

APPENDIX C:

Spark Plans!

Action planning for a better, brighter Ironwood

The Ironwood Comprehensive Plan is structured around an overarching vision and set of guiding principles as well as a number of goals and policies that will guide future investment, development, and redevelopment in the City. The plan recommends concrete strategies in support of the goals and policies in the plan. To ensure that this plan is an actionable document and that proposed strategies translate into concrete results, the City has developed a collaborative implementation and action planning tool known as “Spark Plans”.

Spark Plans are “mini action plans” that elaborate on strategies described in the Comprehensive Plan, providing additional details about the “who, what, where, and why” of a strategy and the key steps necessary to move toward implementation. Each Spark Plan also includes an Action Planning Worksheet that can be used by the City, as well as other public agencies, local businesses and organizations, community groups, and individuals, to develop detailed action steps around a particular strategy.

It Starts with a Spark...

WHAT IS A “SPARK PLAN”?

Spark Plans are “mini actions plans” that elaborate on strategies described in the Comprehensive plan, providing additional details about the “who, what, where, and why” of a strategy and the key steps necessary to move toward implementation. Each plan includes an **Action Planning Worksheet** that can be used by the City, as well as other public agencies, local businesses and organizations, community groups, and individuals, to develop detailed action steps around a particular strategy.

The Spark Plans are not only a tool for action planning, but a way to build support for the Comprehensive Plan and a mechanism for shared accountability. By establishing and tracking action steps and deliverables, the City and local organizations hold each other responsible for making progress towards the goals of the Comprehensive Plan

The City of Ironwood can use these plans to:

- Brainstorm next steps in implementing high priority strategies in the Comprehensive Plan
- Track progress against the plan
- Inform the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Build outside support for implementation of the plan

Individuals and Organizations can use these plans to:

- Brainstorm next steps towards implementation of Comprehensive Plan strategies
- Coordinate efforts with the City
- Take an active role in achieving the vision of the Comprehensive Plan

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

By enlisting groups and individuals in the community to participate in the implementation of the plan, the City can multiply the impact of its efforts and ultimately do more good for the community.

If you see a Spark Plan idea that you like and want to support through your organization, place of work, or individual efforts, make a commitment to act today! Complete the Action Planning Worksheet on the back of the Spark Plan and submit it to the City of Ironwood’s Community Development Office by August 1st of each year:

Michael Brown, Community Development Director
Memorial Building
213 S. Marquette Street
Ironwood, MI, 49938

Phone: (906) 932-5050
Email: brownm@cityofironwood.org

Upon receiving completed Action Planning Worksheets, City staff will follow up to establish next steps and coordination with City efforts.

The success of the Comprehensive Plan depends on the collective commitment and action of individuals and organizations.

The time to act is now. It starts with a spark...

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Entrepreneurial Support Spaces

What is it?

- Entrepreneurial support spaces are public or privately owned/managed spaces that provide services and facilities to support entrepreneurs, solo business operators, remote workers, and start-ups.
- Examples include co-working spaces, enterprise centers, small business support centers, etc.
- Facilities may include meeting spaces, computers, high-speed internet access, printers/copiers, and work stations.
- The spaces may also provide business advisory services, classes, workshops, and networking events.
- “Co-working” spaces offer services on a short-term or drop-in basis (typically fee-based).

Why do it?

- Offer an expanded level of service to entrepreneurs and other creative workers.
- Appeal to potential residents who want to work remotely or start a small business.
- Create space for business people to meet, interact, share ideas, and collaborate.

Who does it?

- An entrepreneurial support space could be implemented by a public agency (economic development entity or City), but more often a private sector, nonprofit, or cooperative venture.

How do you do it?

- Identify an owner/managing agency
- Look at best practices from other similar operations
- Define scope of facilities, programming, and services; engage potential users on the types of services desired
- Identify a space (Could utilize publicly owned spaces/facilities such as the library or memorial building- consider free or subsidized options)
- Develop a business plan to determine operating, management, and financing needs.

Where should it happen?

- Consider using publicly-owned spaces/facilities such as the library, memorial building, or other low/ cost subsidized options
- Locate in Downtown District

How is it measured?

- Successfully opening and maintaining a co-working space
- Monthly/annual number of members/users

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 3.3: Conduct Regular Land Use & Building Condition Inventories
- Strategy 3.4: Identify a Project Area for a Pilot Small Area Plan
- Strategy 6.3: Develop Economic Gardening Programs and Activities
- Strategy 6.4: Explore Workforce Development Opportunities
- Strategy 6.5: Enhance Downtown Business & Retail Environment

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

The Vision and Guiding Principles of the Ironwood Comprehensive Plan articulate how the community will look, feel, and function over the next 20 years and help to define the character, values, and priorities of the Ironwood community. The strategy described in this Spark Plan supports the vision and guiding principles in the following ways:

A THRIVING COMMUNITY This strategy cultivates entrepreneurship and business innovation and leverages the skills, knowledge, and assets of institutions, business leaders and economic development entities.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY This strategy creates a space for local businesses and entrepreneurs to connect and collaborate- and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices

A GREAT DESTINATION By providing options for residents who work remotely or are sole operators, this strategy reinforces the message that Ironwood is a place that values creative workers and businesses and promotes innovation and collaboration.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT SPACES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Makerspaces: Supporting an Entrepreneurial System](#)
- [Michipreneur: Michigan's Startup Community](#)

Action Planning Worksheet!

Do you support this idea? Make a commitment to act! Complete this worksheet and submit it to the City Community Development Office (Contact: Michael Brown, Community Development Director; Memorial Building; 213 S. Marquette Street; Ironwood, MI, 49938; (906) 932-5050 ext.126; brownm@cityofironwood.org)

NAME / ORGANIZATION:

GOAL / MOTIVATION

What is the larger reason for supporting this idea? What do you hope to achieve?

OBJECTIVES

What are the tangible/measurable outcomes you'd like to see in the short term (next 6 months)?

ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Business Retention Program

What is it?

- A formal program of scheduled monthly or quarterly meetings with local business owners and Ironwood Economic Development staff and/or Chamber of Commerce staff to learn about what businesses do, their long term plans, and how the City and community of Ironwood could help realize that vision.

Why do it?

- To better understand what businesses do and better connect them with possible resources or business to business opportunities
- To understand how the vision of the targeted business aligns with Ironwood's; are there synergies between the two? What can the City do to support that business to help create jobs and diversity.
- Understand what kind of support structure is needed for target industries and the community
 - › Labor force (technical training)
 - › Business support services (shipping, accounting, maintenance, legal, printing, marketing, etc.)
 - › Building and facility needs
 - › Land and technology needs (broadband or data storage)
- Understand the businesses employee base and make sure needs are being met
 - › Is there adequate housing for employees?
 - › Do local assets (parks, shopping, entertainment, schools, art/cultural facilities) meeting the desires, needs of employees?
- Connect business leaders and employees with opportunities for civic leadership and volunteer opportunities. Ways to give back or advocate for the City's Vision.

Who does it?

- City Staff, through community and economic development, would lead this effort by connecting businesses with resources and communicating city plans.
- Elected and appointed officials are also key to this effort as ambassadors to the City and as decision makers/advisors.
- The Chamber of Commerce should play a role in helping coordinate and participate in business calls. Each trip/meeting to a business should have one staff resource and one or two elected/appointed officials.

How do you do it?

- Establish an achievable goal of number of desired visits to conduct in a year. This may be one per month or 2 per quarter.
- Establish a database of local businesses sortable by size, type, market, etc. Use this to set an annual calendar identifying general days for visits. Meetings should be somewhat informal.
- Assess previous visits annually; what worked well, how can the visits be improved and made more productive.

How is it measured?

