A special thanks to the guidance and leadership of the City's staff, Planning Commission, and City Council in completing this Master Plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BACKGROUND</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMOGRAPHICS &amp; HOUSING</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATURAL FEATURES</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY SERVICES &amp; FACILITIES</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARKS &amp; RECREATION</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAND USE</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

A Master Plan is a community’s policy document used to guide decisions that affect its land, people, and structures. It is often thought of as a long-term “road map” to guide officials and decision-makers when faced with difficult land use and infrastructure decisions that have long-term impacts on the community. The Master Plan inventories several systems to identify how they work together, how trends have affected these systems over time, and what improvements a city can make to strengthen these systems to positively influence residents’ quality of life. These are among the major features discussed in the Master Plan:
The plan then lays out “where we should go” based on a combination of residents’ priorities and findings drawn from the inventory process. These priorities are the basis for actions that community leadership can pursue through policy, particularly through zoning ordinance updates.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) enables municipalities to create master plans to do the following:

» Guide the use of limited resources efficiently;
» Promote public health, safety, and general welfare;
» Preserve the quality of the environment in the City; and
» Guide zoning decisions.

The plan is designed to be comprehensive, future-oriented, and accessible to the public, because, after all, it is a reflection of the community’s aspirations. That way, busy city officials do not get swept up in short-term gains at the expense of long-term progress.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Iron Mountain is located in the southwest corner of Dickinson County in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. It is the largest city in Dickinson County and functions as the county seat. The City is bordered to the south by the City of Kingsford, and is bound to the west, north, and east by Breitung Township. Because of its position less than two miles from of the Michigan-Wisconsin border, Iron Mountain is closely linked to both states. It is the primary city in the Iron Mountain Micropolitan Statistical Area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, which means the community’s economy is tied to its neighbors on both sides of the state line: City of Kingsford, Breitung Township, City of Norway, and Township of Norway in Michigan, and Niagara, Aurora, and Florence in Wisconsin.

Iron Mountain and its neighbors form one of the three largest urban places in Michigan’s Central Upper Peninsula. The City is located about 80 miles southwest of Marquette and 50 miles west of Escanaba and is connected to these cities via M-95 and US-2, respectively. Whereas the other two major cities are set along a Great Lake’s coastline, Iron Mountain is inland and sits at nearly 600 feet higher in elevation. Because of its inland location, the railroad has played a vital role in the community and continues to do so in 2020 at the railroad junction operated by the Canadian National Railway and Escanaba & Lake Superior Railroad companies.1 US-2 traverses the City and forms important connections with Canada to the east and the Pacific Coast and Great Plains States to the west. The City of Iron Mountain is roughly 100 miles from Green Bay, Wisconsin, over 200 miles north of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and more than 400 miles from Detroit, Michigan.

Iron Mountain’s location amidst the Upper Peninsula’s dynamic natural features underpins the community’s culture. The Menominee River flows roughly two miles south of the City and empties into Lake Michigan after draining over 4,000 square miles of territory in Michigan and Wisconsin. The River has some of Michigan’s most pristine waters, and its heavily wooded banks make it a popular destination for rafting, kayaking, and sightseeing. Much of Dickinson County’s 766 square miles is heavily forested with stands of beech, sugar maple, birch, and other hardwoods native to the area.2
These natural areas also feature extensive hiking, cross-country skiing, ATV trails, fishing, and camping facilities, much of which is managed by Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources. The County’s rolling terrain also lends itself to excellent downhill skiing, as is the case with Pine Mountain Resort, which has one of the world’s largest ski jumps and hosts an annual competition.

HISTORY

The City of Iron Mountain gets its name and origin from a large iron ore deposit known as the Menominee Range formation. The natural formation stretches from the Waucedah area 15 miles east of Iron Mountain, to Iron River, 25 miles to the City’s northwest. The deposit was first documented in an 1851 report by federal geologists, although commercial extraction of the resource began two decades later by the Milwaukee Iron Company. Iron ore was first discovered in what would become the City of Iron Mountain proper in 1878. The largest concentration was on the property of Henry A. Chapin of Niles, who leased the land to the Menominee Mining Company. The company developed “Chapin Mine” on the property, which would become the most productive in the Menominee Range soon thereafter.

As the mining industry burgeoned, railroad companies extended infrastructure to the area. The Chicago and North Western Railway company constructed a line that connected the range with Green Bay and Chicago in 1879, and iron ore was shipped from Chapin Mine the following year. Around that time, the local businessmen Samuel and Isaac Stephenson and Joseph Flesheim subdivided land in what would become downtown Iron Mountain and constructed permanent buildings. A decade later, the new settlement had over 5,000 residents and local leaders formally established the City of Iron Mountain in 1888. By that time, Chapin Mine had 10 different mine shafts, employed over 1,900 workers, and had produced over 1,000,000 gross tons of iron ore. While the mine changed hands several times in the late 1800s, it eventually came under the ownership of Oliver Iron Mining Company, a subsidiary of US Steel.

Iron Mountain reached a high point in the first three decades of the 20th century as its economy diversified to include forestry and manufacturing. The Von Platen-Fox Lumber Company constructed a sawmill in the southern portion of the City in 1910 and began exporting timber via rail.
The 1920s saw the arrival of Ford Motor Company, which founded a sawmill and wooden automobile components factory and almost singlehandedly chartered the City of Kingsford around it. The Ford facilities had more than 7,500 workers in 1925. Most of Iron Mountain’s housing, as well as prominent structures downtown such as the Braumart Theater Building and the Commercial Bank Building, were built during the “Ford Boom” era. The City’s reached its peak population of 11,652 residents in 1930.

Economic downturn characterized Iron Mountain in the following decades. The Great Depression hit the area hard; an estimated 85% of the community’s workers were unemployed in the middle of the 1930s. The general economic hardship was made worse by the iron industry’s sharp decline following World War I. In 1932, the superintendent of the Oliver Iron Mining Company announced the permanent closure of Chapin Mine, and the facility’s pumping system was subsequently decommissioned. The mine pits filled with water, creating the Chapin “lakes” that exist on either side of US-2 today. Although Ford ramped up its production in Kingsford to manufacture glider planes during World War II, the facility closed in 1951 as steel automotive components replaced wooden ones.

Despite the Iron Mountain area’s mid-century slowdown, new economic sectors emerged in later decades. In the 1940s, several commercial structures downtown were renovated, and US-2 was widened to four lanes. The Veteran’s Administration Hospital was built on a 31.5-acre property in the City’s south in 1951, which made it the largest construction project in the Upper Peninsula’s history at that time. Upon opening, the facility employed 360 workers, a figure that grew over the years.
The 1970s and 1980s were difficult decades in downtown’s history, although things improved after the creation of the Iron Mountain Downtown Development Authority in 1978 that could provide economic resources to the City’s core. While the City’s population declined through 2000, its economy diversified with new construction companies and manufacturers.

**PAST PLANNING**

This Master Plan draws on several concurrent planning efforts undertaken by local and regional organizations. These plans are listed in reverse chronological order below to demonstrate the area’s planning precedent and to ensure that this plan does not duplicate efforts, but rather builds on the ideas and success of previous visions.

**Iron Mountain Master Plan - 2011**

The City of Iron Mountain adopted its most recent community Master Plan in 2011. Its findings were used to define nine descriptive categories to guide the City’s land use decisions, and identified the zoning code changes needed to implement the desired patterns. Importantly, the Master Plan proposed higher-density mixed commercial and residential buildings downtown. It also designated a high-density residential land category to allow single-family housing on small lots, along with several multifamily formats to provide greater access to commercial areas and social amenities. The 2011 Master Plan served as an important framework for this plan.

**Additional Plans**

Other plans that are referenced in this document are listed below:

- Central Upper Peninsula Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy - 2016
- Residential Target Market Analysis for Dickinson County - 2016
- CUPPAD Broadband Survey - 2015

**SOURCES**

8. City of Iron Mountain. Master Plan 2011. Section 1.2 Community Description. Pg. 17
Iron Mountain is a population center in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Although the City has lost population for several consecutive years, the rate of decline has slowed since 2010. As of 2017, the community’s population attributes are as follows:

» Smaller Household Size - The average household size declined from 2.49 individuals in 2000 to 2.21 individuals in 2010.

» Fewer Families - A smaller share of households are married couples or families with children compared with Michigan overall.

» Aging Population - Over one-quarter of the population was in the retirement age of over 60 years in 2017.
» Shrinking Workforce - 53% of residents were working or able to work in 2017, which is a smaller labor pool compared to Michigan overall.

» Average Earnings - The median annual household income ($45,575) was about 14% less than the statewide figure. Many households (40%) have low incomes of less than $34,999.

HOUSING

Most Iron Mountain’s 3,611 housing units are within old structures constructed before 1980 and virtually no housing has been built since 2010. About three-quarters (77%) of the City’s dwellings are in single-family detached formats. While a modest share (17%) are in small multifamily types such as duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes, the community lacks these mid-scale multifamily formats overall. The City’s median home value stood at $79,700 in 2017, which is well below the figure statewide. The City’s slouching values are likely linked with its older housing stock and with the recent conversion of owner-occupied dwellings to rentals. Residents expressed low-quality rental housing an area for improvement.

