the goals and objectives laid out in the Plan. A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) can be found in **Appendix E**. This plan lays out the priority projects of the community for its future expenditures. This CIP is meant to be fluid and change as funding opportunities arise.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

IN THIS SECTION...

This chapter provides the overall structure of the Liberty Comprehensive Development Plan.

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Standards
- Planning Process
- How to Use this Document
- Public Involvement
- Key Terms and Phrases



INTRODUCTION

Communities are constantly interacting with and responding to changing factors that relate to quality of life at the local level. Sometimes these changing factors are focused around local shifts, while others are derived from regional and national trends. Population demographics will shift, the economy will respond to new markets, technologies will improve, and preferences will change for services and housing. These changes will inevitably influence current and proposed uses of land, capital, and property. As we look into the future, we can choose to merely react to change or anticipate and direct changes that occur. When engaging to changes that have occurred and planning for change that the community would like to occur in the future.

PURPOSE

The state of Indiana establishes the minimum requirements and purpose of a comprehensive plan (500 series of IC 36-7-4). The primary purpose of a comprehensive plan is to articulate the broader vision and establish guiding principles and policies for future growth and development of an entire community. Indiana code states that “it should promote the public health, safety, morals, convenience, order or the general welfare and for the sake of efficiency and economic in the process of development.” It does not focus on the needs and desires of one property owner, business or neighborhood. Comprehensive plans are intended to be broad in nature. This provided community leaders with the flexibility to implement the community-wide vision, goals and objectives while responding to changing community conditions that are likely to occur over the life of the plan.

STANDARDS

The State of Indiana has developed specific requirements and minimum content for a comprehensive plan (500 series of IC 33-7-4). The elements of a comprehensive plan, at a minimum, should include:

- A statement of objectives for future development of the jurisdiction;
- A statement of policy for the land use development of the jurisdiction; and



- A statement of policy for the development of public ways, public spaces, public land, public structures, and public utilities.

A comprehensive plan may also include a multitude of additional topics, community issues and strategies, such as surveys/studies of current conditions, maps/graphic, reports, and recommendations.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Liberty Comprehensive Development Plan was initiated by the Town of Liberty with the intent of serving as the community's guide for future development over the next 20 years.

Throughout the development of the plan there were many opportunities for the public to provide feedback through public meetings, an advisory committee, key person interviews and adoption hearing. The information and ideas gathered from these public input opportunities were used to establish recommendations and concepts included in this plan.

FRAMEWORK

The framework of the plan serves as a foundation of the planning process which is used in creating this plan – guided by four key questions. The questions are as follows:

- “Where are we now?”
- “Where are we going?”
- “Where would we like to go?”
- “How do we get there?”



HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This plan's vision is the first step in establishing Liberty as a community with a rich history and promising future. It will serve as the guiding document that town officials, decision makers, developers and resident can reference as development and reinvestment occurs. As result, Liberty's Comprehensive Development Plan should serve as the primary, guiding document and be the basis for all decisions about the location, quality and quantity of future growth and its supporting infrastructure. This plan is also intended to be a flexible document and broad in nature so that the town can respond to changes.

The following sections provide the research and analysis of demographic and economic characteristics of the community, documentation of the public participation process, an explanation of the vision, goals, and objectives and a description of elements of the plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This provides a brief overview of the Plan and the reason for taking on this planning process.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION: This chapter provides a brief overview of the Indiana Code requirements, the planning process and framework of the plan document. It also includes an explanation of how portions of the plan are intended to be used and definitions for key terms.

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE: This section gives the background of Liberty including a historical background and its general location and proximity to other communities. This section also includes demographic and socioeconomic information about the current population.

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT: The community's overall quality of life is examined in this section looking at such items as the community's image, different social issues and community involvement. The facilities element identifies the current inventory of utilities such



as water, sewer, and stormwater systems, schools, emergency response departments, and public buildings.

SECTION 4: ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT: This section looks at the economic trends for Liberty as well as the existing conditions of the downtown. It also includes strategies and policy recommendations that relate to development opportunities and funding strategies as they relate to economic development.

SECTION 5: LAND USE: The land use section is the central focus of a comprehensive plan. This element looks at the existing land use, annexation and the housing trends. It includes growth and land use strategies for Liberty, the rationale behind land use decisions, a future land use map and a description of each land use category.

SECTION 6: TRANSPORTATION: This section looks at future funded projects and local need for all forms of transportation in Liberty. This includes different multi modal transportation improvements and projects.

SECTION 7: ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE: This section looks at the current topography of the area, environmental conditions and policies as well as the local need for all forms of recreation in Liberty. This includes parks improvements as well as any bicycle and pedestrian trails. It also looks at environmental protection policies as they pertain to the local community.



APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: This appendix reinforces the elements presented in the various chapters by providing a summary of the public participation process. Exercise results gathered during the Steering Committee meetings and public workshops are included.

APPENDIX B: CITIZEN SURVEY: This appendix describes the process used to gain information from the public about their community. The results are gathered through an online survey as well as hard copy surveying.

APPENDIX C: HISTORIC SITES: This appendix shows the historic properties list and accompanying map from the Union County Interim Report.

APPENDIX D: FUNDING and TECHNICAL RESOURCES: This appendix includes funding and technical resources from government and private entities.

APPENDIX E: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM: This appendix includes a list of future capital improvements that the town would like to see implemented for the next five years.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Listening to the voices of engaged, knowledgeable residents and business owners is an important part of any planning process. Citizen participation is a process that gives private individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions. It has long been a component of the democratic decision process. The concept of citizens participating in government decision-making is fundamental to the functioning of a democratic system of governance.

In preparing the Liberty Comprehensive Development Plan, public input initiatives were established early on in the process to ensure the issues addressed by the Plan would be influenced by the citizens of the community as much as possible. While in general, public participation is an ongoing process, an initial round of public input procedures was conducted to establish an understanding of how citizens feel and think about their community.

MEETINGS

Steering Committee

The Town of Liberty was asked to provide a list of community volunteers that would take the responsibility to form the Steering Committee. This included not only residents of the community, but some stakeholders who participate in community life who reside outside the community. The following individuals participated on the Steering Committee:

- *Jim Barnhizer, Liberty VFD*
- *Matt Barnhizer, Town Council*
- *Melissa Browning, Union County EDC*
- *Julie Coffman, realtor*
- *Dale Dishmond, Union County Sheriff*
- *Gary Finch, developer*
- *Andrew Jordan, Liberty Police Dept.*
- *Danka Klein, Union County Foundation*
- *Steve Logue, Union County Historical Society*



- *Rachel Marcum, Town Council*
- *Jeff Mathews, Union County Planning*
- *Matt Reuss, Liberty Public Works*
- *Chris Winchell, Union County/College Corner School Corp. superintendent*

The initial planning meeting was held on March 1, 2018 at the Union County Foundation building and those attending were introduced to the planning process, review of the timeline and the duties of being on the Steering Committee. The steering committee was introduced to the Needs, Assets and Liabilities (NAL) exercise. (Agendas and sign-in sheets for all meetings are shown in **Appendix A.**)

At the second meeting on March 22, 2018 the Steering Committee met and continued the NAL exercise to identify the positive and negative issues related to the community and to review the citizen survey that would be advertised through the local newspaper via SurveyMonkey. They were then briefed on the upcoming first Public Meeting to be held on April 5, 2018.

The third Steering Committee meeting was held on May 31, 2018. During this meeting the group finished the review of the NAL issues and then a review of the NAL exercise from the Public Meeting was discussed. The results of the citizen survey were reviewed as well.

The fourth meeting of the Steering Committee was held on November 28, 2018. This meeting was to discuss the draft of the Goals, Objectives and Strategies and to discuss future land use for the town.

Public

The first of two Public Meetings was held at the Union County High School on April 5, 2018 at 5:30 P.M. The meeting was advertised in the Liberty Herald, on the Union County EDC website and announcements were posted at various locations throughout the town. Approximately ten people were in attendance. Introductions were made and then an overview of what a



Community Development Plan consisted of and why the Town was undertaking this planning process. The public then participated in an exercise which identified the needs, assets and liabilities (NAL's) related to the community.

The second Public Meeting was held on December 5, 2018. This public meeting was to present the draft Goals, Objectives and Strategies and to get feedback on these items. Future land use for the community was also discussed.

CITIZEN SURVEY

In order to more fully determine the thoughts and desires of the community, a citizen survey was taken during two weeks from May 3, 2018 to May 18, 2018. It was primarily targeted to the residents of the Town of Liberty in order to help determine the major needs and identify issues which are important for the growth and development of the town. A survey was prepared using SurveyMonkey and was available to the public. Hard copies were also available at the Town Hall, library, the Liberty Herald and the local grocery store. Public participation was garnered by newspaper advertising, social media outreach and word of mouth. In all, 77 surveys were completed. With a 2016 American Community Survey estimate of 805 occupied households (owner occupied and rentals), the survey garnered a 9.6% return rate.

The citizen survey was in three sections. The first section asked about basic demographic information. The second section asked questions relevant to the community character (quality of life issues) and to community services. The third section was more open ended and asked what respondents felt about the future of their community, their likes, dislikes, wants and needs.



Demographics

Who responded...

The demographic information showed that out of the survey responses, female responders (58%) outnumbered the male responders (42%). By age group, the largest response rate were those between the ages of 35 to 44 (26%) followed by those groups in the 45 to 54 (19%), and 65 to 74 (17%).

Why they live here...

When asked "How many years have you lived in Liberty", the majority responded over 20 years. The largest groups were those who have lived 20+ years (69%), followed by those who have lived 11 to 20 years (16%) and 6 to 10 years (9%). When asked "if they expected to remain in Liberty 5 years from now", the vast majority (82%) said they were very likely to somewhat likely, only 18% of the respondents were somewhat or very unlikely to continue to live in Liberty.

2016 American Community Survey info...

The population of Liberty is 1,897. The median age of persons living in Liberty is 38.3 years as compared to Union County at 43.1 and Indiana at 37.3.

The median household income is \$42,007, lower than both the County median of \$45,104 and the State median of \$47,697. The major occupation is that of Service (28.0%) followed by Management and Professional services (23.9%), Office and Sales fields (21.6%) followed by those in the Production and Transportation (19.0%) Construction, Extraction and Maintenance (7.1%). The current (2018) unemployment rate (Union County) is 2.9%.

The highest levels of education attained were those with a high school education (85.6%) followed by those with a bachelors degree or better (14.4%).



Quality of Life/Community Services/Growth

In these sections, respondents were asked various questions about how they perceived their community. They were asked to answer the questions on a scale of Agree, Somewhat Agree, Not Sure, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree. Some questions were open ended and respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers or write in their own opinions.

The following sections of this plan will address the results according to subject and a summary of all results are shown in **Appendix B**.

NAL ANALYSIS

NAL stands for Needs, Assets and Liabilities, and offers a structured process for a community to explore their current situation. The process helps a community gather information from a small, but representative, group of local residents and leaders. They are then asked for their community perceptions, in four separate areas. The first two areas are internal: the strengths and weaknesses from within the community. The second two categories are external: the opportunities and threats from outside the community. For example, an external threat may be the national economy, or decreased federal funding that affects local schools. When all the factors are combined, the community can then begin to form a clearer picture of the community's situation.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee over a period of two meetings participated in a NAL exercise. The Steering Committee members were given an overview of how NAL works and then were asked to fill out a NAL worksheet individually. The exercise was to cover five separate areas of issue:

Quality of Life, Community Services, Economic Development, Land Use, Transportation and Natural Resources. The Steering Committee then discussed their opinions and worked to



develop the top issues in each category. These were then used to formulate the goals and objectives for the Action Plan.

Public Meeting

A shorter version of the NAL exercise was presented during the public meeting where the attendees were asked about their views in each of the same five categories. These would be combined with the results from the Steering Committee and used to help derive the goals and objectives. The following sections of this plan will address the results according to subject.

IMPLEMENTATION

The results and information gathered from the Citizen Survey; the Needs, Assets and Liabilities (NAL) exercises by both the Steering Committee and from the first public meeting; the Steering Committee meetings; and interviews with town officials were used to then formulate the Goals and Objectives for each of the planning areas.

Once the Plan is completed, the single most important aspect is implementation. Without implementation, the Plan has no meaning. The Town of Liberty is fortunate in that the Town Council and other town officials and organizations are very committed to implementing the Plan. Implementation is the final phase of the planning process, i.e., the realization of the goals and objectives as set forth in the Plan.

Even though the Plan has been developed for short-range (five years) and long-range (twenty years) planning periods, the Plan should be reviewed annually, and revised as needed by the Plan Commission every five years. Changes will undoubtedly be necessary because of changing trends and economic conditions.

The Town Council and Plan Commission of any community are often pressured to disregard the goals and objectives of the Plan. However, in order to assure orderly growth and development in compliance with the Plan, the town must continue to remain committed to implementing the



Plan. It is only with this adherence to the goals and objectives of the Plan that the residents of Liberty can be assured that the community will maintain and enhance the small town values, appearance and quality of life.

KEY TERMS and PHRASES

Advisory Committee – A group of people chosen to represent a cross – section of the community and guide the comprehensive planning process. They serve as liaisons between the community, the consultant, and town staff during the planning process.

Goal – a broad statement that supports the vision while adding a specific area of focus. Goals are usually lofty in scope yet attainable within the planning horizon of 20 years.

Key Person/Stakeholder – A person who is in some way responsible for implementing the plan, in whole or in part, or has a vested interest in the outcome of the plan.

Objective – A statement that adds a level of specificity to the goal without identifying the individual actions that must be taken for implementation. Objectives are generally measurable so that the community can monitor implementation progress.

Planning horizon – The period of time the plan intends to address community development or the community's vision. This plan uses a 20 – year planning horizon.

Policy – A definite course or method of action to guide present and future decisions. Policies can be legislative or administrative in approach.

Strategy – A way to implement any given objective. These can be legislative or administrative in approach.





SECTION 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE

IN THIS SECTION...

This Section gives background information for the Town of Liberty. It also includes the public input process.

It includes:

- Location
- Demographics
- Historical Background



INTRODUCTION

For any Plan to be effective, it should address the existing conditions of the community as well as its needs and desires for the future. This section updates those factors through a summary of data, trends and facts about the Town of Liberty. The information collected and presented in this inventory is used as a guide to update this Plan.

As the first step in the process, this inventory identifies the issues, opportunities and constraints that serve as a basis for the remainder of the Plan. Overall, the information reported here will provide valuable direction to assess the existing needs of the existing needs of the community, county, and region. It is important to identify where a community has been and what natural course it may follow. Utilizing this information in the development of this updates plan will substantiate further actions as the community evolves in the future.

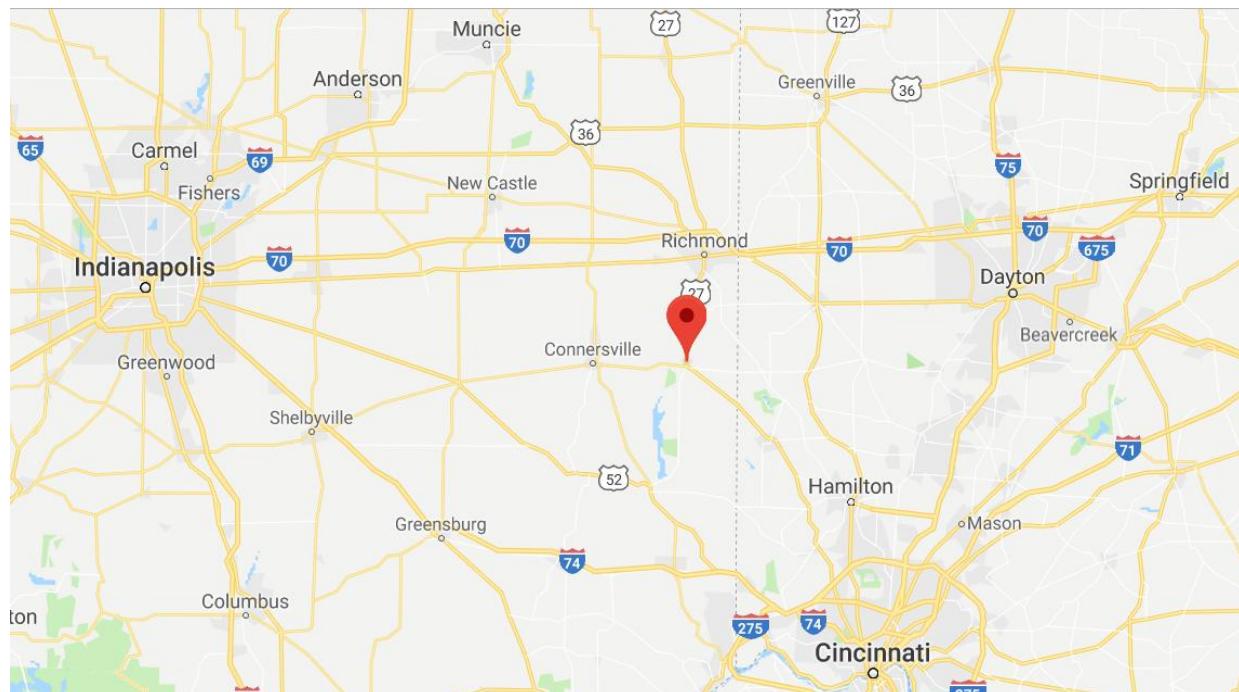




LOCATION

The Town of Liberty is located east central Indiana in Center Township in Union County. Liberty was established in 1823 although it was not incorporated until 1836. Its location in the center of the county made the community desirable as the county seat.

Liberty lies approximately 80 miles east/southeast of Indianapolis which is the capital and largest city in Indiana with a metro population of over 1.9 million. Cincinnati, Ohio is the closest metro area with a population over 1 million (2,137,400) and it lies only 53 miles to the southeast. Other major cities nearby are Dayton, Ohio (140,489) 45 miles east, Richmond (35,664) 14 miles north and Oxford, Ohio (22,341) 14 miles southeast.





DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The demographic analysis considers characteristics such as population, age, race, ethnicity, place of work, and educational attainment to identify demographic trends that will impact the future housing, education, jobs recreation, transportation, community facilities and other need of Liberty.

Data gathered and analyzed for the purposes of this comprehensive plan was primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census on Population and Housing, and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Unless otherwise stated, the data used in this analysis was derived from the most recent, readily available data from the U.S. Census. As the community continues to change and updated data is released, trends and projections should be verified to ensure that the assumptions made about Liberty's population change, demographics, education and economy remain true.

HOW DOES LIBERTY COMPARE

An important first step in any planning effort is to identify demographic and economic trends that may be unique in addition to those which mirror regional, state or national trends. This provides the community with the knowledge needed to guide Liberty in the direction to which they aspire. By analyzing historical data on the demographics of Liberty and comparison communities trends are revealed. Comparison communities are used to further identify the trends by comparing the changes over time.

The comparison communities share similar characteristics to Liberty, and were selected based on the following:



Geographic Characteristics

- Located on minor State and or Federal highways.
- Mainly surrounded by rural landscape.

Demographic Characteristics

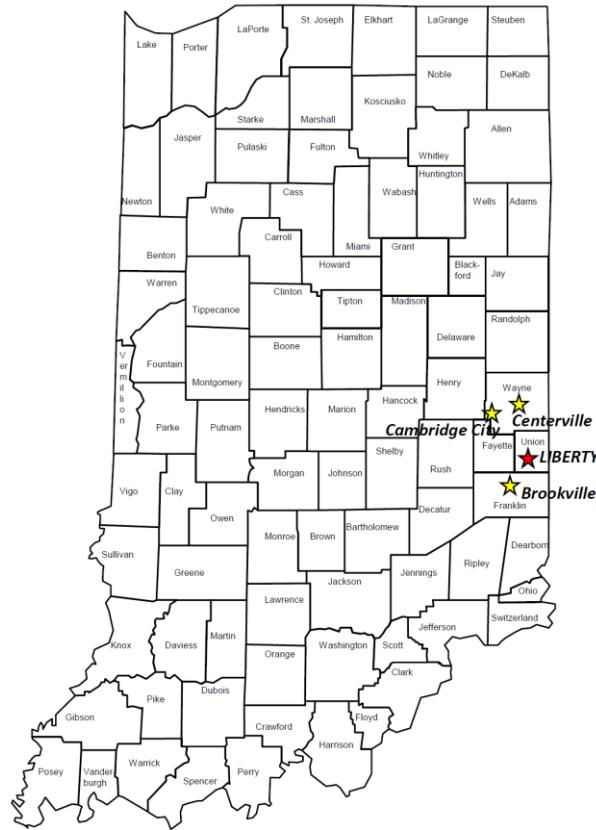
- Contain a population between 1,800 and 2,500 people.

Economic Characteristics

- Similar industry and occupational profiles

Comparison communities used in this analysis include:

- *Brookville, Franklin County*
- *Cambridge City, Wayne County*
- *Centerville, Wayne County*



It is also important to note that Census Geographies are not static; boundaries can change or be redrawn entirely due to changes in political boundaries, population growth or other factors. For the purposes of comparing historical (such as 2010) and current estimated (such as 2016) Census data, the geographic areas are considered to be generally equivalent.



POPULATION

Liberty's Population Trends

The population from the last US Census in 2010 was 2,133 people, representing a population increase of 3.3% since 2000 (2,061). During the same period (2000-2010) the population of Union County increased by 167 or 2.2%. Of the comparison towns, only Centerville showed an increase in population of 4.9%. Both Brookville (-2.1%) and Cambridge City (-13.4%) saw decreases in population. STATS Indiana shows population estimates for all four towns losing population by 2017.

Population by Age

Shown the table below is the breakdown by an age group for the Town of Liberty. As can be seen by comparing it to the percentage for the State as a whole, the Town of Liberty has very similar percentage of persons in several age groups, but is higher in the age groups of school age children (0-24).

	Town of Liberty	Percent of Total Town	Union County	Percent of Total County	Indiana	Percent of Total State
Total	2,133	100%	7,516	100%	6,568,645	100%
Preschool (0 to 4)	163	7.6%	441	5.9%	420,393	6.4%
School Age (5 to 19)	509	23.9%	1,672	22.3%	1,353,140	20.6%
College Age (20 to 24)	116	5.4%	355	4.7%	479,511	7.3%
Young Adult (25 to 44)	529	24.7%	1,788	23.8%	1,668,436	25.4%
Adult (45 to 64)	504	23.6%	2,173	28.9%	1,734,122	26.4%
Older Adult (65 +)	312	14.7%	1,087	14.4%	913,042	13.9%
Median Age	34.7		40.3		37.3	



A stable population would have generally equal numbers for almost all age groups except the oldest. The presence of a wide base in population pyramid indicates high birth rates (growing population) while a narrow base indicates low birth rates (naturally declining population in the absence of migration).

In the U.S. the Baby Boom generation is also usually very evident, producing a bump-out in the chart from those born in the late 1940s to early 1960s. Liberty does exhibit a small increase in the population pyramid as a result of this demographic occurrence.

The median age in Liberty was 34.7 years old, which was much lower than the county (40.3) and of Indiana (37.3 years old).

