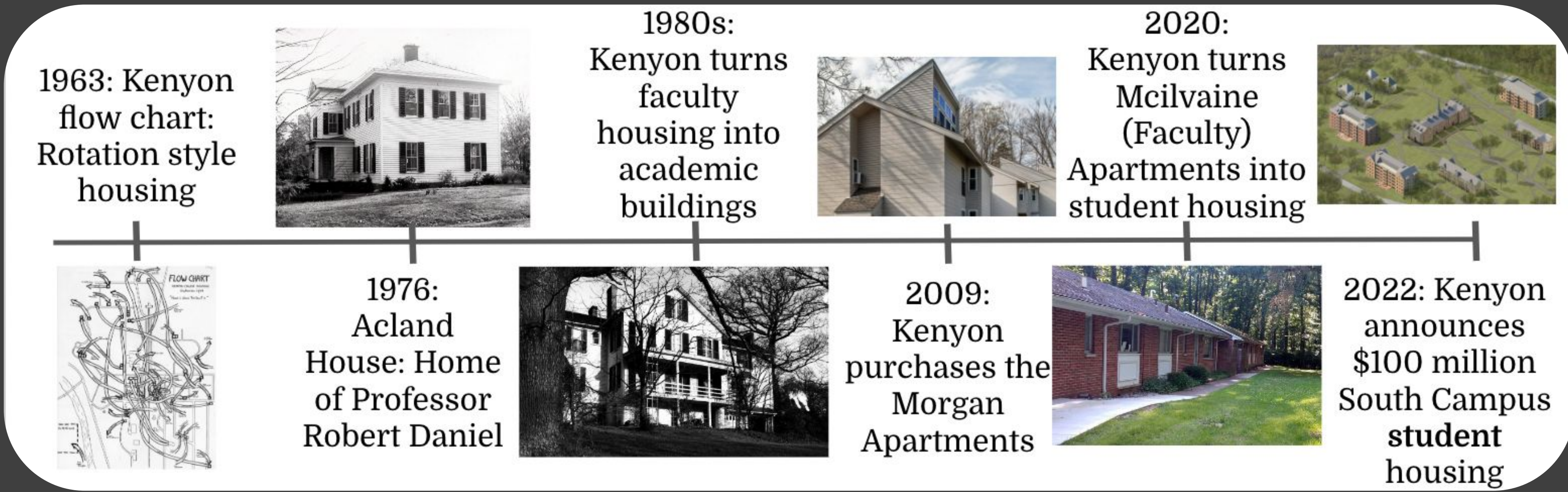
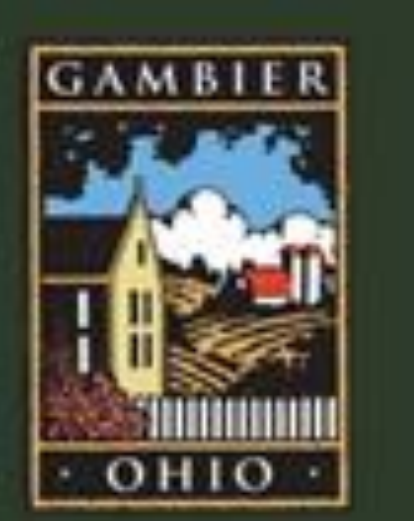


Navigating Disruption: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Kenyon Faculty Housing Crisis

Michael Bazzano and Finn Murray

IPHS 484 Senior Seminar (Spring 2023) Prof Elkins and Chun, Kenyon College



"As a former Kenyon faculty member, I can attest that Kenyon is significantly behind its competitors when it comes to accommodating housing for new faculty. They simply have a lot of catching up to do."

