

APPENDIX A:

# Ironwood Fact Book

People, Place, and Community in Context

Understanding existing conditions in the community is a critical component of the comprehensive planning process. This Fact Book provides a point-in-time “snapshot” of conditions in the Ironwood community today, describing the people, places, and dynamics that shape community life. The facts and figures discussed in this chapter, along with input collected through the public engagement process (see Public Engagement Summary in Appendix B), served to inform the goals, strategies, and priorities laid out in the Comprehensive Plan. Topics covered in this chapter include:

- > Authority to Plan
- > Past Planning
- > History of Ironwood
- > Locational Analysis
- > Demographics
- > Economic Conditions
- > Existing Land Use
- > Housing
- > Natural Resources / Environment
- > Parks & Recreation
- > Infrastructure

## AUTHORITY TO PLAN

The 2008 Michigan Planning Enabling Act unified and replaced three prior planning acts for municipalities, townships, and counties in the state of Michigan (Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008). This legislation grants municipalities the authority to create a “master plan” (or comprehensive plan) which acts as the legal basis for the development of land use regulations. While a master plan is not explicitly required, the statute does indicate that for municipalities (such as Ironwood) that have a zoning ordinance, zoning must be based on a plan.

The purpose of the master plan is to guide future development towards more harmonious, economic, and efficient use of the land; promote public health, safety, and the general welfare; provide for adequate transportation systems, public utilities, and recreation; and ensure efficient expenditure of public funds (para. Sec. 7). The master plan may project 20 years or more into the future, and its adoption is subject to public hearing and approval by resolution of the municipal planning commission.

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension’s Land Use Team has published a variety of informational materials, guides, and checklists for use by planners, city administrators, and citizens to help explain the planning process and clarify the statutory requirements for community master planning. For more information, go to: <http://lu.msue.msu.edu>

## PAST PLANNING

Ironwood’s last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1982. In the intervening years, the City has undertaken a number of significant planning efforts, including a five year parks plan, downtown revitalization plan, and vision plan for the Highway 2 corridor. These plans continue to serve as guiding documents for the City and will inform the content and directives of the updated comprehensive plan.

### ***Ironwood Comprehensive Plan - 1981 (updated 2000)***

*Prepared by Barton-Aschman Associates for City of Ironwood*

The most recent Comprehensive Plan evaluates existing conditions

in the community and provides recommendations across a range of municipal issues, including future development patterns and public infrastructure. Economic development (job expansion), housing supply/maintenance, development patterns, public improvements (utilities, transportation, and parks), and tourism were some of the key issues discussed in the 1981 plan.

### **Key Recommendations:**

- Promote economic development and establish an organizing entity (including creation of business retention program, recruitment, year-round tourism promotion, event coordination, and creation of tourist attractions)
- Extend utilities to the ski hills to facilitate expansion of operations and accommodations
- Upgrade Highway 2 and downtown business districts
- Revitalize existing neighborhoods through vacant lot cleanup, tree planning, demolition of vacant/disused buildings, and other maintenance campaigns.
- Improve Highway 2 corridor (visual appearance/image, safety, land use conflicts, etc.)
- Upgrade City Zoning Ordinance

### ***Ironwood Downtown Blueprint - 2009***

*Prepared by HyettPalma for the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)*

The Ironwood Downtown Blueprint was created under the Blueprints for Michigan’s Downtowns program, a partnership between the MSHDA and the Michigan Municipal League that aims to assist communities with their downtown revitalization efforts. The document presents a vision for Ironwood’s downtown, a comprehensive analysis of downtown commercial markets, survey of business owners and residents, an economic enhancement strategy, and implementation plan.

### **Key Recommendations:**

- Invest in public realm improvements in the downtown area, including streetscape enhancements, wayfinding, gateway improvements, public art, and park enhancements

- Create incentives for private properties to make façade and interior improvements (including matching grants, revolving loan fund, MSHDA and MEDC resources, and historic tax credits)
- Improve code enforcement in downtown
- Acquire, rehab and resell a vacant downtown building as a demonstration project
- Encourage upper story housing
- Create a business incubator program
- Market downtown improvements through various outlets

**Outcomes to Date:**

- Downtown streetlights and street furniture installed
- Downtown Arts Place established
- Secured and spent \$1.4 Million in funding to support street improvements, the addition of 2 parking lots, Depot Park improvements, continuity walls, and the Downtown Pocket Park

**2011-2016 Park & Recreation Plan**

*City of Ironwood*

The City’s Five-Year Park Plan is intended to guide future parks and recreation development and programming within the city and includes a review of existing facilities, recreational goals, and an agenda for future facility improvements. The Plan is supported by a citywide recreation survey. The plan’s goals are to “plan and development a city environment, infrastructure, and recreation system that supports active, healthy lifestyles” and to “address the recreational needs of all age groups in the city”.

**Key Recommendations:**

Various capital improvements are outlined in the plan as part of the five-year capital improvement schedule, including:

- Depot Park Improvements
- Expansion of trail network (motorized and non-motorized)
- Interpretive signage (local history and neighborhood)
- Exploration of feasibility of children’s/nature museum

- Implementation of bike lanes on city streets
- Establishment of community gardens
- Upgrades and maintenance of various existing park and recreation facilities
- Playground construction north of Highway 2
- Dog Park

**Outcomes to Date:**

- Depot Park improvements completed
- Norrie Park playground equipment update and improvements made
- Civic Center ice-making capacity and updates completed
- Patterson tennis courts resurfaced
- Improvements in Miners Memorial Heritage Park by The Friends of the Miners Memorial Heritage Park, including the development of a 2.6 mile trail for walking, jogging, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing; interpretive signage for mining history in the park; clean-up of former dumping grounds; and an annual vigil for an historical mining accident.

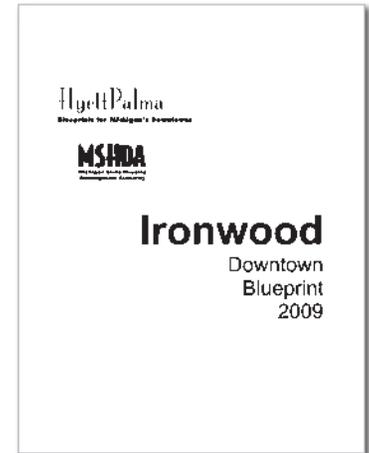
**US-2 Corridor Visual Enhancement Plan - 2003**

*The US-2 Visual Enhancement Planning Project Partnership*

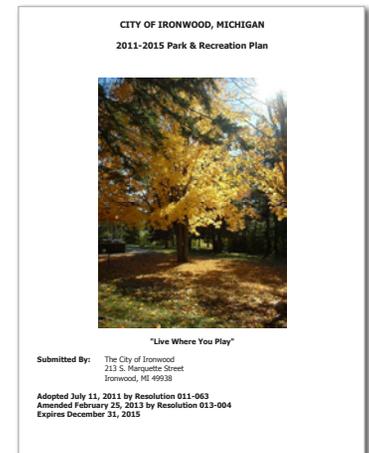
This project was funded through People and Land Program of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to develop a visual enhancement plan for the US-2/M-134 corridor (including BR-2). Ironwood was one of six communities along the US-2/M-134 corridor to receive planning assistance through this program. The report describes the existing pattern of development along Highway 2 as “linear sprawl,” citing inconsistencies in the overall quality of the streetscape and site design.

**Key Recommendations:**

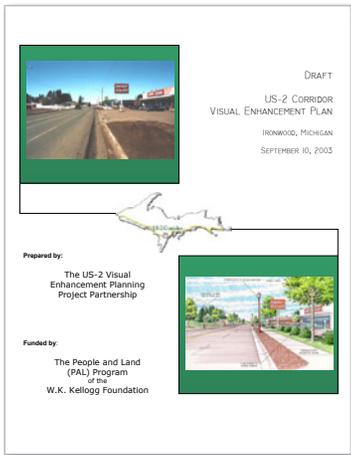
- Preserve east and west approaches into Ironwood (including restricting billboards in these areas; screening the industrial park; creating tourist center/kiosk; and upgrading signage/landscaping)



*Downtown Blueprint (2009)*



*2011-2016 Park & Recreation Plan*



US-2 Corridor Visual Enhancement Plan (2003)

- Improve BR-2 approach to downtown Ironwood from Hurley (including streetscape improvements; screening industrial areas; and enhancing existing Ironwood welcome sign)
- Explore joint project with Hurley, WI for heritage murals or signs on the viaduct
- Various roadway and sidewalk design improvements along Highway 2 (crosswalks, roll-curbs, decorative pavers, benches, pocket parks, banners, street trees, etc.)
- Replace utility pole-mounted streetlights with more attractive lamps, banner brackets, and outlets, and eliminate overhead power lines
- Screen storage yards and parking areas with landscaping/fencing
- Explore directional/wayfinding signage system
- Focus on core commercial blocks and key intersections (Lake, Douglas, Jackson, and Greenbush)
- Explore regulatory controls for signage, billboards, landscaping, lighting, access, and blight (provides model ordinance language)

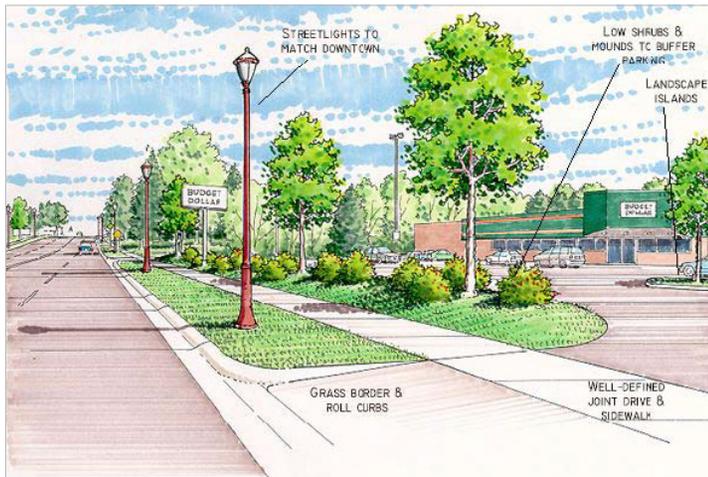


Illustration of proposed streetscape improvements along Highway 2 (US-2 Corridor Visual Enhancement Plan)

#### Outcomes to Date:

- Working with MDOT and Xcel Energy to bury power lines and add upgraded light poles.

#### Zoning Ordinance

##### City of Ironwood

The 1982 comprehensive plan includes a number of recommendations to update Ironwood's zoning ordinance to comply with state statute and modern standards, and to rectify inconsistencies in the existing code. City staff has similarly noted ongoing issues with the city's current zoning ordinance, citing inconsistencies, outdated policies, and compliance issues. Presently, the city has no subdivision ordinance or unified development ordinance to guide new development.

#### Gogebic Wastewater Master Plan - 2010

Prepared by Donahue & Associates, Inc. for Gogebic-Iron Wastewater Authority

The master plan is a 20-year plan to maintain wastewater treatment service at the Gogebic-Iron wastewater treatment plant. The plan evaluates facility needs and conditions and provides recommendations for capital improvements and equipment replacement. The plan also evaluates plant capacity and effluent levels. Further details are provided in to the infrastructure section of this appendix (see page A-32).

#### Gogebic Range Next Generation Survey – 2010

Will Andriesen, Associate Professor, UW Extension and the Gogebic Range Next Generation Initiative (NGI)

The Gogebic Range Next Generation Survey was distributed in 2010 to better understand the factors that influence the location decisions of young people in the Gogebic Range. The survey, based on the Michigan Cool Cities Survey, was a statewide initiative that asked 13,500 college students and recent graduates ages 18 to 35 to rate the factors influencing their decision of where to live. The results of the survey revealed that, similar to findings in the Cool Cities Survey, young people are more likely to make decisions about where to live based on community qualities and lifestyle more than job opportunities. The survey led to the creation of four work groups

tasked with pursuing strategies to: (1) Enhance the region's nature-based outdoor recreation niche; (2) Promote the Gogebic Range as a place to live and work; (3) Retain young workers by building social capital (through social networking and programming); and (4) retain students by better connecting them to the community.

**Outcomes to date:**

The Go-In Forward Next Generation group was formed as an outgrowth of the NGI work-groups to help attract and retain young people in the Iron-Gogebic Range. Today, the group has a growing number of active members and organizes a variety of social events, community projects, and fundraisers to engage and connect young people in the community. The group also manages a website to spotlight its activities and serve as a marketing platform for the area ([www.felivelife.com](http://www.felivelife.com))

## HISTORY OF IRONWOOD

Iron Ore was first discovered in the Gogebic Range in the late 1800s, and the first settlements in Ironwood began in 1884. The growth of iron mining and logging in the range, as well as expansion of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore, and Western Railway Company railroads, brought new and diverse populations to the community. Through the early 1900s, Ironwood continued to grow at a rapid pace, reaching its peak in the 1920s with a population estimated around 25,000.

As demand for iron ore declined following the great depression, so too did Ironwood's population, falling to about 11,000 residents by 1950. Between 1950 and 1970, iron production in the Gogebic Range ground to a halt, leaving mining communities like Ironwood to search for new identity and livelihood.

In recent years, various economic development efforts have endeavored to promote new industries and opportunity in the region. Taking advantage of high annual snowfalls and relatively mountainous terrain for the region, the Upper Peninsula has emerged as a destination for winter sports and outdoor recreation. Ironwood too has sought to capitalize on its natural beauty and local recreational assets, promoting local ski hills, snowmobile, ATV, and cross-county trails, as well as its proximity to regional destinations like Lake Superior and the Porcupine Mountains.

Ironwood's history is indelibly etched in the present day places and spaces of the community. Neighborhoods, streets, and parks bear the names of the former mines (Norrie, Aurora, Curry); The mining

caves themselves extend through the length of the community- the historic spine around which the community was built and thrived for decades. Ironwood takes great pride in its local history and heritage, and through public and private efforts, a number of sites and buildings in the community have been preserved and restored as civic, cultural, and recreational destinations:

**Memorial Building\*:** Completed in 1923, the Memorial Building was built in tribute to Ironwood's World War I veterans. Historical plaques and exhibits within the building recall Ironwood's mining, railroad, and timber past- and honor the sacrifices of the more than 1,500 Ironwood area men who perished in World War I. The building is prized for its Beaux Art architecture, stained glass windows, and collection of public murals and sculpture. The building still functions today as Ironwood's Municipal Offices.

**Miners Memorial Heritage Park:** Dedicated by the City in 2010, the Miners Memorial Heritage Park (MMHP) encompasses the former iron ore mining locations within Ironwood. Today, MMHP has a number of non-motorized trails for cross-country skiing, walking, hiking, and biking.

**Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Building\*:** Originally built in 1892 and used as a freight and passenger rail depot until 1971, the building is now home to the Ironwood Area Chamber of Commerce and a museum maintained by the Ironwood Area Historical Society. The area surrounding the depot was dedicated as a city park in 2013.

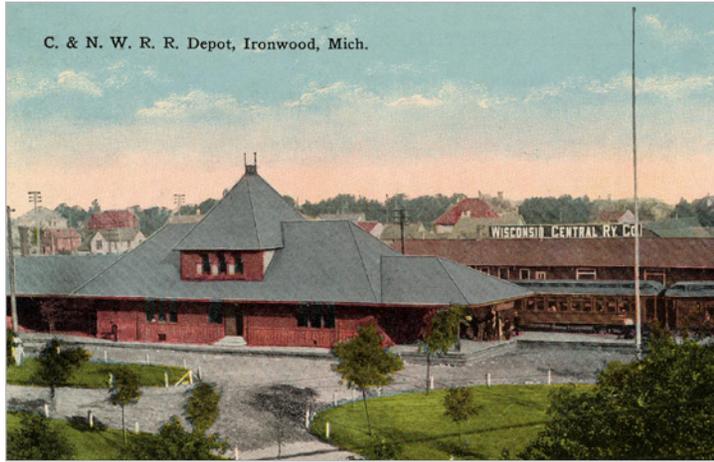
**Ironwood Carnegie Library\*:** The Ironwood Carnegie Library was built in 1901 and is the oldest continuously operated Carnegie Library in Michigan.

