

# IRONWOOD

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF IRONWOOD, MICHIGAN BY  
BARTON-ASCHMAN ASSOCIATES, INC. 1981

IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
AMENDMENTS  
2-2000

1. Amend Text of Chapter 3 - "Ironwood Development Framework", Section Entitled "General Development Framework Plan" to Read in Full as Follows:

The composite of the land use and public facilities plans discussed above is the General Development Framework Plan. Figure 3-3 illustrates the overall plan showing the proposed location for major land uses based on considerations such as existing land uses, street systems and public utilities, services and facilities. The following text explains the intended use and character of the areas illustrated in Figure 3-3.

Low Density Residential Area

The Low Density Residential Area consists of outlying open space and very low density housing located in areas not suitable for high density development due to natural features or the lack of public infrastructure.

Large lots should be required so that public sewer and water lines will not need to be extended to outlying areas. The intent of this plan is to encourage higher density uses in areas where public services are currently available. Appropriate agricultural and related activities such as family farms and kennels should also be allowed in this area.

Medium Density Residential Area

The Medium Density Residential Area is located in the major residential areas of the City. Properties are characterized by small lots and access to existing public sewer and water, sidewalks, streets and parks. Single- and two-family residential uses are the primary use intended. Existing multi-family uses located in this area shall be allowed to continue with appropriate zoning protection for the adjacent uses. To maintain a high quality residential environment, dwelling unit standards, such as minimum dwelling width, should be required.

In many locations throughout this area, there are small established commercial businesses that are legitimate and historical uses serving the community. Where appropriate, these uses should be permitted to continue through proper control and regulation in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

### High Density Residential

The High Density Residential Area is designed to allow affordable housing in appropriate areas. This area should permit single and two family uses in areas with complete sewer, water and street services. This area is located within a cluster of single wide mobile homes. To provide affordable housing opportunities, dwelling units with narrower widths should be permitted in this area.

### Downtown Commercial Area

The Downtown Commercial Area is located generally in the existing downtown area plus the vacant railroad corridor to Curry Street. Activities encouraged in this area are general retail stores and services, restaurants, specialty shops and professional offices. Generally, uses shall be fully enclosed within the building. Outdoor sales and storage should be discouraged. This area should serve as a major commercial service area of the City in order to support existing commercial establishments and to maintain the character of the downtown.

The appearance and efficiency of the downtown is an essential component of a healthy business environment which is necessary for continued economic growth for the entire City. To this end, this plan supports the improvement and design recommendations of the Depot Area Development and Tax Increment Finance Plan.

### Highway Commercial Area

The Highway Commercial Area is generally located along US-2 and adjacent areas. This area is intended for larger scale and higher intensity land uses which would be inappropriate in the downtown area and uses serving the motoring public. Suggested uses in this area include general retail and service, outdoor sales, theaters, filling stations, motels, restaurants and storage facilities.

Appropriate performance standards, landscaping and screening should be required to protect residential homes from commercial uses and to enhance the appearance of this area.

### Industrial Area

The Industrial Area provides for a mix of light to heavy industrial uses. The most appropriate area for industrial development, primarily because of existing industrial activities and services, is the existing industrial park in the Northeast section of the City.

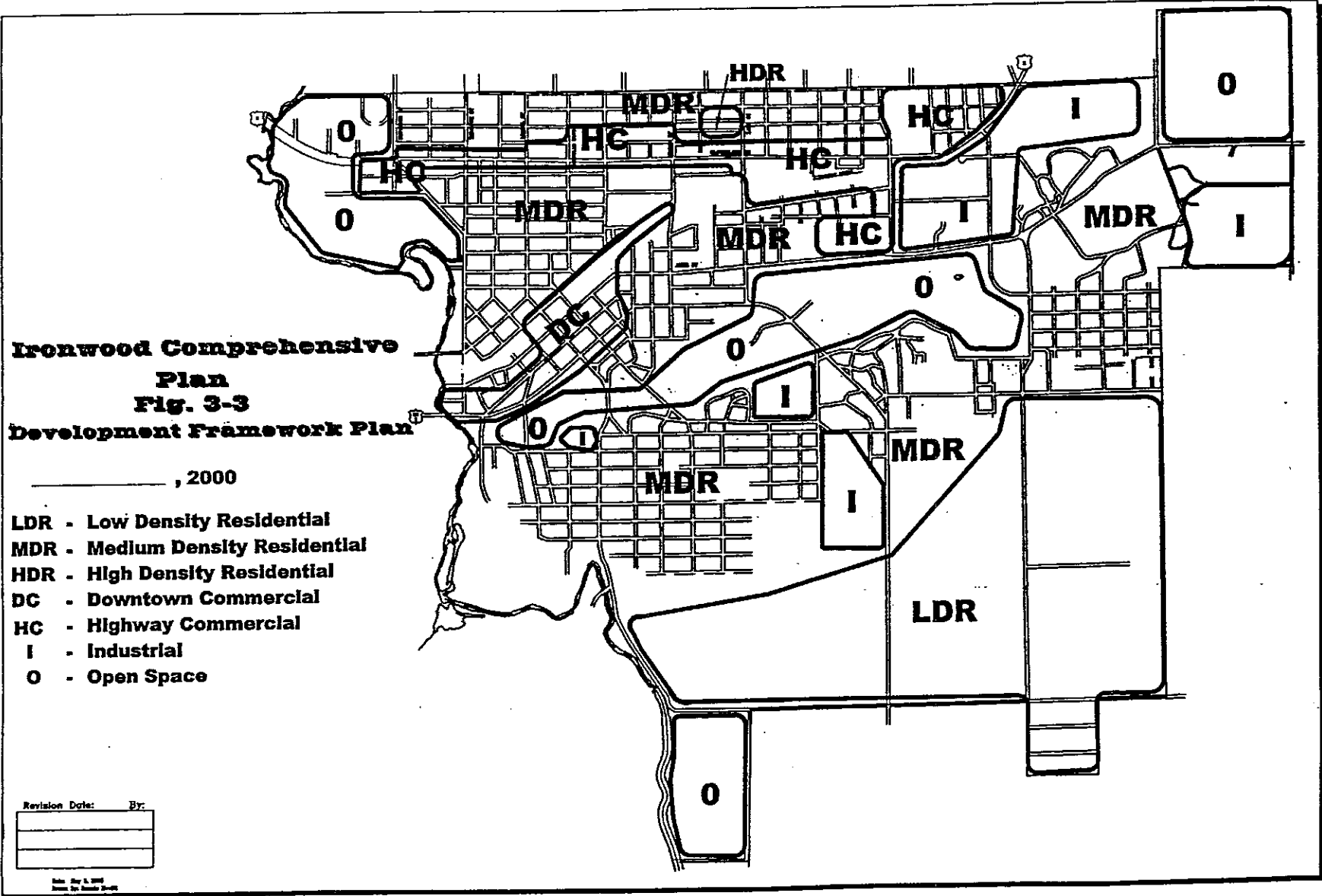
Because the existing industrial park is full, this Plan recommends expanding the industrial area further to the East. This area has excellent transportation access via Country Club Road and Commerce Street, has level to gently rolling terrain, is large in area and is planned for complete public services.

Other Industrial Areas are also located in the City. These are located in areas that have historically been used for industrial-related uses and are still appropriate for industrial use.

To protect adjacent residents and to enhance the appearance of industrial areas, appropriate setbacks, landscaping, screening, use and related performance standards are recommended in this area.

#### Open Areas

Open Areas are large land areas not suitable for development. They are generally located in the "caves" areas and major public areas, such as the cemetery and parks. Uses encouraged in these areas are limited to outdoor recreation, agriculture, forestry or public land uses. Other uses may be permitted with special conditions as approved by the City Planning Commission.



**Ironwood Comprehensive  
Plan  
Fig. 3-3  
Development Framework Plan**  
\_\_\_\_\_, 2000

- LDR - Low Density Residential**
- MDR - Medium Density Residential**
- HDR - High Density Residential**
- DC - Downtown Commercial**
- HC - Highway Commercial**
- I - Industrial**
- O - Open Space**

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_




**BARTON-ASCHMAN ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Ten Cedar Square West/Cedar-Riverside, 1610 South Sixth Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454 (612) 332-0421

MEMORANDUM TO: The City of Ironwood  
FROM: Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.  
DATE: September 1981  
SUBJECT: 1: Community Issues

This memorandum is one in a series of memos prepared during the course of preparation of the Ironwood Comprehensive Plan. Each memorandum documents a different step in the planning process and represents the material discussed and conclusions reached during the Planning Commission Workshops.

#### INTRODUCTION

For a Comprehensive Plan to be useful, it must reflect the values of the community it is intended to serve and address the specific problems which it faces. The primary purpose of the first planning workshop was to identify, discuss, and begin to prioritize problems facing Ironwood. The understanding of problems or issues derived from this first workshop will set the focus for the planning process. Data collection, technical analysis, generation of alternative solutions, and preparation of implementation strategies will be directed toward addressing the problems identified in the first workshop.

This memorandum documents the problems identified during the Issues Workshop and indicates the relative priority given to each of the major issue categories.

#### COMMUNITY ISSUES

A preliminary set of major issues was developed from discussions with city staff, exploration of the community and preliminary review of existing conditions. This list served as a starting point for discussion and was then added to during the workshop.

The issues discussed at the first workshop generally fall into five major categories:

1. Economic Development
2. Housing
3. Development Patterns
4. Public Improvements
5. Other

The issues are summarized below.

## Economic Development

Economic Development is of particular concern to the community. A number of interrelated issues were raised which relate to economic development. They are:

- a. Job expansion and increased employment opportunities.
  1. What influence can the city have.
  2. How to capitalize on forest resources.
- b. Encouragement of population growth.
- c. Expansion of the city's tax base.
- d. Increasing the city's tourist trade and capitalizing on the area's tourist attraction potential.
- e. Increased retail shopping opportunities.

## Housing

Housing is a serious issue in Ironwood because of the rising cost of new construction and the condition of existing housing stock. The vast majority of the city's housing stock is quite old and much of it is in need of rehabilitation. Issues include:

- f. Increasing housing supply.
  1. Where should mobile homes locate?
  2. Where should multi-family housing locate?
  3. What is the impact leased land on the city's housing supply and taxbase?
- g. Maintenance of existing homes.
  1. What is the impact of winter homes on the city?
  2. Is a maintenance code needed?

## Development Patterns

Development pattern concerns include:

- h. Land use management, concern for where each type of development should be encouraged to locate.
  1. How should the U.S. 2 corridor be developed?
  2. What types of land use controls should the city have?
- i. Establishing the highest and best use of each parcel of land in a community.
- j. Identifying a future land-fill site.
- k. The relationship between Ironwood and its neighbors.

## Public Improvements

Public improvement is a very broad category. It includes everything from utility systems to parks and education. Specific issues discussed included:

- l. Utility system improvements.
  1. Should water be sold to adjacent communities?
  2. Where should utilities be extended?
  3. What should the city's policy be with regards to utility service to ski areas?
  4. Should water service be provided without extended sanitary sewers service as well?
  5. Are there any capacity problems with existing system?
  
- m. Streets and transportation improvements.
  1. Where are new streets needed?
  2. Where are improvements to existing streets needed?
  3. Should some streets be eliminated, if so, which ones?
  4. How should street improvements be funded?
  5. How should abandoned railroad right-of-way be reused?
  6. Where would appropriate locations for terminals be?
  7. What is the future of the viaduct?
  8. Where should sidewalks be provided?
  
- n. Park improvements.
  1. Does adequate recreational space exist or is more needed, if so, where?
  2. Skating facilities.
  3. Proximity of park facility to neighborhoods with high concentrations of children.
  4. The city's relationship to the cross-country touring trail.
  
- o. Adequacy and potential for improvements for public safety systems (police, fire protection, para-medics).
  
- p. Maintenance of a quality education system.
  
- q. Opportunities for improved public service delivery.
  1. New methods of sharing costs of facilities and services.
  2. Opportunities for consolidating facilities with surrounding communities.
  3. Efficiency improvements.

## Other

Several other equally important issues were raised which do not fit nicely within one of the previous headings. They include:

- r. Protection of Ironwood's environment including:
  1. What should be done with mining lands.
  2. Floodplain protection.



3. Management of storm drainage.
- s. Energy Conservation
  1. Potential for use of mine water as a heat source.
  2. Wastewood products as an energy resource.
- t. Encouragement of cultural activities such as theater, art, and music, in the Ironwood area.
- u. Management of the development process.
  1. What is the role and responsibility of the planning commission?
  2. Should the city attempt to influence where development occurs, or simply accommodate development? How should the city go about this?
  3. What should the city's policies toward development within surrounding jurisdictions be?
  4. Adequacy of existing ordinances and administration procedures.
  5. Site plan review ordinance.
- v. Community awareness and input concerning the problems facing Ironwood and the actions being taken to alleviate them.
- w. The quality of the physical visual image presented by the community.

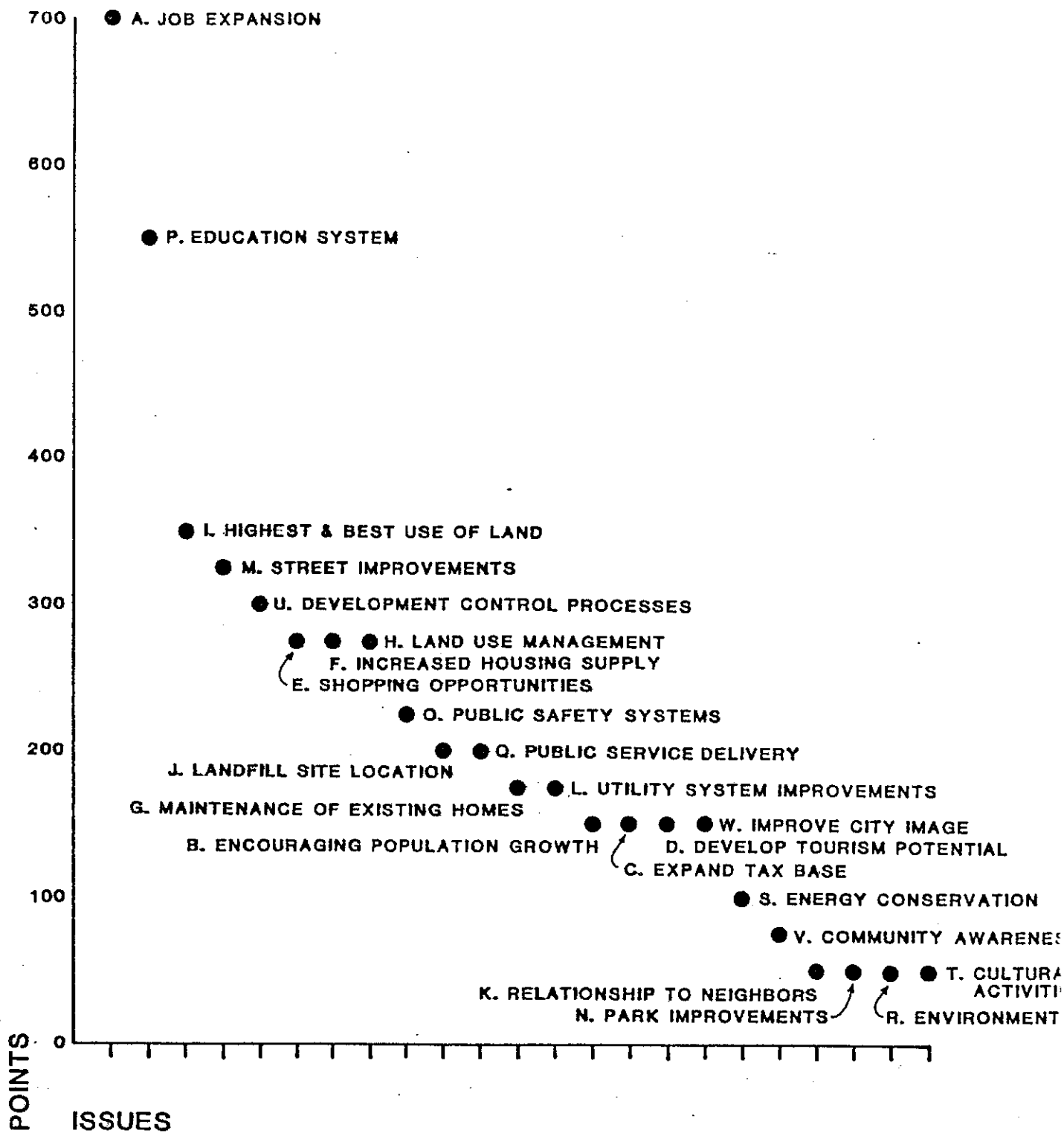
#### PRIORITY OF ISSUES

To establish the relative importance of each issue, an issue ranking exercise was carried out. In this exercise, each planning commission member was give 1,000 total points to distribute among the 23 issues (issues A through W) as they saw fit. A maximum of 200 points could be allotted to any particular issue. The scores were then tabulated to rank the issues in order of priority.

The results of the ranking exercise are shown in Figure 1. The highest ranked issue was the concern for job expansion and increased employment opportunities. The jobs issue received twice as many points as any other issue with the exception of concern for educational quality which received 550 points. The high ranking of the job expansion issue (700 points) underscores the economic expansion problems the community has faced over the years since the mines closed. It indicates that the economic strength of the community should be a primary focus and the underlying purpose of the community's plan.

Education quality was the second highest ranked issue. It was the only other concern that stood out head-in-shoulders above the rest of the concerns expressed at the first workshop.

Nine other issues received more than the median score of 175. These issues focused on land use questions and public improvements. Foremost among them where establishing the highest and best use of the city's land, street improvements, and improvement of the city's land use management and administrative processes.



Ironwood Comprehensive Plan

Figure 1-1

RELATIVE PRIORITY OF COMMUNITY ISSUES

IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WORKSHOP 3: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DISCUSSION HANDOUT

December 10, 1981

Barton-Aschman Associates

Table 1  
POPULATION AND HOUSING TREND COMPARISONS, 1970-1980; CITY OF IRONWOOD, TOWNSHIP AND COUNTY JURISDICTIONS

Area	Population			Housing Units				
	Total		1970-1980 Change	Total		1970-1980 Change		
	1970	1980	Total	Percent	1970	1980	Total	Percent
City of Ironwood	8,711	7,741	-970	-11.1%	3,476	3,504	28	.8%
Ironwood Township	2,256	2,331	75	3.3	1,079	1,229	150	13.9
Gogebic County	20,676	19,686	-990	-4.8	8,906	10,112	1,206	13.5
Ontonagon County	10,548	9,861	-687	-6.5	4,334	5,042	708	16.3
Iron County (Wisconsin)	6,533	6,730	197	3.0	3,747	5,098	1,351	36.1
Vilas County (Wisconsin)	10,958	16,535	5,577	50.9	9,823	18,388	8,565	87.2
Four County Total:	48,715	52,812	4,097	8.4%	26,810	38,640	11,830	44.1%

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1970-1980

TABLE 2  
 POPULATION AGE PROFILE (1970)  
 IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Age Categories	Ironwood		Gogebic		Michigan	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
0-19	2,568	29.5%	7,092	34.2%	3,589,151	40.4%
20-29	774	8.9	1,847	8.9	1,278,384	14.4
30-60	2,897	33.3	7,109	34.4	2,914,226	32.8
60+	2,237	25.7	4,662	22.5	1,093,322	12.32
65+	1,679	19.3	3,383	16.3	755,098	8.5
Total	8,701		20,755			

TABLE 3  
 PER CAPITA INCOME COMPARISONS, 1969-1977;  
 CITY OF IRONWOOD, TOWNSHIP AND COUNTY JURISDICTIONS

Area	Per Capita Income		Percent Change 1969-1977
	1969	1977	
City of Ironwood	\$2,278	\$4,143	81.9%
Ironwood Township	2,400	4,293	78.9
Gogebic County	2,230	3,976	78.3
Ontonagon County	2,342	3,976	69.8
Iru County (Wisconsin)	2,281	4,063	78.1
Vilas County (Wisconsin)	2,371	4,470	88.5
Four-County Average:			

Source: U.S. Census of Population, Series P-25 Reports

Table 4  
TOTAL, NONFARM EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, 1975-1979; COGEBIC COUNTY AND STATE OF MICHIGAN

Industry	Cogebic County				State of Michigan			
	1975		1979		1975		1979	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Agricultural Service,	NA	NA	NA	NA	7,541	0.2%	10,118	.3%
Forestry	0	0%	0	0%	13,745	.4	13,526	.4
Mining	161	3.1	NA	NA	103,935	3.2	139,520	3.7
Construction	1,040	19.8	981	17.6	964,888	30.0	1,161,540	31.2
Manufacturing	NA	NA	NA	NA	141,675	4.4	161,277	4.3
Transportation and	176	3.3	173	3.1	151,075	5.0	171,428	4.6
Public Utilities	1,092	20.7	1,082	19.4	509,299	15.8	590,042	15.8
Wholesale Trade	124	2.4	147	2.6	135,110	4.2	155,428	4.2
Retail Trade	1,033	19.6	1,116	20.0	563,555	17.5	672,350	18.1
Finance, Insurance and	1,448	27.5	1,589	28.4	630,949	19.6	647,650	17.4
Real Estate	5,260	96.5% <sup>(1)</sup>	5,586	91.1% <sup>(1)</sup>	3,221,772	100%	3,722,879	100%
Services								
Government								
Total:								

NA = Not available--data not published to avoid disclosure.

(1) Does not add to 100 percent due to omission of employment categories for which data is not available.

Table 5  
 GROWTH IN NONFARM EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, 1975-1979; GOGEBIC COUNTY  
 AND STATE OF MICHIGAN

Industry	Gogebic County		State of Michigan	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Agricultural Service, Forestry	NA	NA	2,577	34.2%
Mining	0	0%	-219	1.6
Construction	NA	NA	35,585	34.2
Manufacturing	-59	-5.7	196,652	20.4
Transportation and Public Utilities	NA	NA	19,602	13.8
Wholesale Trade	-3	-1.7	20,353	13.5
Retail Trade	-10	-.9	80,743	15.9
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	23	18.5	20,318	15.0
Services	83	8.0	108,795	19.3
Government	<u>141</u>	9.7	<u>16,701</u>	2.6
Total:	326	6.2%	501,107	15.6%

NA = Not available.

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.



Table 6  
MAJOR MANUFACTURING -RELATED EMPLOYERS IN IRONWOOD AREA

Name of Company	Location	Number of Employees.	Service or Product
White Pine Copper Company	White Pine	1,200 (1)	Copper Mining and Smelting
Ironwood Products Corporation	Bessemer	280	Veneers and Plywood
Munsingwear, Inc.	Ironwood	175	Men's Clothing
Steiger Lumber Company	Bessemer	65	Lumber, Wood and Chips
Kodiak Corporation	Bessemer	60	Fishing Rods
Globe Publishing Company	Ironwood	60	Daily Newspaper
Ahonen Lumber Company	Ironwood	55	Lumber
Conner Forest Industries	Wakefield	50	Lumber
Norco of Michigan	Marinisco	30	Wood Windows and Doors
Sellstrom Manufacturing	Ironwood	30	Safety Equipment and Clothing
Globe Concrete and Supply	Ironwood	28	Cement, Sand and Gravel
Ironwood Homes	Ironwood	28	Mobile Homes
Ironwood Plastics	Ironwood	25	Plastic Products

(1) Further expansion is planned. Of 1,200 positions, approximately 500 are filled by persons living in Ironwood and adjacent communities.

Source: Ironwood Area Chamber of Commerce.

Table 7  
 ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TRAVEL-RELATED EXPENDITURES

	Gogebic County	State of Michigan
<u>Total Travel Expenditures</u>		
1975	\$14,810,800	\$3,366,766,000
1980	39,832,000	5,200,598,000
Percent Change, 1975-1980	168.9%	54.5%
<u>Total Travel-Generated Employment<sup>(1)</sup></u>		
1975	480	NA
1980	1,105	NA
Percent Change, 1975-1980	130.2%	NA
<u>Average Expenditure Per Person Night</u>		
	NA	\$54-59
--Transportation	NA	(\$15-16)
--Lodging	NA	(\$ 8- 9)
--Food	NA	(\$18-19)
--Entertainment	NA	(\$ 4- 6)
--Gifts and Incidentals	NA	(\$ 9-10)

Source: Travel Bureau, Michigan Department of Commerce.

100 tourists per day yield:

Population increase of 429  
140 new households  
\$78,000 in tax receipts (or  
enough to support 156 school  
children)  
Personal income up \$777,000  
Retail sales of \$1,120,000  
7 more retail outlets  
111 industry-related jobs

100 new manufacturing jobs yield:

Population increase of 360  
100 new households  
91 more school children  
Personal income up \$410,000  
Retail sales of \$331,000  
3 more retail outlets  
65 industry-related jobs

Table 8  
 ANNUAL SKIER DAY<sup>(1)</sup> VOLUMES FOR IRONWOOD-AREA SKI AREAS

Ski Area	Total Skier Days by Year			Annual Increase 1965-1981	
	1965	1970	1975	1981	Percent
Indianhead	61,000	72,000	115,000	150,000	9.1%
Powderhorn	29,000	50,000	100,000	130,000	21.8
Blackjack	(2)	(2)	(2)	65,000	20.8 <sup>(3)</sup>
Porcupine Mountain	<u>10,000</u>	<u>18,000</u>	<u>35,000</u>	<u>20,000</u> <sup>(4)</sup>	6.3
Total:	100,000	140,000	250,000	365,000	16.6

(1) Actual number of daily lift tickets issued.

(2) First year of operation was 1978.

(3) Based on reported 1978 volume of 40,000 skier days.

(4) Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., estimate.

Source: Indianhead Ski Corporation report, May 25, 1978, and interviews with individual ski area operators.

Table 9  
OCCUPANCY EXPERIENCE OF IRONWOOD-AREA MOTELS

Motel	Number of Units	December-March		April-May Week-Long	June-September Week-Long	October-November Week-Long
		Weekday	Weekend			
Advance Motel	10	60%	100%	20%	80%	20%
Armata Motel	13	60	100	15	50	20
Best Western	30	60	100	35	85	35
Blue Cloud	18	30	100	15	30	35
The Cedars	20	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Circle Hills Motel	20	60	100	10	30	25
Crestview Motel	12	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Javey's Motel	24	55	100	15	65	15
Holiday Inn	100	80	100	35	65	40
Ironwood Motel	10	60	100	20	70	20
Royal Motel	16	60	100	20	70	15
Sandpiper Motel	30	70	100	20	50	15
Townhouse Motel	20	80	100	70	75	70
Twilight Motel	20	30	100	15	70	15
Totals/Average:	343	59%	100%	21%	53%	23%

Source: Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., based on telephone surveys of local motel operators.



**BARTON-ASCHMAN ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Ten Cedar Square West/Cedar-Riverside, 1610 South Sixth Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454 (612) 332-0421

**MEMORANDUM TO: The City of Ironwood**

**FROM: Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.**

**DATE: January 15, 1982**

**SUBJECT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

This memorandum summarizes analyses relating to economic development in the Ironwood area. The work documented here was undertaken as part of the Ironwood Comprehensive Plan. This memorandum is one of a series of reports prepared for the plan, with each report focusing on subjects relevant to future development in Ironwood.

#### INTRODUCTION

The need for economic development in the Ironwood area has been noted as being of particular concern to community leaders. Specific concerns include job expansion and increased employment opportunities, encouragement of population growth, expansion of the city's tax base, tourist trade expansion and capitalization on the area's tourist attraction potential, and increased retail shopping opportunities.

