

INTRODUCTION

Development within Lucas County and the infrastructure to support it has progressed steadily into the western reaches of the county. Public water and sewer service is now available within one mile of the Richfield Township border along Bancroft Street, Central Avenue, Sylvania Avenue and Sylvania-Metamora Road. With the very real possibility of public water and sewer service being introduced into the community in the near future, Township Trustees and Village Council determined that a land use plan was necessary to ensure a balance of the community's agricultural traditions with future development opportunities.

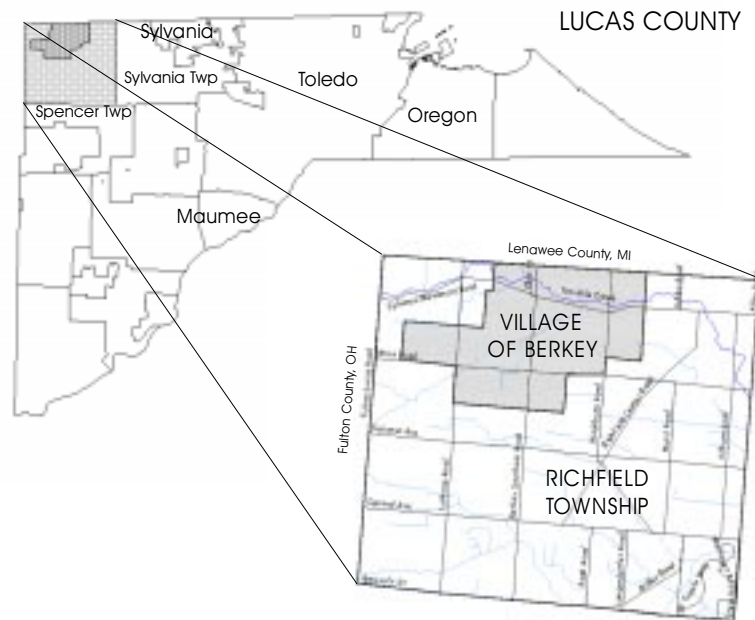
The purpose of a land use plan is to provide guidelines for decisions about future development. Four general steps were used to provide land use information for decision-makers. The community examined (1) where we've been; (2) where we are today; (3) where we want to be; and, (4) how do we get there. This document reflects community priorities for the next 20 years as determined through this public planning process. It is the foundation for subsequent development regulations and capital improvement investments within Richfield Township and the Village of Berkey.

LOCATION

Richfield Township is located in the extreme northwest corner of Lucas County, Ohio and encompasses 22.6 square miles. Its borders in Ohio include Spencer Township to the south, Sylvania Township to the east, and Fulton County to the west. The township neighbors Lenawee County, Michigan to the north.

Ten Mile Creek, a principle tributary of the Ottawa River, flows through the northern part of the community. The topography is generally flat, with a very gentle slope of about five feet per mile, increasing in a northwest direction.

The Village of Berkey, Ohio lies within Richfield Township. Berkey covers an area of 4.2 square miles and was incorporated as a village in 1915. Its corporate boundaries border Lenawee County, Michigan to the north and are within a quarter-mile of Fulton County, Ohio to the west. The village is sixteen miles northwest of downtown Toledo, Ohio and five and one-half miles from downtown Sylvania, Ohio.



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

LOCAL HISTORY

Richfield Township takes its name from the rich nature of its soil, some of the richest in Lucas County. Created in December 1839, the township was formed from parts of what were then Springfield, Wing (Swanton), and Sylvania townships and included a portion of today's Spencer Township until 1845.

Pioneer farmers, whose parents fled religious persecution in Germany during the 1740's, first settled in Richfield Township in 1834. These farmers were Jacob Wolfinger, David Henderson (Hendrickson), and Pliny Lathrop. Over the next four years several other families joined them including James Farley, Issac Washburn, Joseph Smith, Lucien and Araunah Lathrop, and William R. Cole. Many of their descendants still live and farm in the community today.

Jacob Wolfinger built the first log house in what is now known as Secor Metropark. Wolfinger and Lathrop did the first clearing consisting of fifteen acres put into wheat, and Wolfinger planted the first apple and peach orchard three years later. Two of the Wolfinger children were the first white persons to be born and to perish in the township. The burial on the Wolfinger farm marks the beginning of today's Wolfinger Cemetery. Jacob Wolfinger was also elected as one of the first township trustees in April 1840.

In 1837, Pliny Lathrop and his brother Lucien settled in the northern part of the township and built the first frame house and frame barn there. A log schoolhouse was also built near the settlement (Sec. 9) at this time. Lucien Lathrop was the first postmaster at Riga (the Riga name changed to Berkey in 1865) and was succeeded by Pliny fifteen years later. Pliny also served as township clerk, trustee and justice of the peace, and was one of the organizers of the Richfield Christian Church in 1855. Araunah Lathrop was one of the first constables and supervisors of roads, and later served as trustee.

