INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Demographic analysis is an important part of a community comprehensive plan. It is vital to develop policy recommendations based on a strong understanding of the community based on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in Mentor, surrounding communities, Lake County, and the Cleveland metropolitan area. This document provides an updated demographic profile of Mentor, examining information such as population characteristics, educational attainment, school enrollment, income statistics, and employment characteristics. Demographic analysis provides basic information necessary to develop a well-thought-out comprehensive plan. Demographic information is used in a number of ways:

Quantify: Quantifying the various characteristics of city residents is needed to understand the impacts of a population, or subgroup, on matters such as the level of services required, size of markets that can be supported, and impact on transportation and infrastructure.

Trends: Analyzing numbers over time can identify trends affecting the community now or in the future.

Identifying issues and needs: Numbers or trends may identify issues the City may need to address through policy or programs.

The latest data available for most demographic characteristics is from the 2020 Census of Population and Housing by the U.S. Census Bureau. More recently collected data have been included to supplement Census Bureau data wherever possible.

The following highlight some of the more important points of the demographic profile.

1. The median age in Mentor is 47. That compares to a median age of 41.3 for the Cleveland metropolitan area as a whole.

2. The community is solidly middle class, with average incomes somewhat higher than average for the region.

3. Mentor is job rich and job diverse. It is especially strong in the manufacturing sector. It is also a center of retail activity and employment. The fastest employment growth is in "new economy high wage" business sectors, which tend to provide jobs in professional occupations.

4. Mentor includes households across the income spectrum, but most are earning greater than $75,000. There are fewer early-career households in Mentor than in many locations, largely due to the lack of housing types suitable to this demographic.

DEMOGRAPHIC & SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The following section presents demographic and economic data for the city of Mentor. This data provides an understanding of key trends that influence land use and other important community systems. This data is placed in context with trends and patterns in peer communities and the Cleveland metropolitan area.

Demographics[1]

Population

Mentor was originally two communities, Mentor Village (incorporated in 1855) and Mentor Township, which merged in 1963. Mentor became a city with a combined population of 21,652. Populations for 1920 to 1960 shown on Table 1 are the combined populations for Mentor Township and Mentor Village.

Mentor's population growth follows a similar pattern for a post-World War II community and an exurban community. From 1940 to 1960, the city grew rapidly (Table 1 & 2). Through the 1950's the population grew at an even faster pace, increasing by 163% during the decade.

This growth was similar to Eastlake, Willowick, Wickliffe, and other post-World War II communities. But unlike Eastlake, Willowick and Wickliffe, Mentor had a much larger land base to expand upon as the other communities become landlocked in the 1970s.

Evidence of a slowing population growth rate is apparent beginning in the 1970s when the growth rate dropped to approximately 14% (Table 2).

Population of Peer Communities

Mentor was only able to maintain its double-digit growth rates through the 1980's. The west to east migration shifts evident since 1950 continue today, but transportation upgrades such as SR2 and I-90 and employment sprawl to the I-271 corridor has allowed more people to locate in semi-rural communities in central and eastern Lake County. The city has not been able to maintain similar growth as exurban communities such as Concord Township and Beachwood (Table 2).

Table 1. Population comparison of Mentor and peer communities

Geography	Mentor	Lake County	Beachwood	Willoughby	Kettering	Dublin	Sylvania	Concord Twp.	Painesville
1920	1,880	28,667	225	4,177	273	211	1,222	623	7,272
1930	3,417	41,674	249	10,640	n/a	224	2,108	710	10,944
1940	4,635	50,020	372	10,957	n/a	237	2,199	795	12,235
1950	8,228	75,979	1,073	10,967	n/a	289	2,433	1,440	14,432
1960	21,652	148,700	6,089	15,058	54,462	552	5,187	3,860	16,116
1970	36,912	197,200	9,631	18,634	69,599	681	12,031	5,948	16,536
1980	42,065	212,801	9,983	19,290	61,223	3,855	15,556	5,948	16,351
1990	47,358	215,499	10,677	20,510	60,569	16,366	17,301	10,335	15,699
2000	50,278	227,511	12,186	22,621	57,502	31,392	18,670	12,432	17,503
2010	47,159	230,041	11,953	22,268	56,103	41,751	18,971	18,201	19,563
2020	47,450	232,603	14,040	23,959	57,862	49,328	19,011	19,254	20,312
2023 Est.	47,215	232,101	13,850	23,934	57,442	49,031	19,038	19,194	20,453

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, sources for data in this section include the U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census or American Community Survey.

Table 2. Population growth rate 1920-2020

| Geography	Mentor	Lake County	Beachwood	Willoughby	Kettering	Dublin	Sylvania	Concord Twp.	Painesville
1920-1930	81.76%	45.37%	10.67%	154.73%	n/a	6.16%	72.50%	13.96%	50.50%
1930-1940	35.65%	20.03%	49.40%	2.98%	n/a	5.80%	4.32%	11.97%	11.80%
1940-1950	77.52%	51.90%	188.44%	0.09%	n/a	21.94%	10.64%	81.13%	17.96%
1950-1960	163.15%	95.71%	467.47%	37.30%	n/a	91.00%	113.19%	168.06%	11.67%
1960-1970	70.48%	32.62%	58.17%	23.75%	27.79%	23.37%	131.95%	54.09%	2.61%
1970-1980	13.96%	7.91%	3.65%	3.52%	-12.03%	466.08%	29.30%	0.00%	-1.12%
1980-1990	12.58%	1.27%	6.95%	6.32%	-1.07%	324.54%	11.22%	73.76%	-3.99%
1990-2000	6.17%	5.57%	14.13%	10.29%	-5.06%	91.81%	7.91%	20.29%	11.49%
2000-2010	-6.20%	1.11%	-1.91%	-1.56%	-2.43%	33.00%	1.61%	46.40%	11.77%
2010-2020	0.62%	1.11%	17.46%	7.59%	3.14%	18.15%	0.21%	5.79%	3.83%

Mentor's growth rate over the last three decades has been significantly slower than previous decades. This slowdown occurred during the same period as a regional population decline. County growth was also modest in the 80s, 90s, and 2000s.

Table 3. Northeast Ohio Population 2010-2020

Rank	Community	County	Growth Rate Percentage		Community	County	Growth Rate Percentage
1	N. Ridgeville City	Lorain	19.74%	11	Painesville City	Lake	3.83%
2	Avon Lake City	Lorain	11.62%	12	Hudson City	Summit	3.81%
3	Wadsworth City	Medina	11.31%	13	Brunswick City	Medina	3.42%
4	Rocky River	Cuyahoga	7.63%	14	N. Royalton City	Cuyahoga	2.88%
5	Willoughby City	Lake	7.59%	15	Twinsburg City	Summit	2.41%
6	Green City	Summit	6.91%	16	New Philadelphia	Tuscarawas	2.25%
7	Westlake City	Cuyahoga	4.58%	17	Mentor City	Lake	0.62%
8	Wooster City	Wayne	4.26%	18	Stow City	Summit	-1.02%
9	Solon City	Cuyahoga	3.91%	19	Medina City	Medina	-2.19%
10	Strongsville City	Cuyahoga	3.89%	20	Ashland City	Ashland	-5.58%

Population growth in Lake County remained robust in the 2000s before tapering during the Great Recession (The Great Recession was a large economic downturn lasting from December 2007 to June 2009, with a long recovery extending through 2014). As the population ages, natural change (deaths outpacing births) remains a major source of population loss, outweighing continued in-migration.

