

CHAPTER 2:

Vision & Guiding Principles

The community vision statement is a critical component of the comprehensive plan. The vision seeks to describe how the community will look, feel, and function over the next 20 years. It is an over-arching framework that permeates the plan and informs supporting policy and strategy directions. In concert with the vision statement, the plan's guiding principles serve as a yardstick to measure the appropriateness and results of future initiatives. The guiding principles are a tool for future decision-making and help to define the character, values, and priorities of the Ironwood community.

The following are key characteristics of guiding principles:

- Orient the community to the **future**
- Require imagination, recognizing that the direction it sets for the community is **ambitious** and **aspirational**
- Look to **current conditions** and **community history** for clues to the appropriate future
- Identify what the community **desires** for itself based on shared understandings
- Serve as a tool for **evaluation** of proposals, projects, ideas, and future directions
- Provide an anchor during conflict, a way of finding **common ground** and **shared values**
- Become a basis for **coordination** and **cooperation**
- Offer a source of **energy** and **enthusiasm** for maintaining a commitment to the future of Ironwood

“Nurturing the tales of our past - Building new trails for our future”

Nestled in the wilds of Michigan and “big snow country,” Ironwood is a **YEAR-ROUND DESTINATION** that attracts residents and visitors alike. With **WORLD-CLASS RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** (from traditional activities like skiing and biking to emerging and innovative adventure sports); vibrant civic spaces and cultural institutions; thriving businesses; intriguing historical attractions; and a welcoming, safe, and collaborative atmosphere, Ironwood is a vibrant and unique small town where people come to enjoy the **QUALITY OF LIFE**.



Loosely translated as “strength of will” and “courage in the face of adversity,” the Finnish word “**SISU**” encapsulates the spirit of the Ironwood community. The ethos of “sisu” is evident in the stories of Ironwood’s past, from its early days as a mining town- to World War I where Ironwood residents gave their lives in service to this country. The same **RESILIENT SPIRIT** continues to drive Ironwood today, as community members work together to preserve and promote the prosperity, heritage, and beauty of the Ironwood community while forging **NEW PATHS**, uncovering **NEW OPPORTUNITIES**, and creating **NEW STORIES** for the future.

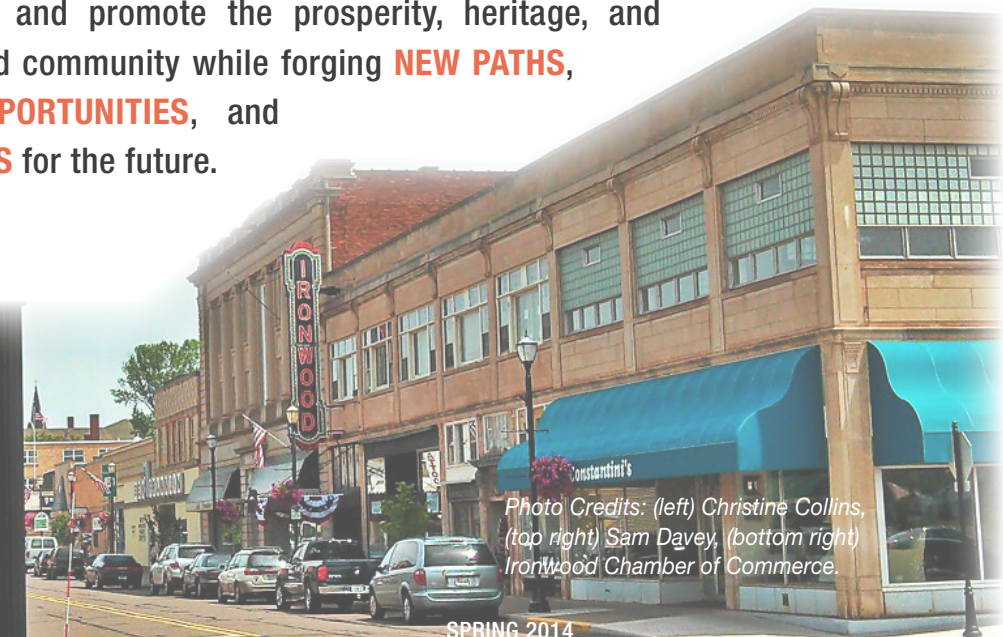


Photo Credits: (left) Christine Collins, (top right) Sam Davey, (bottom right) IronWood Chamber of Commerce.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Ironwood is...



A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

Ironwood maintains a friendly and inviting atmosphere through the maintenance and beautification of public spaces and infrastructure- parks, streets, sidewalks, trails, and civic institutions. Residents, businesses, and civic organizations share in the responsibility to promote the community's image through high quality service and hospitality. Ironwood is an "age-friendly" community that offers amenities and opportunities for individuals at all stages of life.



A CONNECTED/COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY

Ironwood is a community connected both within itself and to its surrounding municipalities, the region, and beyond. Ironwood benefits from strong community connections and technology infrastructure as well as a culture of volunteerism, mentorship, partnership, collaboration, and shared prosperity.

Photo Credits: (left) Sam Davey.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES (CONTINUED)

Ironwood is...



AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Ironwood is a destination for four-season recreation and outdoor amenities- and supports the ongoing development of events, businesses, and facilities that contribute to active and healthy lifestyles. Residents are known for being “active” in their recreational pursuits- such as biking, walking, skiing, snowmobiling, ATV riding- as well as “actively engaged” in civic life, volunteerism, and community development.



A GREAT DESTINATION

Ironwood is a regional, national, and global destination known for its natural resources and scenic beauty, recreational assets, arts and cultural institutions, great schools, forward-thinking leaders, and skilled and creative workforce. Truly a gateway to all that the Upper Peninsula has to offer, Ironwood is a hub of economic and cultural activity for the region.

*Photo Credits: (left) Sam Davey,
(right) Christine Collins,*

Ironwood is...



A RICH STORY

Ironwood is a community of stories with a rich heritage of hard work, service, family, and community. Community history is celebrated in the town's historic buildings and sites- and through institutions, events, and programs that make visible the many story lines, new and old, woven into the tapestry of the community life.



A THRIVING COMMUNITY

Ironwood is a place that cultivates creativity, entrepreneurship, and business innovation- and provides economic opportunity for residents of all ages. Ironwood leverages the strength of its educational institutions, business leaders and economic development entities, cultural institutions, and technological infrastructure- to create a supportive environment to grow new businesses, attract and expand existing businesses, and support those working in creative and innovative fields.

*Photo Credits: (left) Sharon Cekada/
Gannett Wisconsin Media, (right)
Historic Ironwood Theater*