**Historic Ironwood Theater\*:** The Historic Ironwood Theater was built in 1928 and remained in operation until 1982. The City of Ironwood purchased the building and the adjacent Seaman Building (today home of the Downtown Art Place) to facilitate its preservation and restoration. The theater reopened in 1988, operating as a non-profit cultural organization, and is today, a regional destination for performing arts.

\* National Register of Historic Places



Illustration of the 1885 Ironwood settlement



Left: Depot postcard circa 1910 (Credit: <http://commons.wikimedia.org>); Center: The restored depot building as it stands today (Credit: Christine Collins); Right: Ironwood's Statue of Hiawatha



Left: Ironwood Carnegie Library; Center: Ironwood Theater (Credit: [www.facebook.com/ironwoodtheatre](http://www.facebook.com/ironwoodtheatre)); Right: Historic interpretation in Miners Memorial Heritage Park (Credit: [www.fmmhp.com](http://www.fmmhp.com))



Left: Memorial Building (Credit: <http://commons.wikimedia.org>); Middle: Stained glass inside the Memorial Building (Credit: Christine Collins); Right: Mural commemorating Ironwood's mining history (Credit: [www.fox21online.com](http://www.fox21online.com))

## LOCATIONAL ANALYSIS



*Gogebic County's location at the western gateway to Michigan's Upper Peninsula*

The following section looks at the City of Ironwood's location at three scales: Regional, Community, and City. The regional scale considers Ironwood's location within the broader region and relationship to major population centers and regional destinations. The community scale looks at Ironwood's immediate neighbors on the Iron-Gogebic Range, adjacent municipalities, and various jurisdictional boundaries. The city scale focuses on the City of Ironwood proper.

### REGIONAL CONTEXT

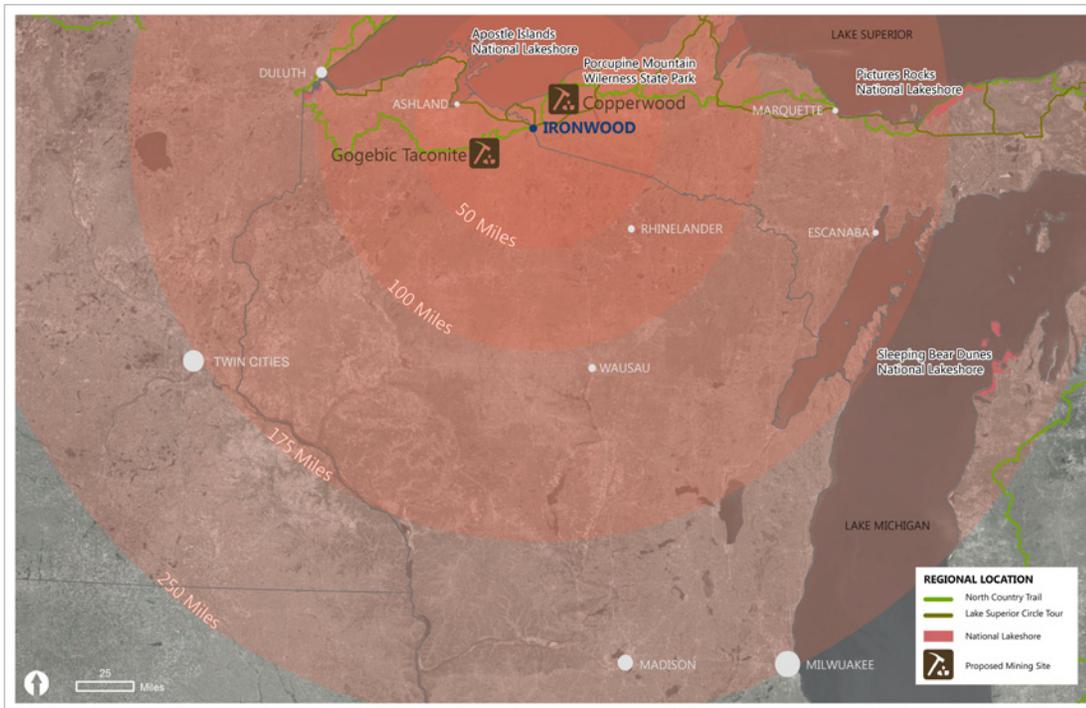
A community's character is deeply influenced by its regional context and the landscape within which it resides. Ironwood is located in Gogebic County at the northern gateway to the Upper Peninsula and in the heart of big snow country. Ironwood and its neighboring communities benefit from the many open space assets in the region such as the Porcupine Mountains, Lake Superior, the

Ottawa National Forest, and some of the Midwest's best skiing areas. These features draw visitors from towns and cities across the region. Figure A-1 illustrates Ironwood's regional neighbors within a 250 mile radius. Neighboring population centers include Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Duluth and Madison.

There are only four areas in the United States designated as National Lakeshores by the National Park Service; Three of these are within 250 miles of Ironwood, and two are within a four hour drive. In addition to these major destinations, there are over 15 waterfalls within 30 miles of Ironwood. The nearby Ottawa National Forest includes nearly one million acres of forest land and 27 public campgrounds. The Upper Peninsula Travel and Recreation Association maintains a thorough and interactive map of the region's recreation-based assets at [www.uptravel.com](http://www.uptravel.com).

The wealth of natural and scenic beauty in and around Ironwood makes the area a year-round destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Winter sports are the major recreational draw. The Ironwood area provides access to hundreds of miles of snowmobile trails and six major ski areas. The ski areas include five downhill facilities (Big Powderhorn, Blackjack, Indianhead, Mount Zion, and Whitecap) and two cross-country facilities (ABR and Wolverine). In addition to winter recreation opportunities, the region also is a year-round destination for hiking, cycling, hunting, mountain biking, camping, fishing, kayaking, and sight-seeing. See page A-26 for more on Ironwood area recreational assets.

FIGURE A-1. REGIONAL CONTEXT



### Mining Projects

There are currently two proposed mining sites within 25 miles of Ironwood in varying stages of planning. While future impacts of new mining operations in Ironwood cannot be fully anticipated at this time, there are employment estimates that provide a baseline understanding of potential job creation related to these projects.

#### Gogebic Taconite

- Location: East of Mellen, Wisconsin.
- Open pit taconite (iron) mine
- Estimated 3,175 jobs during construction (2 year period)
- Estimated 700 direct mining jobs 2,834 total jobs (phase I, approx. 35 years)

- Estimated 1,400 direct mining jobs (phase II, approx 50+ years)
- Estimated average annual income of \$82,982 for employees

(Source: The Economic Impact of The Gogebic Taconite Mine, prepared by NorthStar Economics, Inc., March 24, 2011)

**Copperwood Mine:**

- Location: North of Wakefield, adjacent to Lake Superior, between the Presque Isle and Black rivers
- Underground copper mine
- Operated by Highland Copper Company Inc.
- Estimated 188 direct jobs over a period of 17 years

(Source: Feasibility Study of the Copperwood Project, Upper Peninsula, Michigan, USA, prepared by KD Engineering, March 21, 2012)

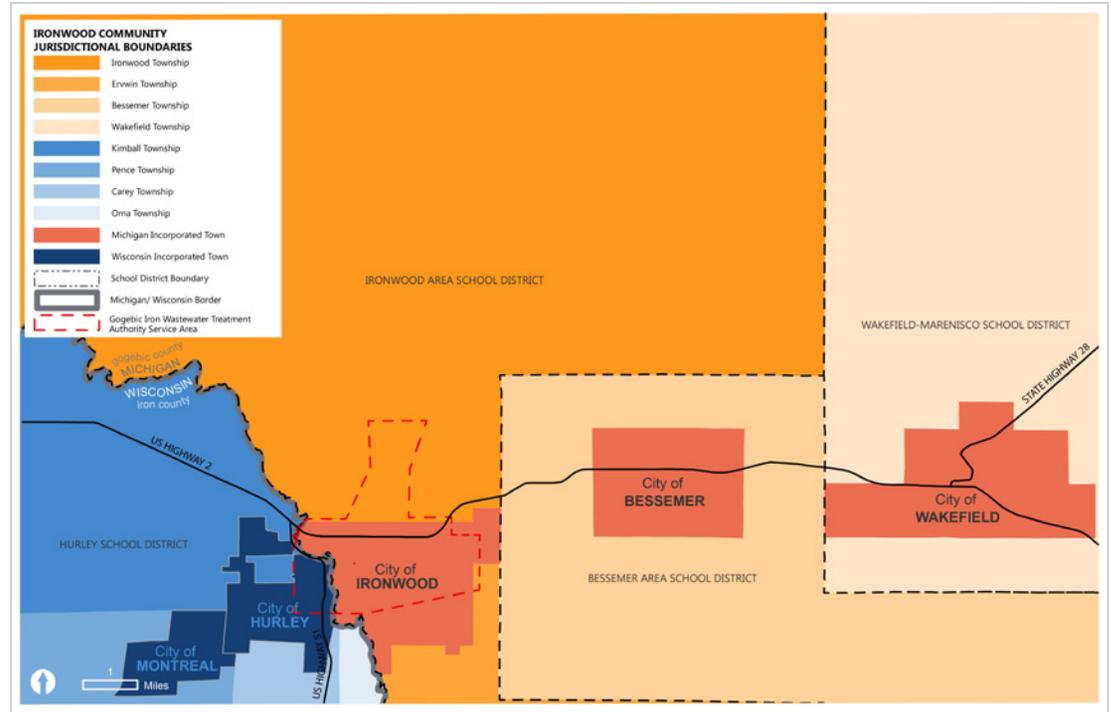
**COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES**

Located along the Michigan-Wisconsin border and at the confluence of several townships and cities, Ironwood is influenced by a variety of jurisdictional forces. Figure A-2 illustrates the numerous jurisdictional boundaries in the Ironwood area. Individuals living in these communities along the Gogebic Range often work in one municipality while residing in another and may conceive of their “community” as extending beyond their home city/township limits to encompass the broader area, the county, or the Gogebic Range. To the extent that these communities, entities, and citizens interact and share assets and resources, they are, in a sense, one “community” interacting in numerous formal and informal arrangements.

**Local Coordination**

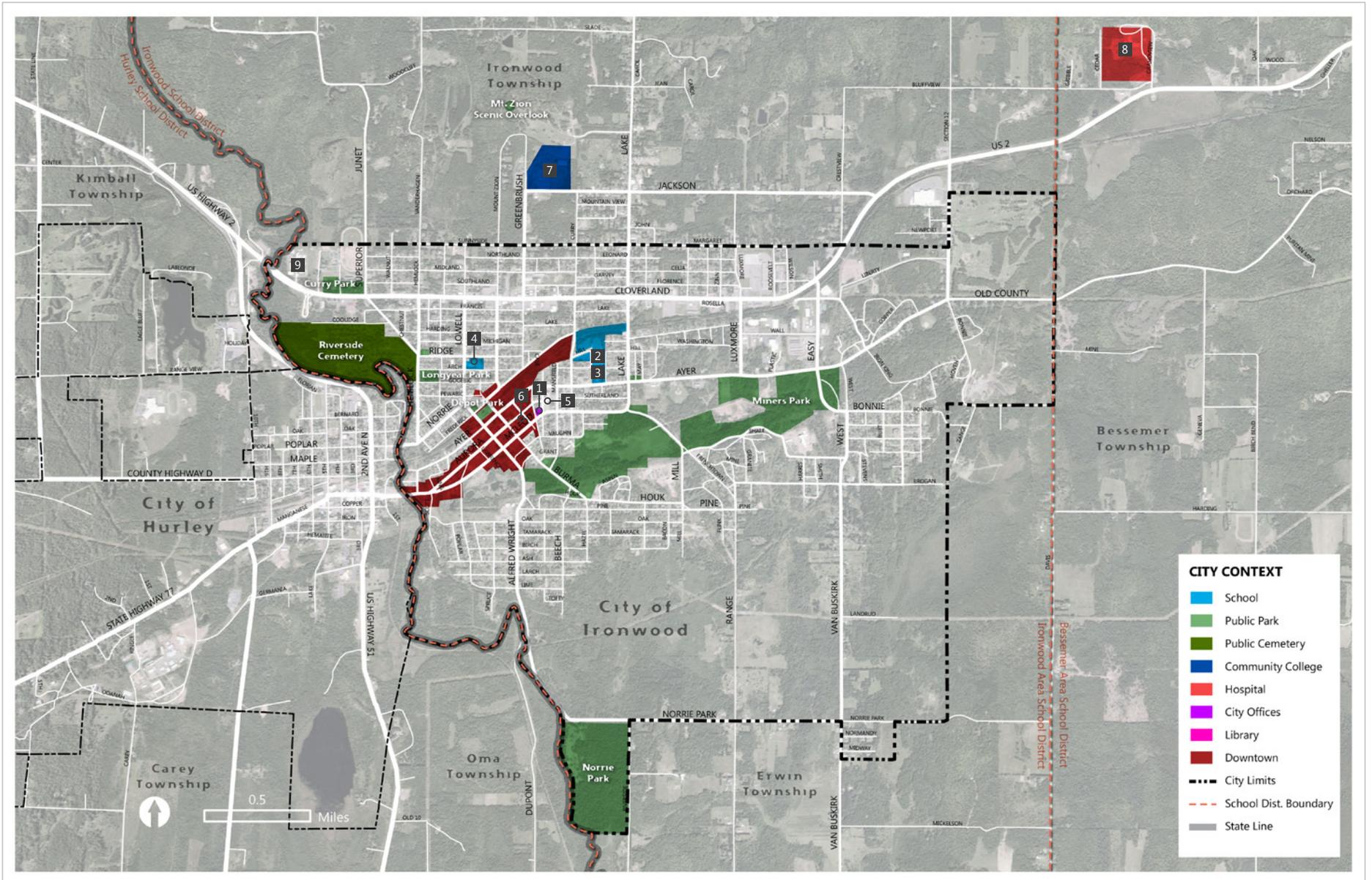
Iron County, Wisconsin and Gogebic County, while located in different states, have a common interest in promoting economic development, tourism, education, and other initiatives at a regional level. Both counties have signed resolutions of support for the Gogebic Range Next Generation Initiative, and share a local SWAT team. Other shared resources include the Gogebic-Iron County Airport and the Gogebic-Iron Water Authority.

FIGURE A-2. JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES



The neighboring cities of Ironwood, Hurley, Montreal, Bessemer and Wakefield- as well as the various township areas- share a number of community resources. For example, the Aspirus Grand View Hospital, located just outside of Ironwood, serves all 5 communities with emergency medical, surgical, and therapeutic services. These cities have also collaborated on initiatives such as the Western Gateway and Riverwalk trails and the Gogebic Iron Area Narcotics Team (GIANT). The cities do however maintain a number of separate services. The five-city area is served by four school districts and separate police and fire departments.

FIGURE A-3. CITY OF IRONWOOD



- |                               |                                |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Ironwood Municipal Offices | 4. Sleight Elementary School   | 7. Gogebic County Community College | 9. Gogebic-Iron Wastewater Treatment Facility |
| 2. L.L. Wright High School    | 5. All Saints Catholic Academy | 8. Aspirus Grand View Hospital      |   |
| 3. Norrie Elementary School   | 6. Ironwood Carnegie Library   |                                     |   |

### ***City of Ironwood - Jurisdictional Boundaries***

The City of Ironwood shares borders with six different governing entities: The City of Hurley, Wisconsin to the west, the township of Ironwood to the north, Erwin Township to the south, Bessemer Township to the east, Oma to the southwest, and Kimball Township to the northwest. Ironwood also sits at the state and county border. See Figure A-3 on the opposite page.

### **School Districts**

Ironwood's school district encompasses the city proper, but also extends to the north and south, serving Ironwood and Erwin Townships. The Ironwood Area School District is one of four school districts within a 15 mile radius. This is especially notably when you consider the low population density of the area, and the low enrollment numbers within each district. The idea of consolidating school districts was raised by a number of respondents to the community survey. Consolidation has been discussed by the municipalities in the past.