Population Projection Table			
Year	Liberty	Union County	Indiana
1980	1,844	6,860	5,490,224
1990	2,051	6,976	5,544,159
2000	2,061	7,349	6,080,485
2010	2,133	7,516	6,417,198
2015	2,040	7,195	6,612,768
2020	1,975	6,974	6,738,573

Above is a population projection table (STATS Indiana) where it shows the history of the population for the Town of Liberty, compare to Union County and the State of Indiana and the projections for 2020. The decrease in population for both Union County and Liberty is in sharp contrast to historical data which shows both to have had increases in population since 1910.



RACE & ETHNICITY

The population breakdown by gender and race:

- 46.6% Male, 53.4% Female
- Median Age: 34.7
- 96.8% White; 0.8% Black or African American; 0.3% American Indian; 0.4% Asian; 1.5% Hispanic or Latino; 0.9% some other race.

Liberty's population was 96.8% white in 2010. Liberty is less diverse in racial composition than Indiana (84.2% white) and the United States (73.6% white). However, Liberty is very similar to Union County (97.5% white).

When compared to the surrounding region, Liberty falls in the middle of the comparison communities in racial composition, Brookville (97.5% white); Cambridge City (98.5% white); Centerville (96.1% white).

Defining Race & Ethnicity:

Race and ethnicity are considered two separate & distinct Characteristics. Race categories include White, Black, African American, American Indian/ Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Other Race. Ethnicity refers to a person's origin. Examples of Hispanic origin could include a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South/Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin. People who identify their origin as Hispanic Latino or Spanish can be any race.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Liberty has a slightly lower percentage of its population that have achieved a high school diploma as their highest level of education earned (85.6%) when compared Union County (88.2%) and to Indiana (88.1%). In regard to higher education, Liberty has 14.7% of the population who have earned a Bachelor's degree or higher. Measured against Union County (18.6%), Indiana (24.1%) and the United States (29.8%), Liberty is lacking in this educational attainment.



HISTORY

Situated between Hanna's Creek and Silver Creek, county officials named Liberty the county seat in 1823. The previous year, Thomas Brown, Deputy Surveyor, completed the original sixty-four lot plat of the town. Prior to Liberty, Brownsville, Union County's oldest town, served as county seat for a short time. The town continued to expand throughout the 1830s and was incorporated in 1836. Early on, the town was populated with inns, taverns, groceries, and other necessary trades, such as grist and saw mills, brickmakers, painters, and a wagon manufacturer. The town also supported a local newspaper, the Union County Herald. By 1858 the town's population had grown to 800 individuals. The town also supported four churches and a local band.

The Union County Seminary was established in the 1820s and was located on the west end of Seminary Street. County seminaries were common in the early 1800s and often operated as one of the few institutions of education in newly formed towns and counties and students paid tuition to attend. The Union County Seminary proved successful with forty students and a new building was erected in 1841. By the 1850s educational trends in Indiana shifted and free public schools were soon implemented. Liberty's fortunes were increased by the arrival of the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Railroad in 1860. The railroad ran east and west through Liberty and rail commerce opened up new markets and efficient shipping to Liberty's entrepreneurs.

By the 1880s, Liberty boasted numerous shops and businesses, which included the Union County National Bank and a new brick hotel. By 1900 the town had also gained a major manufacturing enterprise, the Rude Brothers Manufacturing Company, which made agricultural implements. The success of railroad commerce created substantial growth in the county seat. Between 1870 and 1900 Liberty had expanded its grid system and approximately three hundred businesses and residences had been constructed. Liberty boasted the successful Central Motor



Company, later known as the All-Garden Company, which manufactured mechanical motors beginning the 1940s. The company invented a particular type of tractor, which increased its popularity, and led to its production of a variety of motorized tractors, lawn mowers, 70 and accessories. The company remained locally owned until 1960 when the Wheel-Horse Company of South Bend bought it.

Other local businesses that remained in Liberty for several decades included the Carter Paint Company (now Winslow Browning) and its successors, first founded in 1905; the Liberty Mill that operated from 1898 to 1949, the O'Toole Brothers still in operation today; and the Collyer Barber Shop, which began in 1897 and unfortunately closed its doors in 2017. The Bertch & Son Hardware Store was founded in 1866 and continues to operate today.

Liberty is home to several schools, particularly after the 1961 consolidation of Union County's schools into one district. School reorganization was a contentious subject, as schools were often community centers for rural townships. Short High School, built in 1924 at the end of Union Street operated for many years, but in 1972 it became a middle school with the construction of a new high school. It is no longer in existence. Liberty Elementary School was built in 1966.

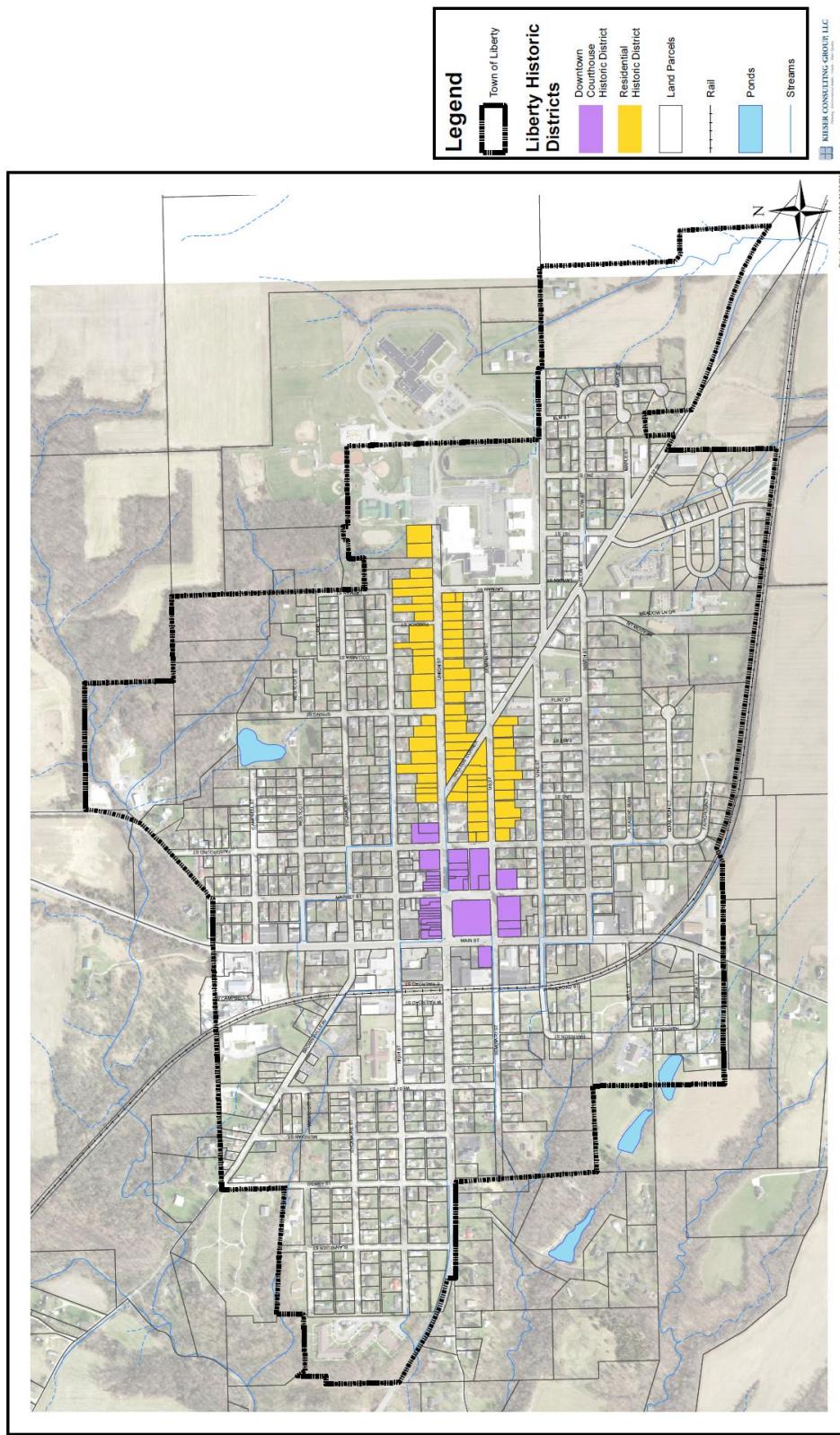
Liberty remains a bustling small town, filled with small businesses and enterprises that cater to its residents' needs. The town retains many excellent historic residences that span from the mid-1800s to the mid1900s. In recent decades that town has included some industrial sites on its outskirts. Modern sprawl has only minimally affected Liberty's composition.

Significant historic sites documented in Liberty include the 1886 Liberty Depot, c.1814 George Crist House, and the First Missionary Baptist Church, a community center for Liberty's early twentieth century African American community.

See Appendix C for the Interim Report



Liberty Historic Districts Map







SECTION 3

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

IN THIS SECTION...

This section identifies issues affecting the social as well as the physical nature of the community. It also looks at the current inventory of utilities and services such as a water, sewer, stormwater, schools, emergency response, public buildings, public lands and other public or semi-public uses.

- Public Services
 - Government
 - Schools
 - Social services
 - Emergency services
- Utilities
 - Water, Sewer, Stormwater



INTRODUCTION

Quality of life is an examination of influences upon the goodness and meaning in life, as well as people's happiness and well-being. From our perspective, the ultimate goal of quality of life is to enable people to live quality lives -- lives that are both meaningful and enjoyed.

Quality of life can have a different meaning to different people. The quality of life issues we looked at included issues affecting the social as well as the physical nature of the community, i.e. seniors, youth, community image, volunteerism.

Community services are very important to help a community serve its citizens providing health and safety as well as providing for a higher quality of living. Having adequate community facilities is also important to a community for economic reasons. An overview of facilities and services can be found in this Section.

Because Liberty is the county seat for Union County, some facilities and services overlap. Many county operated services are within the town limits and share taxpayer revenues for operations. Some facilities and services are solely operated and funded through the citizens of Liberty.





COMMUNITY FACILITIES/SERVICES (Liberty)

Town Hall

The Liberty Town Hall building is located just east of the old downtown and was built in 1975. Their portion of the building houses one office at 144 square feet and the Clerk-Treasurer's office at 247 square feet.

In addition to housing the offices of general government, it also houses the Liberty Police Department and the Liberty Fire Department (1947 building). As the picture illustrates below, the town offices are in close proximity of each other which leads to cramped quarters. The Union County Jailhouse shown in the background is shown because they work in cooperation with the Liberty Police Department mainly acting as the jailhouse for both agencies.



Police Department

The Liberty Police Department serves the town and occasionally assists the Union County Sheriff's Department on calls outside of Town Limits. The original Liberty Police Department had a small Phone Booth which was located on the east side of the courthouse. The Phone Booth was nicknamed the Popcorn Stand. This is what the Liberty Police Department had for an office decades before the Town building was constructed.



The current Police Station has two small offices similar to the Town Hall. The main part of the office is a small area that the officers use. The other office is the Chief's Office. The main office is cramped for space due to a lack of storage. There is also a safety concern due to the fact that anyone can walk up to the door and see the officers sitting in the office which also has two windows they sit next to.

The department has five full time officers and currently 4 reserves. The officers range from 30 plus years to our newest reserves of approximately 2 months. The department currently has four police vehicles, two of which are new and the other two are 2004 and 2006 vehicles. The station is small and has a small closet for storage and evidence. The Liberty Police Department works in cooperation with the Union County Sheriff's office sharing jailhouse facilities as well as assisting on calls as necessary.

Needs

The Liberty Police Department is located in the Town Hall which is shared by the Liberty Volunteer Fire Department. This can cause a parking issue in the front parking lot when there is a fire run for patrons of the Town Hall and the Police Department to park due to all of the vehicles belonging to the fire fighters when they arrive to get on the trucks. A new office would be beneficial to the Liberty Police Department due to the confined space and not having room to store evidence and a room to interview people when they are brought in.

The Police Department has two vehicles that need updated. One is a 2004 Ford Explorer and the other is a 2006 Ford Explorer. Neither of the vehicles were originally standard police vehicles. Instead they were refurbished formerly wrecked vehicles. The Police Department purchased two new vehicles last year (\$26,000 per) and two more would really help the fleet to get rid of the old vehicles. The Police Department will need several new vests for the officers in 2021.

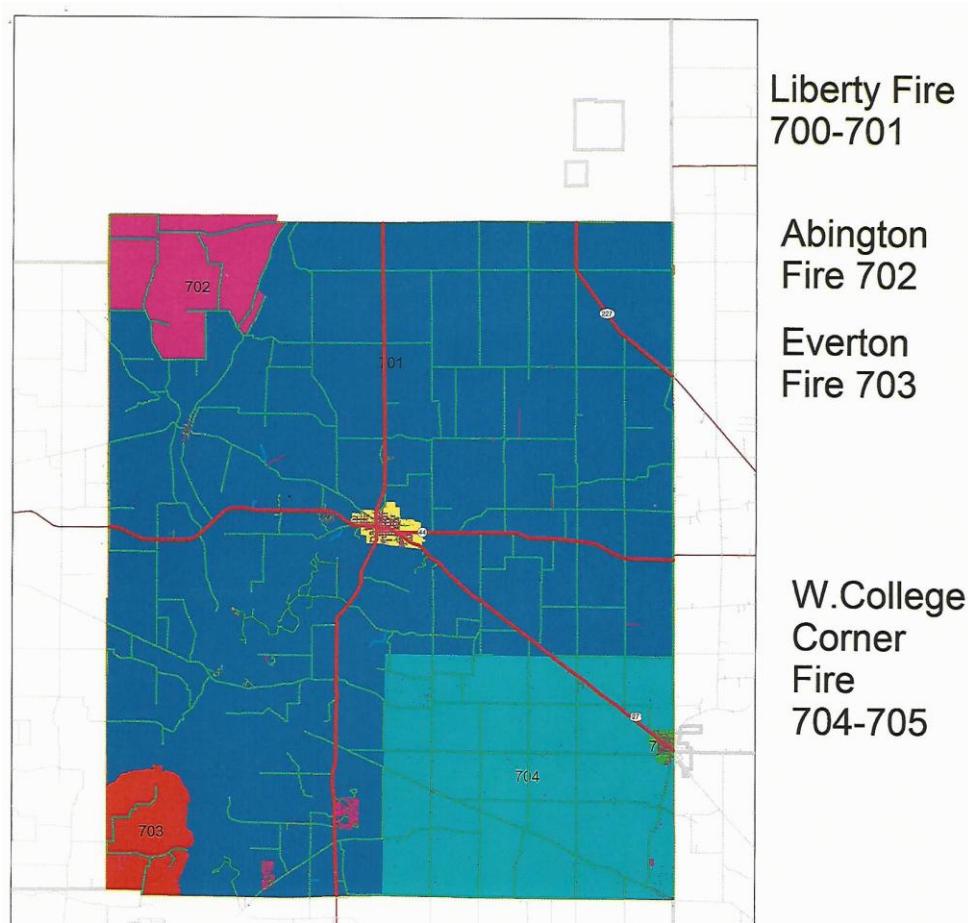


The Police Department has to keep up on mandatory training. The academy continues to raise the price for training an officer and the Police Department has sent a few of its officers in the past years and are expecting to send another officer soon. The increasing training costs can strain the training budget. The Police Department is mainly funded through the General Fund.

Fire Department

Liberty Fire Department (LFD) was organized in 1841. They service the town of Liberty and five townships covering 125 square miles. The current building is 3,969 sf of mainly garage space and includes one Radio Room. The building was built in 1947.

Liberty Fire Department Fire Service Area *Source: Liberty VFD*





Currently the LFD has 21 volunteers. They provide fire response, auto extrication, medical assistance, water rescue, grain bin rescue, and field fire responses. The LFD provides service not only for the Town of Liberty , but also for 2 State Parks with 433 sites, 6 campgrounds, 2025 campsites. The population in Union County on the weekends during the summer is approximately 20,000. The LFD averages 175 runs per year. They charge for fire runs, and that money goes into their Truck Fund. Unfortunately however, only 30% of those who are billed actually pay.

Needs

There is a lack of adequate space for trucks and gear; in addition, they need an exhaust system for keeping out fumes from equipment. Currently they must manually raise overhead doors to access equipment and trucks. There is also a lack of a proper training area. Currently the firefighters must go outside of Liberty to provide training. There is also inadequate space to get trucks in and out of the aging station since the area is shared with the town hall and the police department.

In 2013 the LFD investigated costs for new building and the estimated cost was \$850,000 and \$300,000 for the property. Their current equipment includes: 2001 Aerial Truck; 2003 Pumper, 2014 Pumper; 1998 Rescue Truck; 2016 Brush Truck; 1995 Tanker. The next equipment update will include a new rescue truck and a tanker with a larger water capacity. There is also need for seven new air packs.

Emergency Response

The ambulance service Spirit Medical Transport provides ambulance service in Union County on a contracted basis. The ambulance service contract calls for staffing one ambulance in the county most of the time, but during community events and celebrations between the Fourth of July and Labor Day, a second ambulance is made available.



COMMUNITY UTILITIES

Communities cannot grow or at best even function without quality infrastructure often known as public works. The operation of municipal public works is crucial to a community's health and safety as well as the continuing improvement in the quality of life. Such things as water systems, sanitation or waste water treatment facilities, snow removal, etc. – all are within the domain of public works and all essential to the well-being of our communities. These infrastructure assets are at their best when they are operated, monitored, maintained, and improved by public works professionals. Public works departments play an important role in the management of these assets and thereby extend their benefit to the public and prolong their useful life.

Public Works

The Town of Liberty recently went through a series of reorganizations for their town departments. As a result of this reorganization the Liberty wastewater, water, stormwater and street departments were consolidated into the Public Works department. This new department has five employees that oversee all of the responsibilities of each of the four utilities. There is one superintendent, but all employees are cross trained in each area of utility operations.

One of the most challenging aspects of this new department organization is the lack of any digitalization of records and mapping. This has proven to be a great challenge to the everyday operations as well as any future planning for these utilities. The day to day operations and maintenance jobs take up most all of each of the five employees time which leaves no time for computing old paper records into digital reference. It also leaves very little time for the department to plan for future projects.

Wastewater

The Liberty Wastewater Department is a municipally owned utility. The original system was developed in the 1960's. Fortunately throughout the years the town has kept the system



maintained and its facilities updated. The last major project was a plant upgrade in 2008. The current rate is \$83.89 for 4,000 g. The last rate increase was in 2016.

Needs

There are several areas in town that the utility would like to have televised and cleaned. The departments biggest challenged is getting all of the paper and in some cases mental records of the system into digital form. By doing this it will make day to day operations less challenging and the opportunity for future planning easier. There is currently no utility master plan for the wastewater system. Completing a wastewater utility master plan is recommended.

Wastewater Systems Map

There currently are no digitalized mapping for the wastewater system.

Water

The Liberty Water Department is a municipally owned utility. The water utility system was originally constructed 1893. All water mains constructed before 1976 were cast iron pipe and most are still in service. That plant was abandoned decades ago and the current plant is located outside town limits. The current rate is \$16.91 for 4,000g. The last rate increase was in 2009.

Needs

There are several areas in town that the utility would like to have lines repaired. The most in need of replacement is the 8" transmission pipe that runs along SR 44 from the town and the wellfield. It has developed numerous leaks in several places through the years. The water treatment plant and towers are in good condition. New office facilities are needed as the current office was the old town garage and lacks sufficient HVAC and office facilities.

Like the sewer utility, the water utility's biggest challenged is getting all of the paper and in some cases mental records of the system into digital form. By doing this it will make day to day operations less challenging and the opportunity for future planning easier. There is currently no



utility master plan for the water system. Completing a water utility master plan is recommended.

Water System Map

There currently are no digitalized mapping for the water system.

Stormwater

Like many towns in Indiana, stormwater systems are often an afterthought and a combination of different methods and constructed systems. The current system in Liberty is controlled through a network of undersized pipes, catch basins and inlets; overland flow; detention ponds and wetland areas.

The primary drainage feature in this area is the Silver Creek which runs through the town to the East Fork of the Whitewater River west of the town. This waterway serves as the drainage conduit for most of the town area running southwest out of town.

Needs

Since the system is sporadic and not mapped, the town would like to develop a utility master plan for the stormwater system. Completing a stormwater utility master plan is recommended.

Stormwater System Map

There currently are no digitalized mapping for the stormwater system.

OTHER UTILITIES

The current outside utility providers for the town of Liberty include electric, gas, and internet services.

Electric

The electrical provider is Duke Energy. The rates for Duke Energy are attached.



Duke Energy Indiana, LLC

1000 East Main Street
Plainfield, Indiana 46168

IURC NO. 14
Fourth Revised Sheet No. 6
 Cancels and Supersedes
 Third Revised Sheet No. 6
 Page 1 of 2

RATE RS—SCHEDULE FOR RESIDENTIAL AND FARM ELECTRIC SERVICE

Availability

Available for all residential purposes and farm operations through one meter to individual customers whose maximum load requirements do not exceed 75 kilowatts.

Character of Service

Alternating current, sixty Hertz, single phase at a voltage of approximately 120/240 volts three-wire, or 120/208 volts three-wire as designated by the Company.

Rate*

Connection Charge	\$9.01
First 300 kWh.....	\$0.089116 per kWh
Next 700 kWh.....	\$0.051948 per kWh
Over 1000 kWh	\$0.042634 per kWh

Gas

The gas provider is Ohio Valley Gas, 535 North Eastern Ave, Connersville, IN 47331. The rates for Ohio Valley Gas are attached.

OHIO VALLEY GAS CORPORATION
OHIO VALLEY GAS, INC.
IURC Gas Service Tariff - Original Volume 10

Sheet No. 1

RATE NO. S11
RATE NO. S41
RATE NO. S91
Firm Small Volume Sales Service

AVAILABILITY

This rate shall be available to Customers whose volume of natural gas purchased on an annual basis will be less than 100,000 Therms and who will take delivery of such natural gas in OVGC's Service Area. See Appendix E (Sheet No. 13).

RATES AND CHARGES

Rates, charges and adjustments applicable to service under this rate for monthly billing purposes shall be as follows:

Facilities Charge per meter per month: \$14.75

Distribution Charge per therm: S11 \$0.4476
 S41 \$0.5076
 S91 \$0.4776



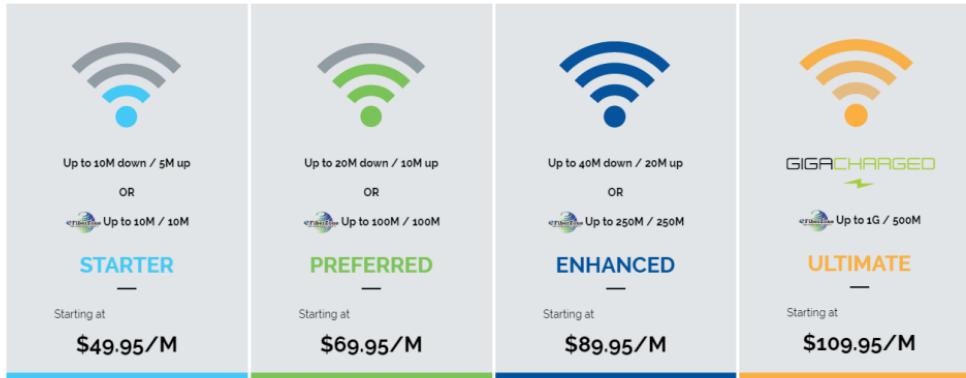
Internet

Internet Services are provided through Enhanced Telecommunications Corp. (ETC), 613 Main Street, Brookville, Indiana 47012. The internet plans are attached. There are no gaps in the service area. There are currently 721 users in the town of Liberty. All current and future needs for the Town are sufficient at this time.



