

# BEREA CITY OF BEREA 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BEYOND



## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SURVEY ANALYSIS

Total Responses: 72 // Survey Period: May 1 – September 30, 2025

### INTRODUCTION

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As part of the broader Berea Beyond 2025 Comprehensive Plan, a dedicated Youth Engagement Survey was distributed to better understand the needs, interests, and aspirations of Berea's young residents. The survey gathered responses from 72 students across grade levels, primarily from within Berea city limits. This analysis highlights young people's perceptions of their community, how they spend their time, and what they would like to see prioritized in future planning efforts.

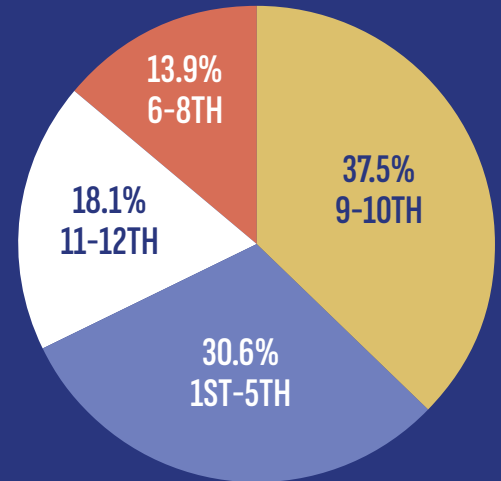
The results offer a unique generational perspective, emphasizing themes such as the need for youth-centered spaces, mental health support, safety, and opportunities to stay involved in shaping Berea's future. Open-ended responses reinforced key themes from the adult survey, while surfacing additional insights from the next generation of community members.

# WHO TOOK THE SURVEY

## Grade Distribution:

- 9th–10th grade — **37.5%**
- 1st–5th grade — **30.6%**
- 11th–12th grade — **18.1%**
- 6th–8th grade — **13.9%**

This shows that over half of the responses (55.6%) came from high school students, with a significant share from elementary students as well, reflecting a wide age range and perspectives.



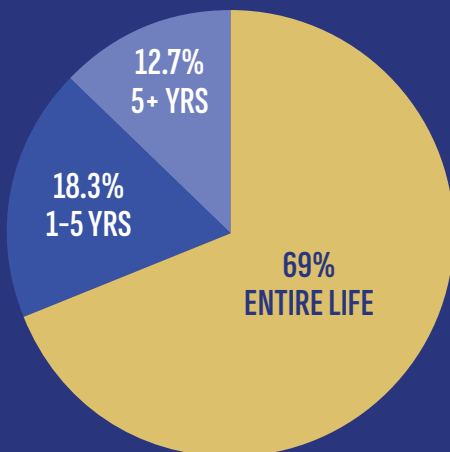
## Residency:

**CURRENTLY LIVE IN BERE A**

**91.7%**

**DO NOT** | 5.6%

**WERE UNSURE** | 2.8%



## Length of Residency in Berea:

- **69% have lived in Berea their entire lives**
- 18.3% for 1–5 years
- 12.7% for more than 5 years
- 0% for less than 1 year

This demonstrates a strong base of long-time youth residents whose perspectives are shaped by a deep connection to the community.



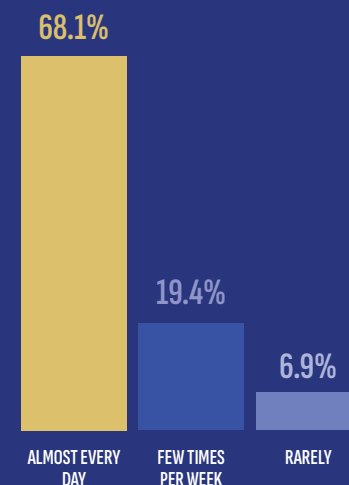
# YOUTH USE OF COMMUNITY SPACE

When asked how often they spend free time in Berea outside of school:

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- **68.1% said almost every day**
- 19.4% said a few times a week
- Only 6.9% said rarely

This reflects strong local activity and daily use of city spaces, making youth a critical audience in shaping parks, events, and public spaces.



# FREE TIME INTERESTS

Respondents selected multiple options that reflect how they spend their free time:

ACTIVITY	% OF YOUTH SELECTING
Hanging out with friends	76.4%
Sports or fitness	66.7%
Outdoor activities (hiking, etc.)	61.1%
Gaming or tech activities	51.4%
Arts (music, painting, theater)	45.8%
Reading or studying	30.6%
Volunteering or helping others	19.4%
Other	8.3%

This reflects a diverse mix of interests. The high preference for socializing and outdoor activity reiterates the need for youth-friendly gathering places and park infrastructure.

# WHAT'S MISSING FOR YOUTH IN BEREA

From the open-ended question “What is missing in Berea for young people like you?”, common themes included:

- Youth centers / hangout spaces
- Places to skateboard, bike, or play games
- More events or entertainment options
- Mental health support
- More fun things to do at night or after school

Many youth expressed a desire for “somewhere to just be with friends that’s safe and fun,” with multiple requests for skateparks, movie nights, and safe social spaces. Several highlighted the lack of places to gather that aren’t commercial or adult-centric.