- Number of visits made (based on size of business)
- Economic development that can be attributed (in part or wholly) to the visits:
 - › New jobs
 - › New businesses started up or brought to the Ironwood community
 - › Expansion (in square feet) of existing businesses
- Reputation/identity/image of Ironwood as a great place to do business (survey or response from the business community, quotes, thank you notes)

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 6.2: Develop a Business-Supportive Zoning and Regulatory Environment
- Strategy 6.3: Develop Economic Gardening Programs and Activities
- Strategy 6.4 Explore Workforce Development Opportunities
- Strategy 6.5: Enhance Downtown Business & Retail Environment
- Strategy 6.9: Coordinate Local and Regional Economic Development Efforts

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A THRIVING COMMUNITY This strategy encourages entrepreneurship, and business innovation- and could potentially improve economic opportunity for residents by leveraging the strength of business leaders and economic development entities.

A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY This strategy encourages local businesses to communicate with individuals outside of their normal sphere of business, and strengthens the networks that act as support systems for local businesses.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN #3:

Revolving Loan Fund

What is it?

- An investment tool where low interest (or zero interest) loans are provided, and proceeds from loan pay backs are then reinvested.
- It starts with an infusion of seed money that will get the program started, either as a onetime infusion of city funds, grant money or philanthropic contributions.
- The city currently has an existing program funded through federal grant monies. These programs have limitations and are not always an ideal fit for Ironwood's needs. This spark plan is about establishing a local revolving loan fund that is specifically made for Ironwood rather than trying to fit Ironwood to meet federal program criteria.

Why do it?

- To help stimulate job creation
- To help improve existing older facilities (modernize from a technology and functional capacity)
- To help with removal of blight
- To help enhance Ironwood's image

Who does it?

- This is an opportunity for a collaborative effort between the City of Ironwood, philanthropic organizations, and the investment community (financial institutions and banks).
- The Economic Development Corporation would be the lead entity with City Staff resources overseeing the administration, marketing (assistance from the Chamber of Commerce) and promotion of the program.
- Local banks/lenders would administer the program and collect a fee for the administration.

How do you do it?

- Establish the goals and objectives of the program.
- Define the eligibility criteria for funds (small businesses, startup businesses, available equity... does not necessarily have to be "need based" but instead more incentive to make investments.)
- Define the uses for the funds (build out of space-redevelopment focused, technology upgrades, short term lease relief, signage and landscaping.)
- Collaborate with banks/lenders to establish the underwriting procedures and processes (work with lenders to administer the loans) – determine if it is 0 interest or low interest.
- Raise seed funds to start the program.
- Target market the program to the most eligible candidates that present the least risk and greatest reward – promote it through chamber, business retention visits, local lenders. Target highly visible areas (Highway 2 Corridor, downtown Ironwood, approach corridors into downtown, industrial park.)

How is it measured?

- Amount of funds loaned out
- Amount of funds paid back
- Amount of seed money raised
- Square feet of sites improved
- Types of improvements made
- Job creation/ business starts attributed to the loans

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.3: Develop Economic Gardening Programs and Activities
- Strategy 6.5: Enhance Downtown Business & Retail Environment
- Strategy 6.9: Coordinate Local and Regional Economic Development Efforts

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A THRIVING COMMUNITY This strategy leverages the strength of business leaders, economic development entities, and the investment community to create a supportive environment to grow new businesses, and attract new people and ideas to the community

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY This strategy encourages strong community connections and technology infrastructure as well as a culture of giving, partnership, collaboration, and shared prosperity.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

Business Mentorship Program

What is it?

- A formalized program that connects experienced business people and entrepreneurs with new start-ups or young and emerging business professionals and leaders.

Why do it?

- Provide support for new entrepreneurs and businesses and transfer knowledge to potential business owners.
- Support job creation and business development.
- Promote collaboration and help foster a friendly and connected community.
- Provide avenues for people to “give back” to the community through mentorship.
- To expand Ironwood’s reputation as a successful, business friendly community.

Who does it?

- Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development Corporation and staff
- Gogebic Community College
- Ironwood Community Schools
- Local business leaders, CEOs and individuals in management positions

How do you do it?

- Establish the program in writing and recruit mentors to pair with interested mentees.
- Consider creating an online database that can be used to search available mentors and filter them by areas of expertise, personal interests, time availability, or other key criteria.
- Market and promote the program through community events, civic clubs and organizations, schools and Gogebic Community College.
- Reward and or acknowledge participation through an annual event, banquet, or appreciation dinner.

How is it measured?

- Number of mentor and mentee participants
- Image as presented through public opinion
- Job growth or business startups that can be attributed to the program, either in part or in whole

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.3: Develop Economic Gardening Programs and Activities
- Strategy 6.5: Enhance Downtown Business & Retail Environment
- Strategy 6.6: Market the Community
- Strategy 6.7: Encourage Events and Festivals in the Community
- Strategy 6.9: Coordinate Local and Regional Economic Development Efforts

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A CONNECTED COMMUNITY This strategy fosters the connections between those striving to improve themselves and their community and those who have experience and knowledge, resulting in a relationship that is beneficial to Ironwood and beyond.

A THRIVING COMMUNITY Mentorship is a critical part of cultivating the next generation of entrepreneurs and business innovators, and is part of creating a supportive environment for new businesses.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY Offering new or fledgling business leaders the opportunity to learn from a seasoned business veteran sends a welcoming message that Ironwood is an inviting place of opportunity.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: BUSINESS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [National Mentoring Partnership](#)
- [Pure Michigan](#)
- [Riverland Community College](#), Albert Lea, Minnesota

Action Planning Worksheet!

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OBJECTIVES

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ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Business Incubator

What is it?

- A business incubator is an organization that helps with the establishment and success of startup and early stage businesses.
- It lowers barriers to entry for entrepreneurs by providing a variety of low-cost/subsidized/free services for start up businesses – particularly space for new businesses to start out before seeking permanent locations.
- Business incubators are designed to support small business creation.
- Incubating business may receive free or subsidized rents.
- A business incubator may include entrepreneurial support spaces.
- Programs may provide training and technical assistance.
- Incubators may or may not have a physical location.

Why do it?

- Support new business creation in Ironwood by lowering barriers to entry.
- Enhance the image of Ironwood as a small business friendly/supportive community.
- Activate underutilized retail, office, and industrial space in the community.

Who does it?

- Economic development entity, non-profit, or city
- May utilize existing businesses as mentors/technical advisors
- Could be supported through partnerships with local educational institutions, foundations, and public agencies

How do you do it?

- Look at the entrepreneurial potential in your community, and match your services to their needs by identifying potential incubator clients and businesses.
- Be flexible: should your incubator be more traditional, serving a variety of business types, or geared more towards a specific segment of business such as retail or food service.
- Develop a financial plan for your incubator, likely piecing together funds to support the program.
- Develop an application process and criteria and for selecting potential clients.

How is it measured?

- How many clients are served annually, and how does it compare to previous years?
- What is the longevity of incubated businesses; what percentage make it past 3, 5, 10 years?
- How many jobs are created with the help of incubation?
- What are the salaries paid through incubated businesses, and how do they compare to local, regional, and state averages?

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.3: Develop Economic Gardening Programs and Activities
- Strategy 6.5: Enhance Downtown Business & Retail Environment
- Strategy 6.6: Market the Community
- Strategy 6.9: Coordinate Local and Regional Economic Development Efforts

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A THRIVING COMMUNITY This strategy cultivates entrepreneurship and business innovation and leverages the skills, knowledge, and assets of institutions, business leaders and economic development entities.

A GREAT DESTINATION By supporting new businesses Ironwood showcases its value for entrepreneurs, creative workers and businesses, and promotes innovation and collaboration.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY Offering new or fledgling businesses supportive services signals that Ironwood is an inviting place where newcomers to the business world are welcome and encouraged.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: BUSINESS INCUBATOR

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [National Business Incubator Association](#)
- [Pure Michigan](#)
- [Michigan State University](#) (Innovation and Entrepreneurship)

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Action	Owner	Deadline

Pop-up Storefronts

What is it?