Figure 1. Net population change in Lake County, 2000-2023
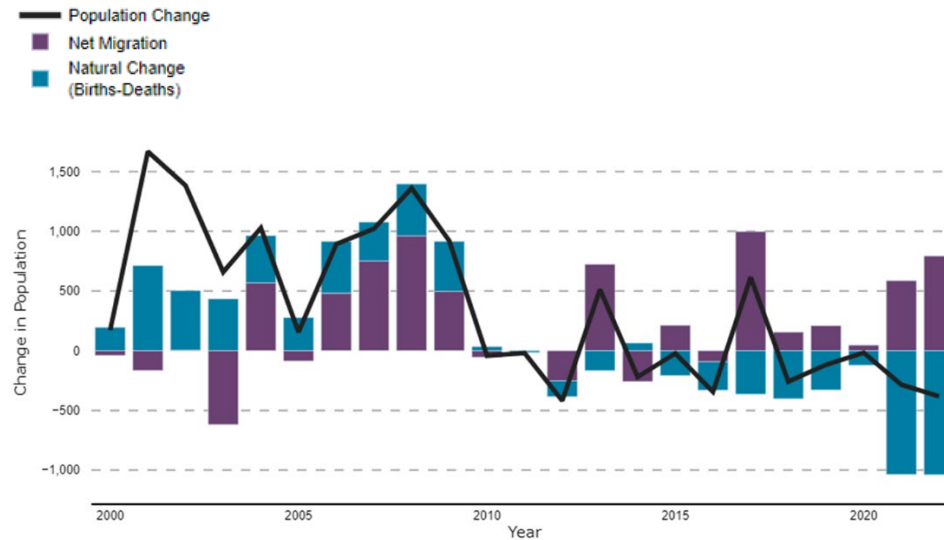

Households and Families

Mentor's single-family houses are slowly turning over from aging empty-nesters to younger households with families. Mentor has the highest ratio of empty nesters compared to similar Ohio communities. While Mentor has a higher proportion of families than the County and broader Metro, a higher ratio may be expected given the dominance of single-family housing in Mentor relative to elsewhere.

Figure 2. Household structure by type
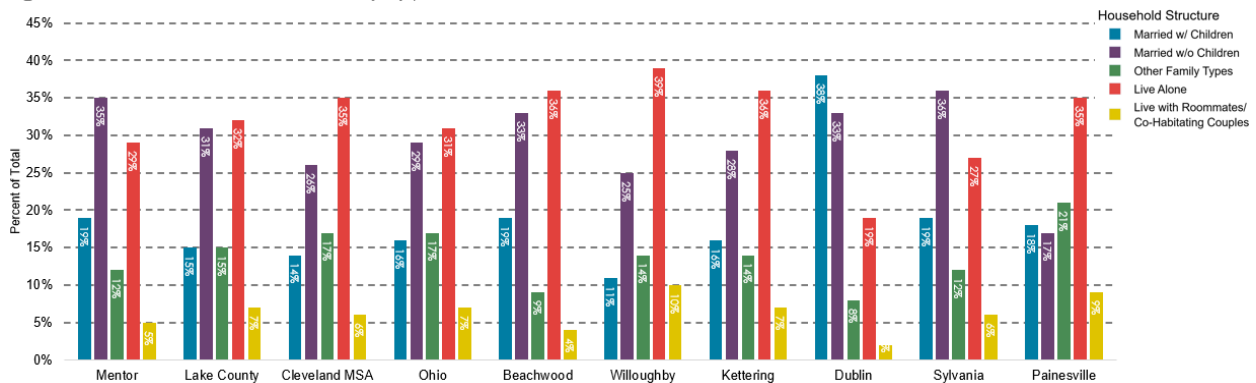
Mentor is a middle-class suburb, with a balanced income distribution around the city median. Dominated by single-family detached housing types in a good school district and with an economy rooted in the manufacturing sector, Mentor continues to be a strong residential hub for middle-income households.

Figure 3. Household income

Age
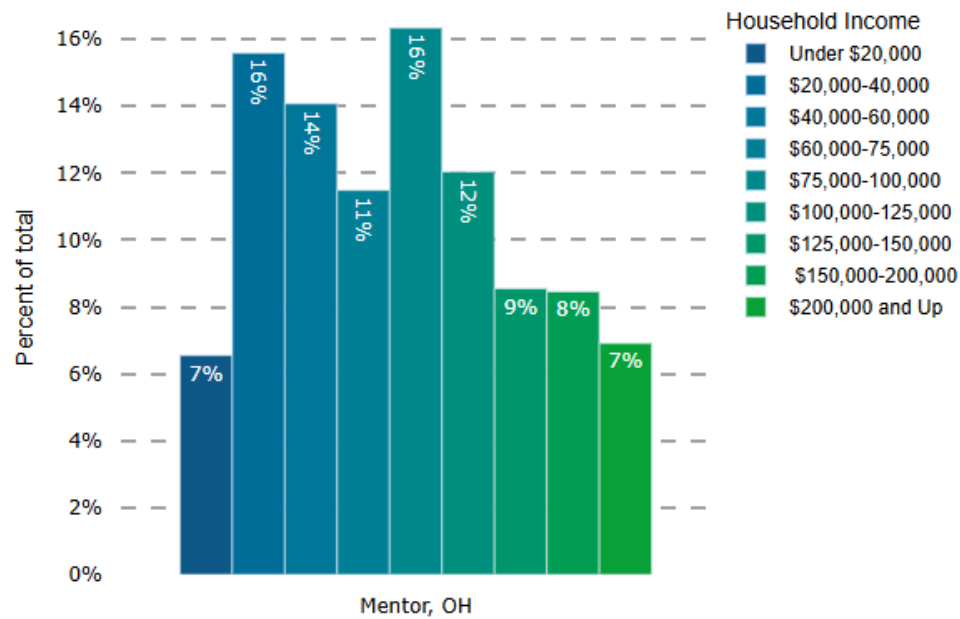
Mentor's population is aging. The median age is 47.3 years old. Table 5 provides an age profile of the City according to the 2023 American Community Survey. Figure 4 shows the fastest growing age bracket is the 65-85 range. There has been a marked decrease in prime career and family-raising aged households aged 35-49. The rate of increase of 65-85 is both from people aging in place and in-migration to newly built senior communities.