High Speed Internet

ETC offers the most advanced high-speed internet technology available today. With download speeds available up to a gigabit, our internet delivers.

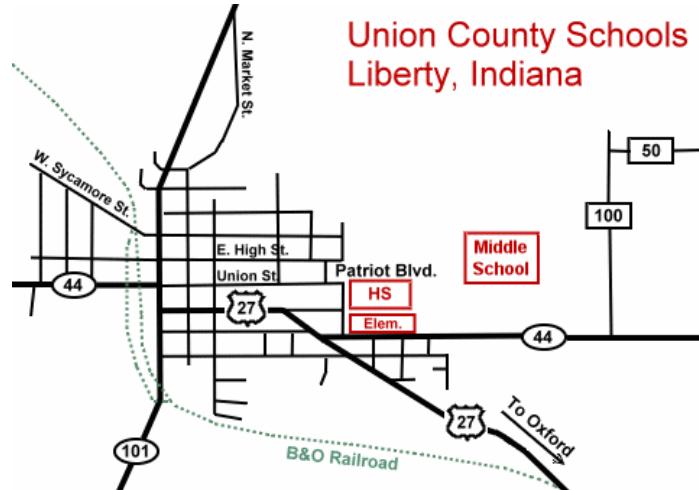




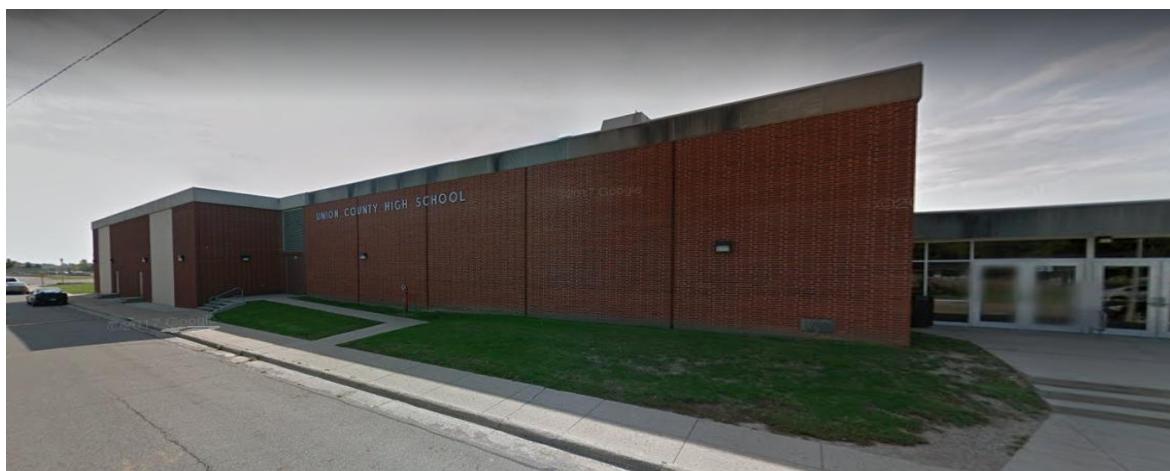
COMMUNITY FACILITIES/SERVICES

Schools

Liberty is served by the Union County College Corner Joint School District (UCCC). There is one high school (Union County High School); one intermediate school (Union County Middle School); and two elementary schools (Liberty and College Corner Union).



Union County is unique in that for 111 years, residents from College Corner living in both Preble and Butler County(s), OH joined with residents living in Franklin and Union County to educate their children at College Corner-Union Elementary School. It is the last of joint school districts in Ohio and Indiana and possibly the United States. The center of the basketball court marks the state line.





Enrollment

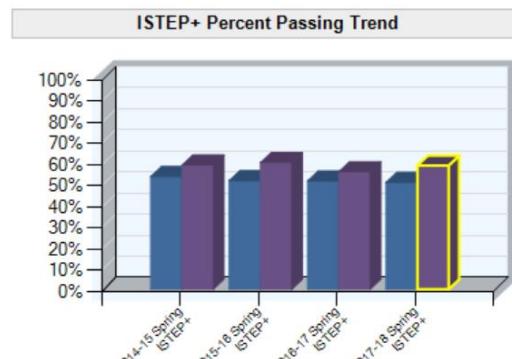
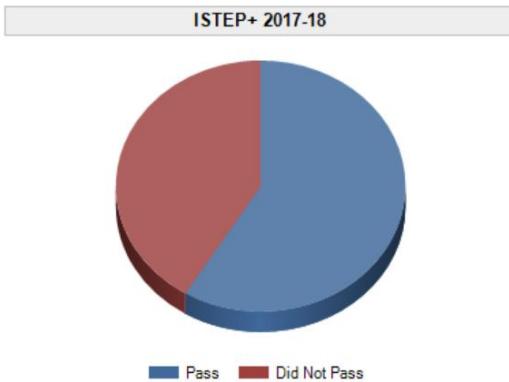
School district enrollment, as shown in the table below, has been in decline for the past few years. The graduation rate (91.8%) has been above that of the state average rate (88.7%).

Year: 2017-18 ▾ Grade: All Grades ▾

Enrollment By Grade					
Grade	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Kindergarten	85	100	94	100	92
Grade 1	94	92	100	99	111
Grade 2	116	82	92	103	88
Grade 3	111	118	83	92	102
Grade 4	111	106	118	92	90
Grade 5	124	119	112	120	92
Grade 6	117	124	114	114	121
Grade 7	100	115	129	107	110
Grade 8	130	102	110	129	105
Grade 9	126	126	113	106	122
Grade 10	131	123	118	109	104
Grade 11	124	128	118	121	103
Grade 12	100	115	122	108	118
Total Enrollment	1,469	1,450	1,423	1,400	1,358



Student Performance

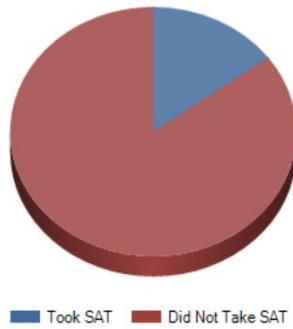


Source: Indiana Department of Education

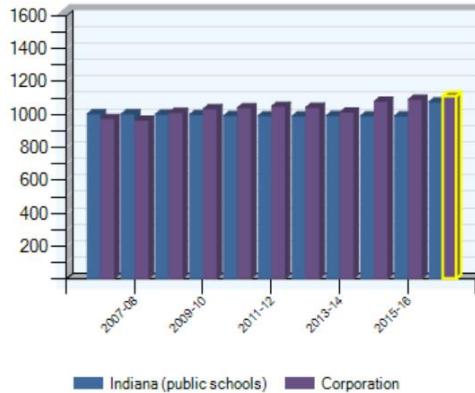


SAT

2016-17 Graduates Taking the SAT

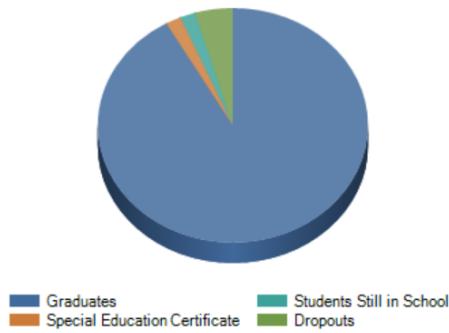


SAT Average Composite Score of Graduates

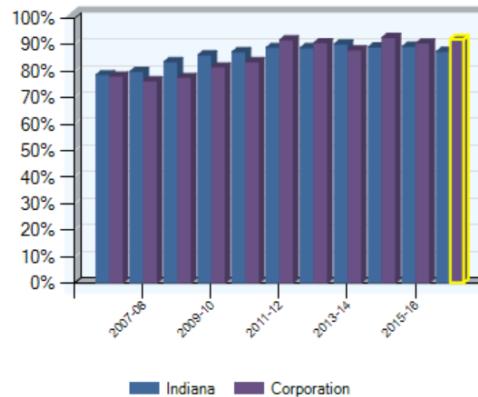


Graduation Rate

Four Year Cohort Status 2016-17



Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate Trend



Source: Indiana Department of Education

Higher Education

The community is close to numerous colleges and universities including Ball State University, Ivy Tech (Muncie), Earlham College, IU East, Ivy Tech (Richmond), Anderson University, Ivy Tech (Anderson).

Union County Jail

The Union County Sheriff's office is housed in the second oldest jailhouse in Indiana. Built in 1872 and still continues as the county's jail. The jailhouse has only eleven holding cells and very limited space to conduct day to day operations. The county jailhouse acts as the jailhouse for the Liberty Police Department as well.



Needs

The need for a new jailhouse has been in conversation for the past decade and the county is currently seeking bids for an assessment for costs to build a new jailhouse.

Library

The Union County Public Library was built in 1915 in the Craftsman style. The first effort to raise funds to establish a library in Liberty was made by school teachers in 1887. It was unsuccessful.



In 1888, a lady visitor to the county offered to establish a 100-book library on the condition that it would be located in the public school building so the books would be available to pupils as well as adults in the county. Books were purchased and the library was established.

A movement to establish a public library building was made by Liberty residents by a funding request to the Carnegie Corporation of New York. After some time, a grant of \$10,000 was awarded for the erection of a free public library building in Liberty. Ground was broken on May 17, 1915 and the cornerstone for the new building was laid on June 19, at 2 P.M. under Masonic auspices. In 2005 a new addition that nearly doubled the size of the original library



was completed. This new addition will serve the population of Liberty and Union County for the next 20 years and counting.

The library has 10 in house programs for all ages and sponsors another 22 programs outside of the library. The total attendance for these programs was 17,155. The total number of annual visits in the library was 100,365 for 2017.

The library has a staff of 14 full and part time employees. The library is open M-F 9a to 7p; Saturdays 9a to 2p and is closed on Sundays.

Needs

The library is in need of some computer upgrading, although the wireless network was recently updated. They also lack storage space. They currently rent two storage units offsite. More training for its employees is hampered by the lack of revenue to pay for it.

Union County Senior Services

LifeStream Services provides a variety of programs and services such as care management, information and assistance, wellness programs, senior meals, guardianship services, transportation, and many more services designed to keep seniors, people with disabilities, and others at risk independent in their homes and communities.

Nutrition Services

Café provide a place for area seniors to enjoy a meal and visit with friends throughout the week. Meals are provided for a suggested donation of \$2.50 for those 60 years and older and their spouses. Those under the age of 60 can enjoy a meal for a small fee. This service is available at Southview Courts on the west side of Liberty. Service times are Monday – Friday at 11:00am.



Transportation Services

LifeStream, Inc. provides transportation service for the Union County Council on Aging & Aged, Inc. It operates several 15 person vans out of its facility on the west side of Liberty. It is open to the general public and operates Mon – Fri, 6a – 5p. All rides are \$1.

Union County Health Department

The Union County Health Department (UCHD) was established in 1966. The first two employees to be hired were nursing and vital record division. The Health Department operated a Health Clinic up until January of 2016. The county fell into some revenue issues and had to close this service. They currently offer a great immunization program and continue to keep the opiate treatment center going despite the revenue setbacks.

The nearest major hospital is Reid Health in Richmond (17 miles). Union County Medical Center is located just north of Liberty and is operated by Reid Health. It offers primary, urgent and specialty care.

Needs

The UCHD would like to see an uninsured health clinic reestablished. The office is in need of updated computer equipment and a new server update. Looking into the future the county would like to have an integrated Health Department with many services/organizations housed under one roof. This may include WIC and Healthy Families and Family Services. This could increase collaboration between those services providers.

The UCHD has a great working relationship with the local medical providers and school system. They would like to have several educational/training programs offered to the community throughout year along with a health coalition in the community that would work on issues that make the community members healthier/safe/educated. The UCHD would also like to continue to work with local business owners developing wellness plans for employees.



Community Care in Union County - HeadStart

The HeadStart program for Liberty and Union County was established in 1989 and is located in the Phyllis Howard building on the southwest part of Liberty. The HeadStart center is an income based program for Early Childhood Development and Education services for children ages 3-5 and their families. Its hours of operation are M-F, 8a to 4p.

Union County Emergency Management

The mission of Union County Emergency Management is to lessen the loss of life, reduce injuries, and reduce property damage during natural, technological, and man-made events through mitigation (reducing the negative impact of disasters before they occur), preparedness (conducting training and exercises for emergency responders, creating/ updating emergency plans), response (coordinating quick and timely response by providing resources and equipping emergency responders), and recovery (coordinating and expending restoration efforts).

The office is located in the municipal building on 6 W. South St. It shares space with the Area Planning department and the Union County Health Department.

Community Organizations/Events

Not-for-Profit

Union County Foundation, Inc.

Founded in 1989, the Union County Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 community foundation serving the area of Union County, IN. They are a non-profit organization raising and stewarding charitable funds and our mission is to improve the quality of life in Union County, assist philanthropic needs of its citizens and meet the changing needs of our communities.

Religious Institutions

Liberty has several churches representing several denominations to serve its public. Many of them have ongoing social programs which aid the needy in the community as well as serving as welcoming agents to people new to the community.



Festivals/Events

Liberty's rich heritage has created a small town atmosphere that is full of community spirit.

Many festivals that celebrate its culture are held annually including the following major events.

Event	Sponsor	Month	Location	Activities
Christmas in Our Hometown and County	Union County Chamber of Commerce	December	Downtown Liberty	Lighting of town Christmas tree, Christmas carols, food, prizes
Smoke on the Water	Liberty Lions Club	May	Liberty	Barbeque Festival, craft fair, live music
Fourth of July Festival	Union County Chamber of Commerce	July	Liberty	Fireworks, cookout, parade
Father's Day Car Show	Liberty Lions Club	June	Downtown Liberty	Car Show and awards, food, music
American Cancer Society Relay for Life	American Cancer Society	May	Union County High School Track	Walking and running and raising money for cancer research
Kelly Miller Circus	Liberty Lions Club	May	Behind Union County Middle School	Food, games, acrobats, animals
Founder's Day	Union County Chamber of Commerce	September (3 rd weekend)	Downtown Liberty	Old – fashioned festival with fun, games, and music
Harvest Fest	Union County Chamber of Commerce	September	Downtown Liberty	Food, games, live entertainment, kids activities, pumpkin races



COMMUNITY FACILITIES/SERVICES

Goal:

Maintain a vibrant community for all citizens so they will work towards much higher levels of economic productivity, educational and cultural attainment, and quality of life so as to encourage greater civic pride.

Objectives:

- Develop a Town website to foster community communication.
- Plan for the installation, expansion, and regular maintenance of utility facilities and services to sustain appropriate service levels as Liberty grows.
- Plan for the expansion of police, fire, and jail equipment, vehicles, and buildings.
- Update digital mapping of wastewater, water and stormwater systems.
- Move all utilities information from paper to digital form.
- Extend services to strategic locations to encourage economic development.
- Keep all municipal employees current on training opportunities.
- Reestablish County health clinic for the uninsured.
- Continue relationship with Lifestream for the needs of the senior population.
- Continue to promote Liberty through community events and festivals.
- Establish adult education (GED) and continuing education services.

Strategies:

- Hire website firm to complete town website.
- Develop master utility plan.
- Assess current fire, police, jail and town hall facilities by developing a building assessment plan.
- Update police and fire service vehicles and service equipment.
- Develop maintenance and training plans for all municipal departments.
- Update hardware and software systems for all departments.
- Work with Union County schools to support adult learning opportunities.
- Work with Union County government to update all joint operations and programs (library, jail, health, zoning/planning).
- Consider partnering with private and nonprofit organizations to leverage existing resources for implementing community, utility, and facility planning.
- Maintain a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to ensure adequate public infrastructure and services for future growth and economic development.



SECTION 4

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

IN THIS SECTION...

This Section includes strategies and policy recommendations that relate to job creation, development opportunities, and funding strategies as they relate to economic development.

- Economic Overview
 - Economic Trends
 - Existing Conditions
- Future Economic Development
- Economic Incentives



INTRODUCTION

Economic development is necessary for a community to renew itself and grow. Many small cities, towns and rural communities are losing people, jobs, and quality of life due to economic instability. Unfortunately, small towns are not self-sustaining, and it is no easy task to maintain economic quality, good jobs, good public services, and a broad tax base.



CURRENT ECONOMIC TRENDS

In the past few years, the U.S. economy as well as the world economy has been recovering from a recession which the likes have not been seen since the Great Depression of the 1930's. Unemployment rates at the height of this recession (2010 STATS Indiana) were 10.2% in Union County and 10.3% in Indiana. The US economy has since recovered and the unemployment rate in Union County for 2018 was at 3.2% and the State was 3.5%.



LIBERTY'S ECONOMIC TRENDS

Total Workforce & Unemployment

About 57.8 % of Liberty's population 16 years and older were estimated in the labor force (848) people in 2016. Liberty has a lower rate of participation in the labor force, when compared to the state (64.0%) as well as Union County (60.8%). Liberty fairs much better than the comparison communities for unemployment rate. The comparison communities of Brookville (9.1%), Cambridge City (9.3%) and Centerville (8.7%) all have higher unemployment rates while Union County (5.4%) and Indiana (6.9%) both have higher unemployment rates as well.

Labor Force <small>Source: American Community Survey</small>		
Community	In Labor Force	Unemployment
Indiana	64.0%	6.9%
Union County	60.8%	5.4%
Liberty	57.8%	3.3%
Brookville	59.3%	9.1%
Cambridge City	57.5%	9.3%
Centerville	63.8%	8.7%

Commuting

In 2016, about 91.9% of Liberty's population used a private vehicle (either by driving alone or carpooling) while traveling to work. This was the smallest percentage of all comparison communities (Brookville, 93.3%; Cambridge City 92.5%; Centerville, 94.9%).

The mean travel time to work in Liberty was 22 minutes which was lower than the comparison communities, Union County and the state of Indiana.

The availability of a vehicle for transportation is not universal for all housing units in Liberty, meaning that the population living in housing units with no vehicle access relies on either

Community	Median Travel Time
Indiana	23.4 minutes
Union County	24.5 minutes
Liberty	22.1 minutes
Brookville	26.7 minutes
Cambridge City	26.5 minutes
Centerville	23.2 minutes



public transportation, walking/bicycling, or other forms of transportation. Approximately 7.2% of housing units in Liberty have no vehicle available compared to the residents in Brookville (5.4%), Cambridge City (3.6%), Centerville (0.0%). This was by far the highest of the comparison communities.

Place of Work

When it comes to where people in Liberty work, it is split almost in equal thirds. Of the people working inside Union County (33.4%), Liberty has by far the lowest percentage among its comparison communities. Centerville by contrast has a high of 86.6% of its citizens working within the county (Wayne Co.). People working outside the county (33.9%) is also the highest among the comparison communities as is people working out of the state at 32.7%. All of the comparison communities lay within counties that border Ohio (Cambridge City and Centerville in Wayne Co. and Brookville in Franklin County), yet Liberty and Union County have the highest percents of out of state workers.

Place of Work	Source: American Community Survey		
Community	Worked Inside County	Worked Outside County	Worked Outside State
Indiana	NA	NA	NA
Union County	28.5%	30.4%	41.0%
Liberty	33.4%	33.9%	32.7%
Brookville	43.5%	28.8%	27.7%
Cambridge City	66.3%	30.5%	3.2%
Centerville	86.6%	11.0%	2.4%



Industries & Occupations

The largest industries in Liberty included educational services, health care and social assistance (34.0%), manufacturing (16.2%), and retail trade (13.2%). All others were below 10%.

The largest occupation in Liberty was Service occupations consisting of 28.0% the workforce.

Occupations	Percent of Labor Force
<i>Source: American Community Survey</i>	
Management, professional and related	23.9%
Service	28.0%
Sale and Office	21.6%
Natural resources, construction, extraction, and maintenance	7.4%
Production, transportation	19.0%

Income

Liberty's median household income in 2016 was \$42,007, lower than Indiana (\$49,255) and Union County (\$45,104). When compared to the comparison communities, Liberty has the second highest median household income only bested by Centerville (\$45,160).

Median Household Income	
<i>Source: American Community Survey</i>	
Community	Median Household Income
Indiana	\$49,255
Union County	\$45,104
<i>Liberty</i>	\$42,007
Brookville	\$30,700
Cambridge City	\$34,028
Centerville	\$45,160



However, Liberty's per capita income of \$18,393 is second lowest of the comparison communities, Centerville was the highest (\$22,088) followed by Brookville (\$19,934), but higher than that of Cambridge City (\$18,264).

Per capita income is frequently used in measuring a standard of living but can be skewed because it does not reflect income distribution.

Per Capita Income	
<i>Source: American Community Survey</i>	
Community	Per Capita Income
Indiana	\$25,346
Union County	\$22,918
Liberty	\$18,393
Brookville	\$19,934
Cambridge City	\$18,264
Centerville	\$22,088

ECONOMIC TRENDS SUMMARY

- *Liberty workers have a shorter commute compared to many other communities.*
- *The percentage of residents who are part of the workforce is similar to other communities and the unemployment is the lowest of the comparison communities (3.3%).*
- *The median household income is \$42,007. Liberty falls in the middle of the comparison communities. This is also lower than Indiana and Union County.*



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Town of Liberty, unlike many small towns, has been experiencing a steady flow of businesses despite the lagging local economy. The town has always offered limited retail amenities such as a small grocery, liquor store, hardware store, banks and restaurants. The old downtown business district of Liberty has very few vacant spaces and or buildings available for new commercial establishments. There are currently just a few vacant buildings available for redevelopment in the downtown study area.

Liberty is fortunate to have major highways coming from all directions enhancing its traffic numbers and its visibility. The major routes are US 27 whose route runs from Richmond in the north and then turns southeasterly traveling to Oxford, Ohio then on to Cincinnati. SR 44 runs east/west from Connersville, bisecting the town, then running east to the Ohio line which can then catch Ohio 725 to Dayton. There is access to two major Interstates, I-70 which lies 16 miles to the north and I-74 which lies 31 miles to the south via SR 101 and US 52.

There is one railroad that travels into town. It is a CSX owned railroad track that travels from southeast to northwest through town between the major cities of Cincinnati and Indianapolis. This track is both a commercial use line and an Amtrak line.

Union County Development Corporation/Chamber of Commerce

The Town of Liberty is a member of the Union County Development Corporation (UCDC) in which it is based. The UCDC also acts as the Chamber of Commerce for both Liberty and Union County.

The mission of the UCDC is to create an environment in our community that will attract new business, retain the business that we have and promote and enhance tourism; through coordinated effort of making Union County a fun place to live, work and play.



Commercial/Business Use Overview

A community's commercial land uses provide employment, goods and services, recreation, tax revenue, and many other amenities and necessities. The features of commercial areas reflect the economic vitality of a community as well as local character. The location and characteristics of commercial areas directly affect local transportation and growth management.

