

CHAPTER 6:

Community Development

The Community Development strategies described in this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan focus on the following key themes emanating from the vision and guiding principles:

By promoting vibrant and welcoming neighborhoods, diverse housing options, and quality retail, services, and hospitality, the community development component of the Comprehensive Plan supports Ironwood's image as **A FRIENDLY COMMUNITY** that attracts people of all ages to live, work, and play.

As **A THRIVING COMMUNITY** Ironwood supports creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship; promotes the growth and livelihood of local businesses; and provides diverse career opportunities for residents of all ages.

As **A CONNECTED / COLLABORATIVE** and **ACTIVE COMMUNITY**, Ironwood harnesses the energies of various agencies, professionals, community groups, and engaged individuals to cooperatively address community challenges. A culture of collaboration, partnership, networking, and mentorship is expressed through community building activities and events, neighborhood cohesion, and the development of close-knit community ties.

Promoting key quality of life amenities (parks, schools, shopping, streets, and housing) as well as unique assets in outdoor recreation, arts and culture, and local history ensures that Ironwood is **A GREAT DESTINATION** for businesses, residents, and visitors. Ironwood celebrates the **RICH STORY** of its mining past and leverages local history as a unique attraction and driver for cultural tourism.

Attractive and friendly **NEIGHBORHOODS**, diverse and high quality **HOUSING** options, and a **CONNECTED** and **BUSINESS-FRIENDLY** environment make Ironwood a **THRIVING** community, a hub of economic activity, and place to call **HOME**.

OVERVIEW

“Community Development” is a broad term used to describe a range of activities and practices carried out by governmental and non-governmental groups, engaged citizens, and professionals to address community issues. In the context of this Plan, community development includes activities specifically related to **economic development** and **housing**. Such activities require buy-in, support, collaboration, and action on the part of local and regional actors, often working in concert with City government. Almost everyone has a role to play in community development, and collaboration and partnership are paramount. As such, **capacity building** and **community cohesion** are secondary issues addressed in this chapter.

The recommendations and strategies discussed in this chapter respond to long-standing and emerging trends and issues in the community:

- Declining population and particularly the loss of working age residents
- Perceived/actual limitations in job and retail diversity
- Changing regional economic trends and workforce demands
- Concerns for sustaining quality educational programs
- Emerging lifestyle trends around housing, [creative class](#) values, and active and healthy living
- Aging infrastructure and tired housing and neighborhoods

WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Improving **job opportunities** and **supporting and growing local businesses** were among the most common concerns raised in the public engagement process. In the community survey, “economic development, job creation, and expansion” was the highest ranking priority for future investment with 68% of respondents ranking it among their top three priorities. Respondents expressed a desire for more “**well-paying jobs**” and opportunities to attract and retain the younger generation of residents.

Community members also described **job and retail growth and diversity**, and in particular, more places to shop and eat, as critical to creating an attractive and thriving community. Some participants also raised concerns about the **quality of service and hospitality** in local businesses, citing inconsistent business hours and poor service as issues within some local establishments.

Many community members emphasized **quality of life improvements** (such as investment in infrastructure, parks, housing, retail, arts and culture, and recreation amenities) as an important strategy for attracting new businesses and residents, and promoting economic health.

Within the community survey, concerns about **housing** diversity and maintenance were raised, but not emphasized as highly as other issues like infrastructure and jobs. Within discussion groups and the community workshop, community members expressed greater concerns about housing quality, as well as a desire to see expanded options for rental and senior housing, as well as additional housing (lofts and live-work) in downtown.

Community members expressed mostly positive feelings about the **downtown** area and recent improvements (Depot Park, Ironwood Theater, DAP, etc.), but the prevailing sense was that much work is still to be done to ensure that downtown is a truly vibrant civic, retail, and cultural center. In the community survey, 63% of survey respondents ranked “improving existing downtown buildings” as “important” or “very important.” Residents expressed interest in the development of downtown housing options.

Arts and cultural institutions in the community are an important asset for the community and the region. Community members expressed support for further development of the local arts economy, building on assets like the DAP and Ironwood Theater, as well as the use of public art in community beautification.

Local history was also noted as a critical community asset and a draw for residents and tourists- as well as an important and unique part of the community’s identity.

WHAT WE’VE HEARD:

Job diversity and job growth are priorities, but we also need great streets, schools, and amenities to attract residents and businesses to the community.



Jobs, housing, and other quality of life concerns play a major role in individual and family decisions about where to live and work.

GOALS & POLICIES

GOAL 6.1 A THRIVING AND RESILIENT ECONOMY

Promote Ironwood as a great place for business, innovation, and commerce- and a community that provides diverse and sustainable economic opportunities for all.

Policy 6.1.1 Support and retain existing businesses and provide assistance for businesses looking to grow, start up, or relocate in Ironwood.

Policy 6.1.2 Invest in quality of life amenities like housing, parks, trails and open spaces, as well as community programs and events that contribute to the attractiveness of the Ironwood community to prospective businesses and residents.

Policy 6.1.3 Encourage development of diverse retail and services that support local and regional needs.

Policy 6.1.4 Promote a high standard of service and hospitality for local businesses.

Policy 6.1.5 Establish and preserve partnerships and coordination with local, regional, and state organizations that support economic development activities.

Policy 6.1.6 Promote and preserve unique local amenities and drivers for regional tourism, including arts and culture, outdoor recreation, and historic assets.

Policy 6.1.7 Promote downtown as a hub of economic activity within the city and region and a unique destination for retail and services.

Policy 6.1.8 Collaborate with educational institutions, economic development entities, and local businesses to address industry workforce needs and create career and educational pathways for residents of all ages.

Policy 6.1.9 Encourage and sustain K-12 educational institutions in pursuit of top quality educational programs and facilities.

Policy 6.1.10 Collaborate with educational institutions, economic development entities, business leaders, and civic leaders to help grow and foster community leaders who will help lead Ironwood and the community into the future.

GOAL 6.2 DIVERSE AND QUALITY HOUSING

Develop a diverse and high quality housing stock that meets the needs of residents at all stages of life and at various income levels.

Policy 6.2.1 Encourage development of new housing to fill gaps in the housing market.

Policy 6.2.2 Expand downtown housing options.

Policy 6.2.3 Support the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing properties.

Policy 6.2.4 Collaborate with community partners to support housing development and rehabilitation.

Policy 6.2.5 Encourage high quality design and use of durable materials in home construction and rehabilitation.

Policy 6.2.6 Maintain quality of historic housing stock.