A strong understanding of a community’s population and its social and economic attributes is key for making informed decision making in master planning. This section uses data collected from recent decennial censuses and more recent sample data from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey to examine Iron Mountain’s demographics over time. Iron Mountain is also the principal City in the Iron Mountain Micropolitan Statistical Area, an economically linked group of communities in Dickinson and Florence Counties. This chapter also compares the community with these neighbors and with the State of Michigan overall.

DATA SOURCES

The information in this chapter was retrieved from the following sources, in this preferred order:

» 2010, 2000, and 1990 US Decennial Censuses: This is considered the most accurate source of demographic

Suburban-style housing.
data in the United States. It measures 100% of the population and offers comparable data points at regular intervals. However, available data is limited to population and housing information, and the ten-year interval between data points means it is rarely “fresh.”

**American Community Survey.** The ACS program replaced the “long form” Census questions beginning in 2000, collecting the same types of detailed information about social, economic, and housing conditions on a rolling basis instead of once per decade. The statistical validity of the ACS depends on sampling. For smaller communities, data is collected over 60 months to achieve a valid sample size, called a “five-year estimate.” This system shows the statistical tradeoff between the reliability gained by increasing sample size and the currency that is sacrificed in the time it takes to do so. The dataset used was the 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

**FIGURE 1: IRON MOUNTAIN POPULATION**

![Iron Mountain Population Graph]


**POPULATION**

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, the City of Iron Mountain had 7,450 residents in 2017. After several consecutive decades of population decline, which began after the closure of Ford Motor Company’s Kingsford plant in the 1950s, population loss has slowed. The City lost only 174 residents after the Great Recession between 2010 and 2017. By comparison, it lost about 530 residents over the entire decade preceding 2010. The graph, “Iron Mountain Population” assumes the slower and more recent rate of population loss into the future and estimates that the City would have just over 7,000 residents in 2030. Population is difficult to predict as it is subject to several factors outside of the City’s control, so it is best to review projections frequently for accuracy.

Iron Mountain is closely linked with its neighboring communities of Kingsford, Breitung Township and the City and Township of Norway. Together, these
Communities have roughly 22,600 residents, which comprises the majority (88%) of Dickinson County’s population. The graph and table “Population Change” show that each community lost population in recent years, although the rate of loss varied by place. The two Townships generally fared better and had a more gradual population loss compared to the cities, except for Norway Township’s rapid loss in the decade before 2010. Although population loss continues across all the area communities, the graph of population change shows that the rate of decline has slowed since 2010, which signifies the start of positive trends.

### Households and Families

Iron Mountain had 3,163 households in 2017, although that number dropped over time with the community’s population loss - there were 3,362 households in 2010 and 3,458 in 2000. About 2,000 Iron Mountain households, or 65% of the total, were considered families in 2017, which is a smaller share than in Breitung Township (68%).
but similar to the share statewide. Interestingly, the percentage of Iron Mountain family households may have increased from 2010, which contrasts with patterns nationwide, as young and elderly individuals more frequently live alone or with unrelated persons.

The Census Bureau’s definition of “families” encompasses many living situations which could explain the City’s recent increase. Despite Iron Mountain’s overall growth in families, only 750 households were families with children under 18 years old, which was a smaller share than in Michigan overall, as the graph “Households - Families & Nonfamilies” shows. Likewise, the City’s share of married-couple families with children under 18 was smaller than the share statewide. These trends reflect the Upper Peninsula’s loss of school-age residents as young households and families have left the region, which has strained local school districts and depleted the workforce. Meanwhile, the City had over 400 sole-person elderly households, which comprised a larger share than in the state overall. This household type has grown in recent years and without adequate care, these residents can become more vulnerable to health emergencies and social isolation.

The average household size in Iron Mountain was 2.21 individuals at the 2010 census, which was considerably lower compared with 2.49 individuals statewide and constituted a decline from 2000. This suggests the presence of smaller families, fewer children, and a greater number of sole-person households in the community. Smaller household size implies growing demand for compact housing formats and a mix of commercial and residential uses located in convenient proximity.

**AGE**

The population’s age distribution is underscores workforce trends and suggests what type of public services may be needed. For instance, the number of late-career individuals indicates the future demand for senior services. The graph,

---

**FIGURE 3: HOUSEHOLDS - FAMILIES & NONFAMILIES**

![Graph showing household types](image)

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year estimates 2013-2017
“Age and Gender Pyramid” shows the percentage of City residents per age group and gender in 2017.

The figure depicts a “top-heavy” pyramid and, therefore, an elderly population. Iron Mountain had nearly 2,000 residents in the retirement age range of 60 years or older in 2017, which made up over one quarter (26.7%) of the population. Because elderly individuals typically exit the workforce and have less discretionary spending, the growth of this cohort is often associated with a slowing economy. The next oldest cohort, ages 45 to 59 years comprised another fifth of the population. These residents will move into retirement in the coming decades, and so the community will need to provide appropriate services, housing, and amenities for these groups.

The City’s 1,700 young working-age residents between the ages of 25 and 44 made up under one-quarter of the population. While this is a substantial share, this represents a heavy loss of about 25% since 2000. Experts have noted the recent exodus of young and educated residents from Michigan is driven by the state’s loss of middle-income jobs and by promising employment and quality-of-life amenities elsewhere in the US. According to estimates, the median age of individuals leaving the state was just under 30 years in 2019, and almost half had a bachelor’s degree. Considering these trends, retaining young households will be an economic goal.

Despite the City’s aging population, Iron Mountain is younger than its neighbors. Compared to the State of Michigan, however, Iron Mountain and its neighbors are noticeably older. Additionally, the community’s median age increased by about four years between 2000 and 2010, further showing the community’s aging.
MAP 2: MEDIAN AGE
The map “Median Age” shows residents’ median age across the City in 2010, displayed in block groups. The two block groups in Iron Mountain’s center, which encompass the neighborhoods near downtown, were substantially younger than the outlying block groups. It is important to note that the outlying block groups are split with neighboring communities, whereas the two central groups are entirely within the City. Even so, this suggests that the City’s central areas are younger than its neighborhoods.

Disabled Seniors and Veterans

Nearly half of the City’s residents over the age of 65 - almost 700 individuals - had some form of disability, which is much higher than the share of disabled seniors statewide. Dickinson County is in a region some observers have coined Michigan’s “Disability Belt,” a stretch of northern territory where aging adults with health concerns left the workforce en masse during the recession. Many subsist on social assistance because they are unable to find work that is less physically demanding and matches their level of education. Another 13% of City residents had veteran status, which was about double the share statewide. The largest share of veterans served in the Vietnam War. These groups’ diverse needs have implications for the design of public services and spaces, especially considering that disabilities also encompass hearing and visual impairments.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Aside from disabilities, residents’ physical and mental health are of concern in the Upper Peninsula. A needs assessment conducted by the region’s District Health Department invited residents to weigh in on their community’s public health issues. Outside of affordable healthcare, Dickinson County residents rated drug abuse and a lack of treatment services, childhood obesity, and a shortage of affordable mental healthcare programs as the greatest challenges.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Although Iron Mountain’s population is homogeneously white, unique ancestry differentiates the community from its surroundings. Iron Mountain attracted a group of Italian immigrants in its early mining days and presently, about 16% of residents report Italian ancestry. The community maintains strong ties with these roots through annual events such as Italian Fest, bocce ball courts, and businesses with distinct cuisines. Because Italian immigration was not heavy throughout Michigan or Wisconsin history, there is an opportunity to grow cultural tourism.

SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

Education

Educational attainment largely determines the employment that residents qualify for, and relatedly, the firms that locate in a community. High school education is a key link to economic stability, and fortunately, the share of Iron Mountain adults with at least a high school diploma (93.9%) is greater than the State of Michigan overall. With the City’s concentration of manufacturing and healthcare jobs, many residents have skilled trades training or other profession-based education. About 1,800 Iron Mountain adults, or one-third of the total, had either “some college” education or an “associate’s degree.” The share of Iron Mountain adults with at least a bachelor’s degree was also substantial (25%) but less than Breitung Township (29.7%) and the State of Michigan overall (28.1%). Figures indicate that the community’s younger workers are also more educated; over half of the estimated 1,300 college degrees in the community were held by residents between 25 and 44 years old.

Iron Mountain also has a distinct group of residents enrolled in higher education programs - ACS data shows that about 300 residents were in college or graduate
school in 2017. Although it is difficult to say whether this figure tracks Bay College students or those enrolled at institutions outside the City, it suggests the presence of students, which is age group with unique spending patterns that could support more business.

Employment

With the region’s aging population, shrinking workforces present a challenge across Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Labor force participation is a measure that refers to the number of adult residents that are employed or actively seeking work. With the City’s aging population just over half of residents (53%), participate in the labor market, which is lower than the share statewide (61%). This corresponds with the community’s large number of senior residents and retirees living on a fixed income (37.6% of households are on social security).