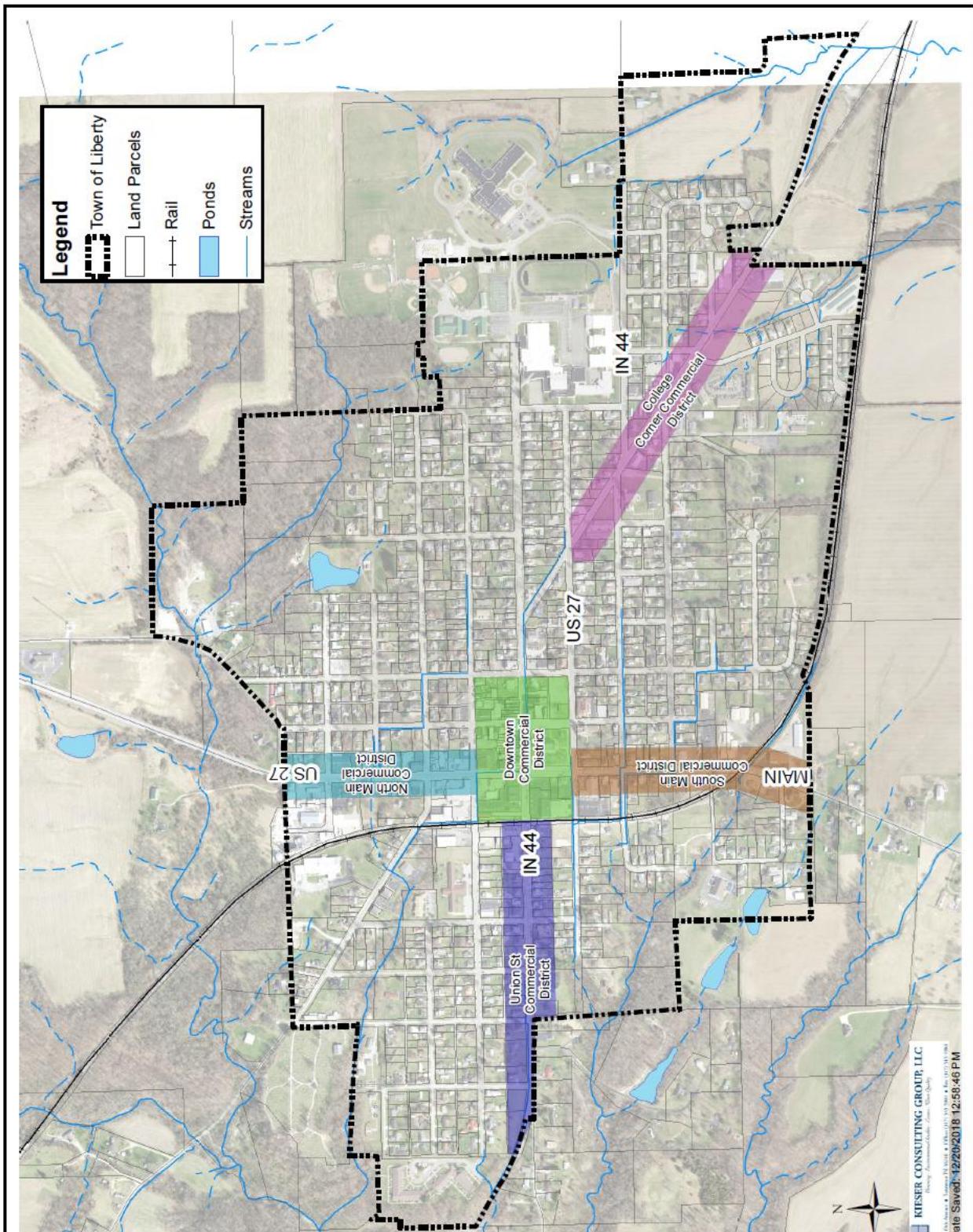
Existing Conditions

The main commercial area in Liberty runs along Main St. (US 27/SR101) from the northern town limits to the southern town limits. The courthouse square and historic downtown lie just east of Main St. between Seminary St. and Union St. These areas are where most of the commercial businesses in Liberty can be found. There are other small local places of business scattered throughout the town.

Some of the leading businesses include Jay's Dairy Inn, Liberty Bell, Woodruff's Foods, Inc., Pollitt's Pit Stop, Terry's Beauty Shop, Patriot Sales, Union County Co-op, MainSource Bank, State Farm Insurance, El Reparo, Showalter Blackwell Long Funeral Home, J A Bertch & Sons, Inc. Hardware Store, Medreco, Inc., Napier & Napier, Whitewater Rehabilitation Center.



Map of Commercial Corridors





Industrial Use Overview

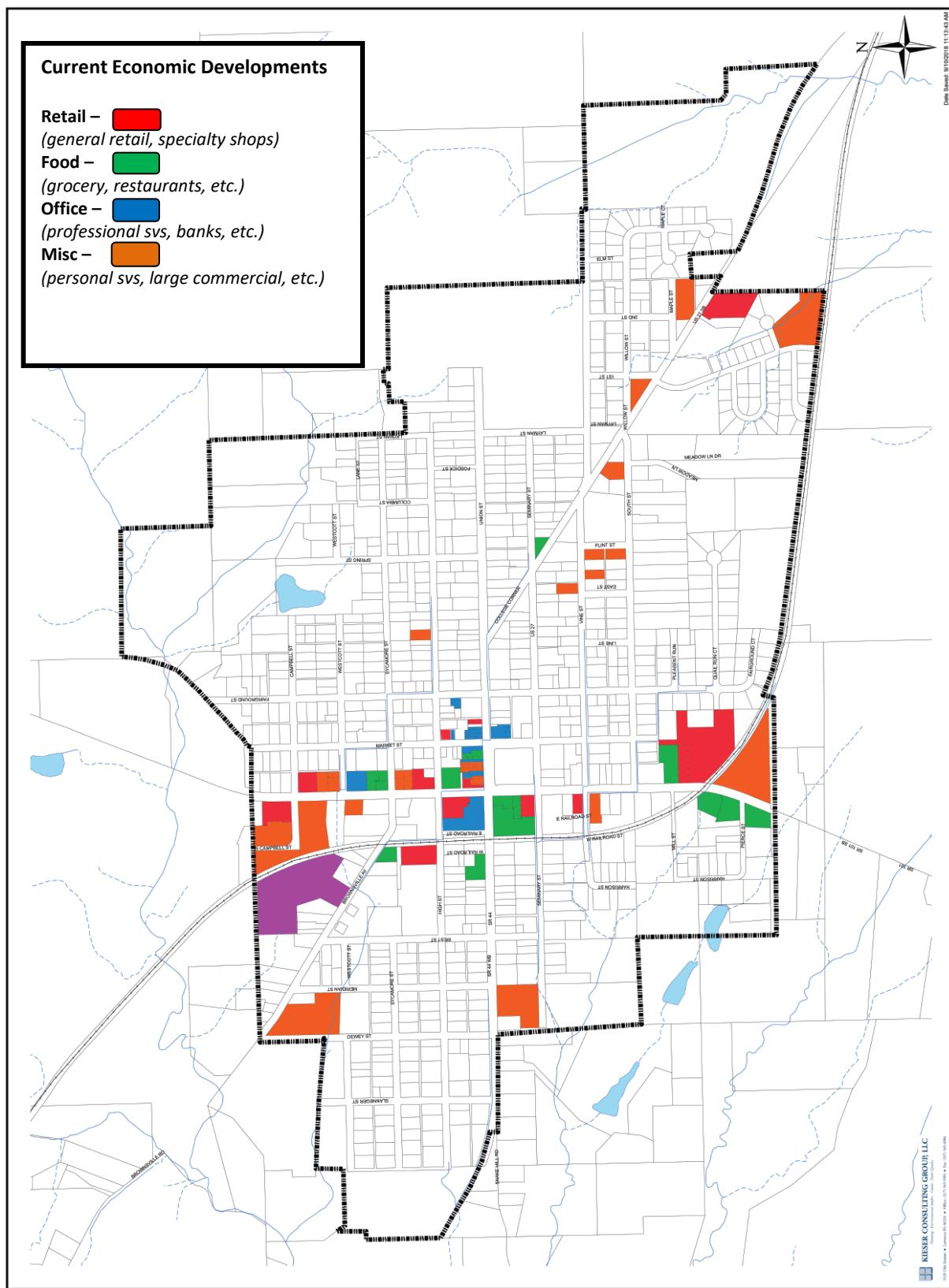
Industrial land uses in a community provide employment and contribute positively to the local tax base. These uses however do have the potential to promote transportation conflicts, pollution, and the reduction of aesthetic quality. Industrial land uses are commonly in conflict with other community uses as they can negatively affect residential and commercial quality. The traffic from adjacent commercial and/or residential uses often imposes on industrial vitality.

Existing Conditions

The Town of Liberty currently has only two industries in the town limits. The only industrial park in Union County is 5 miles southeast of Liberty along US 27. The park, consisting of 64.3 acres, was purchased in 2007 by the Union County Redevelopment Commission with a grant of \$478,425.00 from the Lawrenceburg Regional Economic Development Grant Funding. NSK is currently the leading industry, with a variety of smaller industries making up this very dynamic community.



Map of Business Locales





FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Communities must take advantage of local resources such as their location, physical setting, financial resources and citizens. This includes the readiness on the part of local banks, businesses, and private citizens to donate their time and money. A strong comprehensive planning effort must be implemented to guide growth and to improve the community. Local responsibility and problem solving are the foundations of long-term success.

As Liberty will continue to grow as a “bedroom community” for both the Richmond/Wayne County area and the Oxford/Cincinnati metro area, the community will still need some commercial and professional services growth for the general population. The town has good communication with the Union County Development Corp. and should continue to work with them as well as the local business owners to develop and retain a healthy economic atmosphere in Liberty.

Citizen Survey

The SurveyMonkey that was completed as part of this Plan asked the community to rate certain aspects of the local economic environment. The results as a whole did not shed a positive light about the citizen opinion of the economic viability of Liberty.



Economic Development Survey Results

	Excellent	Good	Don't Know	Fair	Poor
Economic development	0	10	19	26	22
	0%	13%	25%	34%	29%
	13%			62%	
Overall economic health of Liberty	0	12	8	34	23
	0%	16%	10%	44%	30%
	16%			74%	
Vibrant downtown/commercial area	0	11	2	27	37
	0%	14%	3%	35%	48%
	14%			83%	
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Liberty	8	30	1	30	8
	10%	39%	1%	39%	10%
	49%			49%	
Shopping opportunities	0	1	0	22	54
	0%	1%	0%	29%	70%
	1%			99%	
Liberty as a place to work	2	11	5	23	36
	3%	14%	6%	30%	47%
	17%			77%	
Employment opportunities	0	3	4	23	47
	0%	4%	5%	30%	61%
	4%			91%	
Cost of living in Liberty	12	26	4	29	6
	16%	34%	5%	38%	8%
	49%			45%	

The two areas that ranked the worst were shopping opportunities and employment opportunities. The survey also asked what types of businesses that the citizens of Liberty would like to see in their community. Specialty retail shops and sit down restaurants were the top choices among the respondents.



What type of retail businesses would you like to have in Liberty?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Specialty/Boutique	30.8%	4
Antique shops	23.1%	3
General retail	15.4%	2
Shoe store	15.4%	2
Clothing store	7.7%	1
Craft store	7.7%	1

What type of food businesses would you like to have in Liberty?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
General dining (sit down)	45.0%	9
Fast food restaurant	35.0%	7
Specialty food (coffee, ice cream, etc.)	10.0%	2
Outdoor dining	5.0%	1
Pizza parlor	5.0%	1

When asked what type of economic development they would like to see for the community new businesses and more employment opportunities were the top choices.

What type of economic development would you like to see for Liberty?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Businesses (general)	25.0%	4
Employment opportunities	25.0%	4
Manufacturing	18.8%	3
Professional businesses	12.5%	2
Downtown business promotion	6.3%	1
Locally owned businesses	6.3%	1
Tech businesses	6.3%	1



Needs

It was clear from the survey results that economic development for the community is not perceived well by the citizens of Liberty. Although the UCDC has made great improvements in the last few years, it needs to continue to follow its mission and achieve economic growth and stability for the town. It is recommended that the UCDC develop its own economic development plan that will help drive future commercial development for the community. This is extremely important since the UCDC has never had an economic development plan to help the organization develop its goals and strategies. Such a plan will help the UCDC to develop new businesses, retain current businesses, promote local businesses and capture possible spending generated by summer tourism to the state parks. It will also help guide infrastructure improvements that will promote economic growth for Liberty.

Future Land Use

Commercial Use

Most of the town's commercial development is within the courthouse square or along the major highways that run through town. Since there is very little open land for new development within town limits it seemed necessary to keep any new developments in the aforementioned areas. Downtown is filled with older historic structures which need constant upkeep and updating. They should strive to keep these buildings renovated and occupied to deter any possibility of deterioration and or loss of structures.

Any new buildings should be along the highway areas that can provide high visibility and larger tracts of land suitable for larger types of commercial structures.

Industrial Use

Most industrial uses call for large tracts of land which there are none slated for industrial uses within the town limits. Future industrial growth should take place in the Whitewater Industrial Park which is located southeast of Liberty on US 27 which is owned by the Union County



Redevelopment Corp. This approximately 60 acre site has both highway and railroad access and is best suited for any new industrial development.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Goal:

Provide sufficient planning and marketing that encourages growth and retention while retaining a balance between residential neighborhoods and commercial centers.

Objectives:

- Assist existing and proposed businesses that strengthen the tax base, complement existing local businesses, improve the community's quality of life, and are environmentally friendly.
- Foster thriving office, restaurant, and retail establishments that are mutually beneficial to the community.
- Develop an economic development plan for Liberty.
- Develop plan to capture summer season tourist traffic to patronize local businesses.
- Support the local school system to ensure Liberty has the best schools in the region.
- Develop vacant land on the Courthouse Square.
- Encourage new commercial development along major thoroughfares.

Strategies:

- Coordinate partnerships between the public and private sectors to work towards complementary economic development goals.
- Explore opportunities to develop additional Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts to benefit the community.
- Consider partnering with private and nonprofit organizations to leverage existing resources for implementing economic development planning.
- Encourage the development of a critical mass of specialty retail (e.g. apparel and antiques) that would enable Liberty to gain a larger share of the summer tourist market.
- Focus on infill and redevelopment to utilize existing services and infrastructure.
- Promote Liberty's image and character through events and community improvements.
- Include Union County school system accolades in business attraction brochures.



INCENTIVES & POLICIES

In today's economy, business and employers base their decision to locate in a community multiple factors. Business attraction and retention is extremely competitive among communities; in order to compete, Liberty needs to create a strategy and consider the tools that can be used to attract and retain businesses and employers. The following includes incentives and policies that the town can consider in this effort.

Tax Abatement

Tax abatement is a phase-in of property taxes and is intended to encourage development in areas that would not otherwise develop. Tax abatement is a tool widely used by municipal governments to attract new businesses. This tool also encourages investment in new equipment or facilities in existing businesses thus improving the company and stabilizing the community's economy. The community develops and defines the procedures for abatement application and policies on the amount and length of abatement that will be approved. They also decide on the procedures to ensure compliance with the terms of the statement of benefits.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF reallocates future tax revenues to current public improvements without an additional tax. The revenue generated allows a community to make public infrastructure improvements, such as roads, parks, building rehabilitation, environmental cleanup, and sidewalks. The completion of a public improvement or project often results in an increase in property values and often new private investment (new or rehabilitated buildings).

TIF is not an additional tax; it earmarks expected future tax revenues to fund public improvements today.



This generates additional tax revenue. The increased tax revenues are the “tax increment” that is used to finance debt to pay for the public infrastructure. TIF is designed to focus towards public improvements where development would not otherwise occur on its own.

Tax Credits

A community can offer tax credits to business, industry and other employers to not only attract new employers but also help existing businesses succeed. The following are incentives that can be considered.

Job Creation & Workforce Training

One of the most attractive results of guiding new businesses into a region is job creation. There are many tax credits (Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE), Headquarters Relocation, Hoosier Business Investment Tax Credit (HBITC), Industrial Recovery, Venture Capital Investment, Media Production Sale Tax Exemption (MPETC) that provide incentives to businesses looking to locate in Indiana communities and create new jobs. Workforce training is an equally important component in creating new jobs. Businesses that wish to grow and develop their offerings may be eligible for tax credits to offset the costs associated with training existing and new employees with additional skills. The current incentive programs include Skills Enhancement Fund (SEF), Technology Enhancement Certification for Hoosiers (TECH), Community Development Block Grant Micro Enterprise Assistance Program and Community Economic Development Fund and can partner with programs at the Federal, State, regional levels.

Business Attraction

Businesses occasionally look for new locations to conduct their operations, especially those that are large and not fixed to particular resources. Federal, State and regional programs can assist in the effort to attract business operations.



Infrastructure & Rehabilitation

Suitable sites for business location are commonly in need of additional public infrastructure and/or site rehabilitation or remodeling to support operations. This can be an expense that inhibits new businesses from locating in communities and State programs (Industrial Development Grant Fund) can potentially assist with reducing these costs.

Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Research intensive and innovative businesses can be attractive to communities as they generally locate in facilities similar to professional offices and are minimally polluting. Research businesses can be attracted by the utilization of incentives (Research and Development Tax Credit and Patent Income Exemption) and promoting aspects of the community that support the small entrepreneurial business community. Regional resources, such as the International Laboratory, should be promoted for business opportunity in addition to government contracts with regional resources.

Factors that play a role in attracting new business start-up in a community include:

- Customer base and a sense of customer opportunity
- Low cost of doing business, low taxes and business incentives
- Attractive Central Business District
- Existing small business and community banks nearby
- Physical setting of the community
- Good roads/highways to other towns
- Highly educated workforce



PROGRAMS

In addition to incentives, it is important to create programs that foster an environment that supports business development. From an educated and trained workforce to programs that help with start-up businesses, these programs and support are critical to a local economy.

Job Training

Workforce training is vitally important to attracting and retaining employers. This can be accomplished by developing on-the-job training programs, a workforce development program, and additional services such as career counseling and skill assessment. Extending education beyond a high school degree is important by providing access to certificate programs, associate degrees and apprenticeship programs.





SECTION 5

LAND USE

This Section outlines the location and quantity of growth in the community. It includes growth and land use strategies, housing stock and availability, a future land use map and a description of each land use category.

- Existing Conditions
- Current Land Uses
- Housing
 - Purdue Housing Study
- Future Land Use Plan



INTRODUCTION

The location, physical form and manner in which a community grows are key components of the Plan. Growth needs to be coordinated with many aspects of the community, such as utilities and transportation, in order to capitalize on the positive effects from new decisions makers. Looking at the existing land use in Liberty can tell us about how the community has developed and grown over time. It also gives us a look at how the Town may develop in the future. The planning area incorporates the land within the town limits.

Land use policy is determined by an analysis of present land use patterns, assessing any problems associated with these land use trends, and recommendations for future land use. A general evaluation of existing land use is discussed first and is based upon generalized existing land use maps prepared during the planning process. Future land use map for the Town of Liberty are presented along with policy recommendations to guide future land use decisions.

ZONING REGULATIONS

Unlike land use designations, zoning designations are what you can legally do with your parcel today; the land use designation, in conjunction with development guidelines, details how you may be able to use your parcel in the future.

To clarify, there is a significant difference between the two. Land use designations included in the Plan are plans for the future. Whereas zoning designations more specifically define what use is currently allowed on a specific parcel, and outline design and development guidelines for those intended uses such as setbacks, minimum lot sizes, buffering and landscaping requirements, etc.

The Plan is a guide or recommendation for the use of the zoning ordinance and, to a lesser extent, the subdivision ordinance. It suggests, in general terms, proposed uses for land within the locality, as well as the proposed location of utilities and



public facilities such as schools, fire stations and parks. The Plan also makes long-term projections of population growth. The zoning ordinance actually establishes the rules governing the use of land. The zoning ordinance divides a locality into different zoning districts and spells out allowable uses for each district such as agriculture, industry or commercial use. The zoning ordinance is not a mere recommendation as is the Plan. In the case of a conflict concerning land use between the Plan and the zoning ordinance, the zoning ordinance controls. The subdivision ordinance governs the process for dividing land from larger parcels into lots. While the subdivision ordinance is entirely separate from the zoning ordinance, the zoning ordinance establishes the minimum lot size for each zoning district.

Liberty utilizes the Union County Planning office for all of its land use planning, zoning and subdivision control ordinances, permitting and inspections. The districts indicate how land use and development has been shaped.

Current Liberty Zoning Districts

R-1 Residential

The residential zone is established to provide space in suitable locations for one family dwelling units needed in the town and to provide a means of regulating the density and distribution of the population.

R-2 Residential

The residential zone is established to provide space in suitable locations for two family or multi-family dwelling units needed in the town and to provide a means of regulating the density and distribution of the population.

General Business

The “GC” district is intended to provide a land use category for most general business uses generally found serving local areas of the town.

Local Business

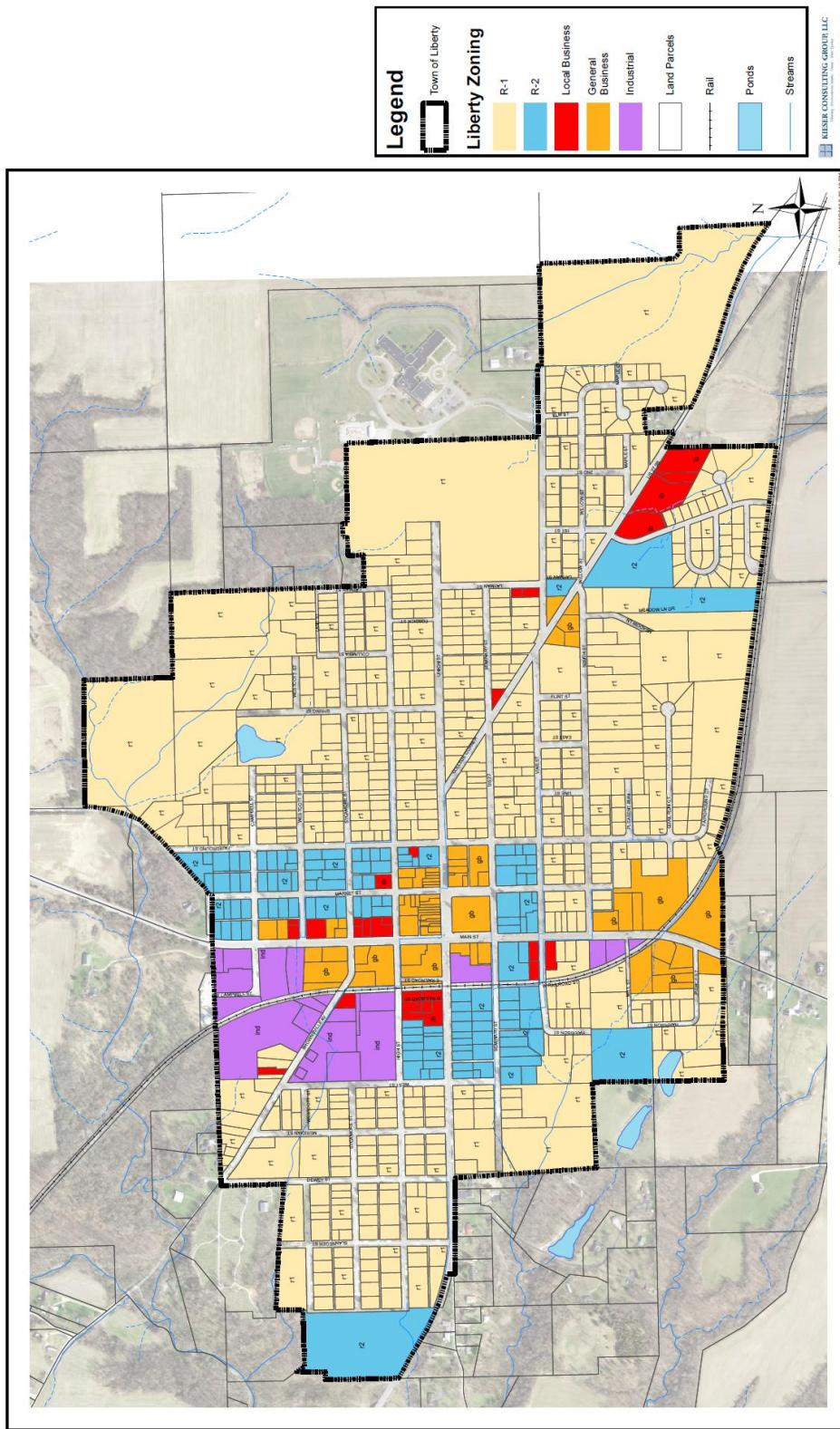
The “LC” district is intended to provide a land use category for most small scale commercial uses that provide goods and services to neighborhoods within town.