There are three public schools housed in two buildings in Ironwood: L.L. Wright High School, Norrie Elementary School, and Sleight Elementary School. L.L. Wright and Norrie are housed in the same facility. Current enrollment in the Ironwood district is 875, down from 946 in 2010 and 1,600 in 1993. 75% of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

To the east, Bessemer Area School District serves residents of the City of Bessemer and Bessemer Township. Current enrollment is 440. Hurley School District to the west in Wisconsin serves the residents of Hurley and Montreal, the townships of Carey, Gurney, Iron Belt, Oma, Pence, and Saxon, and the communities of Iron Belt and Upson. Hurley's current enrollment is 440. Wakefield-Marenisco Area School District serves the City of Wakefield, and Wakefield and Marenisco Townships. Current enrollment is 338. The issue of consolidation is further complicated by the fact that the Hurley School District is in Wisconsin and thus subject to different state education policy and jurisdiction.

### **Gogebic-Iron Wastewater Authority District**

The Gogebic-Iron Wastewater Authority District is owned by the City of Ironwood, Ironwood Township, and the City of Hurley. The area of service is delineated in Figure A-2. More information about the district can be found in the Infrastructure section on page A-32.

### **Gogebic Community College**

The Gogebic Community College campus lies just outside the northern city limits of Ironwood, and is one of only two community colleges in the western Upper Peninsula. The college operates the Mount Zion Ski Area as part of its distinguished Ski Area Management program. The campus also includes the Pat O'Donnell Civic Center and the Lindquist Student Center. The civic center houses Ironwood's only indoor ice rink and is utilized by a number of local groups and athletic organizations from Ironwood and surrounding communities.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

By looking at demographic data, we can better understand current dynamics and potential issues and opportunities in the Ironwood community. Are certain populations growing or shrinking? How have conditions changed over time? How does Ironwood compare to its neighbors, the region, the state? The following section addresses such questions across a range of topics, drawing from the U.S. Decennial Census and other sources.

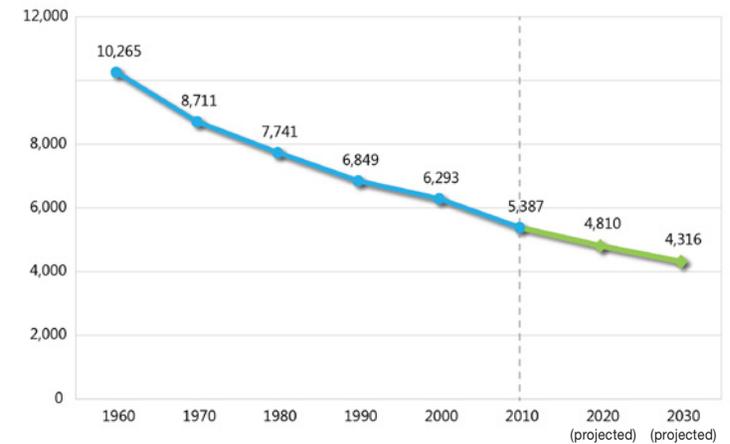
### HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS

As shown in Figure A-4, Ironwood’s population has declined steadily over the past half decade, falling from over 10,000 residents in 1960, to just over 5,000 in 2010. The 2020 and 2030 projections shown below are based on historical rates of change. Recent population loss in Ironwood (see figure A-4) is similar in magnitude to that seen in neighboring communities Bessemer, Wakefield, and Hurley.

### AGE + GENDER

In comparison to state age and gender distributions, Ironwood’s population skews older and slightly more female. 22% of Ironwood residents are 65 and older in comparison to 14% statewide. 22% of Ironwood residents are under the age of 20 in comparison to 27% statewide. Between 2000 and 2010, population declined across all 5-year age cohorts with the exception cohorts between 50 and 69 years of age. This is likely attributed the aging up of “baby boomers” (those born between roughly 1946 and 1964).

FIGURE A-4. POPULATION TREND, 1960 TO 2010 - IRONWOOD, MI



Note: The population projection above uses the least squares method to determine the “best fit” trend line for historical percent change values. This trend line is used to project future population change out to 2030.

### RACE AND ETHNICITY

The population of Ironwood is predominantly white (96%) with one percent of residents American Indian, less than one percent Black or African-American, less than one percent Asian, and 2% reporting race as “Other.” 1% of the population is Hispanic.

## DEMOGRAPHY IS NOT DESTINY...

Although the population projection shown on this page points to continued population loss in Ironwood, this should not be taken as an absolute or inevitable future, but rather, the likely outcome if conditions in the community remain largely the same. One might consider this the “do nothing” scenario. The comprehensive planning process is an opportunity to combat these population trends by improving conditions in the community and encouraging and enabling future growth.

TABLE A-1. HISTORICAL POPULATION, 1960 TO 2010 - IRONWOOD AND COMPARISON AREAS

Year	Ironwood	% change	Bessemer	% change	Wakefield	% change	Hurley	% change	Gogebic County	% change	Iron County	% change
1960	10,265	-	3,304	-	3,231	-	NA	-	24,370	-	7,830	-
1970	8,711	-15%	2,805	-15%	2,757	-15%	NA	-	20,676	-15%	6,533	-17%
1980	7,741	-11%	2,553	-9%	2,591	-6%	NA	-	19,686	-5%	6,730	3%
1990	6,849	-12%	2,272	-11%	2,318	-11%	NA	-	18,052	-8%	6,153	-9%
2000	6,293	-8%	2,148	-5%	2,085	-10%	1,818	-	17,370	-4%	6,861	12%
2010	5,387	-14%	1,905	-11%	1,851	-11%	1,547	-15%	16,427	-5%	5,916	-14%

Data Source: Demographic data on this page is from the U.S. Decennial Census (various years)

FIGURE A-5. POPULATION BY AGE AND GENDER, 2010 - IRONWOOD, MI

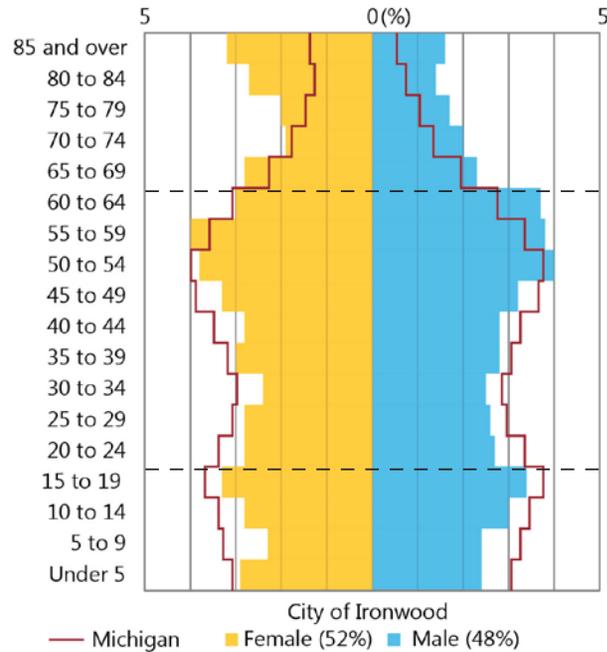
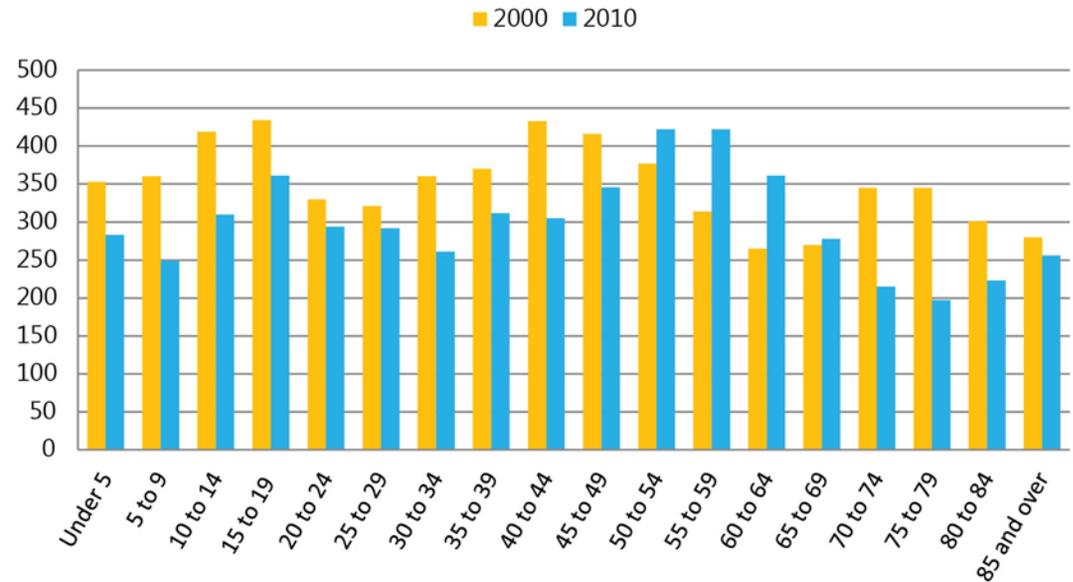


FIGURE A-6. POPULATION BY AGE, 2000 & 2010 - IRONWOOD, MI

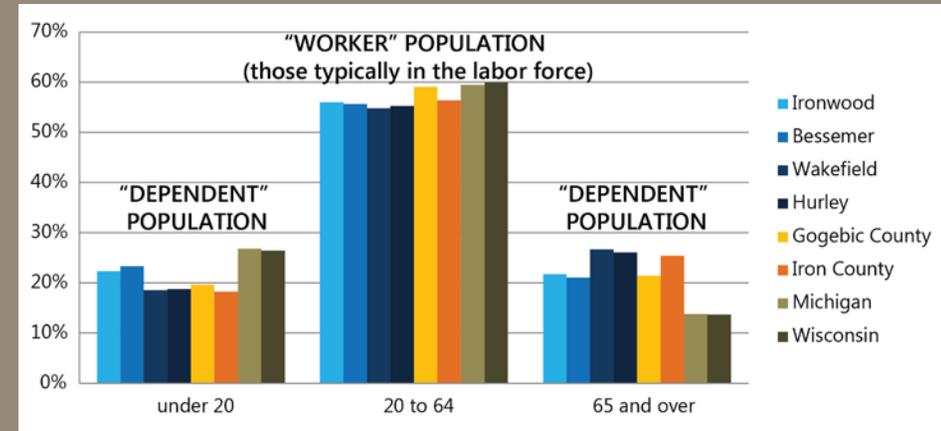


## AGING POPULATIONS

With the rest of the baby boom generation reaching retirement age in the next twenty years, increasing life expectancies, and decreasing birth rates, communities across the country are facing questions about how to plan for an aging population. Ironwood and surrounding communities are no exception to this trend. Compared to statewide figures for Michigan and Wisconsin, Ironwood has a higher percentage of residents “65 and over” and lower percentage of residents in the “under 20” range (young dependents) and the “20 to 64” range (prime labor force). To put it in other terms, for every senior in Ironwood, there are 2.6 working age residents; at the state level, that ratio is 4.4 workers per senior.

This planning process should consider potential impacts of a growing senior population with regard to housing needs, affordability, and maintenance; workforce and entrepreneurship opportunities for seniors; transportation options; bike and pedestrian accessibility; and other quality of life considerations (including parks and open space, recreation, and social services).

FIGURE A-7. WORKERS AND DEPENDENT SUBGROUPS (% OF TOTAL POPULATION)



Data Source: Demographic data on this page is from the U.S. Decennial Census 2000 & 2010

## HOUSEHOLDS

According to the 2010 Census, there are 2,520 households in Ironwood, 56% of which were family households and 44% were non-family households. The U.S. Census defines a “family household” as two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing together in a housing unit (this includes any unrelated persons who may be residing there). The average household size in Ironwood is 2.09. The average family household size is 2.72.

TABLE A-2. . HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE - IRONWOOD, 2000 & 2010

Family Households	2000	%	2010	%	% change
Husband-wife family, no children	767	27%	675	27%	-12%
Husband-wife family, with own children under 18	438	15%	295	12%	-33%
Single householder, no children	152	5%	160	6%	5%
Single householder, with own children under 18	268	9%	278	11%	4%

Non Family Households	2000	%	2010	%	% change
Householder living alone	1077	38%	969	38%	-10%
Multiple unrelated residents	139	5%	143	6%	3%

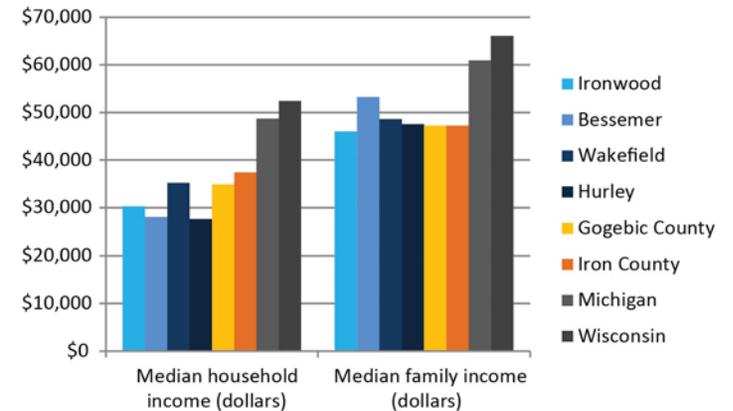
## INCOME

Median household income in Ironwood is about \$30,000 a year (no change from 2000 when adjusted for inflation). The median family income is about \$46,000 a year (an 18% increase from 2010 when adjusted for inflation). Ironwood’s median household income is lower than state and county medians (Gogebic- \$34.9k, Michigan- \$48.7k). Median family income is comparable to the county median (Gogebic- \$47.2k), but well under the state median (Michigan- \$60.9k).

TABLE A-3. MEDIAN INCOME - IRONWOOD, 2000 & 2010

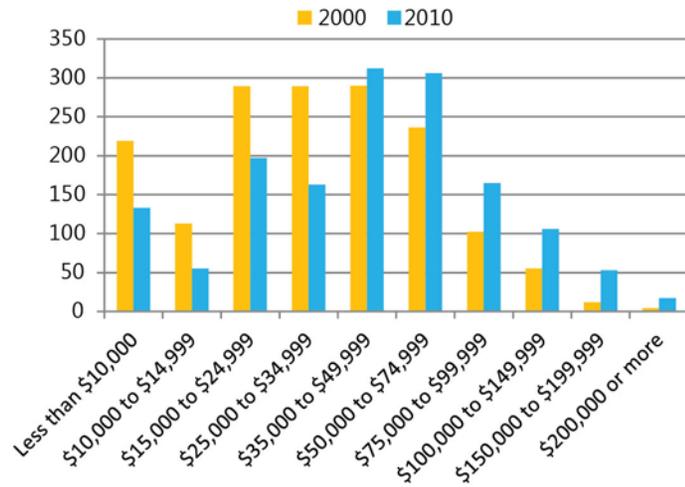
Median Income (in 2010 dollars)	2000	2010	% change
Median household income	\$30,264	\$30,301	0%
Median family income	\$39,082	\$46,024	18%

FIGURE A-8. MEDIAN INCOME - IRONWOOD AND COMPARISON AREAS, 2010



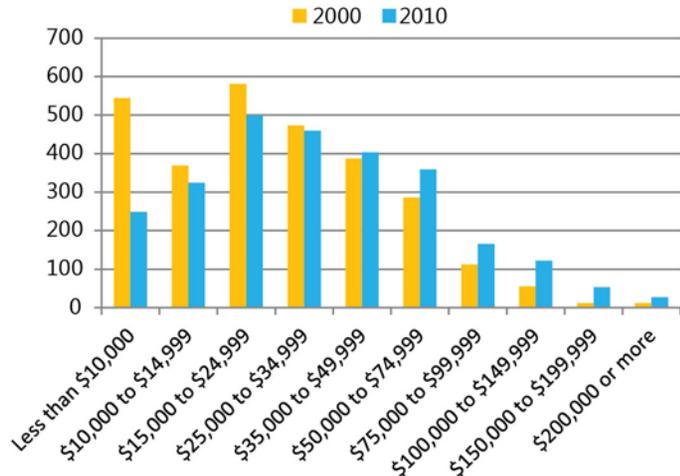
Data Source: Demographic data on this page is from the U.S. Decennial Census 2000 & 2010 and the American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE A-9. FAMILY INCOME - IRONWOOD, 2000 & 2010