GOAL 6.3 VIBRANT AND COHESIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

Cultivate vibrant and cohesive residential neighborhoods that support the image of Ironwood as a welcoming and connected community.

Policy 6.3.1 Encourage community and neighborhood cohesion, gatherings, and interaction.

Policy 6.3.2 Building capacity at the neighborhood level for community improvement projects.

Policy 6.3.3 Reinforce neighborhood identity and history.

Policy 6.3.4 Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing neighborhoods.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

The goals and policies on this page support the vision and guiding principles of the plan and should be used to inform future decision-making and action.

Goals: are broad statements that describe a desired outcome or end-state. Goals are often long-term in scope.

Policies: describe the general course of action or way in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve a stated goal or objective. Policies speak to underlying values, context, or principles, and are often place-specific.

FRAMING CONCEPTS



Quality of life improvements related to infrastructure, parks, outdoor recreation, housing, retail, and arts and culture are an essential part of Ironwood's economic development strategy

RELATED STRATEGIES:

*Strategy 6.1:
Invest in Quality of Life*

*Strategy 6.2:
Develop a Business-Supportive Zoning and Regulatory Environment*

*Strategy 6.3:
Economic Gardening*

SEE P. 6-8 FOR MORE ON THE STRATEGIES LISTED ABOVE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development, job growth, and business retention/attraction were the leading issues raised in Ironwood's 1982 Comprehensive Plan and continue to be principal concerns for the community today. The following economic development concepts inform the strategies recommended at the end of this chapter.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

A growing body of research into economic trends and economic development strategy suggests that the traditional models of business attraction may not be suitable, successful, and sustainable for many communities, particularly in a time of constrained public resources.

Going forward, the City of Ironwood should consider financial incentives, tax breaks, and land subsidies for business attraction on a case by case basis, but the primary engines for business attraction should be: to provide clear land use and development guidance that encourages diverse and desirable industrial and business uses to locate in the community; and to invest in public infrastructure improvements and amenities that will enhance the community's image and attractiveness to prospective businesses, entrepreneurs, and employees.

Recent studies (in both the [state](#) and [region](#)) about the locational preferences of recent college graduates show that increasingly, young people are choosing where to live based on lifestyle and quality of life considerations, rather than job opportunities or pay. Similarly, businesses, particularly those within the knowledge economy, have fewer physical or resource requirements that dictate location within a particular city or region; rather, businesses are looking for places to locate that will provide a high quality of life for their employees and appealing work environment.

In this regard, the broader **Quality of life improvements** recommended in this plan (such as investment in infrastructure, schools, parks, housing, retail, arts and culture, and recreational amenities) are critical to the City's business attraction efforts.

GROWING NEW JOBS & BUSINESSES

The Comprehensive Plan recommends an "Economic Gardening" approach to growing jobs and businesses in Ironwood to complement the quality of life and regulatory recommendations described above. [Economic gardening](#) is an approach to economic development that seeks to grow the local economy from within by promoting local entrepreneurship and small and local business development. By promoting diversity of local industries and widespread prosperity, economic gardening can be a more cost-effective and sustainable strategy for economic development than providing incentives to attract large outside companies to the community.

An underlying principle of economic gardening is to work with what you have in the community to build new opportunities. To this end, the City should provide greater support for existing businesses and entrepreneurs, as well as home-based businesses and cottage industries: Individuals who work from home as freelancers, consultants, or remote employees, and other individuals making or selling products from home.

In general, economic gardening strategies should seek to connect existing businesses and entrepreneurs to resources that will help them grow and thrive; leverage the expertise of existing successful businesses in the community; encourage the development of essential infrastructure and facilities for business development; provide businesses with needed information and training; and reduce the barriers to starting and operating a business.

Benefits of Economic Gardening include:

- Encourages a more resilient local economy by developing a diversity of local businesses.
- Capitalizes on a growing segment of the national economy (i.e. small independent businesses, entrepreneurs, and self-employed individuals).
- Expands opportunities for households to earn additional income through remote employment and home businesses; and potentially provides flexibility for families with children in managing childcare needs.
- Attracts, retains, and cultivates a creative, educated workforce.
- Supports home businesses that are natural business incubators; as home businesses grow, owners are likely to relocate within their own community.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & INDUSTRY TRENDS

The City should leverage educational institutions in the community, (including K-12 schools and the community college) as strategic partners to help create new educational pathways for Ironwood residents and to foster new businesses, career opportunities, and entrepreneurship in the community. The City should work with educational institutions and economic development entities to address the “skills mismatch,” to ensure that local workers can obtain desirable jobs in high growth and high need employment sectors.

The 2013 [State of the Workforce Report](#) identified as high need employment sectors for the Upper Peninsula region:

- Education and health services; demand for healthcare workers (certified nurse aids, home care workers, nurses, and physicians) will continue to grow as the population ages.
- High-skill manufacturing; the decline of low-skill jobs (from mining and timber) has contributed to a skills gap in the workforce. Additional training and targeting of skill sets is necessary to enable low-skill workers to transition to the higher-paying jobs.

Tourism and Hospitality continues to be an important economic driver for the region. Service and hospitality jobs are necessary to support this industry and can provide desirable employment options for students, retirees, and others seeking part-time/seasonal employment. However, over-reliance on these jobs at the expense of a diversified economy can limit economic opportunity and mobility for residents.

Potential future expansion of mining and lumber operations in the vicinity of Ironwood could support a large number of high paying and relatively low-skill jobs. If such operations re-open in the region, the City should maintain its focus on economic gardening strategies and promoting a diversified economy and quality of life improvements to ensure long-term sustainability of economic gains.

DOWNTOWN

The City should continue to promote downtown as a hub of economic and cultural activity within the city and region and a unique mixed use destination. Activating and beautifying the downtown streetscape and storefronts supports economic activity by creating an attractive environment for visitors, residents, and businesses. The City should support ongoing downtown revitalization efforts that encourage downtown redevelopment; expand housing options; promote downtown businesses and cultural and civic institutions; and activate and improve the quality and character of the public realm.

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

The City should continue to cultivate unique local assets as drivers for tourism and amenities for residents and businesses.

Arts and Culture:

- Build on existing assets such as the Downtown Art Place (DAP), Ironwood Theater, local artists/artisans.
- Integrate public art into streetscape design, public parks, infrastructure, wayfinding, retail spaces, and gateway areas.
- Promote Ironwood as a regional hub and destination for arts and cultural activities, events, and institutions.

Local History

- Ensure preservation and restoration of historic sites and structures within the community.
- Develop historic interpretation, public art, events, and activities that tell the story of Ironwood’s mining past.