Industrial

The manufacturing zone is intended to set aside certain lands where manufacturing uses may efficiently locate with minimum adverse effects to other uses.



Liberty Zoning Map





ANNEXATION

In 2015 SB 330 Public Law 228-2015 was passed making it difficult for cities and towns to annex outlying areas. Because of this communities are taking an approach to annexation that will only include voluntary annexations. It is hoped that in the future the annexation laws will once again be less stringent and allow municipalities to annex areas with ease.

EXISTING LAND USE

The Town of Liberty consists of primarily residential land use, commercial land use, institutional land use, industrial use and areas continuing as open space or vacant land.

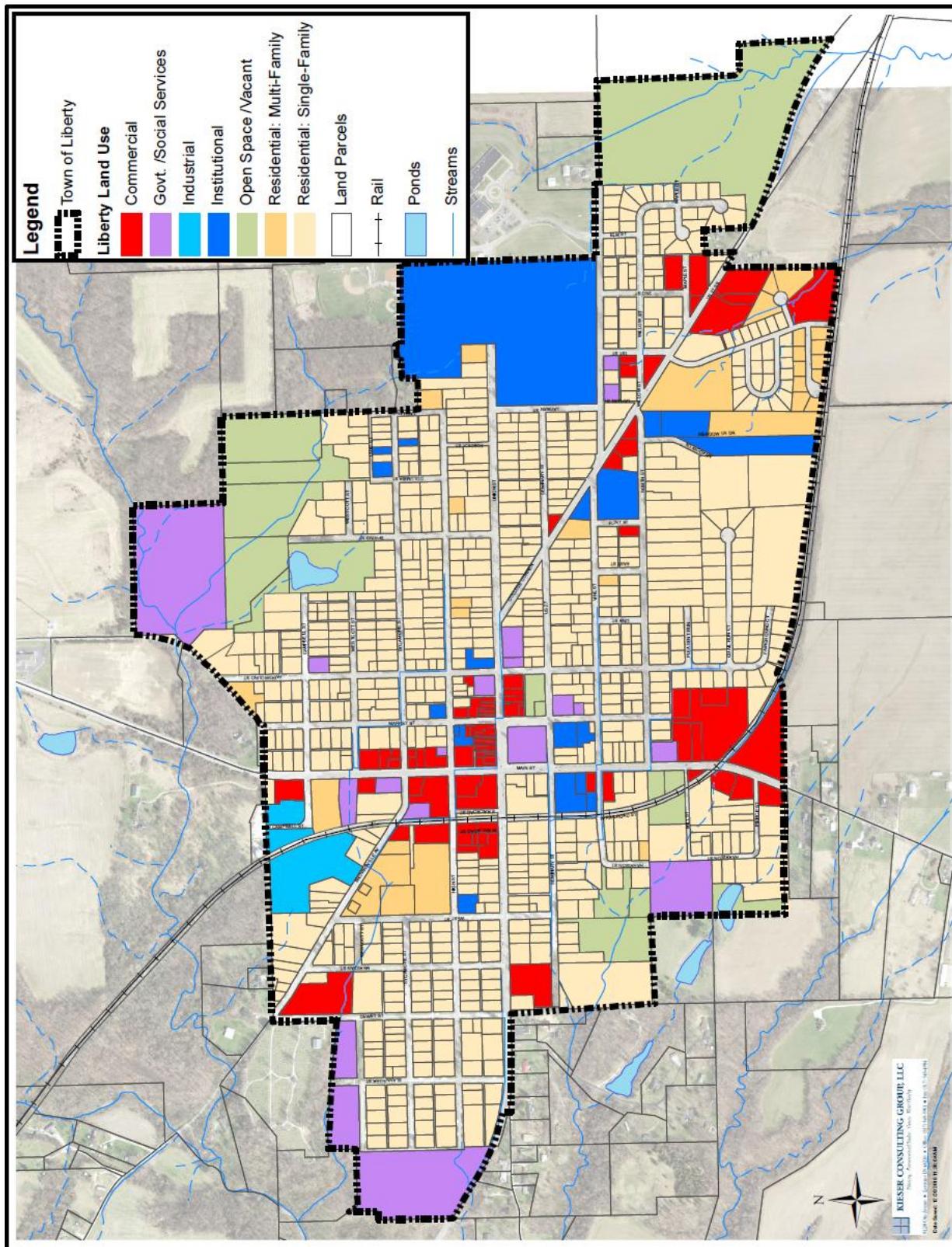
The below shows the percent of existing land use for each of the categories listed.

Existing Land Use		
Land Use Type	Acres*	Percent of Land Total
Residential	350	63.6%
Residential Multi-Family	24	4.4%
Govt./Services	36	6.5%
Institutional	36	6.5%
Vacant/Open Space	58	10.5%
Commercial	37	6.8%
Industrial	9	1.7%
TOTAL	550*	100.0%

*Approximate acres within town limits



Current Land Use Map





Residential Land Use Overview

Several factors including type, size, cost, character, and availability of housing significantly influences the local quality of life in communities. The location of the housing is also a significant factor in the overall quality of a community. Quality housing, of any size or type, is that which is in a well-maintained neighborhood which is accessed by local streets and conveniently located in relation to community activities and facilities, goods and services, and employment.

Population Density

The population density is 3.9 persons per acre for total acreage and 5.7 persons per residential acreage in Liberty. This is quite typical for small towns that were platted prior to the 1900's due to the high number of small residential lots.

Housing

The existing housing stock in Liberty is similar to that which is common in small cities and towns throughout Indiana. The housing stock is dominated by single-family detached homes. Most of the single-family homes sit on less than one-fourth acre lots which make up the original platted town or "old town" area.

There are a several multi-family housing units in the town. Multi-family residential developments which include duplexes and larger scale apartment units make up 6.5% of the residential acreage.

Housing by Type

Liberty has approximately 805 housing units according to the 2016 U.S. Census/American Community Survey. The housing units are predominantly single family dwellings. Single-family units makeup 73.9% of the total housing units. Larger 10+ units make up the next highest percentage at 9.8% of the total housing units. There are only 23 mobile home units in Liberty.



Housing Units by Type

Source: American Community Survey

Type	Number	Percent of Total		
		Liberty	County	State
One Unit, Detached	581	72.2%	79.0%	72.5%
One Unit, Attached	13	1.6%	0.7%	3.4%
Two to Four Units	58	5.9%	3.0%	6.3%
Five to Nine Units	51	6.3%	3.4%	4.8%
Ten or More Units	79	9.8%	3.5%	7.5%
Mobile Home/Other	23	2.9%	10.5%	5.4%
Total	805	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Owner Occupied	433	60.1%	72.7%	71.5%
Renter Occupied	288	39.9%	27.3%	28.5%
Median Rent	\$647		\$710	\$758
Total Occupied	721	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total Vacant	84	10.4%	9.6%	11.3%
Total	805	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Out of the 721 occupied units, 433 or 60.1% are owner occupied. The home ownership rate is below the state average of 71.5% and the county average of 72.7%. The total of number rental units is 288 or 39.9%. This rate is much higher than the county average of 27.3% and higher than the state average of 28.5%. 84 units or 10.4% of the housing stock were reported vacant at the time of the survey. This amount is above the county rate of 9.6% and just above the state rate of 11.3%.



Homeowners vs. Rentals

Source: American Community Survey

Year	<i>Homeowners</i>		<i>Renters</i>	
2000	548	63.9%	310	36.1%
2010	441	59.0%	306	41.0%
2011	451	61.4%	283	38.6%
2012	496	63.4%	286	36.6%
2013	523	66.9%	259	33.1%
2014	535	67.1%	262	32.9%
2015	494	62.1%	301	37.9%
2016	433	60.1%	288	39.9%

Since 2000, the homeowner occupied percentage had relatively remained steady until 2013 and 2014 when it had its highest levels and is currently just 2.8% below the 2000 level. While the rental percentages decreased during that time to a low of 32.9% in 2014, but has since increased to 39.9% which is still higher than the 2000 number by 3.8%.

Housing by Age

Liberty has a comparatively older housing stock. Almost half of the current housing stock or approximately 47.7% of the homes were constructed before 1960 which makes them over 50 years old. 31.9% of these were built before the 1940's alone and this reflects the historic nature of the majority of homes in Liberty. By comparison, only 27.4% percent of Union County houses were built before the 1940's and 19.2% for the entire state. The 1980's showed the highest percentages of new housing units constructed. Approximately 14.7% of all the housing stock was built during this time period.



Year Structure Built				
Source: American Community Survey				
Year Built	Number	Percent of Total		
		<i>Liberty</i>	<i>Liberty</i>	County
State				
2010 or later	7	2.7%	0.6%	3.4%
2000 to 2009	79	9.8%	12.6%	8.4%
1990 to 1999	85	10.6%	13.8%	14.5%
1980 to 1989	118	14.7%	12.4%	10.1%
1970 to 1979	80	9.9%	12.3%	14.5%
1960 to 1969	59	7.3%	9.6%	11.7%
1950 to 1959	75	9.3%	5.9%	11.8%
1940 to 1949	52	6.5%	6.2%	6.4%
1939 or earlier	257	31.9%	27.4%	19.2%
Total	805	100%	100.0%	100.0%

Housing by Value

The 2016 U.S. Census/American Community Survey reported the median housing value in the Town of Liberty to be \$81,900, which is well below the state median value of \$123,000, and below the Union County average of \$106,100. The table below shows Liberty's housing values in comparison with those of Union County and the State's. The median rent in Liberty was \$647. This is less than the state's median rent of \$758, but just lower than the county at \$710.

An increase in the median value of homes could indicate that the average size of homes is increasing which is the trend nationwide. According to the National Association of

Homebuilders, the average square feet of a newly constructed home in the U.S. in 2015 was 2,687. This is an increase from 2,057 square feet in 2000. If this trend continues, then more land may be devoted to residential land use in the future or development restraints will be needed to increase housing density.



Housing Value (owner occupied only)					
Housing Value		Number	Percent of Total		
		<i>Liberty</i>	<i>Liberty</i>	County	State
Less than \$50,000		29	6.7%	10.5%	9.4%
\$50,000 to \$99,999		305	70.4%	36.3%	27.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999		64	14.8%	24.9%	26.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999		31	7.2%	14.9%	16.6%
\$200,000 to \$299,999		0	0.0%	7.2%	12.0%
\$300,000 to \$499,999		0	0.0%	3.9%	5.7%
\$500,000 to \$999,999		0	0.0%	2.2%	1.8%
\$1,000,000 or more		4	0.9%	0.2%	0.4%
Total	433	100.00%	100.0%	100.0%	
Median Value	\$81,900		\$106,100	\$123,000	

Building Permits

Residential Building Permits 2013-17			
Year	Residential Units		Commercial Units
2013	0		0
2014	1		0
2015	0		0
2016	3		0
2017	3		0
Total	7		0

Homeownership can also be reflected in the number of new residential builds.



HOUSING TRENDS

Households & Families

Liberty had an estimated total 721 households in 2016 with an average household size of 2.95 people per household. Liberty's average household size is more than Union County (2.57 people/household) and Indiana (2.5 people/household). In 2016, approximately 64.8% of all households were families and 35.2% were non-family households. Of the family households, 45.6% consisted of a husband-wife family and about 19.1% were single-parent households.

The percent of one-person households (people living alone) in Liberty (28.4%) is higher than Union County (24.9%), but about the same as Indiana (28.0%).

Household Characteristics <small>Source: American Community Survey</small>						
	Town of Liberty	Percent of Total Town	Union County	Percent of Total County	Indiana	Percent of Total State
Total Occupied Households	721	89.6%	2,917	90.4%	2,501,937	100.0%
Family Households	467	64.8%	1,838	63.0%	1,655,043	66.2%
Married with Children	329	45.6%	1,453	49.8%	479,171	19.2%
Single Parents	138	19.1%	385	13.2%	245,304	9.8%
Non-family Households	254	35.2%	1,079	37.0%	846,894	33.8%
Living Alone	205	28.4%	263	24.9%	701,587	28.0%
Average Household size	2.95		2.57		2.5	



Housing Tenure

Approximately 10.4% of housing units in Liberty were vacant in 2016, this has increased 6.5% from 3.9% in 2010. All comparison communities also experienced increases in vacant housing units during this time (2010 -2016) with Brookville increasing by 1.4%, Cambridge City by 1.0% and Centerville by 3.5% vacancy. As of 2016, Liberty was slightly below Union County (9.6%) and still below Indiana (11.2%) in averages for vacant housing units.

Housing Occupancy <small>Source: American Community Survey</small>					
Community	Occupied	Owner Occupied	Rental Occupied	Vacant	Total Units
Indiana	88.8%	68.7%	31.3%	11.2%	2,830,669
Union County	90.4%	72.7%	27.3%	9.6%	3,227
Liberty	89.6%	60.1%	39.9%	10.4%	805
Brookville	87.4%	54.5%	45.5%	12.6%	1,302
Cambridge City	86.9%	71.0%	29.0%	13.1%	865
Centerville	87.0%	72.4%	27.6%	13.0%	1,142

About 60.1% of the occupied housing units were owner-occupied and 39.9% were renter-occupied. Liberty has the lowest percent of home ownership in the comparison communities except for Brookville. Home ownership in Liberty is lower than that of Union County (72.7%) and of Indiana (68.7%)

Housing Value

The median value of Liberty's owner-occupied housing units was \$81,900 in 2016 and the median gross rent for renter-occupied housing units was \$647 per month. Of the comparison communities, only Cambridge City had a lower median value (\$74,000), but two communities had lower rents Brookville (\$595) and Cambridge City (\$576).



Housing Median Value / Rent Comparison

Source: American Community Survey

Community	Median Household Value	Median Rent
Indiana	\$124,200	\$745
Union County	\$106,100	\$710
Liberty	\$81,900	\$647
Brookville	\$109,600	\$595
Cambridge City	\$74,000	\$576
Centerville	\$88,300	\$825

Liberty's housing unit value is significantly less than Union County (\$106,100), Indiana (\$124,200), and the United States (\$178,600) and Liberty's median gross rent was lower than Indiana (\$745), United States (\$928), and Union County (\$710).

Estimated Housing Value (2016)

Source: American Community Survey

	Owner-occupied units	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 to \$499,999	\$500,000 to \$999,999	\$1,000,000 or more	Median Value
Indiana	1,726,338	10.7%	26.3%	24.5%	16.6%	13.1%	6.5%	1.9%	0.4%	\$124,200
Union County	2,121	10.5%	36.3%	24.9%	14.9%	7.2%	3.9%	2.2%	0.2%	\$106,100
Liberty	433	6.7%	70.4%	14.8%	7.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	\$81,900
Brookville	620	5.6%	36.3%	39.4%	12.1%	5.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%	\$109,600
Cambridge City	534	24.9%	50.2%	15.7%	4.5%	2.8%	1.3%	0.6%	0.0%	\$74,000
Centerville	720	6.7%	52.4%	29.3%	9.6%	1.4%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	\$88,300



PURDUE HOUSING STUDY

In 2018 the Purdue Center for Regional Development conducted a survey of the regional workforce to analyze the housing needs and challenges in the East Central Indiana counties of Fayette, Randolph, Rush, Union, and Wayne, respectively. Out of 2,505 received respondents, 2,103 fully completed the survey. This survey reflected the views of the region's workforce (between the ages of 22 and 65). It should be stated that the survey was not considered scientific, nor does it represent all age groups equally.

Union County Focus Group was made up of the following:

Ten participants: One was a newcomer to Union County, two have been residents between 3-10 years, and seven have lived in Union County more than 20 years (most of their lives).

Participants in the forum represented the following sectors: Business and Industry (3), Economic Development (1), Education (1), Elected Official (2), Financial Services (1), Nonprofit (1), and Real Estate (1).

Here are some of the takeaways from the survey:

Insight into Existing Homeowners

What are your future plans in terms of buying or renting a new home?

I do not plan to move	71%
I plan to buy a home	25%
I plan to rent a home	4%

Takeaways

- The majority of the survey respondents reported that they do not plan to move from their homes. However, 25 percent have plans to buy or rent a home. Another 4 percent plan to rent a home in the future. This indicates that the majority of renters plan to buy a home in the future subject to mortgage qualification.



Future Homeowners (represents the twenty-five percent who plan to buy a new home)

How soon are your future plans in terms of buying a new home?	65% - 1 to 3 years
What type of home will you be looking to purchase?	96% - Single family (house or townhouse)
How many bedrooms will you need in your new home?	57% - three bedrooms
How many bathrooms will you need in your new home?	78% - two bathrooms

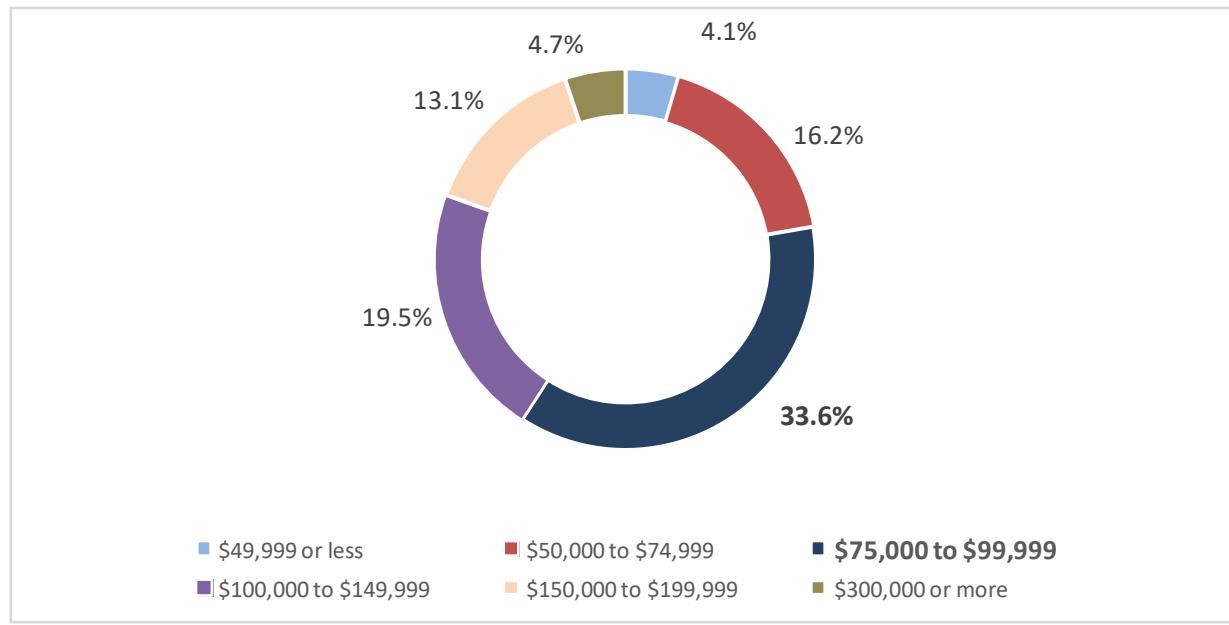
Takeaways

- Sixty-five percent of survey participants who are planning to buy a home are purchasing a home in the next 3 years.
- Ninety-six percent of respondents reported that they are looking to purchase a single-family home.
- Fifty-seven percent reported that they are looking to buy a three bedroom home.
- Seventy-eight percent reported that they are looking to purchase a two bathroom home.



Future Homeowners; Price Range

What is the highest range of home prices that you would be willing to consider for your new home purchase?



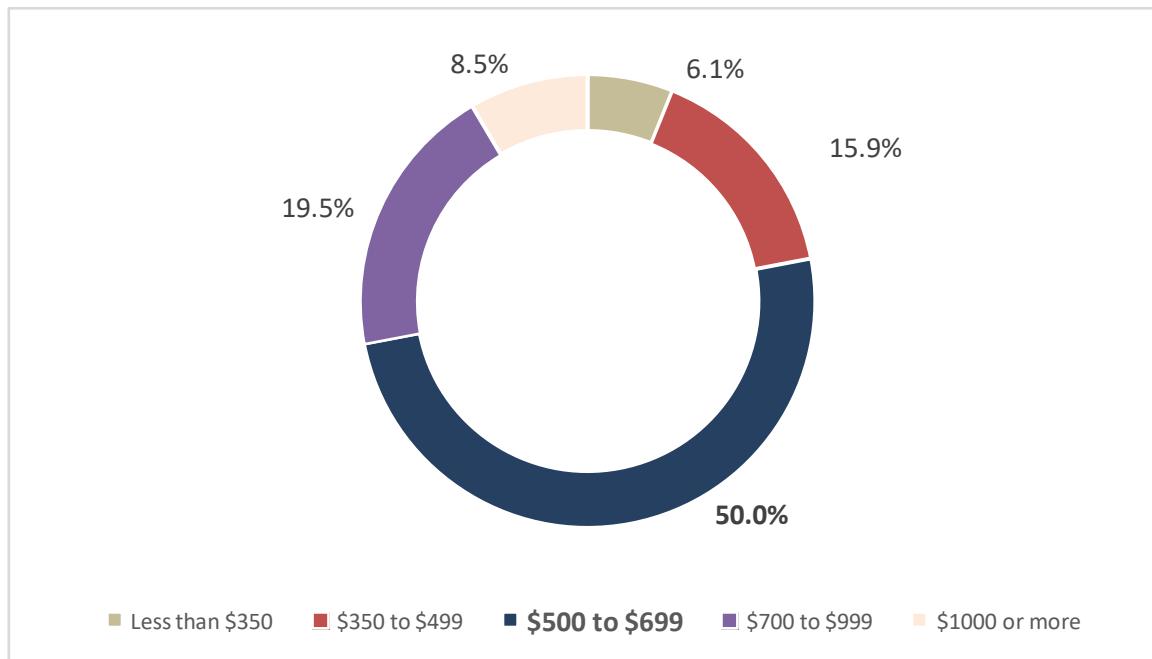
Takeaways

- Thirty-four percent of survey participants reported that the highest price range that they are willing to consider for a new home is \$75,000 to \$99,999.
- There were no responses for the \$200,000 to \$299,999 price range.
- Thirty-three percent will be looking for a home in the \$100,000 to \$199,999 price range. Another five percent of respondents indicated that they would be willing to spend \$300,000 or more for a home.