Note: 2000 incomes not adjusted for inflation

FIGURE A-10. HOUSEHOLD INCOME - IRONWOOD, 2000 & 2010

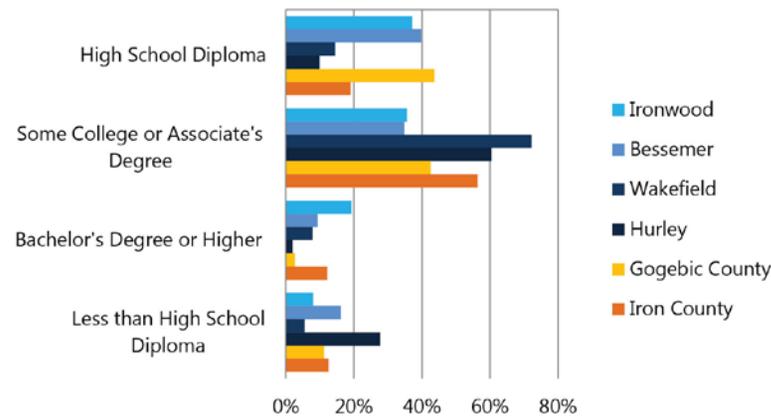


Note: 2000 incomes not adjusted for inflation

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT + ENROLLMENT

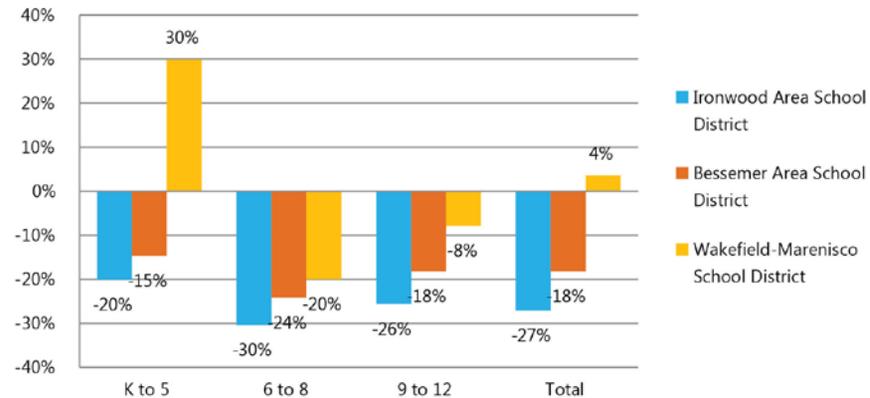
92% of residents 25 and over have a high school degree or higher; 19% have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 8% have less than a high school diploma. Ironwood has a higher rate of secondary and post-secondary educational attainment than neighboring communities. School District Enrollment is declining at all levels.

FIGURE A-11. HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT\* - IRONWOOD, 2010



\*\* Individuals 3 years and older who report being enrolled in a regular

FIGURE A-12. SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT, PERCENT CHANGE 2002 TO 2012



Data Source: Demographic data on this page is from the U.S. Decennial Census 2000 & 2010 and the American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates; School district enrollment is from the Michigan School Data Portal ([www.mischooldata.org](http://www.mischooldata.org))

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

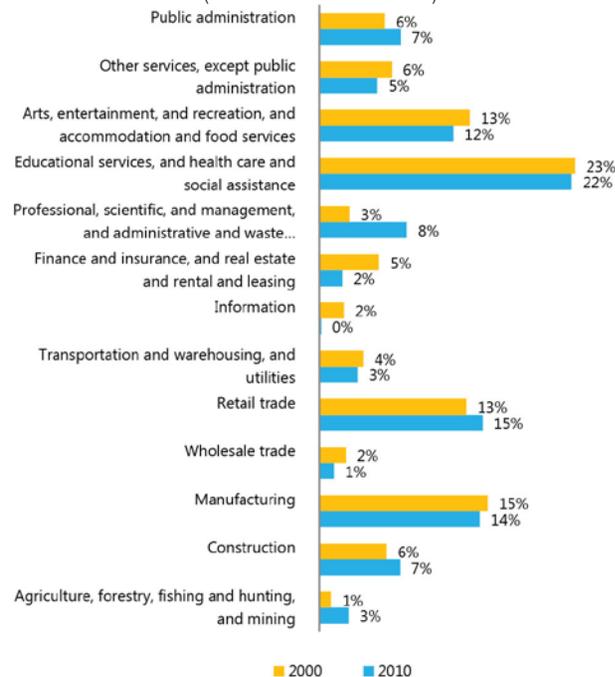
### WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

Within the working age population of Ironwood (residents age 16 and over), 2,342 (51%) are employed, 243 (5%) are unemployed and actively seeking work, and 1,967 (43%) are “not in the labor force,” which may include the long-term unemployed, students, homemakers, retired workers, seasonal workers, institutionalized persons, and those doing only incidental unpaid family work.

### EMPLOYMENT (IRONWOOD RESIDENTS)

Figures A-13 and A-15 respectively show the industries of employment and occupations of Ironwood residents. The most common industries for employment among Ironwood residents include Educational services, health care, and social assistance; arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services; manufacturing; and retail trade.

FIGURE A-13. INDUSTRY (IRONWOOD RESIDENTS) - 2000 & 2010



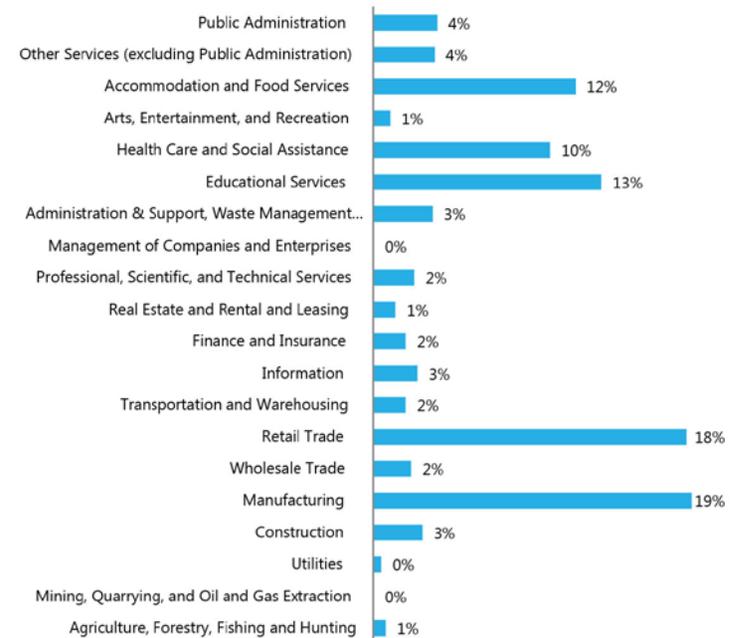
### EMPLOYMENT (WORKERS EMPLOYED IN IRONWOOD)

Figure A-14 shows the industries of employment for all workers in Ironwood (regardless of home origin). Manufacturing; retail trade; education services; accommodations and food services; and health care and social assistance are among the most active employment industries in the community.

### INFLOW/OUTFLOW

56% (981) of Ironwood residents who are in the workforce work outside of Ironwood. 69% (1,838) of total individuals employed in Ironwood live outside of Ironwood. See Figure A-16. 20% of employed Ironwood residents travel over 25 miles to work. Of individuals employed in Ironwood 29% travel over 25 miles to work in Ironwood. See Tables A-4 and A-5.

FIGURE A-14. INDUSTRY (WORKERS EMPLOYED IN IRONWOOD) - 2011



Data Source: Demographic data on this page is from the 2000 & 2010 U.S. Decennial Census, American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates, and the OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2011).



## TOURISM & EVENTS

Outdoor recreation tourism is a core industry for the Upper Peninsula and the City of Ironwood. Through the effort of the City, Downtown Ironwood Development Authority, the Ironwood Theater, and Downtown Art Place among others, Ironwood is growing its arts community and arts-related amenities and destinations.

Ironwood area attractions include:

- **Outdoor recreational destinations** (see [p. A-26](#) for more on local and regional recreational assets)
  - › Mt. Zion Ski Hill
  - › Local cross country, snowmobiling, and ATV trails
  - › Lake Superior
  - › Porcupine Mountains
  - › Ski areas
- **Arts-related attractions:**
  - › Downtown Art Place (DAP)
  - › Z Place Gallery & Framing
  - › Historic Ironwood Theater & Theatre North
- **Historic and heritage sites:**
  - › Memorial Building

- › Old Depot Museum (maintained by the Ironwood Area Historical Society)
- › Little Finland (Hurley, WI)
- › Hiawatha Statue
- **Events and festivals:**
  - › SISU Skifest
  - › Festival Ironwood
  - › Jack Frost Festival
  - › Blackjack ISOC Snowmobile Races
  - › Ironwood Snowmobile Olympics

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

There are a number of organizations engaging in economic development activities in the Ironwood area and the broader region and state. The following table is a comprehensive list of organizations/agencies that provide varying levels of economic development-oriented services. The table lists the key roles/functions of these groups, as well as their geographic focus areas.



Historic Ironwood Theater (Credit: <http://commons.wikimedia.org>)



SISU Ski Fest (Credit: [www.sisuskifest.com](http://www.sisuskifest.com))

TABLE A-6. IRONWOOD AREA AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

Economic Development Group	Function/Role of Group											Geographic Focus / Priority												
	Marketing/Promotion	Funding	Consulting/Advisor	Own/Develop	Mentor	Event/Organizer	Operators	Broker	Recruiter	Job Creation	Training/Retraining	Partner	Downtown Ironwood	Ironwood Industrial Park	City of Ironwood	City of Hurley	City of Bessemer	City of Wakefield	Gogebic County	Ontonagon County	UP	Iron County, WI	State	US
Downtown Ironwood Development Authority	P			S		S	S	P	P			P	X											
Foundations																								
Gogebic Brownfield Redevelopment Authority		P																	X					
Gogebic Community College	P		P		P	P					P	P			X		X	X	X				X	
Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Action	P	S	P			P	P	S	P	P		P							X	X				
Gogebic-Ontonagon Community Foundation		P				P						P							X	X				
Ironwood Area Chamber of Commerce	P				S	P		S				P	X	X	X	X	X		X					
Ironwood Economic Development Corporation	P	P	P	S	P		S	P	P			P	X	X	X									
Ironwood Industrial Development Corporation	P	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	P			P		X										
Ironwood Tourism Council	P	P										P	X	X	X									
Michigan Economic Development Association			P		P	P						P	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	
Michigan Economic Development Corporation		P	P						S			P											X	
Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center	S		P		S	S						P	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			
Michigan State University Extension			P		P	S						P									X		X	
Michigan Works	S		S			S				P	P	P	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			
Northern Initiatives	S	P	P										X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Private Companies (banks, utilities)																								
UP Collaborative Development Council												P											X	X
UP Economic Development Alliance	S					P						P											X	
UPWard Initiative	P					P						P											X	
US Department of Ag Rural Development		P											X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Western UP Convention and Visitor Bureau	P	P	S		P	P						P	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	
Western UP Planning & Development Region		P	S			S						S			X		X	X	X	X	X			
Wilds of Michigan	P												X	X	X		X	X	X	X				

## EXISTING LAND USE

One way of observing patterns in Ironwood is through an analysis of existing land use patterns. Existing land use is a snapshot of how lands are currently used taken at a point in time, in this case Winter of 2013/2014. Existing land use was determined through an analysis of current tax classification, parcel data (including year built and building values), current zoning designations, ownership data, an evaluation of aerial photos, and limited field observations. The following categories describe the existing land use pattern in Ironwood:

### COMMERCIAL

Commercial land uses represent locations where retail goods and services are bought and sold. These sites are characterized by proximity and visibility to and from major road corridors or key districts such as downtown Ironwood. Generally, these uses generate significant vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Limited neighborhood commercial services can also be found serving many of the residential neighborhoods. These uses tend to be smaller building foot prints and often located in what used to be residential structures. Outside of downtown, commercial uses area characterized more with an auto orientation (parking lots, large highway oriented signage, buildings set back from the street with parking in front). Within the downtown district (and to a degree at some neighborhood nodes), commercial uses are more pedestrian oriented, largely due to the historic nature of downtown and the time period in which it was developed.

### INDUSTRIAL

Industrial uses tend to be more job intensive uses or manufacturing intensive uses that require larger footprints and generate greater levels of by-products such as noise, truck traffic, dust, or outside storage. Examples of industrial uses can be found in the city industrial park or on some outlying parcels.

### RESIDENTIAL

The predominant land use pattern in the city is devoted to single family detached residential housing uses. Residential neighborhoods within the areas adjacent downtown typically follow a similar platting pattern of 45-50 foot wide residential lots oriented towards an east/west neighborhood street and platted with alley access. Many home sites combine two lots or more platted lots per single family home. In some cases, small apartments or multifamily housing is introduced into the neighborhood fabric. Across all residential land uses, there are approximately 3.3 units per acre of residential land.

### PUBLIC FACILITIES

Public facilities generally include such uses as the County Fairgrounds, maintenance facilities, government service centers such as the Memorial Building, or other public oriented uses. These uses are often located in or near commercial corridors or districts and generate a fair amount of vehicle traffic, particularly during key events or peak periods.

### SCHOOLS

Schools are also public facilities; however, locating schools requires a more considerate account of proximity to housing, parks/open space, and transportation corridors. Schools include K-12 facilities in Ironwood. Gogebic Community College located just north of the City is not included in the existing land use inventory but is recognized as being an integral part of the community.

### RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

This category essentially includes churches and schools or other assembly type programs that are directly affiliated with a church. These uses historically have located in residential neighborhoods; however, they are characterized today by being more of an auto oriented destination generating vehicle traffic at key peak periods during assembly or congregation events.

### INSTITUTIONS

Uses that have characteristics of more service providers and public/non-profit orientations are grouped into the “institutional” designation. These uses might include nursing homes, day cares, or social service facilities.

### PARK

Park is predominantly city owned public park land, which might be active play fields/facilities or more passive trails and open space.

### PUBLIC

Public represents publicly owned lands that are not principally park land but are also not generally situated for future active development. This includes the cemetery and some miscellaneous open space parcels.

FIGURE A-17. MAP OF EXISTING LAND USE

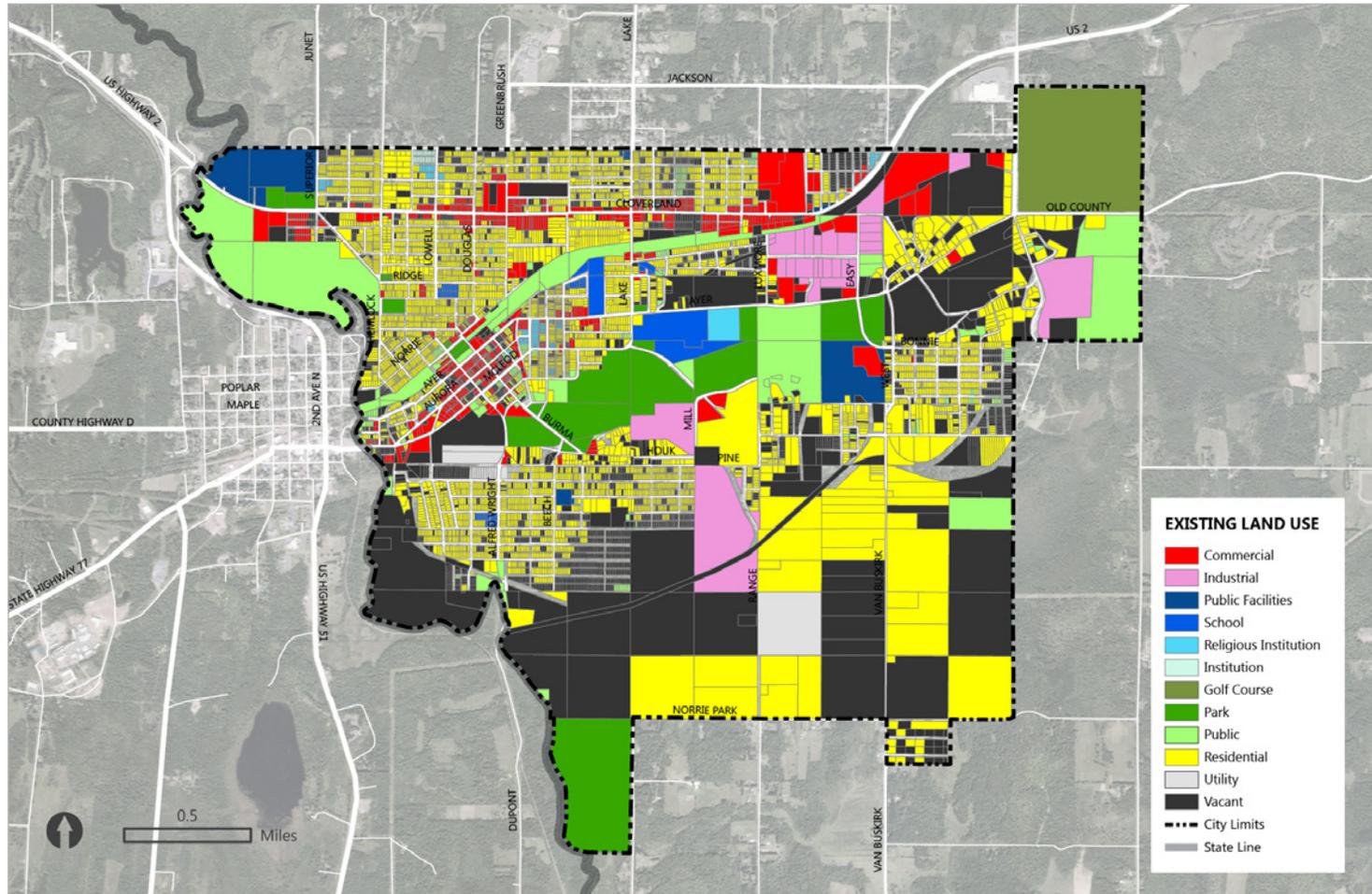


TABLE A-7. EXISTING LAND USE BY ACRES

Land Use	Acres
Residential	1147
Vacant	1116
Public	364
Park	263
Commercial	214
Industrial	180
Golf Course	161
Public Facilities	80
Utility	56
School	50
Religious Institution	20
Institution	2
Grand Total	3655

**UTILITY**

Public and private utilities include service stations or sub stations.

