



Request for Proposals

City of Ironwood Strategic Housing Plan

Date Issued: February 20, 2024 Deadline for submittals extended to: April 5, 2024 at 4pm CST

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 Strategic Housing Plan that will guide the City through the challenging housing shortage that has gripped our community and the whole nation.

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.

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 develop a Strategic Housing Plan to alleviate the housing crisis in Ironwood by creating a plan to increase housing stock and mitigate the issues that are exasperating the housing market.

Create an Actionable Plan to Address the Housing Crisis

The Plan needs to be financially feasible to implement and have clear action items that can be implemented through the use of City resources or through granting opportunities. The plan should engage local employers to understand what the talent they are trying to attract is looking for in housing. We want talent to move here and grow here. That may mean identifying housing needs for all stages of life. From single people, to new families, and to retirement.

The Creation of a Developer's Guidebook

In 2022, the City adopted a new zoning ordinance to help streamline the development process and create opportunity for unique housing developments. A Developer's Guidebook should help existing developers navigate development opportunities and requirements. The Guidebook should also help inspire new developers to enter the housing development marketplace.

Conceptual Housing Development Sites and Plan

The City owns multiple vacant properties that could be utilized for development. Determining the viability of one or two of these parcels and creating a conceptual plan for development is a priority of this project. This may include determining the City's involvement in development as an incentive and possible layouts for the sites depending on what housing is in greatest demand.

Identify Incentive Programs to Attract Developers

What can the City do to attract developers to the area and are these incentives financially viable. What are funding programs through state and federal agencies to assist?

Impacts of Short-Term Rentals and Possible Mitigation of Negative Impacts

Ironwood has seen a rapid increase in short-term rentals over the last several years. Currently there are no specific regulations for short-term rentals. What are the pros and cons of regulating them and what is the most effective way to do so? Is there a way to incentivize property owners to convert short-term to long term rentals?

Existing Planning Documents to be cited and/or incorporated

- 2024 Comprehensive Plan (concurrent timeline)
- 2014 Comprehensive Plan
- Five Year Parks and Recreation Plan
- Downtown Development Plan and TIF Plan

Scope of Services and Deliverables

Public Participation

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

Project Orientation

At the beginning of the project, the Consultant shall meet with City Staff and members of the Planning Commission and the Economic Development Corp. 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 clear vision of the issues facing the City by engaging the City Commission, Committees, Commissions, Downtown Development Authority, Economic Development Corporation, City Staff, the general public, business owners, associated stakeholders, and others.

Draft Plan Document

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 Staff, City Commission, and other Committees.

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 final Strategic Housing 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).

Proposed Timeline

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

If this is not possible, what is a more realistic timeline?

Proposal Submission Requirements

Written proposals shall be submitted in PDF and should be in order based on the requirements below. Please send proposals to Tom Bergman at bergmant@ironwoodmi.gov at City of Ironwood, 213 S. Marquette Street, Ironwood, MI 49938 by **March 22, 2024 at 4pm CST**.

- 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 Committees. 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 include a list of all maps, graphs, charts, tables, pictures or other graphic imagery that are planned to be created as part of the plan.
- D. A detailed project schedule/timeline with milestones (see sample timeline above). The City is interested in having the Plan approved and adopted by March 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 similar planning projects as well as other planning related work.
- G. Five (5) references of other communities the company has prepared similar 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 strategic housing 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 may be selected for interviews. Because of the location of Ironwood, virtual interviews will be entertained.
- C. After the interviews (if applicable), staff will present a 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.