Table 4. Median Age

Community	Median Age
Mentor	47.3
Lake County	43.9
Cleveland MSA	41.4
Ohio	39.5
Beachwood	51.4
Willoughby	44.0
Kettering	39.1
Dublin	39.3
Sylvania	42.1
Painsville	30.9

Table 5. Age distribution 2020

Age	Mentor		Lake County		Cleveland PMSA	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
≤5	2,059	4.30%	10,995	4.70%	108,751	5.20%
5-9	2,386	5.00%	12,015	5.20%	117,947	5.60%
10-14	2,572	5.40%	13,538	5.80%	125,894	6.00%
15-19	2,617	5.50%	13,846	6.00%	128,212	6.10%
20-24	2,256	4.80%	12,688	5.50%	126,304	6.00%
25-34	5,078	10.70%	27,499	11.90%	268,090	12.80%
35-44	5,201	10.90%	26,616	11.50%	244,069	11.70%
45-54	5,973	12.60%	29,703	12.70%	258,191	12.40%
55-59	3,833	8.10%	17,896	7.70%	151,036	7.20%
60-64	4,165	8.80%	18,827	8.10%	155,171	7.40%
65-74	6,659	14.10%	28,443	12.30%	236,077	11.30%
75-84	3,303	7.00%	14,636	6.30%	117,013	5.60%
≥85	1348	2.80%	5901	2.50%	51496	2.50%
Grouping of ages 19 and under, 20-54, and 55 and over						
≤19	9,634	20.20%	50,394	21.70%	480,804	22.90%
20-54	18,508	39.00%	96,506	41.60%	896,654	42.90%
≥55	19,308	40.80%	85,703	36.90%	710,793	34.00%

Figure 4. Mentor Age Bracket: Net Change
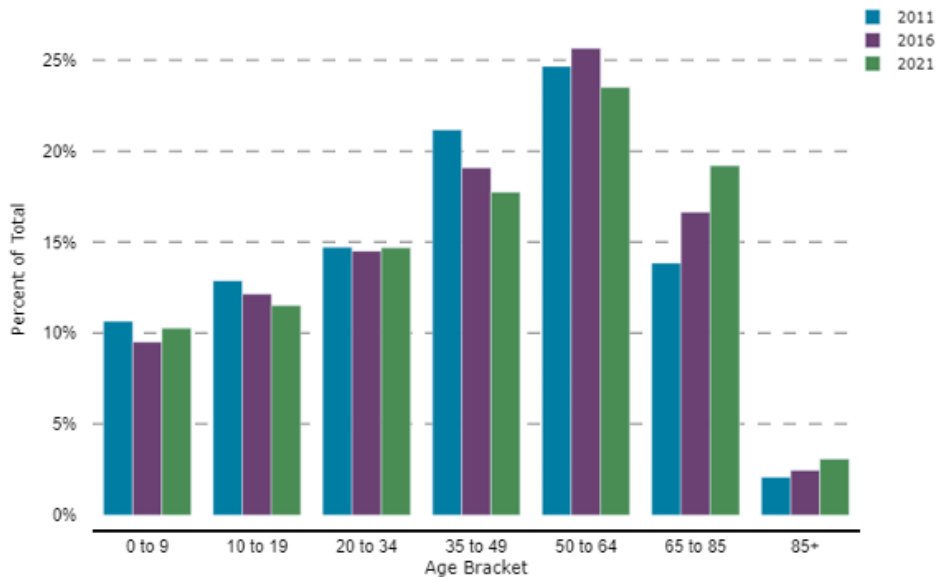
Education

According to the 2023 American Community Survey, approximately 96% of the City's population age 25 years and older are high school graduates compared to 93.9% for Lake County and 91.6% for the state (Table 6). Furthermore, 35.6% of the population has attained a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 30.5% for Lake County, 33.4% for the Cleveland MSA and 30.9% for the state.

Table 6. Percentage of high school graduates or higher

| Community	% of High School
Mentor	95.7%
Lake County	93.9%
Cleveland MSA	91.7%
Ohio	91.6%
Beachwood	97.0%
Willoughby	95.7%
Kettering	94.9%
Dublin	96.6%
Sylvania	97.6%
Painesville	82.8%

Table 7. Education attainment

| Education Attainment	Mentor	Lake County	Cleveland MSA	Ohio	Beachwood	Willoughby	Kettering	Dublin	Sylvania	Painesville
Less than high school graduate	4.3%	6.1%	8.4%	8.3%	3.0%	4.3%	5.1%	3.4%	2.4%	17.2%
High school graduate or equivalency	28.6%	31.6%	29.0%	32.3%	13.4%	29.3%	21.6%	8.2%	17.8%	34.0%
Some college or associate's degree	31.5%	31.7%	29.2%	28.4%	19.2%	30.5%	32.3%	15.3%	29.2%	27.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	35.6%	30.5%	33.4%	30.9%	64.5%	35.9%	41.1%	73.1%	50.6%	21.3%

Occupation and Industry

Economic output in Lake County is driven by manufacturing. Despite the great wave of outsourcing during the 2000s and early 2010s, Lake County's manufacturing sector remains a major strength, and may be positioned to grow in a political economic climate favoring reshoring and domestic production.

Figure 5. GDP by industry in Lake County
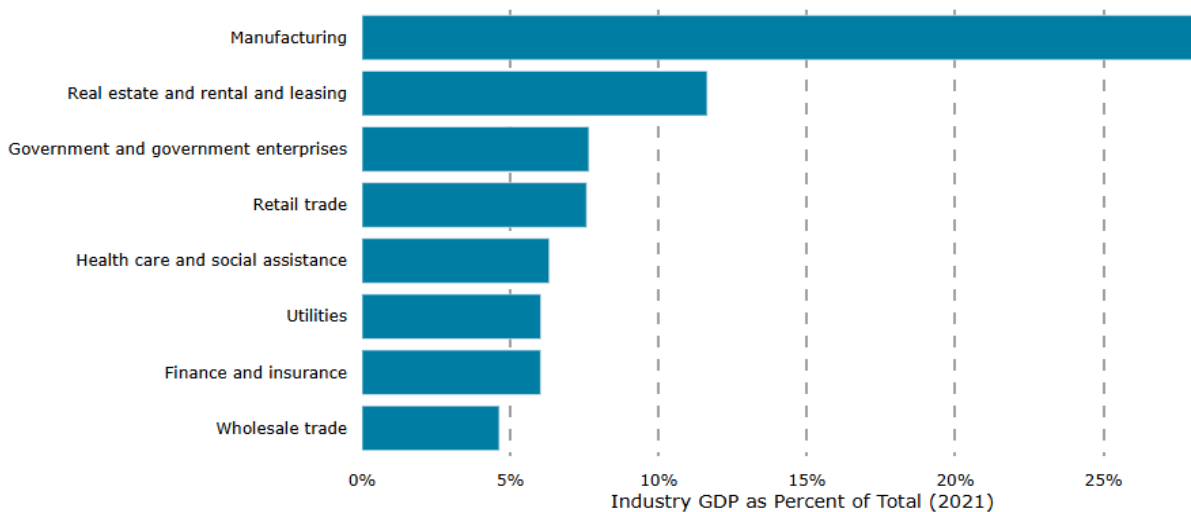
The importance of manufacturing to Mentor's economy is reflected in the total employment in the sector. Twenty-nine percent of jobs in Mentor are in manufacturing. Manufacturing jobs support other services, including jobs in retail, accommodation, and food services that are also over-represented relative to the Cleveland Metro. While Mentor's job base is rooted in the manufacturing sector, due to high productivity, jobs in the manufacturing sector are less abundant compared to services. As a center for regional trade and healthcare for Lake County, Mentor also contains a higher proportion of jobs in the service sectors than the broader metro.