**VACANT**

A key part of assessing the land use patterns is understanding lands that are currently not occupied by buildings or structures and are generally not being put to a productive use. These lands do not include park lands or lands that are intended for storage or other use. Vacant lands might include public or private land areas that could be sold or developed/improved.

FIGURE A-18. EXISTING LAND USE BY %

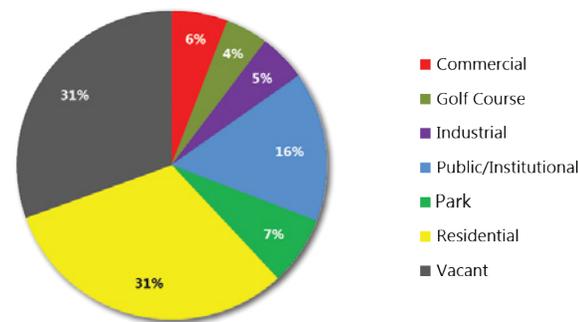
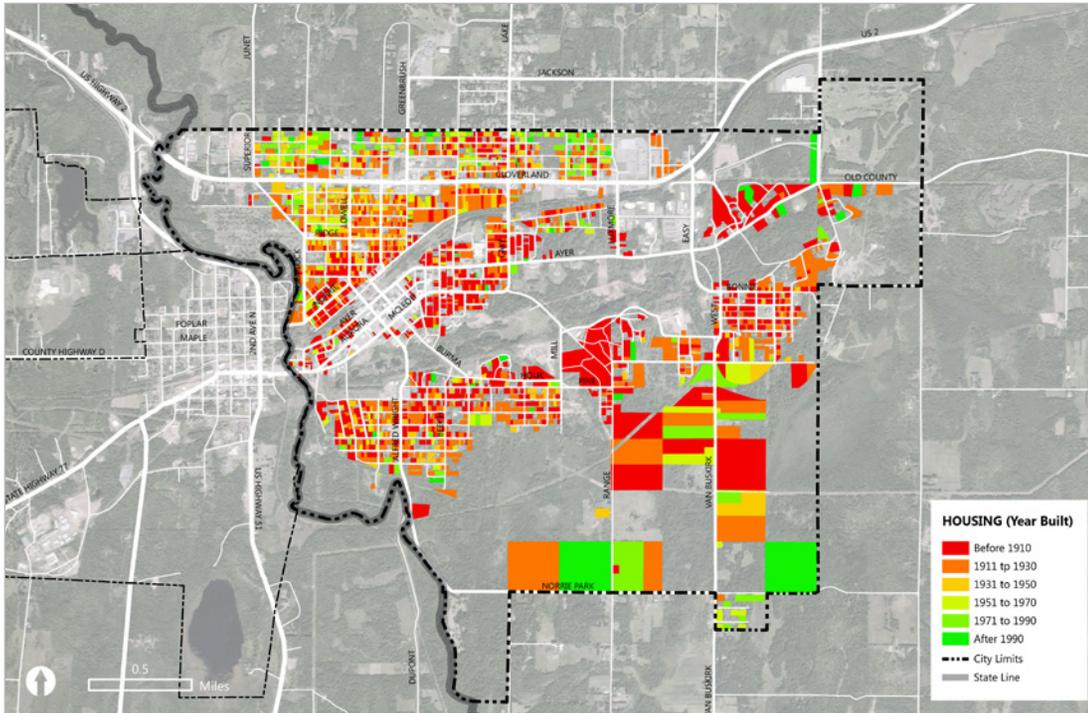


FIGURE A-19. HOUSING (YEAR BUILT)



Data Source: City of Ironwood



Examples of housing types found in Ironwood

Data Source: Demographic data on this page is from the U.S. Decennial Census 2000 & 2010 and the American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates

## HOUSING

### HOUSING CONDITIONS

The housing stock in Ironwood is predominantly single-family detached housing, with the majority of housing units built before 1940 (about 60%). There has been little housing constructed since 1980. Median home values rose between 2000 and 2010 (adjusted for inflation), and the overall number of housing units declined. The decline in housing units is likely the result of demolition of aging/vacant properties. This may also account for the increase in median home values.

Figure A-19 shows residential parcels in the city symbolized by the year built of the residential structure. The predominance of red and orange parcels (homes built before 1910 and 1930 respectively) in the areas adjacent to Miners Park reflects the worker housing built around the former mines, which has survived to this day.

TABLE A-8. TOTAL HOUSING UNITS - IRONWOOD, 2000 & 2010

Housing Units	2000	2010	Difference
Total	3,347	3,154	-193

TABLE A-9. MEDIAN HOME VALUE - IRONWOOD, 2000 & 2010

Median Value (in 2010 dollars)	2000	2010	% change
Median Home Value	\$45,714	\$59,400	0%

TABLE A-10. HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE - IRONWOOD, 2010

Units in Structure	Count
Total housing units	3,154
1-unit, detached	2,650
1-unit, attached	13
2 units	176
3 or 4 units	26
5 to 9 units	42
10 to 19 units	19
20 or more units	165
Mobile home	63

FIGURE A-20. YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT - IRONWOOD, 2000 & 2010

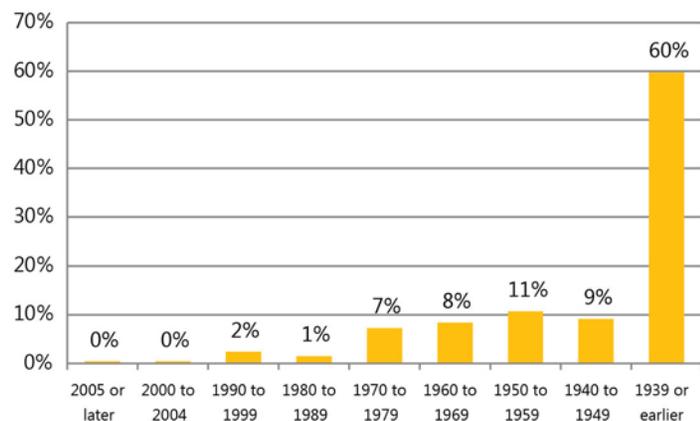
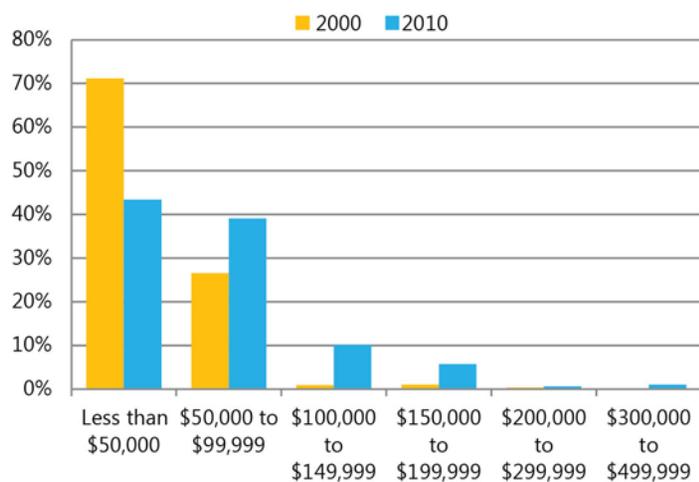


FIGURE A-21. HOME VALUES - IRONWOOD, 2000 & 2010



## HOUSING TENURE + COSTS

72% of the occupied housing units in Ironwood are owner-occupied, and 28% renter-occupied. The percentage of households facing a housing burden has increased since 2000 for renters and owners. This may be related to the rising cost of housing for both renters and owners. (Note: The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) deems a household as cost burdened if they pay more than 30% of household income for housing)

FIGURE A-22. HOUSING BURDEN (OWNED AND RENTAL) - IRONWOOD, 2010

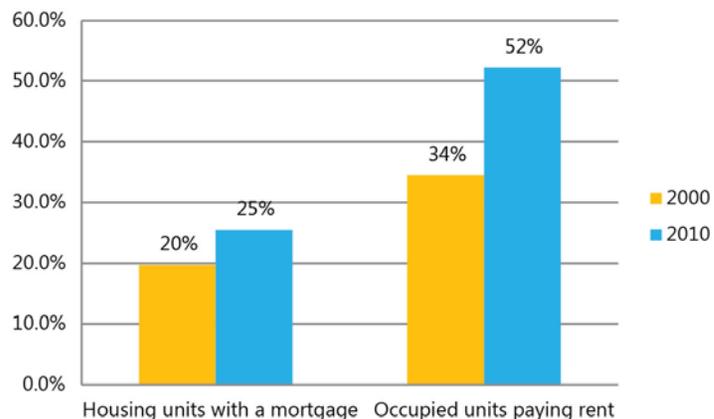


FIGURE A-23. HOUSING COSTS (IN 2010 DOLLARS) - IRONWOOD, 2000 & 2010

Median Value (in 2010 dollars)	2000	2010	% change
Median select housing costs for owners with a mortgage	\$679	\$881	30%
Median select housing costs for owners without a mortgage	\$296	\$356	20%
Median monthly rent	\$453	\$579	28%

Data Source: Demographic data on this page is from the U.S. Decennial Census 2000 & 2010 and the American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates

## NATURAL RESOURCES / ENVIRONMENT

### ELEVATION

The elevation within Ironwood ranges from 1740 to 1430 feet above sea level, a difference of 310 feet. This topographic relief hints at nearby faults within the Gogebic Iron Range and the North American Mid-Continent Rift, within which the city lies. Local topography, including the two ridges that characterize the Gogebic Iron Range, can be seen in Figure A-24.

### WATER RESOURCES

**The Montreal River Corridor:** A designated trout stream, the Montreal River begins some 20 miles southwest of Ironwood at Pine Lake, flowing into Lake Superior's Oronto Bay and forming the Michigan-Wisconsin border for much of its course. Within Ironwood the Montreal is well-buffered from development by deciduous forest and open space, with the exception of an approximately half mile segment between West Aurora Street/US Business Highway 2 and

North Hemlock Street at West Gogebic Street, where a number of residential properties abut the river. A specific area of concern within this segment includes the city-owned Ironwood Manufactured Gas Plant site at Water Street (Hemlock and West Ayer). A 2011 EPA report notes the presence of visible contaminants from coal tar at the site, and clean-up was completed in 2013 by the EPA.

The Gogebic-Iron Wastewater Treatment Plant discharges treated effluent into the Montreal from its location at the very northwest corner of the city. The effluent currently meets state standards for levels of contaminants, but may have difficulty meeting new mercury restriction levels anticipated to change in the future.

**Streams/Creeks/Waterways:** In addition to the Montreal River, there are several small creeks that flow thru or near Ironwood; Whisker's Creek along the south border and into Norrie Park, Welch Creek just north of town, Siemen's Creek northeast of town, and an unnamed stream that enters the Montreal north of West Norrie Park Road. There are also four scenic ponds in Miners Park that are the result of mine pits subsiding and retaining water.

**Wetlands/Floodplains:** The south/southwest portion of the city consists largely of emergent herbaceous wetlands and woody wetlands. Figure A-25 shows this distribution.

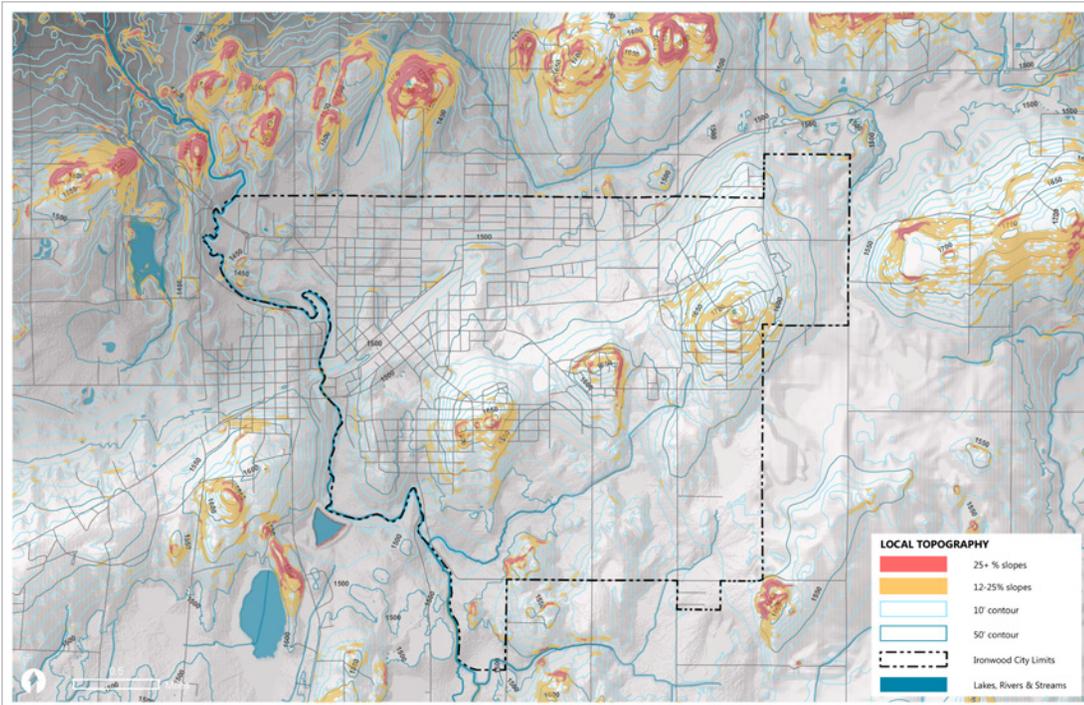
### SOILS

Ironwood area soils are generally characterized by the Gogebic-Cathro-Rock Outcrop Association. Gogebic soils comprise 72% of the association, and are moderately well-drained with loamy parent material and fine sandy and silt loams in the surface layer. Cathro soils make up 7% of the association and are very poorly drained, with a mucky surface layer over organic then loamy parent material. Rock Outcrops make up 3% and soils of minor extent the remaining 18%.