This document describes current economic conditions in the Ironwood area and suggests an economic development strategy for the community and region. Conclusions and recommendations here are based on review of relevant demographic and economic trends, surveys of major Ironwood-area employers, identification of opportunities and constraints for economic development, and analysis of tourism potentials in the local area.

#### OVERVIEW OF EXISTING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The Ironwood Historical Society notes that the "heyday" of Gogebic County was in 1920, when the census of that year indicated a population of 33,225. At that time, the number of iron ore miners on the Gogebic range was estimated at 4,000. The subsequent economic decline brought on the area by the closing of the mines is reflected in the fact that the county population has declined by 13,539 persons, or 41 percent, since 1920. The City of Ironwood has experienced population declines at even more rapid rates than Gogebic County in recent years. As shown in Table 1, the population of the city declined by 970 persons, or 11.1 percent, between 1970 and 1980. While some growth was noted in the Ironwood Township area, this was relatively limited, with an increase of only 75 people noted for the decade. The only jurisdiction within the general area that has exhibited significant population growth has been Vilas County in Wisconsin, which has experienced an influx of retirees and vacation home buyers.

Table 1  
POPULATION AND HOUSING TREND COMPARISONS, 1970-1980; CITY OF IRONWOOD, TOWNSHIP AND COUNTY JURISDICTIONS

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Iron County (Wisconsin)	6,533	6,730	197	3.0	3,747	5,098	1,351	36.1
Vilas County (Wisconsin)	<u>10,958</u>	<u>16,535</u>	<u>5,577</u>	<u>50.9</u>	<u>9,823</u>	<u>18,388</u>	<u>8,565</u>	<u>87.2</u>
Four County Total:	48,715	52,812	4,097	8.4%	26,810	38,640	11,830	44.1%

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1970-1980

The City of Ironwood has also experienced very limited growth in the number of housing units constructed in recent years. According to census figures, an increase of only 28 housing units occurred within the city between 1970 and 1980. Ironwood Township experienced an increase of only 150 units during this period.

The populations of Ironwood and Gogebic County are declining simply because death rates and out-migration currently surpass birth rates and migration of persons into the area (see Table 2). Between 1970 and 1978 in Gogebic County, 2,600 deaths occurred while 600 more people moved away than moved into the county. During this same period, 2,100 births occurred, resulting in a net decline in population of 1,100.

The high death rates in Ironwood reflect the preponderance of older people who now live within the community. As Table 3 shows, the City of Ironwood had a population aged 65 and over comprising over 19 percent of its total population in 1970. Also noteworthy is the fact that the proportion of younger persons (under the age of 19) is relatively small. This age profile largely reflects the poor range of job opportunities available within Ironwood and Gogebic County, thus forcing young job seekers away from the area. Unless the situation is reversed, the percentage of older persons within Ironwood and the Gogebic County area will likely remain high.

With such a large population of senior citizens and other nonwage-earning groups, it is not surprising that incomes of residents within the City of Ironwood and Gogebic County are relatively low. As shown in Table 4, per capita income of city residents was estimated at \$4,143 in 1977. This average falls far below the average for the State of Michigan. The lower incomes of Ironwood area residents naturally have a negative impact on potential expenditure levels for local stores and the ability of local government to increase taxes as needed.

#### Local Employment Trends

Table 5 shows total non-farm employment by industry for both Gogebic County and the State of Michigan. As indicated, Gogebic County had 5,586 such jobs in 1979. The largest segment of these were in government (28 percent) followed by services (20 percent), retail trade (19 percent), and manufacturing (17.6 percent). Government jobs represent a significantly higher percentage of total employment in Gogebic County compared with the State of Michigan as a whole.

Total growth in non-farm employment for the two jurisdictions is shown in Table 6. As indicated, Gogebic County experienced an increase of 326 jobs--a 6.2 percent increase--between 1975 and 1979. By comparison, total employment within the State of Michigan during the same period increased by 15.6 percent--a level two and one-half times as high as that experienced locally. The only sectors of employment to increase substantially in Gogebic County between 1975 and 1979 were government; services; and finance, insurance and real estate. During this period, manufacturing, wholesale trade and retail trade employment actually declined.

Many of the manufacturing-related industries in the Ironwood area are small enterprises, generally consisting of less than 20 employees (see Table 7). Of the 12 largest manufacturing-related employers, only one (the White Pine Copper Company) can be said to truly dominate the local employment scene. It is significant that of the top eight such employers, all but three are natural resource-



TABLE 2  
 COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE --  
 GOGEBIC COUNTY, 1970 - 1978

	Gogebic County	State of Michigan
<u>Components of Population Change, 1970 - 1978</u>		
A. Births	2,100	1,190,000
B. Deaths	2,600	630,000
C. Net Migration	-600	-253,000
Total Change:	-1,100	307,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Series P-25 Report.

TABLE 3  
 POPULATION AGE PROFILE (1970)  
 IRONWOOD AND LOCAL JURISDICTIONS

Age Categories	Ironwood		Gogebic		Michigan	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
0-19	2,568	29.5%	7,092	34.2%	3,589,151	40.4%
20-29	744	8.9	1,847	8.9	1,278,384	14.4
30-60	2,897	33.3	7,109	34.4	2,914,226	32.8
60 +	2,237	25.7	4,662	22.5	1,093,322	12.32
65 +	1,679	19.3	3,383	16.3	755,098	8.5
Total	8,701		20,755			

TABLE 4  
 PER CAPITA INCOME COMPARISONS, 1969 - 1977  
 CITY OF IRONWOOD AND LOCAL JURISDICTIONS

Area	Per Capita Income	
	1969	1977
City of Ironwood	\$2,278	\$4,143
Ironwood Township	2,400	4,293
Gogebic County	2,230	3,976
State of Michigan	3,354	6,130

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Series P-25 Report

Table 5  
TOTAL NONFARM EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, 1975-1979; COGEBIC COUNTY AND STATE OF MICHIGAN

Industry	Cogebic County				State of Michigan			
	1975		1979		1975		1979	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Agricultural Service, Forestry	NA	NA	NA	NA	7,541	0.2%	10,118	.3%
Mining	0	0%	0	0%	13,745	.4	13,526	.4
Construction	161	3.1	NA	NA	103,935	3.2	139,520	3.7
Manufacturing	1,040	19.8	981	17.6	964,888	30.0	1,161,540	31.2
Transportation and Public Utilities	NA	NA	NA	NA	141,675	4.4	161,277	4.3
Wholesale Trade	176	3.3	173	3.1	151,075	5.0	171,428	4.6
Retail Trade	1,092	20.7	1,082	19.4	509,299	15.8	590,042	15.8
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	124	2.4	147	2.6	135,110	4.2	155,428	4.2
Services	1,033	19.6	1,116	20.0	563,555	17.5	672,350	18.1
Government	1,448	27.5	1,589	28.4	630,949	19.6	647,650	17.4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5,260</b>	<b>96.5% (1)</b>	<b>5,586</b>	<b>91.1% (1)</b>	<b>3,221,772</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,722,879</b>	<b>100%</b>

NA = Not available--data not published to avoid disclosure.

(1) Does not add to 100 percent due to omission of employment categories for which data is not available.

Table 6  
 GROWTH IN NONFARM EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, 1975-1979; GOGEBIC COUNTY  
 AND STATE OF MICHIGAN

Industry	Gogebic County		State of Michigan	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Agricultural Service, Forestry	NA	NA	2,577	34.2%
Mining	0	0%	-219	1.6
Construction	NA	NA	35,585	34.2
Manufacturing	-59	-5.7	196,652	20.4
Transportation and Public Utilities	NA	NA	19,602	13.8
Wholesale Trade	-3	-1.7	20,353	13.5
Retail Trade	-10	-.9	80,743	15.9
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	23	18.5	20,318	15.0
Services	83	8.0	108,795	19.3
Government	141	9.7	16,701	2.6
Total:	326	6.2%	501,107	15.6%

NA = Not available.

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Table 7  
 MAJOR MANUFACTURING - RELATED EMPLOYERS IN IRONWOOD AREA

Name of Company	Location	Number of Employees	Service or Product
White Pine Copper Company	White Pine	1,200 (1)	Copper Mining and Smelting
J Ironwood Products Corporation	Bessemer	280	Veneers and Plywood
J Munsingwear, Inc.	Ironwood	175	Men's Clothing
Steiger Lumber Company	Bessemer	65	Lumber, Wood and Chips
Kodiak Corporation	Bessemer	60	Fishing Rods
Globe Publishing Company	Ironwood	60	Daily Newspaper
Ahonen Lumber Company	Ironwood	55	Lumber
Conner Forest Industries	Wakefield	50	Lumber
Norco of Michigan	Marinisco	30	Wood Windows and Doors
Sellstrom Manufacturing	Ironwood	30	Safety Equipment and Clothing
Globe Concrete and Supply	Ironwood	28	Cement, Sand and Gravel
Ironwood Homes	Ironwood	28	Mobile Homes
Ironwood Plastics	Ironwood	25	Plastic Products

(1) Further expansion is planned. Of 1,200 positions, approximately 500 are filled by persons living in Ironwood and adjacent communities.

Source: Ironwood Area Chamber of Commerce.

based industries, depending either on mining or wood products. Also significant is the fact that of these top eight employers, only three are located within Ironwood itself. This underlines the fact that economic development is more than a community concern, and requires a regional approach to encourage new job growth.

### Opportunities and Constraints for Industrial Development

Several factors influencing traditional types of industrial development in the Ironwood area can be identified. These include both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages that the community provides as a business location include the following.

- o Extensive Natural Resources. Ironwood has good access to abundant timber resources as well as some minerals in the surrounding area. Not surprisingly, many of the local area's major employers are based on timber and mineral resources.
- o Quality of Life. The quality of life in Ironwood is consistently cited as a major community asset. In Ironwood's case, this seems to reflect the area's attractive and recreation-oriented physical environment as well as the less hectic local lifestyle compared to more urbanized areas.
- o Plentiful Labor Force. The Ironwood area has a good supply of labor, particularly in the low wage-earning job categories. Attitudes of workers and labor relations are generally described as favorable.
- o Good Training and Educational Facilities. A number of facilities, including the Gogebic Community College and the Michigan State University Extension Service, provide job training and technical assistance to local businesses.
- o Building and Land Availability. A number of vacant buildings and reasonably priced land are available for potential industrial and business use, including property located within the city's industrial park.
- o Location Relative to Regional Markets. Ironwood is located central to the northwoods area, and serves as a regional trade and service center. Good highway connections are available to Duluth, Houghton/Hancock, Marquette, and Iron Mountain.

A number of factors also serve as liabilities to establishment of a successful economic development program in Ironwood. These include:

- o Location Relative to National Markets. Ironwood's location is relatively isolated for industries which must obtain supplies from the greater Midwest region or whose markets are located outside the immediate area. Its distance from major markets may increase transportation costs for many businesses to a point where operations become uneconomical or noncompetitive.
- o Low Skilled Labor Force. While the size of the labor force in Ironwood is potentially large, it is not particularly well-skilled. This suggests that the community would be a desirable location only for firms that could effectively utilize a low-wage, generally underskilled work force.

- o Limited Rail and Transportation Links. Major highway transportation links to large Midwest cities such as Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Chicago are unavailable. The future of the area's freight rail and air passenger systems are also in doubt, suggesting that firms requiring good transportation between these major market areas would find an Ironwood location unacceptable.
- o Lack of Coordinated Management Responsibility. Another hinderance to economic development in the Ironwood area is the lack of an identifiable management entity responsible for coordinating economic development efforts, attracting new businesses, and providing technical and financial assistance.

### Tourism Development Opportunities

Tourism is the third largest industry in the United States, and by the year 2000 some authorities feel it will be the largest industry in the world. The rate of growth in tourism receipts has out-paced the rate of growth in gross national product every year in this past decade. According to recent studies by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the drawing of an additional 50 tourists a day to a community--which could be just ten families--would provide the same economic impact on the community as attracting a firm with an annual payroll of \$200,000. The tourism dollar is estimated to multiply anywhere from twice to seven times within a local community.

Tourism has provided an increasingly important influence on the local economy of the Ironwood area in recent years. As indicated in Table 8, travel expenditures in Gogebic County increased 169 percent between 1975 and 1980. In 1980, Michigan State Travel Bureau estimates suggest that these expenditures resulted in employment of 1,105 persons. The area's biggest tourist attraction has been its four major ski areas. As shown in Table 9, the total volume of skier-days in the Ironwood area was 365,000 in 1981, representing an increase of 265,000 skier-days since 1965. While the economic impact of the area's ski industry has been substantial, this impact is inherently seasonal in nature. The downhill ski season lasts only 120 days per year, and even within this period, major peaks are experienced only on weekends, during the presidents' holidays, and between Christmas and New Years. These fluctuations are reflected in the uneven nature of local motel occupancies. As indicated in Table 10, local Ironwood-area motels fill up practically every weekend during the ski season, and maintain 60 to 70 percent occupancies during most of the week. During spring and fall, however, occupancies at local motels are often less than 30 percent. Surprisingly, many local motels report they are most consistently busy during the summer months rather than the winter.

### Constraints to Further Tourism Development

Several constraints likely to inhibit further development of tourism in the Ironwood area can be identified:

- o Inability to Capture Tourist Trade Year-round. The great fluctuation of local motel occupancies point to the need for a more effective promotion of attractions in the Ironwood area. It is important that attractions be established which will cause summertime motorists passing through the community to stay in the area a day or two longer. Fall and springtime activities must also be programmed.



Table 8  
 ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TRAVEL-RELATED EXPENDITURES

	Gogebic County	State of Michigan
<u>Total Travel Expenditures</u>		
1975	\$14,810,800	\$3,366,766,000
1980	39,832,000	5,200,598,000
Percent Change, 1975-1980	168.9%	54.5%
<u>Total Travel-Generated Employment<sup>(1)</sup></u>		
1975	480	NA
1980	1,105	NA
Percent Change, 1975-1980	130.2%	NA
<u>Average Expenditure Per Person Night</u>		
--Transportation	NA	(\$15-16)
--Lodging	NA	(\$ 8- 9)
--Food	NA	(\$18-19)
--Entertainment	NA	(\$ 4- 6)
--Gifts and Incidentals	NA	(\$ 9-10)

Source: Travel Bureau, Michigan Department of Commerce.

Table 9  
ANNUAL SKIER DAY (1) VOLUMES FOR IRONWOOD-AREA SKI AREAS

Ski Area	Total Skier Days by Year			Annual Increase 1965-1981	
	1965	1970	1975	1981	Percent
Indianhead	61,000	72,000	115,000	150,000	9.1%
Powderhorn	29,000	50,000	100,000	130,000	21.8
Blackjack	(2)	(2)	(2)	65,000	20.8(3)
Porcupine Mountain	10,000	18,000	35,000	20,000(4)	6.3
Total:	100,000	140,000	250,000	365,000	16.6

(1) Actual number of daily lift tickets issued.

(2) First year of operation was 1978.

(3) Based on reported 1978 volume of 40,000 skier days.

(4) Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., estimate.

Source: Indianhead Ski Corporation report, May 25, 1978, and interviews with individual ski area operators.

Table 1.0  
OCCUPANCY EXPERIENCE OF IRONWOOD-AREA MOTELS

Motel	Number of Units	December-March		April-May Week-Long	June-September Week-Long	October-November Week-Long
		Weekday	Weekend			
Advance Motel	10	60%	100%	20%	80%	20%
Armata Motel	13	60	100	15	50	20
Best Western	30	60	100	35	85	35
Blue Cloud	18	30	100	15	30	35
The Cedars	20	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Circle Hills Motel	20	60	100	10	30	25
Crestview Motel	12	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Davey's Motel	24	55	100	15	65	15
Holiday Inn	100	80	100	35	65	40
Ironwood Motel	10	60	100	20	70	20
Royal Motel	16	60	100	20	70	15
Sandpiper Motel	30	70	100	20	50	15
Townehouse Motel	20	80	100	70	75	70
Twilight Motel	20	30	100	15	70	15
Totals/Average:	343	59%	100%	21%	53%	23%

Source: Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., based on telephone surveys of local motel operators.

- o Lack of Coordinated Promotion. A major constraint to "getting the word out" about tourism attractions in the Ironwood area is the absence of a central source of information about local attractions. Not only must a single organizational entity be established, it must be adequately funded to carry out an effective promotion and advertisement campaign.
- o Lack of Utilities in Ski Areas. The local ski areas which are located near Ironwood cannot expand their overnight, lodging accommodations further until adequate water and sewer facilities are provided to the hills.
- o Poor Physical Image of Business Area. The absence of attractive restaurant and shopping facilities in local communities could be a deterrent to future growth of the area as a major tourist destination. The poor general image provided by developments now existing on U.S. Highway 2 also could be a factor reducing the attractiveness of the Ironwood area for tourists.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### Growth Opportunities

The most significant industrial employers in the Ironwood area are involved in natural resource-based production. These include industries such as the White Pine Copper Mine, lumber mills, and manufacturers of wood-related products. Such industries are likely to experience some level of growth in the future. The White Pine Copper Mine is already under expansion. Lumber production should increase significantly when Midwest-area construction and the need for lumber, plywood and paper products return to pre-recession levels. Current efforts to establish wood pelletizing production facilities in the northwoods could also provide opportunities for employment growth in the Ironwood area.

Optimism about growth opportunities for local natural resource-based industries must be tempered by some of the constraints to growth noted earlier, however. Ironwood is far-removed from many of the major markets for wood products, thus giving a distinct advantage to less isolated lumber-producing areas. The threatened curtailment of rail service to the Ironwood area would further disadvantage local lumber-producing companies. The higher tax rates and business costs in Michigan relative to Wisconsin and other upper Midwest states are probably the most significant constraints to major expansion of natural resource-based industries.

These constraints to growth are even more significant for industries not involved in natural resource-based production. For manufacturers of plastics, clothing and other miscellaneous products now produced locally, the Ironwood area offers no special locational advantage. Such industries apparently have been attracted to Ironwood because of the local quality of life and supply of low-cost labor which is available. Unfortunately, such factors are often overlooked by major manufacturers, particularly today with the trend towards increased mechanization and high technology.

Many areas of the United States which are experiencing the fastest employment growth are those with strong service-oriented economies. These include many areas whose economies are heavily based on tourism. Las Vegas and the ski areas of Colorado and New England are examples of places that have prospered under tourism. In each of these areas, manufacturing plants and other non-tourist

business have been attracted because of the initial exposure to the place provided by tourism.

Tourism appears to represent the most significant opportunity for employment growth in the Ironwood area. As previously noted, utilization of local downhill ski areas alone totalled 365,000 skier-days in 1981. Many additional thousands of persons take advantage of local cross country skiing, snowmobiling, other wintertime attractions, and summertime pursuits such as camping, boating or hiking in or near Ironwood.

Local growth of tourism has been stimulated primarily through private efforts with relatively limited roles played either by local governments or chambers of commerce. Of the many tourist attractions, only downhill skiing has well-maintained facilities and is adequately promoted. Other local attractions almost uniformly suffer from poor facilities, uncoordinated and under-capitalized sponsorship, and lack of effective promotion.

Assuming that the above problems could be overcome, it is likely that prospects for major growth of tourism in the Ironwood area would be excellent. Ironwood is situated on the major highways carrying summertime tourists to attractions such as the Porcupine Mountains and Apostle Islands (see Figure 1). Ironwood is only a few hours' drive from major Wisconsin lake resort areas including Land-o-Lakes, Minocqua and Hayward. If some type of special attraction could be established in the Ironwood area, it likely could draw a steady flow of day visitors from these nearby summertime tourism centers. In addition, the wintertime attractions of the Ironwood area could probably draw many more thousands of visitors annually if properly developed and promoted.

A variety of attractions and special activities should be considered to attract a more sustained flow of visitor traffic to the Ironwood area. To identify what other communities have done to promote year-round tourism, a survey of cities in the ski areas of Colorado and New England was conducted. Several of these communities also have mining heritages similar to Ironwood.

In each community, special civic efforts have been made to promote area-wide attractions. A number of special attractions and events have also been sponsored which have been successful in drawing tourists on a year-round basis. Examples of special events and festivals include Gold Rush Days, music festivals, winter carnivals, craft fairs, Octoberfests, Fourth of July barbeque and fireworks, marathons and other sporting events. In addition, attractions such as mining exhibits, ski-lift rides, alpine slides and others have been successful.

Ironwood has much to build on in establishing events and attractions designed to keep overnight visitors in the area and draw others from various close-by tourist destinations. The Gogebic range has a unique cultural and mining heritage which could be capitalized on through development of attractions such as an iron mining interpretive center or special events and festivals which emphasize local mining history, and the area's unique food and culture.

### Development Strategy

An economic development strategy is proposed for the Ironwood area which responds to the opportunities and constraints to growth identified in this analysis. The strategy includes the three principal recommendations described below.

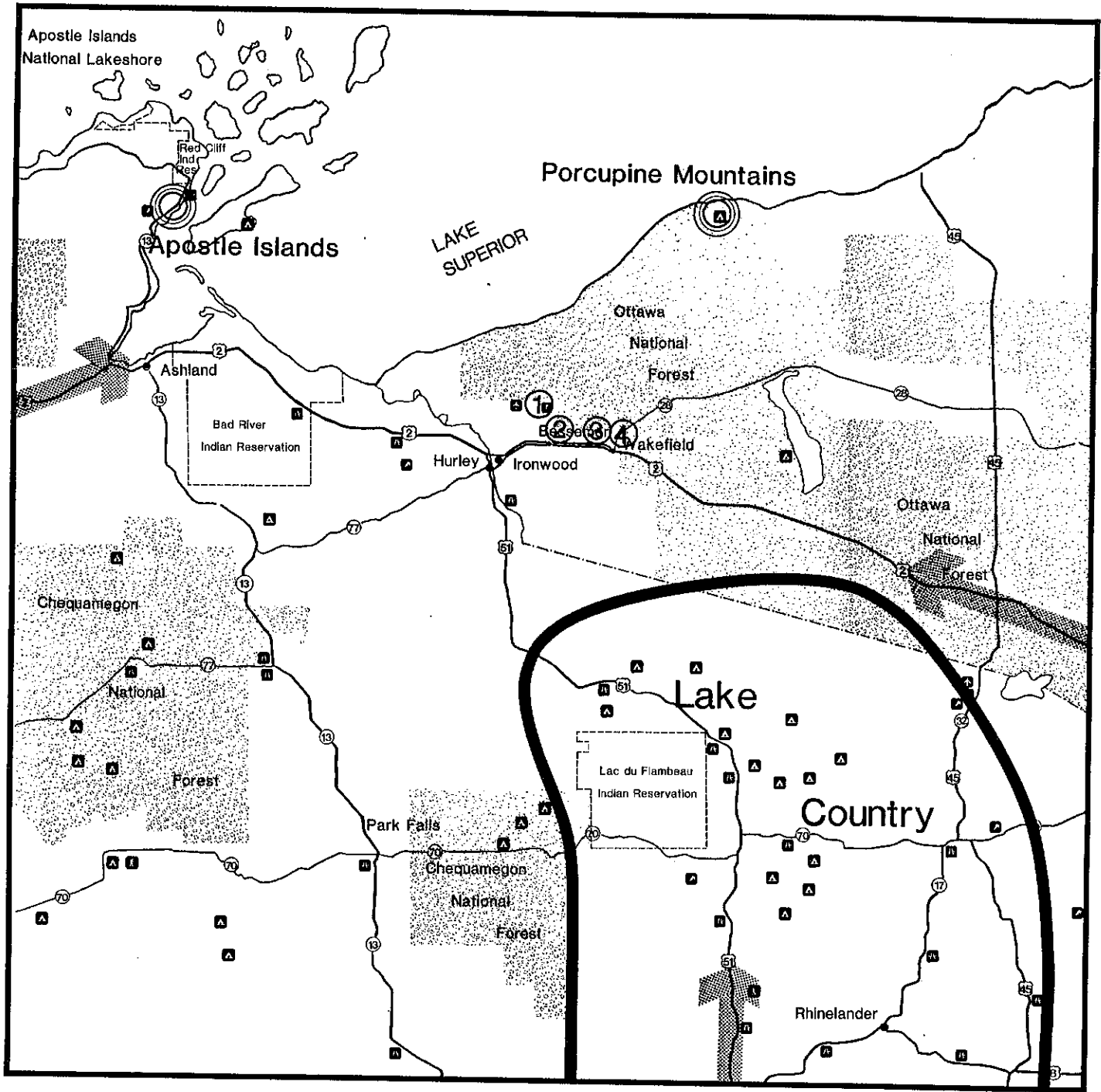


Figure 2-1  
Regional Setting

- 1 Copper Peak
- 2 Powderhorn
- 3 Blackjack
- 4 Indianhead
- Major Regional Access

  
**IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN**

1. Maintain Active Economic Development and Promotion Program

A major constraint to industrial growth in Ironwood is the lack of an identifiable entity having responsibility for recruiting new firms to the area, or assisting those which already exist to expand. Similarly, the absence of such an organization limits Ironwood's potential to capitalize on tourism development opportunities which are available.

Such an organization should have a regional, public-private orientation. The City of Ironwood, as well as other city, township and county government entities, should be involved. The organization should also join together all the chambers of commerce now in the region. Finally, the organization should include representation by Big Snow Country, the private consortium of local downhill skiing, lodging and assorted business interests.

Major responsibilities of the new organization should include the following.

- A. Business Retention. Responsibilities would include role as clearing-house for information on low interest loan programs such as those available through the Small Business Administration. The organization should also act as an advocate and troubleshooter for local business interests, with capabilities to respond to issues such as the proposed termination of rail service, or the phasing out of commercial air service to the Ironwood area.
- B. Industrial Recruitment. Responsibilities would include an aggressive promotion campaign to attract industries which would have strong linkages to existing businesses in the Ironwood area, or would have a locational advantage by establishing a facility in the area. Such a campaign may involve publicity, including use of brochures, newspapers, and magazine advertising. Also, personal contact with industry representatives and participation in trade shows and major conferences may be valuable.
- C. Year-Round Tourism Promotion. A major responsibility of the new organization would be the development and distribution of promotional materials on year-round tourism attractions in the Ironwood area. This should include advertising in major Midwest newspapers, personal contacts with newspaper and magazine travel editors, and development of maps, brochures, and lodging directories for the Ironwood area.
- D. Event Coordination and Creation of Tourist Attractions. The organization would be charged with sponsoring and coordinating tourist events and with creating new types of local attractions. This would assure that certain events such as the Hurley marathon would be carried out regardless of changes in community leadership. This would also provide for creation of events and attractions which extend the tourist season into the fall, spring, and summer months.

The organization described above would need to be well-funded and have a qualified, full-time executive director and staff. Funding for the organization should come from a special assessment or room tax for all transient lodging facilities within the region. This method of financing is currently underway in the Traverse City, Mackinac Island, and Detroit areas to pay for

marketing efforts in those communities. Approval for use of such assessments must come from the Michigan State Legislature. Other funding for the organization should come from private business contributions or dues similar to those now collected for Big Snow Country's promotional efforts.

2. Consider Utility Extensions to Ski Hills

Lodging facilities developed in the vicinity of the downhill ski areas depend on wells for water and septic tanks for waste disposal. Development in these areas already overtaxes these facilities. No additional lodging development can occur without more water and an adequate sewage disposal system.