Despite its shrinking workforce, the City’s diverse employment sectors have remained stable over recent years. The largest portion of residents were employed in healthcare in 2017 and these jobs, many of which are provided through the Dickinson County and Veterans Administration Hospitals, provided stable earnings. Employment in manufacturing also comprised a large share of local employment and grew between 2000 and 2017, which is surprising considering the downward trend throughout Michigan. Other local employment sectors such as professional services and public administration, both associated with the Dickinson County government, as well as construction, have remained relatively consistent.

Income

Household income is a result of the jobs residents hold, which is in turn linked to educational attainment and job training. Other segments of the Iron Mountain community have low annual incomes. The graph “Iron Mountain Households by Income Range” shows that about 40% of households had annual earnings under $34,999. These households are likely the City’s retirees living on fixed incomes,

FIGURE 5: INCOME & EDUCATION
and the many workers employed in retail or arts, entertainment, recreation, and food services. Workers annual earnings in these two industries were some of the lowest in the community ($20,943 and $11,716, respectively) and many jobs were often not full time or year-round. Low wages among service workers will continue to present a challenge; if the community seeks new businesses downtown, the labor force that supports those establishments will need affordable amenities.

The United States Census Bureau determines poverty by comparing household annual income with the number of individuals in the household. With this definition, about 1,100 Iron Mountain residents were in poverty in 2017, which is comparable to the share statewide. While poverty is often concentrated among the very old and young, about one quarter of Iron Mountain residents between 18 and 34 years old were in poverty. Further, United Way organizations in Michigan study households termed ALICE (asset limited, income constrained, employed) - households with incomes above poverty but who still struggle with basic needs including healthcare and nutrition. According to 2015 data, financially vulnerable households in either poverty or ALICE status make up an estimated 45% of the City's total.
HOUSING

In 2017 there were an estimated 3,611 housing units in the City of Iron Mountain. ACS figures suggest that the vast majority of these were constructed before 1980 and that virtually no new housing has been constructed since 2010.

2016 Target Market Analysis for Dickinson County

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority collaborated with the Upper Peninsula’s regional planning agencies and a private consultant, Land Use USA, to conduct a housing market analysis. The study’s objective was to determine the housing formats that communities and builders should promote to capture demand from potential new households. The analysis published findings specific to each of the region’s 15 counties by using their demographics, and internal and external migration patterns. It identified each County’s “target markets” - households residing throughout Michigan that are most inclined to move and likely to migrate to that County. By promoting housing options in line with their target markets’ preferences, communities can position themselves to retain and attract new residents.

Dickinson County’s target markets are primarily moderate- and upper-income households. Although they include diverse ages, most are without children and many prefer attached housing such as townhomes, flats, lofts, and mid-rise apartment buildings. The analysis forecasted housing demand in the County and individual communities in a “conservative” scenario, where new demand is based on in-migration to the County only, and in an “aggressive” scenario, which adds potential migration within the County to the estimate. Results from the latter are shown in the table “Annual Market Potential - Aggressive Scenario,” and suggest that potential new Iron Mountain households could support 321 detached housing units, and 175 attached units annually.

Several of the attached types, such as duplexes and townhomes are often termed “missing middle” housing; formats larger in scale than single family homes but smaller than large apartment buildings. The study’s results will be a key consideration for Iron Mountain as it updates its residential zoning and if the community seeks to attract new households.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Format</th>
<th>City of Iron Mountain</th>
<th>City of Kingsford</th>
<th>City of Norway</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detached Houses (1 unit)</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplex-Quadplex (2-4 units)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse (5-9 units)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Multiplex (10-19 units)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Multiplex (20-49 units)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Target Market Analysis Dickinson County Michigan 2016
Housing Types

As is the case in many Michigan communities, single-family housing is the predominant format in Iron Mountain. According to ACS estimates, over three-fourths of the community’s dwelling units were single-family detached structures. “Missing middle” housing is at the center of local discussions across the United States as a potential antidote to a housing stock that is mismatched with resident’s preferences and pocket book. Experts claim that seniors and millennials seek compact middle options because the higher density allows these groups to live conveniently near amenities and necessities.\(^{16}\) The advantage of mid-scale housing types is that they can match the scale and character of existing single-family neighborhoods and are often more palatable to nearby homeowners than large multifamily structures.\(^{17}\) As the graph “Housing Formats” shows, around 17% of Iron Mountain’s dwellings, about 600 units, could be categorized as “middle” housing, including 350 duplex units, 189 small multifamily units (3-9 units per lot), and 179 units configured in 10-19 units per lot.

While these numbers show some housing variety, the City could do more to promote compact, mid-scale options. One common obstacle is zoning laws that discourage these forms, for example, multifamily housing denser than duplexes are not permitted in the R-2 Moderate Density designation and are limited in its R-3 Multiple Family districts.\(^{18,19}\) These two zones encompass the neighborhoods adjoining downtown where it would be ideal to boost residential density to accommodate the walkable lifestyles desired by younger and older demographics.\(^{20}\)
Adding duplexes, triplexes, and low-rise apartments as permitted uses could promote more diverse options. According to the community survey results, the most popular home outside of single-family is townhomes. The City could also remove single-family housing from the Multiple Family zone to allow a designated space for multifamily options, in keeping with the zone’s purpose. Single-family housing on small lots is another way to increase density without dramatically altering neighborhood character, and so lot widths in the single-family zone could be decreased.

**Tenure & Housing Value**

Iron Mountain has experienced a recent shift toward more rental housing - about 1,918 residents were living in rental dwelling units in 2000, which grew to 2,001 by 2017. By 2017, nearly one third (30.5%) of the community’s dwelling units were renter-occupied, which is high compared with neighboring Breitung and Norway Townships (9.1% and 12.8%). The area’s growing senior population has likely contributed to the growing share of renters, while the loss of young households likely underlies declining homeownership. The foreclosure crisis from the Great Recession made homeownership a less appealing investment for many potential buyers and may also be an influencing factor.

The graph “Owner-Occupied Housing Values” shows slouching home values in the community; about two-thirds of the owner-occupied dwellings were valued at under $100,000 or less, and the median home value is low compared to Breitung Township and Michigan. This trend is likely attributable to the community’s older housing stock and the conversion of owner-occupied units to rentals.

Housing rehabilitation should remain a City goal. Although it is largely market driven, the public sector can take measures to encourage it. For instance, the City could convene stakeholders to create a revolving loan program to encourage the private sector to revitalize housing in instances where it otherwise...
would not. Inventorying blighted properties is another good step, so that the City can apply for the US Department of Agriculture and Michigan State Housing Development Authority grants for housing rehabilitation and know where to target these funds.

The City has already taken action to encourage neighborhood revitalization by establishing a Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ). These zones are designed to tip the financial playing field and promote housing rehabilitation in communities that meet the State's definition of “distressed.” The City offers tax exemptions to builders and property owners who improve housing in the NEZ. Two types of projects can qualify for the tax incentive: the rehabilitation of existing structures valued at $80,000 or less per unit, or the construction new structures with one or two dwelling units where one dwelling unit will be owner occupied.21

Ensuring the quality of rental housing will be an economic concern as the community seeks to attract new residents. Participants at the visioning workshop highlighted low quality rental units as a challenge in the absence of tighter regulations. The City's ordinance requires that rental housing maintain minimum standards; however, it mainly ensures buildings’ structural integrity and safety and does not extend to their amenities or aesthetics.22

80% of survey respondents expressed support for standards to require minimum inside and outside appearances and the provision of modern amenities for rental housing.

Cost Burden

Housing cost is a product of supply and demand in the local market. As a result of low wages, some Iron Mountain households struggle with housing costs. Households that expend over 30% of their monthly earnings on housing costs are considered cost-burdened by the Census Bureau. The share of cost-burdened renters in the City has consistently remained higher than owners. Although cost burden has been decreasing since the recession, over one-third of the City’s renters and just under a quarter of owners remained cost-burdened in 2017. Renting is often the precursor to homeownership and without high-quality and attainably priced dwellings, renters will struggle to save enough to invest in the community’s housing market.
Vacancy

With Iron Mountain’s declining population, housing vacancy is a concern. In 2017, about 448 housing units were vacant, which is up considerably from 361 units in 2000. Although small levels of vacancy are desirable to ensure some availability for new households, higher levels of residential vacancy also lowers property values, often lead to blight, and constrain the tax base.

Housing vacancy has increased since 2000.