### MINERAL RESOURCES

The presence of mineral resources in the region continue to be of import to the Ironwood community. The Ironwood Iron Formation that spurred some 40 mines in the region from 1877 to 1967, produced over 325 million tons of ore during that time. While mining operations have slowed significantly, new technologies in mining and mineral processing, combined with global demand for earth

FIGURE A-24. LOCAL TOPOGRAPHY



Source: U.S. Geological Survey

metals have resurfaced the economic feasibility of mining in the region. Current estimates put economically recoverable ore at 3.7 billion tons within the Ironwood Formation. See [p. A-8](#) for more on proposed mining projects in the region.

## FOREST RESOURCES

Ironwood lies within the Superior Mineral Range Ecoregion, typified by hemlock/sugar-maple/white pine forests, swamp conifers, and cedar/hemlock forests. Red pine, white pine, red oak, and paper birch grow on bedrock ridges with thin soils, while hardwood forests of hemlock, sugar maple, basswood, and yellow birch occur on areas with glacial loamy till soils.

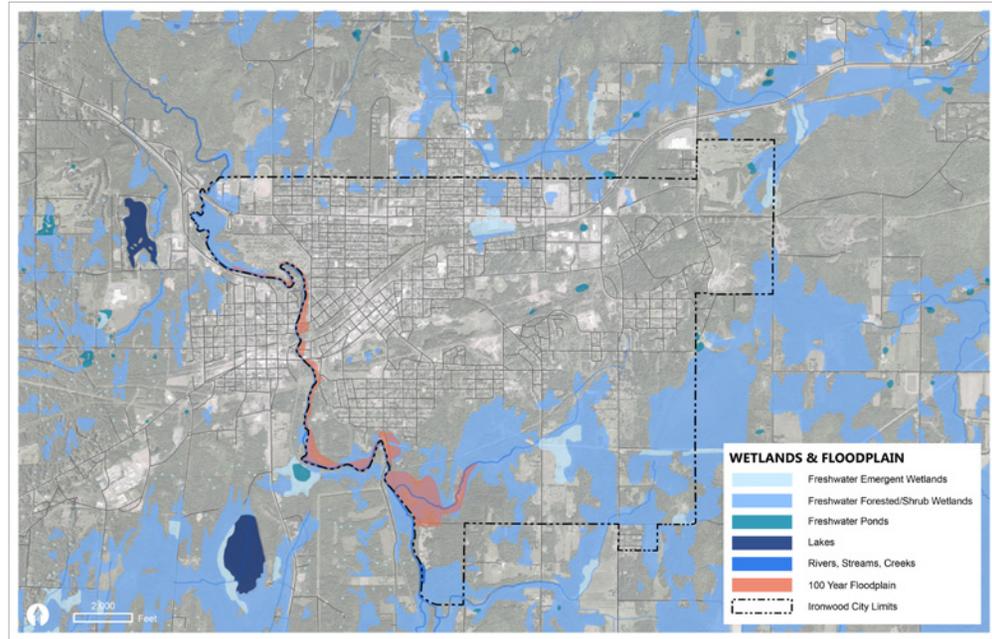
Ironwood is flanked by two National Forests within 50 miles; The Chequamegon and Ottawa National Forests. The Ottawa comprises nearly one million acres of forest in the region. More locally, the Gogebic County Forestry and Parks Commission manages over 50,000 acres of forest, producing world class sugar maple sawlogs and veneer.

Since 2000, a decline in the forest products sector has been observed for the Northern Region of the US, including the Ironwood area. This decline in production has contributed to large volumes of standing and growing timber stock in the vicinity. Defining the Ironwood vicinity as the western eight counties of the Upper Peninsula and the seven northwest counties of Wisconsin, the U.S Forest Service estimated in 2009 8.8 million acres of timberland with a standing volume of 10.6 billion cubic feet. Timberland does not include forests reserves such as wilderness, parks, and municipalities.

## HABITAT

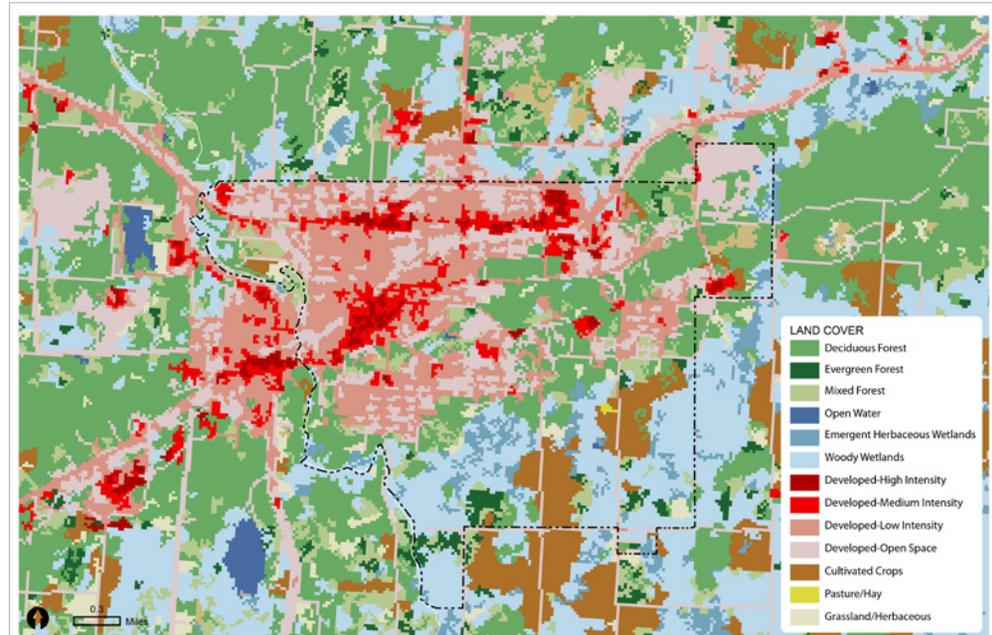
Two animal species federally recognized as threatened or proposed as endangered have habitat ranges that include the Ironwood area; Northern Long-eared Bats and Canada Lynx. Northern Long-eared Bats, currently proposed as endangered, hibernate in caves and mines and live in upland forests during spring and summer, and have been documented in Gogebic County. Canada Lynx are listed as a threatened species. The presence of a lynx was recently documented in the Upper Peninsula, and forested areas of Gogebic County are considered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service as likely lynx habitat.

FIGURE A-25. WETLANDS



Source: National Wetland Inventory, US Fish & Wildlife Service

FIGURE A-26. 2006 LAND COVER



Source: National Land Cover Database, USGS Land Cover Institute

## PARKS & RECREATION

### CITY PARKS, RECREATION & TRAILS

Ironwood Parks and Recreation currently operate under an eight person Parks & Recreation Committee. The City adopted the 2011-2015 Park & Recreation Plan in 2011- and amended the plan in February, 2013. See summary of the Plan on [p. A-3](#). The following section provides an inventory of Ironwood's parks, trails, and recreation facilities, along with descriptions of select parks.

City parks are classified into six categories; Community Park, Neighborhood Park, Special Use Park, Mini-Park, Private Facility, and School Park. See Table A-12 on the following page for a detailed inventory of park types and facilities. The inventory has been compiled by the City and updated as changes to the park system have occurred.

#### **Community Parks**

Community Parks are designed to serve the broader community and meet city-wide recreation needs. They may also preserve special landscapes and open spaces. Community parks include Longyear, Norrie, Miners Memorial Heritage, and Depot Park.

#### **Neighborhood Parks**

Neighborhood Parks are the basic unit of a community's park system, and serve as the recreational and social focus of a neighborhood, and provide a setting for informal active and passive recreation. Neighborhood parks include Kuitunen, Hiawatha, and Lake and Ayer Street Parks.

#### **Special Use Parks**

Special Use Parks include a broad range of park and recreation facilities geared toward a single-purpose use such as RV camping (Curry Park), Skiing/Outdoor Recreation (Mt. Zion), and other sports (Randa Field, Skate Park, Pat O'Donnell Civic Center, etc.).



The Downtown Pocket Park is a 3,485 square foot mini park that features benches, landscaping, and paving (Credit: Christine Collins)

#### **Mini-Park**

Mini-parks are used to meet limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs, and are typically between 2,500 square feet and one acre in size. Ironwood's downtown pocket park is an example of a mini-park.

#### **Private Facilities**

**Lindquist Student Center:** The community college also provides access for area residents to the Lindquist Student Center's 11,205 square foot gymnasium, six-lane competitive swimming pool, 1/11 mile indoor walking track, aerobics area, and weight room.

**Mount Zion Recreation Complex:** Also part of Gogebic Community College, the Mount Zion Complex is open to the public and features free cross country skiing and reasonably priced lift tickets, ski/snowboard lessons, and snowtubing.

## ELECTED AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Parks and Recreation Committee of Ironwood was founded in 1987 and charged with:

*...analyzing, planning, and recommending procedures affecting the recreational, cultural, and life-enrichment aspects of community life, maintaining the city's Recreation Plan; help coordinate activities of the various groups working in this area so as to encourage initiative, but also to make the best use of the limited resources available, bearing in mind the needs of the residents and the appeal of the activities to tourists and other visitors to the area.*

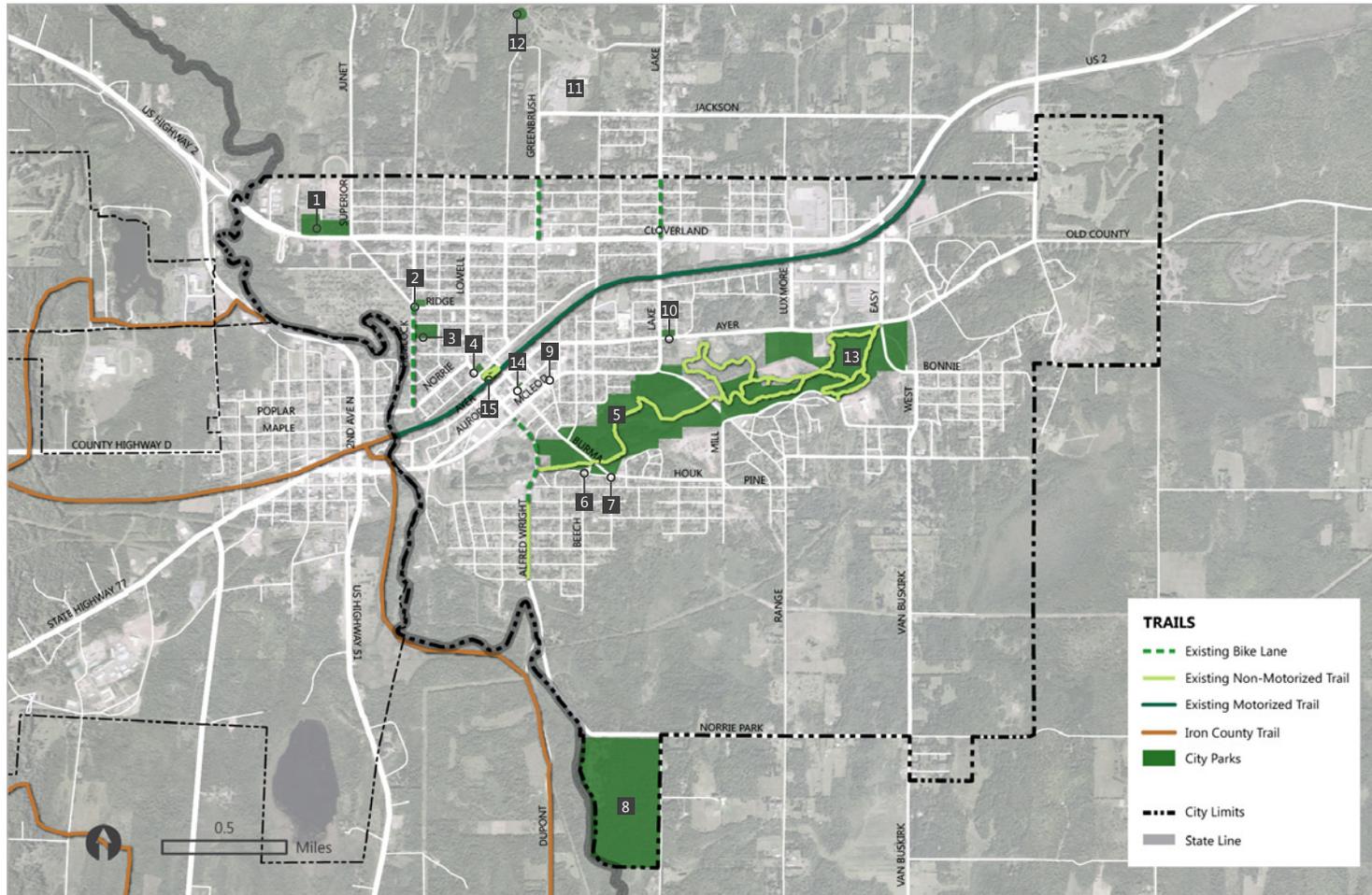
The Parks and Recreation Committee makes recommendations to the City Commission regarding park and recreation capital improvements. The City Commission has final authority over the parks and recreation system and decisions. All meetings are open to the public.

The City's Parks are managed by the Ironwood Public Works Department. Some services are contracted to local businesses. Volunteers and Organized groups support the City with maintenance and donations.

The City of Ironwood Parks and Recreation Committee communicates and collaborates with:

- Ironwood Planning Commission
- Ironwood City Commission
- Downtown Ironwood Development Authority
- Ironwood Area School District
- Gogebic Community College
- Local civic, community and recreation groups

FIGURE A-27. EXISTING LOCAL PARKS AND TRAILS



1. Curry Park
2. Patterson Tennis Courts
3. Longyear Park
4. Kuitunen Park
5. Little League Field
6. Hiawatha Park
7. Randa Field
8. Norrie Park
9. Municipal Building
10. Lake/Ayer St. Park
11. Pat O'Donnel Civic Center
12. Mt. Zion Overlook Park
13. Miners Memorial Heritage Park
14. Downtown Ironwood Pocket Park
15. Ironwood Historic Depot Park & Depot Building



**Depot Park:** Located in downtown, Depot Park features a public pavilion as well as the historic Depot Building; the park is also a regional trailhead and a popular venue for community events. (credit: Sam Davey)



**Miners Memorial Heritage Park:** Miners Parks was established as a public park in 2010 on the site of Ironwood's former iron mines; Plans for the park include expansion of recreational trails and interpretive displays showcasing Ironwood's mining history. Park improvement efforts are supported by the Friends of the Miners Memorial Heritage Park organization. (Credit: [www.fmmhp.com](http://www.fmmhp.com))

TABLE A-11. IRONWOOD PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES INVENTORY

Park & Classification	Size	picnic tables	grills	tennis courts	play equipment	basketball court (lighted)	parking lot	band shell	baseball field	spectator seating	concessions	restrooms	portable restrooms	pavillion	softball field (lighted)	walking paths	horseshoe pits	ice-rink	benches	cross country ski trails	community garden	Soccer field	football field	track	swimming pool	ski/snowboard/tubing	gymnasium			
<b>Community Park</b>																														
Longyear Park	3.22 acres	•			•	•		•					•			•														
Norrie Park	105 acres	•	•		•		•					•		•		•	•			•	•									
Miners Memorial Heritage Park	168 acres						•									•				•										
Municipal Memorial Building	n/a					•	•				•	•															•			
Depot Park	3.3 acres	•					•					•		•		•			•											
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>																														
Kuitunen Park	.5 acres															•			•											
Hiawatha Park	1.04 acres				•																									
Lake & Ayer Street Park	.4 acres	•			•																									
<b>Special Use</b>																														
Pat O'Donnell Civic Center	30,000 sqft						•				•							•												
Curry Park	9.25 acres	•	•		•							•																		
John Krznarich Little League Field	2.75 acres				•		•		•	•	•	•																		
Randa Field	1.4 acres									•					•															
Mount Zion Overlook Park	1 acre	•										•							•											
Hiawatha Rotary Skate Park	1.2 acres	•					•						•																	
Patterson Tennis Courts	.77 acres			•			•												•											
<b>Mini-Park</b>																														
Downtown Pocket Park	.08 acres															•			•											
<b>Private Facility</b>																														
Lindquist Student Center	n/a										•														•	•		•		
Mount Zion Recreation Complex											•															•				
<b>School-Park</b>																														
LL Wright High/Norrie Elementary	2 acres				•		•			•												•	•	•						
Sleight Elementary School	.3 acres				•		•																							

Note: All parks are accessible

FIGURE A-28. EXISTING AREA RECREATION DESTINATIONS

### COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL DESTINATIONS

The Ironwood area offers a variety of recreational opportunities, including: hundreds of acres of Gogebic County and Ottawa National Forest land; a multitude of cross-country and downhill ski areas; camping and hiking destinations; and access to Lake Superior and other local water bodies. Perhaps the most unique facility in the area is the Copper Peak Ski Flying Hill located north of Bessemer. While inactive as a ski jumping facility since the 1990s, Copper Peak has recently been granted approval by the Federation of International Skiing to renovate the facility to become the largest summer ski jump in the world. Figure A-28 shows recreation destinations in the Ironwood Area.