Since the downhill ski areas and their associated lodging and service facilities are the region's major generators of tourist traffic, it is recommended that the City of Ironwood join with other localities in studying the feasibility of utility extensions to the ski hills. Such extensions would enable the individual ski areas to substantially expand their current operations and attract significantly more skiers to the area. It is likely that this level of attraction could not be achieved if required lodging facilities were instead developed within the City of Ironwood or any of the other cities in the local area.

If utilities are extended, development restrictions should be required for the ski hill areas to prevent construction of substantial retail facilities or other uses which would duplicate or be directly competitive with developments in the existing business districts. The costs for utility extensions should be borne directly by the property owners in the ski hill areas through user fees.

3. Upgrade Ironwood-Area Business Districts

The physical appearance and mix of retail stores in either of Ironwood's two business districts are not conducive to attraction of tourists to the area. The strip commercial development along Highway 2 is the only part of Ironwood ever seen by many visitors. This area is quickly becoming an eyesore, and a concentrated program of building and zoning control and improved signing and design standards are needed to upgrade the appearance and traffic safety of the area.

Within Ironwood's central business district, increased emphasis should be given to the shopping desires of tourists. Establishment of restaurants and specialty stores which are heavily oriented to tourists should be encouraged. Creation of special events and extension of store hours into the evening should also be considered as a means to capture the tourist shopping dollar.



**APPENDIX**

**COMPARATIVE SKI AREAS**

City Phone Number and Contact	Characteristics Size, Location, Relation to Ski Areas	Similarities/ Differences with Ironwood	Promotional Organizations	Promotional Activities	Results Miscellaneous
<p>I. Central City, Colorado (303) 582-5251 City Clerk</p> <p>Denver Opera Association (303) 623-7167</p> <p>Colorado Department of Commerce and Development (303) 866-4486 Randy Russell</p>	<p>Population 350, off the main drag to ski hills - 1½ hours' drive from Denver.</p>	<p>Pursue all federal and state grants available. Old gold mining town, large elderly popula- tion, close to major metropolitan area, does not capture much of the ski tourist trade (only % of 1% of ski traffic goes through town). No motel or hotel facili- ties - daytime visitors.</p>	<p>Businessmen's Associa- tion, helps out in promotional efforts, provides some funding and publicity. Paid city staff member to do promotional work (full- time).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develops brochures and circulates in Denver travel bureaus and throughout state.</li> <li>2. Helps organize special events and festivals.</li> <li>3. Works with media in Denver and state TV to publicize.</li> </ol>	<p>Groups of businessmen will advertise. City staff invite Denver reporters to all events/ get good coverage. Sponsor specific events: 1. Jazz Festival "Preservation Hall theme." 15-20 bands, some of national and international fame are located in bars and public facilities throughout city - can walk from set to set. People in city host musicians while in town. Sponsored in conjunction with the Denver Opera Association. Get large turn-out.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Miner's Days. Sev- eral thousand visitors through in a day ( up to 20,000). Contests: Hand drilling, power drill- ing, mucking.</li> <li>3. Winter Bazaar (Wintershire Festival). Cornish people sell high-quality crafts.</li> <li>4. Spitting-Belching- Cussing Contest. Held this three years. Second year 500-600 people showed up. Third year, a couple thousand. Drew a rowdie crowd so community decided to discontinue.</li> </ol>	<p>Higher quality retail market, same store owners sell better goods, crafts, etc., than they used to. Marketing for a higher classed tourist. Large annual budget for size, \$400,000 to \$500,000 per year. Increased revenue for city, but also in- creased costs. Full-time police force. Large public works staff, staff equal to that of Idaho Springs. Cleaning and maintenance costs high. Return from state gasoline tax helps maintain roads, \$5,000 per year.</p>

City Phone Number and Contact	Characteristics Size, Location, Relation to Ski Areas	Similarities/ Differences with Ironwood	Promotional Organizations	Promotional Activities	Results Miscellaneous
2. Idaho Springs, Colorado (303) 567-4382 Chamber of Commerce	Population ? Close to 1,000 ? Major highway runs through town, route to Winter Park and other ski hills - 30 miles from Denver.	Old mining town, get a lot of transients through town on route to ski hills. Located an hour or two from ski hills. Close to large city.	No formal organization other than Chamber. No paid city staff person. Hotels and restaurants will not cooperate with each other. Hotels do not advertise. They don't have to because they are right on the road.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gold Rush Days con- tests like in Central City. (This is a bigger event and lasts longer than the one in Central City.) Food booths, square dancing, uphill races, burro races, raffle gold nugget, ½ marathon - Bush Natural Light Run sponsored partially by Amax Mining. Proceeds to Easter Seals Camp.</li> <li>2. Las Vegas Night.</li> <li>3. Auctions in summer.</li> </ol> <p><u>Other Tourist Attractions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tour of Mines <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Historical Mine on Nat'l Register (Contact Becky at Indian Springs Resort 567-2191)</li> <li>b. Colorado School of Mines runs tours through other mine.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Hot Springs - Indian Springs Resort</li> </ol>	Most of hotel business generated from people traveling long distances, stopping on way to or from ski slopes. Restaurants also capture more of local tourists (Denver) stopping to eat on route to or from slopes.
				Promotional activities help to capture tourists in summer months.	

City Phone Number and Contact	Characteristics Size, Location, Relation to Ski Areas	Similarities/ Differences with Ironwood	Promotional Organizations	Promotional Activities	Results Miscellaneous
3. Georgetown, Colorado (303) 569-2840 Georgetown Preservation Society Ron Neely	Located close to an interstate highway used as a route to the ski hills 50 miles from Denver. Population 800-1,000. Whole town designated as a National Historic Landmark and listed on National Register. Received historic designation 20 years ago along with city of Silver Pluth and railroad running between towns. 90% of housing stock pre-20th century. Three major employers outside of town: State Highway Dept., Amax Metals - Molybdenum Mining, ski industry.	Old silver and gold mining town. Located farther from ski hills, closer to a large city.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Georgetown Preservation Society has part-time public relations manager, works with media publicity.</li> <li>2. Chamber of Commerce part-time P.R. staff person publicity.</li> <li>3. Christmas Market Committee promotes market held before Christmas.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aspen Festival in Fall.</li> <li>2. Kite Festival in Spring.</li> <li>3. Market at Christmas time.</li> <li>4. General advertising brochure circulation related to historic character of city and accommodations.</li> </ol>	There is a lot of restaurant use after skiing. Tourism in Georgetown generated by both historic significance and location in regard to ski hills. Marketing survey done by University of Colorado in Denver (we may be able to get a copy). Showed most visitors came to Georgetown because of its historical resources.

City Phone Number and Contact	Characteristics Size, Location, Relation to Ski Areas	Similarities/ Differences with Ironwood	Promotional Organizations	Promotional Activities	Results Miscellaneous
<p>4. Stowe, Vermont Stowe Area Association (802) 253-7321 Toni Sullivan (Manager)</p> <p>Vermont Economic Development Department George Donovan (802) 828-3221</p>	<p>Located in north central Vermont, 7½ miles from ski hills (Mount Mansfield). Population around 3,000. Tourists from within 300-mile radius.</p>	<p>Close to ski hill, not much located on hills themselves. A few condominiums. Need city for entertainment and accommodations.</p> <p>Association runs reservation services and promotes summer events while Mansfield Company prints winter brochures, city distributes them.</p>	<p>Stowe Area Association established 41 years ago, very important and active organization in the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provides brochures</li> <li>- reservation service for hotels in area</li> <li>- promote summer events</li> </ul> <p>Promote city, region, and state.</p> <p>Almost every hotel, 40 restaurants, retail businessmen, and Mount Mansfield Corporation (ski hill) all members of association. Each contributes a fixed fee plus a flat fee which represents percent of income. Do not sustain a profit. Influence decision-making in community somewhat (put in bike and walking paths).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Octoberfest</li> <li>2. Bike Race</li> <li>3. 4th of July Barbeque</li> <li>4. Grand Prix Tennis</li> <li>5. Winter Carnival</li> <li>6. Stowe Performing Arts Festival Week - local repertoire live musical theater</li> <li>7. Offer ski and travel packages</li> </ol> <p>City has extended electrical power to ski hill for snowmaking (municipal generating plant), increased revenues but also increased rates due to greater use. City benefits from increased use of ski hills.</p>	<p>People feel they benefit economically from promoting on regional basis. City thrives on tourism. Has been successful for a long time, hard to measure benefits.</p>
				<p><u>Other Attractions</u></p>	
				<p>100 miles of interconnected x-country trails, telemarking, and mountaineering.</p> <p>Alpine Slide (big attraction) and gondola rides in summer.</p>	

City Phone Number and Contact	Characteristics Size, Location, Relation to Ski Areas	Similarities/ Differences with Ironwood	Promotional Organizations	Promotional Activities	Results Miscellaneous
<p>5. Merimark, New Hampshire (603) 424-3669 Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>New Hampshire Resources and Economic Development (603) 271-2343 Norman Vanderude</p>	<p>Southeast New Hampshire Population grew from 3,000 to 18,000 in last 3½ years.</p>	<p>Different from Ironwood in that it is experi- encing economic growth because of location along a newly completed major highway (inter- state toll booth located there). Anhauser Bush, Nashua Corp., Sanders Digital recently moved there.</p>	<p>Chamber of Commerce publishes brochures and circulates them. Not much promo other- wise.</p>	<p>Dinner theater specials - give out funny money. Auction House (written up in Nat'l Auctioneer's magazine). John Zyla's Sundays 11-6:00. Many good restaurants. City extended water line to ski area - ski hills cover cost and receive a rebate when users in between hook up. Summer alpine water slides. Hiking in White Mountains. Fishing and lakes attraction.</p>	<p>Increased revenues/ property value of extension area increases.</p>



## **Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.**

1610 South Sixth Street Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454

612-332-0421

**MEMORANDUM TO:** City of Ironwood  
**FROM:** Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.  
**DATE:** March 1982  
**SUBJECT:** 3. IRONWOOD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

### **INTRODUCTION**

Traditionally, community comprehensive plans focus primarily on strategies for directing the growth of the community. But the City of Ironwood and the surrounding area have seen very little or no growth over the last two decades. For Ironwood, a comprehensive plan must address very different issues. The lack of population growth and development has left the community with an aging population, meager economic opportunities, and an aging physical plant (streets, utilities, parks, etc.). The primary needs for Ironwood are increased economic vitality. As a result, the comprehensive plan has attempted to focus on:

1. Economic development strategies to attract businesses and investment to the community.
2. Improvement strategies for maintaining the physical systems of the city.
3. Land use and physical system plans oriented toward accommodating new development stimulated by the economic development strategies of the community.

The first of these primary elements of the comprehensive plan was addressed in the previous memorandum. It laid out the Economic Development Strategy for Ironwood. This memorandum addresses the second and third areas of focus for Ironwood's comprehensive plan. It integrates plans for the city's major physical systems (transportation, utilities, etc.) with the city's land use plan, to form an overall plan or Development Framework for the city.

While Ironwood has seen very little growth, it certainly has seen substantial change. The population has aged and the average family size decreased. The number of children in the community has also decreased. The demographic changes of the community have altered the demands for public services and facilities. The need for schools and neighborhood parks oriented to children have diminished and, instead, things like social services for the elderly and programs for maintaining quality housing have become more important. Changing housing preferences and the interest by many people to live in





attractive rural areas has spurred development in the rural areas surrounding the city. Inflation and energy problems have affected all sectors of society. Technological and social changes continue to take place and affect the development patterns and public service systems in the community.

The Development Framework Plan is a guide for assisting community leaders with their decision-making in light of the changing conditions in the community. It provides direction with regard to the use of land in the city, and investments in public facilities such as streets, utilities, and parks. It is not intended to be a catalog of uninterpreted facts about the community. Instead, it is intended to be a resource document that provides policies to guide community leaders' responses to issues they are confronted with. The framework plan is issue-oriented and addresses primarily those issues raised by the Planning Commission at the first workshop meeting on the comprehensive planning process. The plans and resolutions to these issues are cemented together within the general structure of the framework plan.

## **LAND USE PLAN COMPONENT**

The land use plan component of the development framework provides guidance for how the land area of the community should be used and conversely directs where different types of both public and private development should locate within the community. The framework plan provides this guidance through a plan map illustrating appropriate locations for different types of development and a land use location check list. The land use location check list summarizes the factors which should be considered before deciding whether a given land use should be allowed to locate on a given site. The check list is intended to be used to evaluate unforeseen development questions or special situations.

### **Existing Conditions and Trends**

The City of Ironwood proper is largely fully developed. The existing patterns of development, therefore, are well established. Substantial vacant land exists within the city limits, but only a small portion is readily buildable. Most of the vacant land is south of the Norrie, Aurora, Jessieville area. Of the 100 buildable acres, some is scattered on isolated small parcels throughout the city, but the majority is located within the industrial park on the east side of town (see Figure 3-1). The lack of vacant land within the city combined with the interest of many people in a rural lifestyle has caused substantial development, primarily residential, to occur in the townships surrounding the city. Twelve hundred households are located in Ironwood Township and 224 in Erwin Township. These townships have experienced the only growth which has occurred in the Ironwood area. While the absolute population of the City of Ironwood has decreased and the number of households has stayed about even in the last ten years, Ironwood and Erwin Township have each increased both their populations and number of households (see Table 3-1). In effect, the overall density of the area is decreasing as residential developments spread further into the rural areas. The townships are gaining population and development to some extent at the expense of the City of Ironwood.

Over the decade from 1970 to 1980, the Ironwood area (City of Ironwood and Ironwood Township) decreased in population by 895 people and increased in housing units by 178. This is generally consistent with the State of Michigan Department of Commerce projections for Gogebic County and Ironwood. The state had projected slowly declining populations for both the city and the county through the year 2000. The 1980 U.S. census figures indicate the population size is declining somewhat faster than projected.



IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

FIGURE 3-1

LAND USE

- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC
- OPEN



BARTON-ASCHMAN  
ASSOCIATES, INC.

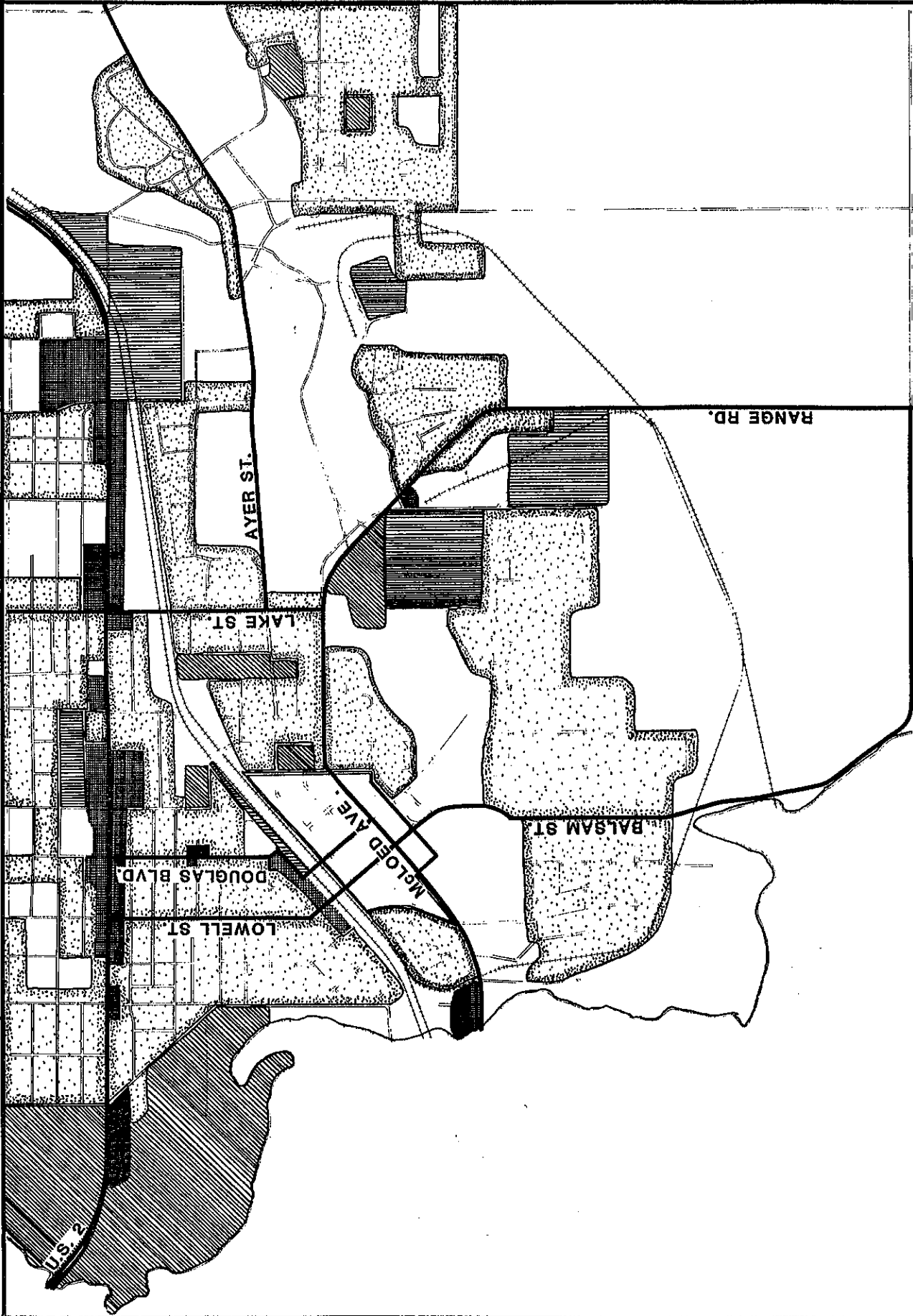


TABLE 3-1  
POPULATION AND HOUSING TREND COMPARISONS, 1970-1980;  
CITY OF IRONWOOD, TOWNSHIP AND COUNTY JURISDICTIONS

Area	Population				Housing Units			
	Total		1970-1980 Change		Total		1970-1980 Change	
	1970	1980	Total	Percent	1970	1980	Total	Percent
City of Ironwood	8,711	7,741	-970	-11.1%	3,476	3,504	28	.8%
Ironwood Township	2,256	2,331	75	3.3	1,079	1,229	150	13.9
Erwin Township	545	527	-18	-3.3	200	224	24	12.0
City of Hurley	2,418	2,015	-403	-16.7	912	1,049	137	15.0
Town of Kimball	468	499	31	6.6	162	224	62	38.3
Gogebic County	20,676	19,686	-990	-4.8	8,906	10,112	1,206	13.5
Ontonagon County	10,548	9,861	-687	-6.5	4,334	5,042	708	16.3
Iron County (Wisconsin)	6,533	6,730	197	3.0	3,747	5,098	1,351	36.1
Vilas County (Wisconsin)	10,958	16,535	5,577	50.9	9,823	18,388	8,565	87.2
Four County Total:	48,715	52,812	4,097	8.4%	26,810	38,640	11,830	44.1%

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1970-1980

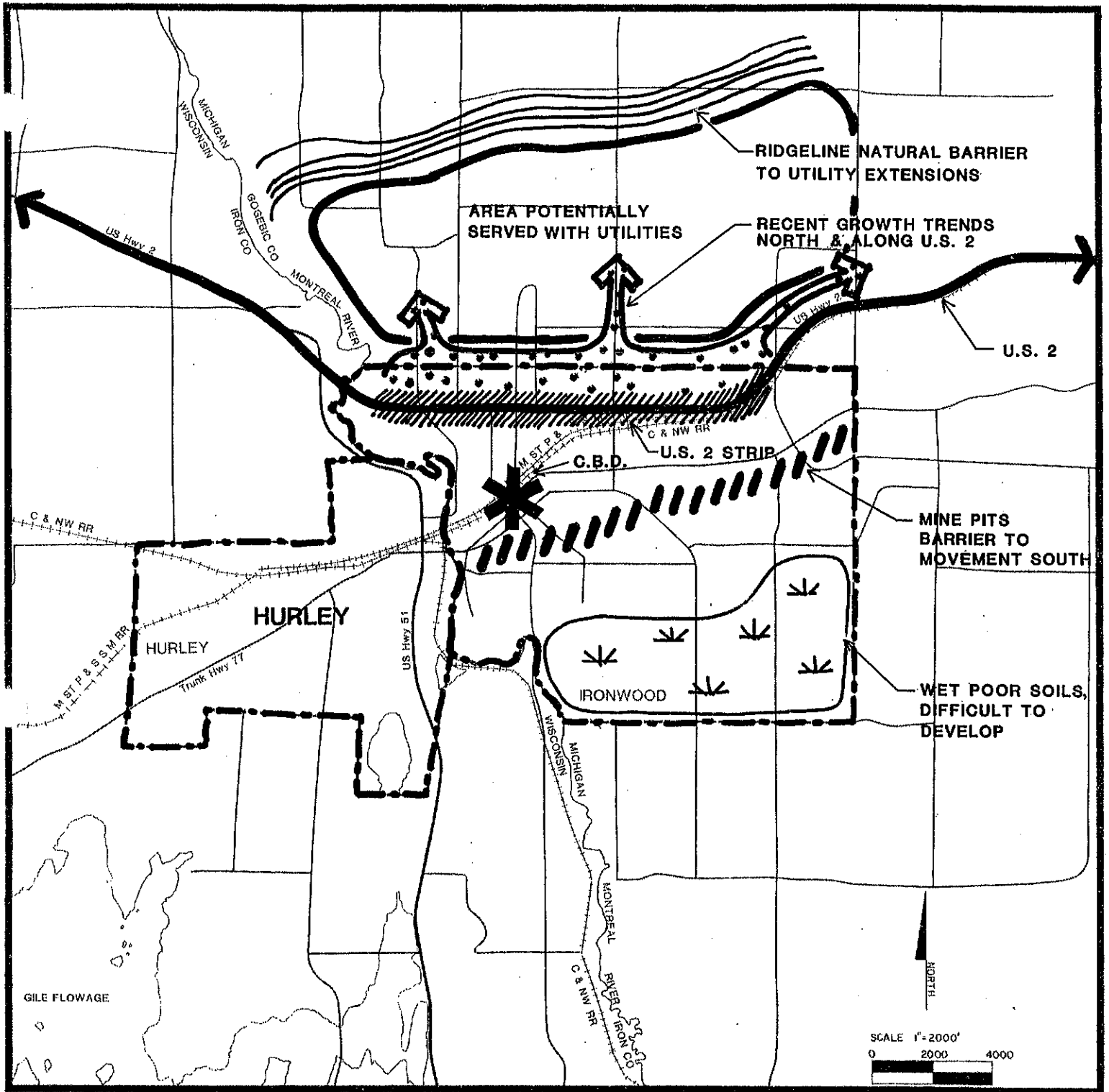
An increase in the number of housing units in the area means an increase in the amount of land dedicated to residential use. The exact amount of land newly in residential use depends on the type of housing units and the density of development. Since over 80 percent of the area's new units occurred outside of the city, it's safe to assume most of the new units were built at relatively low densities. If all of the 178 new units were built on half-acre lots, 88 acres of land were converted to residential use over the last decade. Five-acre lots would have required conversion of 890 acres of land. The differences in average lot size greatly affect the impact of new development on land consumption as well as the provision of public services. If the next decade sees a continuation of the trends of the 1970s, the Ironwood area will continue to experience population and housing shifts from the city to the rural areas. Steps will have to be taken to accommodate the demand for new housing within the area, possibly on a scale comparable to the last decade's 178 housing units.

The primary opportunities for accommodating new development in the Ironwood area then are the limited vacant parcels within the city itself and the substantial amount of vacant land available in the surrounding townships. Little new development is predicted at this point for the Ironwood area, but it is still important to identify opportunity areas for new development in order to be prepared for the potential development stimulated by the area's economic development strategies, and to accommodate general shifting of development within the community as a whole. Existing development patterns are well established and have dictated where major nonresidential types of development will and should locate within the community. The major centers of nonresidential activity have already been established. They are:

1. the central business district
2. the U.S. 2 corridor
3. the city's industrial park

Each of these locations has land available and suitable for development as industrial, office, and commercial facilities. No need exists to create additional locations for major land uses and it would be unwise to scatter nonresidential development in other locations or to attempt to establish additional major activity centers. Scattering development would create land use conflicts within the community and establishing additional activity centers would tend to dilute the strength of the existing centers.

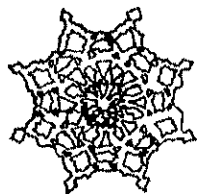
At least some pressure for residential development outside the city limits is likely to continue both because of people's locational preferences and the size of parcels needed to accommodate significant amounts of residential development. Residential development tends to occupy the largest proportion of a community's land area. Opportunities for accommodating substantial residential development within the city are very limited without special actions by the city to either redevelop existing land or encourage development of land with special development problems. Most residential development, primarily single-family residential development, will most likely happen outside of the city limits. Much of this housing is likely to be built in attractive rural settings well away from the current city limits. Higher density single-family development, such as housing found in suburban subdivisions, is more likely to locate close to the city in areas where public utilities are available. The physical constraints presented by the mine pits, and wetlands on the south side of the city, the steep slopes on the east side and the Montreal River and Hurley on the west dictate that the primary opportunities for residential development and expansion of the area served by public utilities is the area directly north of the current city boundaries in Ironwood Township (see Figure 3-2).



DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

**IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN**

FIGURE 3-2



## **Framework Plan**

Existing development having established the locations of major nonresidential land uses, and physical constraints having established the opportunity areas for extension of public utilities and residential development, the framework plan is obvious. Figure 3-3 illustrates the Development Framework Plan which establishes major activity nodes or centers along the U.S. 2 corridor, downtown, and the industrial park on the east side of the city. The residential areas fill in around and between these major activity areas and are limited primarily to the land within the city limits of Ironwood and the area immediately north of the city. Table 3-2 summarizes the basic land uses appropriate for each of these major land use districts. The framework plan provides basic guidelines for where different types of land use should be encouraged to locate. It also illustrates the pattern of development which the public systems, streets, utilities and parks will need to be designed to serve.

Within this general framework, the number of specific issues must be addressed. They are:

1. Locations for multifamily housing and mobile homes.
2. Policies toward development outside the city limits.
3. Policies on development within existing neighborhoods.
4. Check list for evaluating development proposals.
5. Highest and best use of existing vacant land.

In addition to this group of specific issues, questions on development within the U.S. 2 corridor and annexation must also be addressed. These issues will be dealt with separately elsewhere in the comprehensive plan. The importance and complexity of these issues justifies more extensive attention and separate treatment. The specific issues listed above are discussed below.

### **Multifamily Housing Locations**

Multifamily housing (apartments, townhouses, etc.) only accounts for a small percentage of the Ironwood area's total number of housing units. Yet the multifamily housing supply in Ironwood is increasingly important. The high cost of housing, decreasing family size, and increasing population age will increase the demand for multifamily housing units. More locations for multifamily housing development will be needed.

Multifamily housing has special siting requirements. Its higher density tends to make availability of public utilities important. The higher level of activity associated with higher density housing can create problems for adjacent, less intensely developed property. Care must be taken in locating and designing the sites on which multifamily housing is developed. The lack of vacant land in Ironwood complicates the locational question. In locating multifamily development, the following factors should be considered.