- A pop-up shop is a temporary or start up business that occupies a vacant storefront or work space, typically at a reduced rent and on a short-term lease.
- In some cases, the temporary business is able to grow into a permanent arrangement, paying full rent in the space-or moves on to another permanent site.
- A “Pop-up” project can be a retail storefront, gallery, park, or other public or private space improvement that is installed on a temporary or seasonal basis.

Why do it?

- Activate and invigorate underutilized spaces in the community.
- Foster new businesses and artistic endeavours.
- Allow entrepreneurs to test their business ideas and skills in a lower risk environment.
- Provide new options for goods and services for citizens.
- Create interim revenue/rent generating uses for otherwise vacant or under-utilized properties.

Who does it?

- An economic development entity
- The City
- A non-profit organization

How do you do it?

- Identify, inventory, and advertise vacant or underutilized retail properties that could be utilized on a short-term basis, including
 - › City-owned spaces
 - › Privately owned spaces with cooperating and supportive property owners
- Match spaces to the needs of local artisans, makers, craftspeople, etc.
 - › What will they use the space for?
 - › How long do they want to use the space for- a weekend, a week, a month, the holiday season?
 - › Are their dates flexible?
 - › Do they have location requirements or limitations?
 - › What is their budget?
 - › Do they carry any necessary licenses (ie. catering)
 - › Would they be interested in a shared pop-up?
- Establish terms of the agreement
 - › Payment amount and terms
 - › Duration of pop-up

Where do you do it?

- Downtown Ironwood or in any other vacancies within a commercial node

How is it measured?

- Formal and informal feedback regarding program success from:
 - › Pop-up business owners
 - › Property owners
 - › Customers/citizens
 - › Neighboring business owners
- Rate of transition for pop-up businesses into permanent locations

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.3: Develop Economic Gardening Programs and Activities
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Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

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A THRIVING COMMUNITY This strategy cultivates entrepreneurship and business innovation and leverages vacancies to benefit individuals and the community

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY An active, busy downtown contributes to an atmosphere of a friendly and inviting community, and filling vacant spaces, even temporarily, improves the communities image.

A GREAT DESTINATION By repurposing and enlivening vacant storefronts, Ironwood can share the creative talents of locals with visitors to the historic downtown, capturing those that come to the area from around the world.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: POP-UP STOREFRONTS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Mainstreets that Pop-Main Street Now Sept/Oct 2011](#)
- [The Storefront](#)
- [The Starling Project](#) St. Paul, Minnesota
- [Artists in Storefronts](#) Minneapolis, Minnesota

Action Planning Worksheet!

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Action	Owner	Deadline

Economic Development Coordination

What is it?

- An effort to align the more than 20 organizations and agencies that provide various degrees of economic development services to the City of Ironwood. These organizations range from federal to local organizations, some public, some private, and some nonprofit groups. Some groups focus on workforce development, some focus on marketing and promotion, others focus on physical capital and investments.
- A resource or tool that aligns key mission/purposes of agencies and organizations with project needs.
 - › A spreadsheet/matrix, flow chart graphic, etc.
- The challenge lies with coordinating the various entities that provide services, with the intent to better streamline efforts to enhance the community's quality of life and economic development position within the Upper Peninsula region.

Why do it?

- Strengthen the connection between agency/organization resources.
- Quicken the response times to align Ironwood economic development projects to funding or partnership opportunities.
- Improve Ironwood's (and the UP) competitive position.
- Minimize duplication of economic development efforts.

Who does it?

- Community/Economic Development Director
 - › Economic Development Corporation
 - › Chamber of Commerce

How do you do it?

- Determine the best format of the tool (i.e. spreadsheet, flow chart graphic, interactive online database).
- Identify various agencies and organizations and their respective missions, or charges;
 - › Collaborate with executive directors or key staff from various organizations.
- Roll out the tool through an on-line function on City Web Site and link to area resource pages.

How is it measured?

- Number of hits on web page
- Turn around times for Ironwood projects working with various agencies/organizations
- Volume of collaborations between Ironwood and agencies and organizations

Related Strategies:

- All Economic Development Strategies

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A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY By providing tools and resources that are easy to use and understand, and that maximize the efficiency of time resources, Ironwood improves upon its image as a friendly community.

A THRIVING COMMUNITY This strategy cultivates entrepreneurship and business innovation and leverages the resources, knowledge, and assets of federal, state, regional, and local economic development entities.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY This strategy strengthens the relationship among economic development oriented agencies and organizations. Clarifying roles and responsibilities can help streamline efforts, reduce conflict, and help achieve the bigger goal of a thriving community and region.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Pure Michigan \(MEDC\)](#)
- [Rocky Mountain Institute Economic Renewal Guide](#)
- [Michigan State University \(Innovation and Entrepreneurship\)](#)

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Citywide Arts Plan

What is it?

- A community-wide arts master plan developed with community partners (particularly the Downtown Art Place)
- The plan coordinated future public, private, and community-led investments in public art.
- This may include planning for mural projects, artists housing/lofts, events/festivals, community-led activities, arts in the schools- as well as art integration in parks/infrastructure.

Why do it?

- Establish policy guidance, coordinate, and leverage public/private investments in public art installations.
- Support and enhance Ironwood's arts and overall image.

Who does it?

- Downtown Art Place
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local artists and art enthusiasts

How do you do it?

- Work collaboratively with the DAP, its partners, stakeholders, and the community.
- Involve key artists in the strategic planning and design of public art installations.
- Develop a compelling city-wide vision for public art installations within the community.
- Prepare concept designs and implementation details for key public art spaces.
- Provide key design guidelines that can be incorporated into City development policies and procedures.

Where do you do it?

- Across the City at places that would benefit from the presence of art or the process of making art

How is it measured?

- Completion of a city-wide master plan
- Number of new art installations
- Dollars invested in public art
- People hours dedicated to developing public art

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 3.1: Update City Ordinances
- Strategy 4.2: Prepare a Wayfinding Master Plan
- Strategy 5.8: Incorporate Public Art into Parks and Open Space

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A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY By providing a clear policy and planting seed for public art, Ironwood can present a unique, interesting, and welcoming image.

A GREAT DESTINATION The interest and intrigue behind unique pieces of public art can help make Ironwood a destination for the art community. It also can help in making Ironwood a year round destination.

A RICH STORY This strategy has a great potential to help tell the many stories of Ironwood through public art.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: CITYWIDE ARTS PLAN

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Pure Michigan \(Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs\)](#)
- [Forecast Public Art](#)
- [Michigan City, Indiana](#)
- [Allen, Texas](#)
- [Lakewood, Colorado](#)

Action Planning Worksheet!

Do you support this idea? Make a commitment to act! Complete this worksheet and submit it to the City Community Development Office (Contact: Michael Brown, Community Development Director; Memorial Building; 213 S. Marquette Street; Ironwood, MI, 49938; (906) 932-5050 ext.126; brownm@cityofironwood.org)

NAME / ORGANIZATION:

GOAL / MOTIVATION

What is the larger reason for supporting this idea? What do you hope to achieve?

OBJECTIVES

What are the tangible/measurable outcomes you'd like to see in the short term (next 6 months)?

ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Neighborhood Branding/Identity

What is it?

- A Neighborhood Brand or Identity is a unifying idea that represents the character and experience of a neighborhood.
- It is a program that recognizes key neighborhoods by name.
- It includes Mapping and signage that identifies neighborhoods.
- Identification of a neighborhood identity
- Creates opportunities for neighborhood gathering and celebration.

Why do it?