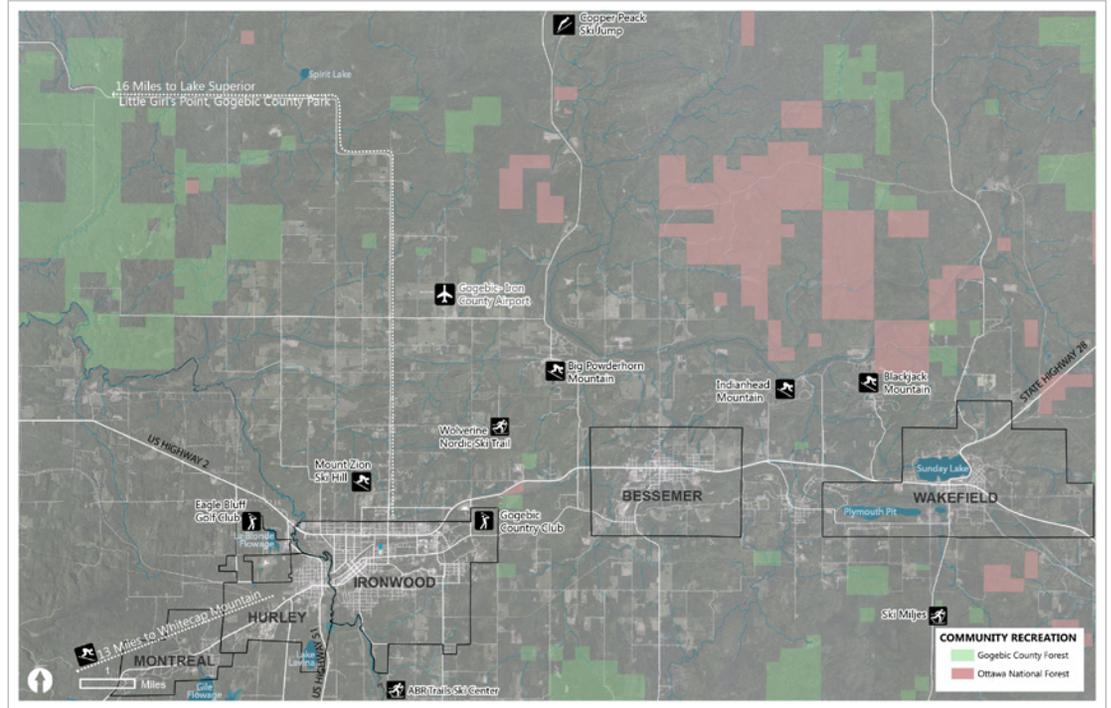
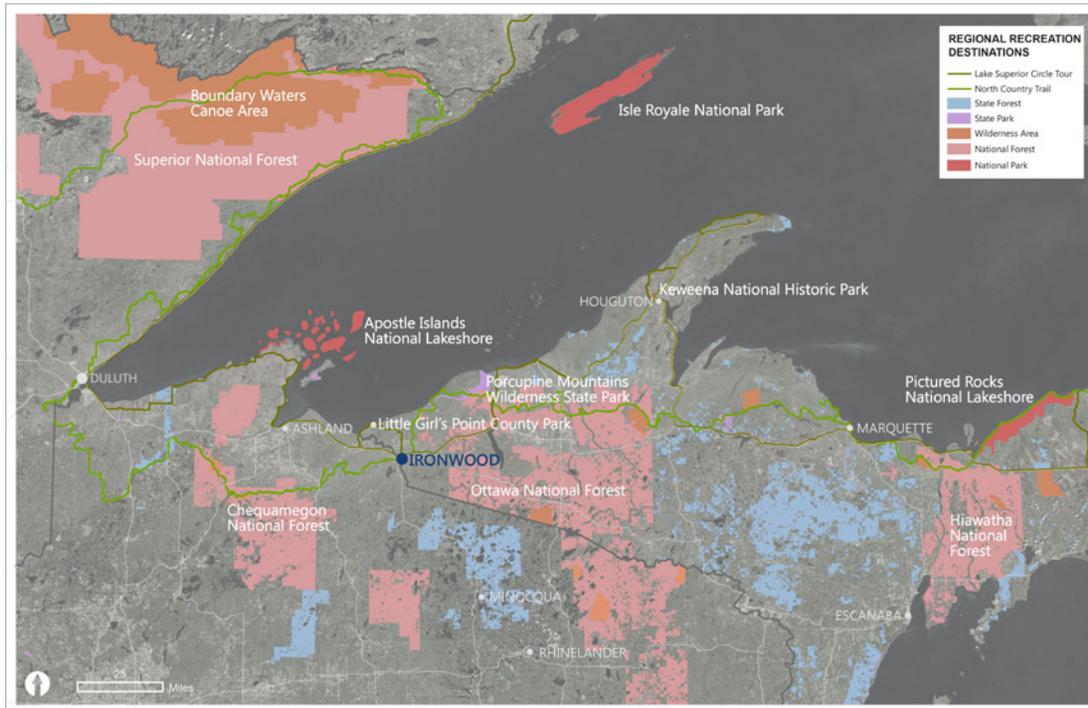


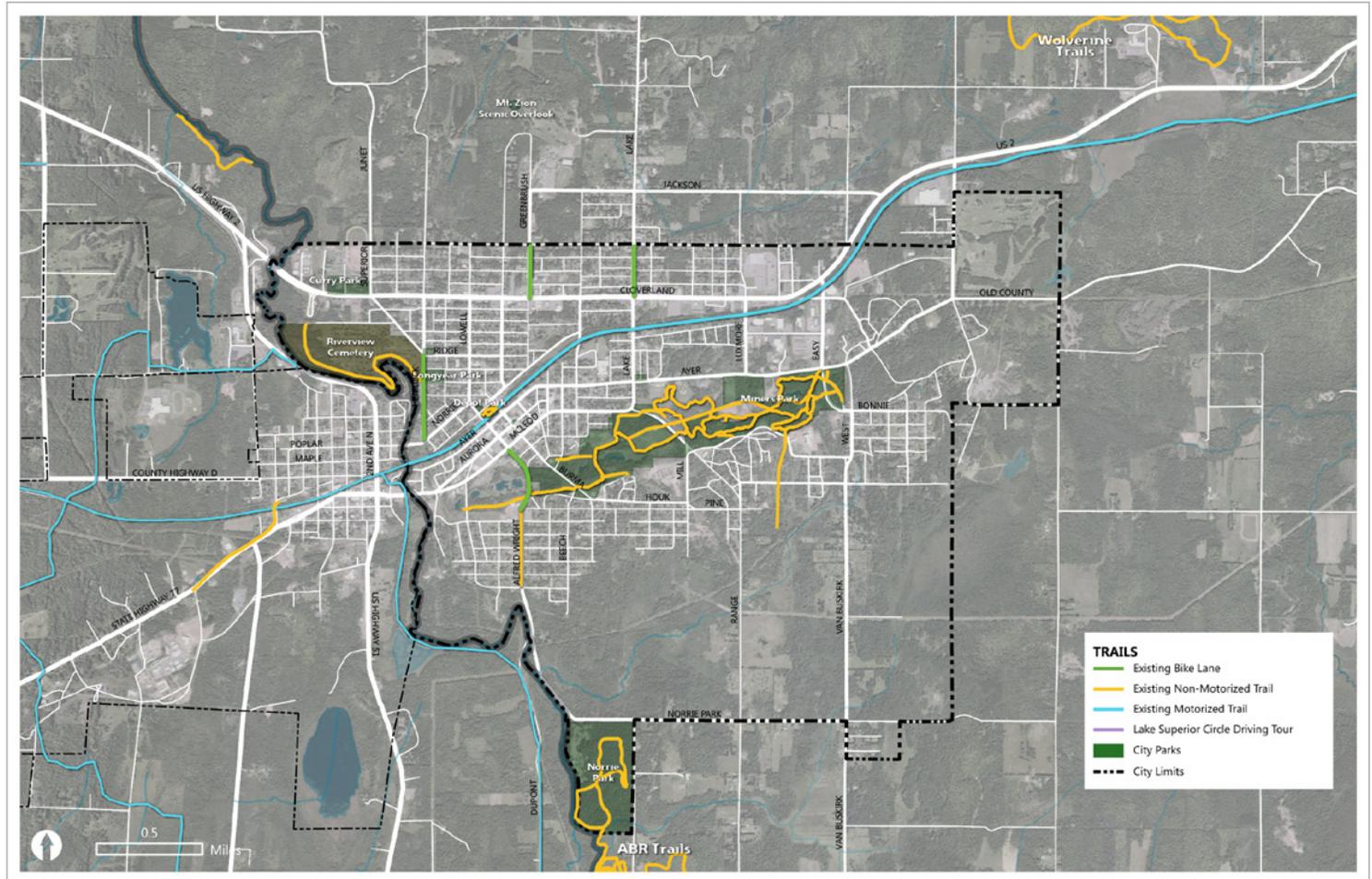
FIGURE A-29. REGIONAL RECREATION



### REGIONAL RECREATIONAL DESTINATIONS

Regionally, Ironwood is situated in the midst of a very active outdoor recreation area, with land set aside for conservation and public use. Figure A-29 shows the location of major scenic and recreational amenities in the region.

FIGURE A-30. EXISTING TRAILS & BIKE LANES



## TRAILS

Trails are a valued amenity in Ironwood. Many people use trails for snowmobiling, biking, hiking, skiing, walking, snowshoeing, and as part of their routine transportation. For the purposes of this report, trails are classified into five categories (as shown in figure A-30 above): Regional, Park, Connector, On-street Bikeway, and Driving Tour.

### ***Regional Trails and Tour Routes***

Regional trails include multi-use trails that make connections beyond the individual city. Regional trails in Ironwood include Michigan’s Western Gateway Trail, Gogebic Range Trail Authority

State Snowmobile Trail #2, and a temporary connector portion of the North Country Trail, a national hiking trail connecting New York and North Dakota.

Michigan’s Western Gateway Trail follows the railroad bed of the former Canadian National Railroad through downtown Ironwood. Snowmobilers and ATV riders have access to over 2,000 miles of trail from the Gateway Trail in Ironwood. Plans for a non-motorized addition to the trail in Ironwood include the transition of the abandoned Canadian National Railroad bed parallel to the existing Trail 2 to accommodate non-motorized uses.

TABLE A-12. IRONWOOD TRAILS INVENTORY

Trail & Classification	General Description	Uses						Surface
		Walk/ Hike	Bike	ATV	Snowmobile	Cross country ski	Snowshoe	
<b>Regional Trail/Tour Route</b>								
Western Gateway Trail/Gogebic Range Trail Authority Snowmobile Trail	Motorized trail connecting users from Wisconsin to thousands of miles of trails in Western Upper Peninsula. Proposed non-motorized section through Ironwood.			•	•			Unpaved with Exception of segment in Depot Park
North Country Trail (temporary connector)	Non-motorized national trail hosted by many land management units across multiple states. Policies vary by section	•				•	•	Varies across management units
Lake Superior Circle Tour	Scenic Driving Tour around Lake Superior							Paved (On-road)
<b>Park Trail</b>								
Miners Memorial Heritage Park Trails	Non-motorized system in Miners Memorial Heritage Park	•	•			•	•	Unpaved
Riverside Cemetery	Non-motorized network in Riverside Cemetery	•	•			•	•	Unpaved
<b>On-street Bikeway</b>								
NA	Bike lanes on portions of Greenbush Street, Lake Street, and Alfred Wright Boulevard		•					Paved (On-street)
<b>Private Trail Facilities</b>								
ABR trails	Private ski touring facility on over 1,100 acres, including a portion of Norrie Park					•	•	Unpaved
Wolverine Nordick Ski Trails	Operated by a non-profit, the Wolverine network is donation-based and open to the public		•			•	•	Unpaved

The Lake Superior Circle Tour, popular among motorcyclists, loops around Lake Superior along highways closest to the lake. The Michigan portion of the tour starts in Ironwood and extends to Sault Ste. Marie.

**Park Trails**

Park Trails in Ironwood can be found within Miners Memorial Park and Riverside Cemetery. Miners Memorial Park trails, with the exception of a motorized north-south crossing for ATVs and Snowmobiles, are non-motorized walking, biking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing trails. Riverside Cemetery offers non-motorized trails for snowshoeing, hiking, and cross-country skiing.

**Connector Trails**

Connector Trails emphasize a safe mode of travel for non-motorized

users between parks and other community assets. There are several planned connector trails within Ironwood. See Figure A-30 for locations of such trails.

**On-street Bike Lanes**

Currently, Ironwood’s proposed on-street bike lanes outnumber the existing, but there are plans to make lengthy on-street connections for bikers.

**Private Trail Facilities**

Two private trail facilities contribute to the overall system within Ironwood; including The Wolverine Trial System and ABR Trails.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Community infrastructure includes the systems that provide drinking water, sanitary sewer, rainwater/snowmelt management, energy/power, and telecommunications technology. These “utility” systems include both underground and above ground infrastructure. As above ground infrastructure, their presence often has an impact on community image and identity, such as a water tower logo or iconic design, or massive power lines spanning a prominent corridor. Underground infrastructure is less visible, but keenly felt if, for example, the water does not flow or backs up where it shouldn’t.

Much of the infrastructure in Ironwood was built in the early 20th century when the community was experiencing its greatest growth. Since then, the city has been in more of a manage and maintain mode, with the exception of introducing new technology such as telecommunications infrastructure.

The following section highlights the basic elements and current status of the City of Ironwoods key infrastructure systems.

## POTABLE WATER

### ***Governance and Jurisdictional Agreements***

Ironwood’s potable water system is managed by the City’s Water and Sewer Department. The city sells water at bulk rate to the City of Hurley, Wisconsin, and to a few customers in Ironwood Township.

### ***Well Fields (water source)***

The city currently has 6 wells that range in depth from 54 to 140 feet. The wells draw drinking water from two glacial aquifers. The well fields are the Big Springs and Spring Creek well fields and are located generally north/northwest of the city of Ironwood. The city has a well head protection plan/ordinance adopted in 2003 as a means to protect the well areas from land uses that could potentially threaten water quality.

### ***Treatment System (water treatment)***

The water treatment plant was originally built in 1923. In 1999, the plant underwent an expansion that increased and enhanced its ability to treat water drawn from the city’s wells for drinking needs. The plant currently has a capacity to treat 3.5 million gallons of drinking water per day. The current usage of treated drinking water is 0.75 million gallons per day. Significant capacity exists within the existing treatment plan for additional demand.

