



1.1 VISION STATEMENT

By creating this plan, the community wishes to continue seeking opportunities to develop and redevelop the City of Mentor. This plan is designed to preserve the diversity of land use along with financial and social stability of the community by promoting the City's natural features, educational system and suburban atmosphere. This plan will also address the goal of attracting new and diverse commercial and industrial businesses through proper planning, while striving to maintain the integrity and identity of the City of Mentor.

1.2 MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION

"...The Commission shall have the powers conferred upon it by general law and it shall adopt and recommend to the Council a *comprehensive general plan* for the physical development of the city, or the redevelopment of any area or district therein, which shall include the location of public ways, property, bridges, schools, utilities, buildings, parks, playgrounds and recreation areas, and the reservation and acquisition of lands therefore."

1.3 WHY A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The City of Mentor is no stranger to the planning discipline. Planning for the future has been a tradition in Mentor since the 1950's when the community recognized that its tremendous potential for growth carried with it the potential for equally tremendous physical and social impacts. This document represents the continuing work of the Mentor community in carrying that planning tradition into the next decade and century of prosperous growth and wise community development and redevelopment. The work of study and analysis has culminated in the following *City of Mentor: Vision 2020*. *Vision 2020* is a rewrite of the "Comprehensive Plan, Mentor, Ohio" (June 1997). Multiple sections of the 1997 plan are still applicable in this document and were used in portions of this document.

A comprehensive plan is a land use document that provides the framework and policy direction for land use decisions and other actions affecting the physical, economic, and social aspects of the community. It indicates in a general way how local citizens and government leaders want the community to develop in the future.

The basic characteristics of a comprehensive plan are that it is general and far-reaching. Another defining characteristic is that the plan is long-range and provides a base from which to make decisions. In Mentor, local decision makers include the Municipal Planning Commission and City Council.

The adoption of a comprehensive plan often becomes the driving force behind creation of more targeted plans. Examples of more targeted plans may include a plan for Historic Mentor Village area or a plan for redevelopment of the Great Lakes Mall.

The City of Mentor Comprehensive Plan is a major planning effort to guide the community toward what it will be like in the future as a place to live, work, and invest. It is being developed through an open process driven by four broad-reaching questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where are we going?
3. Where do we want to be?
4. How do we get there?

The Comprehensive Plan will identify a vision and broadly address the needed elements that build a community including transportation, housing, open space and natural resources, sense of place, government services, the impacts of new developments and more.

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the City “to do” list, at least with regards to land use and the built environment for the near future. Through goal setting, it will set priorities about land use, economic development, cultural and natural resources, transportation and other areas.

The Comprehensive Plan will not propose specific lot-by-lot locations for land uses or facilities, or address detailed regulations. A Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning resolution or subdivision regulation. However, such regulations are used as tools for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide the legal and rational framework for regulations, investments, and government action.

This new plan charts the City’s course into the twenty first century. It sets goals tempered by the realities of time, opportunity, and resources. It is a realistic plan which incorporates a feasible program of implementation designed to bring the community to where it wants to be in the foreseeable future. This plan is intended to focus on those community needs over the next 5-10 years and also the direction that development will take for areas of the City where major changes are likely to occur.

The Plan requires public cooperation and support for its accomplishments. It also requires far-sighted and steadfast leadership by public agencies that serve the city to support the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to serving as a guide to expenditure of public funds in acquisition of land and construction of public facilities, the Comprehensive Plan forms the necessary background for the zoning and subdivision regulations. Zoning, subdivision and design standards, are necessary to achieve orderly growth, an acceptable pattern of land use and an attractive built environment. Growth and change occur with time, and good planning principles must be established to preserve our vision for the future.