- Build on existing assets and histories to help create a sense of place in Ironwood's neighborhoods.
- Develop and encourage connections between neighbors.
- Create a sense of pride.
- Help with wayfinding in the community.
- Memorialize history.

Who does it?

- Neighborhood leaders and groups
- Community service officers

How do you do it?

- Develop a neighborhood map based on existing neighborhoods, unique features such as historic plats, mine shafts, schools or other identifiers.
- Enlist the help of a local artist to create a distinctive neighborhood map.
- Distribute the map to potential and new residents, tourists, and visitors.
- Offer funds or matching grants to neighborhood groups to install neighborhood markers such as a mural, gateway icon, interpretive piece, other art installation.
- Coordinate and host neighborhood gatherings, festivals, events.

How is it measured?

- Number of neighborhoods formed
- Number of people participating in events
- Feedback from realtors and community members

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 4.2: Prepare a Wayfinding Master Plan
- All Park Strategies, to a degree
- Strategy 6.7: Encourage Events and Festivals in the Community
- Strategy 6.13: Promote Neighborhood Capacity Building

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

The Vision and Guiding Principles of the Ironwood Comprehensive Plan articulate how the community will look, feel, and function over the next 20 years and help to define the character, values, and priorities of the Ironwood community. The strategy described in this Spark Plan supports the vision and guiding principles in the following ways:

A RICH STORY Promoting neighborhood identities that build on local heritage helps tell the stories of Ironwood, celebrating the histories of work, family, and community.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY This strategy encourages the beautification of public spaces and infrastructure by providing a framework for groups to initiate improvements that promote the communities identity.

A GREAT DESTINATION Distinctive, vibrant neighborhoods help make Ironwood a destination that provides an experience that can be found no where else in the world, attractive to visitors and residents alike.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: NEIGHBORHOOD BRANDING/IDENTITY

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Next City](#)
- [Center for Neighborhoods](#)

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ACTION STEPS

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Action	Owner	Deadline

Historic Preservation & Interpretation

What is it?

- An inventory of historical/cultural places, structures, and events in the City of Ironwood. This could be a database connected to points on a map using Geographic Information System software.
- The inventory would identify location, age or era, and key characteristics that make it an important part of Ironwoods history.
- A plan with specific policies and procedures that guide the City of Ironwood and residents in rehabbing, restoring, or redeveloping property that might be historically significant.
- Provides the intellectual baseline for evaluating individual properties.
- Ideas for telling the story of Ironwoods past building off of existing efforts such as the Depot and the Memorial Building museum.

Why do it?

- To provide an intellectual baseline for evaluating individual properties historical significance.
- To help tell the story of Ironwood to residents and visitors.
- To create interest and intrigue providing residents and visitors with entertainment opportunities.
- To be able to leverage the economic development potential of historic and cultural resources.

Who does it?

- Historic Preservation Commission
- Historians and history enthusiasts
- Students (college/high school)

How do you do it?

- Prepare a work plan with key tasks:
 - › Develop policies and procedures that address historical, cultural, and economic factors
 - › Establish a web site through the Ironwood Historical Society and engage the community in the discussion through meetings and online engagement
 - › Develop historical context: inventory existing properties for historic significance and document chronology of historic events
 - › Conduct inventory and historic designation studies and full designation evaluations (consultant expertise necessary)
- Prepare plan – volunteer led or hire an historical/cultural resources planning expert.

How is it measured?

- Plan is completed and embraced by the community
- Number of installations of historic interpretation
- Number of historic structures rehabbed or preserved

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 3.1: Update City Ordinances
- Strategy 3.3: Conduct Regular Land Use and Building Inventories
- Strategy 4.2: Prepare a Wayfinding Master Plan
- Strategy 5.8: Incorporate Public Art into Parks and Open Space
- Strategy 6.7: Encourage Events and Festivals in the Community
- Strategy 6.8: Develop Unique Local Assets

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A THRIVING COMMUNITY and **A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY** History is made every day. Modern day economics create challenges in preserving and restoring the past. Historic and cultural resources can be a key part of Ironwoods economic resilience. To make it happen, requires collaboration among long time residents and new comers, business owners and residents.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY Preserving, interpreting, and restoring significant parts of Ironwood’s past shows a great deal of respect for a community’s history

A RICH STORY As a community of stories, this spark plan is all about bringing the stories out into the community to celebrate the community’s assets and look for lessons that might influence the future Ironwood.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: HISTORIC PRESERVATION & INTERPRETATION

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Historical Society of Michigan](#)
- [Annual Upper Peninsula History Conference](#)
- [Ironwood Historical Society](#)
- Memorial Building Museum
- City Assessors Data

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ACTION STEPS

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Action	Owner	Deadline

Housing Market Study

What is it?

- A study that includes an inventory of available housing supply (existing housing stock) and an analysis of current housing demand based on demographic analysis and projections
- Key components typically include:
 - › Existing housing inventory: types, age, condition and price
 - › Current population mix: household type, age, income, persons/per household
 - › Project change in population – persons per household – total households – type of households
- Demand measured in number of units for various housing types: by tenure (owner vs. renter), by type (single family, apartment, townhome, etc), by income (market rate vs. subsidized), and senior housing

Why do it?

- Better inform housing strategies that achieve the goal of maintaining a balanced housing supply of life cycle housing options.
- Support investors/lenders in understanding housing demand.
- Help target specific housing redevelopment or rehabilitation programs to areas of greatest need.
- Market housing and development opportunities to the community.

Who does it?

- Consultant or staff specializing in market research and housing
- Community Development Department
- Economic Development Corporation

How do you do it?

- Conduct data collection and research;
 - › Survey housing inventory and review assessor data.
 - › Collaborate with realtor/brokers, home builders, and lending institutions to collect sales information and housing trend data.
 - › Interview landlords, senior housing, and public housing providers to understand existing vacancy rates.
 - › Interview hotel/motel owners to determine if hotel/motel units serve as longer term housing trends.
- Conduct in depth demographic research and project household growth by household type.
- Determine demand based on existing housing stock, vacancy rates, and household growth projections.

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 3.1: Update City Ordinances
- Strategy 3.3: Conduct regular land use and building condition inventories
- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.6: Market the Community
- Strategy 6.10: Encourage Housing Rehabilitation
- Strategy 6.11: Support Infill & Redevelopment
- Strategy 6.12: Market Housing Assets
- Strategy 6.13: Promote Neighborhood Capacity Building

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

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A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY Part of being a friendly community is embracing the needs of a variety of people from different family types, professional and cultural backgrounds, and income levels, among other things. This includes students, the elderly, young families, single adults, and retirees to name a few.

A THRIVING COMMUNITY The creative solutions and new ideas that help a community grow come easiest from groups with diverse populations whose backgrounds and experiences vary. A diverse housing mix helps to attract and retain these people.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY Part of being connected to surrounding regions and beyond is attracting new or returning residents that can share their experiences from outside Ironwood. Desirable housing options is one component of attracting new or returning residents who bring their outside connections with them when they come.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: HOUSING MARKET STUDY

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Michigan State Housing Development Authority](#)
- [US Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

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ACTION STEPS

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Action	Owner	Deadline

Scattered Site Housing Redevelopment Program

What is it?

- A program that removes the most severe cases of housing blight/deterioration and replaces them with new housing of a product type and quality that diversifies the existing housing stock.

Why do it?

- Enhance the community image by removing blight
- Diversify the existing housing stock:
 - › Current stock is 84% detached single family, 8% multi-family 3+ units, 6% duplexes and 2% mobile homes.
 - › The majority of housing stock is greater than 50 years old.
 - › The majority of housing stock is priced at moderate or first time home buyer price points.
- Be a more friendly community that offers housing to all life cycles:
 - › Young adults and single person families—apartments/rentals/townhomes
 - › Young families – single family detached homes
 - › Larger older families – bigger single family detached homes
 - › Empty nesters – condos/townhomes (maintenance free)
 - › Seniors – apartments/condos
- Offer “new” housing opportunities to people who want to come to Ironwood or move up within Ironwood but stay in the community.
- Serve as a catalyst to foster neighborhood investment.