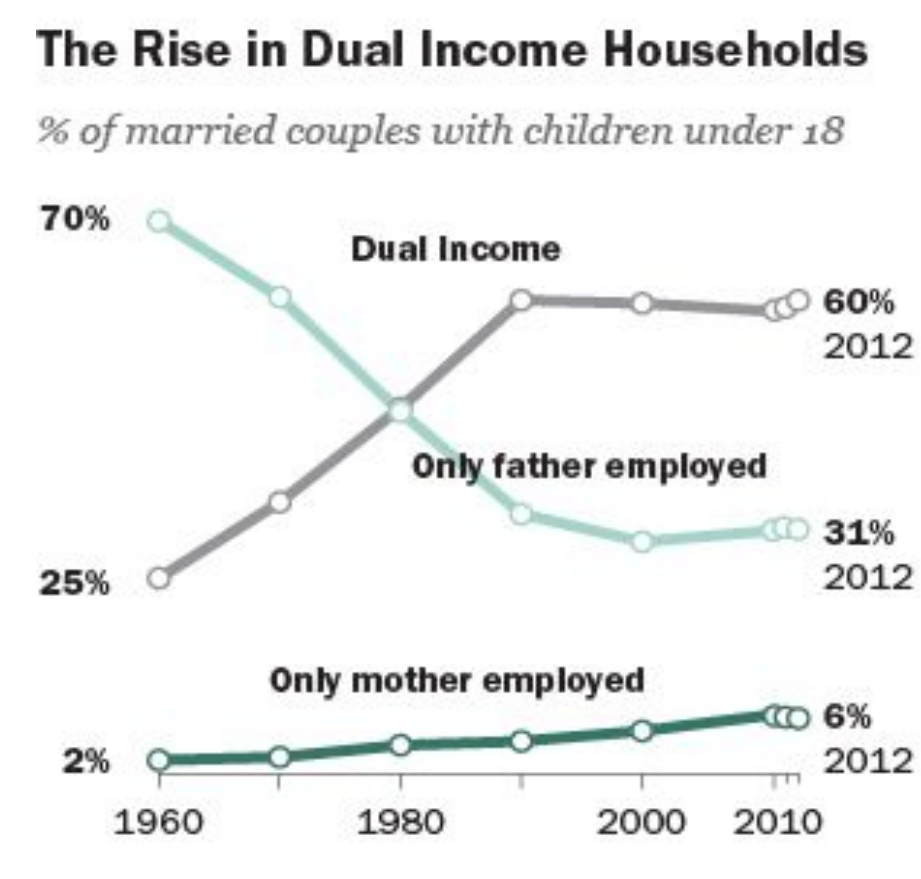
Abstract

The village of Gambier, home to Kenyon College, has experienced a decline in available housing options for faculty members over the past few decades. This decline is primarily attributed to the conversion of former faculty homes into classroom spaces, administrative buildings, and other college facilities. The shortage of affordable housing has significant implications for the well-being and retention of faculty members, as well as the overall vitality of the community. This poster presents a comprehensive analysis of the current housing situation in Gambier and proposes a sustainable approach to address the affordable housing crisis for professors. The proposed solutions include identifying and re-establishing suitable former faculty homes, fostering partnerships between Kenyon College and private developers, preserving and expanding the existing housing stock, and encouraging sustainable development practices. By implementing these recommendations, Kenyon can tackle the housing issue for professors while preserving its historical charm.

Factors:

In recent years, the housing crisis in Gambier has been influenced by a multitude of factors, with Kenyon College playing a significant role in its development:

- The expansion of Kenyon College, driven by the rise in student population, has created high demand for office space and classrooms.
- The increase in dual-income households has exposed the lack of employment opportunities near Kenyon.
- Intel "mega-site" outside of Columbus will employ 3,000 workers with an average salary of \$135,000 a year.
- Rise in price of housing/scarcity of housing.
- Corporate investment companies are purchasing properties in Gambier.



Faculty Housing Comparisons

Colleges comparable to Kenyon College that offer faculty housing:

- Denison University: Currently building 60 units of faculty housing on land owned by the university.
- Haverford College: The college owns houses and apartment units on campus that are rented to members of the faculty. Haverford's faculty housing program allows approximately 40% of the faculty to reside on campus.
- Colorado College: Visiting faculty housing provides convenient and affordable on-campus housing to visiting professors. They offer one and two-bedroom apartments, fully furnished.
- Bates College: 96 apartment rentals specifically to house faculty. Apartments are offered at 1/3 of market price of the surrounding area in Lewiston, Maine.