1. Adequate auto access. Multifamily housing generates more traffic and activity for a given land area than single-family residential development. Multifamily housing should be located close to collector or minor arterial streets capable of handling heavier traffic loads. In effect, significant traffic generators should be located close to major roads to avoid dragging traffic through quiet residential areas.

TABLE 3-2  
 LAND USE LOCATIONS  
 IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Land Use Type	Rural Area	Urban Expansion Area	Urban Residential Area	U.S. 2 Strip	Central Business District	Industrial Park
Residential						
o Low Density	X					
o Moderate Density		X	X	O		
o High Density			X		O	
Commercial						
o Hospitality	O			X	X	
o Highway/Convenience	O			X		
o Neighborhood		X	X		O	
o Community and Regional Retail				O	X	
Office					X	
Industrial					O	X

X = Highly Appropriate Land Use

O = Conditionally Appropriate Land Use

2. Proximity to services and employment opportunities. People who live in apartment buildings frequently do not have their own cars and must rely on public transportation or walking to reach the goods and services they require. Locating multifamily housing near shopping and/or employment opportunities minimizes the need for private transportation.
3. Proximity to public facilities and natural amenities. Natural amenities, such as attractive views, woods, and streams, are desirable for all types of residential development. It is especially desirable for multifamily housing because the increased density of development maximizes the number of people who can benefit from these amenities. Furthermore, where small children have to live in an apartment complex, proximity to natural amenities and public parks insures adequate recreational opportunities.
4. Compatible adjacent development. Surrounding land use should be consistent with the residential character of multifamily development and/or capable of being adequately buffered from the site if need be. Intense commercial, industrial, or office development are typically inappropriate land uses next to multifamily development. Site buffering such as landscape plantings or fences frequently can overcome the problems created by otherwise incompatible land uses. Where multifamily development is placed within less intensely developed areas, steps must be taken to insure the multifamily development is a good neighbor to existing surrounding land uses. Multifamily development can be placed within a single-family residential neighborhood where the site has adequate size to accommodate significant buffering from neighboring properties, parking facilities are appropriately located, building design is consistent with the characteristics of the neighborhood, and traffic will not create significant problems for the neighborhood.

Using the factors listed above, potential areas for multifamily housing were identified and illustrated in Figure 3-4. Generally, the most central parts of the city provide the best opportunities for multifamily housing because these areas are the closest to the major employment and shopping areas of the city. Many of the city's parks, schools and other public facilities are also located close to the center of the city. The areas identified in Figure 3-4 as the primary multifamily housing location areas are the areas of the city which best meet the criteria discussed above. The secondary multifamily housing location areas meet some but not all of the criteria, and are areas close to major employment centers. It would be very desirable to have multifamily housing located close to these major employment centers. Special consideration should be given to potential projects in these areas.

#### **Policies on Development Outside Ironwood's City Limits**

Development outside of Ironwood's city limits affects the city in many ways. Among these effects are demand for public services, potential creation of problems the city may ultimately inherit, and finally, interference with the potential expansion of the physical area of Ironwood.

Development outside of the city limits increases the demand for virtually all of the services which the City of Ironwood provides its residents. Some of these services, such as public water, the city gets reimbursed for; other services, they do not. Parks, libraries, streets which serve not only residents but nonresidents alike are paid for only by the city. Increasing development outside the city limits increases the demand for these non-reimbursed services.





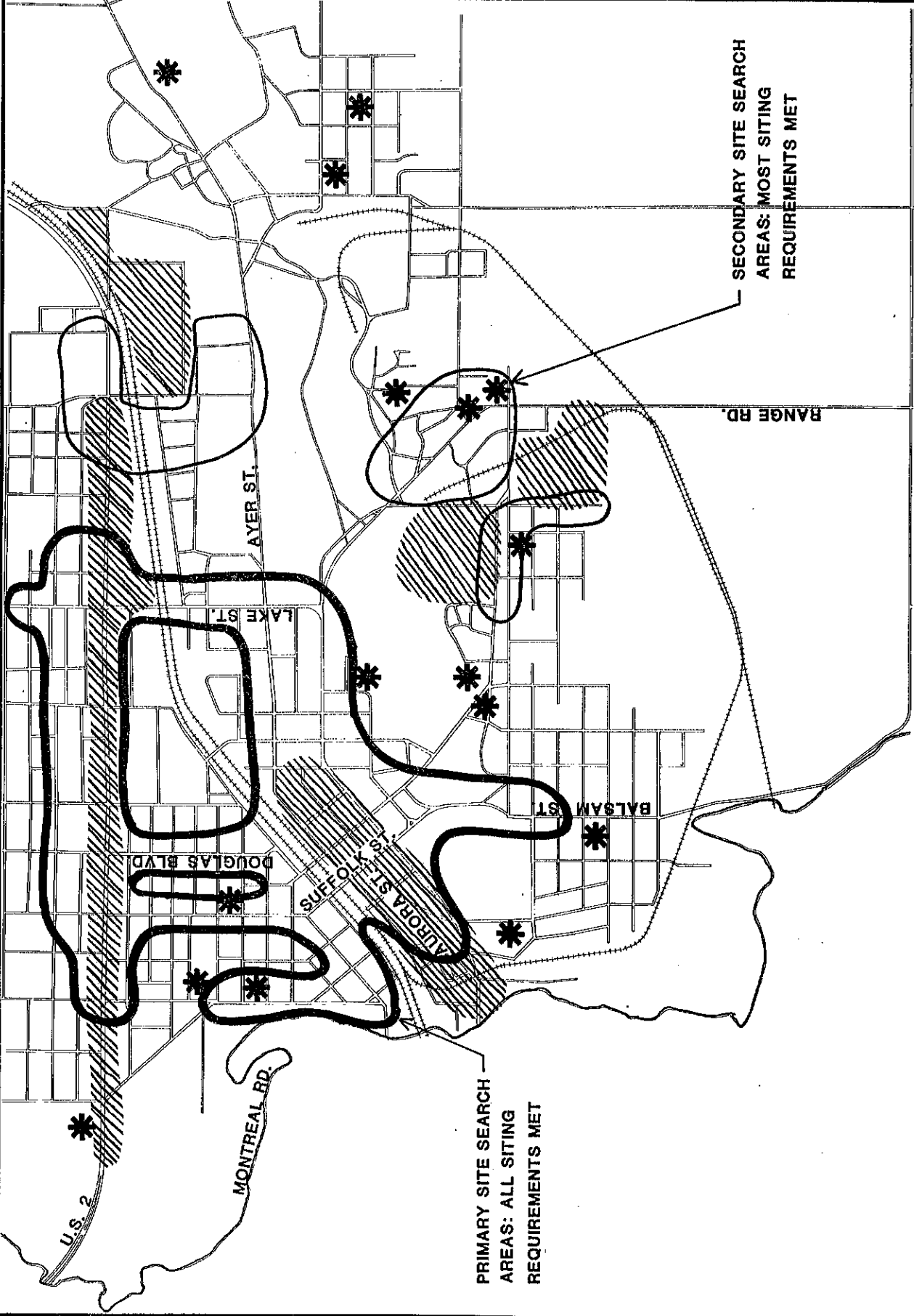
IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

FIGURE 3-4  
MULTI-FAMILY  
HOUSING  
OPPORTUNITY  
AREAS

/// EMPLOYMENT  
CONCENTRATION  
\* RECREATION  
FACILITIES



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ASSOCIATES, INC



PRIMARY SITE SEARCH  
AREAS: ALL SITING  
REQUIREMENTS MET

SECONDARY SITE SEARCH  
AREAS: MOST SITING  
REQUIREMENTS MET

Much of the land outside of the city limits may ultimately become part of the City of Ironwood. If the area becomes relatively urban in density, requiring more intensive public services and careful management, the township will be faced with a choice of staffing up to provide these services itself or becoming part of the City of Ironwood. It's very possible this area would choose the latter course of action. In that case, any problem created by development decisions made within the township over the years prior to annexation would be inherited by Ironwood. If annexation did not occur, the opportunities for expansion of the City of Ironwood could be diminished or destroyed altogether. The city could become landlocked.

All of the issues mentioned above indicate that Ironwood has at least a limited vested interest in development decisions within its surrounding townships in general and Ironwood Township in particular. The small scale and slow pace of development which is occurring in the surrounding townships today minimizes, at least for the short term, the need to adopt stringent policies and actively strive to control development outside the city boundaries. The city doesn't run an immediate risk of being landlocked nor is the development which is occurring surrounding the city an immediate problem for Ironwood. But that's not to say that the city should not be aware of and monitor development beyond its limits and be prepared to take steps to influence development as the need arises.

Similarly, the city's policy of providing public water outside the corporate limits at double the rates paid within the city helps to balance any inequities created by rural developments' use of the city services. Considering that Ironwood does not provide all of the services which the rural areas use, the double water rates probably generate sufficient revenue to be a cost-effective policy for the city to pursue.

If the rate of development begins to increase and the approaching need for more significant public services and facilities becomes apparent, Ironwood should be prepared to initiate policies to influence development in the rural area. The city can either attempt to work with the surrounding townships to develop general plans and strategies for the rural area or it will need to influence development through its annexation and utility extension policies. In the immediate term, it would be appropriate to limit somewhat where utilities and public water would be provided in order to discourage indiscriminate residential development in the rural area. Non-farm rural residential development can have many negative impacts if it is not carefully controlled. These problems may not directly affect the city, but they do affect the community as a whole and other political jurisdictions which Ironwood's residents are part of, such as the school district and the county. Table 3-3 highlights some of the potential problems and possible solutions for each.

### Housing

Housing occupies the largest portion of the city's developed land. Over 900 acres of the city is used for residential property. This is about half of the acreage that is developed. The city's 3,500-plus housing units represent a mammoth private investment in the community. Maintenance of that investment is critical to the well being of the community. Eighty-five percent of the housing stock is over 30 years old and 20 percent is over 70 years old. It is natural for housing in these age categories to require substantial reinvestment to maintain their livability. The city's aging population, lack of economic vitality, and generally low average income make maintenance of the housing stock solely by private, individual actions difficult. The city using community development block grant funds has assisted in rehabilitating 43 housing units over the last two years. This amounts to a little over one percent of the city's housing stock. Another 50

TABLE 3-3  
EFFECTS OF RURAL NON-FARM DEVELOPMENT  
IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS
A. Congestion on the limited county road network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Control access drive locations.</li> <li>o Control density.</li> </ul>
B. Water quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Maintain and require good septic systems.</li> <li>o Control density of development.</li> </ul>
C. Costly future extension of utilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Establish areas where utilities will or will not be extended; encourage appropriate densities.</li> <li>o Tell people where these areas are and that they will have to pick up the cost of extensions if they become necessary later.</li> </ul>
D. School transportation costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Have parents pay a share of costs.</li> </ul>
E. Demand for other urban services which would be difficult to provide at such low densities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- urban police and fire</li> <li>- better roads and plowing</li> <li>- parks</li> <li>- animal control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Establish policy to not provide these services in the rural area. Provide only a rural level of services in outlying areas.</li> </ul>
F. Interference with rural activities; agriculture, mining, lumbering, grazing livestock. (The low level of agricultural activity in the Ironwood area should minimize these problems.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Limit the areas where non-farm rural development is allowed and avoid their location in areas where more traditional rural activities are most appropriate.</li> <li>o Inform people of these problems and the city's inability to deal with them.</li> </ul>
G. Energy consumption. Heating and transportation energy consumption is much greater for low density development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Discourage rural residential development.</li> <li>o Encourage urban residential development in and close to the city.</li> </ul>
H. Demise of rural character. If too much development occurs in rural areas, it will begin to alter the character of the area and detract from the features which attracted folks in the first place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Control density.</li> <li>o Control development standards: setbacks, height, lot size, landscaping, visibility of buildings.</li> <li>o Control use, restrict non-residential, non-rural land uses.</li> </ul>

units of housing are proposed to be rehabilitated in the future. The exact number of housing units in need of improvement is not known, but it is clear that it is substantially more than the city's resources are capable of handling. The city should actively continue to pursue funds for improvement of housing and encourage private reinvestment. Figure 3-5 illustrates the areas of most significant housing deterioration. These areas represent potential target areas for future housing improvement programs.

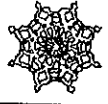
Ironwood has a special housing problem as a result of its proximity to the ski hills. Many housing units are used as ski homes. Out-of-town skiers buy a small home in the city and use it much as a person would use a summer lake cabin. The intermittent occupancy of these dwellings can create problems for the city. Limited use of these homes can result in less building and property maintenance, especially for routine items such as snow removal and lawn mowing. In addition, absentee property owners tend to have less stake in the community and interest in providing important community services such as education.

Ski housing has some potential benefits for the city. Ski housing represents private investment in the city, and when it is well-maintained it can improve the image and physical character of the city's neighborhoods. Ski housing also pays taxes without generating a very significant demand for public services, because the units are occupied so little during the year. The city should consider a housing maintenance code for insuring ski homes as well as other housing in the city is well-maintained. Additional steps may be necessary to insure absentee-owned property is maintained. The city may consider actually doing maintenance items itself and billing the property owner for the work, or it may set up a mechanism for having property owners contract locally for the maintenance of their property.

### Neighborhood Renewal

Related to housing conditions are neighborhood conditions. The city has several relatively well-defined and historically established neighborhoods. Maintaining the quality and viability of these neighborhoods is central to the quality and livability of the community as a whole. Strong neighborhoods make strong cities, and the strength of a neighborhood is as much a social condition as a physical characteristic. Residents need to take pride in their neighborhood and their city. This pride can be reflected in the maintenance of their own homes and their neighborhood and the city at large. Maintaining neighborhood identity and social organizations, such as athletic clubs, can encourage self help activities in the community as well. Organizing the neighborhood and enlisting them in the task of identifying problems that need to be addressed, potential solutions to these problems, and priorities will improve the impact of city efforts in the neighborhood and spur individual neighborhood action.

The city has a significant amount of miscellaneous small parcels capable of being developed within its limits. Much of this land is south of the mine pits in the Norrie, Aurora, and Jessieville neighborhoods. Active neighborhood organizations and improvement efforts in these areas should be used to spur new investment either in the form of new construction or rehabilitation and upgrading of existing structures in these neighborhoods. By encouraging new families and new development to locate in these areas, the city will enhance its tax base and population without having to invest in expansion of public utilities and streets. Existing public facility capacity is used up and the community's public facilities needs are met more efficiently. Any number of low capital investment actions could be taken to improve the image and attractability of the city's neighborhoods. Possible actions might include vacant lot cleanup, tree planting, demolition of poor and unused buildings, and minor paint-up and fix-up campaigns.



IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

FIGURE 3-5

HOUSING  
PROBLEMS

HOUSING  
DEFICIENCIES:



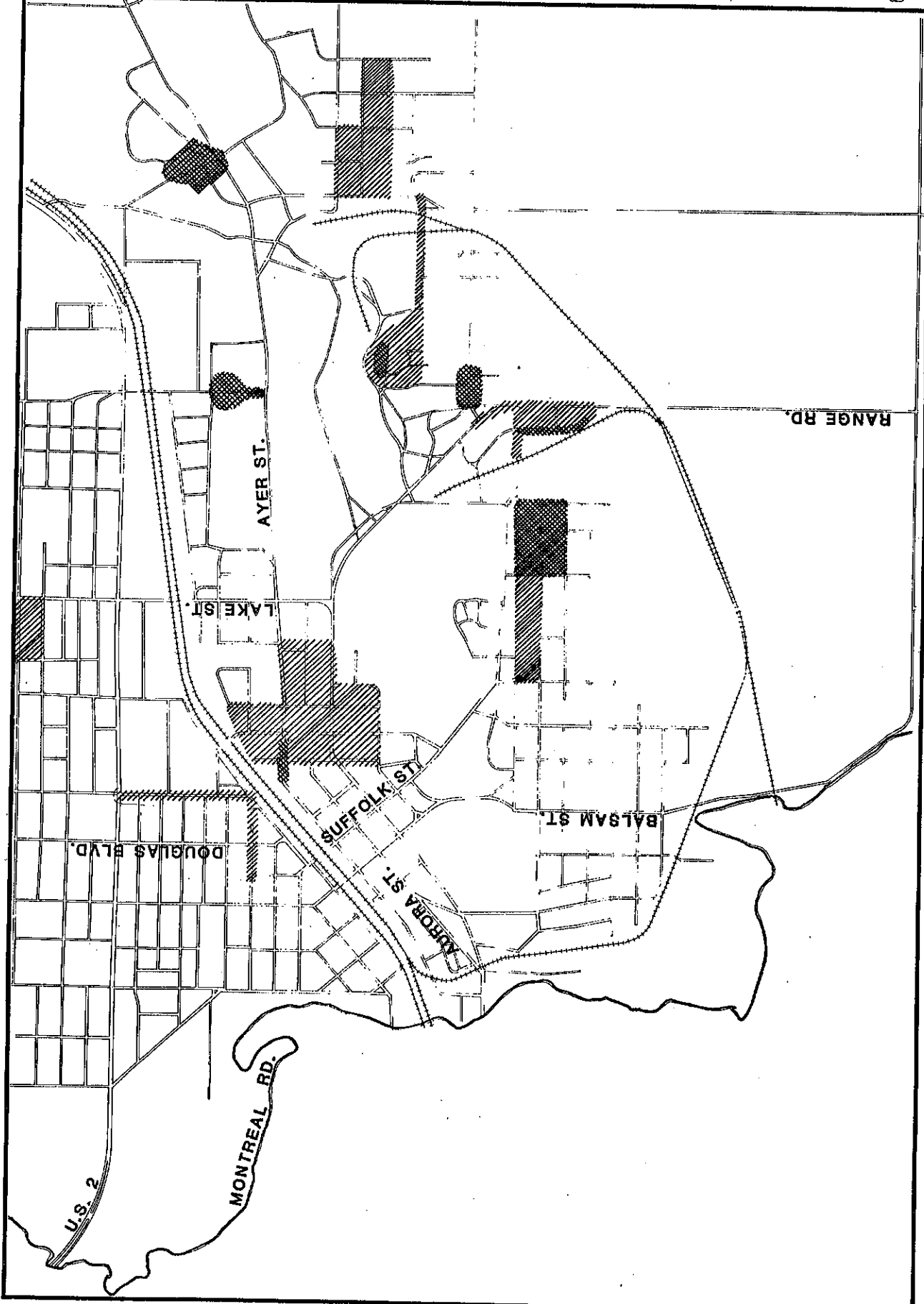
MAJOR



MINOR



BARTON-ASCHMAN  
ASSOCIATES, INC.



## Development Check List

The Development Framework Plan provides general guidelines for the location of different types of development. When considering specific development proposals, a more detailed look at the fit and appropriateness of the proposed use for the specific site is needed. The following is a check list of items that should be considered in evaluating a specific development proposal.

1. The first item that should be considered is whether or not the proposed project is consistent with the development framework and existing zoning ordinance requirements. If the proposed project is not consistent with the plan and zoning ordinance, that does not mean the proposed project should be rejected automatically, but it does mean the project should be looked at especially closely. For a project in this situation to be considered further, there should be some special, strong rationale for its location in this particular spot. If such a rationale does exist, and after review of the development with regard to the other important items on the check list, the city reaches the conclusion that the proposed project is indeed desirable at the given location, then the city should also consider altering its development framework plan and zoning ordinance to reflect this refinement or adjustment.
2. The compatibility of surrounding land uses must be considered. Like land uses are obviously compatible with one another and it is desirable to group them together. But mixing land uses, if done carefully, adds variety to the community and increases the convenience of goods, services and employment opportunities to city residents. The location of dissimilar types of development next to one another cannot be completely avoided anyway. It is inevitable that the transition from one type of land use to another must occur at numerous places within the community. The compatibility of dissimilar land uses should be evaluated by considering the characteristics of proposed land use. Specific characteristics that should be identified and investigated include:
  - a. Building Character. Is the proposed building consistent with the general character of the surrounding neighborhood or district? In some cases, this may not be important if the character of the surrounding area is already very mixed. The overall size, height, types of building materials, and general architectural style should be considered.
  - b. Site use, design and orientation also affect compatibility. How will the site be used, will material be stored outside, will much of the site be used for parking, will construction of some type occur outdoors, will there be recreational facilities, and how are these different uses of the site organized and oriented. In other words, for example, if a specific project is going to have a large parking lot, where will the parking lot be located? Will it be located adjacent to a sensitive land use like residential development, or can the residential development be sheltered from the parking facility?
  - c. What are the traffic generation characteristics of the proposed project compared to the traffic generation characteristics of the adjacent and surrounding land uses? How many cars on an average day and how many trucks? What time of day will this traffic be generated? Will it be concentrated at certain peak hours or will it be spread evenly throughout the day? In addition, where will the truck and auto entrances and exits from the site be in relation to the surrounding land uses?

- d. What are the characteristics of the proposed use? Will a lot of activity be generated, will it be noisy or quiet? What times of the day and of the week will the facility be active?
- e. Are there any fumes or aromas associated with the project? What is the potential affect upon air quality?
- f. What kind of site lighting will be used? Will it be brighter than or inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood?
- g. If the facility has loading and/or refuse storage areas, where will they be located related to surrounding land uses? Will they be offensive to surrounding land uses? Will they be enclosed?
- h. What will be the hours of operation of the facility? How do these hours relate to the activities of the surrounding land uses?

Reviewing the characteristics of the proposed development may reveal a number of potential negative impacts for the surrounding land uses. These negative features may not negate the appropriateness of the proposed land use if it is possible for the developer to alter slightly the use of his site, the orientation and organization of building and site, or if remedial actions, such as buffering adjacent land uses, can alleviate the problems.

- 3. The appropriateness of a given development on a given site also depends upon its fit with public facilities, such as the street system, public utilities, availability of police and fire protection, and the needs for parks and schools. Each different type of land use places a somewhat different demand on the city's public facilities and service organizations. It's desirable for residential development, for instance, to be located within convenient reach of recreation facilities. Industries which involve wood products or paper tend to present increased fire hazards which should be considered in evaluating their locations. Each development should be looked at in terms of whether the city can adequately provide the services and public facilities needed at the proposed site. In particular, the following questions should be considered.
  - a. Can the streets immediately serving the proposed facility handle the anticipated traffic level, and if they will carry truck traffic, is the load capacity design of the street adequate?
  - b. Is the sewer and water system capable of handling the demands generated by the proposed development?
  - c. Are there special emergency services needs associated with the proposed development and can the city meet these needs?
  - d. If the proposed development is a residential development, are sufficient recreation facilities available close to the proposed development and, if not, how will the recreational needs be met? Will they be provided by the developer on site, or will the city take some type of action?
- 4. The natural features of the site should be considered. The question is whether the natural features of the site are consistent with the type of use being proposed. Generally, if a site is especially attractive, possibly offering special amenities such

as unique views, woodlands, some type of water feature, or interesting terrain, it is most appropriately used for parkland, residential development or, in some cases, commercial uses such as a restaurant or possibly office facilities. Less attractive sites typically are more appropriate for more intense land uses such as major commercial facilities or industrial facilities. In addition, industrial and commercial development typically require sites with special natural features. Typically, they need easily buildable land which is relatively level. The effects of the proposed development on natural features, such as the attractiveness of the area, and more tangible issues, such as storm water runoff, water quality, and air quality, also need to be considered.

5. The special needs of some development types, and the unique characteristics of the site should be considered in evaluating the desirability of a proposed development. The size, shape, buildability, proximity of the site to specific land uses, or special facilities such as railroad tracks or major highways need to be considered. Special consideration should be given to the fact that the city may be making decisions with regard to a very unique and special parcel of property in the community, or the developer may be proposing a very unique development for the community which may have very few potential locations to choose from. Examples of land conditions which would be unique might be land with rail access, or land located along U.S. 2, or large parcels of vacant land under consolidated ownership within the city limits. These parcels require special attention because they are unique, and if they are used for less than their ideal use, other parcels with the same mix of unique characteristics may not exist.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES FRAMEWORK PLAN**

Development and public facilities exist within a symbiotic relationship. Development must have public services and facilities to exist, and public facilities influence the location of development. Neither development nor public facilities can be realistically planned for alone. They must be investigated and planned for as an integrated unit. The land use component of the general development framework plan discussed previously provides guidance for decisions on the location of specific development types. It is derived partially from an understanding of the availability and location of existing public facility investments. The network of streets and utilities, in particular, provide a skeleton on which development grows. The location of existing public systems and decisions on future improvements and expansions of that system will be a major factor in directing future development in the community.

The public facilities development framework is a guide for public system improvement and expansion decisions. Because little new growth is anticipated in the Ironwood area, plans for the expansion of the city's basic public systems is much less important than plans for maintaining and upgrading existing public facilities. Even with the success of the economic development strategy, little expansion of existing public systems will be needed because substantial reserve capacity exists today and substantial vacant land in areas where utilities and streets are available already exists.

### **Transportation System**

The city's basic transportation network is already established. The circulation system has developed over the years in conjunction with development of the community in general. The limited growth projected for the community minimizes any need for expansion of the basic network of primary streets or major changes to the existing network to handle increased traffic within already developed areas of the city.



The city's street system provides mobility for the community's residents and access to specific land uses and sites. To facilitate efficient movement of goods and people, to minimize potential negative impacts of traffic on surrounding land uses, and to provide streets cost-effectively, the street system should be as a hierarchical system. In other words, some streets should be planned and designed to be more important than others. Table 3-4 highlights the basic components of a street system for a community the size of Ironwood. The system consists of three components, minor arterials, collectors, and local streets. Arterial streets carry the heaviest traffic while local streets carry the lightest and collector streets more or less connect between the local streets and the arterials. Arterial streets because of their greater size and higher speeds tend to carry more through traffic and traffic traveling longer distances. In contrast, people tend to travel only a short distance on local streets and a moderate distance on collector streets. In Ironwood, U.S. 2/Cloverland is probably the only true arterial in the city. It serves an important role as an east-west circulation route within the city and also serves a regional transportation function as the primary route connecting Ironwood with surrounding cities and states. Other important but less intensely used east-west circulation routes in the city include Ayer Street, Aurora Avenue, and McLeod Avenue. These streets are more like collectors than arterials. Their functions overlap somewhat, especially in the downtown area, but McLeod serves an important east-west traffic circulation function from Hurley through the downtown to Lake Street, while Ayer functions as a key east-west route primarily from downtown west to the city limits. With the emphasis on McLeod as the eastern entrance into the downtown, Aurora's function as a collector street will diminish. The key north-south circulation routes include Lowell, Douglas, Suffolk, and Lake Street. These collector routes serve the north-south traffic movement needs of the city and connect downtown to the regional transportation route, U.S. 2.

The neighborhoods south of the mine pit areas, Norrie, Aurora, and Jessieville, are a special transportation problem. The small number of people living in these areas minimizes the need for a formal, highly precise hierarchy of streets. But a basic network of key streets should be identified to help focus road maintenance funds and avoid any potential inadvertent traffic intrusions on the neighborhoods. North-south circulation from these neighborhoods to downtown, and the rest of Ironwood with its employment, public facilities, and shopping opportunities, is probably the most important transportation movement in this area of the city. This transportation need is pretty well met by the roads which connect through the mine pit area to the rest of the city. Lowell, Suffolk, McLeod, and West Street all connect across the mine pit area and should be considered collector streets. Furthermore, Lowell and West continue through the neighborhoods and south of the city thus serving as important roads for people entering the city from the south. In addition, the South Range Road serves a similar function by connecting the City of Ironwood with areas south of the city limits. It too should be considered a collector street and connected with Bacon Street. East-west movement through the neighborhood south of the mine pits is more complicated. The traffic movement demand in this direction is probably very light and yet no single road is continuous between the three south side neighborhoods. A collector street should be established or rather a series of streets should be established as the east-west collector route within the Norrie, Aurora, Jessieville neighborhoods. The network of major streets and their functional classification is illustrated in Figure 3-6.