Outdoor Recreation

- Partner with existing nearby recreation destinations to bring in visitors to Ironwood and the region.
- Coordinate with local businesses such as hotels and restaurants to develop promotions and packages for recreational tourists.

Other efforts should be made to encourage residents to shop locally (both within downtown and along Highway 2) and to promote high standards for service and hospitality in all Ironwood businesses. Such initiatives should be coordinated with broader local and regional tourism promotion and community marketing efforts.

LOCAL & REGIONAL COORDINATION

A myriad of groups and individuals are working to support economic development in Ironwood, running the gamut from tourism-oriented activities and promotion of local commerce, arts, and culture; to social networking and events; to support for industrial and business development and recruitment (see [p. A-19 of Appendix A: Ironwood Fact Book](#) for a detailed inventory of local and regional economic development entities). Increased coordination of these entities and efforts is necessary to ensure that economic development is implemented efficiently and effectively; to provide a full complement of services and resources that support local business and industry; to reduce duplication of efforts; and to reduce barriers to entry for businesses looking to locate and grow within the city.



RELATED STRATEGIES:

*Strategy 6.4
Develop training/vocational programs to fill workforce needs*

*Strategy 6.5
Enhance Downtown Businesses & Retail Environment*

*Strategy 6.6
Market the Community*

*Strategy 6.7:
Encourage Events & Festivals*

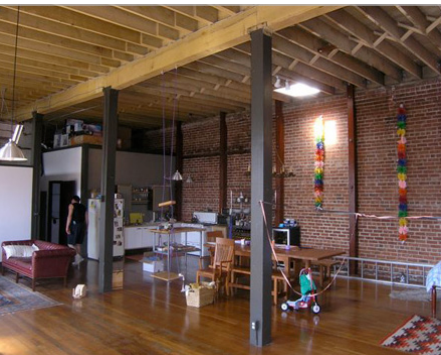
*Strategy 6.8
Develop Local Assets*

SEE P. 6-8 FOR MORE ON THE STRATEGIES LISTED ABOVE

FRAMING CONCEPTS



Market local housing assets



Introduce new housing types such as lofts and live-work spaces that may appeal to millennials and retirees

RELATED STRATEGIES:

*Strategy 6.10:
Encourage Housing
Rehabilitation*

*Strategy 6.11
Support Infill &
Redevelopment*

SEE P. 6-10 FOR MORE ON
THE STRATEGIES LISTED ABOVE

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

The quality of housing options in a community is often a decisive factor for individuals and families in choosing where to live. Providing high quality housing options that meet diverse needs in the community will require efforts to maintain and upgrade the existing housing stock, to market existing assets, and to pursue targeted infill and redevelopment. The larger goal is to develop Ironwood not only as a community of great homes, but a community of great neighborhoods. This requires coordination and collaboration between public agencies, private developers, community groups, and individual homeowners/tenants, as well as improved cohesion and capacity for action at the neighborhood level.

The following housing and neighborhood development concepts inform the strategies recommended at the end of this chapter (see [p. 6-8](#) for a listing of all Community Development strategies).

MAINTENANCE AND REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing housing stock helps to maintain aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods and supports preservation of the fabric of Ironwood's historic neighborhoods. However, individual homeowners may find such improvements to be costly and time consuming, and may lack the skills or ability to complete these projects on their own. City programs should seek to remove barriers to rehabilitation and maintenance by providing financial and technical support for homeowners who might want to pursue home and property improvements, including historic preservation and restoration.

INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment is often a challenging and complicated tasks that requires a high level of collaboration between the City, property owners, other agencies, and ultimately the developer. The City stands to fulfill a number of different roles vis a vis redevelopment, serving as a potential broker, facilitator, or developer/partner. See [p. 3-14](#) in the Land Use chapter for more details on infill and redevelopment opportunity sites and the role of City government. The City may consider employing a number of programmatic strategies to support infill and redevelopment efforts, including:

- Developing a deeper understand of the housing market and needs, and working with developers to target market gaps.

- Actively marketing redevelopment opportunities through print and online media, as well as through community partners (realtors and other economic development entities)
- Working with partners to accomplish redevelopment; this may include demonstration and possibly subsidized projects to “test” market potential for new housing types.
- Marketing resources (financial and technical) to support housing redevelopment, infill, and historic preservation and restoration.
- Pursuing new strategies to encourage, fund, and facilitate redevelopment projects.



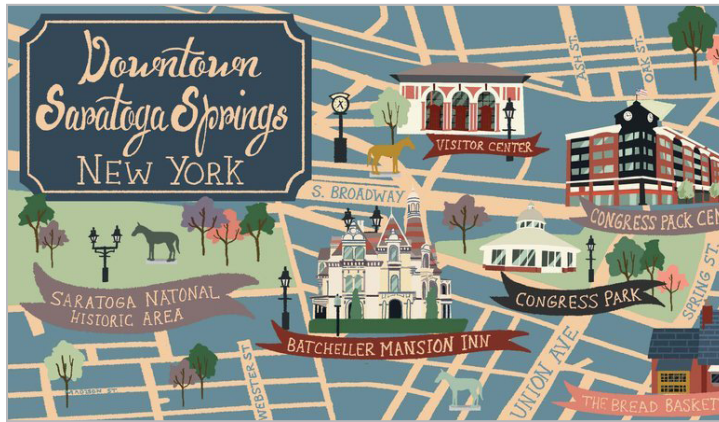
Encourage diverse, mixed use housing options in downtown

DOWNTOWN HOUSING

The City should play an active role in developing housing options in Downtown, facilitating both the activation of existing vacant units through redevelopment and rehabilitation, as well as the development of new housing options unique to downtown such as live-work units, artist lofts, and higher density apartment buildings. New residential development promotes the image of downtown as a unique district where people come to live and work. Housing in downtown should serve the needs of diverse tenants, including students, young families, empty nesters, artists, and others seeking the convenience of downtown living; and should include rental and ownership options. Zoning and subdivision regulations should be revised as needed to encourage and enable the desired mix of housing types.

MARKETING LOCAL HOUSING ASSETS

Ironwood's aging housing stock presents challenges with regard to ongoing maintenance and preservation, and pockets of more significant housing blight and vacancy do exist in the city. However, an overall evaluation of housing options suggests that Ironwood possesses a number of strengths that should be marketed and developed, including the general affordability of the housing stock and neighborhoods/areas with lots of intact and well-maintained homes and properties. The City should look to partner with realtors and other economic development entities to develop platforms for marketing local housing and neighborhoods. Such strategies may include remodeled home tours (virtual or in-person), marketing through print and online media, and development of neighborhood branding and a neighborhood map.