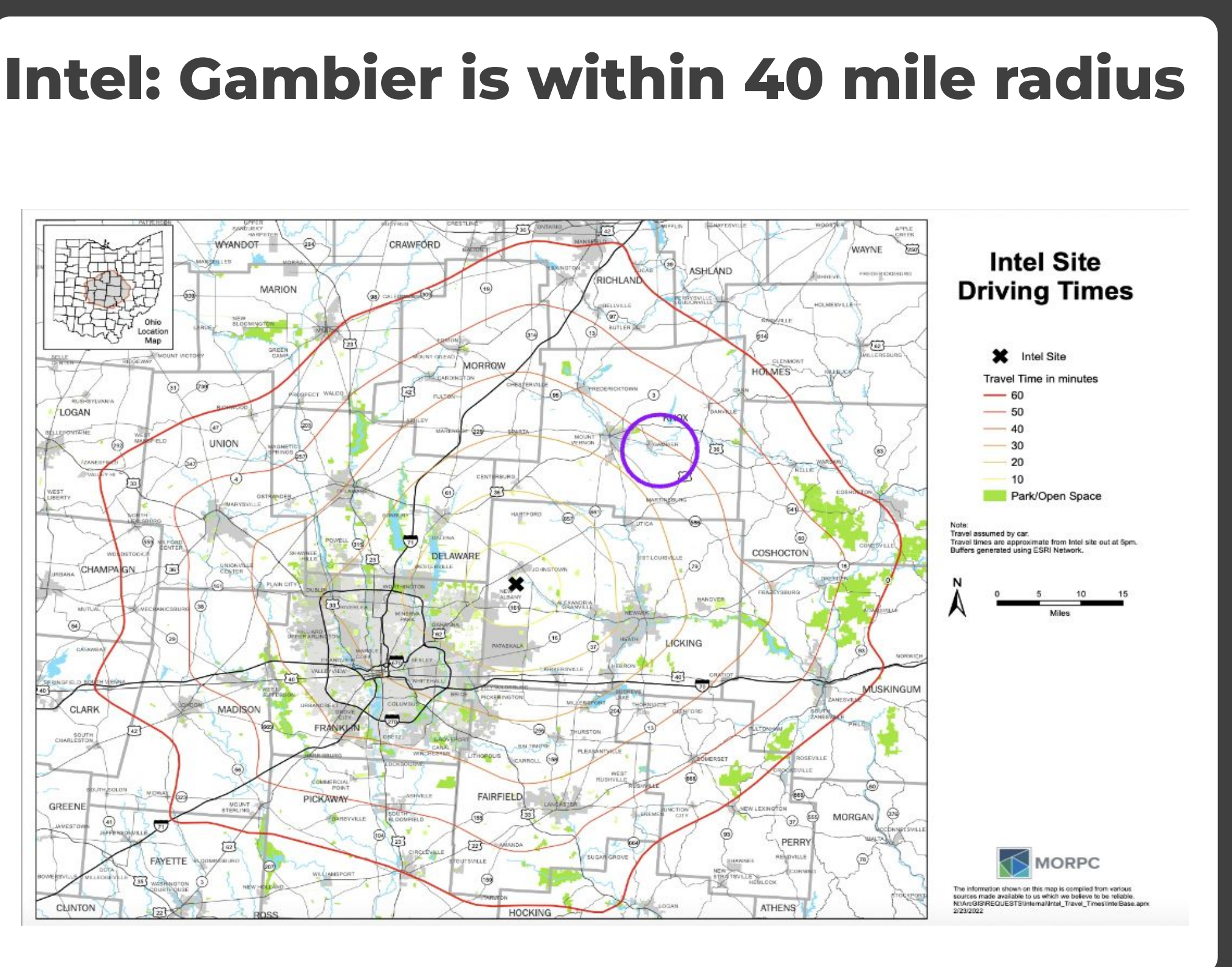
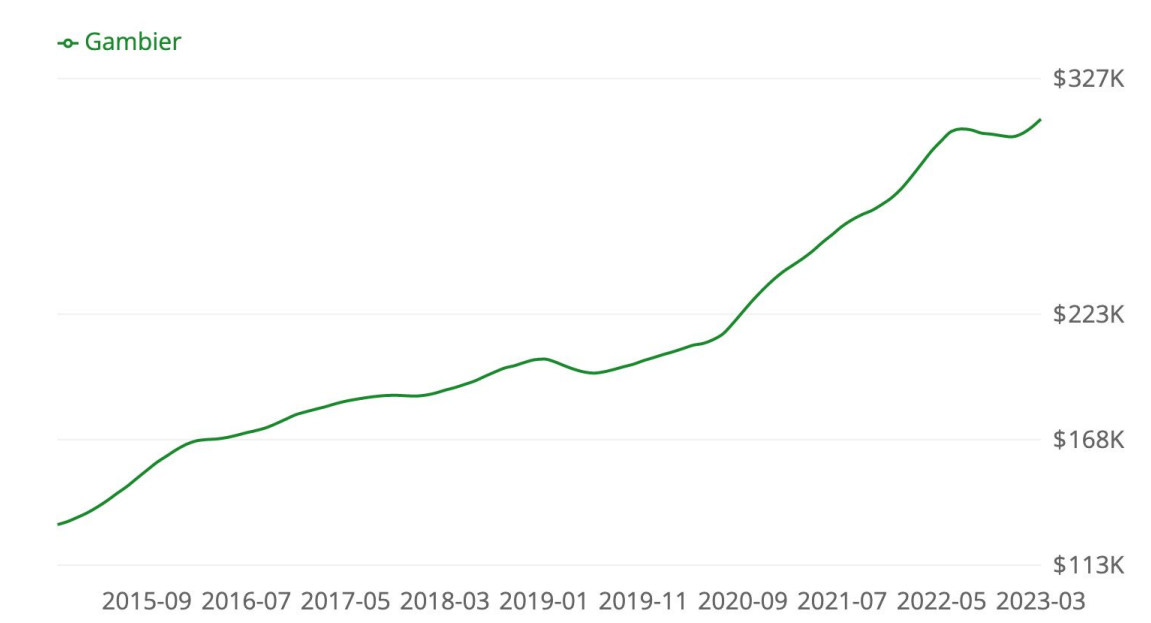
Conclusion