Who does it?

- Community Development Staff
- City Commission & Economic Development Corporation
- Community Action
- Brokers/Builders/Financial Institutions
- Gogebic Community College Construction Technology class

How do you do it?

- Identify potential sites and collaborate with property owners on demo, sale or redevelopment of existing blighted homes.
- Demonstrate possible housing types, patterns, forms, and site layouts using architectural pattern books.
- Conduct Housing Market Study to support private investment based on qualified market study.
- Explore funding mechanism to acquire, demo, write down land costs and be able to re-coop investments overtime: possible candidates include Tax Increment Financing or TIF, Tax Abatement, Revolving Loan Funds.
- Market vacant lots to builders, realtors, developers, etc.

Where do you do it?

- Targeted neighborhoods that could benefit most from revitalization

How is it measured?

- Number of new homes that are built per year
- Number of blight cases removed
- Increase in property tax valuation

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 3.3: Conduct Regular Land Use and Building Inventories
- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.10: Encourage Housing Rehabilitation
- Strategy 6.11: Support Infill & Redevelopment
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A GREAT DESTINATION Diversifying housing options and improving the ‘curb appeal’ of Ironwood helps make the community more appealing to potential residents and visitors alike.

A THRIVING COMMUNITY With new residents and visitors come new opportunities for business innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY This strategy helps provide options for families and individuals with differing size, structure, age, and needs and desires.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: SCATTERED SITE HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Michigan State Housing Development Authority](#)
- [NeighborWorks America](#)
- [Anoka, Minnesota](#)

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Action	Owner	Deadline

Homeowner's Toolkit/Handbook

What is it?

- A guide/manual (or series of guides/manuals) that assist homeowners with ideas for how to improve older homes:
 - › Economical – energy efficient – water conservation
 - › Modernize – kitchen and bath upgrades or additions and significant remodeling such as adding a mud room, master bedroom, four season porch.
 - › Historic restoration
 - › Garage storage
 - › Landscaping and storm water management

Why do it?

- Improve quality of life (housing quality, economics).
- Improve the overall housing stock.
- Improve neighborhood identity and image.

Who does it?

- Chamber of Commerce
- Gogebic Community College
- Business Trades and Utility Companies
- Universities with Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Civil Engineering, and Construction programming emphasis

How do you do it?

- Brainstorm a list of guidebook/manuals that would be useful for Ironwood (i.e. how to remodel older mining homes – implementing solar energy and payback, etc.).
- Prepare manuals and guidebooks.
- Promote manuals and guidebooks through various businesses and community events.

How is it measured?

- Number of manuals/guidebooks prepared
- Number of building permits issued for remodels, additions, or energy efficiency improvements.
- Number of historic structures rehabbed or preserved

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 3.3: Conduct Regular Land Use and Building Inventories
- Strategy 6.10: Encourage Housing Rehabilitation
- Strategy 6.12: Market Housing Assets
- Strategy 6.13: Promote Neighborhood Capacity Building

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A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY and **A THRIVING COMMUNITY** *Housing is a critical factor in deciding where to locate or if you are able to stay in a community. This spark plan will keep Ironwood friendly and thriving by providing resources and guides to residents to assist with housing improvements.*

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [A Remodeling Planbook for Post WWII Houses](#)
- [Michigan State Housing Development Authority](#)
- [United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development-Housing and Community Assistance](#)
- [Gogebic-Ontonogon Community Action Agency Housing Program](#)

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ACTION STEPS

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Action	Owner	Deadline

Housing Rehab Program

What is it?

- A program that offers affordable loans and assistance to qualified homeowners for home repairs. Assistance may include:
 - › Identifying priority repairs
 - › Getting a fair quote for the work
 - › Ensuring complete and quality repairs
- Qualified repairs may include those that address:
 - › Energy efficiency
 - › Emergencies, such as roof or furnace repairs
 - › Exterior repairs such as siding, windows, or porches
 - › Making the home accessible for individuals with disabilities
 - › Repairs that improve the homeowners health and safety, such as the removal of lead-based paint

Why do it?

- Provide assistance to those with economic or other challenges.
- Increase property values.
- Extend the life of older homes.
- Maintain neighborhood character and identity by reducing the frequency of vacancies or tear-downs.
- Spur neighboring improvements.

Who does it?

- Ironwood Community Development Staff

How do you do it?

- Establish program director to spearhead the effort.
- Secure funding sources:
 - › Federal assistance through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 203(k) program
 - › State assistance from Michigan State Housing Development Authority
- Advertise the program and distribute applications.
- Select recipients based on potential impact and need.

How is it measured?

- Is there an Increase in property values?
- Repayment success
- Recipient/resident, and neighborhood satisfaction
- Increase in home sales

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 3.3: Conduct Regular Land Use and Building Inventories
- Strategy 6.10: Encourage Housing Rehabilitation
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A CONNECTED COMMUNITY This strategy results in a sense of support and care among residents, and promotes partnerships, collaboration, and shared prosperity.

A RICH STORY By preserving the character of Ironwood's existing neighborhoods, the Housing Rehab Program helps maintain Ironwood's small town charm and heritage.

A GREAT DESTINATION Happy-looking houses help convey a sense of economic and cultural activity within a community, making it a more attractive destination for visitors and potential residents and employers.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

Home Remodeler's Showcase

What is it?

- An annual spring event featuring local and regional home maintenance, remodeling, finance, and garden and landscape professionals
- Free and open to the public

Why do it?

- Stimulate interest in and understanding of home remodeling and maintenance.
- Provide a one-stop shopping experience for local property owners.
- Provide an opportunity for local businesses to gather together and promote their services and businesses.

Who does it?

- Chamber of Commerce

How do you do it?

- Choose a local venue that has adequate space for vendors to set up display booths, and consider facilities for small concessions.
- Invite local builders, contractors, home remodelers, landscape designers and installers, etc.
- Promote the event in the local newspaper, on the radio, and with flyers, etc.

Where do you do it?

- The Memorial Building has potential as the location for this event.

How is it measured?

- Feedback from vendors and attendees
- Public Attendance numbers

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 6.5: Enhance Downtown Business & Retail Environment
- Strategy 6.7: Encourage Events and Festivals in the Community
- Strategy 6.10: Encourage Housing Rehabilitation
- Strategy 6.12: Market Housing Assets
- Strategy 6.13: Promote Neighborhood Capacity Building

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A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY This strategy promotes a friendly and inviting atmosphere in Ironwood by encouraging and facilitating home and property beautification.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY This strategy helps enhance Ironwood's community connections by providing a forum for exchange and dialogue among residents, and contractors and service providers.

A THRIVING COMMUNITY By creating an event that offers businesses the opportunity to showcase their products and services, Ironwood is facilitating local businesses and supporting a shared opportunity for residents and business owners.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: HOME REMODELER'S SHOWCASE

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Metropolitan Builders Association - Home Building and Remodeling Show Milwaukee, Wisconsin](#)
- [Parade of Homes, Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area](#)

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OBJECTIVES

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ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Trail & Sidewalk Improvements

What is it?

- A prioritized plan for incremental construction and reconstruction of new sidewalks, multi-use paths, and trails
- A permanent, designated segment of the North Country Trail that coincides with Michigan’s Western Gateway Trail
- Encourages connections across and along the Montreal River into Wisconsin, including the proposed River Walk Trail
- Includes strategies for making stronger connections to existing trails south of Ironwood, and nearby communities such as Mercer, Wisconsin

Why do it?