Insight into Future Renters

What is the highest range of monthly rental prices that you would be willing to pay in your preferred community?



Takeaways

- Fifty percent of survey participants reported that the highest monthly price range that they are willing to pay is \$500 to \$699.
- Nearly twenty percent of respondents selected \$700 to \$999, while another 8.5 percent are willing to pay \$1,000 or more.

Future Renters; Size of Rental

How soon are your future plans in terms of renting a new home?	66% - 1.5 years or less
How many bedrooms will you need in your new home?	43% - two bedrooms
How many bathrooms will you need in your new home?	99%- one to two bathrooms



Takeaways

- Of survey participants who are planning to rent a home, 66 percent reported that they will be renting in a 1 ½ years or less.
- Forty-three percent reported that they are looking to rent a two-bedroom home.
- Ninety-nine percent are looking to rent a one-to-two-bathroom home.

Recommendations

Pitching community to developers

Put together a dossier and highlight the following:

- Survey demand for owner-occupied and rental housing
- Evidence showing the number of permits issued over the past five years for the specific county that desires new home construction.
- Sites which have infrastructure hookups (sewer, water, broadband, electricity and gas connectivity).
- Address barriers to development ahead of time with specific sites such as obtaining appropriate zoning or variances.
- Work with employers to recruit potential home buyers or renters for your projects.
- Obtain 10 or more pre-approved buyers (such as first time buyers, seniors, middle age 2nd time homeowners) who are willing to purchase a new build home from a developer at one or more designated locations. This shows developers that there are able buyers.

Flagged Issues for Regional Housing

- The markets in many of these communities are “too thin” to attract potential developers. Local contractors who are in a position to build homes prefer to work in the higher end market where the profit margins are much higher (a contractor can make more profit building one higher end home than building two or three “middle income” homes). Perhaps tax or developer incentives can be implemented to entice developers to rehab or build properties for first-time buyers.
- Many of the state/federal programs are aimed at “affordable” housing, which translates into low-income housing. Local banks have incentives through the Community Reinvestment Act to target funds at lower income housing, but not necessarily “middle income housing” developments. EIRPC, local employers and banks could work together to find ways to incentivize workers to buy homes in the region with subsidized loans, low closing costs, or some other mechanism.



Union County Focus Group Overview

The researchers also did a housing focus group discussion for Union County. Below are the concerns and strategies from that focus session.

Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction of Current Housing Options

Housing Focus group participants shared these thoughts when prompted to describe the availability, quality, price, and equity of current housing options:

- 1) Poor Availability:** Need more homes to sell, demand going up; homes in town sell quickly; receive calls from potential renters with nowhere to rent.
- 2) Housing Needs:** Needs of senior citizens are different than younger families; see lots of young families with interest in elusive housing; people want to build, but the infrastructure is missing/too costly to install; low profit margin for developers (must wait until 70% of houses sell to recoup their costs construction costs/pay bills).
- 3) Consumer Credit:** Low cash availability; low-income homes in need of costly repair; few resources to fix up older homes, credit issues prevent purchase.
- 4) Zoning Tension** (between agriculture and residential): Bothers some to see farm land taken away; people are willing to live in town but aren't finding adequate properties; costly to build because paying for the land, sewer and water in addition to the house.
- 5) Single-Family Housing Demand:** Mostly for homes with 3 bedrooms/2 bathrooms; in the price range of \$90,000-\$150,000; country homes are sought after but difficult to find; difficult to be a bedroom community without enough bedrooms.
- 6) Rental Demand:** People not as interested in rentals, but a good one goes quickly; people aren't building to rent, except apartment complexes; rental experience has been positive overall, but depends on individuals; buying on land contract has become popular, but can be dangerous for the buyer.



Suggested Strategies

Housing Focus group participants were asked to individually write a list of potential housing strategies to share with local and regional leaders and elected officials. Strategies included:

- 1) Public Water:** Need to have available public water, waterlines are old, competition between ag and residential with wells, need subsidies or grants to help with rehabilitation of water lines so that builders don't have to invest in this infrastructure.
- 2) Comprehensive Plan:** Provide a vision for development and access to funding (Liberty-focused now with hopes of getting the county on board); build regional partnerships and call on state elected officials to help.
- 3) Habitat for Humanity:** Create a local chapter in Union County; maintain the historical integrity while ensuring efficiency.
- 4) Housing Incentives:** Both public and private, that could incentivize rehabbing, building or making housing more accessible; provide incentives for companies to rehab homes for their employees.
- 5) Building Permits:** Analyze the process, data, constraints; limit permitting for low-income housing; encourage county building inspector to enforce existing codes; incentive the renovation of existing housing.
- 6) Beautification:** Create a program with an accompanying award (like a Pride Program) that regularly recognizes homeowners.
- 7) Improve Housing Focus:** Differentiate between low and medium income housing and strive for promoting medium income housing.
- 8) Connect the Dots:** Focus on areas to develop around the edge of town and on the lakes (where infrastructure is available), as a holistic approach so the desired amenities are there; analyze the land that is currently available.
- 9) Sense of Place:** Develop trails, paths (currently, there's a disconnect between parks and amenities), appreciate what we have; balance the desire to remain a small town while having big city amenities.
- 10) Infrastructure:** Cell service, broadband access (Smart parks), county roads improvement.



Institutional Land Use Overview

Institutional land uses include those which are generally public, or semi-public such as churches, schools, and government buildings. Institutional land uses are a necessary element of a community and their locations can either contribute to, or detract from, the overall quality of the area.

Existing Conditions

Institutional uses in Liberty are comprised of mostly governmental buildings and utilities, schools and churches. The waterworks plant is located just outside the town limits. The town has ample space for any future institutional uses including park expansion and government facilities such as water and wastewater. Those entities sit on large tracts of land designated for future expansions in necessary.

Commercial Land Use Overview

Industrial Land Use Overview

Both of these can be found in Section 4 Economic Environment

Agricultural/Open Space Land Use Overview

Agricultural land uses are necessary globally for the production of food products. On the local level agriculture is a source of employment, community character, and economic vitality. In a broader sense, agriculture is a way of life for many families. In many areas, agricultural land is considered to be simply undeveloped vacant land. Through the public input process for this Plan, the participants indicated a need for the recognition of agriculture as a land use, the preservation of prime agricultural land, and the restriction of sprawl development that threatens local agricultural operations.

Open Space uses are often set-asides for park and recreational activities and general green space. These amenities provide a community a certain quality of life level. Parks and open



spaces can provide not only recreational opportunities, but also educational, spiritual and health related functions.

Existing Conditions

The continued use of acreage in Liberty for agricultural purposes is mainly done on a few larger tracts of land that have yet to be developed for any residential, commercial or recreational uses. This is quite common in smaller towns that these parcels are used for farming until such time for future development. There is only one large area still being used for farming and it sits on the very southeast corner of the town. It is about 40 acres in size and is bisected by US 27. Because of this the likelihood of its being developed are high. Other larger undeveloped areas are some woodlots on the northeast and southwest sides of the town.



FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use is the culmination of the physical reality of land use planning which is linked to the goals and objectives. The information in this chapter provides a summary of the future land use plan for the Town of Liberty and how it is based on these goals and objectives for the community.

Since there are very limited areas for development within the town limits, the Town will need to concentrate on preservation of existing structures and infill development to enhance the community as well as utilizing the existing open areas for residential, commercial, and open space uses. The Future Land Use Map shows areas where general growth is to take place. The map in this report is intended to be general in nature; land use boundaries are not specific. This plan is intended as a flexible and general guideline; **it is not intended as a zoning map**.

Residential

As with all older communities with limited land for new housing, it will be pertinent to concentrate on infill of existing vacant lots. Liberty does have a large tract of land on the very southeastern part that abuts US 27. This area would be prime for new housing as it is close to existing utilities and has close proximity to the schools.

Commercial

Industrial

Both of these can be found in Section 4 Economic Environment

Open Space/Recreation

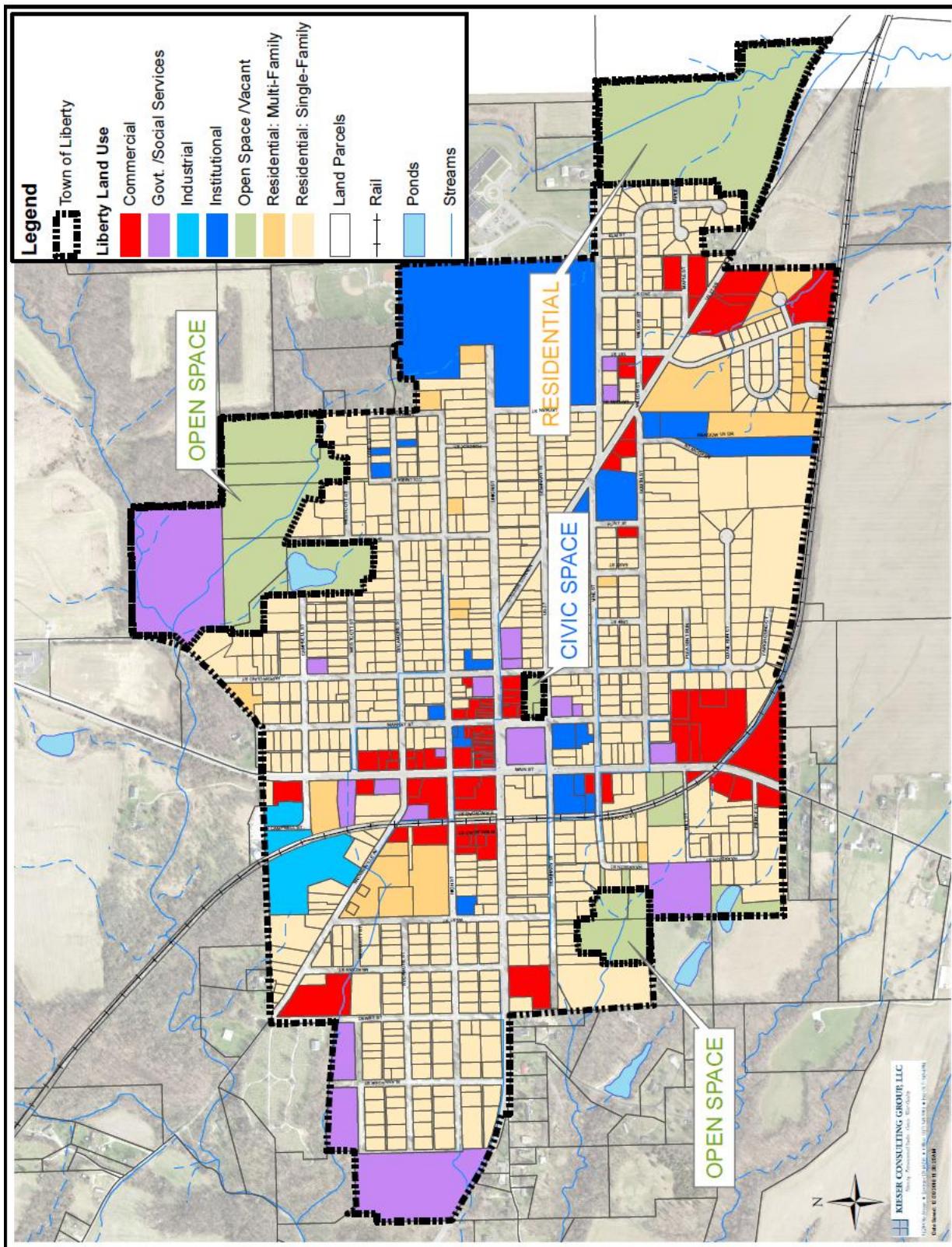
There are two areas in town that are set aside for open space. These two areas are some of the last wooded areas and should be preserved for future parkland.

Agricultural

There are no areas in town limits that are set aside for future agricultural uses.



Future Land Use Map





LAND USE POLICY

Goal:

To encourage the orderly, responsible development of land in order to promote the community goals, and to determine and direct land use patterns in the most positive way for the community as a whole, in a manner consistent with its long term interests.

Objectives:

- Promote residential growth representing a variety of housing opportunities.
- Promote commercial growth along major transportation routes and the downtown area.
- Use annexation to promote new growth.
- Plan for future housing growth areas in town and adjacent to town limits.
- Promote homeownership opportunities.
- Assess rental opportunities for single family homes.
- Eliminate blighted houses.

Strategies:

- Review zoning, subdivision control ordinances and permitting process.
- Concentrate on using existing vacant property for new growth.
- Connect with IHCD for homeownership assistance and rehab programs.
- Apply for blight elimination grants.
- Follow the Purdue University Housing Study strategies.
- Work with the Union County Development Corporation to promote business growth.



SECTION 6

TRANSPORTATION

IN THIS SECTION...

This Section coordinates future state funded projects and local needs for all forms of transportation in Liberty. This includes roadway improvements as well as multi-modal projects.

- Existing Transportation
 - Vehicular Network
 - Pedestrian Network
 - Multi-Modal Transportation
- Transportation Improvements
 - Roadway Improvements
 - Sidewalk Improvements
 - Recreation Improvements



INTRODUCTION

A community's transportation network is directly responsible for maintaining a healthy and thriving community. A coordinated and deliberate plan to develop transportation throughout a community, including facilities such as streets, sidewalks, and multi-modal trails, is an essential component of a comprehensive plan.

The overall objective of the Transportation Plan is to offer a system of transportsations that will allow for the safe movement of people and commodities, quickly, economically, and conveniently between all points of the town and the surrounding area to provide a reasonable choice of facilities and routes.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION

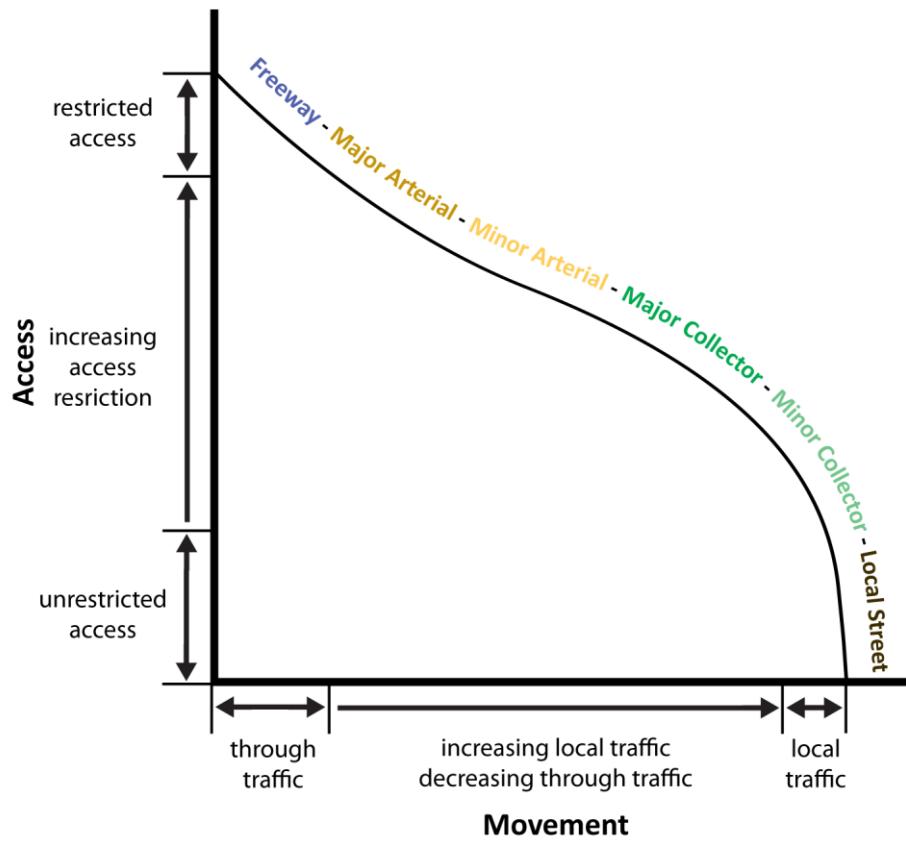
ROADWAYS

The Liberty area is not part of any of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in the state. MPO's are responsible for the Transportation Improvement Plan for those areas which they cover which contains all future roadway improvements for the planning area. In this case it was determined that the Thoroughfare Plan for Union County be reviewed to determine any future projects in and or around Liberty. With that being stated, there are no major projects planned for the Liberty area through 2038.

The Town of Liberty has both Federal and State highways (primary arterials) as well as collector and local streets. The Functional Classification Map (following page) represents the current classifications of roadways in Liberty.



Street Classification



Arterials

The Arterial system is designed to serve the major centers of activity for a community, the highest traffic volume corridors, as well as the majority of “through traffic” desiring to pass through a community with minimal obstruction. They should carry the highest proportion of the total urban area travel on minimum mileage. Sometimes access to private property is restricted in order to maintain these characteristics.

Within the Town of Liberty, US 27 otherwise known as Main St. runs from the north town limits through the town then at the courthouse square it takes an east direction then runs southeasterly toward the Ohio state line. US 27 is considered a rural primary arterial. SR 44 runs east/west through the middle of town. From the west town limits to Main St. it is classified as a rural minor arterial. It then follows US 27 until Eaton St. where it travels due east and is



classified as a rural major collector road. SR 101 begins at Seminary St. and runs south out of the town. It is classified as a rural minor arterial.

Collectors

The Collector system of streets and highways is designed to provide both land service access and traffic circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. As the name implies, Collector streets also serve to collect traffic from local streets and channel it into the Arterial system. Collector streets are divided into Major Collectors and Minor Collectors.

Within the Town of Liberty, SR 44 or Eaton St. is classified as a rural minor collector.

Local

The Local system consists of all other streets and roads that do not fall under one of the higher systems. It serves primarily to provide direct access to the adjacent lands and access to the high level systems. All streets within the Town of Liberty that have not been identified previously fall under the Local Streets category.

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

In addition to vehicular traffic flow throughout a community, another vital mode of transportation is the non-vehicular transportation system, sometimes referred to as “multi-modal”. The multi-modal transportation system consists of a community’s alternate modes of transportation, such as pedestrian sidewalks as well as biking, walking and jogging trails. In some communities, this also involves rail and navigable waterways as alternate modes of transportation.

A simple inventory of sidewalk and trail locations can indicate which of a community’s features are being served by alternative modes of transportation. Interconnectivity within a community through a multi-modal transportation system promotes a healthy population, additional forms

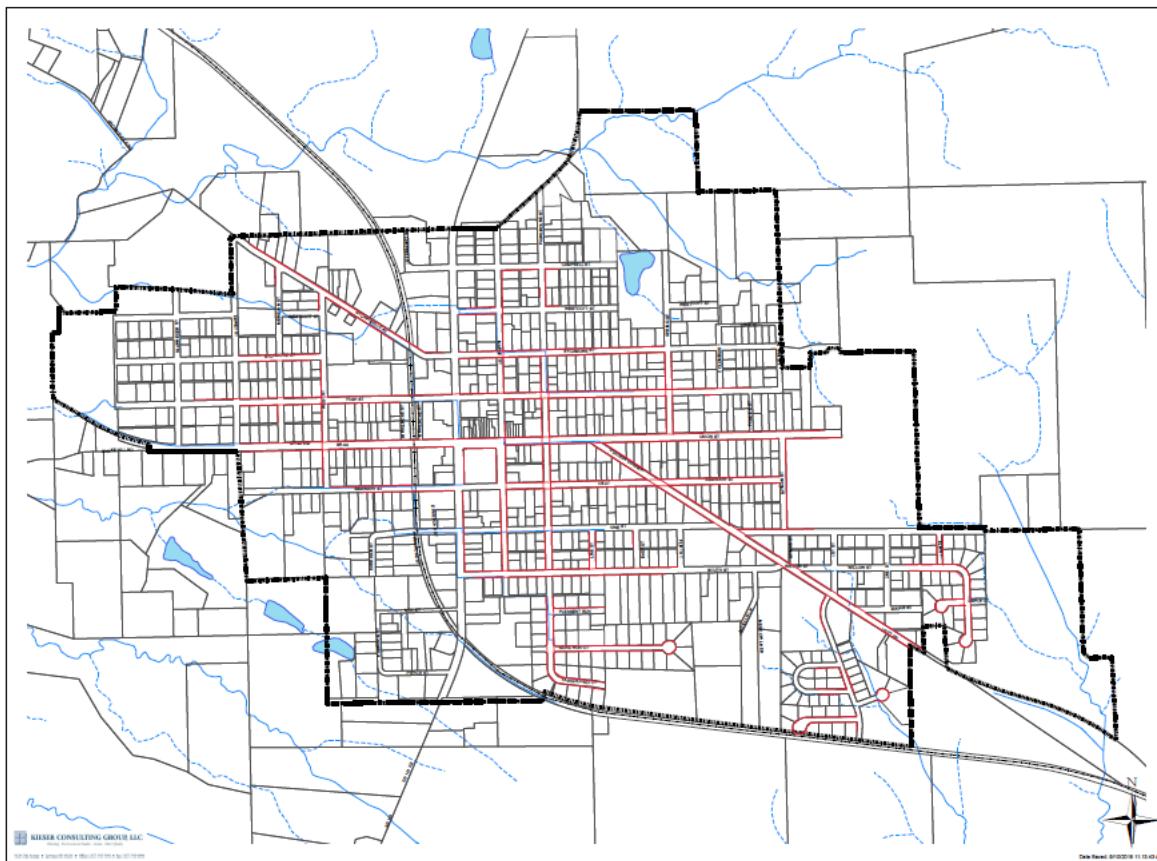


of recreation, and provides desirable characteristics within the community such as reduced vehicular congestion and pollutants.

Sidewalks/Trails

As with many smaller towns, the system of sidewalks is sporadic in Liberty. Some areas of the Town have sidewalks in excellent condition while other areas are lacking any type sidewalk system. Since 2015 the town has made improvements to major sections of sidewalk in the downtown residential area due to a lawsuit that was filed against them. They will continue to make improvements as their budget permits.

Current Sidewalk map



There are no bicycling or hiking trails in Liberty.