David Hendrickson settled in the central part of the township. He was elected constable and fence viewer at the first township election, and subsequently served as trustee. Issac Washburn also established a farm in the center of the township (80 acres in Sec. 15), and served several terms as trustee and treasurer. James Farley settled on 160 acres of land and was one of the organizers of "Farley's Class", the township's first religious organization in 1848 — today's Farley United Methodist Church. Services were held in the log schoolhouse until moving to a building known as the Washburn School - near the site of today's Richfield Township Hall. The present church at Sylvania Avenue and Berkey Southern Road was dedicated in 1870, and descendants of the original founders are still members of the church and continue to serve as community leaders today.

The settlement near Berkey grew during the 1840's as the community's first doctor (Dr. Mather M. Mason), merchant (A.D. Sanderson), and blacksmith shops (Jacob B. Gillan & Charles C. Welch) arrived. In 1865, Dr. Andrew Murbach arrived from Spencer Township and settled $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of what is now Berkey's "Four Corners". Later, during the 1870's, the Richfield Center settlement grew with the establishment of its first store (Henry King), a post office (William H. Williams, postmaster), a blacksmith, harness and shoe shop, wagon repair and grocer (George Darton, Mr. Hoover, and John Haas), as well as another doctor (Dr. E. Thompkins). By the 1900 census, Richfield Township had a total population of 1,136 people, with 100 in Berkey and 111 in Richfield Center. In 1915 Berkey incorporated as a village, the Richfield Center area did not. By the 1920 census, the Village of Berkey population had doubled to 201 people. This may be attributed to the fact that the Toledo & Western Electric line, part of the interurban line centering on Toledo, ran through the northern portion of the community. It connected Toledo and Pioneer (in Williams County), via Sylvania and Berkey, with a branch from Allen Junction to Adrian, Michigan.

DEMOGRAPHICS

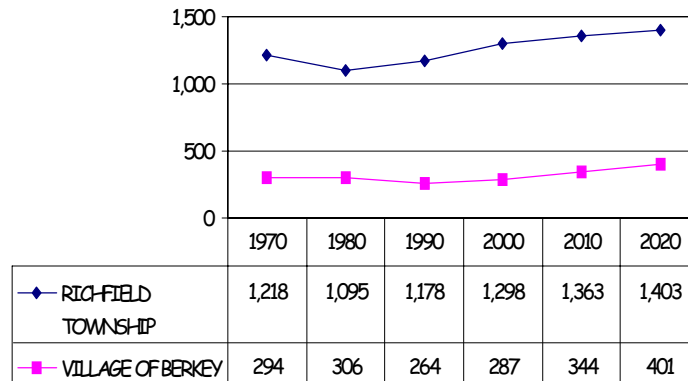
Population, housing, and employment trends in Richfield Township and the Village of Berkey over the past twenty years are similar. Within the community population declined, and the number of housing units and people employed increased. The population decrease reflects the trends occurring in both the City of Toledo and Lucas County over that time period. However, housing and employment trends are more closely aligned with the county and are indicative of the dynamics experienced by urban counties in Ohio and across the country.

Projections to the Year 2020 for the community estimate an increase in population, housing units, and people employed. These trends, projections and community highlights from the 1990 U.S. Census are summarized below and more detailed data are provided in the Appendix.

Population

- There is a comparable proportion of males and females within the township and the village.
- The community is made up of white, middle class, working families.
- Township students are typically enrolled in public schools, whereas village students are more likely to attend private schools.
- Nearly half of the residents are high school graduates.

POPULATION

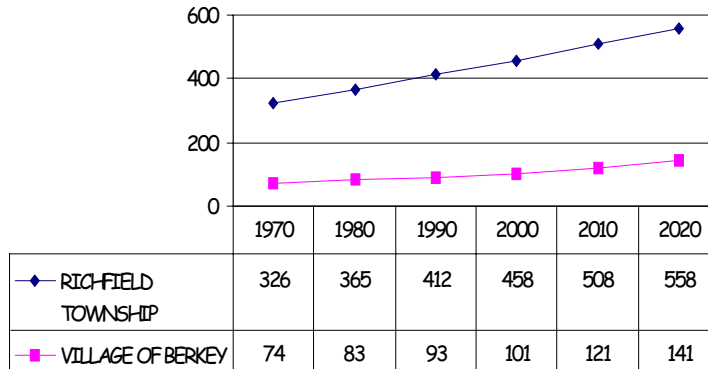


Housing Units

- The majority of housing is owner-occupied, single-family units with median values 25% above the Lucas County average.
- There is a similar proportion of rental units in the township and village, and few mobile homes.

- Public water and sewer is not yet available to the community.
- The majority of homes were built nearly 50 years ago, however, building activity increased during the 1970s and late 1980s.

HOUSING UNITS



Employment

- Most of the workers in Richfield Township and the Village of Berkey are employed, and work in the services sector.
- The construction and manufacturing industries are also major employers of township and village workers.
- Most township workers have jobs in sales & administrative support, or as machine operators, assemblers & laborers.
- Village workers also hold positions in sales & administrative support, but have a greater proportion in management than township workers.

EMPLOYMENT