- Improve the multi-modal transportation system.
- Encourage active living by making walking, biking, and skiing the easy and fun choice for transportation.
- Draw new residents and tourists to Ironwood with the lure of a looping, complete trail system with regional connections.
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Capture North Country Trail users as a new segment of tourist in Ironwood.
- Reduce pollution by getting people out of their cars (less sediment from vehicles entering the stormwater system, reduced carbon monoxide, heavy metals, and other pollutants from vehicle exhaust).

Who does it?

- The City
- North Country Trail Volunteers

How do you do it?

- Ironwood Streets Fund
- Explore outside grant opportunities
 - › Federal
 - › State
 - › Private
- Seek permanent designation for The North Country Trail along a portion of Michigan’s Western Gateway Trail.
- Join the North Country Trail Association’s Trail Town Program

Where do you do it?

- Prioritize sidewalk improvements by comparing and analyzing street projects and Pedestrian Zones according to the Transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Make trail improvements, starting with low-hanging fruit and connections to the most-utilized trails:
 - › Michigan’s Western Gateway Trail
 - › Shorter, more easily-implementable connections

How is it measured?

- Keep updated goals that get revisited and revised on an annual and ten year basis.
- Are you meeting your goals, or do they need to be recalibrated and refined?
- Identify barriers or keys to success and strategize to overcome or utilize them.

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 4.1: Identify and Implement Pilot Routes for a Complete Streets Program
- Strategy 4.4: Define Priority Improvements to the Pedestrian Network
- Strategy 4.5: Prioritize and Plan for Trail System Improvements
- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life

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AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY A more complete sidewalk network and trail system encourages multiple modes of transportation and encourages active living among residents.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY This strategy helps to enhance Ironwood’s inviting and friendly atmosphere by creating pedestrian friendly streets and connected, usable trails.

A GREAT DESTINATION Upgraded and well-maintained sidewalks and trails attract visitors and potential residents to Ironwood.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: TRAIL & SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [North Country Trail -Trail Towns Program](#)
- [American Trails](#)
- [Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership](#)

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ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Trail Users Forum

What is it?

- A quarterly or annual meeting of trail users and trail user groups to discuss and share current and future plans and initiatives
- An opportunity to get different trail user groups together to have an open dialogue and encourage collaboration on improving and building trails in and around Ironwood

Why do it?

- Combine efforts of local groups and individuals to affect greater action on a local and regional level.
- Increase discussion between users and user groups.
- Resolve conflicts between trail user types/groups.

Who does it?

- Initiated and facilitated by a neutral, overseeing party; Chamber of Commerce or City Staff person
- User groups from the Ironwood Area, including but not limited to:
 - › Snowmobilers
 - › Bikers
 - › Hikers
 - › Snowshoers
 - › Cross-country skiers
 - › ATV riders
 - › Fat Tire riders
 - › The North Country Trail advocates

How do you do it?

- Find an individual champion to organize and plan the initial meeting.
- Set a meeting frequency and schedule that is a agreeable to a majority of participants.
- Establish group vision and goals.
- Report on and represent the combined interests of Trail Users to the City Planning Commission, City Commission, Parks & Recreation Committee, and any other decision-making or influential bodies.

Where do you do it?

- › Consider holding the meetings at the Memorial Building, the Library, or at a city park.

How is it measured?

- Is attendance at the forum growing or remaining steady?
- Do members find value in meeting?
- What advancements or projects have been made as a result of the forum?

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 4.5: Prioritize and Plan for Trail System Improvements
- Strategy 5.2: Understand and Balance the Needs of Parks and Trail Users
- Strategy 5.4: Develop Park Master Plans
- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life

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AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY A more complete, inclusive trail system encourages multiple modes of transportation and encourages active living among residents.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY This strategy helps to enhance Ironwood's inviting and friendly atmosphere by creating dialogue and improving a coordinated trail system.

A GREAT DESTINATION Upgraded, extensive, and well-maintained trails attract a wide variety of visitors and potential residents to Ironwood.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

Wayfinding

What is it?

- The system of signs and cues that help guide people through your city to destinations that make it a great place
- Wayfinding is more than just signage. Wayfinding is the creation of a theme or iconic brand that helps identify a district or a destination within a place or community. Wayfinding might include:
 - › Community gateway signage
 - › Street signage
 - › District signage
 - › Landscaping or streetscaping themes
 - › Building or Park Design themes
 - › Route planning (walking tours, running/ski courses, bike routes) centered around key destinations such as tourist destinations, historical/cultural assets, or downtown

Why do it?

- Help navigate and find key destinations within the community.
- Improve safety by providing more clear and identifiable signage and direction.
- Link visitors and people not as familiar with Ironwood to local and regional assets, making them feel welcome.
- Show pride in Ironwood and its assets.

Who does it?

- Chamber of Commerce/Convention & Visitor Bureau/Ironwood Tourism Council
- City of Ironwood (Parks/Public Works) in collaboration with park groups, trail authorities, historical society, artists, etc.
- Local/Regional Business support

How do you do it?

- Implement a framework: decide on an overarching theme, and identify systems within the overall network:
 - › Parks
 - › Civic Institutions
 - › Information Centers
 - › Trailheads
 - › Districts
 - › History
 - › Art
- Identify current wayfinding signage and assess the system for key gaps.
- Develop recommendations for design themes and placement of features (signage, kiosks, landscaping, public art, etc.).
- Consider the city-wide brand, if developed, and coordinate where appropriate (color, general style, etc.)
- Develop designs for wayfinding elements.
- Identify funding sources and strategies for implementation.

Where do you do it?

- At critical intersections for motorists, trail users, and pedestrians

How is it measured?

- Completion of a wayfinding master plan
- Implementation of the master plan

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 4.2: Prepare a Wayfinding Master Plan
- Strategy 5.5: Provide Tools that Direct People to Parks in the Community.
- Strategy 6.5: Enhance Downtown Businesses and Retail Environment
- Strategy 6.6: Market the Community
- Strategy 6.8 Develop Unique Local Assets

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

The Vision and Guiding Principles of the Ironwood Comprehensive Plan articulate how the community will look, feel, and function over the next 20 years and help to define the character, values, and priorities of the Ironwood community. The strategy described in this Spark Plan supports the vision and guiding principles in the following ways:

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY and **A GREAT DESTINATION** By providing signage and direction throughout the city, Ironwood signals a welcoming and inviting community that encourages guests to share community assets and local treasures.

AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY Wayfinding also helps local residents navigate and become aware of otherwise hidden assets or events, encouraging active living and participation.

A RICH STORY A wayfinding plan can help navigate some of the stories of Ironwood by directing people to key destinations or providing a character/icon that is reflective of Ironwood's rich history.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Wayfinding and Signage Strategy for State Heritage Routes \(State of Michigan\)](#)
- [Adventure Cycling Association](#)
- [Michigan Street Wayfinding Signs Conceptual Approach](#)

Action Planning Worksheet!

Do you support this idea? Make a commitment to act! Complete this worksheet and submit it to the City Community Development Office (Contact: Michael Brown, Community Development Director; Memorial Building; 213 S. Marquette Street; Ironwood, MI, 49938; (906) 932-5050 ext.126; brownm@cityofironwood.org)

NAME / ORGANIZATION:

GOAL / MOTIVATION

What is the larger reason for supporting this idea? What do you hope to achieve?

OBJECTIVES

What are the tangible/measurable outcomes you'd like to see in the short term (next 6 months)?

ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Miners Park Master Plan

What is it?

- A long-range, complete, cohesive plan for the transformation of Miners Park into a regional park
- Establishes phases of work, including
 - › Funding
 - › Construction
 - › Programming
- Clarifies and codifies the role of the Friends of Miners Park and its relationship with the City

Why do it?