Figure 6. Mentor's job base relative to Cleveland Metro
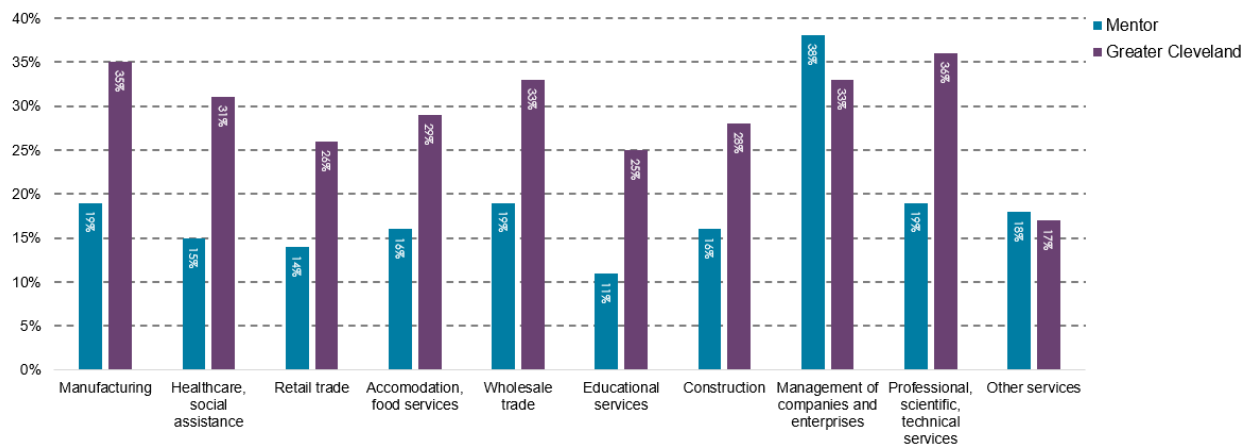

Manufacturing also drives new economy high wage industries. Management, professional services, and engineering related jobs are the fastest growing segment of the economy and pay high wages. Retaining and attracting these employees across the age-spectrum may require new forms of rental and ownership housing.

Figure 7. Indexed change in GDP by industry grouping
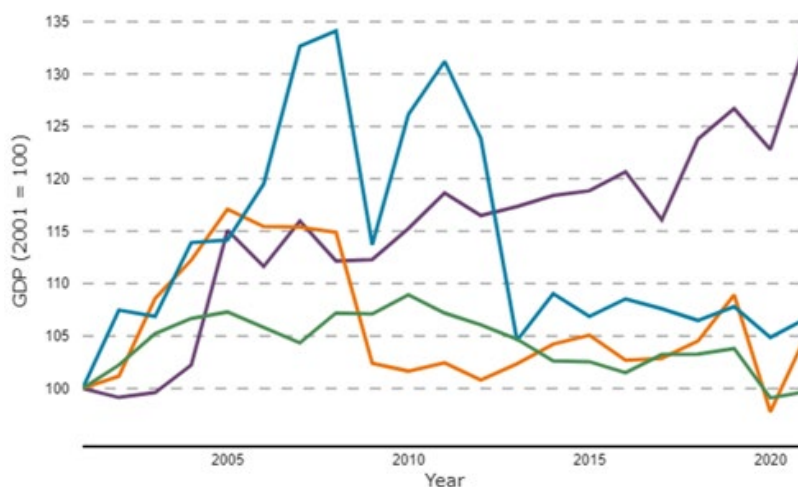
As shown in Figure 8., low wage services are still a major segment of the economy. Retail and food services make up 36% of all jobs in Mentor, although the total share declined by 19% since 2010. Both the shifting consumption habits of aging families and the rise of e-commerce have impacted employment in these sectors. With low wages, workforce housing remains in demand for those who would prefer to live closer to their place of employment.

Figure 8. New economy low wage industry share
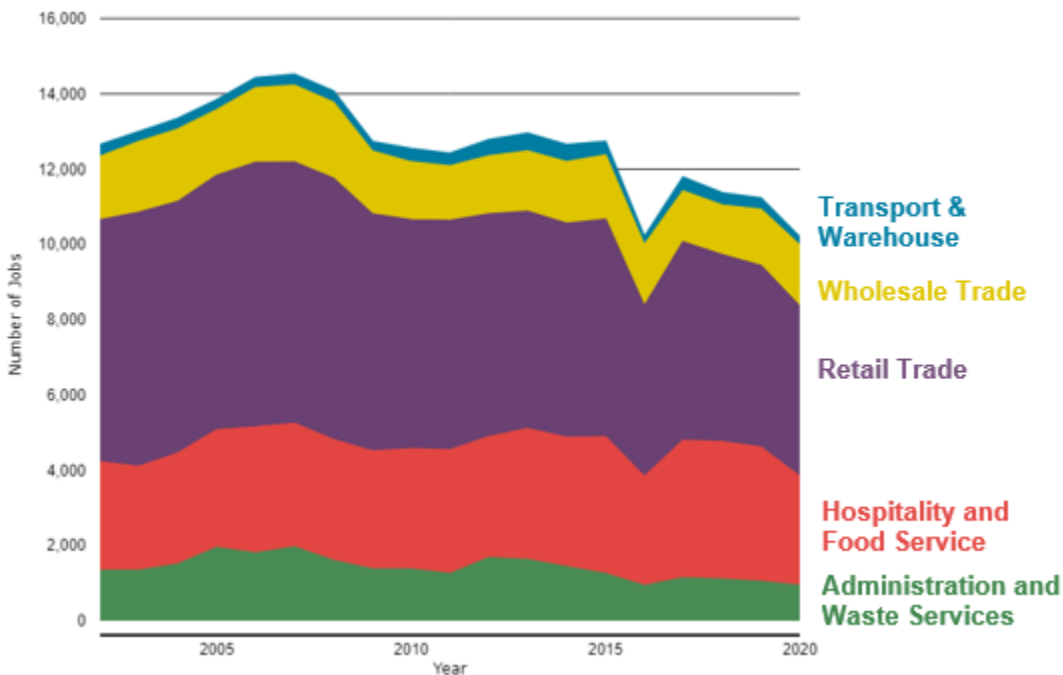
Race and Ethnicity

Table 8. Race

Race	Mentor	Lake County	Cleveland MSA	Ohio	Beachwood	Willoughby	Kettering	Dublin	Sylvania	Painesville
White	92%	86%	69%	77%	68%	86%	85%	71%	88%	57%
Black/ African American	2%	5%	20%	13%	14%	7%	5%	2%	3%	13%
Native American / Alaskan	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Asian	2%	1%	3%	3%	12%	2%	2%	20%	2%	1%
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	1%	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	17%
Two or more races	4%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	7%	5%	6%	11%

Table 9. Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Mentor	Lake County	Cleveland MSA	Ohio	Beachwood	Willoughby	Kettering	Dublin	Sylvania	Painesville
Hispanic or Latino	2%	5%	6%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%	27%
Not Hispanic or Latino	98%	95%	94%	96%	98%	98%	97%	97%	96%	73%

Growth

Population and household growth in Mentor are projected to stabilize. Given the strong local economy and projected regional employment growth, new households will continue to migrate to Lake County. The projected growth in population is based on the 10-year historical growth rate.

Household growth is a function of housing units. Local demand for housing may grow, but if a municipality is not adding units, household growth will occur elsewhere. This has been the case in Mentor. Mentor has only captured 1.2% of household growth in Lake County between 2009-2022. This has diluted its proportion of Lake County households from 21.1% in 2009 to 19.4% in 2022.