The primary problem which the City of Ironwood must face with regard to its street system is their physical condition. Based on the 1980 assessment of city street conditions, 34 percent of the city's secondary streets and 48 percent of the city's major streets are in inadequate condition and in need of repair. To reconstruct the 14 miles of local streets and 9½ miles of major streets that are in inadequate condition today would

TABLE 3-4  
ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM - IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

	Minor Arterial	Collector	Local
<u>Purpose</u>	Serve continuous travel	Assemble traffic from interior and deliver to nearest arterial	Provide access to abutting property
<u>Characteristics</u>			
- spacing	Reflect trip density (one mile typically)	Allow for progressive signals (1/4 miles)	Every block
- lanes	Four or greater	Two	Two
- parking	None	Restricted	Yes
- speeds	35 mph +	30 mph	25 mph
- traffic control	Signals, signs	Signals, signs	Signs
- neighborhood penetration	No	Some	Yes
- land use	High density residential High school Neighborhood shopping centers	Medium density residential Grade school Limited commercial	Low density residential



IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

FIGURE 3-6

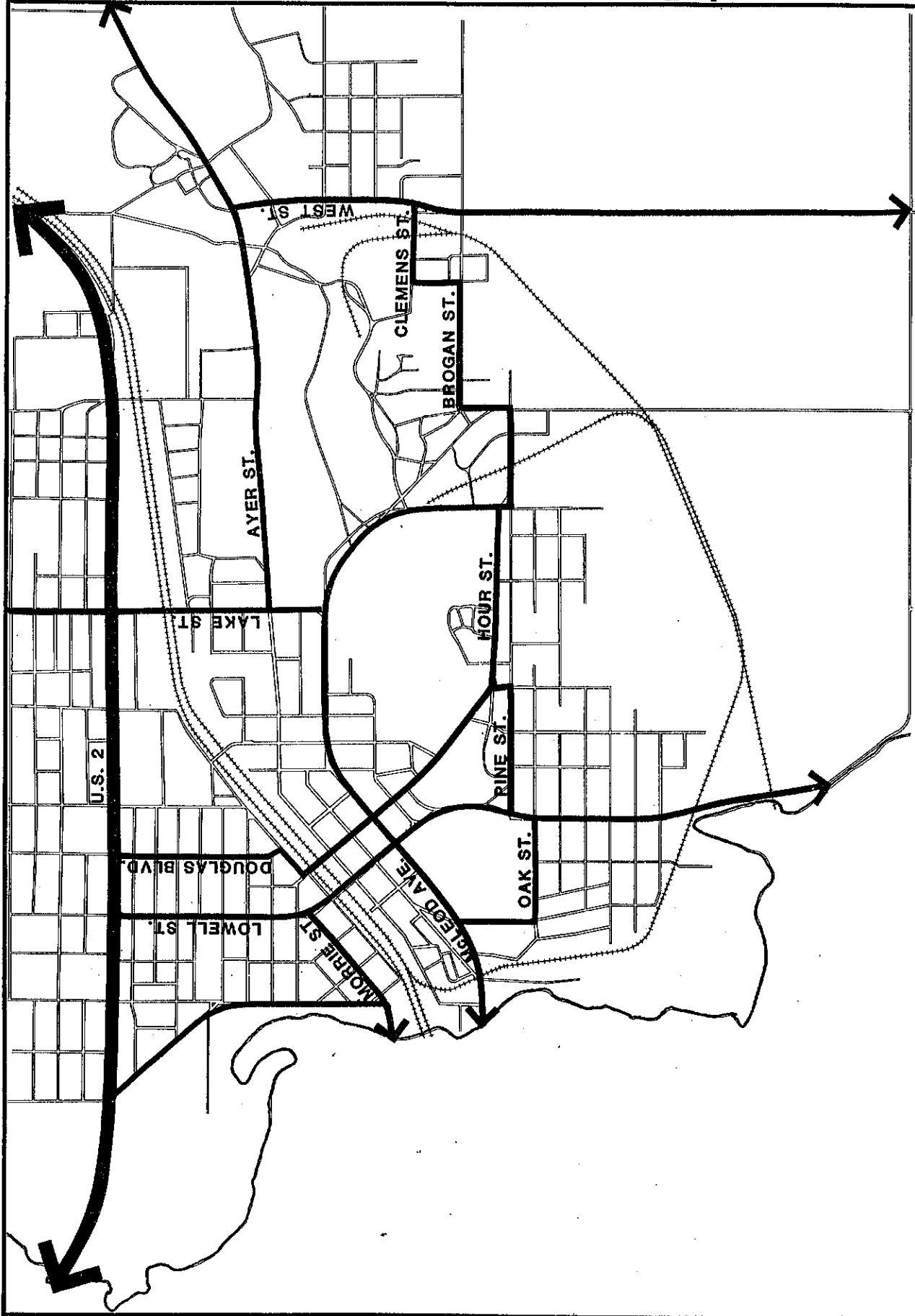
STREET  
SYSTEM

ARTERIALS

COLLECTOR



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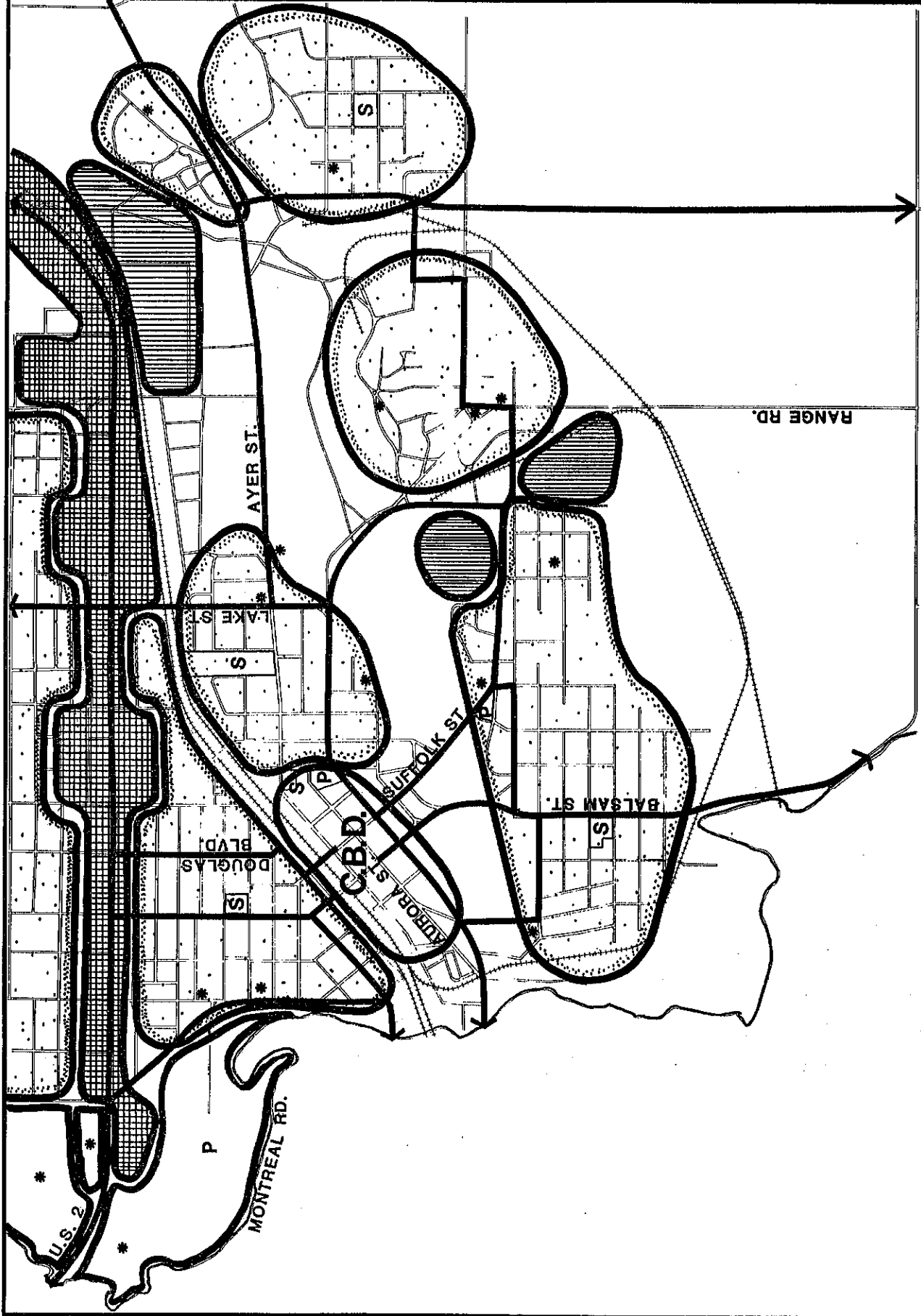
IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

FIGURE 3-3  
DEVELOPMENT  
FRAMEWORK

- RESIDENTIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- U.S. 2  
CORRIDOR
- PUBLIC LAND
- S SCHOOLS
- \* PARKS



BARTON-ASCHMAN  
ASSOCIATES, INC



cost \$12.5 million. Not all of the streets need complete reconstruction, still, the cost of street repairs would be very high and will require reinvestment to alleviate the problem. Figure 3-7 shows the location of inadequate streets.

### Utility Systems

Utility systems are a major determinant of growth patterns. The availability of utilities spurs development and encourages higher density development. The city has well-established water and sewer systems serving all of the city, and in the case of the water system, some areas outside the city limits.

The major problem facing the city with regard to its utility systems as with the transportation system is the need to improve and repair the systems rather than expansion of the service network. Over \$1.5 million in sanitary sewer system improvements and rehabilitation is needed. In addition, the sewage treatment plant itself is in need of upgrading at a potential cost of \$5 million. Figure 3-8 shows the location of the sewer system and manholes needing improvement. Sewer rehabilitation work includes:

1. Sewer rehab/replacement - 4.8 miles
2. Replace service - 3.83 miles
3. Bypass/cross connection at 14 locations
4. Reroute service at four locations
5. Disconnect storm sewers at 133 locations
6. Rehab manholes at 39 locations

Primary problems with the sewage treatment system relate to excessive infiltration and inflow. The city's sewage treatment plant apparently treats over 5 million gallons of waste water per day, but approximately 4 million gallons on the average are storm water. The storm water uses up a great deal of the city's sewage treatment plant's capacity.

The growth projections indicate little expansion of the city's utility systems will be needed in the foreseeable future. Adequate amounts of vacant land already served by utilities exist. Figures 3-9 and 3-10 show the area currently served by utilities. If additional area is needed in the future, expansion to the immediate north of the city limits would be most appropriate. Much of the area is already served by water and development trends seem headed in this direction. Utility service extensions should be consistent with the land use plan.

### **GENERAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN**

The composite of the land use and public facilities plans discussed above is the General Development Framework Plan. Figure 3-3 illustrates the overall plan showing the location of major land uses, the network of major streets, the location of major public facilities, and locations for the expansion of public services.



IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

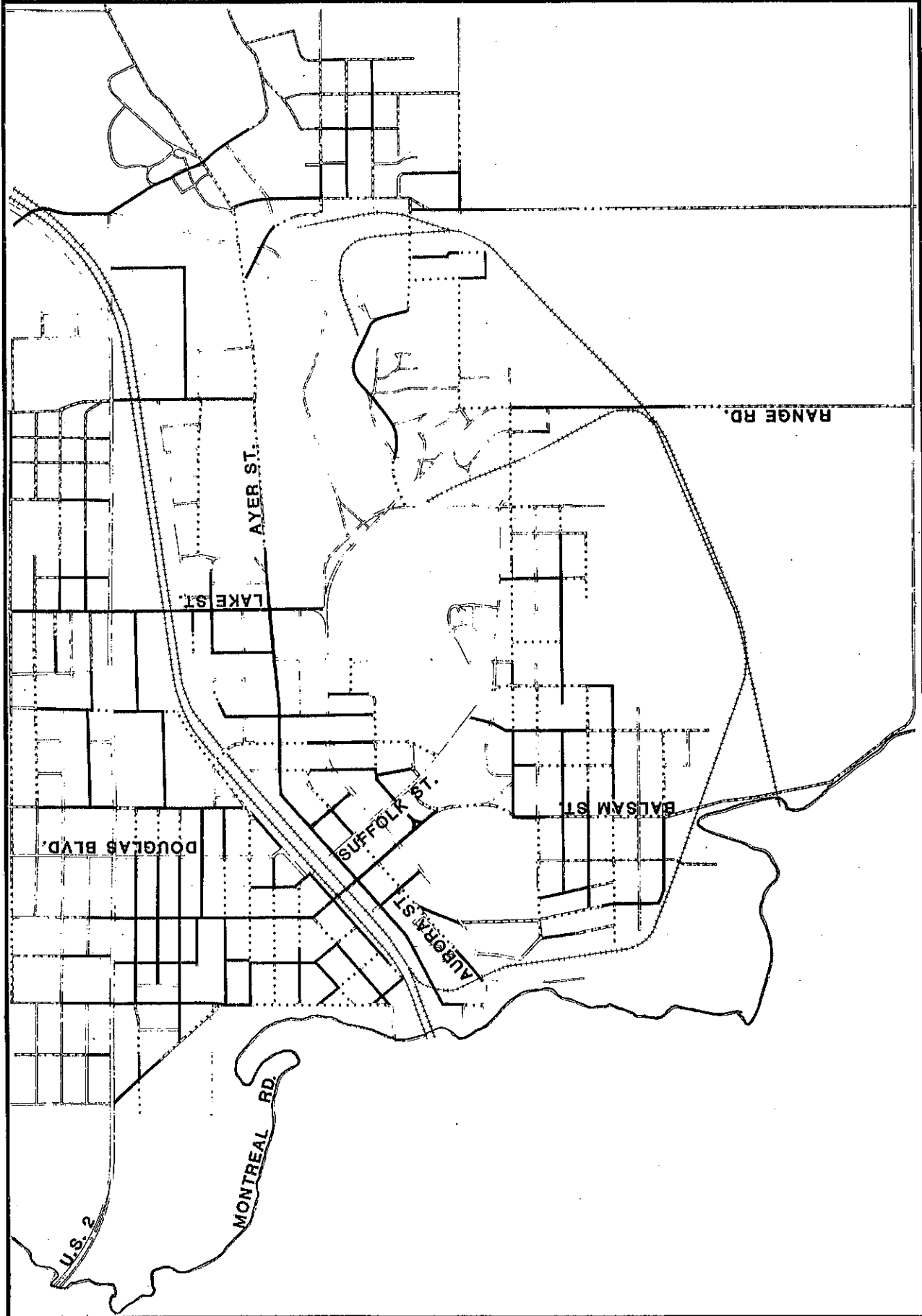
FIGURE 3-7

STREET  
CONDITIONS

— ADEQUATE  
- - - INADEQUATE



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IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

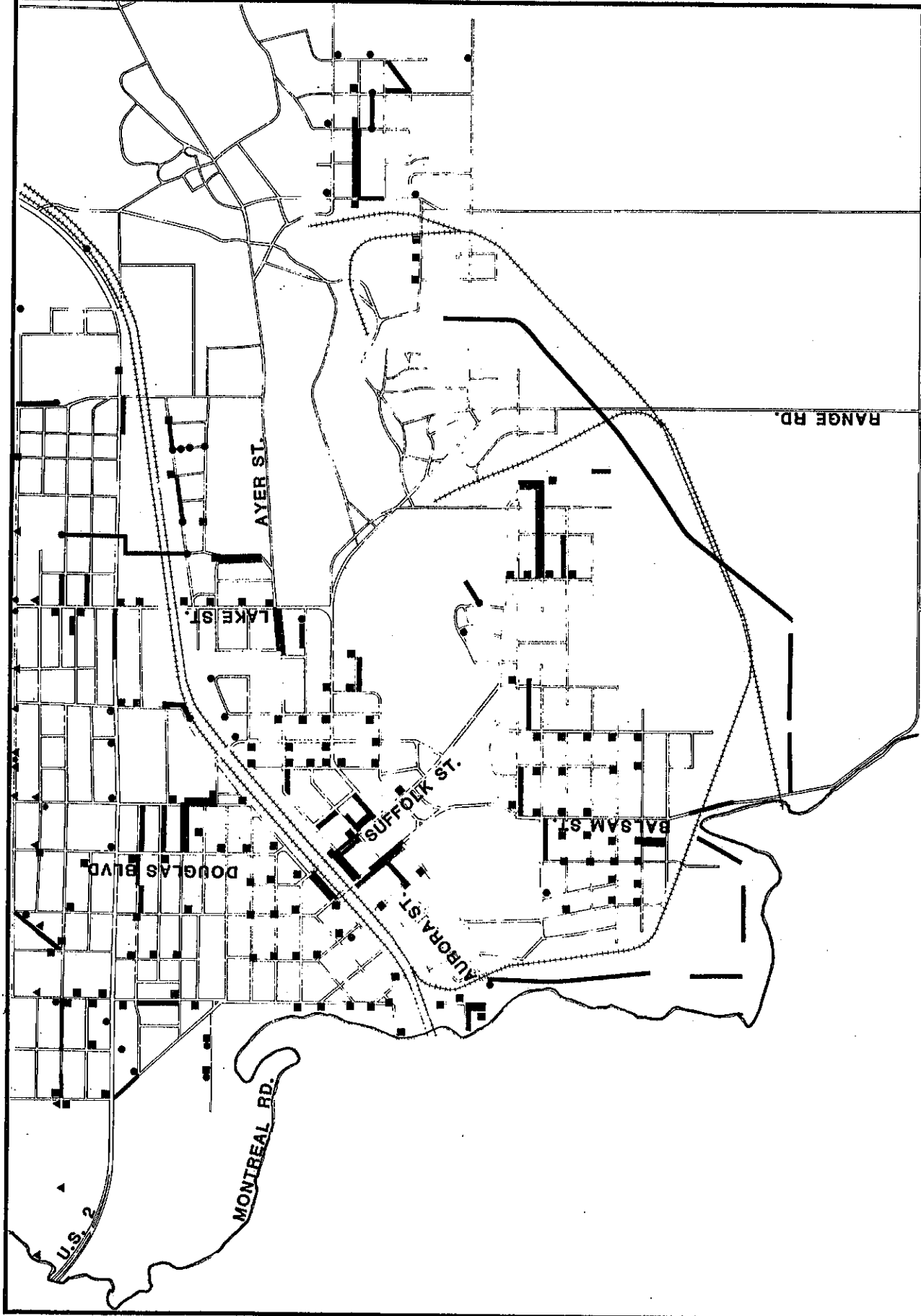
FIGURE 3-8

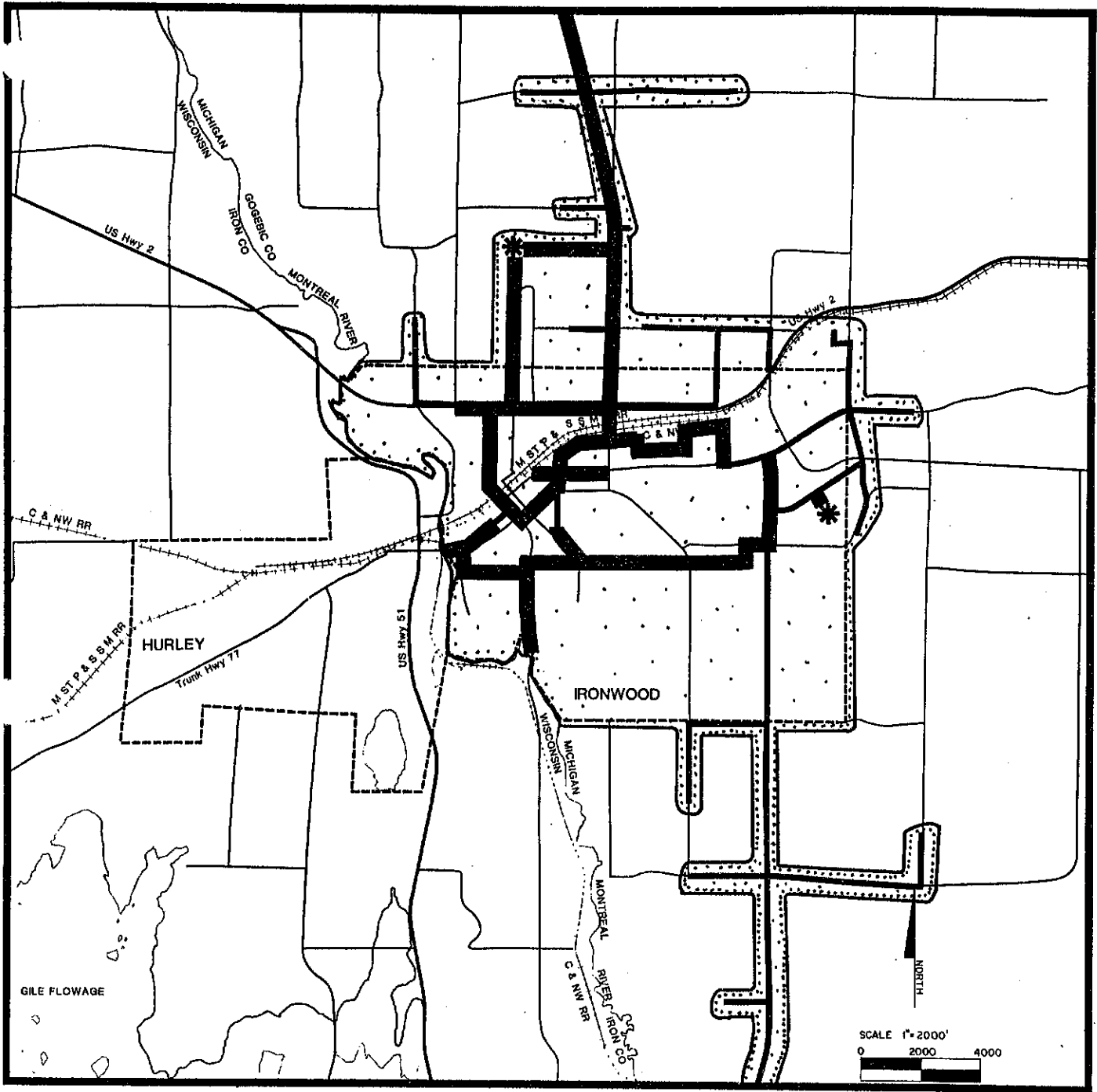
UTILITY  
SYSTEM  
PROBLEMS




- REPLACE SERVICE
- SEWER REHAB. & REPLACE-  
MENT
- REROUTE SERVICE
- ▲ BY-PASS/  
CROSS CONNECTION
- MANHOLE REHAB.
- DISCONNECT  
REROUTE  
STORM

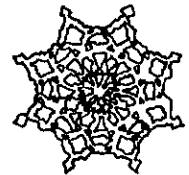


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-  MAJOR WATER LINES (10" OR LARGER)
-  SECONDARY WATER LINES
-  RESERVIORS



WATER SYSTEM  
SERVICE AREA

**IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN**

FIGURE 3-9



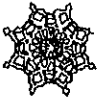
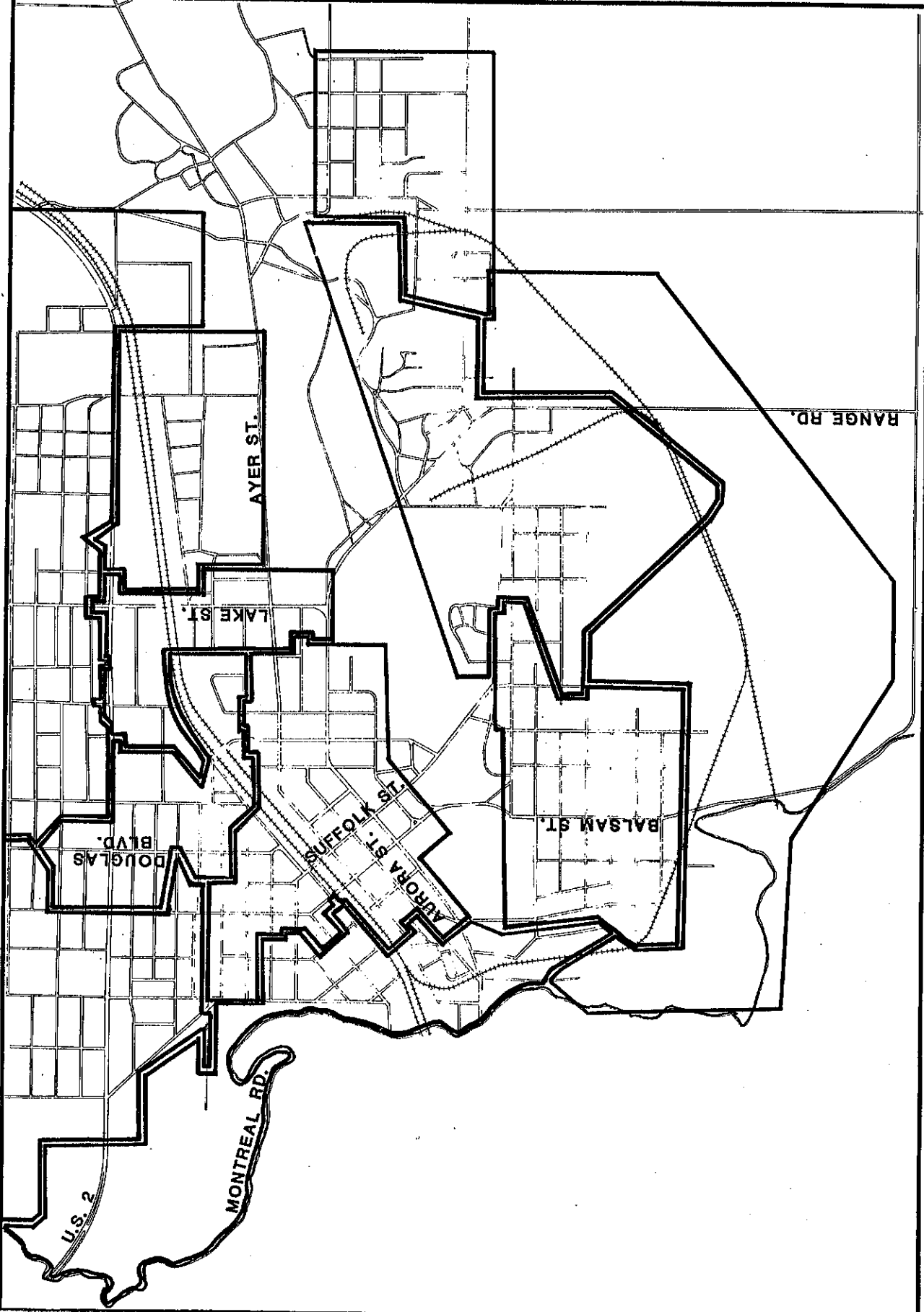


FIGURE 3-10

SEWER  
SYSTEM  
SERVICE  
AREAS





## **Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.**

1610 South Sixth Street Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454

612-332-0421

**MEMORANDUM TO:** The City of Ironwood  
**FROM:** Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.  
**DATE:** April 1982  
**SUBJECT:** 4. U.S. 2 HIGHWAY CORRIDOR PLAN

### **INTRODUCTION**

The U.S. 2 highway corridor through Ironwood is an area of the city which requires special planning attention. It is a unique and critical area of the city with many special problems. U.S. 2 is the most significant road in Ironwood and carries the heaviest traffic loads in the community. The highway is a interregional transportation facility stretching across the northern states. It is the primary connection between Ironwood and the surrounding cities and regions of both Wisconsin and Michigan. It is a primary route for moving goods and materials to and from Ironwood and the primary access route for tourists and visitors to the city and the immediately surrounding area. The regional access provided by U.S. 2 is critical to the city's economy, making it possible for tourists to frequent the area and to connect Ironwood's industrial enterprises with their markets and sources of raw materials.