A map of Ironwood neighborhoods can be used to brand, market, and reinforce the identities of historic neighborhoods



Events like National Night Out, block parties and other capacity building activities promote cohesive, safe, and vibrant neighborhoods

NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY BUILDING

While improving the appearance of residential neighborhoods relies in large part on municipal functions such as the maintenance of public right of ways, streetscape quality, and public amenities, there is much that private property owners, community groups, and businesses can do to support neighborhood revitalization. The City should work with local groups to support “capacity building” activities at the neighborhood level, ensuring that various private and non-for-profit entities have the resources to develop, organize, and act in support of community revitalization goals.

Capacity building may take the form of outreach to community partners, trainings for community groups, event planning, mini-grants to support local initiatives, and community-wide events like National Night Out that encourage community cohesion, volunteerism, and fun. Neighborhood groups and civic organizations should be encouraged, as well as the reinforcement of neighborhood identities and neighborhood history through events, educational/youth programs, public art, and historic interpretation.

Neighborhood organizations, faith-based organizations, social clubs, and other community groups should be engaged as partners in housing redevelopment projects, both as advisors around community needs, and as partners in implementation. Local organizations stand to provide physical manpower (construction, maintenance, and clean-up crews, etc.) as well as financial/fundraising resources that can be leveraged for neighborhood revitalization, maintenance, and redevelopment.

RELATED STRATEGIES:

*Strategy 6.12:
Market Housing Assets*

*Strategy 6.13:
Promote Neighborhood
Capacity Building*

SEE P. 6-10 FOR MORE ON
THE STRATEGIES LISTED ABOVE

STRATEGIES

KEY TERMINOLOGY

“Strategies” are actions, programs, and practices that support one or more of the plan’s goals and policies. Strategies address the “who, what, when, where, and how” of reaching a goal, and may involve multiple sub-strategies.

The following strategies support the Community Development goals and policies described in this chapter.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:

STRATEGY 6.1: INVEST IN QUALITY OF LIFE

The City should prioritize key investments in quality of life amenities like housing, schools, parks, trails and open spaces, as well as community programs and events that contribute to the attractiveness of the Ironwood community to prospective businesses, entrepreneurs, employees, and residents.

Strategy 6.1(a): Allocate funds for economic development and marketing

In addition to broader quality of life improvements, a financial commitment should be made by the City annually toward marketing and economic development.

Strategy 6.1(b): Develop a Leadership Center

Develop a center in collaboration with the community college where residents and business people can go through a program that helps them understand what it means to be a leader. Focus should be on both leadership from a business development perspective as well as leadership from a civic/community perspective.

STRATEGY 6.2: DEVELOP A BUSINESS-SUPPORTIVE ZONING AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

The City should ensure that its zoning ordinance and administrative procedures allow for and encourage diverse and desirable industrial and business uses to locate in the community. See [Strategy 3.1: Update City Ordinances](#) in the Land Use chapter for more on zoning strategies.

STRATEGY 6.3: ECONOMIC GARDENING

Economic gardening is an approach that seeks to grow the local economy from within by promoting local entrepreneurship and small business development. Economic gardening strategies focus on developing services, facilities, and infrastructure to support existing small and local businesses, start-up companies, entrepreneurs, and those working remotely. Sub-strategies include:

Strategy 6.3(a): Improve the City’s Façade Improvement Program

- Develop a local program that complements and builds on the

existing state and federal programs utilized by the City.

Strategy 6.3(b): Improve the City’s Revolving Loan Fund Program (RLF)

- Develop a local program that complements and builds on the existing state and federal RLF programs utilized by the City.

Strategy 6.3(c): Implement a business mentorship program

- Development of a business mentorship program is already underway.

Strategy 6.3(d): Develop a business retention program

- Such a program focuses on maintaining strong working relationships with local businesses through direct outreach to understand their needs, identify opportunities for growth, and tap into their expertise.
- Develop value-added businesses, that is, businesses that utilize the by-products and raw materials from existing industrial uses in the community to create new business and job opportunities. An example of this would be encouraging the development of businesses that might utilize locally produced lumber and other construction materials for more advanced manufacturing. This approach could also apply to the business mentorship program, Strategy 6.3(c), and business incubator, Strategy 6.3 (g).

Strategy 6.3(e): Develop an Economic Development Toolkit

- Develop an “Economic Development Toolkit” as a printed and online resource that educates businesses and entrepreneurs about the type and use of available municipal, regional, state, and federal economic development incentive programs.
- City staff should maintain working knowledge of various economic development programs and entities and serve as a resource businesses seeking technical assistance.

Strategy 6.3(f): Expand WiFi/broadband/cellular network

- Ensure widespread cellular and WiFi/broadband internet coverage.

Strategy 6.3(g): Develop a Business Incubator

- Provide start-up space, training, and temporary access to professional services and equipment for new business ventures.

Strategy 6.3(h): Develop Entrepreneurial support spaces

- Such as co-working and meeting spaces.



Co-working and other entrepreneurial support spaces provide places for remote workers, innovators, and entrepreneurs to work, share ideas, and create.

STRATEGY 6.4: DEVELOP TRAINING/VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO FILL WORKFORCE NEEDS

Partner with Ironwood schools, Gogebic Community College, and local businesses to develop business and entrepreneurship training programs, apprenticeships, and other opportunities that expand career pathways for residents of all ages and promote a skilled workforce that can meet the changing needs of industry.

STRATEGY 6.5: ENHANCE DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES & RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

The City should continue to promote downtown as a hub of economic and cultural activity within the city and region and a unique mixed use destination.

Strategy 6.5(a): Continue downtown streetscape, public realm, and institutional investments

- See various discussions of downtown improvements in the Land Use, Transportation, Parks, and Civic Facilities portions of this plan.

Strategy 6.5(b): Work with community partners to support ongoing downtown revitalization efforts

- Continue City support and involvement in various downtown projects through the DAP, DIDA, the Chamber of Commerce and other local organizations; facilitate coordination of efforts as needed.

Strategy 6.5(c): Promote “pop-up” stores and events in downtown

- Work with community partners to implement pop-up stores and similar temporary uses and events to activate vacant and under-utilized spaces in downtown.

STRATEGY 6.6: MARKET THE COMMUNITY

Strategy 6.6(a): Market the community through the city website and other media outlets and partner organizations.

- Work with groups like the Next Generation/Go-In Forward group and the Chamber of Commerce to market the community to prospective residents and businesses.

Strategy 6.6(b): Develop and distribute promotional community maps

- This may include a community-wide caricature map that highlights key destinations, landmarks, and attractions in the community; a map of downtown businesses; and a map of city parks and trails.