Figure 9. Projected household growth in Lake County
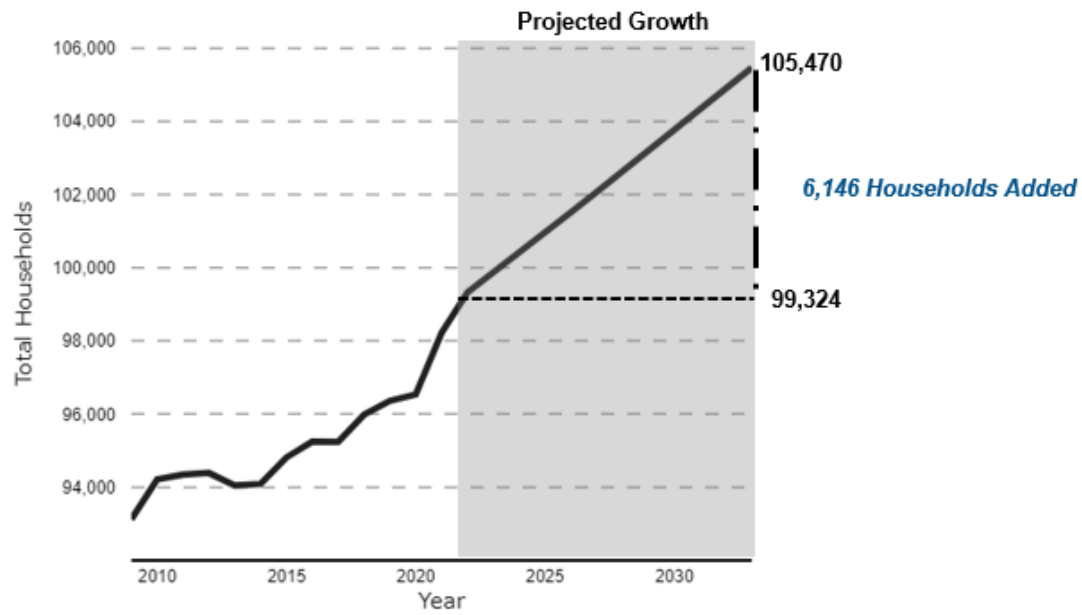
Housing

Introduction

Mentor is in high demand as a place to live, and it is economically vibrant with more people coming to work in Mentor businesses than commute out from Mentor to work elsewhere.

Mentor's desirable neighborhoods and strong economy are in many ways a benefit to the community. But they also result in some housing challenges. It's difficult to buy into the community. Homes that go on the market are snapped up quickly, and the prices of homes become out of reach for many. Rents for homes and apartments have also risen quite precipitously. Mentor's business community, among others, would like to see more housing choices in Mentor so their workers can find homes near their jobs.

Mentor is also at the cusp of a generational change. It has a large contingent of empty nesters and retirees, many of whom will choose to look for a lower maintenance housing option in the next ten to fifteen years. At the other end of the generational spectrum there is a new wave of young adults and families that would be happy to choose Mentor as a place to live in the next phase of their lives.

In this dynamic generational moment for Mentor, its housing stock is not keeping pace. The growth and adaptation of its housing stock has been gradual compared to the demographic changes. Some of this is due to the fact that Mentor is almost completely built out. But there are other impediments to housing development, which can be addressed in various ways.

The Mentor Housing Study and Needs Analysis was initiated in response to this distinctive context. Its goal is to understand Mentor's housing conditions and market context, and the housing related needs of the Mentor community. It identifies strategies that can be employed to address Mentor's present and future housing challenges and meet community needs.

The following pages document an analysis of:

- The economic and demographic factors that shape housing demand
- The market context for new housing development
- Mentor's existing housing inventory, and
- The "gap" between the housing needs of the community and the housing that is available to meet those needs
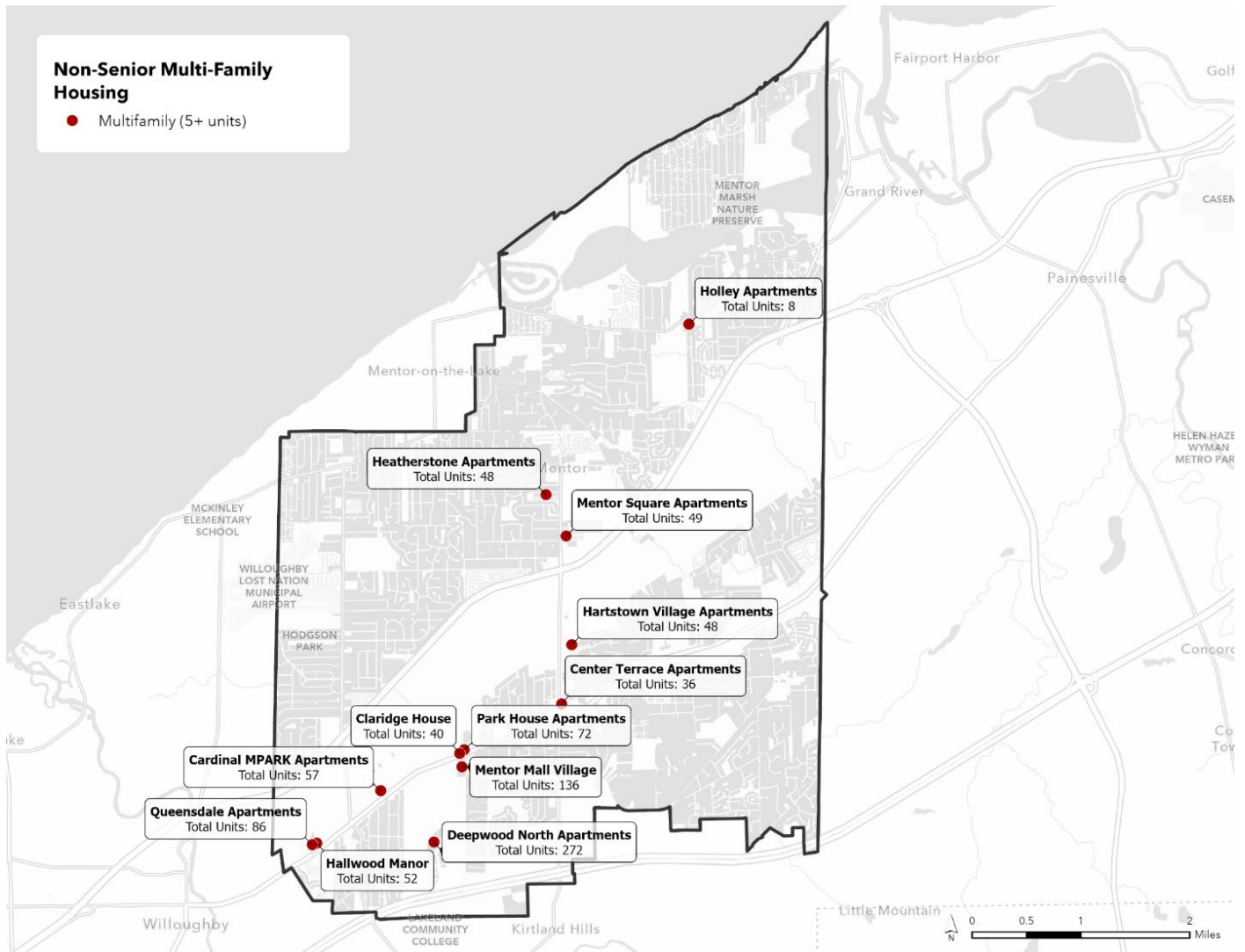
Housing Inventory

- **Single family homes dominate in Mentor**. Low-density single-family homes remain the most common form of development in Mentor. Multi-family buildings tend to be clustered near existing commercial districts, especially multi-family rental housing. The more historic centers contain a range of light-density housing types from eras where duplexes and triplexes were more common.