SOURCES

1  City of Iron Mountain. Master Plan 2011. Pg. 2-3
4  US Census Bureau. Nearly 1 in 5 People Have a Disability in the U.S. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html
5  Western U.P. Health Department. Dickinson County Factsheet. http://www.wupdhd.org/upchna/
6  Iron Mountain DDA. Italian Fest. https://www.downtownironmountain.com/italian-fest
8  United Ways of Michigan. 2017 ALICE Update. Pg. 5
9  United Ways of Michigan. 2017 ALICE Update. Pg. 117
10 Land Use USA. Target Market Analysis Regional Workbook 2016. Pg. 22
11 Land Use USA. Target Market Analysis Dickinson County Michigan 2016. Pg. 8
12 Land Use USA. Target Market Analysis Regional Workbook 2016. Pg. 9
13 Land Use USA. Target Market Analysis Regional Workbook 2016. Pg. 23-24
14 Land Use USA. Target Market Analysis Dickinson County Michigan 2016. Pg. 19
15 Land Use USA. Target Market Analysis Regional Workbook 2016. Pg. 9
16 Opticos Design. Missing Middle Housing - What does the market want? https://missingmiddlehousing.com/about/market
17 Opticos Design. Missing Middle Housing - What are the characteristics of Missing Middle Housing? https://missingmiddlehousing.com/about/characteristics
19 City of Iron Mountain. Zoning Ordinance. Division 4. Section 74-253
Crystal Lake and Lake Antoine are beautiful natural features that Iron Mountain is known for. However, large areas of paved surfaces exacerbate flooding, which threatens these water bodies and poses risks to the surrounding neighborhoods. The City currently lacks representation to regional groups such as the Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Conservancy where they can share concerns and learn about watershed-level decisions that may affect the City. Impervious surfaces, highest along M-95 and US-2, make for prime areas to install green infrastructure to capture and purify stormwater. Trees provide several other benefits in urban areas - enhancing the appeal of business districts, raising property values, and improving air quality.
As communities have grown outward, the natural environment has historically been consumed irresponsibly at the expense of that prosperity. Part of nature’s degradation during this process is a lack of understanding of nature’s valuable ecosystem services, such as cleaning our air, water, soil. Only recently have there been substantial steps toward integrating the natural environment into the built environment in a way that minimizes negative impacts on the environment. This section inventories the natural features within the City of Iron Mountain, discusses their importance to planning, and provides strategies to ensure their preservation.

**THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The built environment consists of manmade structures, networks, and spaces that have been substantially physically altered. Impervious surfaces (i.e. pavement) are one way to measure the extent of the built environment because they demonstrate where manmade materials have disrupted water from entering the ground. The areas with the highest degree of impervious surfaces are often along major transportation lines, which is the case in Iron Mountain. Along US-2 and M-95, imperviousness reaches up to between 90-100%. The "Impervious Surface" map demonstrates the percent imperviousness within the City, with yellow areas representing 0% impervious land in its natural state.

Areas with high degrees of impervious surface increase the risk of flooding because water is not able to infiltrate the soil and therefore is forced to flow above ground and pond in lower-lying areas of the City. As a result, impervious surfaces can harm public health as water picks up contaminants along its path before depositing those contaminants in the stormwater system or a local waterbody. Pavement and other types of impervious surfaces absorb solar radiation increasing the ambient temperature that contributes to artificially high temperatures in areas with a high degree of imperviousness.

**Flooding – The Effects of the Built Environment**

Flood events are caused by an excess volume of water moving through the watershed due to an extreme rain event or a large amount of snowmelt. These events are exacerbated by the built environment. Iron Mountain has struggled with flooding, especially in the southern portion of the City around Crystal and Mud Lakes. In September 2014, a flood caused the closure of sections of US 2 and roughly 15,000 homes lost power.¹

The map “Anticipated Flooding,” on the following page, shows which areas in the City are likely to flood during four types of flood events in order of growing severity: an actionable event, a flood event, a moderate flood event, and a major flood event. These areas were calculated by taking the flood event elevations from a USGS stream monitoring gauge and joining it to the topography of Iron Mountain.² This analysis is solely based on topography and stream height; therefore, it is not intended to be a substitute for an in-depth hydrologic survey. As the climate changes, precipitation is predicted to become heavier and more frequent. The Great Lakes Integrated Science and
MAP 4: IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

City of Kingsford
Breitung Township

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR, FEMA

Percent Impervious Surface:
Low (1%)  High (100%)

City Boundary
MAP 5: ANTICIPATED FLOODING

ANTICIPATED FLOODING

FEMA 1% Annual Flood Hazard
Actionable Event
Flood Event
Moderate Flood Event
Major Flood Event

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR, USGS, NOAA, FEMA
Assessment Program (GLISA) predicts that Iron Mountain will experience a 1-2% increase in average annual precipitation and a 1-1.5 day increase of heavy rainfall. While these numbers may seem small, climate change could mean one or two more flood events per year.

It is interesting to note that the area that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has designated floodplain is smaller than “anticipated flooding.” This demonstrates that all properties are vulnerable to flooding; cities are seeing much wider damage than expected outside of the 1% annual flood hazard boundaries.

Lake Antoine

The City completed a Lake Management Plan for Lake Antoine in 2016 with the vision to protect the lake as a recreational and natural asset. The main purpose of the plan is to manage the long-term health of the lake, though other concerns from the community included high lake levels, litter, and quality of fishing. Rising lake levels and growing precipitation falling in concentrated bursts will likely continue to plague the City, further stressing the importance of implementing the recommendations in the Lake Management Plan.

Members of the Lake Antoine Association and Dickinson Conservation District were heavily involved in the inventory and data provision for this Plan and remain the necessary partners to monitor progress towards the goals of improving water quality and preventing the spread on invasive species. It is recommended that the City work with these organizations and support these efforts, where possible.

Watershed

Iron Mountain is only one player in the larger picture of watershed management in the region. Watersheds are drainage basins defined by the final destination a drop of water drains to.
Iron Mountain is located within the Menominee River Watershed, which follows the Menominee River. Many communities in the state of Michigan have developed watershed councils to take a comprehensive community-based approach to watershed management. No such watershed council exists for the Menominee River Watershed. Although the Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Conservancy covers the entire Upper Peninsula and provides many resources to communities interested in protecting and preserving their watershed, there is no local watershed council to proactively protect it, investigate concerns, or educate local members on topics such as land use policy and coordinated environmental stewardship.

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

Green stormwater infrastructure helps mitigate the negative impacts of pervious surfaces. Strategic location of plants and trees that absorb and purify water through their root system, as opposed to the installation of more expensive constructed methods is a cost-effective approach that has the added benefits of expanding greenery and beautifying the built environment.

The “Green Infrastructure Placement” map shows the best placement of green infrastructure in Iron Mountain based on the combination of four factors: topography/slope, existing vegetation, land use, and soil characteristics. Each factor was weighted to reflect its level of importance in determining where green infrastructure is needed. The analysis shows that the areas along US-2, M-95, and in the western residential areas have the greatest need for green infrastructure. Since these areas are more densely developed, bioswales, rain gardens, planter boxes, and permeable pavement that take up relatively little space and can be integrated into already developed neighborhoods or in the public right-of-way are appropriate examples for that context."}

---

**CASE STUDY: DETROIT**

A study in Detroit quantified the combined advantage of pervious pavement and a rain garden on a church’s parking lot. Using the EPA’s stormwater management model, the study calculated that a 4,530 square foot rain garden and a 33,000 square foot patch of pervious pavement reduced stormwater runoff volume by 70%, even during the heaviest six-hour period of precipitation in Detroit’s recent history (2016).

The Natural Environment

Wetlands

Besides serving as a unique habitat for numerous species, they are the natural filtration device of the ecosystem. Wetlands can absorb excess water from severe rain events or snowmelt and filter the water before it enters the ground. Development of wetlands is strictly controlled by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE); any development that deposits, fills, dredges, removes, drains, or constructs on a wetland must receive a permit. Local municipalities are enabled to enact stricter regulations to ensure their preservation; for example, additional site plan review requirements for development on or near a wetland.

EGLE identifies two types of wetlands: freshwater emergent and freshwater forested/shrub. EGLE also identifies areas of restorative wetlands, which makes about 9% of the City’s total land area.

Most wetlands in the City are in the south by Mud Lake or in the north where...
**MAP 6: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLACEMENT**

**WEIGHTED FACTORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topography / Slope</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Vegetation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soils</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR, USGS, NOAA, NLCD.
Moon Lake connects to Antoine Creek. Because these areas are saturated with water at all times, they are often the first areas to flood during an excessive rain or flood event and should not be used for development.

Tree Canopy Coverage

Trees also provide valuable ecosystem services in stormwater infiltration, lowering rising temperatures, and providing aesthetic value to cities. The “Tree Canopy Coverage” map shows the tree canopy for the City in 2016. Using remote sensing and satellite imagery, the federal government inventories the tree canopy for the contiguous United States every five years. A new inventory will be conducted in 2021. As seen on the map, the undeveloped east and west side of Iron Mountain have very dense tree canopies. The tree canopy map and the impervious surface map are near perfect inverses of each other, demonstrating the impact that the built environment has on the natural environment. By adding trees or other green infrastructure into the City, a process referred to as urban greening, Iron Mountain can reap the benefits of the natural environment without substantially changing the built environment.