# WHAT YOUTH WANT TO SEE IN BEREA

When asked what they would like to see in Berea (select all that apply):

DESIRED FEATURE	% OF RESPONDENTS
Indoor sports or rec facility	72.2%
Youth center or teen hangout space	61.1%
Safe places to hang out with friends	58.3%
Better parks/playgrounds	48.6%
Live music, events, open mic nights	38.9%
Arts and maker space	26.4%

DESIRED FEATURE	% OF RESPONDENTS
Gaming/tech hub	36.1%
Job training or internships	25.0%
After-school clubs	29.2%
Youth council or leadership opportunities	27.8%
Other	11.1%

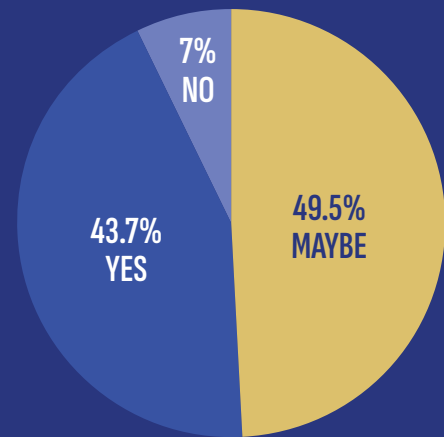
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# STAYING IN OR RETURNING TO BEREA

When asked about their long-term plans:

- **49.3% said Maybe**
- 43.7% said Yes
- Only 7% said No

This demonstrates a promising openness to remaining in Berea, with the caveat that improvements to quality of life and youth opportunity are key factors.



# WHAT WOULD MAKE YOUTH STAY OR RETURN

From the open-ended responses, top themes included:

1. More job opportunities, especially part-time or summer jobs
2. Affordable places to live and hang out
3. More entertainment and things to do
4. Opportunities to get involved in decision-making
5. A stronger sense of youth voice and value in the community

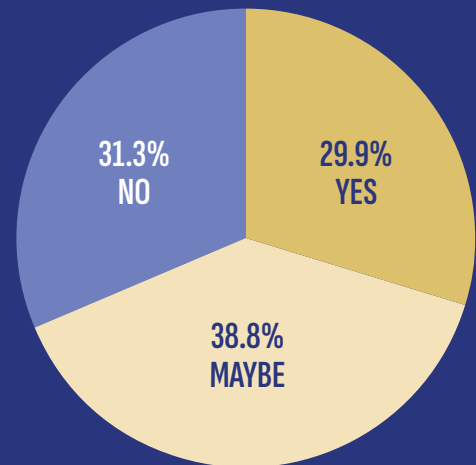
Several responses directly linked their desire to stay with whether Berea “feels like a place for young people” or “offers good jobs and not just tourism.”

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

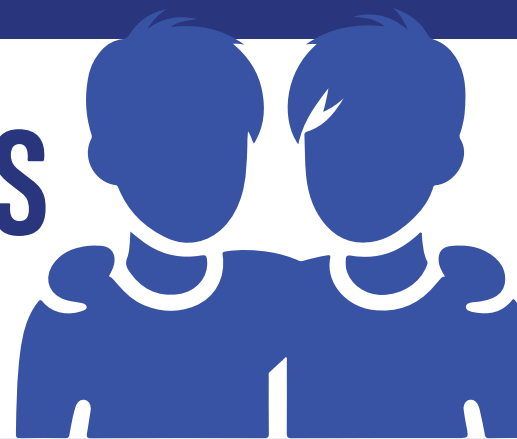
- 29.9% said Yes to being part of a youth advisory committee
- 38.8% said Maybe
- 31.3% said No

This indicates that **nearly 70% of youth are interested or potentially open** to engaging in civic leadership if given the right structure and support.

Several respondents in open-text feedback said they'd participate "if it's fun and actually taken seriously," which highlights the need for adult allies and meaningful roles.



## RESPONSE PATTERNS BY GROUP



- **High School Students (9th–12th grade)** were more likely to say Berea **lacks places to socialize or hang out** that feel welcoming to teens.
- **Elementary students (1st–5th grade)** emphasized **parks and outdoor play equipment**, indicating differing design needs by age group.
- **Youth who spend time in Berea daily** expressed greater interest in **community involvement** than those who rarely engage.
- **Students unsure about staying in Berea** were more likely to call out **lack of opportunities, limited job prospects, or feeling excluded** from decision-making.



# FINAL OBSERVATIONS

The Youth Engagement Survey surfaces a consistent message: Berea's youth want to stay involved, feel included, and see themselves reflected in the city's future.

## Top priorities include:

- Creating **safe, fun, and inclusive places** for youth to gather
- Offering **job training, internships, and local employment** pathways
- Establishing a **Youth Council or advisory group** to help shape decisions
- Designing **recreation spaces and cultural events** tailored to youth needs
- Supporting **mental wellness, creativity, and belonging**