Map 1 Housing inventory by age
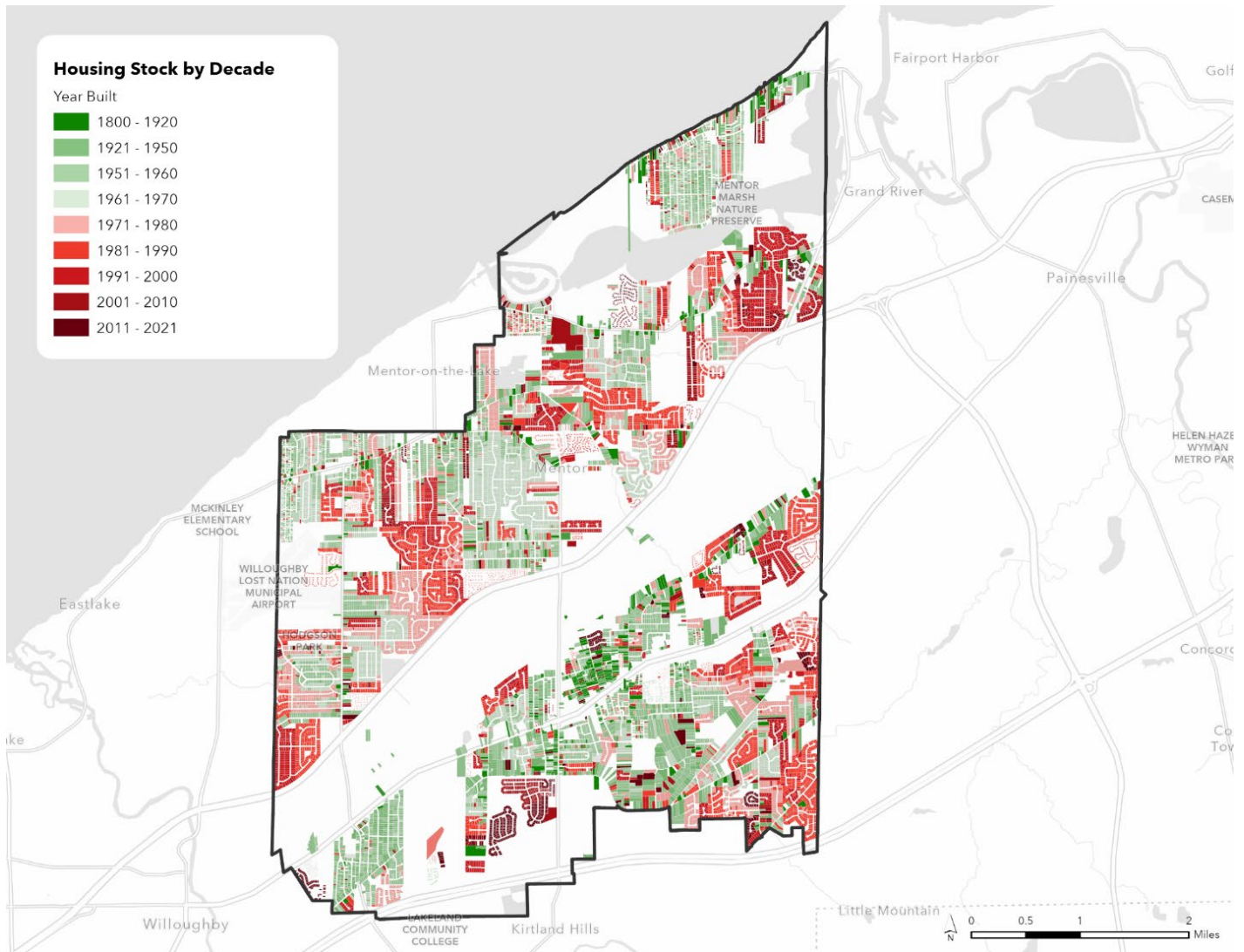
- **Rental units are affordable, but are old and limited**. Mentor's multi-family housing stock is affordable for those earning workforce incomes, but the housing stock is often dated. It lacks the amenities, design, and orientation to community-based amenities often desired by renters. The number of affordable units is also limited relative to existing demand.
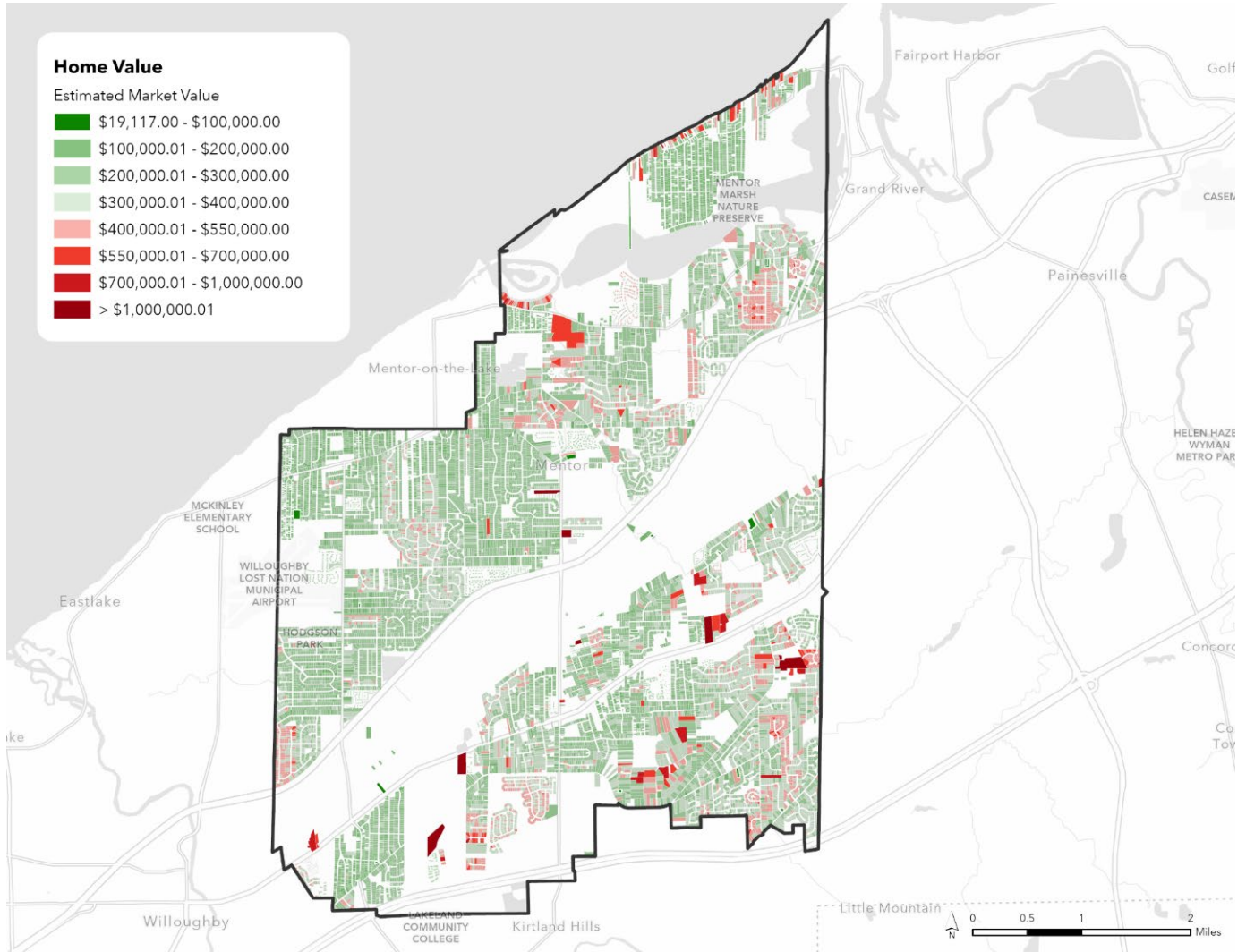
Map 2 Non-Senior multifamily housing[2]