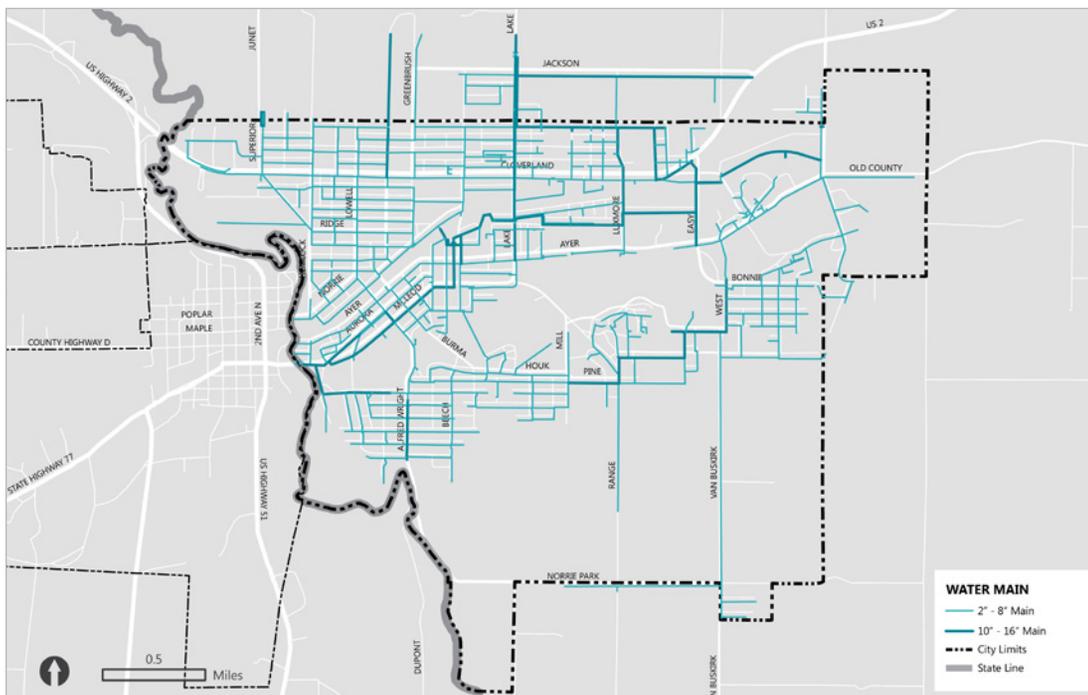
### ***Water Towers (water storage)***

The city has a water tower and an underground storage tank located at Mount Zion. These facilities provide sufficient storage capacity for Ironwood’s current and anticipated future water supply.

### ***Distribution system (water distribution)***

The City of Ironwood water pumping and distribution system is responsible for maintaining 63 miles of pipe that was built for a population of 15,000 people dating back to 1923. This system also includes approximately 500 fire hydrants and 2900 meter service connections. The City of Ironwood has been very fortunate during the past number of years of securing funding to replace the aging infrastructure. These improvements have replaced defective undersized mains as well as improve water flow. City staff annually repairs water breaks as well as maintain the system such as replacing meters, flushing hydrants and exercising valves.

FIGURE A-31. EXISTING WATER MAIN



## Capital Improvement Plan

The city has a number of improvements planned in its CIP for water system improvements in addition to annual maintenance and fire hydrant replacements. Those improvements include Phase 3 of the US-2 Water System Improvements, Northeast Corridor Water System Improvements, a 16" Secondary Water Main expansion project, water main improvements on Florence Street, Best Street, Leonard Street, East Ayer Street and phase III of the Jessieville/Norrie neighborhood water and sewer project.

## SANITARY SEWER

### Governance

Sanitary sewer infrastructure is managed by the City through the Gogebic-Iron Wastewater Authority ("GIWA"). GIWA completed a master plan in 2010 that provides a thorough assessment of the existing wastewater treatment plant. In 2005, a Sanitary Sewer System Study was completed by Coleman Engineering to assess the existing sewer infrastructure and a plan for improvements to the system. GIWA includes the cities of Ironwood, Hurley and Ironwood Township.

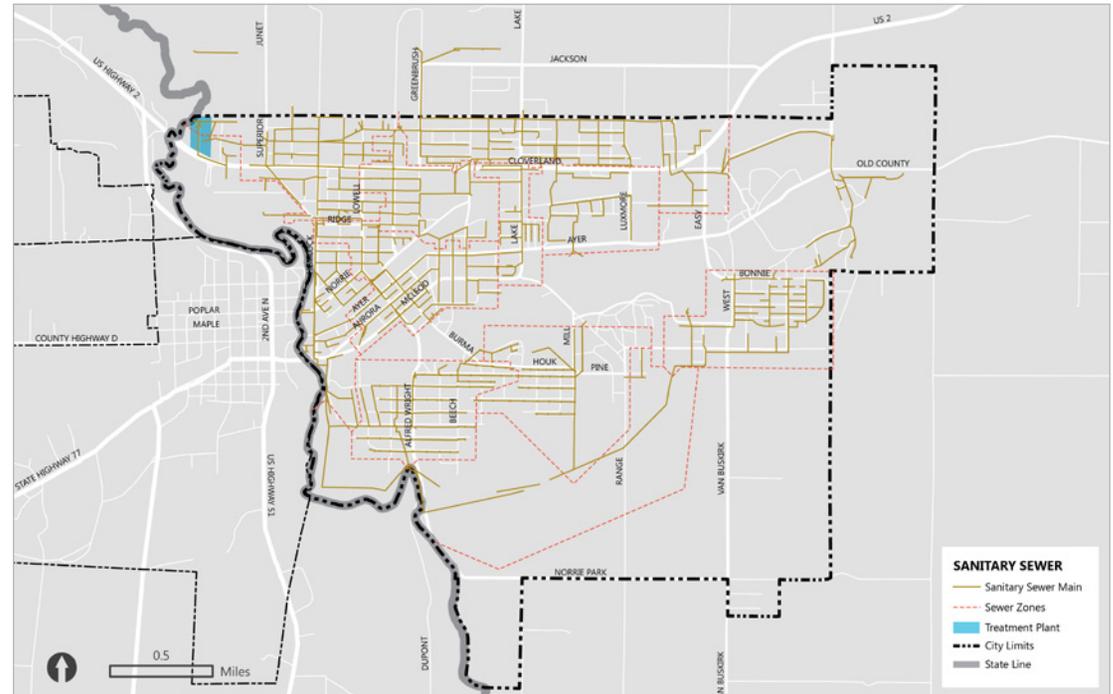
### Plant age and capacity

The GIWA's treatment plant was completed in 1986, and it replaced the City of Ironwood's treatment plant, which was converted into the Flow Equalization Basin. Most of the major equipment is original and reaching the end of its designed useful life. The plant was designed to serve 14,914 people, with an average daily flow of 3.4 million gallons per day. At the 2010 census, the plant was serving 7,681 people (5,387 Ironwood residents, 1,547 Hurley residents, and 747 township residents). The treatment plant has an excess flow equalization and treatment process that stores and treats a portion of flows above 8.5 million gallons per day (mgd) and all flows above 10 mgd. The plant can treat up to 14 mgd with the excess flow systems.

Average flows at the plant in 2013 were 2.54 million (mgd) with peak flows of up to 11.5 mgd.

After water is treated, effluent outflows to the Montreal River. State and federal rules regulate the quality of the water that is released.

FIGURE A-32. EXISTING SANITARY SEWER



### Collection System

The City of Ironwood maintains approximately 50 miles of sanitary sewer pipe, the majority of which is a gravity fed system.

### Lift Stations

The City of Ironwood maintains one lift station in the community.

### I/I issues

Peak flows increase during periods of heavy rain and spring thaw/snow melt. This pattern of increased flowage during these times is evident of inflow/infiltration problems where rainwater or snow melt water gets into the system through cracks or sump pumps in home draining directly into the system. This is a common problem with older sewer systems.

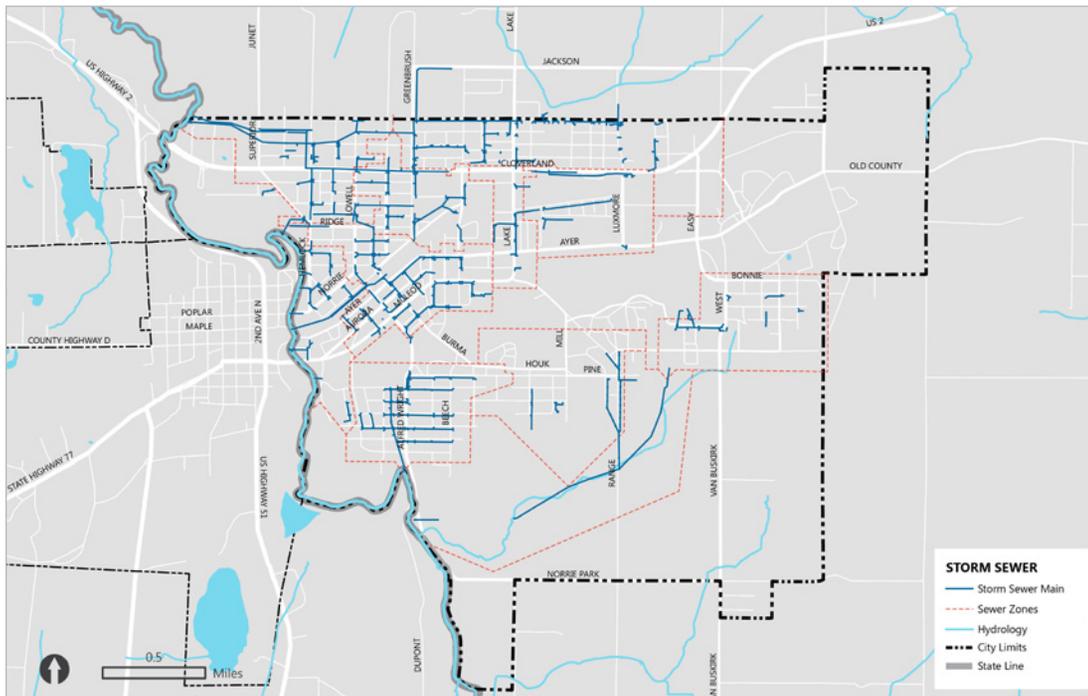
### Capital Improvement Plan

The City annually budgets for sanitary sewer infrastructure replacement and maintenance. Key projects for more substantial infrastructure replacement and upgrades are associated with major street projects such as the current US 2 corridor improvements or recent improvements in Jessieville or Norrie neighborhoods.

## STORM WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The City has an existing storm sewer improvement district covering a portion of the City and generally follows Best Management Practices (BMPs) when undergoing infrastructure replacement project. These BMPs focus on managing the volume of rain water runoff and establish procedures to treat run off before it enters surface water systems which ultimately drain into the Montreal River. The biggest challenge in Ironwood relative to managing stormwater and occurs during the spring snow melt.

FIGURE A-33. EXISTING STORM SEWER MAIN



## TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

Ann Arbor-based Merit has brought Broadband technology through the Broadband Stimulus Project to Ironwood. The project, Rural, Education, Anchor, Community and Healthcare - Merit's Michigan Middle Mile Collaborative (REACH-3MC), helps connect rural and underserved areas in Michigan with more than 2,200 miles of broadband infrastructure. The infrastructure connects public institutions (universities, K-12 education, government, etc...). The new broadband allows Ironwood, and other U.P. cities, to connect to broadband services at a lower cost and consolidates services. Beyond the REACH-3MC, Ironwood is served by a cable and phone providers with traditional DSL or cable internet services.

## GAS AND ELECTRIC

Xcel Energy provides electric and gas service to the City of Ironwood. No usage report is available for review.

There are 5 electric substations that serve the city and surrounding area. Xcel has plans to convert the city from 4.16kV to 12.47kV. With this conversion will be an upgrade to distribution line facilities as needed and the retiring of one substation.

## STREETS

The City maintains over 65 miles of streets within the City. Two State roads BR2 and US 2 are the only streets not owned by the City and thus not maintained by the City. However, snow removal of these roads is handled by Ironwood public works crews. Figure A-35 shows which roads are maintained by plow during winter months.

Many of the streets in Ironwood are aging and are reaching the end of their life span necessitating reconstruction needs. The city has recently completed some reconstruction projects in the Jessieville and Norrie neighborhoods and will continue to plan reconstruction projects in conjunction with infrastructure improvements and funding is available.

FIGURE A-34. EXISTING ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSES

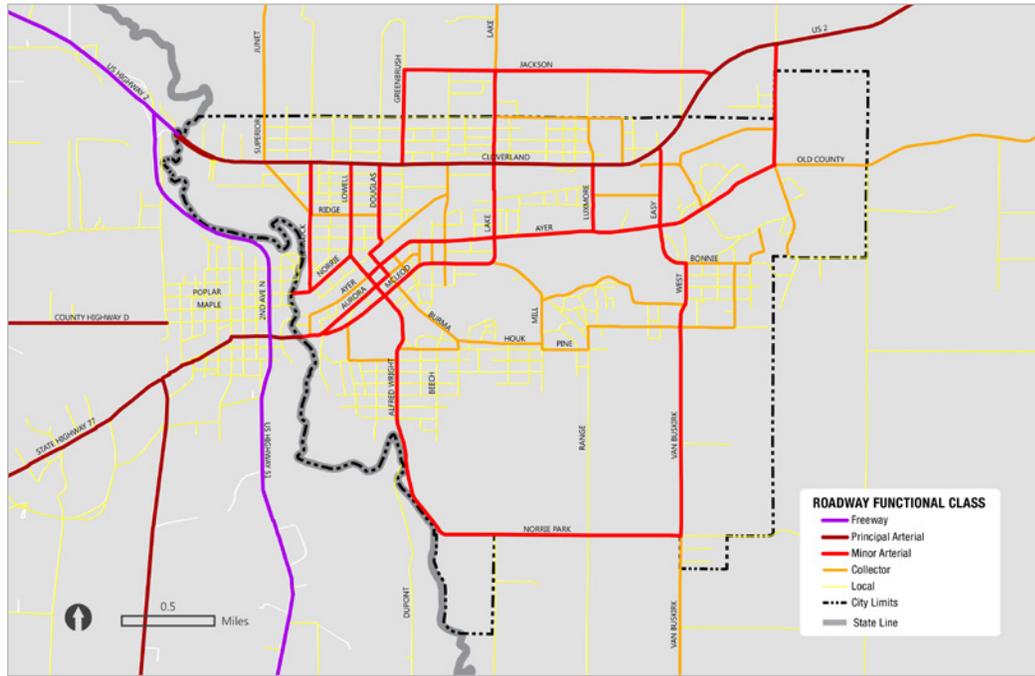
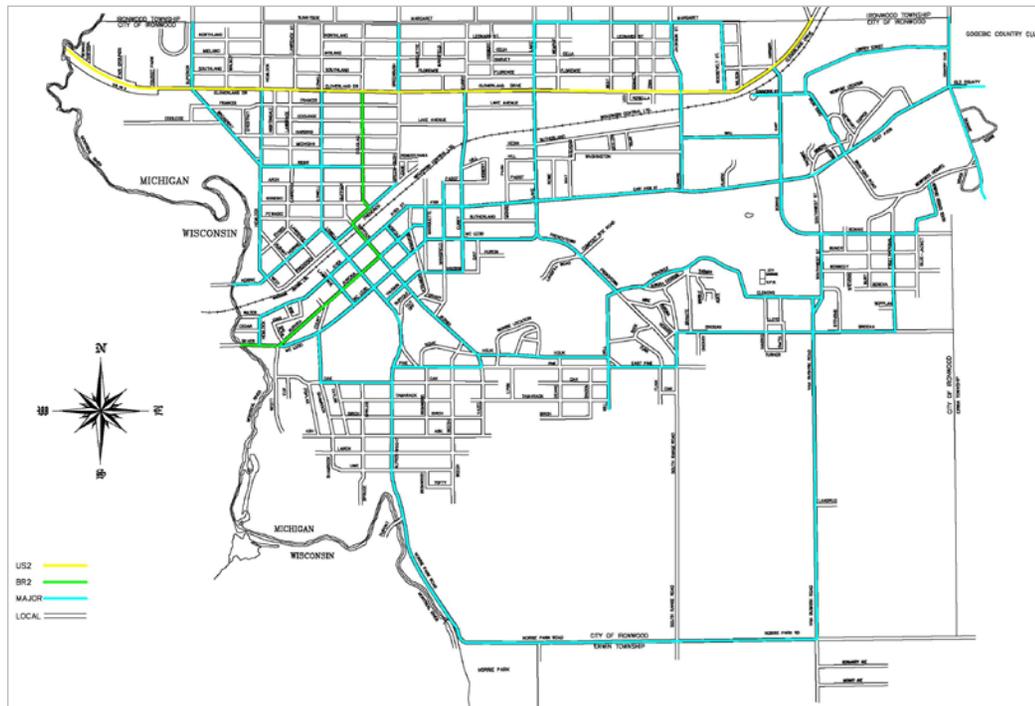


FIGURE A-35. ALL SEASON ROADS



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