Strategy 6.6(c): Develop a “shop local” / hospitality campaign

- Consider a range of activities, events, marketing, and incentives to encourage residents and employees to support local businesses.
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce and other groups to develop a campaign around hospitality and service; engage business and other stakeholders on best practices for promoting a friendly retail and service environment.

Strategy 6.6(d): Conduct a retail and commercial market study

- Understand the potential for attracting various retail and commercial businesses to the community through a market study and analysis of community/regional demographics.

Strategy 6.6(e): Brand and market the City

- In order to effectively market the City, invest in developing a brand that builds on Ironwood’s current motto: “Live Where You Play.”

STRATEGY 6.7: ENCOURAGE EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Strategy 6.7(a): Establish an annual event calendar/speaker series

- Ensure that information about local events is updated and easily accessible through print and online media.

Strategy 6.7(b): Create a venue to brainstorm new ideas for events, festivals, or entertainment experiences.

- Community organizations should bring people together to brainstorm new ideas for community-wide events and attractions.
- Ideas raised in the public engagement process include:
 - › Sporting events (e.g. expanding SISU Ski Fest to other sports)
 - › Events and festivals in Miners, Depot, and other city parks
 - › Historic tours and festivals
 - › Arts/Craft-related fairs and festivals

STRATEGY 6.8: PROMOTE UNIQUE LOCAL ASSETS

Strategy 6.8(a): Develop a community wide arts plan

- Work with community partners (particularly the Downtown Art Place) to develop a community-wide arts plan that coordinates future public, private, and community-led investments in public art. This may include planning for mural projects, artists housing/lofts, events/festivals, community-led activities, arts in the schools- as well as art integration in parks/infrastructure planning: streetscape, wayfinding, parks/trails, etc.



Temporary pop-up events like “better block” projects and pop-up shops can spark activity and interest in downtown



Create an updated Ironwood “caricature” map to market local businesses and attractions

STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

Strategy 6.8(b): Coordinate activities to promote local history, interpretation, and preservation

- Work with community partners (Historical Society and others) to coordinate activities and planning related to historic interpretation and preservation. This may include:
 - › Historic wayfinding
 - › Historic walking tours and other event/activities
 - › Expanded interpretive services at key locations such as the Memorial Building, Depot Park, and Miners Park.
 - › Inventory and plan for historic assets

STRATEGY 6.9: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION

Increased coordination of various local and regional economic development entities is necessary to ensure that economic development is implemented efficiently and effectively. The City should maintain regular communications with partner organizations and identify and address gaps and redundancies across the array of economic development services and programs in the region. See Appendix A: Ironwood Fact Book for a full listing of local and regional economic development entities and activities.

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES:

STRATEGY 6.10: ENCOURAGE HOUSING REHABILITATION

The City should build on its existing housing rehabilitation programs to offer a variety of resources and services to support rehabilitation of homes and properties.

Strategy 6.10(a): Develop a housing rehab toolkit

- Make available in print and online; should include a comprehensive list of financial resources, pre-qualified contractors, remodelers handbook, etc.

Strategy 6.10(b): Host remodeling workshops and provide consultation services

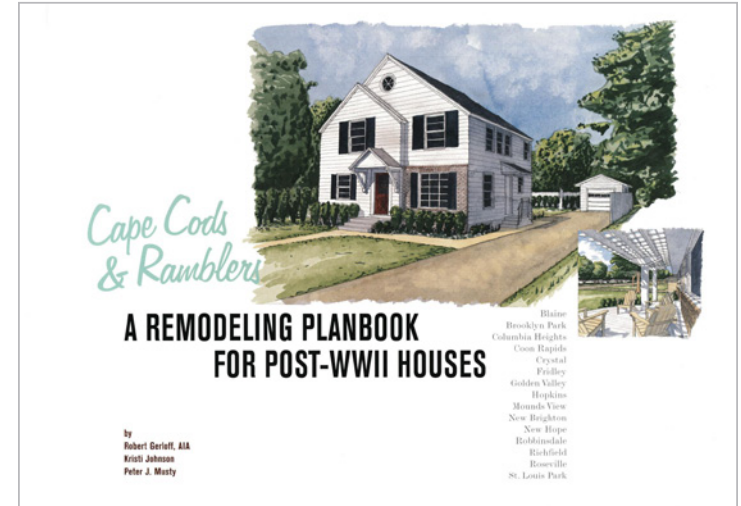
Strategy 6.10(c): Host a home remodelers showcase

Strategy 6.10(d): Develop a scattered-site housing redevelopment program

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



Support maintenance and rehabilitation of housing stock



Example of [remodelers handbook](#) that could be included as part of a housing rehab toolkit

STRATEGY 6.11: SUPPORT INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT

The City should consider programmatic strategies to support and encourage private infill and redevelopment efforts in concert with zoning and city-led redevelopment strategies recommended in [Chapter 3: Land Use and Community Character](#).

Strategy 6.11(a): Conduct a market study

- Build understanding of the housing market and housing needs to inform broader redevelopment strategies.

Strategy 6.11(b): Work with community partners to target market gaps

- Collaborate with Construction Trades Program at Gogebic Community College to develop demonstration housing projects that “test” market potential for new housing types.

Strategy 6.11(c): Pursue alternative strategies to encourage, fund, and facilitate redevelopment projects

- Consider a multi-tiered approach to facilitating redevelopment of properties on the City surplus list:
 - › Allow property owners to purchase adjoining City-owned surplus properties that are too small to be developed on their own; encourage activation and improvement. Purchase of such properties will require no additional City approvals.

- › Sell prime City-owned surplus properties through a competitive proposal process. Such a RFP process evaluates development proposals based on future use, developer vision and experience, and potential neighborhood impact, rather than on bid price alone. This helps to ensure that redevelopment contributes to neighborhood revitalization.
- › Reevaluate the surplus list annually - See also [Strategy 3.3: Conduct regular Land Use & Building Condition Inventories](#).
- Encourage redevelopment of historic housing stock through a lease to purchase program where monthly payments are used to pay the mortgage until the potential property owner is able to secure their own mortgage.
- See [Rebuilding Communities: A Best Practices Toolkit](#) for more information.

STRATEGY 6.12: MARKET HOUSING ASSETS

The City should look to partner with realtors and other economic development entities to develop platforms for marketing local housing and neighborhoods.