- **Single-Family homes range in value, with newer homes at the higher end.** Home values vary strongly based on year-built, with newer homes often targeting the upper-middle end of the housing market. Older homes provide more affordable entry-points into the market.

Map 3 Housing inventory by market value

- **Lacking a suburban center**. Many suburbs have sought to cultivate higher density housing oriented around a central location, seeking to add more place-based character to neighborhoods developed historically around sprawl. Mentor currently lacks a 'center,' with more dense developments extending along the commercial corridors of the city.

Map 4 Housing inventory by age
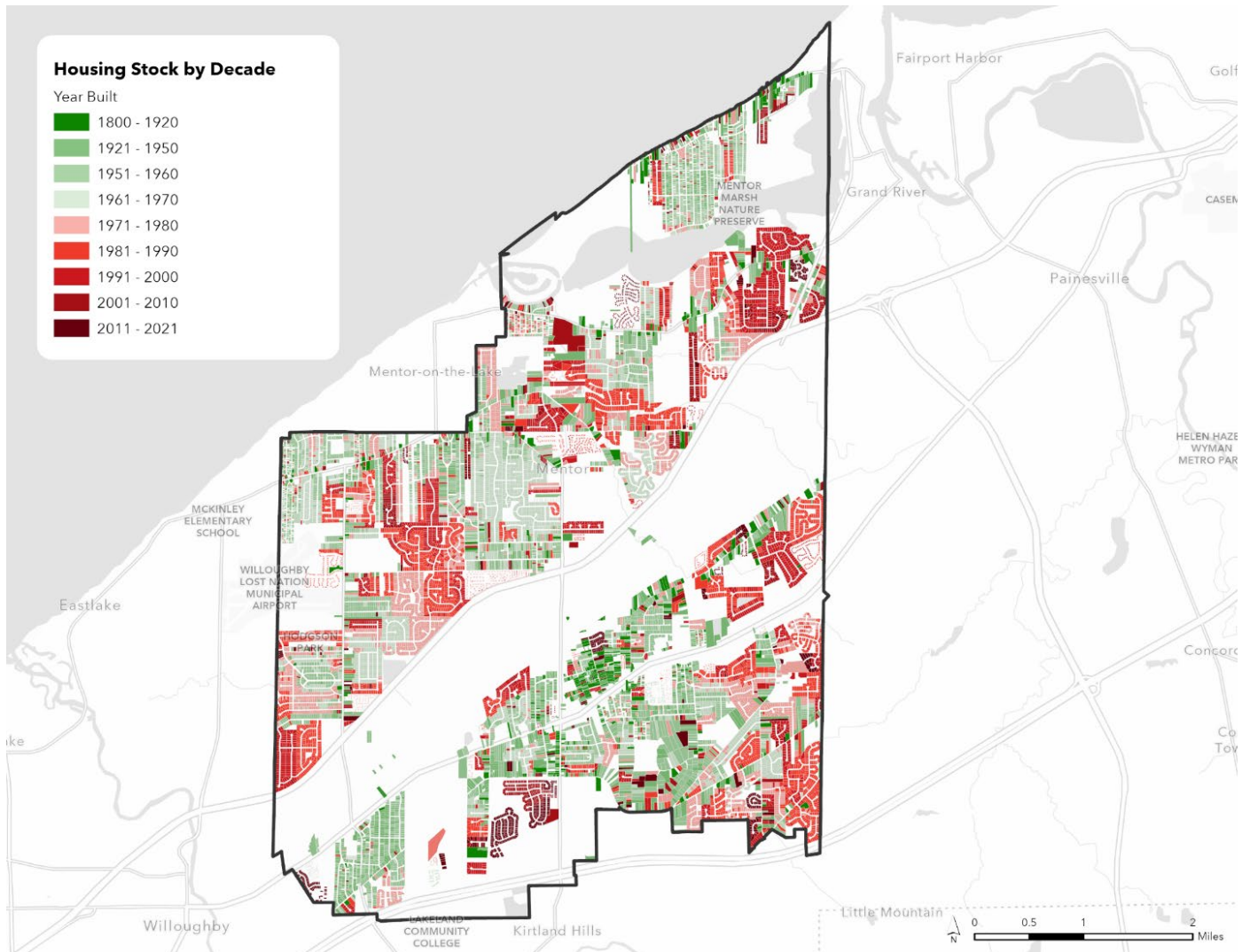
- **Senior Housing inventory is growing, but mostly in the assisted living and nursing care categories**: New senior communities are emerging in areas with developable land in the southern portions of Mentor. This housing type is emerging due to high demand for senior-specific housing types and communities to meet the needs of an aging community.