- Utilize the master plan to pursue and secure funding.
- Ensure a cohesive, well-planned park that meets the needs of its users, now and in the future.
- Garner public input, support, and enthusiasm for the park.
- Fully capitalize on the amazing resource that has the potential to be a regional and national draw for new residents and tourists alike.

Who does it?

- Friends of Miners Park
- The City
- Interested user groups such as cross-country skiers, snowshoers, bikers, etc.

How do you do it?

- Build on the work already complete by the Friends of Miners Park.
- Understand and articulate a vision and set of goals for the park, including near and long term hopes.
- Raise money to fund the completion of a master plan:
 - › Write grants
 - › Pursue corporate or business sponsorship
 - › Organize and hold charity events

How is it measured?

- Establish a time frame and goals for the completion of the Master Plan, and regularly review them to measure progress.

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 4.5: Define priority trail improvements
- Strategy 5.2: Understand and Balance the Needs of Parks and Trail Users
- Strategy 5.4: Develop Park Master Plans
- Strategy 5.7: Develop Efficient and Prioritized Practices for Park Maintenance
- Strategy 5.8: Incorporate Public Art into Parks and Open Space
- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.6: Market the Community
- Strategy 6.8 Develop Unique Local Assets

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

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A GREAT DESTINATION A 157-acre park in the heart of Ironwood that features a variety of uses, the interpretation of historic mining sites, and connections to world-class trails would add to Ironwood's reputation as a great destination.

AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY A master plan is the first step towards the realization of Miner's Park as a place for four seasons of recreation and outdoor amenities.

A RICH STORY Miner's Park is a trove of treasure when it comes to Ironwood's heritage of hard work, service, family, and community, and planning to celebrate it throughout the park is a major component of Ironwood's Vision and Guiding Principles.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: MINER'S PARK MASTER PLAN

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Michigan Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#)
- [National Recreation and Park Association](#)
- [Hartley Park](#) – Duluth, Minnesota
- [Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan](#), Dakota County, Minnesota

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OBJECTIVES

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ACTION STEPS

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Action	Owner	Deadline

Community Gardens/Adopt-A-Lot

What is it?

- The temporary 'adoption' of city-owned vacant lots by neighbors, individuals, or groups
- Think community gardens and food production, flower gardens, bee boxes, grass art, fruit tree orchards, kickball fields, sculpture gardens, events, and outdoor art galleries...the possibilities are endless!

Why do it?

- Allow for vacant lots to be utilized by the community.
- Turn opportunities for blight into opportunities for beauty.
- Provide more opportunity for potential producers to participate in the farmer's and artisan market at Depot Park.
- Help stabilize property values and reinvigorate neighborhoods.
- In addition to producing fresh produce and plants, community gardens and adopted lots provide a connection for residents to our environment, food, and each other.

Who does it?

- The City oversees the program, and collaborates with residents, neighborhood organizations, youth groups, individuals - anyone that can meet application requirements.

How do you do it?

- Develop an adopt-a-lot licensing process to grant temporary uses.
- Maintain and publicize an on-line list of city-owned vacant lots available for adoption, and include lots that have been adopted, and lots that have been added to a 'long-term community managed open space program'.

Where do you do it?

- Throughout Ironwood on city-owned vacant lots

How is it measured?

- Quantity of lots in the adoption program
- Feedback from adopted lot neighbors, citizens, city staff, and adopt-a-lot participants
- Is there a need or support for the establishment of a 'long-term community managed open space program' as a result of the popularity and success of adopted lots?

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 3.1: Update City Ordinances
- Strategy 5.8: Incorporate Public Art into Parks and Open Space
- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.6: Market the Community
- Strategy 6.7: Encourage Events and Festivals in the Community

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

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AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY This strategy encourages residents to embrace an active and healthy lifestyle through volunteerism, community development, and neighborhood engagement.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY This strategy helps foster a culture of partnership, collaboration, and volunteerism within the local community.

A GREAT DESTINATION By providing the opportunity for beautification, this strategy helps promote Ironwood as a home to forward-thinking, skilled, motivated, and creative people.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: ADOPT-A-LOT PROGRAM

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [City Green](#)
- [Flint, Michigan](#)
- [Michigan State University Extension Services](#)
- [National Recreation and Park Association](#)

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NAME / ORGANIZATION:

GOAL / MOTIVATION

What is the larger reason for supporting this idea? What do you hope to achieve?

OBJECTIVES

What are the tangible/measurable outcomes you'd like to see in the short term (next 6 months)?

ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Community-built Playground

What is it?

- An outdoor facility for children to play and explore
- Built by community members and volunteers utilizing non-traditional, re-purposed or found materials, more in the spirit of a hands-on ‘adventure park’

...or...

- Built by community members and volunteers using traditional materials that may include pre-fabricated components purchased through fund raising or partnership efforts

Why do it?

- Meet the recreation needs and desires of families with young children.
- Extend dedicated City funds that are budgeted for park improvements.
- Create a community-building event that benefits volunteer participants and park users.

Who does it?

- A Community Playground Committee

How do you do it?

- Decide on the type of effort-will the playground consist of more traditional elements, or be a more exploratory, hands-on adventure park? Things to consider include:
 - › Potential staffing requirement with adventure park
 - › Availability of ‘found’ materials
 - › Funding opportunities/ potential partnerships
 - › Requirements for volunteer resources

Where do you do it?

- Underutilized park space
- Vacant city-owned lot

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 5.2: Understand and Balance the Needs of Parks and Trail Users
- Strategy 5.4: Develop Park Master Plans
- Strategy 5.7: Develop Efficient and Prioritized Practices for Park Maintenance
- Strategy 5.8: Incorporate Public Art into Parks and Open Space
- Strategy 6.1: Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.8 Develop Unique Local Assets

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

The Vision and Guiding Principles of the Ironwood Comprehensive Plan articulate how the community will look, feel, and function over the next 20 years and help to define the character, values, and priorities of the Ironwood community. The strategy described in this Spark Plan supports the vision and guiding principles in the following ways:

AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY This strategy is part of supporting the ongoing development of events and facilities that contribute to active and healthy lifestyles.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY This strategy creates a space for local families and volunteers to connect and build upon a culture of volunteerism, partnership, collaboration, and shared prosperity.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY Providing amenities for children and young families is part of being an ‘age-friendly’ community and offering opportunities and destinations for individuals at all stages of life.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: COMMUNITY-BUILT PLAYGROUND

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [KaBoom](#)
- [National Recreation and Park Association](#)
- [Adventure Playground, Berkeley California](#)

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NAME / ORGANIZATION:

GOAL / MOTIVATION

What is the larger reason for supporting this idea? What do you hope to achieve?

OBJECTIVES

What are the tangible/measurable outcomes you'd like to see in the short term (next 6 months)?

ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Youth Center

What is it?

- A social and recreational after-school drop-in center for use by children ages 12-20, largely organized and operated by youth.
- Offers programs such as movie night, book club, photography, garden club, band night, etc
- Provides youth the opportunity to plan programs and events, organize volunteer opportunities, practice fund raising, and grant writing

Why do it?

- Provide a place for youth to gather, socialize, recreate, and participate in civic engagement and community service.
- Empower local youth to volunteer and gain valuable first-hand experience.
- Encourage mentorship between established community groups and youth.
- Revitalize an underutilized space in the community.

Who does it?

- Youth-led fund-raising, organizing, and participating; they decide
- Adult volunteer community members

How do you do it?

- Plant the seed-encourage youth to champion the center and consider finding an adult champion to act as liaison.
- Establish a Youth Board of Directors
- Establish an Adult Board of Directors
- Secure an AmeriCorps volunteer to help with programming, coordination, fund-raising, etc.

Where do you do it?

- Offer the use of a city-owned space for initial meetings, such as the Memorial Building.
- Wherever the youth can afford to do it- they choose and lease or buy the space when they have the funds

How is it measured?

