



Request for Proposals

City of Ironwood Comprehensive Plan Update

Date Issued: December 19, 2023

Deadline for submittals: February 2, 2024

Introduction

“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.

Above is the introduction to the City of Ironwood’s 2014 Comprehensive Plan. This statement still reflects so much of what Ironwood is and was. Since then we have made huge strides and have tackled what would have appeared to be unthinkable challenges 10 years ago. Ironwood is looking for a new Comprehensive Plan that builds off of where we have been, tackles the challenges of today and the years ahead, and sustains and grows the community for decades to come.

Community Background

The City of Ironwood is the western gateway to the upper peninsula of Michigan and is located 18 miles south of the big lake Gitchieegumme (Lake Superior). The beautiful Montreal River traverses the western boundary of the City while forested woodlands make up the southerly border of the community. Two major highways provide easy access to the area including Michigan U.S. Highway 2, Wisconsin U.S. Highway 51 and Wisconsin State Highway 77. Ironwood is a border community to our Wisconsin sister city Hurley, Wisconsin. The City covers about six (6) square miles and has a population of 5,045. The City has numerous outdoor opportunities including

parks, bicycle and walking paths, mountain bike trails (10 miles recently developed in the Miners Park), skateboard park, snow shoe trails, groomed cross country ski trails, downhill ski facilities, trout fishing (Montreal River) not to mention all of the amenities and public services provided by a full service community.

Since the 2014 Comprehensive Plan the City has seen significant changes to Ironwood's Historic Downtown. Many new businesses have opened, including a craft brewery, coffee shop, European food market, Stormy Kromer clothing store, dance studio, additional hair salons, restaurants, bakeries, and many more. In addition, the City and MEDC partnered on the Downtown City Square project that included an amphitheater for outdoor concerts, splash pad, gas fire pit, and a mountain bike skills course. The facility supports the First Friday Music series in the summer and SISU Ski Fest "Finnish Line" in the winter.

The highway commercial area has also seen significant development. Much of this is due to the City allowing Cannabis retailers, but we have also seen developments by Kwik Trip, Marshalls, Tractor Supply, and Snap Fitness to mention a few. The Cannabis Industry has had a significant impact on the highway. Millions of dollars have been invested in redevelopment of buildings and new construction. As a result, available commercial space on the highway has become more difficult to find.

In addition, there has been significant investment in infrastructure by the City and made possible by grants and loans through state and federal agencies. City has accomplished multiple street reconstruction projects and in the next few years will have a new water treatment plant and wastewater treatment plant.

Recently the City sold the last available lot in our Industrial Park. Planning for an industrial Park expansion is essential to the continued growth of the community.

Last but certainly not least, the City has seen a massive demand for housing at all levels and price points. Prices have doubled and in some cases tripled. With very little housing stock it has made it increasingly difficult to attract labor and talent to the area. The problem will increase in the future with the opening of the Highland Copper Mine (currently being developed). Short term rentals continue to be a challenge and with the renovation of Copper Peak Ski Jump this will continue to affect the housing stock.

Project Overview

The purpose of the project is to update the City of Ironwood's Comprehensive Plan, last updated in 2014, looking to the year 2045. The Comprehensive Plan update will focus on:

Developing a Vision for Ironwood

- A picture of Ironwood after successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan
- What does Ironwood grow into in 2045 and what is the associated growth plan to achieve that vision?
- Identify City Values and Develop a City Values Statement
- What are Ironwoods' cherished values and principles?

The Consultant will need to address 10 key topics in the plan (with equity, technology and sustainability incorporated into each):

1. Land Use and Development

(e.g. Updated growth and density; infill development; build off the Downtown Development Plan, how to develop the Montreal River; note potential redevelopment areas; address available land for industrial development and/or expansion of the Industrial Park)

2. Housing and Neighborhoods

Ironwood will be working on a Strategic Housing Plan concurrently with the Comprehensive Plan. Prepare for future integration of that plan into the comprehensive plan.

3. Economic Development

(e.g. Competitive edge, workforce, childcare, recreation, livability, alternative energy, physical development; riverfront development; diversified business base)

4. Environment

(e.g. Reference Forest Management Plan, green infrastructure/alternative energy; climate change; water resources, stormwater management, open space, etc.)

5. Transportation

(e.g. Complete Street Plan; update for projects completed; include MDOT projects; focus on ability to implement; transit, airport; pedestrian safety; City streets; bicycle friendly systems; reinvestment in aging infrastructure; motorized routes)

6. Historic Preservation

(e.g. Intrinsic value of historic resources in our community, connection to economic development and reinvestment in the core of the City, connection to neighborhood identities and development practices)

7. Accessible Government

(e.g. Increasing participation and representation on City committees/Commissions; Incorporating technology to increase efficiency and access; vision, mission, and values statement for Ironwood City government and individual departments)

8. Arts and Culture

Development of an Arts and Culture Master Plan

9. Park and Recreation

The City is about to complete its 5 year Parks and Recreation Plan as required by the MDNR for eligibility for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Program. Integration of this plan into the Comp Plan is needed. It is important that the City be able to amend this plan without having to formally amend the Comprehensive Plan.

10. Transformative Projects

(Large/Complex projects that cover multiple sections and may be time and place specific)

Existing Planning Documents to be cited and/or incorporated

- Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan (nearly completed)
- Downtown Development Plan and TIF Plan
- Strategic Housing Action Plan (concurrent timeline)

Scope of Services and Deliverables

Public Participation

The consultant shall specify how and when the public will be engaged throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update process to address the key components listed in the project overview. The consultant shall also create an engagement report to be included in the Comprehensive Plan final document.