Within the city proper, U.S. 2 serves many other important and more local transportation functions. U.S. 2 is the primary east/west street through the city meeting the mobility needs of the city's residents. U.S. 2 also provides immediate site access to the numerous businesses which have grown up along the highway as a result of the high auto accessibility and visibility provided by U.S. 2.

The accessibility and visibility provided by U.S. 2 have spawned low density sprawling development stretching along virtually the full three miles of U.S. 2 highway within Ironwood's corporate limits. This loosely organized sprawling development represents a major portion of the city's tax base and employment opportunities. It is one of the major centers of activity within the community. The continued availability of vacant land and the opportunities for redevelopment of underutilized land have made the U.S. 2 corridor one of the few areas of the city which has experienced substantial new development in recent years. Continued pressure in this corridor can be anticipated. Special attention is needed to direct wise use of the remaining vacant land and fit new development in with existing development and traffic circulation patterns.



The U.S. 2 corridor represents in many respects the front door and front yard for the City of Ironwood. For tourists, skiers, and other travelers, the view of Ironwood offered within the U.S. 2 corridor is the first and in some cases the only view of the city they experience. Their experience traveling along this route provides them with their image of Ironwood whether it be positive, negative, or mixed. As the front door for Ironwood, the U.S. 2 corridor deserves some special attention, particularly considering the importance of tourist trade to the economy of the community. The type and quality of the image presented within the corridor affects directly the tourist economy of the city.

These multiple and critical functions which the U.S. 2 corridor serves for Ironwood, namely:

1. regional transportation facility,
2. local transportation facility,
3. major center of activity within Ironwood,
4. concentration of the city's tax base and employment base,
5. major future development opportunity area,
6. "front yard" for the city,

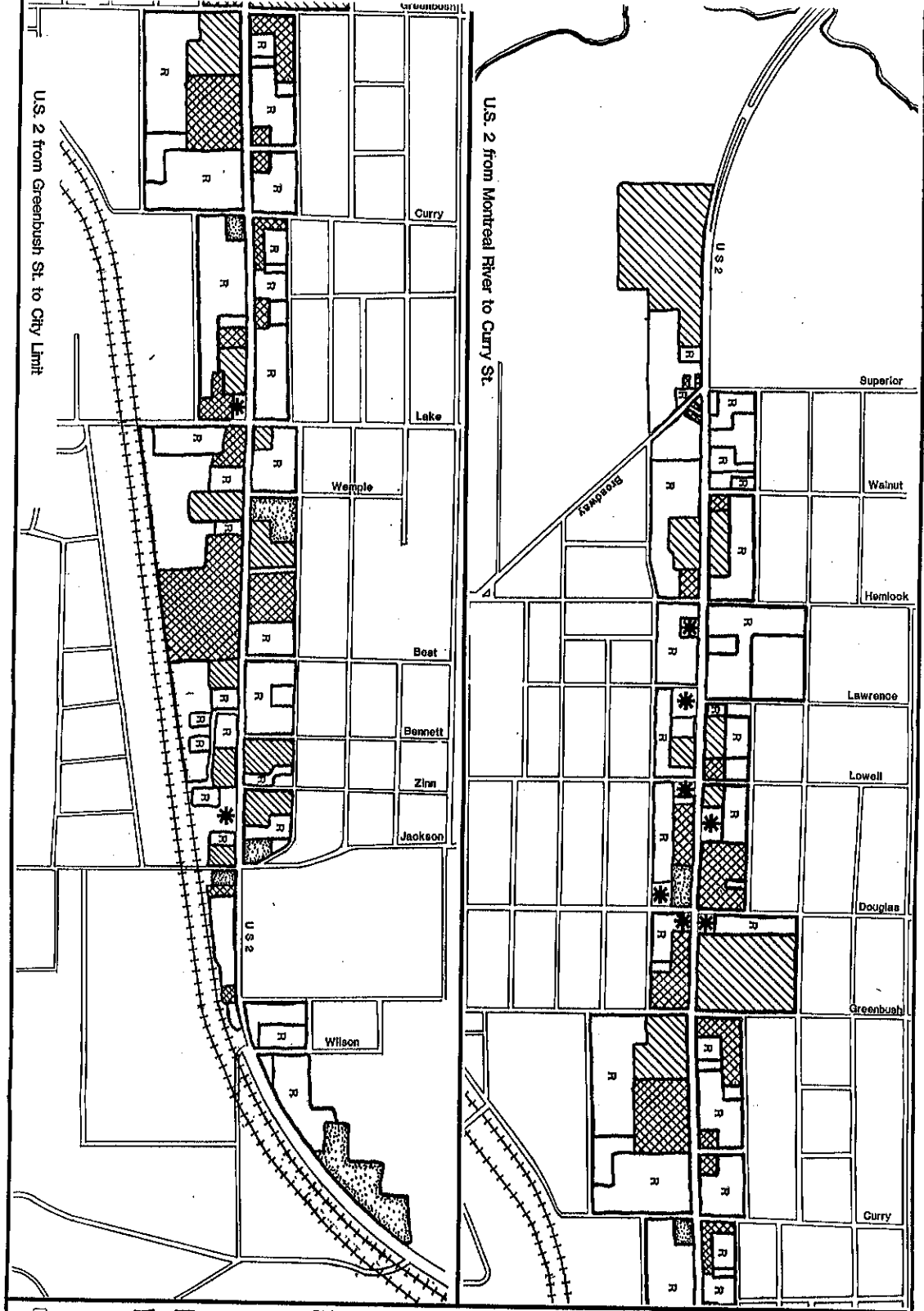
dictate that special attention should be directed toward planning for this lifeline of the community. This memorandum discusses the problems and opportunities associated with the corridor and documents a plan for its future development and improvement.

## **PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Highway 2 stretches east/west through Ironwood for nearly three miles, extending from the Montreal River on the east side of the city to the western corporate boundary of the city. The roadway is generally a two-lane highway, 22 feet wide, within a right-of-way of 78 feet through most of Ironwood and as much as 200 feet on the eastern end. Average daily traffic is as much as 8,000 cars per day near Douglas Boulevard. Traffic volumes steadily decrease as one moves away from the intersection of Douglas Boulevard and U.S. 2 until traffic volumes of 1,000 to 2,000 cars per day are reached at the extreme eastern and western edges of U.S. 2 within the city limits.

A wide variety of land uses occupy the property which abuts U.S. 2 (see Figure 4-1). Excluding public lands, such as the county fairgrounds, about 100 acres of land is directly accessible from U.S. 2. Of this land, about 60 percent is some type of commercial use. The next most abundant land use within the corridor is residential development. Over 20 percent of the land in the corridor is occupied by housing, mostly low density, single-family housing. Some office and wholesaling or industrial land uses are also found along U.S. 2, but these land uses combined represent less than 10 percent of the area. Another 16 percent of the corridor is vacant land. The commercial land uses consist of a variety of development types. The dominant commercial activities are travel related or hospitality land uses. Motels occupy about 20 acres along the corridor while restaurants occupy 11 acres and gas stations about 4 acres. A mixture of additional commercial activity, primarily convenience oriented, make up the remaining 22 acres of commercial land use within the corridor. The most notable retailing land uses are the K-Mart store and the Red Owl store.

The twelve motels, eleven restaurants, eight gas stations, 73 residences and numerous additional retailing, office and wholesaling operations are located within the U.S. 2 corridor in a disorganized pattern. Little or no relationship exists between adjacent land uses. Similar types of land uses are not grouped together or concentrated in certain sections of the corridor. Most of the establishments are independent from one another.



**IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN**

**FIGURE 4-1  
U.S. 2  
CORRIDOR  
EXISTING  
LAND USE**

- HOUSING
  - RETAIL
  - SERVICE/  
HOSPITALITY
  - GAS  
STATION
  - OFFICE
  - VACANT
- 800 1690 2400  
BARTON-ASCHMAN  
ASSOCIATES, INC.

Few developments are interconnected in any way. Each site and development has its own access driveway onto U.S. 2 and its own parking facilities in virtually every case. No pedestrian walkways connect adjacent land uses. The independence of land uses, the lack of concentration of major land uses into nodes, or organization of land uses within subdistricts leads to a very mixed, chaotic development pattern.

The U.S. 2 corridor is faced with many problems.

1. To some extent, the U.S. 2 corridor area competes with downtown Ironwood. Both areas are heavily commercial and retail oriented and offer some directly competing goods and services. What's more, the U.S. 2 corridor has greater auto accessibility, more opportunities for providing convenient parking, more opportunities for new development, and generally newer facilities. Also, because of the important transportation role U.S. 2 provides, businesses along the highway get first crack at many potential customers which the downtown businesses do not. Because of this potentially cut-throat competition between the two districts of the city, the role of each district must be carefully defined. The types of development appropriate for each district must be identified. The relationship of the U.S. 2 corridor to downtown must be clearly defined to insure strong, healthy, appropriate development in both districts.
2. The linear development pattern within the corridor creates an extensive edge where land use transitions have a significant and often detrimental impact on surrounding residential development. Much of the commercial development along the nearly three miles of corridor abuts residential development. The noise, lights, traffic, and visual blight created by loading docks and refuse areas can be detrimental to the residential properties.
3. The linear development pattern within the corridor minimizes the interrelationships between the individual facilities and makes shared parking or pedestrian amenities difficult to provide. This makes efficient use of land within the corridor more difficult and limits the opportunities for some kinds of businesses and retailing.
4. The linear development pattern within the corridor provides the maximum direct access to individual stores by auto, but increases traffic congestion as a result of increased turning movements and auto travel between the individual facilities. The lack of concentrations of similar or related facilities within some type of organized node with common parking, discourages one-stop shopping and forces people to drive between stores and businesses.
5. U.S. 2 has a confusing array of access points serving commercial facilities as well as a large number of cross streets. The safety and convenience of the area would be improved by a decrease in the number of access points.
6. The setback of buildings from U.S. 2 street right-of-way is generally quite short and varies significantly from property to property. This makes provision of parking for many of the facilities awkward and inefficient.
7. The corridor lacks a distinctive and cohesive image or character. What's more, the mishmash of development types, building materials, and signing systems present a poor image to travelers along the corridor. In effect, they make a negative statement about the City of Ironwood and tend not to be appealing to tourists.

8. A haphazard array of parking lots along the corridor and the lack of significant landscaping of these lots in most cases adds to the visual chaos and unattractiveness of the corridor.
9. The entrances to the city and the corridor in contrast to the majority of the corridor are very appealing and strong visual statements. The east entrance is defined by a large stand of pine and the relatively attractive forest service facilities. The west entrance is defined by the Michigan State Roadside Information Bureau and the county fairgrounds. Both of these facilities are heavily vegetated and attractive facilities in keeping with the northwoods character of the Ironwood area. These entrances provide features on which to build the character of the corridor and promote the city.
10. Residential development occupies a significant amount of the land within the U.S. 2 corridor. Seventy-three residential properties front on U.S. 2. Many of these properties are intermingled between existing commercial development and the environment created by the U.S. 2 highway is not particularly conducive to residential land use. The future of existing residential development within the corridor needs to be decided.
11. Some vacant and underutilized land (for instance, the drive-in theater) exists within the corridor. Most of this land represents the last easy development opportunities within the corridor. The future use of these opportunities should be carefully evaluated.
12. Opportunities to expand the narrow U.S. 2 corridor in order to establish activity nodes are limited by the existing development surrounding the corridor. Development presses up against the properties which front on U.S. 2. Few opportunities for expansion away from the highway are possible. The most notable opportunities are:
  - a. Industrially zoned land currently used for mobile home construction just north of U.S. 2, between Green Bush Street and Curry Street.
  - b. The land in the vicinity of the new K-Mart caught between U.S. 2 on the north, railroad tracks on the south, and Lake Street on the west.
  - c. An area immediately north of the new Twin Theaters in the vicinity of Best Street.
  - d. The drive-in theater site on the north side of U.S. 2 and at U.S. 2's eastern end.

## **U.S. 2 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

Any course of action or plans for the U.S. 2 corridor which the city decides to pursue should strive to achieve a number of important objectives. The objectives that form the basis for the U.S. 2 corridor plan and should serve as the guiding light for public action in this district of the city are as follows:

1. Use of the U.S. 2 corridor should be consistent with the city's overall economic development strategies and goals. Development within the corridor should be encouraged to the extent that it increases the employment and tax base of the city.

2. In keeping with the community's number one need and community improvement goal, expansion of the community economic base, care must be taken that new development within the corridor enhances the attractiveness of the community to further economic development and, in particular, tourism business.
3. Improve the overall visual image and character of the U.S. 2 corridor as a means to improve the economic viability and stability of the community through promotion and expansion of tourist-related business.
4. The primary role of U.S. 2 is to carry traffic and serve as a interregional transportation facility. To this end, the traffic carrying capacity of U.S. 2 must be maintained.
5. Insure the traffic safety of the U.S. 2 corridor.
6. Insure adequate and convenient auto accessibility of the property within the U.S. 2 corridor.
7. Insure as much as possible that the development within the U.S. 2 corridor is a good neighbor to surrounding development, especially the relatively quiet and sensitive land uses such as schools, parks, residential development, and churches.
8. Minimize location of conflicting land uses near one another and support and encourage location of complementary land uses close to one another.
9. Discourage sprawling, linear development patterns, especially outside of the city limits. Such development draws away potential economic base from of the city, creates a chaotic image for the region, and ultimately is a very costly development pattern to provide with public services and facilities.

## **U.S. 2 CORRIDOR PLAN**

The plan and development policy for the U.S. 2 corridor has been prepared in response to the corridor issues discussed previously and to achieve the corridor goals. The U.S. 2 corridor policy is a companion piece to the broader community development policies and provides a more detailed guide for public and private decisions affecting this special district of the city. The city itself has a choice to make with regard to how active or passive it will be in seeking not only to guide future private investments, but also to pursue physical improvements within the corridor. The city can actively seek developers and provide assistance in redeveloping underutilized parcels. It can strictly enforce a locational plan which strives to create nodes of complementary land uses. It can establish and build a common signing and lighting system for the corridor or it can pursue much more advisory and passive roles in all of these areas. This plan highlights the basic direction that should be taken on all of the key system components of the corridor, but does not attempt to lay out the detailed improvement plans. The plan and policy of the U.S. 2 corridor addresses: 1) general development framework, 2) image considerations, and 3) transportation policy.

### **Development Framework**

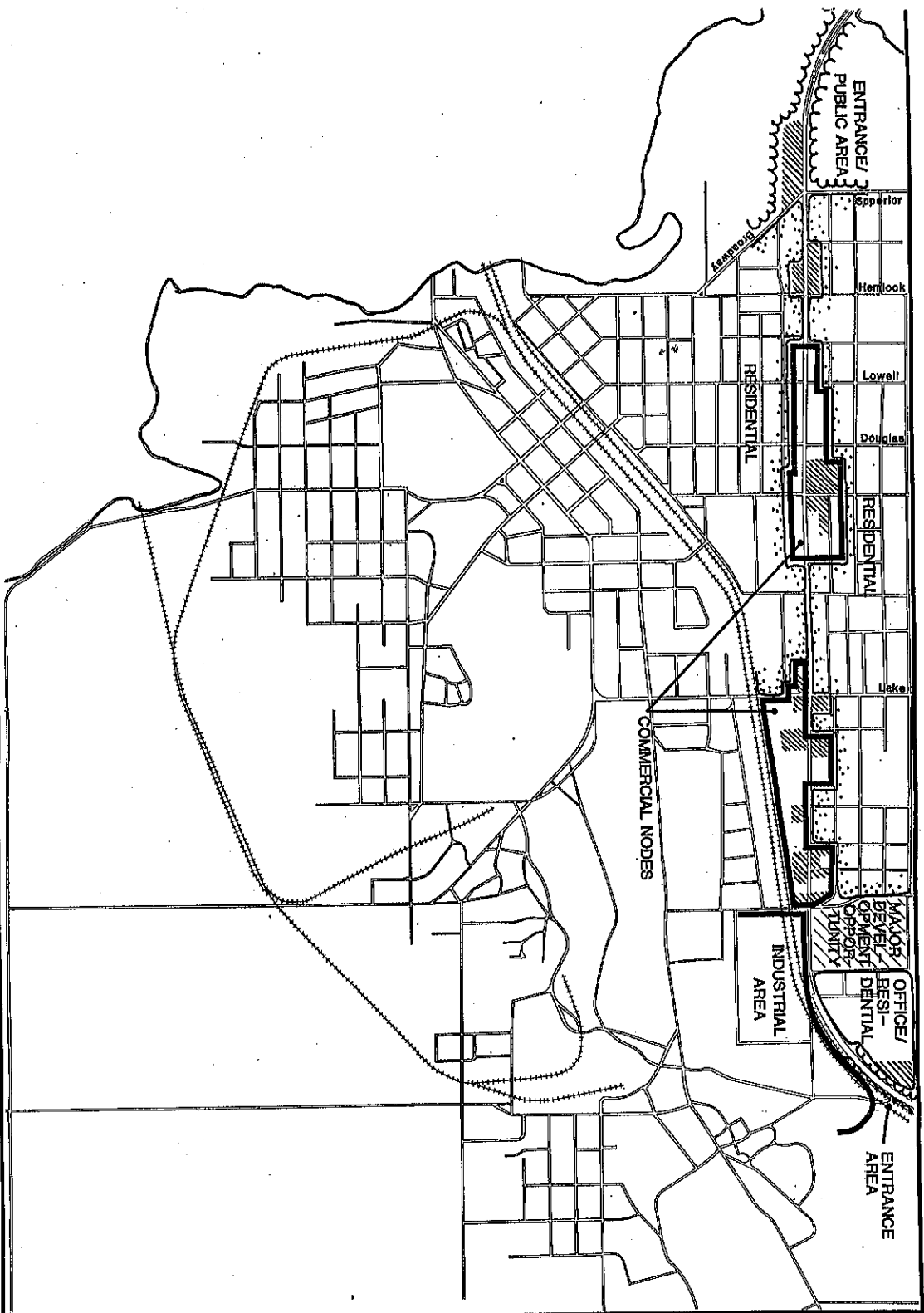
The high accessibility provided by U.S. 2 both for Ironwood residents and transient traffic suggests that the types of land uses which would most appropriately be located within the corridor are highway-oriented, convenience-oriented commercial facilities and tourist or hospitality-oriented businesses. These types of businesses should be



encouraged to locate within the corridor. Examples of these types of land uses are gas stations, restaurants, fast food restaurants, motels, and other convenience-oriented small scale stores. The lack of a pedestrian environment and the limited opportunity for integrated commercial facilities support this land use role for the corridor since most highway-oriented convenience-oriented operations are one-stop shopping types of facilities which do not benefit from concentrating several facilities together. They typically are independent operations with very little relationship to other potential commercial facilities located in the same district. By contrast, comparison shopping types of stores (clothing stores, for example) do benefit from a grouping of similar and related facilities in close proximity to one another and linked with a pedestrian system. These types of land uses are better located in settings like downtown.

The basic configuration of land uses within the corridor is illustrated in Figure 4-2. The physical plan for the corridor calls for the following policies.

1. The relatively quiet and heavily vegetated entrances to the community located both at the east and west ends of U.S. 2 as it passes through Ironwood should be maintained as much as possible in its current state, and where possible enhanced.
2. Substantial residential property exists within the corridor which has the potential to continue indefinitely. The areas dominated by residential development and/or other relatively peaceful land uses should be encouraged to continue their current land use. Redevelopment of these areas for some other use would be costly and unlikely. Furthermore, the demand for land within the corridor is not great enough to warrant redevelopment of all the residential property along U.S. 2 within the foreseeable future. Since many of these residential properties are quite small, both in width and depth, it would be difficult to put together an adequately sized parcel in any case. To allow spot redevelopment of existing residential development within the quieter sections of the corridor would disrupt these areas. For these reasons, much of the U.S. 2 corridor has been identified as at least short-term residential areas. Redevelopment and use of existing facilities as commercial ventures should be discouraged in these sections of the corridor until such time that either substantial decay occurs within housing conditions or the demand for commercial land outstrips the supply within the corridor and other redevelopment opportunities.
3. The areas which are the most intensely commercial today should be encouraged to continue and looked upon as commercial activity nodes. Steps should be taken wherever possible to interrelate and coordinate the developments within these districts. Furthermore, residential development within these areas should be considered an intruder and only a short-term, temporary use. These areas should be seen as ripe for redevelopment in more intense and commercial activities.
4. Establishing commercial nodes could be enhanced by expanding the amount of land devoted to commercial land uses at the nodal locations. The narrow corridor of commercial activity should be widened to create potentially more compact and intense commercial nodes. Widening of the corridor can occur on the south side of U.S. 2, east of Lake Street, and on the north side of U.S. 2 between Greenbush Street and Currie Street. In the case of the land east of Lake Street, intense commercial activity including the new K-Mart Store has already developed in this section of U.S. 2, establishing it as a major hub of activity. The opportunity exists to expand that hub south from U.S. 2 to the Soo Line, and Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks. Most of this land is currently vacant and generally has no direct access to U.S. 2 over any other significant public streets. This land



IRONWOOD  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

FIGURE 4-2

U.S. 2  
CORRIDOR  
LAND USE  
PLAN

TRAVEL/  
HOSPITALITY  
LAND USE



could be used to accommodate additional commercial development integrated with the existing commercial facilities along U.S. 2 and in this vicinity. The railroad tracks make a natural barrier and dividing point between the commercial activity along U.S. 2 and the residential development further to the south. Approximately seven residential units currently front along Lake Street and north of the railroad tracks. In the long range, it would be appropriate to assume that this area would be redeveloped into commercial facilities.

The land north of the corridor and between Greenbush and Currie Streets is industrially zoned and marginally used. The expansion of commercial activity north from U.S. 2 into this area would be appropriate. It would make it possible to accommodate larger, more integrated commercial developments in this area.

5. The eastern most portion of the U.S. 2 corridor north of the highway is a mixture of residential and office types of development. This area is relatively quiet in nature and should be maintained as a low intensity area of the corridor.
6. The drive-in theater represents a future development opportunity. At some point in time, the reuse of the drive-in theater property in some more intense development is likely. The theater site is a transitional location in that it is located between the residential and office development on the east end of the corridor and the edge of one of the corridor's potential commercial nodes. The design and development of this parcel must carefully bridge between these two different types of land use and ensure that existing development is not negatively impacted. Furthermore, the drive-in theater site is one of the few large parcels of property available on the corridor. The city should encourage its reuse as a single large facility or development as an integrated site for smaller facilities. Redevelopment of the site by a major hotel or motel chain would seem a very appropriate use considering the size of the property and the travel/hospitality industry character of the corridor.

### Corridor Image

The heavy emphasis on tourist-related industry in the Ironwood area makes community image a particularly critical issue. The mix of land uses and their physical organization in part establish the image presented to travelers by the U.S. 2 corridor. Maintaining the attractive wooded entrances to the city at the eastern and western ends of the corridor and establishing an orderly development pattern within the corridor will affect the image. But to make a strong and complete statement, improvement to all of the visual components of the corridor are needed. The range of possible actions the city and/or businesses and property owners within the U.S. 2 corridor can undertake is extensive. The community can choose how far it's interested in pursuing active improvement of the image of U.S. 2. The basic components that need to be addressed are:

1. Signs, both public and private.
2. Building design, including height, building materials, colors, even potential styles of buildings.
3. Site design, including location of parking, building setbacks, access location, and sign locations.

4. Site landscaping, including landscaping of parking lots, the boulevard along U.S. 2, the edge between conflicting land uses (for instance, the edge between residential land use and commercial development), and key focal points such as major intersections.
5. Overall design scheme for the U.S. 2 corridor, integrating the design of buildings, signs, landscaping, lighting systems and other objects within the corridor.

The level of control and investment that is put into any one of these image components could vary greatly. Sign improvements, for instance, could range from adoption of a strong sign ordinance with effective enforcement to development of a common sign and signing system for the corridor's private businesses and public information signs. Possibly a system based on the wooden Indian head signs or the Ironwood snowflake logo could be used to establish a common theme within the corridor, clean up the current chaotic signing and establish the City of Ironwood's identity in the minds of visitors and highway travelers. Similarly, an overall design framework for U.S. 2 could be developed using special lighting standards, signing systems, controlling building location and designs to create a cohesive visual image within the corridor.

### Corridor Transportation Policy

The primary purpose of U.S. 2 is one of transportation. To ensure U.S. 2's ability to accommodate traffic safely is maintained, the following principles should be applied to controlling traffic, development, and access to development within the corridor.

1. The first priority for any special improvements such as turning lanes, consolidated access driveways or other improvements should be given to the major traffic generators and attractors within the corridor.
2. The critical factor in the safety of traffic flow within the corridor is the large number of access driveways and intersections. The number of access driveways should be kept to a minimum, ideally not more than four would occur within a 600-foot block. The spacing between access driveways should be relatively uniform and adequate to make each driveway easily identifiable and visually separated from other access drives. Access driveways should be kept well back from street intersections. A 150-foot setback would be appropriate. Control of residential access driveways is generally less critical than driveways for commercial development because of the much lower traffic volume.
3. The minimum lot size for commercial land use should be large enough to ensure well-spaced access driveways. Commercial lots should have a minimum frontage in excess of 150 feet.
4. Where possible, cross streets should be used to provide access to development along U.S. 2 corridor, thus eliminating the need for access driveways directly onto U.S. 2.
5. Where possible, access driveways for major land uses should be aligned with access driveways on the other side of U.S. 2. Where driveways to major land uses on either side of U.S. 2 cannot be aligned, a significant offset should be required to ensure the driveways will be visible as distinct non-aligned driveways.
6. Exclusive turn lanes to particular land uses should be avoided.

7. Development should be required to have extra setbacks from the street right-of-way at the intersections to ensure adequate driver visibility.
8. Oversized or undefined driveways should be discouraged. Improvements should be made to establish clear-cut, identifiable driveways. In high traffic areas, such as the Lake Street and U.S. 2 intersection, if traffic conflicts become a problem, it may be necessary to limit access driveways to use for right turns in and right turns out only.

## **CONCLUSION**

Management of the development of the U.S. 2 corridor and improvement to its image will depend upon the action of the City Commission, the Planning Commission, private developers and private property owners within the corridor. This plan should be seen as a guide for both the city's public and private decision-makers. Furthermore, it exists within the larger policy framework of the comprehensive plan. The U.S. 2 policy should be seen as a refinement of the broader comprehensive planning policies.