Map 5 Senior housing inventory[3]
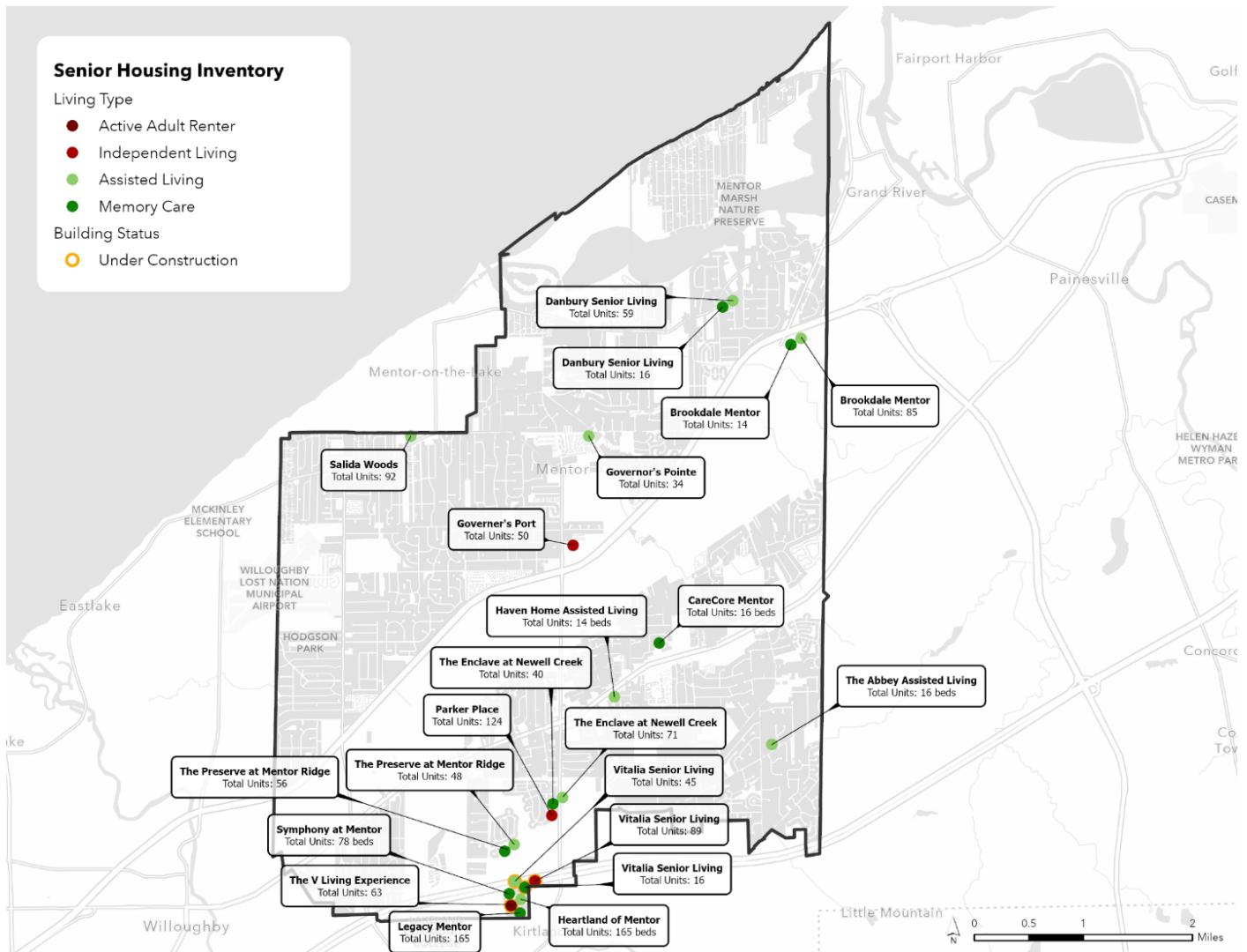
Housing Gaps

- **Mentor households are over-housed**. Mentor households are smaller than the homes they inhabit, especially so when viewed through a model that projects demand based on household size and composition. Even adjusting for current existing preferences where people maximize space as incomes increase, units are large and built for family types that are *now* less common in the area.

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[3] Data source(s): Stantec, Warren Group, Costar, Apartments.com, City of Mentor

Table 10. Housing demand by price, tenure, and unit size[4]

Household Income Required	Max Monthly Housing Cost	Rent				Own			
		1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR+
Less than $15000	$375	372	64	7	1	527	69	9	0
$15,000-24,999	$625	291	61	39	0	664	155	34	0
$25,000-34,999	$875	235	55	92	7	929	123	18	1
$35,000-49,999	$1,250	385	208	78	39	1,353	220	48	10
$50,000-74,999	$1,875	528	264	64	107	1,586	535	161	82
$75,000-99,999	$2,500	201	50	60	44	1,609	879	300	74
$100,000-149,999	$3,750	87	99	49	5	1,783	1,382	677	163
$150,000-199,999	$5,000	0	3	6	1	728	454	206	26
$200,000 or more	--	18	3	2	0	582	581	170	79

- **Housing for workforce households**. There is a significant deficit of workforce housing in Mentor. Single-income households and dual-income households working in Mentor's large service sector or living on fixed incomes would struggle to find affordable units – especially so in the ownership market. The deficit of affordable units means many households are paying more than 30% of their income on housing, leading to high rates of rent-burdened households.

Figure 10. Affordability Relative to Common Industry Median Wages[5]
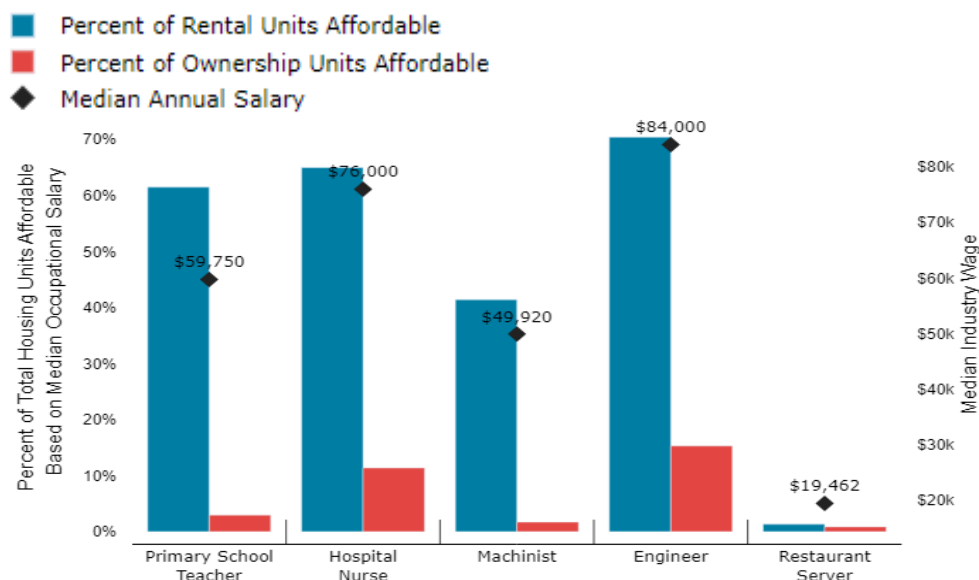
- **Appropriate housing for seniors across the cost-spectrum.** Many seniors are aging in place in homes they've owned for decades. These homes may be increasingly unsuitable, especially in the next 5-10 years as large blocks of Mentor's population enter their late 60s/70s.

Table 11. Estimated market demand: senior housing by type

Estimated Market Needs: Totals

	2023	2028	Percent Change
Active-Adult For-Sale	266	311	17%
Active-Adult Rental	225	290	29%
Active-Adult Affordable	494	440	-11%
Independent Living	577	450	-22%
Assisted Living	8	181	2211%
Memory Care	46	104	123%
Total Senior	*1,616*	*1,775*	10%

- **New market-rate rentals, preferably mixed income.** Mentor lacks new market-rate rental housing designed and built on more modern specs, including smaller bedroom sizes. Much of the existing stock is outdated. Market rate rental housing can attract and retain younger households and add to a sense of place. Mixed income and mixed age housing would be appropriate.

Table 12. Multi-family rentals

Property	Address	Total Units	Year Built
Heatherstone Apartments	6400 Center St	48	1969
Mentor Square Apartments	6615 Center St	49	1958
Cottonwood Apartments	7155 Hart St	48	1969
Center Terrace Apartment	7423-7433 Center St	36	N.A
Claridge House	7921 Mentor Ave	40	1964
Park House Apartments	7945-7947 Mentor Ave	72	1963
Cardinal MPARK Apartments	7559 Mentor Ave	57	1960
Deepwood North Apartments	8100 Deepwood Blvd	272	1976
Mentor Mall Village	7950 Mentor Ave	136	1963
Queensdale Apartments	7191 Mentor Ave	86	1963
Hallwood Manor	7205 Mentor Ave	52	1962