Project orientation

At the beginning of the project, the Consultant shall meet with City Staff and the Planning Commission for a project orientation meeting. The meeting shall provide an understanding of project process, goals, and schedule.

Issue Identification

The Consultant shall gather broad-based input to develop a vision for Ironwood, identify and orient toward the community's cherished values and principles, and to address the key topic areas. Input shall be obtained from the City Commission, Committees, Commissions, Downtown Development Authority, Economic Development Corporation, City Staff, the general public, associated stakeholders, and others.

Draft Plan Document

In consideration of the City's vision for 2045, the consultant shall address the key topic areas in a draft Comprehensive Plan document. Fiscal sustainability shall be addressed as applicable in each topic area to ensure that the final plan is achievable. Education regarding fiscal sustainability considerations shall be provided in the plan and at meetings with the Planning Commission and City Commission.

Revised Draft Plan Document

Based on input from the draft plan document, the consultant shall create a second draft of the plan for public input.

Final Plan Document

Following input from the second draft, the consultant shall prepare a final plan for adoption by the Planning Commission and the City Commission. Once approved, the consultant shall provide:

- 10 hard copies of the draft plan and 20 hard copies of final Comprehensive Plan documents including all color maps, graphs, charts, tables, pictures or other graphic imagery.
- Electronic submission consisting of all plan elements in native, web-ready software formats editable by the City (MS Office, mxd, shp, dwg, pdf, etc)
- all other data and information that has been collected through the process in digital PDF format.
- All public participation materials including any survey results or other information in digital PDF form (paper copies if applicable).

Timeline

- Launch February – May 2024 (what does the community want?)
- Key Directions May – September 2024 (what are the ideas to get there?)
- Policy Approaches and Priorities September 2024 to January 2025 (which ideas rise to the top and are attainable)
- 1st Draft February – March 2025
- 2nd Draft April-May 2025
- Adoption June-July 2025

Proposal Submission Requirements

Written proposals shall be submitted as well as in PDF and should be in order based on the requirements below.

- A. An introduction of the company.
- B. A work program describing the precise scope of work to be undertaken including an outlined approach for public engagement and how the consultant will interact with City staff and the Planning Commission. Tom Bergman, Community Development Director, will be the staff contact.
- C. A proposed table of contents to include the elements the City desires to be included in the plan also to include all maps, graphs, charts, tables, pictures or other graphic imagery.
- D. A detailed project schedule/timeline with milestones (see sample timeline above). The City is interested in having the Plan approved and adopted by July 2025. If this is not possible, what is a more realistic timeline?
- E. Resumes of company personnel, including subcontractors if proposed to be used, that will be assigned to the project as well as their involvement and roles played in the project.
- F. Company resume in comprehensive planning projects as well as other planning related work.
- G. Five (5) references of other communities the company has prepared comprehensive plans for including links to those community's websites to review the plans.
- H. Disclosure of any competing interest or potential conflicts of interest in the City including consultant's work for persons who own land or have development interest in the City.
- I. A proposed itemized budget. As discussed above, the City understands the cost of a comprehensive plan increases with the increase in public engagement; an itemized budget with these components shall be presented.

Cost Incurred in Responding to this RFP/RFQ

The City of Ironwood shall not be liable for any costs incurred by consultant in responding to this request for proposal/request for qualification.

Evaluation and Consultant Selection

- A. City Staff will review the submitted proposals and they will be evaluated on the overall qualifications, experience, and competence of the consultant and staff, prior experience in similar projects, experience in handling public relations and citizen involvement, a check of references, understanding of the project, proposed project approach, interview and proposed budget.
- B. A short list of consultants will be selected for interviews. Because of the location of Ironwood, virtual interviews will be entertained.
- C. After the interviews staff will present a recommendation to the Planning Commission for recommendation to the City Commission for final approval.
- D. Once a consultant has been selected contract negotiations will commence.
- E. The City has the right to reject any and all submittals, waive any irregularities, re-issue all or part of this RFP/RFQ, and not award any contract, all at its discretion and without penalty.

Conditions and Limitations

- A. Proposals that do not include all the submittal requirements outlined herein may not be considered.
- B. At the City's sole discretion, the City may choose to republish this RFP.
- C. Until such time the professional services agreement is executed, there are no express or implied obligations or commitments on the part of either the City or the Consultant concerning either this RFP or any proposal associated with it.
- D. At the City's sole discretion and with notice being provided to the Consultants. the City may amend the Selection Process and/or Tentative Project Schedule at any time.
- E. By submitting materials for the City's consideration pursuant to this RFP, the Consultant is waiving any claim of confidentiality, trade secrets or privilege with respect to materials submitted.
- F. If warranted, any updates, revisions or modifications to this RFP shall be posted on the City of Ironwood's website during the advertising period, and it shall be the responsibility of the Consultant to review the website during the advertising period to verify if any such updates, revisions or modifications have been made to this RFP.
- G. Any changes resulting from the questions submitted affecting specifications. the scope of work, or which may require an extension to the proposal due date will be reduced to writing in the form of an addendum to this RFP. Addenda will be posted on the City's website. It is the Consultant's responsibility to check the website to determine if the City has issued any addenda and/or schedule changes. Please email the City directly if you would like to be on an email list for addendums.

- H. The selection of a Consultant and the execution of a contract, while anticipated, is not guaranteed by the City. The City reserves the right to determine which proposal represents the City's best interest and to award the contract on that basis.
- I. The City Commission will consider the final contract for award to the selected Consultant.
- J. Proposals submitted to the City of Ironwood are a matter of public record and may become public in the future through the review and selection process or through data requests made by the public.