**MEMORANDUM TO:** City of Ironwood  
**FROM:** Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.  
**DATE:** June 1982  
**SUBJECT:** 5. ANNEXATION AND UTILITY EXTENSION POLICIES

### **INTRODUCTION**

Despite little growth in population in the Ironwood area, and actual population decline in the City of Ironwood, the number of households and dwelling units in the Ironwood area has increased. As discussed in Memo 3, virtually all of the increase in households occurred outside the city limits in the surrounding townships. As a result, the city has little influence on this new development, yet development surrounding the city influences the city and uses city services. Development outside the city's boundaries raises general questions about the city's relationship with its emerging neighbor and specific questions about annexation and the extension of utilities. This memorandum looks specifically at the issues of annexation and utility extensions as components of the city's relationship toward its generally rural neighboring townships. Questions about the purpose and fiscal impacts of annexation are explored as well as policies and principles for guiding utility system extensions.

### **ANNEXATION**

The City of Ironwood is faced with the need to establish an annexation policy. To date, it has steered away from annexation and toward a policy of providing urban services outside its borders on a fee basis. Not annexing new land has avoided political battles with its neighboring townships and land owners, as well as avoiding increasing the demand on city services. But no firm policy with regard to annexation has been established, and the question arises: Under what circumstances should the city consider accepting annexation requests or actively pursuing annexation of lands itself? Typically, a city considers annexing land when it begins to experience urban development and require urban services only available from the city or when little land exists within the city's boundaries to accommodate new urban growth. Annexation amounts to expanding the city and the area where city public urban services will be provided, since cities frequently tie the provision of urban services to areas outside their limits to the land owners' decision to join the city. This has not been the case in Ironwood. Services and annexation have not been tied together.



## Purpose of Annexation

From a planning perspective, annexation is not an end in itself. It is only one of many potential tools for implementing a community's broader growth management policies. It is a means of managing development change surrounding the city and providing basic urban services in an effective, efficient manner. By annexing land, the city can influence development patterns either by exercising direct control over the land or by influencing private development decisions with the city's intentions to annex or not to annex. It also makes it possible for the city to plan for and provide needed public facilities and services in an effective manner. Annexation is certainly not the only means of insuring public services are provided and sound development patterns occur. A township with a commitment to sound development policies, cooperative planning between the city and surrounding townships, utility extension policies, and other techniques can be used to influence development patterns in areas adjacent but outside the city. Special service districts, individually provided services, services provided by the township, or services provided by the city for a fee can be used to provide well planned public services to urban areas outside of the city. In the final analysis, annexation by itself only alters the jurisdiction responsible for the land, not the quality of planning related decisions. It is usually assumed that the established city is in a better position to provide services and manage development than townships. Townships with limited resources, little staff, and a rural focus are typically ill-equipped and ill-prepared for managing development or providing urban services. But this is not always the case, and as discussed above, other techniques besides annexation can be used to address the problems created by change.

## Fiscal Considerations

Along with the shift in jurisdictional responsibility from township to city comes the right to tax property. From a fiscal point of view, annexation is a method of expanding the city's tax base. Obviously, the demand for public services is also expanded through annexation. From a fiscal standpoint, the advisability of annexation depends upon whether the cost of the increased demand for services is met or exceeded by the revenues generated by the annexed property. More than just capturing new tax base, annexation is a means of including land on the city's tax rolls which is benefitting from the existence of the city, and using many of its facilities and services whether it is offically or legally part of the city or not. Urban development near but not inside the city exists almost solely because the city exists. The city provides the majority of employment opportunities, shopping facilities, medical facilities, educational facilities, parks, libraries, and other miscellaneous goods and services without which urban development outside of the city limits would probably never have developed. Public costs are involved in providing these goods and services whether they be public or private facilities. The cost of providing these facilities and serving the major private institutions in the city are reflected in the city's tax rates. Everybody within the city bears some portion of the burden of the costs of these services, while urban development outside of the city limits benefits from these services as well, but does not bear a portion of the cost. From a fiscal point of view, annexation should generate more than enough revenues to cover the added demand for services to be justifiable from the city's point of view.

In the Ironwood area, a significant amount of urban development or development not tied to rural occupations has occurred in the townships surrounding the city. In fact, in the face of declining city and county populations, Ironwood Township has



seen a slight increase in the last ten years. Population has been shifting from the city to the townships. Because of the problems in finding water in the rural areas, growth is naturally deterred by the expense and difficulties in getting water. To overcome this obstacle, city water has been provided to 280 Ironwood Township households and 100 Erwin Township households. The city has been following the policy of not attempting to influence development patterns outside its boundaries and providing public water at the expense of the townships and at water rates twice those within the city limits. The intent has been to avoid the hassles of trying to annex land, manage growth outside the city limits, and provide a full range of public services outside the city limits by making it possible for development to occur in these areas without significant involvement from the city, and yet still generating some revenue in excess of actual service costs in recognition of the debt this exurban growth has to the city as a whole.

This policy is effective from a fiscal standpoint as long as the revenues generated by the high water charges are sufficient to cover:

1. the cost of providing water to these households,
2. a reasonable portion of the cost of regional services such as library, parks provided by the city, and
3. some of the costs of the more expensive road systems serving regional shopping facilities and employment areas in the city which serve the region.

From a planning perspective, this policy does nothing to manage development patterns or insure cost-efficient growth. These concerns would need to be addressed through some other means, and if they are not addressed, then the city runs the risk of inheriting an inefficient and potentially trouble-riddled area in the future. In the future, the township may reach a point where it can no longer manage providing its own services and dealing with its own development or growth problems. It may be forced to seek annexation with the city. Extension of water to the township could have been used as a bargaining tool to insure carefully planned development in the township or as an enticement for annexation giving the city the control needed to insure a sound development pattern. The need for water would have enticed development to the city and potentially spurred a very compact development pattern relatively inexpensive to serve with public services. This option no longer exists because services have already been extended outside the city.

In 1981, the City of Ironwood sold \$31,090 worth of water to Ironwood Township and another \$15,264 of water to Erwin Township. This represented about 15 percent of the city's total water department budget. Considering that water rates outside of the city are double those within the city, Ironwood made a profit of about \$23,000 or 7 percent of the total water department's budget from the sale of water to Ironwood and Erwin townships. In comparison, if the 280 Ironwood households served with utilities were each valued at the average assessed value of Ironwood Township households (\$12,872), they would have generated \$90,823 in property taxes in addition to about \$15,000 in water charges. Erwin Township with an average assessed value per household of much less than Ironwood Township (\$7,390) would have generated \$18,624 in property tax in addition to about \$7,600 in water revenues. Clearly much more gross revenue is generated by taxing the property served with water rather than simply charging them double the standard water rate. One hundred nine thousand four hundred and forty-seven dollars in

property taxes would have been generated in 1981, plus \$22,167 in water charges for a grand total of \$131,614 compared to \$46,354 when the only revenue source is water charges. Obviously, annexation would have required the city to provide services in addition to water to the annexed property. Much of the new property taxes generated would have been needed to pay for these services. The question is how much of the potential revenue benefit would be eaten away?

It is very difficult to estimate the costs of providing public services to any particular household or development. The specific characteristics of the development in question, the people living in the facilities, the density, size and other aspects of the development dictate what the costs will be. Some costs are difficult to allocate because they are sporadically used. Police and fire services are examples of this type of service. Costs also will depend upon the need for public capital investments such as parks. Some of these major public improvements can be charged directly to the benefitting property owners thereby negating their potential impact on the community as a whole, others cannot. All in all, you would expect that the costs of providing services to residents outside of the existing city boundaries would be less than the costs of providing services within the city limits, since many major capital investments and services which would not have to be altered as a result of increasing the city's size already have been built and are being funded. One of a kind public facilities and services fall into this category, items such as the city hall, the library, public works facilities, and to some extent general city administration are examples. On the other hand, development in the potential annexation areas has occurred at much lower densities than in the existing city. More street and utility systems must be maintained per household in the potential annexation areas than in the existing city, thus increasing service costs. These added maintenance costs may counterbalance any savings from existing facilities.

Property taxes are a prime source of revenue for the city. The taxes each household pays can be seen as their bill for public services. Obviously, residential property taxes are not the only source of revenue, especially in an older established city such as Ironwood. State and federal funds contribute a major share of revenue, user charges generate substantial revenue, and nonresidential property pays a large share of total property taxes. Nevertheless, residential property taxes do reflect somewhat the costs of providing services within a city. It frequently is argued that residential property generates a disproportionate demand for services in comparison to the property tax revenue generated, and industrial or commercial development generates more tax dollars than public service costs. This suggests that annexation of residential property may create a fiscal drain on the city, increasing the demand for services much more than the resources to pay for them. In Ironwood, however, only 31.5 percent of the total cost of city services is paid for by property taxes. About 30 percent of service costs have been paid for from federal and state aids and 34 percent has been covered by user charges. This diminishes the importance of any differences between service demand and taxes generated by land use type. In 1981, households in Ironwood on the average paid about \$162 each in property taxes. In contrast, households in Ironwood Township paid only about \$63 and in Erwin Township they paid only about \$56. If Ironwood could provide services to the residents of the two townships as cheaply as the townships themselves do, the city would generate large sums of excess property taxes if they annexed the townships. Considering Ironwood's tax rate, the annexed property would pay many times the \$55 to \$65 per household they pay currently in the township. Even if the city's cost to provide services for each township were two to three times what the township is currently receiving in property tax, the

city would still stand to make a substantial net revenue gain from annexation. The Ironwood Township and Erwin Township households on the average are valued so much higher than the average Ironwood city household (see Table 5-1) that the average Ironwood Township household would pay twice as much taxes as the average city household (\$324 compared to \$162) and Erwin Township households, less highly assessed than Ironwood Township households, would generate \$24 more per household than the city or about \$186 per household.

As mentioned above, it is very difficult to estimate the potential cost of providing services to newly annexed land. Besides the imponderables of allocating and estimating costs, the city can influence the potential service costs through its decisions on exactly what level of service it will provide. Every nook and cranny of the city does not get exactly the same level of public services. For example, some areas are closer to the fire hall than others, the same is true with parks, libraries, police service, etc. Major streets get more attention than minor streets. Newly annexed areas, especially remote, sparsely developed areas, may not receive quite as high a level of service as the rest of the city, thereby reducing the potential cost impact of their inclusion in the city. Table 5-2 attempts to estimate the cost of providing services to the 380 households currently served by utilities and outside the city limits. The costs used for estimating purposes are based on the cost of providing services in Ironwood today. As indicated in Table 5-2, the annexed land would most likely generate more revenues than service costs. The relatively high value of property in the annexed area makes the surplus possible.

The estimated tax revenue surplus is comparable to the surplus revenue generated from special water charges for land outside the city, although there is the potential for the city to capture a greater surplus through annexation if the cost of service delivery in actuality turns out to be closer to the costs the townships themselves are incurring. It's estimated the city nets \$23,000 from its special water charges and could receive \$16,000 (see Table 5-2) in property taxes in excess of public service costs if it annexed the property it now serves with water only. The lack of an overwhelming fiscal difference between a service charge approach and annexation approach to its hinterlands gives the city the option to pursue either policy direction. The fiscal impact question becomes moot and the decision to pursue or not to pursue annexation centers on planning and service delivery issues.

The estimated potential surplus tax revenues are based on the estimated cost of providing public services to the newly annexed areas. Any significant difference in the actual cost of providing services from the estimated cost would significantly change the surplus revenue the city would gain from annexation. The estimates of tax surplus have been based in effect on a public service cost of \$783 per new household with 31.4 percent or \$246 of the total costs covered by property taxes. This is 50 percent more than the city is currently spending on its existing residents (\$162 per household) and 400 percent to 500 percent more than the townships are currently spending per household (\$62.85 in Ironwood Township and \$56.46 in Erwin Township). The cost estimates for providing public services (see Table 5-2) are probably generous. If the actual costs of providing services are anywhere near what the city is currently spending on existing households or what the townships themselves are spending, the city's potential gains from annexation would be much greater than the estimated \$16,000.

The potential revenues from taxes on annexed property suggest it would be fiscally advantageous for the city to annex at least part of Ironwood and/or Erwin townships. If it cost \$162 per household to provide services to the newly annexed

TABLE 5-1  
TOWNSHIP FISCAL CHARACTERISTICS<sup>1</sup>  
IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

	Ironwood Township	Erwin Township
Total Households	1,229	224
Households Served by Utilities	280	100
Total Assessed Value	\$22,420,485	\$2,413,100
Residential Assessed Value	\$15,819,425	\$1,655,450
Assessed Value per Household	\$12,872	\$7,390
Mill Rate	4.883	7.640
Property Taxes per Household:		
A. Local Mill Rate	\$62.85	\$56.46
B. City Mill Rate <sup>2</sup>	\$324.00	\$186.00
Property Taxes for Utility Served Households:		
A. Local Mill Rate	\$17,599	\$5,646
B. City Mill Rate <sup>1</sup>	\$90,823	\$18,624
Water Revenues	\$31,090 <sup>3</sup>	\$15,264

<sup>1</sup> All data based on 1981 figures.

<sup>2</sup> City of Ironwood mill rate is 25.20; average city household assessed value is \$6,444 and average property taxes are \$162.40.

<sup>3</sup> This is total water revenues, residential water revenues, amount to \$29,070.

TABLE 5-2  
 POTENTIAL SERVICE COSTS TO ANNEXED LAND  
 IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Service Category	Unit of Measure	Service <sup>1</sup> Cost Per Unit	Number of Units	Total Cost
General City Government	\$/HH <sup>2</sup>	\$57	380	\$ 21,660
Other General Government	\$/HH <sup>2</sup>	\$52	380	19,760
Public Safety	\$/ \$1000 A.V.	\$17		73,834
Public Works	\$/Mile of Street	\$1388		10,589
Sanitation Department	\$/HH <sup>2</sup>	\$50	380	19,000
Enterprises & Utilities	\$/HH <sup>2</sup>	\$12	380	4,560
Recreation & Culture	\$/HH <sup>2</sup>	\$21	380	7,980
Urban Development & Housing	\$/HH <sup>2</sup>	\$1	380	380
Miscellaneous	\$/HH <sup>2</sup>	\$63	380	23,940
Roads & Streets	\$/Mile of Street	\$10,418		79,477
Water & Sewer Utility	\$/HH <sup>2</sup>	\$96	380	36,480
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$297,660</b>
Percent of Costs Typically Covered by Property Taxes (31.4%)				\$ 93,445
Potential Property Tax Revenue				\$109,447
Net Benefit or (Deficit)				\$+16,002

<sup>1</sup> Base on cost per unit expended by Ironwood in Ironwood.

<sup>2</sup> Many of these measures tend to overestimate the cost of additional services demanded by newly annexed land. Many services would not be increased as a result of annexed land. Additional costs for the Memorial Building would not be induced by annexation, for instance. Also, sanitation costs don't fall solely on residential property. Furthermore, some additional service costs for services, such as recreation and culture, would depend on whether additional parks or other facilities were expanded as a result of annexation. If they aren't, no increase in cost would be anticipated.

<sup>3</sup> Miles of street estimated based on typical residential densities in the townships.

areas (the amount the average Ironwood city household pays in taxes today), Ironwood would receive a net gain in revenue of \$58,560 from annexing the 380 households currently served with water by the city.

### **Policy**

In the long run, as development occurs adjacent to the city, it is very likely that portions of the surrounding townships will eventually become part of the city. The city is the best equipped governmental unit for managing growth and providing urban services. The townships are not well-equipped for meeting urban service demands, and it would be inappropriate and duplicative for them to develop the capability to meet these needs. While the need for services is relatively low and the area is quite rural, the provision of services for a fee by the city may be an appropriate interim approach. But as development becomes more truly urban, annexation is probably more appropriate. Delivery of all services, or even several services on a fee basis, may be cumbersome and expensive for the township area. Furthermore, their lack of political representation at the city may be intolerable. Full assimilation with the city would avoid this situation. During the interim period, careful planning and development management will be critical to insure the land for future annexation is developed in a way compatible with the city and capable of being provided with urban services efficiently.

Pursuing a policy of annexation and tying it to a policy of extending utilities only within the city limits would give the city a great deal of control over development patterns in the area also. Pursuit of this policy is not without its drawbacks. Annexations will not come easily and the newly annexed land will bring with it its share of city management and planning headaches. It may be that the headaches involved with insuring sound development occurs in the first place are much less than the headaches of trying to correct earlier mistakes further down the line.

### **UTILITY EXTENSIONS**

Water systems and sanitary sewer systems are among the basic services provided by any city. A good water supply and some way of handling wastes are fundamental requirements for any development to take place. Urban development commonly handles these basic needs with a centralized system of water production and distribution, and sewage collection and treatment. In rural areas or semi-urban areas, these basic needs are the responsibility of the individual property owner. Geology in the Ironwood area has made it difficult for these basic needs to be met on an individual basis. The unpredictability of ground water depths and locations makes drilling a well a very speculative business. Poor soils for accommodating drain fields makes individual on-site septic sewage treatment systems difficult to use and prone to pollute ground water. These conditions have made public utilities, in particular water, much more crucial for development. It gives the organization or individual controlling water and sewage treatment systems much more potential influence over development patterns in the area than they would otherwise have. Since Ironwood is the primary provider of water and sewage treatment, Ironwood is faced with the question of under what conditions should it extend utilities? In particular, the question arises: should utilities be extended to the ski hills?

The potential effect of utility system extension upon development makes it imperative for utility extension policy to be considered within the broader context of general development policies and economic development policies. The willingness to provide utilities can spur growth and affect the economic vitality of the

area. Without this broader context, the question of when and where to extend utilities is simply one of physical feasibility and cost effectiveness. As long as the extension is physically possible and a method of paying for the improvement can be worked out, the improvement could move ahead.

The city's water system has already been extended to serve quite a large area outside of the city proper, including the City of Hurley. The location of the city's well fields more than three miles north of the city limits makes it possible for water to be extended to a very large area, including potentially the Powderhorn ski area.

The sanitary sewer system situation is much different. Generally, only the city is served by the sanitary sewer system. The natural terrain of the area and the location of the sewage treatment plant are detriments to the extension of the sewage collection systems north of the city limits toward the well fields. The land slopes north, away from the sewage treatment plant north of the city making lift stations necessary to handle sewage generated in this area if utility lines were extended.

The city's utility extension policy appears to have been the extension of utilities upon request at the expense of those requesting the service and without any overall development plan. Each utility system has been dealt with independently of the other. Extension of water without sewer can lead to problems. It makes it possible for people with serious and potentially chronic septic system problems to avoid correcting their septic systems. Failing septic systems polluting local ground water do not become as immediate a problem to local property owners when they're not relying upon their well as their source of water. Extension of both utilities together insures that the development spurred by providing public water does not lead to overtaxing the land's ability to handle wastes.

It may be appropriate for the city to adopt a utility extension policy which reflects an overall development policy for the area. Ideally, this policy would be one developed in conjunction with the affected townships and with their support. Certainly they stand to benefit as much from a well planned and efficiently developed community as does the city whether the lands developed are eventually annexed by the city or always remain part of the township. A sound policy would include:

1. No extension of water utilities without extension of sanitary sewer.
2. Extension of utilities should only occur in areas where development densities will be sufficient to warrant the investment.
3. Extension of utilities should correspond with an overall development policy and only should occur in areas where urban scale development is desired. The most appropriate location for this type of development would appear to be the areas of Ironwood Township directly north of the city's northern boundary. The northernmost reach of this potential utility extension district should be established so that inappropriate types of development could be discouraged from this area, and so property owners would have a general understanding of whether their land would ultimately be served with utilities or not. The ridge line which extends east-west through Mount Zion north of the city limits would appear to be a good general location for that dividing line.

4. Since water alone has already been extended to a large area outside the city, it may find it very difficult not to continue extensions of water outside of the areas immediately adjacent to the city. Furthermore, there is likely to be a continued strong interest in rural home sites. The city should only reluctantly provide water to these areas, and while parallel extension of sewage lines may be inappropriate, very stringent on-site sewage treatment requirements and standards should be applied. It may even be appropriate to pursue package sewage treatment systems or require klivas multrum sewage treatment systems in these rural areas to insure protection of ground water supplies.
5. The ski hills are a unique situation. They are vital to the economic vitality of the area and their location is fixed by the natural features of the region. Water should be extended to these areas to insure their continued prosperity. In exchange, plans should be required from each ski hill operation illustrating how they would develop their area and how they would meet their sewage treatment needs.
6. The city should consider negotiating with the townships an agreement to extend utilities to areas close to the city in exchange for not serving development along existing water lines in more remote parts of the township.





The purpose of the C-2 Downtown Commercial district is to accommodate general shopping, merchandising, and professional activities of the community. Ironwood's central business district also serves as a regional commercial center. Permitted uses in this district could include commercial recreation, hospitals, hotel and motel, offices and medical centers, retail trade, governmental buildings such as city hall, police station and fire station, wholesale business, movie theaters, restaurants, cafes and supper clubs, passenger transportation terminal, drive-in business, clubs, lodges, automobile service stations, utility lines and necessary appurtenant structures, car wash, and dwelling units. Conditional uses might include on-sale liquor establishment, freight transportation terminal, and industry such as a printing company that requires direct contact with the public for sales.

Because of the emphasis placed on the promotion of tourism as a means of boosting Ironwood's economy, control of development in the C-3 Highway Commercial district is of particular importance. In addition to those uses permitted in the ordinance (motels, motor courts, restaurants, amusement centers, recreation facilities, outdoor advertising), gasoline service stations and gift shops would be appropriate. The adoption of specific performance standards to address such issues as landscaping and signage would be beneficial in controlling the visual appearance of this district. Maintaining a quality environment along U.S. Highway 2 would make it a more attractive place for travelers to stop and visit.

### **Industrial District**

Ironwood's zoning ordinance currently has provisions for a light and a heavy industrial district. However, the uses and requirements listed for each of these districts in the ordinance does not support a differentiation between them. Generally, light industrial districts are designated to accommodate business and light manufacturing uses. General or heavy industrial districts include uses which require isolation from residential and commercial use. It is recommended that Ironwood adopt specific uses for each industrial district on this basis, allowing uses which would best suit the community's need for industrial expansion. It would be desirable to establish specific performance standards for industrial development which would address noise, dust, glare, odor, vibration, fire hazards, air pollution and potential amounts of waste material created. Other standards could be added as needed. While federal and state regulations address many of these performance issues, Ironwood may wish to establish somewhat tougher standards for light industrial districts or for evaluating the compatibility of industrial development adjacent to residential development.

### **Off-Street Parking Requirements**

The issue of off-street parking requirements has been receiving increasing attention from municipalities. Inadequate off-street parking leads to increased congestion and traffic interference on the street, especially streets of heavy travel.

The off-street parking requirements in Ironwood's zoning ordinance are vague and require updating. As the city adopts more specific permitted and conditional uses for each of its zoned districts, off-street parking requirements should be developed which apply to each of the allowed uses. Typical off-street parking requirements are listed in Table 6-3.

TABLE 6-3  
 TYPICAL PARKING DEMAND BY LAND USE TYPE  
 IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Land Use Type	Parking Demand (Parking Spaces Per Unit of Measure)
Multi-family Housing	1.25/dwelling unit
Office Building	4.0/1,000 square feet of office
Convenience Shopping Facilities (Grocery Stores, Drug Stores, etc.)	4.0 to 7.0/1,000 square feet of store
Comparison Shopping Facilities (Shopping Centers, Department Stores)	4.0 to 5.5/1,000 square feet of store
Hotel/Motel	1.15/room
Industrial	2.8/1,000 square feet of building or 1/employee

Of particular concern to the City of Ironwood is parking in the downtown area and along U.S. Highway 2. The Downtown Development Program prepared previously outlines appropriate parking system management policies and techniques for downtown. The key feature ingredient to effective, efficient downtown parking is management of the parking supply as a system. It is recommended that provisions for such a parking authority or some other parking management mechanism be adopted in Ironwood's zoning ordinance as part of requirements in the C-2 commercial district.

The adoption of stricter off-street parking requirements in the C-3 Highway Commercial zone will lessen the potential for traffic problems along the U.S. Highway 2 corridor as its use continues to expand.

### **Planned Unit Development Ordinance**

Ironwood may wish to consider inclusion of a planned unit development (PUD) ordinance in their zoning text. A PUD ordinance is used by communities to allow developers of large areas to mix different types of land uses, to vary zoning standards to accommodate innovative techniques, and to develop the project over a multi-year period. A PUD may integrate various types of housing (multi-family, single family, duplexes, etc.) or mix land uses such as offices, commercial and residential. It is not intended to bypass traditional zoning, but to provide an alternative for innovative design, preservation of environmentally sensitive lands, provide housing for low and moderate income groups, or other desired goals.

### **Subdivision Ordinance**

Subdivision regulations are locally adopted measures governing the process of converting land into building sites. Such measures normally require developers to submit plans for their proposed subdivisions to the Planning Commission for approval before they can make improvements or divide and sell their land. Planning Commission approval is based upon compliance of the proposed subdivision with development standards set forth in the Subdivision Control Ordinance.

Subdivision regulations serve a wide range of purposes. In general, their objectives are:

- to uphold local health standards by insuring that new residential developments have a safe water supply and wastewater disposal system, and that they are properly drained
- to assure safe design and proper construction of new streets, utilities, and drainage systems, as well as to provide a record of underground utilities
- to insure the provision of water systems of adequate size and pressure for fire-fighting purposes and streets of correct design to allow for maneuvering of emergency vehicles
- to obtain school and recreation area sites needed to serve the residents of new neighborhoods
- to provide a means for local officials to coordinate the otherwise unrelated plans of a great many individual developers.

Although Ironwood does not show a great potential for growth in the next decade, it is safe to assume that the city will expand in the future with development most likely taking place on the fringe of the city. A sound subdivision ordinance can be used to control such growth.

### **Administrative Procedures**

The administration of the city zoning ordinance is critical to its effectiveness as an implementation tool for the city.

Clear, consistent procedures should be followed when administering requests for building permits, rezoning, zoning variances, or special exceptions. The city staff and public officials, especially the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals, should be well versed in the procedures and purposes behind each administrative procedure. Without a solid understanding and consistent application of these procedures, the city will have little chance to implement its community development goals and plans.

Related to the need for following clear and consistent procedures in the application of city ordinances is the need to provide a summary of these administrative steps to interested parties so that property owners, developers and any other concerned citizens will know exactly what procedures will be followed for any given request. A very effective means of accomplishing this is to provide small brochures or fliers diagraming the key steps and requirements for each of the basic ordinance procedures. While "short cuts" may be tempting in certain cases, they undermine the intent of the ordinance and established procedure, which is to provide fair and equal treatment for all.

Each of the decisions the Board of Zoning Appeals, City Commission and Planning Commission make has an impact on the quality of the community and implementation of the comprehensive plan. The ability to make sound decisions is enhanced if these decisions are informed decisions. The comprehensive plan is a tool to provide information and guidance in making these decisions. Staff reports on requests for special exceptions, variance, or rezoning would provide additional guidance for decision-makers. The staff could prepare a brief report highlighting the specific issues involved in a particular request. The intent would not be to create bureaucratic red tape to overwhelm city staff with paperwork or swamp public officials with reading material. Staff reports could be provided in a check list format which would indicate what specifically was being requested, whether the request was consistent with the comprehensive plan, location of the area in question, utility system capacity in the area, street access and traffic capacity issues surrounding land uses, special hazardous characteristics of a proposed change, and special natural features concerns. The American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service, has a report entitled "Writing Better Zoning Reports" that includes a format for case reports (Report #321, October 1976). Appropriate fees should be charged to cover the administrative cost involved in processing any of the various special requests, including the cost of adequate review by city staff and to discourage speculative or inappropriate requests.