There are several ways to increase tree canopy coverage aside from public funding of tree plantings. Through the Zoning Ordinance, the City may require that any new development must plant native vegetation on the parcel. On an already heavily vegetated site, the City may enact a tree preservation ordinance that states a minimal number of trees that may be cut down in the development process. Currently, the City has a Tree Board that inventories, manages, and recommends trees that are optimal to the area to City Council. While this is an important task in tree preservation, the Zoning Ordinance is a tool that requires these regulations be applied to all new development.
MAP 7: WETLANDS

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR
TREE CANOPY COVERAGE

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR, NLCD 2016

MAP 8: TREE CANOPY COVERAGE
Winter trails near the historic Chapin Mine.

SOURCES


3. Great Lakes Integrated Science and Assessment Program Climate Change Maps

4. Ibid.


Community Services & Facilities

The City operates public water and sanitary sewer systems, both of which have adequate capacity and could likely serve new development. Stormwater management is perhaps the most pressing public infrastructure concern - heavy precipitation events have flooded streets and caused wastewater overflows into the Menominee River. These occurrences that could damage buildings, human health, and natural ecosystems if they continue in the future and are partially attributed to combined stormwater and sanitary sewer systems. Because of the area’s population loss over time, residents expressed a desire to optimally use public funds by consolidating public services across municipal boundaries.
Community services and infrastructure, though not always visible to the public, are the skeletal systems that allow cities to function properly. Some, including communications infrastructure, enable economic growth in the 21st century, while others including healthcare and education, are closely linked with the needs of specific age groups. This chapter describes Iron Mountain’s services and infrastructure, inventories the diverse public and private organizations responsible for maintaining them, and makes recommendations for their improvement.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Water

The City of Iron Mountain provides water to most properties in the community – only 49 properties rely on private wells.¹ The City’s water is sourced from four groundwater wells, three are located in the City and one in Breitung Township. Iron Mountain has a designated wellhead protection zone surrounding its wells that helps prevent groundwater contamination by limiting the use and development of surrounding properties.² After being drawn from the water table, municipal water is stored in one of three reservoirs in the community: underground tanks are located at Millie Hill, between A and B Streets, and an above-ground tank is located at Pine Mountain.³ The system also serves properties outside of the City boundary including Pine Mountain, Timberstone Golf Course, and a few commercial customers in Breitung Township that pay for this service.

The average daily demand for water in the community is well below the system’s capacity. Iron Mountain anticipates that its system will continue to meet local demand in the coming years. Perhaps the greatest challenge related to the system is Michigan’s 2018 revised Lead and Copper Rule. The state mandate was designed to protect households from contamination by requiring that water utility operators replace pipes extending between public water mains and properties that contain lead, which, in rare instances, have corroded over time, causing a potential threat to human health.⁴ Without outside assistance, local jurisdictions face a funding shortage to inventory and replace the infrastructure. Iron Mountain’s role in replacing the lines will continue to evolve as the responsibilities held by state and local jurisdictions are clarified through legal processes. In the meantime, the City plans annual maintenance to its water system, including the replacement of water meters, hydrants, and mainline valves through 2023.⁵

Wastewater and Stormwater

The City of Iron Mountain maintains a sanitary system, which collects wastewater from most properties in the community, excluding 43 that rely on private septic systems.⁶ The system transports wastewater to a treatment plant owned jointly between Kingsford and Iron Mountain. The treated water is then discharged into the Menominee River. With the area’s population decline over recent decades, the treatment plant meets current demand and could likely serve new development - it has an estimated daily capacity of three million gallons of existing capacity daily.

Water System Statistics

2.5 million gallons of daily capacity
750,000 gallons of existing capacity daily
Pressure between 50-120 pounds per square inch
45 miles of water mains
650 valves
620 fire hydrants

Source: City of Iron Mountain Department of Public Works
MAP 9: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR

Community Facility
City of Iron Mountain

0 0.5 1 Miles

City of Kingsford
Breitung Township
Dickinson County Healthcare System
Iron Mountain High and Middle Schools
Menominee Range Historical Museum
North Elementary School
East Elementary School
Dickinson County Library
Oscar G Johnson VA Medical Clinic
Iron Mountain Senior Center
WWII Glider & Military and Cornish Pumping Engine & Mining Museums

Northern Lights YMCA
Northwestern Michigan College
Bay College West Campus
City of Iron Mountain
Breitung Township
Wisconsin DNR
WISCONSIN
gallons and treats only about two million gallons daily. While Iron Mountain’s sanitary lines also have sufficient capacity, some older lines require more maintenance. In 2017, the City obtained a SAW grant from the state to assess the condition of its collection system, which revealed that older clay lines are deteriorating. The City will need to finance these repairs in the coming years.

Precipitation that falls in Iron Mountain is handled by either the City’s storm sewer system or its sanitary system. The storm sewer collects the bulk of the stormwater and directs it into one of two water bodies. Precipitation falling on the community’s west side is channeled into Crystal Lake, while stormwater in its eastern extent is first directed into Chapin Mine, and then pumped into Lake Antoine. The municipal sanitary lines also collect a small amount of stormwater, often called a combined sewer system, an infrastructure configuration typical of many older Michigan communities. Stormwater collected by the sanitary system is managed like wastewater; it flows to the shared treatment plant in Breitung Township and is discharged into the Menominee River after treatment. The drawback to a combined sewer system is that rapid precipitation overwhelms the system’s capacity.

Heavy rainfall events are increasingly common in Michigan and pose a management challenge, supported by survey results which revealed a moderate flooding severity problem. Ponding is particularly common on the low-lying west side of the City, where it restricts access to neighborhoods, causes damage to private property, and could pose health hazards. Rainwater flowing into the combined sewer lines has also overwhelmed the treatment plant on numerous occasions, causing untreated wastewater to flow into the Menominee River. The plant’s superintendent commented on the increasing frequency of the events in June 2017, recounting they had to discharge five times halfway through the year after discharging five times over the entire previous year. These occurrences highlight a need to manage greater stormwater volumes; therefore, the City should implement green infrastructure in public spaces and require onsite water retention through the zoning ordinance and site plan review process to reduce the quantity that the infrastructure manages.

Historic Chapin Mine.
NON-MUNICIPAL, PRIVATE, & NONPROFIT SERVICES

Education

Public School System

The Iron Mountain Public School District provides K-12 educational resources to the community. The district's boundary coincides exactly with the City's, and so it is required to provide transportation to and from its facilities for all families in the community. As of 2019, the district operated four facilities: the high school and middle school are located near downtown, while the two elementary schools are in the northern and eastern neighborhoods. The district also provides adult education and literacy classes through Iron Mountain-Kingsford Community Schools. Combined, Iron Mountain Schools had a total enrollment of 883 students in the 2018-2019 school year. Breitung Township schools is the neighboring district and encompasses both the Township and the City of Kingsford. The table “District-wide Student Enrollment” shows that of the two districts, Iron Mountain Public Schools had a smaller student body and that enrollment declined in recent years, while the Township schools held relatively constant. Although it would likely take considerable time, survey respondents indicated that consolidating the school districts should be explored to make the administration of K-12 education more efficient.

Despite declining enrollment, Iron Mountain Public Schools offer a unique array of educational resources to students, who have a record of excellent academic achievement. The high school has a variety of advanced placement and college preparation classes in subjects including science, technology, and social sciences. Both the high and middle schools offer project-based learning coursework, in which students focus on a research question for an extended period, and the high school offers co-op classes, where students spend time with a local employer to explore careers. A greater percentage of Iron Mountain High School students were enrolled in advanced placement courses compared with students statewide, and the district had an above-average graduation rate.

Dickinson-Iron Intermediate School District provides an array of specialized educational services in Dickinson and Iron Counties. The organization’s “Head Start” and “Great Start” programs offer childcare for children younger than preschool age and operate out of the Willis Center facility in Kingsford. The intermediate school also provides special education services and therapy to students enrolled in local schools through its facility in Kingsford. Trades classes including welding, automotive services, electrical systems, graphic communication, and marketing are also available through the district’s technical education center in Kingsford.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iron Mountain Facility</th>
<th>2018-2019 Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iron Mountain High School</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>9 - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Middle School</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>7 - 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Elementary School</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>5 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Elementary School</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>K - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM-K Community Education</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>Adult education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Michigan School Data
school students can even get an early start on an associate’s degree through the district’s partnership with Bay College. The district operates with state and local resources, including a property tax millage.14

Bay College West Campus

Outside of Northern Michigan University, Bay College is the major higher educational institution in the Central Upper Peninsula. While its main campus is in Escanaba, Bay College opened a 67,000 square-foot facility in Iron Mountain in 2007, which has provided tremendous support for the community and its economy. The community college offers affordably priced transfer programs and professional certifications. Enrolled students participate in internships with local businesses including Systems Control, MJ Electric, CCI Systems, and Boss Snowplow.15 The college also has dedicated staff members that offer career guidance to students and work with local employers to assess their workforce needs. The facility is located on 25 acres along US-2 in and its operations are financed through a local millage and state funds.16

Healthcare and Senior Services

Dickinson County Healthcare System

Dickinson County Memorial Hospital is located on US-2 in Iron Mountain near the City’s southeast border. The 96-bed facility is large and was completed in 1996 and provides a variety of general and specialized healthcare services to the community. The Dickinson Primary Care Center is located on the campus and provides general healthcare and pediatric services. Specialized care including therapy and rehabilitation services, heart care, cancer treatment, and in-home healthcare is also available through the facility.17 The hospital also has an emergency department and a convenient care clinic. Considering the growing need for senior housing, the City could work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Breitung Township Schools</th>
<th>Iron Mountain Public Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>1,893</td>
<td>883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>1,839</td>
<td>879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>1,805</td>
<td>863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>1,792</td>
<td>893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>1,808</td>
<td>941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>1,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>1,672</td>
<td>1,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>1,676</td>
<td>1,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>1,689</td>
<td>1,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>1,716</td>
<td>1,277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Michigan School Data

Iron Mountain football stadium

Iron Mountain High School and Middle School
with the hospital to provide assisted living facilities on site, which would allow convenient access to healthcare for seniors in need.