Strategy 6.12(a): Encourage events such as remodeled home tours and a citywide housing fair

Strategy 6.12(b): Maintain a catalog of historic home renovation opportunities

- A print and/or online resource that can be used to market properties to potential buyers

STRATEGY 6.13: PROMOTE NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY BUILDING

The City should work with local groups to support “capacity building” activities at the neighborhood level, ensuring that various private and not-for-profit entities have the resources to develop, organize, and act in support of community revitalization goals.

Strategy 6.13(a): Provide capacity building training for neighborhood groups

- Train neighborhood and community groups around grassroots community-building strategies and event planning.

Strategy 6.13(b): Sponsor community-wide events that encourage community cohesion, volunteerism, and fun

- Such as [National Night Out](#), block parties, etc.



Community-led public art projects do double-duty, serving to building community cohesion and beautify public spaces

Strategy 6.13(c): Partner with neighborhood groups on rehabilitation, community clean-up and other service projects

- Organize neighborhood volunteer projects to support various revitalization strategies; may include home building or vacant lot stabilization projects.
- Leverage neighborhood groups as partners in fundraising and financing for redevelopment/reinvestment projects; see examples like [Fundrise](#) and [cooperative](#) models.

Strategy 6.13(d): Develop a mini-grant program to support local initiatives and service projects

- The City or other entities could initiate a [competition](#) or RFP process to solicit ideas for small-scale community-led improvement projects (parks, gardens, public art, etc.) and provide small grants to support implementation of the best/most popular ideas.

Strategy 6.13(e): Cultivate neighborhood branding/identity

- Partner with neighborhood and community groups to reinforce neighborhood identities and celebrate historic neighborhood names and historic sites through events, educational/youth programs, public art, and historic interpretation; consider creation of a neighborhood map.

MAKING IT HAPPEN!

Priority Actions

Priority action steps are identified in the following matrix. This matrix focuses on immediate (0-1 year) and short-term (1-5 year) action steps, as well as ongoing actions and practices. A complete matrix including longer term actions has been prepared and is maintained by the City as part of the on-going comprehensive planning process. Once these immediate and short term actions have been substantially completed, the city should initiate a comprehensive plan update process to revisit the vision, guiding principles, goals, policies and strategies and renew the list of action steps. The matrix identifies the key strategy, related sub-strategy, responsible implementing entity (most often the City), partnership resources, general costs, and possible funding sources.

NOTE: Table 6-1 addresses priority actions related to economic development. Table 6-2 addresses priority actions related to housing and neighborhoods. For strategies listed in Table 6-1, the Ironwood Economic Development Corporation (an arm of the City's Community Development department) is considered part of the implementing entity.

TABLE 6-1. PRIORITY ACTIONS - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IMMEDIATE ACTION (0-1 YEARS)						
Strategy	Sub-Strategy	Implementing Entity	City Role	Potential Partners	Cost	Possible Funding Sources
6.3 Develop Economic Gardening Programs and Activities	6.3(a) Continue City's Façade Improvement Program	City (Community Development)	Lead	DIDA - Chamber of Commerce	\$ (0-\$10,000)	CDBG, General Fund
	6.3(b) Improve City's Revolving Loan Fund Program (RLF) *	City (Community Development)	Lead	DIDA - Chamber of Commerce	\$ (0-\$10,000)	CDBG, General Fund, Grant Resources, MEDC
	6.3(c) Implement a business mentorship program (already underway) *	City (Community Development)	Partnership	IIDC, Chamber of Com, Schools	\$ (0-\$10,000)	General Fund
	6.3(d) Develop a Business Retention Program *	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Chamber of Commerce	\$ (0-\$10,000)	General Fund
	6.3(e) Develop an Economic Development Toolkit	City (Community Development)	Partnership	DIDA - Chamber of Commerce	\$ (0-\$10,000)	General Fund
6.4 Develop training programs to fill workforce needs	-	Community College & Ironwood Schools	Support	Chamber of Commerce	NA	NA
6.6 Market the Community	6.6(a) Market the community through the city website and other media outlets	City (Community Development)	Lead	Chamber of Commerce	\$ (0-\$10,000)	General Fund
	6.6(c) Develop a shop Local/Hopitality Campaign	City (Community Development)	Support	Chamber of Commerce	\$ (0-\$10,000)	Grant Resources, Sponsorship
	6.6(d) Conduct a retail and commercial market study	City (Community Development)	Support	Chamber of Commerce	\$\$ (\$10,000-\$50,000)	Grant Resources, Sponsorship, General Fund
	6.6(e) Brand and market the City	City (Community Development)	Support	Chamber of Commerce	\$\$ (\$10,000-\$50,000)	Grant Resources, Sponsorship, General Fund

KEY TERMINOLOGY

The City has developed a number of **Spark Plans**, or “mini action plans,” to support implementation of select strategies in the comprehensive plan. Spark Plans focus on strategies that: (1) are high-priority actions, (2) may require additional explanation and planning, and (3) may be implemented by groups other than City agencies (community groups, civic organizations, individuals, etc.). Strategies for which a Spark Plan has been developed are noted in the priority action matrix with the following symbol: *

See [Appendix C: Spark Plans](#) for the complete set of Spark Plans.

TABLE 6-1. PRIORITY ACTIONS - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

SHORT-TERM (1-5 YEARS)						
Strategy	Sub-Strategy	Implementing Entity	City Role	Potential Partners	Cost	Possible Funding Sources
6.3 Develop Economic Gardening Programs and Activities	6.3(f) Expand Broadband/WiFi/Cellular Network	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Local, Regional, and State Economic Development Entities	NA	NA
	6.3(g) Develop Business Incubator *	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Local, Regional, and State Economic Development Entities	\$\$\$ (\$50,000-\$200,000)	CDBG, Philanthropic, Grant Resources, MEDC
	6.3(h) Develop Entrepreneurial Support Spaces *	City (Community Development)	Partnership	DIDA - Chamber of Commerce	\$\$\$ (\$50,000-\$200,000)	CDBG, Philanthropic, Grant Resources, MEDC
6.6 Market the Community	6.6(b) Develop and distribute a promotional Ironwood/Downtown Map *	City (Community Development)	Support	DIDA - Chamber of Commerce	\$ (0-\$10,000)	Grant Resources, Sponsorship
6.8 Promote Unique Local Assets	6.8(a) Develop a community-wide arts plan *	DAP	Support	Historical Society - User Groups	\$\$ (\$10,000-\$50,000)	Philanthropic, Grant Resources
	6.8(b) Coordinate activities to promote local history *	City (Community Development)	Support	Historical Society - User Groups	\$ (0-\$10,000)	Philanthropic, Grant Resources
ONGOING						
Strategy	Sub-Strategy	Implementing Entity	City Role	Potential Partners	Cost	Possible Funding Sources
6.1 Invest in Quality of Life	6.1(a) Allocate funds for economic development and marketing	City (Community Development)	Lead	-	\$ (0-\$10,000)	General Fund
	6.1(b) Develop a leadership center	Chamber of Commerce	Partnership	Community College	NA	NA
6.2 Develop Business-Supportive Zoning and Regulatory Environment	-	City (Community Development)	Lead	-	NA	NA
6.5 Enhance downtown business & retail environment	6.5 (a) Continue downtown streetscape, public realm, and institutional investments	City (Community Development)	Lead	DIDA - Chamber of Commerce	NA	NA
	6.5 (b) Work with community partners to support ongoing downtown revitalization efforts	City (Community Development)	Support	DIDA - Chamber of Commerce	NA	NA
	6.5 (c) Promote "pop-up stores" and events in downtown *	City (Community Development)	Lead	DIDA - Chamber of Commerce	\$ (0-\$10,000)	General Fund, Grant Resources