Over the past three months, we have had the opportunity to engage with numerous faculty members and discuss this pressing issue with more than 100 students. It has become clear that the housing crisis in Gambier is widely recognized as a problem for which Kenyon College is responsible. The impending arrival of Intel has heightened concerns among faculty regarding the future of the institution, with one faculty member stating, "Kenyon must act swiftly to address housing needs; as Intel moves in, there's a possibility that new faculty members may not even be able to afford housing in Mount Vernon." Kenyon's current inability to provide adequate housing for faculty jeopardizes the college's core values: a tight-knit community characterized by strong faculty-student relationships. In conclusion, our proactive efforts to address disruptive housing challenges for Kenyon faculty involve providing innovative, sustainable, and affordable options. These initiatives not only highlight the necessity of keeping up with ongoing changes in Ohio but also contribute to building a brighter future for the Kenyon community.

Introduction

"The housing market in Knox County is currently a sellers-market. Real average and median close prices have steadily increased. Days on market across all price bands have fallen. Successful sales as a percentage of all listings has risen from 42% in 2010 to 83% in 2019. Current listings as "months of supply" is around 4 months. This figure has steadily fallen over the last decade. We are ultimately led to the conclusion that demand for housing has outpaced supply in the past 10 years." (Katie Black, 2019)

This trend is accentuated in Gambier, where the average home value is now \$309,344, a 134.9% increase from 2015 (Zillow).



"It's quite striking to walk through the halls of Ascension post-Covid and see so many doors closed. I can't help but feel that the once-strong sense of community at Kenyon is gradually fading away." - Kenyon College Student

Disconnect Between College's Mission and Actual Situation

- From Kenyon's website: "our faculty and staff have come here from all over the country-indeed, from all over the world, and from all kinds of backgrounds. They stay and live a life some never expected to live. Faculty and staff walk their dogs around campus. For a change of pace, some will make the 50-minute drive to Columbus for some great dining, arts and cultural events, or shopping."
- Kenyon's supposed dedication to fostering a sense of community between their faculty and students is a core value of the college.
- However, it is evident that this oneness has been eroded by the current housing issue in Gambier, resulting in a smaller number faculty living in the Village. From speaking with a number of younger faculty members including coaches and professors, it is clear that this trend is felt on all levels.
- "Living in Gambier presents unique challenges for young faculty, including limited housing options and work opportunities for spouses. The social environment and demanding professional expectations further compound these difficulties. To retain and attract junior faculty, Kenyon College must revitalize housing, foster a more inclusive community, and create a welcoming atmosphere for young professionals and their families." (Kenyon Assistant Professor)

"Kenyon College needs to prioritize quality faculty housing to maintain academic excellence and attract top-tier professors, in addition to their efforts to provide exceptional student housing." -Kenyon College Professor

Recommendation

Following discussions with the Village Council and key members of the Kenyon College community, we recognize the scarcity of available land in Gambier. Despite previous proposals in the 2014 Campus Plan to develop faculty housing and independent living, these projects have yet to materialize. Our experience with the temporary modular apartments on Meadow Lane demonstrates the viability of this land for housing. Once the modular apartments are removed, we recommend utilizing this land for faculty housing, offering incoming professors a convenient solution to their accommodation needs. The location provides a comfortable distance from the student population, while still promoting community engagement and ensuring an easy commute. As the land has already been utilized for modular housing, repurposing it for faculty housing would be a seamless transition.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to professors Elkins and Chun for their invaluable guidance throughout this project. Their knowledge, expertise, and dedication to this work has been instrumental in helping us navigate the complexities of this research and complete this project successfully. We would also like to extend our thanks to the other professors who took the time to speak with us and provide us with valuable insights and perspectives. Their contributions were instrumental in helping us to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and to refine our research approach.