**Veterans Administration Hospital**
The Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Clinic provides support to the region’s veterans and their families. The large 6-story, 63-bed facility first opened in 1950, and its service area includes most of the Upper Peninsula and eleven counties in northern Wisconsin. The facility provides a range of services including primary care, rehabilitation, therapy, mental health services, and surgery, many of which are available on an outpatient basis. It also includes a 40-bed nursing home care unit.

**Dickinson-Iron Community Services Agency**
The Dickinson-Iron Community Services Agency is a private nonprofit organization with the stated mission to empower individuals in Dickinson and Iron Counties to remain self-sufficient. The organization provides in-home services to seniors 60 years of age or older including personal care, homemaking, and respite care, which keep elderly residents in their homes and support their independence. The agency also delivers prepared meals to homebound seniors up to seven days a week. It also operates the Iron Mountain Senior Center in the City, where it offers a congregate meal program for seniors and guests. Support for veteran families, including rental and utility assistance, is another important service the organization provides.

**Emergency Services**

**Fire**
The City of Iron Mountain provides 24-hour response service to the community. Its facility is located on Fleshiem Street on the north side of downtown, and it maintains a staff of professional firefighters. The City has a mutual-aid agreement with Kingsford and Breitung Township, wherein each community will provide staff and equipment to one another in the event of a potentially life-threatening situation. Participants in Iron Mountain’s community visioning workshop expressed that the City should seek to consolidate services and equipment with its neighbors. If its neighbors were to need expanded coverage or equipment, this could present
an opportunity for Iron Mountain to achieve the vision.24

Police
Iron Mountain Police Department is co-located with the Fire Department on Fleshiem Street. The City commits officers to participate in the multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement program titled KIND (Kingsford, Iron Mountain, Norway, Dickinson County). A mutual aid agreement also applies to local law enforcement in Dickinson and Florence County communities, where police departments in one community will support neighboring communities if an emergency arises.25 The Dickinson County Sheriff’s also provides law enforcement in the community, and its office is in downtown Iron Mountain.

Ambulance
The private company Beacon Ambulance Service has long provided emergency medical transportation in Dickinson County; however, the company decided to discontinue the service in November 2019 because of a lack of use and staffing issues.26 A newer service operator in the area, Integrity Care EMS began operating in Dickinson County in 2016 and will fill the role. Integrity maintains a local fleet of six emergency medical vehicles.

Utilities
Gas & Electric
Private companies provide utilities in Iron Mountain; DTE energy provides gas, while Wisconsin Electric delivers electricity. The Wisconsin-based energy company operates a few hydroelectric facilities in the Upper Peninsula, but most of its production facilities are in Wisconsin. Stakeholders participating in the Central Upper Peninsula’s Planning and Development Commission’s 2016 economic development strategy identified high energy costs as a major economic inhibitor throughout the region.27

Survey Results
If consolidating services presented cost savings, which services do you think should be consolidated with neighboring communities?

- Schools (K-12) – 61%
- Police / Fire – 60%
- Streets – 53%

FACT: SOLAR ENERGY
The UP has one of the nation’s best returns on solar investment.

Renewable energy sources have for the first time become more economical or competitively priced with nonrenewable sources which makes their adoption and future use an inevitability. Yet, a city must be prepared for their arrival and determine how it will enable the use of solar, wind, or geothermal on its land and at what scale. For example, does the city want to permit solar farms or personal rooftop panels? While it is commonly believed that Michigan does not receive enough sunlight to warrant the installation of solar panels, research says otherwise. The Upper Peninsula has one of the nation’s best returns on solar investment.28 To start, renewable energy sources should be defined and permitted in the zoning ordinance as an accessory use in residential, commercial, and industrial zones. Regulations about the location of panels and buffering requirements are some popular concerns from residents who may worry that this type of infrastructure could change the character of the community. Other potential changes include updates to the
building code that provide weatherization requirements which could better insulate properties to reduce overall energy consumption.

**Solid Waste**

The City of Iron Mountain contracts with Great American Disposal for the community’s solid waste services. The company provides a weekly curbside trash collection service to residents and businesses, and the fee is added to their water bills. Waste is then transported to a transfer station in Breitung Township, which is operated by the private contractor. Though the service is largely adequate, it does not extend to recyclable materials; residents bring recycling to the transfer station themselves. The Iron Mountain community sees this as a priority for change, which the visioning session supported. Kingsford and Breitung Township also contract with the same company for waste services but lack curbside recycling in 2019. Iron Mountain could, therefore, explore a partnership with its neighbors to initiate the new service, as demand across a larger contiguous area could help increase the program’s viability.

Iron Mountain’s Department of Public Works operates the community’s composting program, which includes leaf collection in the fall and an annual brush pickup. Residents may also bring yard waste to the department’s compost site during normal business hours.

**Broadband**

High-speed internet is limited throughout much of the Central Upper Peninsula and is often slow or expensive where it is available. Internet connectivity is a necessity for modern businesses to operate and a quality-of-life factor for residents. Stakeholders throughout the region determined broadband availability as a major priority to advance the economy. The Maximum Residential Broadband Download Speeds collected by Connected Nation shows that the City of Iron Mountain has access to relatively strong service with maximum download speeds of at least 100 megabits per second. The graph “Households with a Broadband Subscription” suggests that the percentage of Iron Mountain households was almost on par with the state of Michigan overall in 2017.

Although these numbers indicate adequate service, other figures suggest room for improvement. The Central Upper Peninsula’s Planning and Development Regional Commission distributed a survey to households in 2015 to better understand broadband access in the region. Over two-thirds of the Dickinson County participants replied that internet service does not meet their needs. Most respondents also reported that the “price is too high” or the “speed is too slow.” This suggests that a lack of supplier competition and high prices are still issues. Other numbers illustrate further; Charter Spectrum is the sole provider of broadband at speeds of over 25 megabits per second in the Iron Mountain zip code. The City should, therefore, explore strategies to bring new service providers to the area. One way to do that is to update the ordinance to comply with Michigan legislation passed in March 2018 (PA 365 of 2018) that permits the deployment of small cell infrastructure that can be placed on existing poles to create a 5G network. As opposed to microcell towers, these small-scale wireless facilities have a smaller

“Stakeholders ranked affordable energy as a critical need because high energy costs and limited capacity are a significant barrier to business attraction, retention, and expansion.”

Source: Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Commission CEDS 2016
service radius and can be dispersed to improve the signal. Updating the ordinance can heighten demand for this type of service and may help to attract more competition to the area.

CULTURE AND RECREATION

Dickinson County Library

The main branch of the Dickinson County Library is located on Iron Mountain Street downtown. Along with publicly available reading material, the facility offers internet access, a computer lab, and a variety of programmed events, including adult and youth reading groups.32 It operates under the direction of the Dickinson County Library Board of Trustees, although an active volunteer group called Friends of the Dickinson County Library hosts events to support the facility and its programming.33

Menominee Range Historical Society

The Menominee Range Historical Foundation is a nonprofit organization with the express purpose of preserving the area’s history and using historical information to educate the public. The organization keeps extensive archives of books, newspapers, and documents from throughout the Menominee Range area. It also maintains two separate museum facilities in Iron Mountain; the Menominee Range Historical Museum displays the community’s early history, while the Cornish Pumping Engine and Mining Museum, and the World War II Glider and Military Museum portray the area’s mining and wartime production heritages. The Historical Foundation operates under a board of governors and uses support from grants, donations, use fees, and membership dues.34

YMCA

The Northern Lights YMCA is an exceptional recreation facility and
functions as a year-round focal point in Iron Mountain. The organization attained ownership of the Crystal Lake Community Center in 2018 and undertook a $4.5 million renovation to expand its programs, including a new fitness center and equipment, renovated locker rooms, and a state-of-the-art aquatics center and pool, which opened in November 2019. Much of the work was made possible through private donations. The organization offers a wide variety of programmed activities including adult group fitness and lessons for adults. The center is a unique provider of youth activities, including an after-school club for school-age children, and clubs and events for younger children. Membership subscriptions are available to the public and were estimated at 3,000 in 2018.