* Strategy for which a Spark Plan has been developed. See [Appendix C: Spark Plans](#) for the complete set of Spark Plans.

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MAKING IT HAPPEN! (CONTINUED)

TABLE 6-1. PRIORITY ACTIONS - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

ONGOING						
Strategy	Sub-Strategy	Implementing Entity	City Role	Potential Partners	Cost	Possible Funding Sources
6.7 Encourage events and festivals in the community	6.7(a) Establish an annual event calendar/speaker series	City (Community Development)	Support	Civic Organizations, Chamber of Commerce, Gogebic Community College	NA	NA
	6.7(b) Create a venue to brainstorm new ideas for events, festivals, or entertainment experiences	Various	Support	Civic Organizations, Chamber of Commerce	NA	NA
6.9 Coordinate Local and Regional Economic Development Efforts *	-	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Local, Regional, and State Economic Development Entities	NA	NA

TABLE 6-2. PRIORITY ACTIONS - HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

IMMEDIATE ACTION (0-1 YEARS)						
Strategy	Sub-Strategy	Implementing Entity	City Role	Potential Partners	Cost	Possible Funding Sources
6.10 Encourage Housing Rehabilitation	6.10(a) Develop a housing rehab toolkit *	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Financial Institutions - Contractors - Builders - Designers - Gogebic Community College	\$ (0-\$10,000)	Grant Resources, Sponsorship, CDBG, MSHDA
6.11 Support Infill & Redevelopment	6.11(a) Conduct a market study *	City (Community Development)	Lead	Local, Regional, and State Economic Development Entities	\$\$ (\$10,000-\$50,000)	CDBG, Grant Resources, General Fund

* Strategy for which a Spark Plan has been developed. See Appendix C: Spark Plans for the complete set of Spark Plans.

TABLE 6-2. PRIORITY ACTIONS - HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

SHORT-TERM (1-5 YEARS)						
Strategy	Sub-Strategy	Implementing Entity	City Role	Potential Partners	Cost	Possible Funding Sources
6.10 Encourage Housing Rehabilitation	6.10(d) Develop a scattered site housing redevelopment program *	City (Community Development)	Lead	Financial Institutions - Contractors - Builders - Designers - Gogebic Community College	\$\$\$\$ (\$200,000-\$1 million)	Grant Resources, Sponsorship, CDBG, MSHDA
6.13 Promote Neighborhood Capacity Building	6.13(d) Develop a mini-grant program to support local initiatives and service projects	City (Community Development)	Partnership	DIDA - Chamber of Commerce - Civic Organizations	\$\$ (\$10,000-\$50,000)	Philanthropic, Grant Resources, Sponsorship
ONGOING						
Strategy	Sub-Strategy	Implementing Entity	City Role	Potential Partners	Cost	Possible Funding Sources
6.10 Encourage Housing Rehabilitation	6.10(b) Host remodeling workshops and provide consultation services	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Financial Institutions - Contractors - Builders - Designers - Gogebic Community College	\$\$ (\$10,000-\$50,000)	Philanthropic, Grant Resources, Sponsorship
	6.10(c) Host a home remodelers showcase *	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Financial Institutions - Contractors - Builders - Designers - Gogebic Community College	\$\$ (\$10,000-\$50,000)	Philanthropic, Grant Resources, Sponsorship
6.11 Support Infill & Redevelopment	6.11(b) Work with community partners to target market gaps	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Financial Institutions - Contractors - Builders - Designers - Gogebic Community College	NA	NA

* Strategy for which a Spark Plan has been developed. See Appendix C: Spark Plans for the complete set of Spark Plans.

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MAKING IT HAPPEN! (CONTINUED)

TABLE 6-2. PRIORITY ACTIONS - HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

ONGOING						
Strategy	Sub-Strategy	Implementing Entity	City Role	Potential Partners	Cost	Possible Funding Sources
6.11 Support Infill & Redevelopment	6.11(c) Pursue alternative strategies to encourage, fund, and facilitate redevelopment projects	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Local, Regional, and State Economic Development Entities	NA	NA
6.12 Market Housing Assets	6.12(a) Encourage events such as remodeled home tours and a citywide housing fair	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Financial Institutions - Realtors/Brokers	\$ (0-\$10,000)	Grant Resources, Sponsorship
	6.12(b) Maintain a catalog of historic home renovation opportunities	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Historical Society - User Groups	\$ (0-\$10,000)	Philanthropic, Grant Resources, Sponsorship
6.13 Promote Neighborhood Capacity Building	6.13(a) Provide capacity building trainings for neighborhood groups	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Civic Organizations, Gogebic Community College	\$ (0-\$10,000)	Philanthropic, Grant Resources, Sponsorship
	6.13(b) Sponsor community-wide events that encourage community cohesion, volunteership, and fun	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Civic Organizations	\$ (0-\$10,000)	Philanthropic, Grant Resources, Sponsorship
	6.13(c) Partner with neighborhood groups on rehabilitation, community clean-up and other service projects	City (Community Development)	Partnership	Civic Organizations	\$ (0-\$10,000)	Philanthropic, Grant Resources, Sponsorship
	6.13(e) Cultivate neighborhood branding/identity *	Various	Partnership	Civic Organizations	NA	NA

* Strategy for which a Spark Plan has been developed. See [Appendix C: Spark Plans](#) for the complete set of Spark Plans.

The Comp Plan and YOU!

The Comprehensive Plan serves not only as a guiding document for city government, but as a collective expression of community values, desires, and visions. Just as the creation of this plan was fueled by the input and ideas of community members like you, its successful implementation requires your continued engagement, advocacy, and action.