1.4 USING THE PLAN

In simple terms, the Plan is a tool for dealing with change. Specifically, it can be used in at least the following ways:

1. As a basis for the development of public programs and regulations, including community services and facilities, thoroughfare, water and sewer services; zoning regulations; and land use.
2. As a basis for decisions on specific land use changes as reviewed through zoning regulations.
3. As a basis for the measurement and evaluation of change in the physical, social or economic makeup of the city. Out of this process may come modifications of the Comprehensive Plan.
4. As a means of multi-jurisdictional and regional coordination and understanding.
5. As a means of communication and education for the public.
6. As a basis for private decision-making regarding the nature and timing of land development and conservation activities.

1.5 PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Comprehensive Plan is the statement of development policy for Mentor. The Plan presents a series of goals and strategies to guide the preparation of City regulations and the application of City programs. These goals and policies are organized in 11 chapters.

The formal plan introduction, in the next chapter, describes the history, geography and geology of Mentor, along with a description of the challenges faced by the city. The **demographics element** describes attributes of the city's population, how it has changed through the years, and how it may change in the future. The **land use** chapter describes the role of the built environment on the city, how land is being used, and the importance of creating and maintaining a unique sense of place. The **transportation** chapter describes the transportation system in the City; not just considering motor vehicles, but also bicycles, pedestrians and public transit. The **housing** chapter describes home ownership and tenure trends, and addresses challenges such as affordable housing. The **recreation and public facilities** chapter describes all public land uses – public safety facilities, schools, parks and open space – and discusses future needs. The **utilities** chapter describes the role that utilities play in shaping the built environment of the city. The **economic development** chapter describes the business environment of the city and policies intended to maintain a diverse tax base and reduce the tax burden on residents, while increasing business growth. The **natural resources** chapter describes the features of the city built, not by man but by nature, and ways to protect those gifts in the face of population growth.

Each chapter contains a summary of important issues and trends, a statement of goals and a list of strategies, and recommendations that the City could use to reach these goals. Each chapter is supplemented with maps, tables and charts with data from countless sources including the City of Mentor, Lake County Planning Commission, US Census Bureau and the Ohio Department of Development.

1.6 RELATION TO REGIONAL PLANS

With Mentor being a home-rule City, its comprehensive plan is not considered an amendment to the Lake County Comprehensive Plan. Regional plans from the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA), that guides transportation planning in the Cleveland metropolitan area, and information from the Lake County Coastal Development Plan is reflected in this plan.

1.7 PROJECT PARTNERS

The City of Mentor Economic and Community Development Department served as the project leader for the plan. They also served as a liaison between all City Departments including Engineering, Parks and Recreation, Police and Fire to ensure all information was included into the plan.

Technical partners included:

Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc.

The Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. was established in 1996 in response to concerns regarding erosion, water quality and flooding within the watershed. CRWP staff provides technical support service to member communities (including Mentor and Lake County) and develops cost effective solutions to minimize new, and address current water quality and quantity problems (www.crwp.org).

CRWP was a key technical contributor throughout the planning process for the following topics:

- CRWP staff assisted to ensure conformance with the Chagrin River Balanced Growth Plan. The Balanced Growth Plan is being developed based on a state wide program for balanced growth being promoted by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. In 2004, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission finalized the Balanced Growth Program, defined as a *local planning framework to coordinate decisions about how growth and conservation should be promoted by State and local investments*. Through this program, CRWP has been working with Mentor to develop Priority Conservation Areas (PCA) and Priority Development Areas (PDA) throughout their community. This is discussed in Chapter 4.
- Parking standards
- Riparian corridor protection strategies
- Erosion and Sediment Control
- Comprehensive Storm Water Management
- Riparian and Wetland Setbacks
- Flood Damage Reduction regulations

Lake County Planning Commission

The Lake County Planning Commission staff served as the primary consultant. LCPC is well versed in land use, zoning, coastal planning, design guidelines and subdivision regulations.

The information presented in the plan is based upon guidance from City officials and department heads, CRWP and local citizens with a focus on innovative, long-term achievement strategies.