**SOURCES**

1. Interview with Scott Thomas, Public Works Supervisor 10/15/2019
6. Interview with Scott Thomas, Public Works Supervisor 10/15/2019
16 Bay College. History. https://www.baycollege.edu/about/history.php
21 City of Iron Mountain Fire Department. https://cityofironmountain.com/64/Fire-Department
35 The Daily News. Making a splash: YMCA pool to reopen. 11/18/2019
36 Northern Lights YMCA. Dickinson Program Center. https://nlymca.com/dickinson/core/##/programs/
37 The Daily News. YMCA Signing. 11/1/2018
Recreation planning is directly linked to The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the state agency that reviews Parks and Recreation Master Plans and provides grants for projects listed in those plans that are backed by community support. Iron Mountain’s recreational resources range from traditional open spaces such as City Park to specialized areas such as Millie Hill Walking Trail. In the City’s 2017 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, residents prioritized the maintenance of existing facilities over parkland acquisition. Moreover, accessibility to public parks for all users and creating small green spaces downtown would be welcome additions.
The name Iron Mountain invokes nature, and as such appeals to those who desire direct access to it. While its economic legacy has been one of extracting natural resources to generate wealth, the City no longer features active mining sites (it has repurposed one to create a lake) and has shifted its focus to preserving its natural assets. Its rugged topography gives it a unique landscape in the State of Michigan that lends itself to scenic views of the City and space to host habitat for bats at a safe elevation. Because of the heavy precipitation it receives, the City has ample open water and green spaces, and therefore several sites to offer refuge. This section inventories Iron Mountain’s recreational spaces and leans heavily on the 2017 Parks and Recreation Master Plan so that goals and actions remain consistent and feasible.

STRUCTURE

Together, the Recreation Committee, City Manager, and City Council are responsible for the budget and decisions made regarding recreation. The decision-making process should be largely guided by the work and recommendations made in the 2017 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, where nearly a year of planning and community engagement produced a set of goals and actions to follow. As an advisory committee, the Recreation Committee liaises with the community and local associations that manage recreation leagues to determine priorities for programming and facilities. The Recreation Committee make recommendations to City Council, the City Manager leads the planning and administration of recreation, and the Department of Public Works maintains the sites.

Without a dedicated Recreation Department, it is incumbent on several groups to operate the recreation system. Over the fiscal years 2012 through 2017, the budget for recreation increased incrementally, a testament to the City’s commitment to recreation.

INVENTORY

Distribution

MDNR categorizes parks by size, facilities, and reach. The table “MDNR Park Descriptions” summarizes the differences in park types and is later used in the table “Iron Mountain Inventory Details” to help characterize the City’s recreation sites. While residents value maintenance over the acquisition of more parkland, the City should still consider where and what type of parks could be implemented should an opportunity arise. The “Public Parks and Trails” map shows where there major gaps in park provision. The National Recreation and Park Association standards helps determine what type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description of Park Types</th>
<th>Reach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini-Park</td>
<td>Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs, less than 1 acre</td>
<td>Less than ¼ mile distance in residential setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Park / Playground</td>
<td>The basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.</td>
<td>¼ to ½ mile distance and uninterrupted by physical barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>Serves a broader purpose than a neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.</td>
<td>Usually serves 2+ neighborhoods ½ to 3-mile distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Park</td>
<td>Land set aside for the preservation of natural beauty or environmental significance, recreation use or historic or cultural interest use.</td>
<td>Serves several communities within 1 hour driving time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Trail</td>
<td>Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks and natural resource areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with natural environment.</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 7: MDNR PARK DESCRIPTIONS
MAP 10: PUBLIC PARKS & TRAILS

[Map showing various parks and trails in Iron Mountain, Michigan and Wisconsin, with labels for City Park, Westside Park, Ranger Field, Forest Street Play Lot, Chapin Field, Rahoi Street Park, Millie Hill Walking Trail, Mountain View Ice Arena, Eastside Park, Goulette Park, West Lake Antoine Park, and Herchleid's Campo Sportivo.]

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR, Michigan DNR.
of park to create. The City's total park acreage falls within the recommended standards of between 88 and 164 acres for its population size; however, the distribution of park type is imbalanced. Iron Mountain residents would benefit from a greater distribution of smaller-scale mini, neighborhood, or community parks. Included in this distribution would be small public spaces in the downtown for passers-by to socialize or seek respite.

**Access**

In addition to having a variety of parks, access to facilities at each site is equally important. The MDNR guidelines provide a scale for evaluating the accessibility of recreation facilities from one to five. A score of “one” means that none of the facilities meet accessibility standards, and a score of “five” signifies that the entire facility was developed using

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type of Park</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iron Mountain City Park</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Lake Antoine Launch/Park</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastside Recreation Complex</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pewabic Playfield</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain View Ice Arena</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapin Field</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westfield Field</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Lake Park</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranger Field</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hercheids Campo Sportive</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranger Field</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulette City Park</td>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Street Play Lot</td>
<td>Mini</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jess Tidmore Memorial Courts</td>
<td>Mini</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Rahoi Street Park</td>
<td>Mini</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millie Mine Bat Cave Walking Trail</td>
<td>Park Trail</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.8 mile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 115.25

City Park playground.
principles of universal design. That is to say, implementing universal design is not a narrowly focused task meant to accommodate one group of residents, it is an investment in maximizing utility for everyone.

None of the parks scored a “five,” leaving room for improvement for user-friendliness. This MDNR scale system is used once a person arrives at a park, but an expanded view of access would examine the ease at which residents can get to these sites safely. To start, the map “Pedestrian Shed” shows a ¼-mile radius around each park and estimates that 2,262 parcels are within walking distance. That is approximately 1,955 households that can arrive at a park on foot - making Iron Mountain quite walkable for recreation. Another, and often missing component of the accessibility conversation, is the connectivity and maintenance of these links. To start, the Recreation Committee can lead an exercise with a group of volunteers to chart the connectivity and condition of routes leading to parks and record where there are gaps in accessibility on the way to these destinations.

East Side Park and Neighborhood
MAP 11: PEDESTRIAN SHED

PEDESTRIAN SHED

1/4 Mile Pedestrian Shed
Park
Iron Belle Trail
Iron Mountain to Norway Motorized Trail

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR, Michigan DNR
Specialized Recreation

In adjacent Breitung Township, Pine Mountain Winter Sports Arena hosts specialized recreation, mainly in the form of skiing facilities. It has 14 ski slopes, one of the world’s highest artificial ski jump (10 stories), and cross-country trails.

In addition to municipally managed parks and facilities, there are school-owned properties that offer greater and specialized variety. For example, Iron Mountain Senior High School has an indoor basketball court, the Izzo Mariucci Fitness Center has a full weight room and aerobic equipment, and the Iron Mountain Stadium features a running track and football field. While these are in use most of the year for students, access to the public on nights and weekends can provide assets that often cities do not have the capital to invest in. Private facilities also provide choice to residents; for example, the Pine Grove Country Club, Cornish Pump and Mining Museum, and the Timberstone Golf Course. The national nonprofit YMCA opened in late 2010, and its membership nearly reaches 8,000 per month. Its popularity is evident by the generous donations to improve its facilities and offer swim classes at no cost for third graders. The YMCA has an indoor pool, sauna, personal training, babysitting services, a wellness center, and a youth room.

Nonmotorized Opportunities

Nonmotorized trails are an emerging recreational asset in the Iron Mountain area. The Iron Belle Trail is the state’s showcase long-distance hiking trail; it encompasses over 2,000 miles from Belle Isle in Detroit to Ironwood in the Upper Peninsula. In Iron Mountain, the trail follows US-2. Once the MDNR finishes all planned improvements, it will have two separate trails - one for hiking and one for biking. The nonprofit, Dickinson Trails Network (DTN), has obtained grants to attach signage to the route.
The City also maintains Millie Mine Bat Cave Walking Trail, which extends for nearly a mile between the intersection of Stephenson Avenue and Third Street and the summit of Millie Hill. The trail features historical place markers, captivating views from an observation deck, and encircles a “bat cave.” DTN has announced that Millie Hill will also feature nonmotorized, multi-use trails that can be used for walking, hiking, and biking. Phase 2 of this project would be to build more trails near the water tower across 120 acres of land.2

A motorized off-road vehicle trail, managed by DTN, intersects the northern portion of the City. The trail extends east of the community to the City of Norway and includes five miles of trail. Part of it runs through Copper Country State Forest along the way.

COMMUNITY INPUT AND GOALS

In 2017, residents participated in a survey to express their priorities for recreation planning. The telling feedback removes the need, for the next five years, to plan for the acquisition and development of new parkland. Instead, the focus should remain on improving the condition of amenities already provided.