So, what can you do to support the vision, goals, and policies expressed in this chapter? Here are a just a few ideas to get you thinking, talking- and hopefully, taking action!

- Learn about and take advantage of economic development programs, grants, and resources offered by the City to do expand your small/home-based business or start-up a new enterprise.
- Serve as a mentor for students, businesses, and entrepreneurs in the community; share your knowledge and expertise to grow new jobs and businesses.
- Volunteer for community organizations (particularly those that are entirely volunteer-run) that promote active living and outdoor recreation, arts and cultural programs, historic preservation and interpretation, and other community-supportive activities.
- Support City investment in infrastructure upgrades and other public improvements that enhance quality of life in Ironwood and make the City a more attractive place for businesses and residents.
- Take advantage of housing rehabilitation programs, grants, and resources offered by the City to do small repairs, upgrades, and maintenance projects around your home and property.
- Enhance the public realm in your neighborhood by planting a front yard garden, building a porch, deck, or seating area that faces the public street, or just keeping your yard tidy.
- Volunteer to help an elderly neighbor with property maintenance and repair projects, mowing the grass, fixing a gutter, etc.
- Organize community building events in your neighborhood such as neighborhood meetings and social events, block parties, National Night Out, clean-up days, neighborhood watch, etc.
- Start a community garden or community-built playground on a vacant lot in your neighborhood.

Performance Measures

To ensure accountability around the Plan, the community needs to measure and report on accomplishments. Performance measures provide a way to measure progress and success in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Some performance measures are quantifiable, concrete figures; others are more qualitative in nature. The following are the key performance measures for the community development-related action steps recommended in this chapter:

- Scale of outreach to local businesses (number of visits, meetings, or workshops).
- Direct results of economic development programs/assistance:
 - › New jobs created
 - › New businesses started up or brought to the Ironwood community.
 - › Expansion (in square feet) of existing businesses
 - › Square footage of sites improved
 - › Number of businesses engaged in mentorship (mentors and mentees)
- Lending/grant-related metrics:
 - › Amount of funds loaned out
 - › Amount of funds paid back
 - › Amount of seed money raised
- Improved image of Ironwood as a great place to do business as measured by survey or response from the business community and other sources of feedback.

The following are the key performance measures for the housing and neighborhood-related action steps recommended in this chapter:

- Number of new homes that are built per year.
- Number of blight cases removed.
- Increase in property tax valuation.
- Number of building permit applications.
- Number redevelopment projects led, facilitated, or brokered by the city.
- Number of redevelopment sites sold off of the city-surplus list.
- Improvement in neighborhood character, cohesion, and identity.

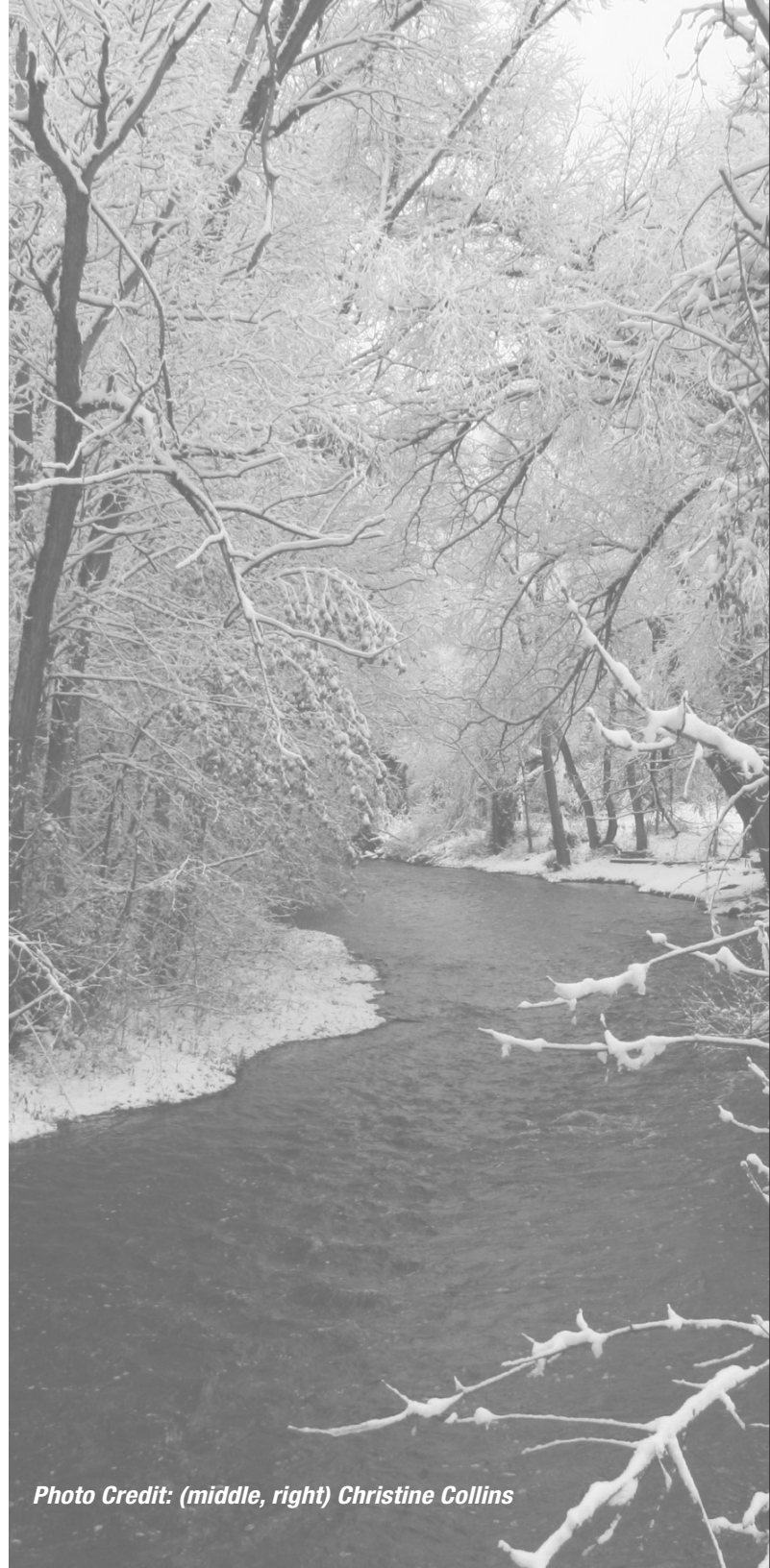


Photo Credit: (middle, right) Christine Collins