### **Site Plan Review Requirements**

Generally, while development proposals which are consistent with the ongoing requirements need not be required to provide site plans for review by the City Council or Planning Commission, it may be desirable to require site plan review for

major development projects which have potential dramatic impacts on the community. Developments such as major retailing facilities, industrial complexes or very large residential subdivisions can have such a significant impact on the community as a whole and the area immediately surrounding the proposed development. Since the Ironwood Zoning Ordinance has very few performance standards to control the aspects of developments which can create problems for their neighbors, site plan review may be particularly pertinent. To overcome this deficiency, standards for items such as allowable site-generated noise, site access, site lighting, air quality, landscaping and visual screening should be added to the zoning ordinance. These issues become particularly important for industrial development and some intense commercial development.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM**

A capital improvements program is a schedule for expenditures on major capital improvements such as municipal buildings, police and fire stations, libraries, parks, utility construction, wastewater treatment plants, refuse disposal sites, road construction, parking facilities, fire fighting equipment, or other high cost, long-term community investments. The capital improvement program (CIP) takes the identified improvement needs of the community, prioritizes the needs, establishes the funding sources for the proposed projects, and finally, schedules the projects over a period of years.

The capital improvements program provides the link between the community's comprehensive planning process, which identifies community needs, and prepares schemes for their resolution, and the city's financial resources for implementing plans. The CIP is a key tool in the implementation of the comprehensive plan. It focuses the community's resources on the problems facing the community based on the community's priorities.

The capital improvements program makes it possible to plan ahead for major capital improvement needs and manages the city's investment in projects that will take a number of years to complete.

### **IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Ironwood is faced with the need to reinvest in and rehab many of its basic facilities and infrastructures. The major pressing projects identified so far include:

1. Utility system improvements. As discussed in the Development Framework Plan memo, the city's sanitary sewer system is in need of substantial rehabilitation. It has been estimated that improvements would cost \$1.5 million.
2. Wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater treatment plant has been identified as in need of replacement. Anticipated costs, \$5 million.
3. Street reconstruction. Fifty-one miles of the city's street system have been identified by the city's engineering department as in need of reconstruction. The cost of reconstruction depends on the specific street width, design load, and design characteristics, but typical reconstruction costs are \$50 to \$60 per linear foot of roadway. That would make the total cost of the street improvements \$13 million to \$16 million.

4. The Memorial Building. The Memorial Building is in need of rehabilitation to maximize its benefit to the community and effectiveness as an administration building.
5. Downtown improvements. The downtown revitalization plan identified a number of projects and improvements needed in the downtown which will require at least some city assistance.

Many more general and specific projects could be added to the list. The high cost of implementing even the projects listed above outstrips the city's resources for funding improvements.

Considering the mammoth number of potential projects every community could undertake, the critical component of a capital improvements program is setting priorities. The city must pick and choose between the endless list of potential projects those which are most important and worthy of funding. To prioritize the projects, consistent, carefully thought out criteria should be used. The criteria should reflect the community's goals and objectives as well as principles of wise resource use. For instance, at the top of Ironwood's list of comprehensive planning issues was the desire for additional economic development. Ironwood's capital improvement programming decisions should reflect the community's goal to achieve increased economic development activity. Improvement projects which will enhance the city's ability to attract or which will make it possible to accommodate specific new private investment should be rated higher than projects with little or no impact on employment opportunities and generation of tax base.

In addition to Ironwood's specific goals, some principles of resource use should be used to guide the city's investment decisions. In particular, projects should be evaluated on the basis of need. Each proposed project should be classified as one of the following:

- a. Critical. Projects in this category should be ones that are absolutely needed to maintain the health and welfare of the city's residents.
- b. Maintenance and cost saving improvements. Improvements in this category would include expenditures which would maintain the quality of an existing facility thereby avoiding more costly repairs later or saving operational costs. Also included in this category would be improvements which improve the efficiency and economical operation of the community's services and facilities.
- c. System expansion or general improvements. Needed improvements or extensions of basic services which neither are critically needed nor will result in greater efficiency or cost savings for the city.
- d. Desired improvements. Improvement projects which are desirable but not likely to be constructed without special funds, such as federal grants, and do not fall in any of the previous three categories.

The placing of each one of the proposed projects the city is considering at any given time into one of these categories will require extensive discussion by the City Commission, Planning Commission, and city staff. It is not a cut and dried technical process but rather revolves around the values of the community as expressed in the community's goals and objectives. Additional factors to consider

in prioritizing projects are outside funding opportunities, and the relative impact of the proposed improvement. Frequently the city is in the position to "leverage" funds from outside sources through a small expenditure of city funds. Federal matching grants and the like require the city to spend some of their own resources in order to trigger grant money. The city should consider the opportunities for these types of matching grants or small city investments which trigger private funds in evaluating proposed projects and setting priorities. A project which might not otherwise be considered appropriate to fund may be a wise project to undertake if substantial outside funds could be leveraged to execute the project.

Many public improvements will affect the climate for private investment within the community. This applies both to commercial/industrial areas as well as residential neighborhoods. In selecting projects and prioritizing expenditure on facilities, consideration should be given to the impacts of the improvements on the immediate area. What's more, it would be very desirable to coordinate and focus reinvestments to maximize their effect on neighborhood vitality and reinvestment climate. Scattering small improvements throughout the community frequently results in marginal improvement, whereas concentrating improvements within one neighborhood or one sector of the city can make a very noticeable difference which inspires investment within the specific community or area of the city where the public improvements are made, and also is a signal to the city as a whole that the problems of the city are being attacked and that reinvestment is truly taking place. Therefore, a locational focus should be applied to the prioritization of proposed capital improvement projects.

The sources of funds to address Ironwood's capital improvement needs can be divided into three major categories.

1. Local and recurring general purpose funding sources.
2. Special purpose local funding sources.
3. General and special purpose outside grants.

In the first category, local and recurring general purpose funding sources, all Ironwood's primary methods of raising revenue. They include general revenues from ad valorem taxes, federal revenue sharing, general obligation bonds, special assessment bonds, and city fees. These sources of funds have been the primary source of local capital improvements funds for the city and, with the current federal policies, they will be even more important as funding sources in the foreseeable future. General tax revenues get used primarily to meet operating expenses of the city and to pay the interest and principal payments on outstanding debt. But some portion of general tax revenues can be devoted to general improvements. A revolving fund to pay for capital improvements can be set up or the city can commit a portion of its resources annually to constructing new facilities. Currently, the city is following this course of action. The city has very little existing debt with only about \$26,000 worth of outstanding general obligation bonding debt. The city has been spending over a \$130,000 annually for street reconstruction. The source of funds include not only city taxes but recurring transportation needs from the State of Michigan. Because Ironwood has so little outstanding debt, only a very small fraction of its budget is devoted to debt redemption. Table 6-4 shows the City of Ironwood's expenditures per capita for basic city services, debt redemption, water utility, and sewer utility. For comparison, expenditures per capita for Minnesota cities with a population of 2,500



TABLE 6-4  
 EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA  
 IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Expenditure Categories	Ironwood		Cities of 2,500-10,000 Population <sup>1.</sup>	
	\$ Per Capita	% of Total	\$ Per Capita	% of Total
Operating Expenditures	\$295	76%	\$356	80%
Debt Redemption	\$3	1%	\$41	9%
Water Utility	\$53	14%	\$30	7%
Sewer Utility	\$35	9%	\$17	4%
Total	\$387	100%	\$446	100%

<sup>1.</sup>Data is for all cities in Minnesota with populations between 2,500 and 10,000.

outside sources, establish a schedule for improvement over a five-year period.

4. The capital improvements program must be updated annually, new projects added to the project list, completed projects removed, priorities reevaluated, and the new year added to the five-year schedule of improvements.

## **ACTION PLANS**

The comprehensive plan by definition attempts to address all of the problems and issues facing the community. The result can be an overwhelming array of solutions, plans, and policies, leaving the community frozen in indecision about how to begin. The comprehensive plan can be seen as marching orders for the community. They're work plans for the community's leaders' attack on community problems. To facilitate translation of the plans that the City Commission, Planning Commission and staff have developed with Barton-Aschman during the course of the nine months' comprehensive planning process, key first steps for initiating the comprehensive plan and its various components have been listed. These action steps should be seen as a working guide which the city will want to revise and add to as it sees fit. Furthermore, we would suggest that the Planning Commission and City Commission begin by reviewing the action steps listed and selecting those which it feels are most important to pursue first.

### **Action Steps**

- A. Adopt comprehensive plan
- B. Revise zoning ordinance
- C. Rezone U.S. 2 corridor
- D. Rezone potential multi-family housing sites
- E. Establish Planning Commission's duties
- F. Prepare comprehensive community improvement project list and create specific CIP
- G. Communicate with neighborhoods
- H. Contact neighboring townships and begin growth management and utility extension plan
- I. Initiate comprehensive street reconstruction program
- J. Acquire potential sites for multi-family housing
- K. Establish redevelopment district
- L. Initiate floodplain protection measures
- M. Improve parks
- N. Investigate placing powerlines underground
- O. Improve the Memorial Building
- P. Pursue ice arena
- Q. Seek solid waste disposal site
- R. Pursue reuse of Munsingwear and old school property
- S. Establish Douglas, Lake, McLeod as the entrances to downtown
- T. Pursue downtown development plans
- U. Provide downtown off-street parking
- V. Initiate storefront loan program
- W. Pursue Ironwood's iron mining museum and interpretive center
- X. Extend utilities to the ski hills
- Y. Initiate U.S. 2 corridor improvements, access consolidation, signing, lighting, entrance protection, landscaping
- Z. Support the regional economic development organization

# **Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.**

1610 South Sixth Street Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454

612-332-0421

**MEMORANDUM TO:** The City of Ironwood  
**FROM:** Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.  
**DATE:** July 1982  
**SUBJECT:** 6. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

## **INTRODUCTION**

Through previous memoranda, the basic components of the City of Ironwood -- natural features, urban systems and development patterns -- have been analyzed. Specific problems facing Ironwood have been identified with particular emphasis given to the issue of economic development. Policies for dealing with development and for directing public investments have been established. The usefulness of this material is now left with the residents and officials of the Ironwood area and their ability to translate these ideas into actions.

Everyone has a role to play in the implementation of the comprehensive plan. The City Commission, Planning Commission, Park Board, Economic Development Corporation, Downtown Development Corporation, city staff, the new regional economic development group, etc., each is responsible for implementing the plans which the city has developed during the course of the comprehensive planning process. Addressed below are tools for implementing the plans and policies (zoning ordinance improvements, capital improvement programming) and a listing of the key action steps.

## **ZONING ORDINANCE REVIEW**

One of the primary tools available to Ironwood for implementing its comprehensive plan is the city zoning ordinance. Zoning is probably the single most commonly used legal device available for implementing land use plans. In general, the principal objectives of zoning are:

- to protect and preserve desirable land uses
- to guide growth and development in such a manner that a safe, efficient, and desirable community will result



- to encourage the reuse of land in such a manner that redevelopment of obsolete or inefficient areas can be accomplished economically.

Review of Ironwood's zoning ordinance and procedures reveals a number of deficiencies and opportunities for improving its usefulness and effectiveness in carrying out Ironwood's comprehensive plan. Table 6-1 summarizes Ironwood's zoning ordinance requirements while Table 6-2 compares it to an optimal model ordinance and makes general recommendations for improvements. The following discussion elaborates on several key needs and suggests further recommendations for eliminating and overcoming problem areas. In addition, there will be a brief discussion of administrative procedures to bring the Planning Commission and city officials up to date with current administrative techniques.

### **Definitions**

The following suggested revisions for the terms "lot width," "lot depth" and junkyard are recommended.

- o Lot Width. The minimum required horizontal distance between the side lot lines measured at right angles to the lot depth, at the minimum building setback.
- o Lot Depth. The shortest horizontal distance between the front lot line and the rear lot line measured from a 90 degree angle from the street right-of-way within the lot boundaries.
- o Junkyard. Land or structures used for the storage or keeping of junk, including scrap metals, or for the dismantling or wrecking of automobiles or other vehicles or machinery, other than the storage of materials which is incidental or accessory to any business or industrial use on the same lot.

### **General Provisions**

The general provisions section of Ironwood's ordinance includes regulations which supplement other sections of the ordinance. This would be an appropriate section to address the issue of home occupations. Most communities allow home occupations to be carried on in residential dwellings. However, such use must be adequately controlled in order to prevent a change in the character of the neighborhood from occurring.

### **Commercial Districts**

Ironwood's zoning ordinance provides for three commercial districts, neighborhood, downtown and highway commercial, which are appropriate for serving the community's commercial needs. However, the district designations would be more meaningful if specific allowed and conditional uses were assigned to each. Permitted uses in the Neighborhood Shopping district could include convenience facilities such as grocery stores, drug stores, restaurants, and parking lots and structures. Automobile service stations and pubs could be allowed under special conditions. In this type of district, some communities have placed floor area restrictions on business establishments to insure that they do not exceed an appropriate neighborhood scale (for example, a maximum of 5,000 square feet on the ground floor).

PL 6-1  
WOOD EXISTING ZONING REGULATIONS  
IRONWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PART I: USES

PART 2: AREA, YARD, BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

Section	District	Uses Permitted As of Right	Uses Permitted Under Special Use Permit	Minimum Requirements					Maximum Requirements		
				Lot Size	Lot Width	Yard		Parking		Other	Building Height
						Front	Side				
5.38-5.39	A-1 Residence	Single-Family Residences	Churches, public and non-public schools, public libraries, public museums, public art galleries & public parks & playgrounds, funeral homes. (Any buildings located 20 ft. from lot lines subject to approval by the city commission.)	7,200 square feet	60 feet	25 feet	Two side yards of 4 feet each.	20 feet. For corner lots 14 feet. In measuring rear yard, an attached garage is considered an accessory building.	2 1/2 stories or 35 feet		
5.40-42	A-2 Apartment	Apartments, single & two-family residences.	Same as A-1	7,200 square feet plus 2800 square feet per unit for each unit over 2.	60 feet Applies for single-family use only.	25 feet	Two side yards of 4 feet each. Where corner lot, 10 feet.	20 feet. For corner lots 14 feet.	Where driveway access is through side yard, driveway residential use, 20 feet in length. Signs permitted if not more than 8 square feet and attached flat to building.	2 1/2 stories or 35 feet	
5.45	A-3 Mobile Home	Mobile Homes	Same as A-1	8,000 square feet	75 feet	25 feet	Two side yards of 10 feet each.	20 feet	One space per unit. Self-contained water and sewer connected to city system. Minimum size 10 feet by 50 feet		

Section	District	Uses Permitted As of Right	Uses Permitted Under Special Use Permit	Minimum Requirements				Maximum Requirements
				Lot Size	Lot Width	Yard	Parking	
5.50-53	C-1 Commercial Neighborhood Shopping	Businesses and services which are not detrimental to adjacent residential areas.		25 feet	None. If located next to a residence, 4 feet or less where 50% of block side yards are less.	4 feet. If building is over 16 feet in height, 14 feet or less where 50% floor of block rear yards are less.	One square foot parking space per square foot of usable floor area.	Business must be conducted in an enclosed bldg. (except uses such as service stations & parking). 2 1/2 stories or 35 feet
5.55-59	C-2 Downtown Commercial	Community-wide general shopping and professional activities. All uses in C-1 and C-3.	D-1 as an accessory use only when necessary to the C-2 principal use, under conditions defined by the board.	None	None	None	Business conducted in enclosed building with exceptions. Prohibited uses: 1. Billboards & signs more than 300 square feet per 50 feet frontage. 2. Signs projecting more than 3 feet over the required setback, etc. 3. Hazardous & noxious uses.	6 stories or 75 feet

All products for retail sale only.  
No more than 2 persons doing repair work or processing.  
Residential uses must meet A zone requirements.

Section	District	Uses Permitted As of Right	Uses Permitted Under Special Use Permit	Minimum Requirements			Maximum Requirements
				Lot Size	Lot Width	Yard	
				Front	Side	Rear	Building Height
5.6-5.63	C-3 Highway Commercial	Businesses which accommodate the needs of highway traffic and adjacent residential areas.		25 feet or less where 50% of the block frontage is less.	None. When adjoining street, 4 feet or less where 50% of the block side yards are less. Building must be 5 feet from lot line if not on lot line.		2 1/2 stories or 35 feet
							Business must be conducted in enclosed building with some exceptions. All products produced on site, sold at retail. Prohibited uses
							1 square foot parking space per 1 square foot usable floor area or 1 space per dwelling unit.
							1. Any prohibited in C-2. 2. Signs above 35 feet unless part of building. 3. Signs facing any A district. 4. Hazardous and noxious uses.
5.7-5.73	D-1 Light Industrial	Any business light industrial or manufacturing use not prohibited.		30 feet or 15% of average depth of lot, no less than 7 feet.	Two side yards of 30 feet each or 15% average depth where adjoining street same as front yard.	24 feet. Alley can be included in meeting rear yard requirements. (Requirement waived for railroad right-of-way.	80 feet
							Uses must be conducted within enclosed area with exception (loading & unloading on premises) Prohibited uses: 1. New dwelling units or conversion to dwelling unit. 2. Trailers. 3. Schools, hospitals, clinics and other human care facilities. 4. Hazardous and noxious uses.
							1 square foot per 2 square feet of usable floor area.

PART 1: USES

ART 2: AREA, YARD, BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

Section	District	Uses Permitted As of Right	Uses Permitted Under Special Use Permit	Minimum Requirements					Maximum Requirements
				Lot Size	Lot Width	Front	Side	Rear	
5.8-5.84	D-2 Heavy Industrial	Anything not prohibited.	Junk yard	Same as D-1	Same as D-1	Same as D-1	Same as D-1	Same as D-1	Same as D-1
									Prohibited uses same as D-1.
									1 square foot of parking space per 2 square feet of usable floor area or 1 space per employee (which ever is greatest).
5.90	E Open Area	Agriculture, forestry or similar use and only buildings incidental to such use.							Prohibited: Buildings which require water, sewer or other public utilities.



TABLE 6-2  
IRONWOOD, MICHIGAN, CODE EVALUATION

Feature	Optimum (Recommendations)	Ironwood	Rating	Comments
1. Organization and Format of the Ordinance	Arrangement that facilitates convenient use and administration.	Regulations appropriately arranged, fairly easy to find and apply.	Adequate	Some section headings could use rewording for clarification and consistency. May want to adopt a schedule of regulations for easy reference.
2. Definitions	All significant terms occurring in the ordinance should be precisely defined within the text.	Thirty words or phrases are defined.	Adequate	Clarify definitions for lot width and depth (14 d and e). Add definitions for Junkyard and Trailer.
3. Administration and Enforcement	Enforcing officer to be responsible for all daily enforcement, inspection, and issuance of all necessary certificates.  Board of Zoning Adjustment to hear and decide appeals and requests for variance.	Zoning ordinances enforced by the Building Inspector.  The City Commission acts as the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mayor is chairman of the Board and appoints vice-chairman. City Clerk is secretary. Reviews actions of the Building Inspector if appealed; decides application for variances.	Adequate	Procedure for approving conditional use permits or amendments could use further regulation.  May want to consider a Board of Appeals which is separate from the City Commission.
	Planning Commission to review and hold hearings on requests for amendments and make recommendations to the Council. Also, Commission to review, hold hearings and recommend, approve, or disapprove conditional use permits to the Council.  City Council reviews recommendations by Planning Commission on zoning amendments and conditional use permits and approves by 2/3 votes or disapproves.  FEES should relate to the direct administrative costs.	The Board approves or disapproves conditional use permits. The City Commission can amend zoning regulations and/or district boundaries by ordinance, in accordance with state law.		
4. Machinery for Ordinance Update	Enforcing Officers to be responsible for Annual Report to Planning Commission regarding status of text and maps. At least once every three (3) to five (5) years, Planning Commission to initiate complete review of zoning text and maps in conjunction with a review of the Comprehensive Plan.	No provisions are made for updating the zoning ordinance (with the exception that the City Commission may make amendments).	Inadequate	Suggest adoption of provisions similar to optimum recommendations.

TABLE 6-2 (Continued)

Feature	Optimum (Recommendations)	Ironwood	Rating	Comments
5. Violations and Penalties	Penalties to be prescribed for violations.	Same as optimum.	Adequate	
6. Appeals	The Board of Zoning Adjustment should have the power to hear and decide requests due to error of zoning administrator and because of undue hardship.	Same as optimum.	Adequate	
7. Variances	Board of Zoning Adjustment to hear and decide requests for variances where practical difficulties exist or the ordinance imposes undue hardship. Standards for consideration should be provided, and a list of allowable variance conditions should be clearly established.	Board of Zoning Appeals hears and decides requests for variances. No standards are provided.	Deficient	
8. Text Amendments and Map Changes	City Council authorized to amend text or map after public hearing and written recommendation from Planning Commission. Amendments may be initiated by any interested party.	City Commission authorizes amendments. No provision for hearing or recommendation from Planning Commission.	Deficient	
9. Conditional Use	Within each zoning district, a list of uses to be allowed only after review, public hearing and recommendation from the Planning Commission to the City Council who approves or disapproves. A comprehensive section within the ordinance should specify procedures and standards.	Conditional uses under the title "required conditions" are only listed for residential districts. Board of Zoning Appeals approves or disapproves. City Commission approves location after referral from Planning Commission. Procedures not specified.	Deficient	Adopt conditional uses for other districts where appropriate.
10. Nonconforming Buildings and Uses	Comprehensive provisions concerning: repairs, and alterations; additions and enlargements; restoration of damaged building; expansion of use discontinuances and/or changes of use.	Same as optimum.	Adequate	
11. Home Occupations	Precisely and appropriately defined and controlled so as to preclude nuisances should prohibit: signs or displays, commodities being sold on premise, non-domestic mechanical or electrical equipment. For better control, permit could be required.	Not addressed.	Inadequate	Adopt home occupation provisions to be addressed in the general provisions section of the ordinance.

TABLE 6-2 (Continued)

Feature	Optimum (Recommendations)	Ironwood	Rating	Comments
12. Community Unit Projects	<p>Allow all residential, commercial, and industrial planned developments, which grant certain premiums and flexibility to the developer in exchange for a degree of design control by the city. Flexibility should be offered both for density or intensity of use and types of land use allowed.</p> <p>Complete procedures and standards to be specified in the chapter on administration and enforcement.</p> <p>Planned developments to be considered as conditional uses within each district.</p>	<p>Not addressed.</p>	Inadequate	Ironwood may want to consider adoption of a planned unit development ordinance.
13. Sign Regulations	<p>Within each zoning district sign regulations as to: content, total area, projection lighting, height and spacing.</p> <p>Advertising signs and devices (as opposed to business identification signs) to be restricted to heavy commercial and heavy industrial districts.</p>	<p>Sign regulations are discussed only in districts A-2, C-2 and C-3.</p> <p>Advertising signs are restricted from A-2 district.</p>	Deficient	May want to adopt more comprehensive sign ordinance.
14. Annexation Procedure	The proper permanent zoning classification of all annexations should be decided and adopted coincident with the approval of the annexation.	Not addressed.	Deficient	Michigan state law allows that the existing zoning regulations pertaining to property being annexed remain valid for two years or until new regulations are adopted by the jurisdiction to which the property is annexed.
15. Off-Street Parking	Comprehensive schedule of required number of spaces per type of use based on building square footage plus complete design standards for lighting, surfacing, setbacks, size, access and screening.	General treatment of off-street parking requirements for each district with the exception of the C-2 district. Parking requirements need updating.	Deficient	Parking in the C-2 district should be addressed. Off-street parking requirements could be broken out as a separate section in the ordinance.
16. Off-Street Loading	Comprehensive provisions including: complete schedule of required number of loading berths based on type or intensity of use and amount of floor, access to loading area, screening, design and maintenance.	No off-street loading provisions with the exception of the required condition in the D-1 district that all loading and unloading done on premises.	Inadequate	

TABLE 6-2 (Continued)

Feature	Optimum (Recommendations)	Ironwood	Rating	Comments
17. Bulk Regulations	Bulk control by minimum lot area and width, yards and setbacks and floor area ratio or height limitations.	Same as optimum.	Adequate	Should be labeled "bulk regulations" or "area, yard, building requirements," instead of "required conditions."
18. Residence Districts	Appropriate number of districts distinguished by density, to accommodate desired population levels. Each district so designed as to protect residential character.	Three residential districts are established: one single-family, one multi-family, and one mobile home district.		A larger number of smaller multi-family districts may be more appropriate than the large A-2 district shown on the zoning map. Ironwood might want to consider the mobile home district as a floating zone. Need to adopt specific uses for each district.
19. Business District Regulations	Sufficient number of districts to accommodate every type of business or commercial activity in a proper location. Permitted and conditional use lists to be established on the basis of compatibility.	Three business districts, one for neighborhood commercial, downtown commercial and highway commercial use. There is no listing of specific permitted or conditional uses.	Deficient	Need to develop specific permitted and conditional uses for each district.
20. Industrial District Regulations	At least two (2) districts, one designed to accommodate "clean" industries requiring nuisance-free environment. Permitted activities to be controlled by definitive performance standards, or by listing of permitted uses established on the basis of normal performance standards.	Two industrial districts with similar performance standards and uses allowed. Uses not specifically spelled out.	Inadequate	Need to adopt specific allowable uses for each district. Need to differentiate between the two districts by varying the performance standards.
21. Performance Standards	Standards in all commercial and industrial districts to control landscaping, water, waste and storage design, to control noise, vibration, smoke and particulate matter, heat and glare, odors and noxious matter, heat and glare and control of unstable materials or materials which decompose by radiation or active to intense burning.	No specific standards. Noxious and hazardous uses are specifically prohibited in C-2 through D-2 districts.		May want to adopt standards similar to optimum recommendations.

TABLE 6-2 (Continued)

Feature	Optimum (Recommendations)	Ironwood	Rating	Comments
22. Zoning Map Land Use	Zoning map should be current and should reflect both growth strategies and desirable land use.	Reference to 1967 zoning map; it has been updated since.	Adequate	Change reference to most up-to-date map.
23. Subdivision Ordinance	<p>Subdivision regulations to specify design standards for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arrangement of streets and alleys</li> <li>2. Access to major streets</li> <li>3. Right-of-way and paving width for streets</li> <li>4. Street grades</li> <li>5. Vertical and horizontal curves</li> <li>6. Cul-de-sac or dead-end streets</li> <li>7. Easements</li> <li>8. Block design</li> <li>9. Lot size, shape and orientation</li> <li>10. Natural features</li> <li>11. Utilities</li> <li>12. Sidewalks</li> </ol> <p>Procedures for approval clearly stated.</p>	No subdivision ordinance.		Ironwood may want to adopt a subdivision ordinance.
24. Mobile Home Regulations	<p>Complete standards and procedures regulating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>administration permits</li> <li>inspection environment and open space requirements</li> <li>access parking vehicle and pedestrian systems utilities</li> <li>accessory uses</li> </ul> <p>to insure the character of the park and allow for a variety of housing types dispersed throughout the community.</p>	Administration and permits are discussed in separate chapter following zoning and planning chapter. Must comply with State Act 24.3. Site requirements are discussed under district A-3 of the zoning ordinance.	Adequate	