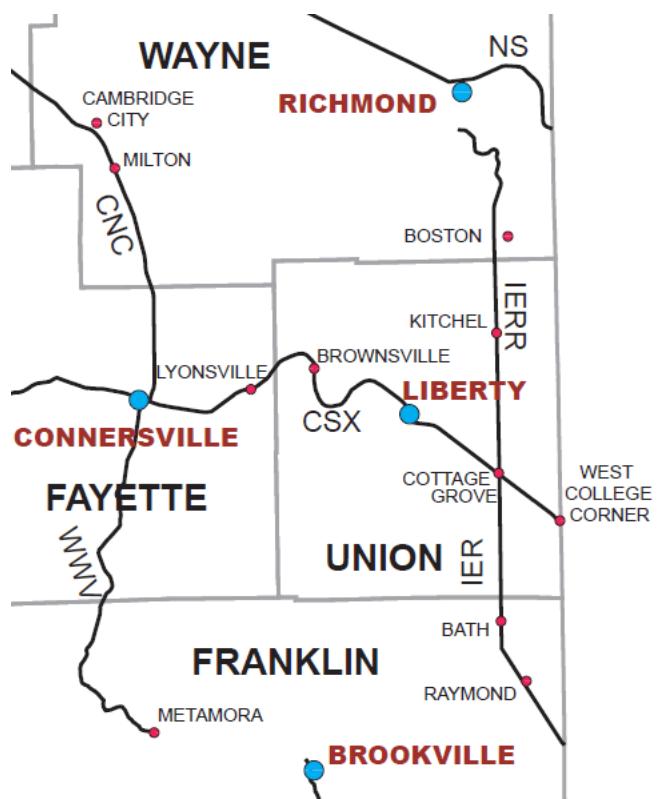


Public Transportation

Union County TRANSIT is the public transportation service provided by Union County. It operates several 15 person vans out of its facility on the west side of Liberty. It is open to the general public and operates Mon – Fri, 6a – 5p. Like most rural public transportation, it is not a taxi service and riders must call in advance to schedule a ride. All rides are based on a cost per mileage.

Railroads

There is one railroad that runs through town. CSX railroad runs a rail line through Liberty that mainly runs freight trains, but it also runs the Amtrak Cardinal passenger line. Although it no longer stops in Liberty it can be boarded in nearby Connersville (12 miles west). The Cardinal line runs 3 times a week from New York to Chicago.



Source: Indiana Department of Transportation



Amtrak Cardinal Passenger Route



Source: Amtrak

Airport Access

Liberty has two private small plane airports, Norris Field and EZ Acres. The nearest regional airports are in Richmond Municipal Airport in Richmond, IN (12 miles NE) and the Miami University Airport in Oxford, OH (14 miles SE). The closest major airports are Dayton International (54 miles east) and Cincinnati/Northern KY International (60 miles SE).



TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

A community's comprehensive plan is a unique opportunity to evaluate the current status of the transportation systems within the community. In preparing this plan, some needed improvements have been identified to meet the current transportation needs. These improvements are included in this chapter.

In addition to satisfying current transportation needs, improvements may be driven by or a driving force behind future land use projects. As land is dependent on transportation for development and growth, and may require specific types of access, the transportation system serving that area must accommodate those needs.

Improvements have been divided into the following categories:

- Roadway Improvements
- Sidewalk Improvements
- Recreational Improvements

ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

The Town of Liberty has recently in the past year undergone a reorganization of its public facilities departments. There currently are no future plans for street improvements beyond maintenance and repairs as needed. The current department is working on updating years of written documentation on past road improvements in able to gain a better understanding of what has been accomplished in the past and to get a better understanding of future roadway needs.

Roadway Planning

For many communities, an effective preventative maintenance program is the most economical way to sustain the condition and prolong the life of their street system. With this being said it will be recommended that the town adopt a Pavement Management and Asset Plan. This type



of plan will be able to outline the performance goals and expected level of service of pavements, define the rating system, and describe the work plan for pavement maintenance making routine work performed to maintain pavement as close to its as-built condition for as long as possible. Each town-maintained street in Liberty can be evaluated by measuring pavement width and length of the pavement section, noting the type of pavement and each occurrence of pavement defects. Maintenance includes crack filling, thin overlays, and repairing localized broken areas and base failures. Conversely, pavement rehabilitation strengthens or replaces existing pavement, rather than preserving it, and includes resurfacing and reconstruction.

The Town of Liberty can use this type of document as a guideline for yearly pavement maintenance and preservation.

Roadway Funding

It is recommended that the Town of Liberty pursue a variety of funding sources. Each funding source has specific goals and these should be matched with the projects that best meets these objectives. There are several financing options potentially available to the proposed project. This section of the report will describe each of the different funding options.

➤ **Motor Vehicle Highway Distribution – MVH**

Motor Vehicle Highway distributions are made monthly to the Indiana Department of Transportation, counties, cities and towns. MVH funds can be used by counties, cities and towns for the expenses of highway and street departments, construction, maintenance and reconstruction cost of streets and roads, and equipment purchases.

➤ **Local Roads and Streets Fund – LRS**

Local Road and Street distributions are made monthly to the Indiana Department of Transportation, counties, cities and towns. Local Road and Street distributions from INDOT can be used by counties, cities and towns for construction, maintenance and reconstruction costs of streets roads, engineering, land acquisitions, and equipment.



➤ **Community Crossroads Matching Grant Program**

This program provides funding to cities, towns, and counties across Indiana to make improvements to local roads and bridges. For towns under 10,000 the match is 75/25. Projects that are eligible for funding through Community Crossings include road resurfacing and preservation, bridge rehabilitation or replacement, road reconstruction with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance in connection with a road project. Material costs for chip sealing and crack filing operations are also eligible for funding.

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

Just as the public works department has been struggling with the new reorganization of the street functions it also has been the same with sidewalk improvements. It will also be recommended that the town develop a Sidewalk Management Analysis and Asset Plan.

Sidewalk Planning

A Sidewalk Management Analysis Plan can help the community determine each existing sidewalk was evaluated by measuring the width and the length of the sidewalk and noting the type and occurrence for each pavement defect. For each sidewalk, the number for occurrences of each defect can be recorded and then assigned a condition rating. By doing this the town can then determine which sidewalks should receive the highest priority for improvements.

An effective preventative maintenance program is the most economical way to sustain the condition and prolong the life of the town's sidewalk system. Over the life of a sidewalk, the cost of removing and replacing a sidewalk is much greater than the cost of a preventative maintenance program. Sidewalk management is the routine work performed to keep sidewalks as close to their as-built condition for as long as possible.



Sidewalk Funding

Funding for sidewalks can be challenging for any community. Unlike roadways which usually have a designated source of local, state and federal taxpayer funds, sidewalks usually do not have any designated funding by government agencies. Some communities will enact sidewalk ordinances that will pay for new sidewalks with matching funds only. Currently Liberty has no such ordinance.

➤ **Community Crossroads Matching Grant Program**

This program provides funding to cities, towns, and counties across Indiana to make improvements to local roads and bridges. For towns under 10,000 the match is 75/25. Projects that are eligible for funding through Community Crossings include road resurfacing and preservation, bridge rehabilitation or replacement, road reconstruction with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance in connection with a road project. Material costs for chip sealing and crack filing operations are also eligible for funding.

RECREATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

Bicycle and pedestrian paths can serve multiple purposes within a community and increase the quality of life for residents. Paths and trails can be used as a form of transportation, a recreational opportunity and a health benefit. Liberty currently has limited connectivity for those wanting to walk, run or bike. Sidewalks and trails play an important role in connecting various destinations, housing areas and other portions of the community.

Future Trails map can be found in Section 7



TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Goal:

Strive to make the community connected by all means of transportation modes which will enhance the growth and development of the community.

Objectives:

- Continue annual maintenance of local streets and sidewalks.
- Develop connectivity through the expansion of sidewalks and development of trails.
- Maintain and develop more street lighting.
- Work to improve traffic flow through town during summer tourist season.
- Continue coordination with INDOT to enhance highway safety and improvements.

Strategies:

- Develop a Street and Sidewalk Analysis and Improvement Program.
- Establish sidewalk replacement program through town ordinance.
- Develop sidewalk system/route from school to areas south of US 27.
- Assess areas with poor street lighting.
- Attend INDOT district meetings on issues related to US 27 and SR's 44 and 101.



SECTION 7

ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE

IN THIS SECTION...

This section identifies environmentally sensitive areas. These are local amenities which make living in the community an enjoyable, aesthetically appealing, and healthier experience. The aesthetic and functional importance of these natural areas should be protected and preserved from the wake of development.

- Promote parkland and recreational opportunities.
- Promote connectivity through trails and greenways.
- Conserve natural areas.
- Reserve open space to provide habitat for plants and animals.
- Minimize conflicts between growth and the natural environment.



INTRODUCTION

Natural resources can be a community's biggest and best asset. Rivers, streams, lakes and other natural formations tend to not only determine the development patterns of communities, but also define how a community looks and feels to visitors.

In this day and age, the preservation of natural resources has become preeminent for local governments and their protection of these natural resources has become not only a source of community pride, but also of economic prosperity.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Access to parks, recreation, and open space is essential to a high quality of life, good health, and community spirit. Comprehensive parks and recreation programs can provide a variety of opportunities for a variety of income levels and age groups throughout the year.

Trails and pedestrian paths have become an integral part of communities in this day and age. People want to have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors while gaining the many health benefits offered through using trails and pathways. These trails and pathways are also a component for communities to connect their residential areas with commercial and recreational areas. The impact to a community's quality of life is proven to be bolstered by the availability of trails and pedestrian pathways.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

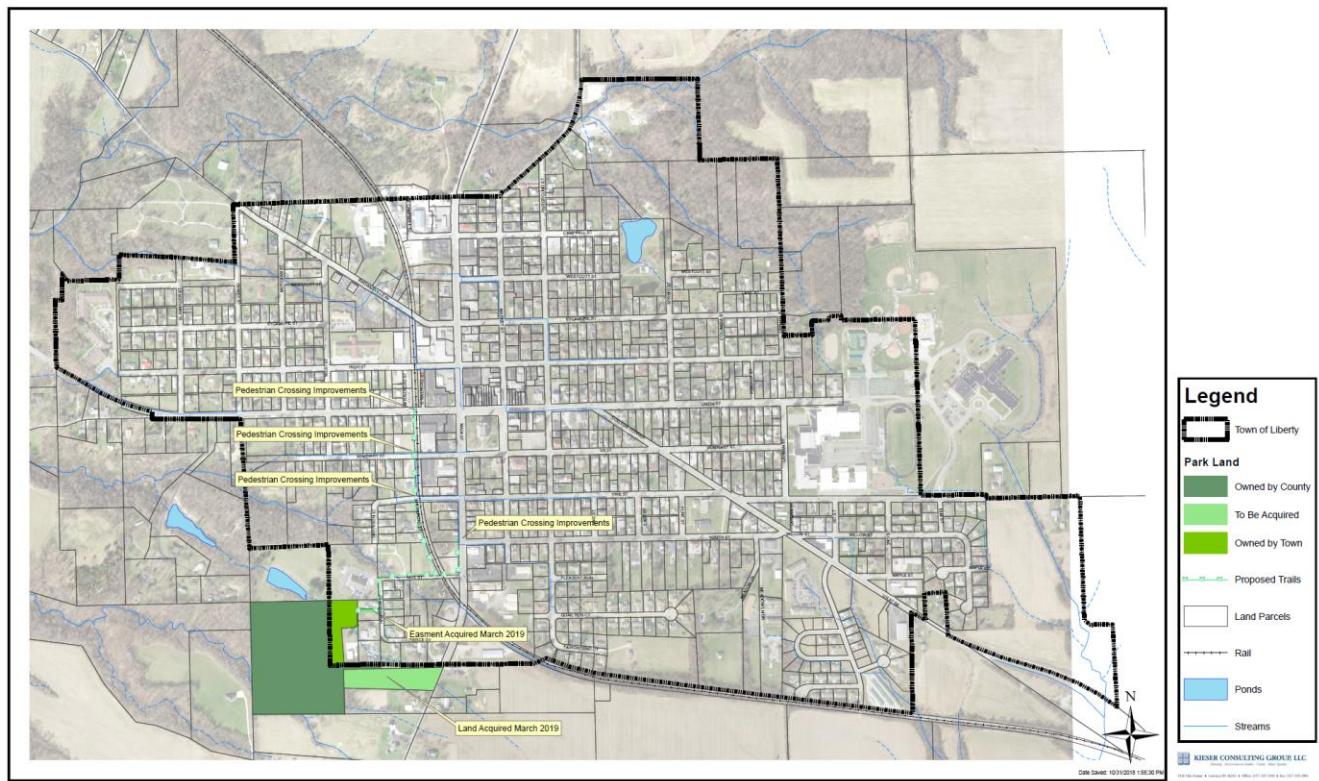
Parks

The Town of Liberty, although it does have an active park board, does not have an active park. The town, in conjunction with the county, does own land for a park. The Union County Parks and Recreation Board (UCPRB) was established in 1994 after concerns that the town offered no opportunity for recreational activities.



In 2010, with the help of a Lilly Foundation grant, the UCPRB purchased 15 acres of property at the southwest corner of the town. 13 acres are in the county while 2 acres are within the town limits. Unfortunately the purchase did not include any access to the property and development of the parkland stalled. That problem will be solved in the spring of 2019. The town reached a purchase agreement with a property to the east and south of the current property. This 3 acre property which sits along SR 101 will not only provide access to the current parkland property, but will provide 3 buildings for the UCPRB to utilize for the future development of the park. The town will also be receiving an easement for access to the northeast portion of the parkland as well. The following map reflects the current parkland and the new acquisitions.

Parkland Map





FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The UCPRB is currently finalizing their 5-Year Master Park Plan. This Plan will be submitted in April 2019 to the IDNR which will make them eligible for IDNR funding. This Plan will also lead the UCPRB through the next 5 years of park improvements. The following are items from the Plan that address the UCPRB goals and objectives as well as funding mechanisms.

Priorities for 2019 to 2023

These priorities were developed using public input:

- Establish funding for the Union County Park and Recreation Board. In establishing stable funds and budget, the UCPRB will be able to run self-sufficiently and maintain the park facilities.
- Establish relationships between the School Corporation, 4-H, and local community to provide more park facilities.
- Apply for the 2019 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF will help fund other Union County Parks and Recreational facilities.
- Multi - Use Trail – The Union County Park and Recreation Board applied for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Recreation Trail Program (RTP) to help fund the multi - use trail on 15 acre park land.
- Development of Multi – Use Trail.
- Parking Areas – A parking lot will be constructed as part of the Multi - Use Trail and will be funded by the Recreation Trail Program.
- Develop park design layout.
- Development of Restroom Facilities.
- Use LWCF for Playground installation.
- Installation of picnic tables and picnic shelter funded by grants and donations.
- Apply for a grant to fund the Amphitheater.
- Development of the Amphitheater.
- Apply for grants and fundraising to fund exercising stations.
- Installation of exercise stations around the park.
- Installation of Splash Pad.
- Partner with local organizations to develop more recreational programming.
- Development of Dog Park.
- Apply for RTP Grant to fund a Nature Trail.
- Development of Nature Trail.
- Establish Programming or educational classes for the park
- Development of Disc Golf Course.
- Development of Pickle ball court.

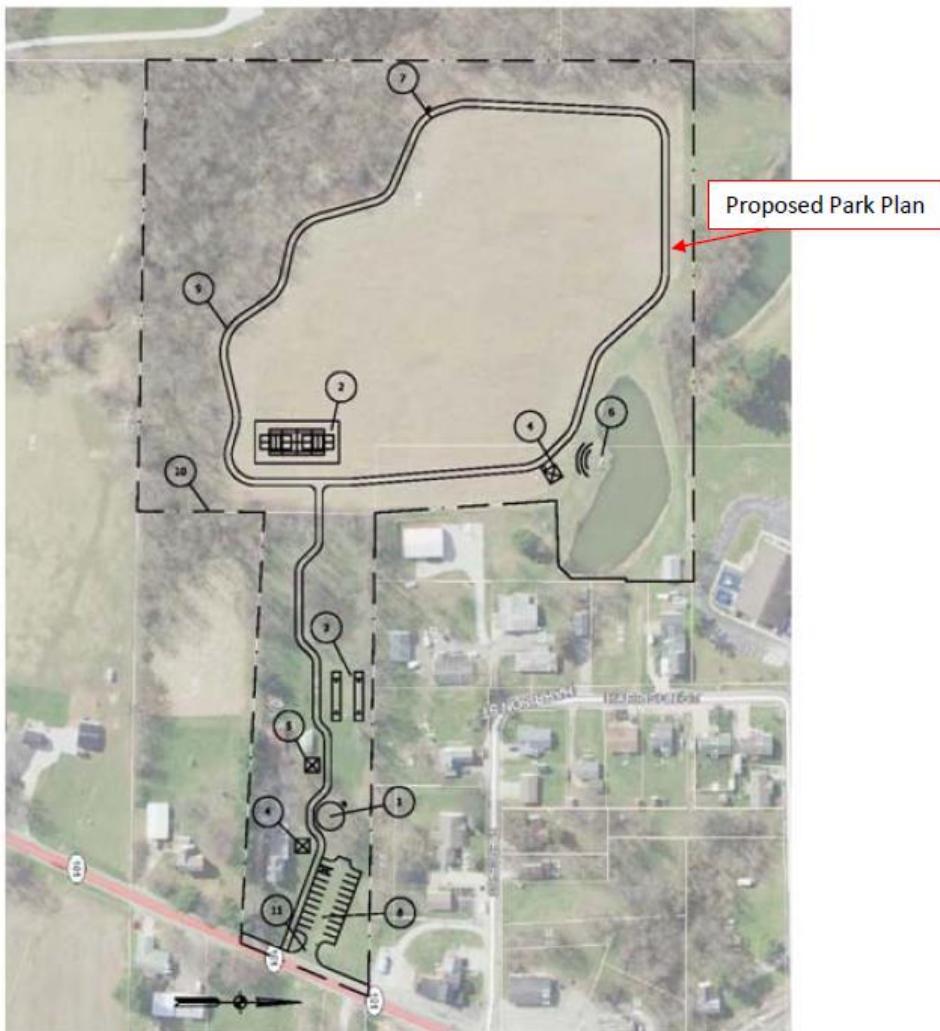
TOWN of LIBERTY
Comprehensive Development Plan



Budget Year	Site	Priority Item	Lead Entity	Potential Cost	Potential Funding Source
2019	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Development of Multi - use Trail	UCPRB	Costs depend on length and width of trail and materials used.	RTP Grants, Donations, in-kind donations for locals
2019	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Development of parking lot	UCPRB	Cost depends on materials used and size. Costs could range from \$30,000 - \$45,000	Part of the RTP Grants can be use to develop the parking lot.
2019	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Installation of lighting, electrical, and sewage utilities	UCPRB	Costs for lighting depend on light bulb type, style, and installation. Costs could range from \$600 to \$2,500 per pole.	Grants
2020	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Installation of restroom facility	UCPRB	Costs depend on size, type, and materials. Costs could range from \$35,000 to \$ 220,000.	Grants, LWCF Grants
2020	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Installation of accessible playground equipment	UCPRB	Costs depend on size, type, and materials. Costs could range from \$35,000 to \$ 220,000.	American Hiking Society, Nature Valley Trail Grant, LWCF Grant
2021	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Installation of picnic tables and picnic shelters	UCPRB	Costs ranges from \$4,100 to \$ 6,000 for shelters depending on size.	Grants
2021	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Development of amphitheater	UCPRB	Costs could range from \$15,000 to over \$200,000. Around \$2,500 for the base, \$21,000 for the structure.	In-kind service donations from community members, Grants
2022	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Installation of Splash Pad	UCPRB		Grants and in-kind donations
2022	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Installation of exercise stations along the trail	UCPRB	Costs could range from \$500 to \$3,000.	Grants and in-kind donations
2023	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Develop Dog Park	UCPRB	Costs could range from \$15,500 to over \$25,000	Grants, LWCF Grant
2023	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Development of Nature Trail	UCPRB	Cost Could range from	Grants and in-kind service and material donations
2023	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Development of Pickle Ball court	UCPRB		Grants and in-kind service donations
2023	18 acre parcel Harrison St. in Liberty	Development of Disc Golf	UCPRB		



Map of Proposed Projects

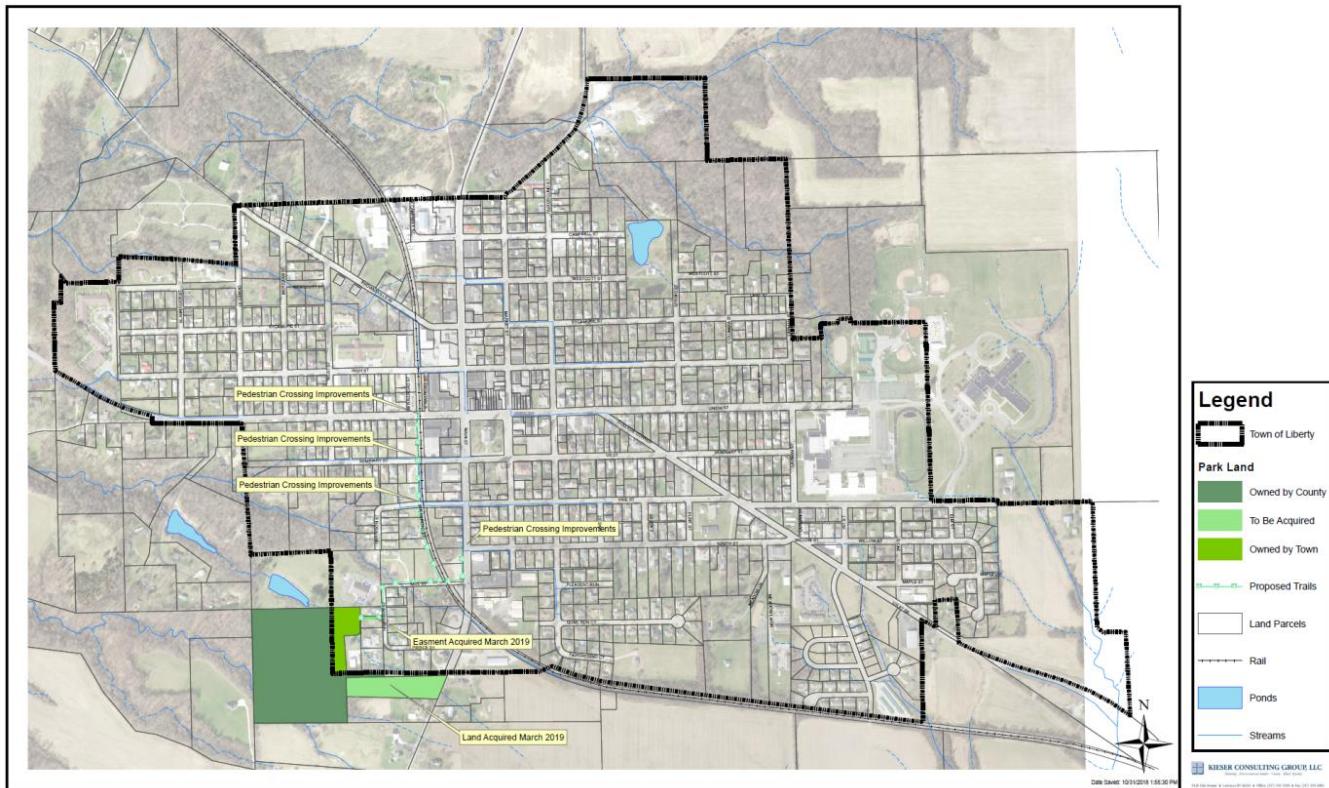


- 1. Playground, Bench, Bikerack
- 2. Tennis and Pickle Ball Courts
- 3. Horse Shoe Pitch
- 4. Shelter and Waste Receptacle
- 5. Restrooms with Water Fountain
- 6. Amphitheater
- 7. Bench
- 8. Parking Lot
- 9. Walking Trail
- 10. Parcel Boundary
- 11. Park Entrance



In the future the town would like to see access to the northeast part of the park using the access easement that they will acquire in 2019. This will give residents of the town opportunity to access the park by foot and bicycle. A possible route is shown on the map below.