- Is it self-sustained, self-governed, and self-policed by the youth?
- Feedback from Adult Board of Directors on progress and accomplishments

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 6.1 Invest in Quality of Life
- Strategy 6.5: Enhance Downtown Businesses and Retail Environment
- Strategy 6.7: Encourage Events and Festivals in the Community
- Strategy 6.8 Develop Unique Local Assets

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

The Vision and Guiding Principles of the Ironwood Comprehensive Plan articulate how the community will look, feel, and function over the next 20 years and help to define the character, values, and priorities of the Ironwood community. The strategy described in this Spark Plan supports the vision and guiding principles in the following ways:

AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY By providing a space and forum for youth, they are encouraged to participate in the ongoing development of events and facilities that contribute to active, engaged, healthy lifestyles.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY This strategy creates a space for local youth to gather, learn, collaborate, volunteer, mentor, and share, amongst themselves, with adults, and the larger community.

A THRIVING COMMUNITY This strategy cultivates and encourages young leaders, providing them the opportunity to collaborate, organize, and practice the skills that will translate into adulthood.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: YOUTH CENTER

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Northfield Union of Youth](#), Minnesota
- [Youth-Led Research Resource Page](#)-The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement

Action Planning Worksheet!

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GOAL / MOTIVATION

What is the larger reason for supporting this idea? What do you hope to achieve?

OBJECTIVES

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ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Develop a Local/Regional Map

What is it?

- A physical map, or series of maps, that can be placed at key tourist destinations such as restaurant foyers, hotel/motel desks, Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Library, Gogebic Community College and other locations
- A Map that highlights key destinations such as parks and major recreational destinations, trails and trail heads, waterfalls, historical/cultural destinations (such as mining areas, art galleries), major districts such as downtown or key shopping districts, civic institutions such as Library, Memorial Building, Schools, or Community Theater.
- Maps could identify key businesses; however, as businesses come and go, the maps can become outdated quickly. A good example of a map from 1989 can be seen on the wall at Joe's Pasties in Ironwood.
- Technology is a must. An online map with live links to key destinations is another form of such a map or set of maps.
- A marketing tool that showcases Ironwood's local and near-by destinations

Why do it?

- Help draw people to Ironwood and provide a variety of things to do for tourists or visitors.
- Help tell the story of Ironwood and link historical/cultural resources to physical geography.
- Encourage use of (and navigation of) Ironwoods extensive trail network (existing and planned).
- Better connect patrons with businesses or business districts.
- Help make Ironwood a memorable, friendly destination worth coming back to on a frequent basis.

Who does it?

- The Chamber of Commerce (local and regional)
- Historical Society
- City of Ironwood Parks and Recreation Committee
- Regional destination businesses (ski resorts, ABR, DAP, etc)
- Regional economic development entities

How do you do it?

- Brainstorm a list of key map themes (parks and outdoor recreation, business/commerce theme, arts/culture/entertainment theme).
- Identify key destinations for each theme, determine how much can fit on a map, and the best format (large format fold up map, 11 X 17 place mat, etc.).
- Explore map applications for online maps.
- Find a graphic designer or artist to render maps.
- Cover costs with business support/contributions.
- Distribute to local restaurants, hotels, resorts, etc for free dissemination to customers and visitors

How is it measured?

- Number of maps ordered and distributed
- User feedback surveys

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 4.2: Prepare a Wayfinding Master Plan
- Strategy 5.5: Provide Tools that Direct People to Parks in the Community.
- Strategy 6.5: Enhance Downtown Businesses and Retail Environment
- Strategy 6.6: Market the Community
- Strategy 6.8: Promote Local Assets

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

The Vision and Guiding Principles of the Ironwood Comprehensive Plan articulate how the community will look, feel, and function over the next 20 years and help to define the character, values, and priorities of the Ironwood community. The strategy described in this Spark Plan supports the vision and guiding principles in the following ways:

A GREAT DESTINATION Maps identifying multiple local and regional attractions can help make a trip to Ironwood a memorable experience and worthy of many return trips.

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY Many people travel through Ironwood on Highway 2 or visit the outdoor recreation attractions in the greater community without knowing what hidden gems are located throughout Ironwood. An illustrative map or series of maps can make people aware of activities and destinations and help them easily navigate to those destinations.

A RICH STORY Maps can help tell the story of Ironwood by directing people to historical or cultural assets or by telling the story right on the map itself.

AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY Maps can help visitors identify key destinations to walk or bike too weather it be exercise or entertainment.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: DEVELOP A LOCAL/REGIONAL MAP

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Red Wing, Minnesota](#)
- [Sault Ste. Marie area](#)
- [Duluth, Minnesota](#)

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NAME / ORGANIZATION:

GOAL / MOTIVATION

What is the larger reason for supporting this idea? What do you hope to achieve?

OBJECTIVES

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ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

Parks & Business Partnerships

What is it?

- Partnerships between businesses and the parks system. This could come in many forms:
 - › Sponsorships (leagues, events, naming rights)
 - › Business Opportunities (concessions, events, markets, for-profit programming, outfitting/guiding)
 - › Expertise/Donation of Services (engineering, park/landscape design, signage, materials, event planning)
 - › Volunteer Efforts (invasive species removal, playground build, habitat restoration)
 - › Development (new or rehabbed development improves nearby parkland as well)

Why do it?

- Secure additional revenue for parks, resources, and users, while minimizing the burden on the City.
- Businesses get additional exposure and advertising, as well as a reputation for community investment and leadership.

Who does it?

- City of Ironwood (Parks/Public Works)
- Local/Regional Businesses
- Chamber of Commerce

How do you do it?

- Identify park and recreation needs in the community using the park plan and other community input and requests.
- Discuss and brainstorm opportunities as part of the business conversations.
- Develop legal agreements and documents.
- Utilize City and Chamber of Commerce to promote partners.

How is it measured?

- Donations to the parks
- Number of volunteer events
- Growth of Park/Recreation related businesses

Related Strategies:

- Strategy 4.5 Prioritize and Plan for Trail System Improvements
- Strategy 5.5 Implement the Park Action Program
- Strategy 5.6 Understand and Balance the Needs of Park and Trail Users
- Strategy 5.10 Program the Parks

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A THRIVING COMMUNITY Parks may be part of the amenity package that entices talented workers and budding entrepreneurs to the community. Partnerships leverage the strengths and resources of many different entities to promote Ironwood and the businesses that call it home.

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY and **A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY** Partnerships are a prime example of what a collaborative community does. When businesses and the City work together to improve parks, it can be a mutually beneficial relationship.

A GREAT DESTINATION Partnerships with businesses create the opportunity to make the parks a greater destination than what they may otherwise be. Sponsorships also direct park users to supporting business destinations in the city.

AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY A thriving and attractive park system is an asset for businesses and health providers who often look to develop healthy habits for their employees and encourage better health outcomes in the communities they serve.

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

SPARK PLAN: PARKS & BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Chesterfield Township](#)
- [Seattle, WA](#) (a different kind of city, but nevertheless, a good resource)
- [Blue Cross Blue Shield Michigan](#)

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OBJECTIVES

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ACTION STEPS

What needs to happen next to meet your objectives? Who specifically is responsible? Set a Deadline!

Action	Owner	Deadline

MAKE YOUR OWN SPARK PLAN:

Write your idea here!

Do you have a spark inside you? An idea that could help achieve Ironwood's vision and goals? Fill out this blank Spark Plan to describe the "What, Why, Who, How, and Where" of your brilliant idea!

What is it?

Where do you do it?

Connecting to the Vision & Guiding Principles

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A THRIVING COMMUNITY

A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY

A GREAT DESTINATION

AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY

See Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan for full text of the community Vision and Guiding Principles.

Why do it?

How is it measured?

Who does it?

Related Strategies:

How do you do it?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

-
-
-

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