Proposed Trail Route to Park





ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The environment is another element integral to a community's quality of life. Clean water, clean air, and an aesthetically pleasing environment are some of the reasons for maintaining and restoring natural habitats.

The following covers the methods to protect the following environmental features in Liberty:

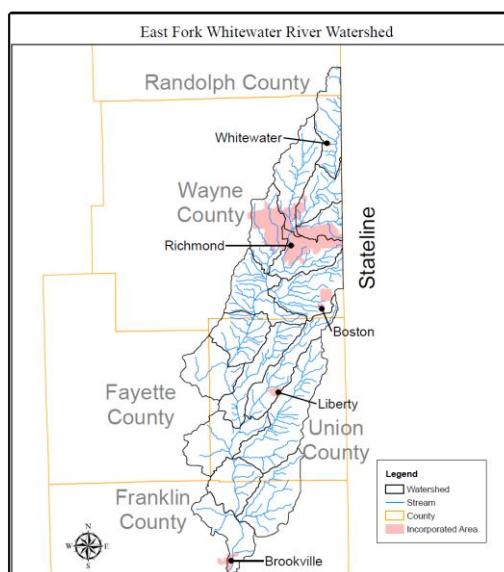
- Floodway Management
- Groundwater quality
- Riparian Corridor Management
- Wetland Conservation
- Woodlot Management

Watersheds

Liberty is located in the East Fork Whitewater River Watershed which is located in east central Indiana, draining approximately 312 square miles in Wayne, Union, Fayette and Franklin counties. Major streams included are East Fork Whitewater River, Lick Creek, Short Creek, Smith Creek, Richland Creek, Simpson Creek, Franklin Creek and the Sugar Creek which runs through the town.

East Fork Whitewater River Watershed Map

Source: IDNR



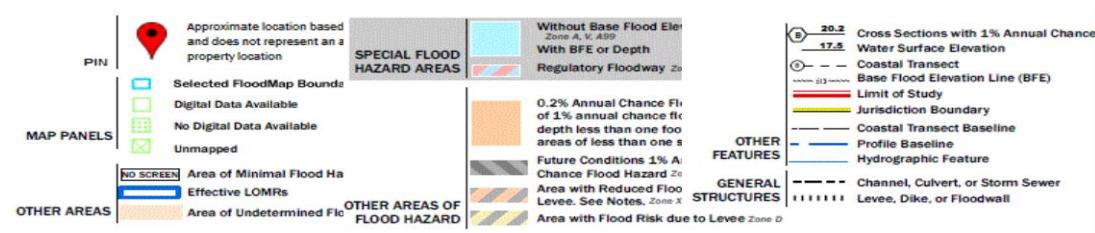


Floodplain Management

Flooding causes more damage to communities across the country than all other types of natural disasters combined. Flooding is costly, not only in terms of the value of the property lost, but also lives loss. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) completes comprehensive flood studies for the Planning Area. A floodway is the channel of a stream and adjacent floodplain area that must be kept free of encroachment to carry the 100-year flood without substantial increase (>0.1 ft.) in flood height.

In the Planning Area, there are no floodways that are identified on the FEMA FIRM maps. We show the floodways in the Planning Area in the following map on the below.

FEMA Floodplain Map





Groundwater Quality

Liberty should be aware and be sensitive to land uses and practices that could contaminate the water supply. Any development that poses a risk to the groundwater will be prohibited unless technologically acceptable measures are used to protect the water supply.

Riparian Corridor Management

Riparian corridors are streamside forests that are located along rivers including their tributaries. These corridors have significant ecological and aesthetic values, in part because they contain a rich array of plants and animals.

Healthy riparian corridors are typically composed of large trees, woody understory of trees and shrubs, and smaller flowers, grasses and groundcovers. This vegetation stabilizes the banks of the waterways, reduces the amount of sediments and pollutants entering waterways. It also lessens flooding and drainage problems.

According to the National Wetlands Inventory for surface waters and wetlands there are no riparian areas located within the town limits.

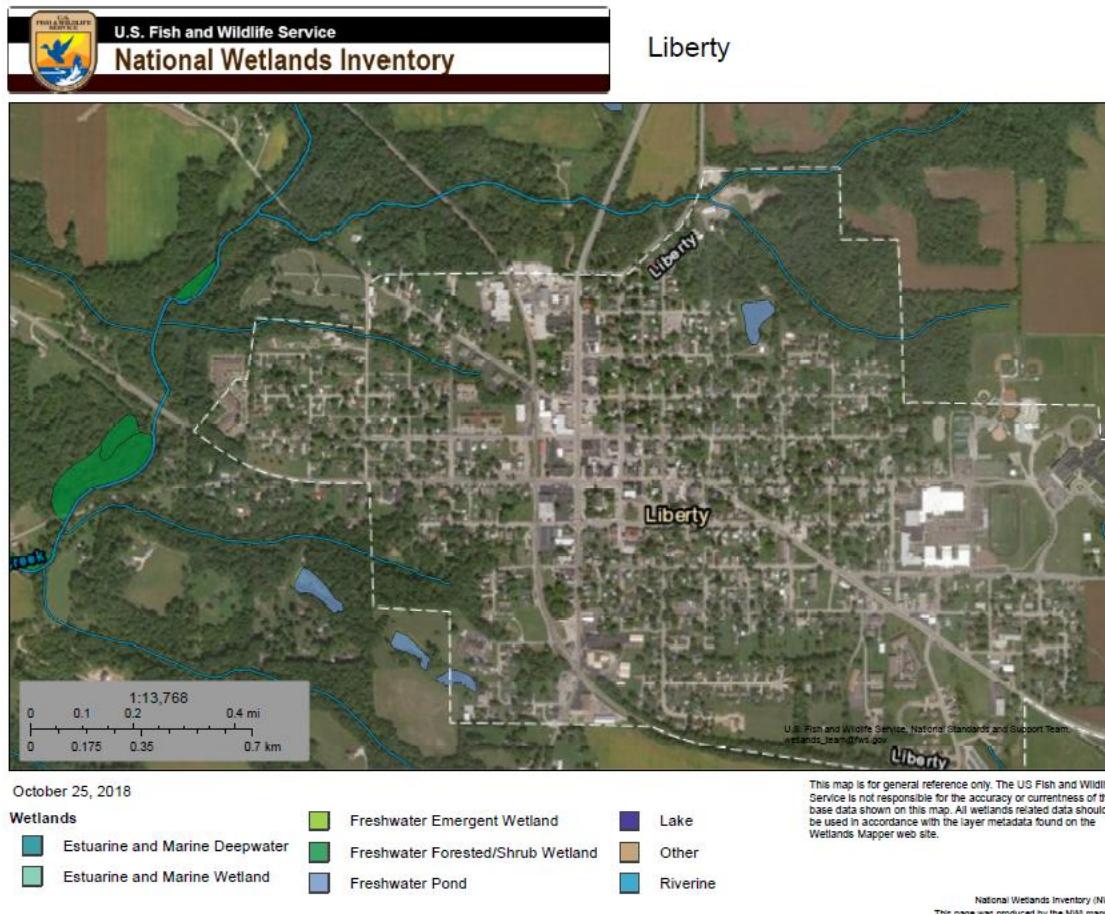
Wetland Conservation

The Federal government defines wetlands as areas with hydric soil (soil formed in the presence of water), and water at or near the ground surface long enough in the growing season to support hydrophytic vegetation. Wetlands are considered the single most productive type of wildlife habitat in the United States.

According to the National Wetlands Inventory for surface waters and wetlands there are no wetland areas located within the town limits.



National Wetlands Inventory Map



Woodlot Management

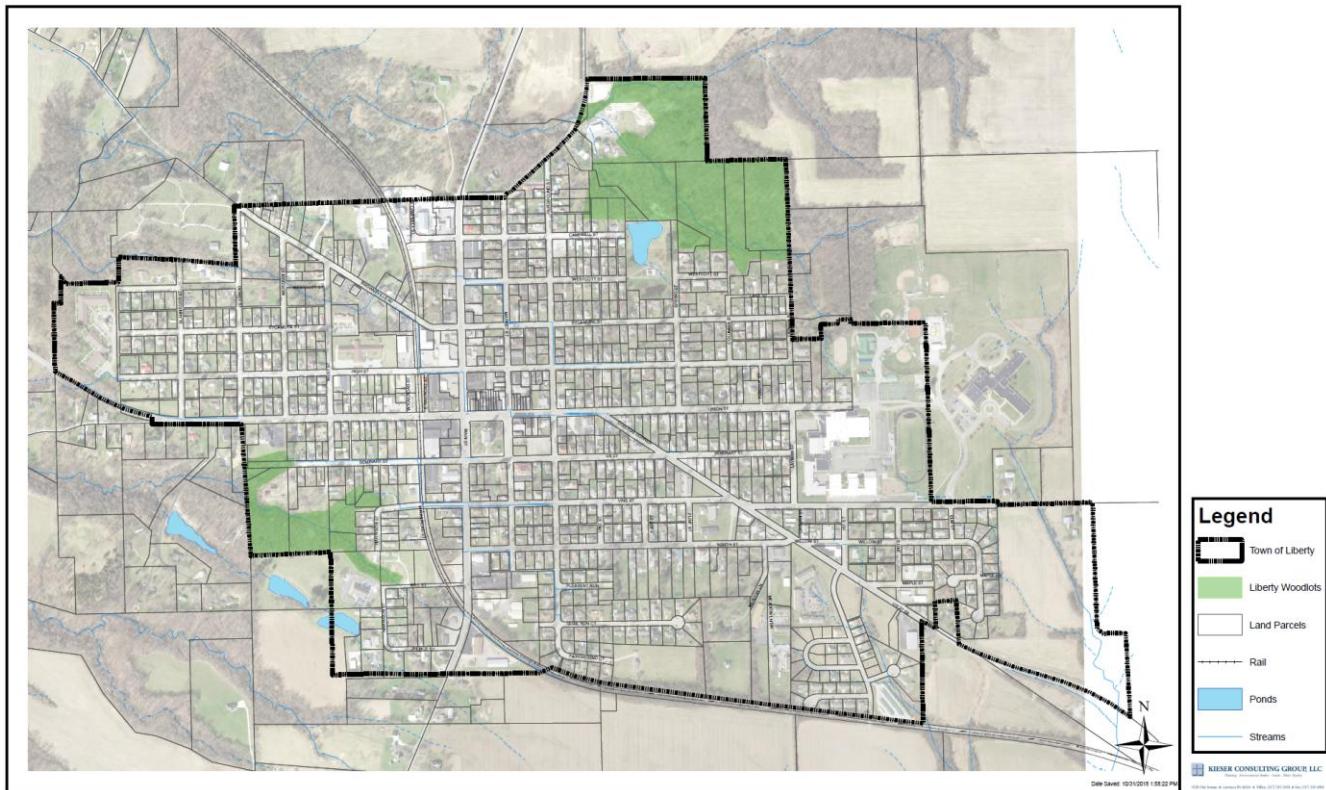
Liberty has one medium-sized woodlot in the northeast part of the town. Woodlots should be managed because of the many benefits it provides. A forest stand can:

- Reduce air temperatures in the summer by about 10 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Reduce wind velocities by 20% to 60%.
- Provide vital wildlife habitat.
- Clean pollutants from the air, absorbing an estimated 10 tons of carbon dioxide per year per acre of woodlot.
- Reduce the erosion of soil on construction sites.



For the property owner, saving a few trees on site reduces energy bills and increases the value of the property. New development should be designed to minimize the impact on existing woodlots and tree stands.

Map of Woodlot Areas



Outstanding State Resources Water, Exceptional Use Streams and Natural and Scenic Rivers

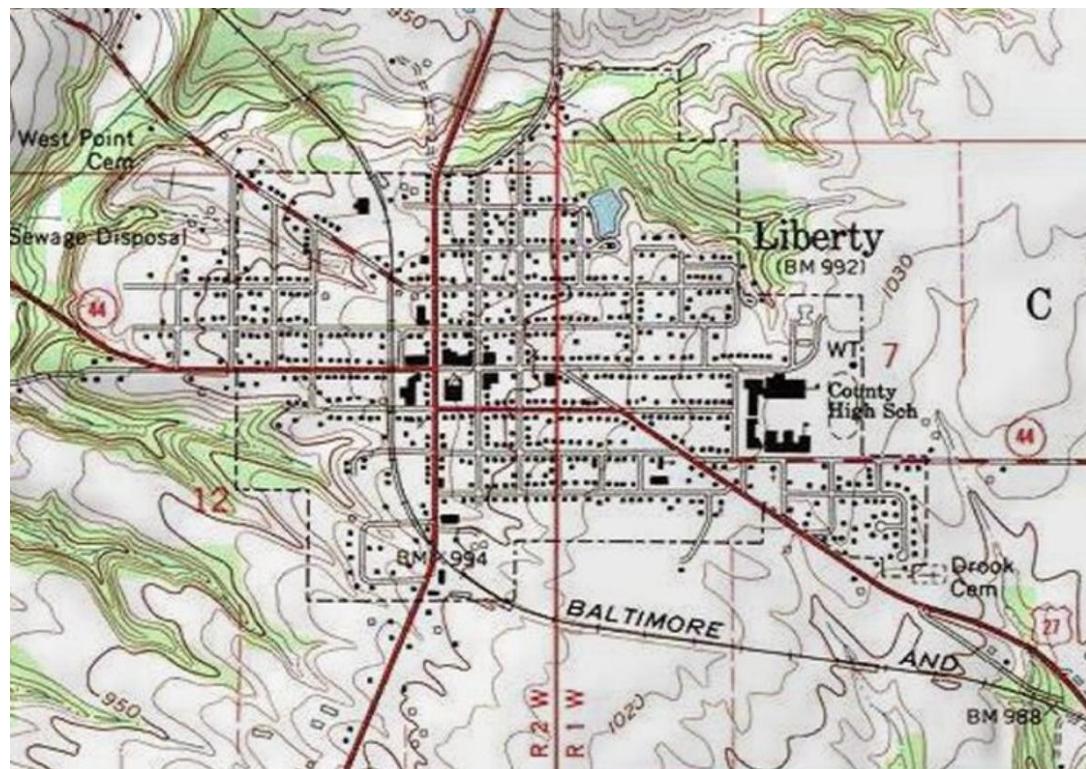
There are no outstanding state resources of water, limited use streams, exceptional use streams, or natural scenic rivers in Liberty.



TOPOGRAPHY

The Planning Area has a gently rolling topography falling to the southeast. The map shown below is an overview of topographical map of Liberty. USGS Map shown below.

USGS Topography Map



SOILS

The Town of Liberty contains a variety of soils predominantly of Russell Silt Loam (14.0%), Xenia Silt Loam (13.7%), and Russell Miami Silt Loam (9.8%) all which are well draining soils. The water table may be seasonally high in this type of soil. We have included a general soil map of the Liberty area as shown on soil map below.

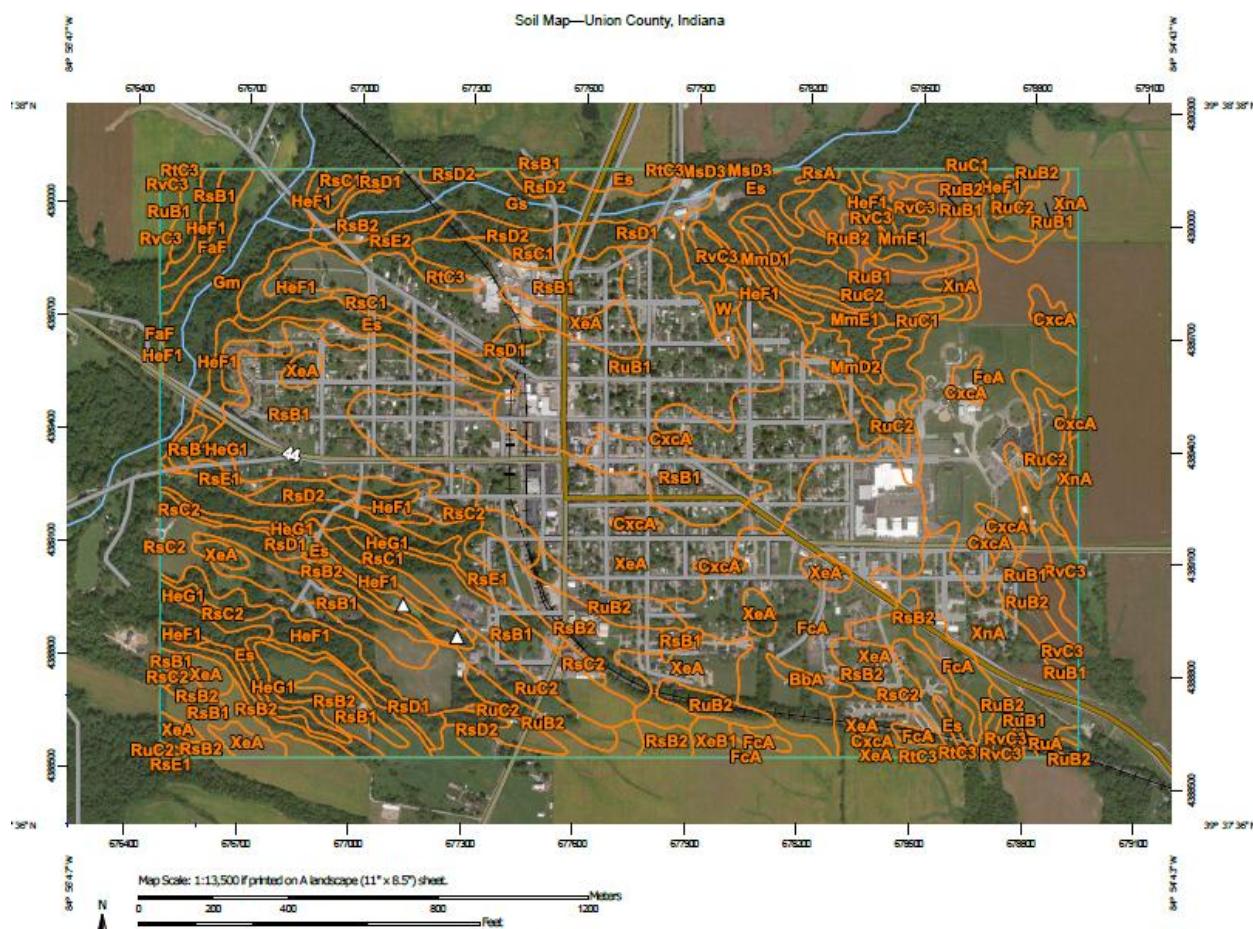


Soil Quality & Management

Soils limit the type of development and land uses on site. Development on inappropriate soils can result in problems such as water and wind erosion, flooding, and insufficient drainage. These problems can financially burden the Town and property owners.

Adequate research during the site selection process can minimize these problems. Soils should be tested properly to make certain land uses are suitable for specific sites. All development should have adequate sanitary sewer capacity and be required to connect to the Town's wastewater system.

Soils Map





Map Unit Legend

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
BbA	Birkbeck silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	2.2	0.2%
CxcA	Cyclone silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	11.1	1.2%
Es	Eel silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	46.1	4.8%
FaF	Fairmount silty clay loam, 25 to 35 percent slopes	5.1	0.5%
FcA	Fincastle silt loam, Southern Ohio Till Plain, 0 to 2 percent slopes	67.4	7.1%
FeA	Fincastle-Crosby silt loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes	56.7	5.9%
Gm	Genesee loam	27.0	2.8%
Gs	Genesee silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded, brief duration	26.1	2.7%
HeF1	Hennepin loam, 25 to 35 percent slopes, slightly eroded	35.3	3.7%
HeG1	Hennepin loam, 35 to 50 percent slopes, slightly eroded	17.4	1.8%
MmD1	Miami silt loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes, slightly eroded	7.2	0.8%
MmD2	Miami silt loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes, moderately eroded	5.8	0.6%
MmE1	Miami silt loam, 18 to 25 percent slopes, slightly eroded	8.3	0.9%
MsD3	Miami soils, 12 to 18 percent slopes, severely eroded	0.1	0.0%
RsA	Russell silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	0.5	0.1%
RsB1	Russell silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes	133.6	14.0%
RsB2	Russell silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes, eroded	69.8	7.3%
RsC1	Russell silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, slightly eroded	8.5	0.9%
RsC2	Russell silt loam, 6 to 12 percent slopes, moderately eroded	20.0	2.1%



Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Web Soil Survey
National Cooperative Soil Survey

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Page



Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
RsD1	Russell silt loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes, slightly eroded	21.2	2.2%
RsD2	Russell silt loam, 12 to 18 percent slopes, moderately eroded	13.5	1.4%
RsE1	Russell silt loam, 18 to 25 percent slopes, slightly eroded	8.8	0.9%
RsE2	Russell silt loam, 18 to 25 percent slopes, moderately eroded	4.2	0.4%
RtC3	Russell soils, 6 to 12 percent slopes, severely eroded	2.5	0.3%
RuA	Russell and Miami silt loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes	1.3	0.1%
RuB1	Russell and Miami silt loams, 2 to 6 percent slopes, slightly eroded	93.7	9.8%
RuB2	Russell and Miami silt loams, 2 to 6 percent slopes, moderately eroded	35.1	3.7%
RuC1	Russell and Miami silt loams, 6 to 12 percent slopes, slightly eroded	3.7	0.4%
RuC2	Russell and Miami silt loams, 6 to 12 percent slopes, moderately eroded	27.4	2.9%
RvC3	Russell and Miami soils, 6 to 12 percent slopes, severely eroded	26.3	2.8%
W	Water	1.3	0.1%
XeA	Xenia silt loam, Southern Ohio Till Plain, 0 to 2 percent slopes	130.4	13.7%
XeB1	Xenia silt loam, 2 to 6 percent slopes, slightly eroded	5.7	0.6%
XnA	Xenia and Celina silt loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes	30.2	3.2%
Totals for Area of Interest		953.5	100.0%



NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

Goal:

Promote an ecologically healthy community through the protection and enrichment of the community's environmental amenities.

Objectives:

- *Encourage preservation of open spaces.*
- *Continue development of the parkland in cooperation with Union County.*
- *Develop recreational opportunities for the community.*
- *Encourage pedestrian and bicycling trails throughout the town.*
- *Encourage preservation of existing woodlot areas.*

Strategies:

- *Complete 5-Year Master Park Plan.*
- *Tap into grant funding to develop active and passive recreational facilities and programs.*
- *Educate property owners on benefits of preserving open spaces and woodlots.*
- *Promote healthy living by educating community on benefits of walking and bicycling.*