The goals for improvement are already laid out in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan with concrete actions. It is recommended that the City continue to use the Parks and Recreation Master action plan as the main source of how and where to implement these updates through careful coordination with the Capital Improvement Plan, and that the City keeps the Parks and Recreation Master Plan current. Larger goals will require partnerships and outside funding sources to complete bigger projects. Most of the larger projects proposed are the installation of new trails: nonmotorized, multi-use paths, or a trailhead. Importantly, the City’s partnership should specify roles around maintenance, as it does not behoove Iron Mountain in the long run to continue to expand its recreational offerings if they are to fall into disrepair.

SOURCES


Iron Mountain is shaped by two state highways, US-2/Stephenson Avenue and M-95/Carpenter Avenue. They were built to carry larger traffic volumes than they currently handle and have left little room for widened sidewalks, bike lanes, and other amenities that would make walking and bicycling along the roads safer and more appealing. Residents seek convenient pedestrian and bike travel, and the City should strive to create a well-maintained and connected nonmotorized network throughout the entire community.
Transportation networks enable modern society to function at its hurried pace. Roads, sidewalks, and bicycle infrastructure allow residents to move between home, work, places to socialize, and other everyday destinations. Connections with other locations, via road, rail, air, or other modes enable the exchange of products and services with other economic markets. In Iron Mountain, rail infrastructure was key in the community’s early mining days and remains a key link to provide goods to the area. Since then, the City’s transportation system has diversified as trucks and car have become more popular. This chapter reviews the community’s transportation network and describes possible routes for improving it.

**ROAD SYSTEM**

The City of Iron Mountain has 71 miles of road within its boundary. A large share of them, 21 miles, are the federal and state highways US-2 (Stephenson Avenue), US-141, and M-95 (Carpenter Avenue) that connect Marquette, Escanaba, Green Bay, Chicago, and other locations. These highways fall under the Michigan Department of Transportation’s (MDOT) jurisdiction, giving the City limited influence over their design. The remainder of the community’s roads and alleys, a total of 85 miles, are local streets operated by Dickinson County, the City, or private entities. Iron Mountain apportions money from its local street fund to operate its public streets, and the Department of Public Works maintains them.

**Traffic and Classification**

MDOT estimates the number of vehicles that travel daily by road throughout the year, a figure termed Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT). The map “National Functional Classification” shows these figures on US-2/Stephenson Avenue, the City’s most traveled roadway, handling at least 12,000 vehicles daily (including more than 1,000 commercial vehicles). While access to the highway is an economic driver in Iron Mountain, the road carries persistent truck traffic that detracts from the experience of walking in the downtown. Participants at Iron Mountain’s visioning workshop envisioned that 10 years from now truck traffic would be rerouted. Fortunately, progress has already been made with a bypass along Lake Antoine Road. Considering the goal of enhancing downtown, however, the City should work with the state and Dickinson County to mandate...
that trucks use the Lake Antoine Road route.

The State of Michigan designates roads with the Federal National Functional Classification (NFC) System, which categorizes roads based on their traffic volumes and share of local versus non-local vehicles. A road’s classification determines its eligibility for federal funding. The map “National Functional Classifications” shows that Iron Mountain’s roads fall into one of four NFC categories. Only arterials and collectors are eligible for federal aid; therefore, all roads designated as “local” are not eligible for federal funding.5

**Condition and Maintenance**

Michigan’s deteriorating roads and bridges are widely understood to be a challenge. Among the costs of degraded road infrastructure are lost productivity and vehicle maintenance transferred to motorists. In a 2019 “Solutions Summit,” the state’s transportation leaders recapitulated how decades of underfunding will cost upwards of $2 billion annually to fix.6 More recently, Michigan passed a bond initiative to target road rehabilitation, and while a large proportion of the funds are earmarked for projects in the Detroit area, the Upper Peninsula will receive a modest $225 million.7 The aid would be timely, as many of the highways connecting Iron Mountain with the region need repair.8 While the initiative is a step in the right direction to improve highways, communities are left to finance most repairs to local roads.

Road quality affects residents’ and visitors’ perceptions of the City’s districts and

---

**TABLE 10: NATIONAL FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Road(s) in Iron Mountain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Arterial</td>
<td>Carry long-distance commercial traffic between cities.</td>
<td>US-2/Stephenson Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
<td>Serve a similar function to Major Arterials but accommodate more local travel at smaller volumes.</td>
<td>M-95/Carpenter Avenue and Antoine Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Collector</td>
<td>Serve local business districts and channel traffic toward arterials.</td>
<td>Milwaukee and Park Avenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Promote access to adjoining properties.</td>
<td>Most roads in the City</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Carpenter Avenue (M-95).
neighborhoods as they may be perceived as blight. The Transportation Asset Management Council is an organization affiliated with MDOT that classifies roads into “good,” “fair,” and “poor” conditions based on a visual assessment of their pavement. The table and map “Pavement Conditions” show that large segments of Iron Mountain’s roads are in a degraded condition. Fixing roads in a “fair” state is far less costly in the long run than repairing them after they fall into “poor” condition, and so these streets should likewise be prioritized.

Financing repairs is often the stumbling block in Michigan, although some northern communities have reversed worsening road conditions by increasing the local millage rate. Iron Mountain should catalog and prioritize local street improvements to reduce the miles of roads that fall into further disrepair.

**NONMOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION**

The benefits of nonmotorized travel are multifaceted; trips made without a vehicle can ameliorate carbon footprints, help households save on transportation costs, and promote mobility for youth and elderly residents who cannot drive (or prefer not to). Further, some experts claim that access to diverse transportation choices is a key quality-of-life amenity that young workers prioritize when deciding where to call home. Currently, Iron Mountain is a relatively car-dependent community; over 90% of workers over the age of 16 years used an automobile to get to work. A large share of community survey respondents indicated, however, that they would take fewer car trips if the sidewalks and bicycle lanes were better.

### Sidewalks

Much of Iron Mountain was built in the early 1900s when walking to work or the grocery store was commonplace. Correspondingly, most streets are configured in a consistent grid with relatively short and rectangularly-shaped blocks that facilitate pedestrian travel. However, sidewalks are often absent in neighborhoods. In other places where they are present, sidewalks have fallen into disrepair or are missing segments that connect one block to the next. In other locations, sidewalks are positioned uncomfortably close to vehicle traffic with no buffer, as is the case along Stephenson Avenue, and the community voiced improved nonmotorized options as a priority for change during the community visioning session.

When improving sidewalks, a community’s options are to require the infrastructure from private developers,

---

**TABLE 11: PAVEMENT CONDITIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Mileage of Condition in Iron Mountain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US-2 south of A Street</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Street west of US-2/Stephenson Avenue</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Street west of US-2/Stephenson Avenue</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Mountain Street</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter Avenue between Woodward &amp; Fleshiem</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludington Street east of US-2/Stephenson Avenue</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Street east of US-2/Stephenson Avenue</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Transportation Asset Management Council, interactive PASER map
MAP 13: PAVEMENT CONDITIONS

PAVEMENT CONDITIONS

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR, MDOT, TAMC
or finance and build it with public funds. The former leads to piecemeal installation and gaps in the sidewalk network and the latter often leads to delayed installation. While Iron Mountain’s zoning already requires the construction of sidewalks when development occurs on private property, the provisions could be strengthened to ensure that the facilities are safe and appealing. For instance, the language could specify that sidewalks be buffered from the street with trees, extend along properties’ entire front lot lines, and connect with existing facilities on adjoining properties.

While zoning for sidewalks could prove effective in prime redevelopment areas, the City may need to build the infrastructure in instances where waiting for the private sector is impractical. For example, infrastructure improvements surrounding school drop-off and pick-up would provide safer travel for youth and enhance the surrounding neighborhoods’ appeal. Michigan’s Safe Routes to School program awards grants for nonmotorized projects that connect residences with schools. In a collaboration with the City and School District, infrastructure could be planned for and implemented with the assistance of a Safe Routes to School Director.

Bicycling

Aside from providing a recreational resource, bicycling can offer a popular and efficient transportation alternative. Bicycle lanes are generally between four and six feet wide and are most appropriate on roads with low vehicle speeds of 25 miles per hour or less. Several City roads fit these characteristics; A and B Streets connect downtown with the neighborhoods to its east and west and thus could create an appealing route between districts. Both streets are over 30 feet wide, which would provide sufficient space for 4-6-foot-wide bicycle lanes, if on-street parking were reconfigured. Further, bike lanes could be installed as road repairs are undertaken; More community survey respondents disagreed than agreed that they feel safe when bicycling and walking in the City.

Downsizing Carpenter Avenue has been discussed in the past and visual illustrations of the street’s potential design are shown in the figure “Carpenter Avenue Redesign Conceptual Illustrations.” Currently, the road is nearly 50 feet wide and has four vehicle travel lanes, however, its traffic volumes of around 7,500 vehicles daily could easily be accommodated if one lane in each direction were removed to make room for bike lanes, which would...

43% of survey respondents disagreed that they feel safe from traffic when walking or bicycling in Iron Mountain.
FIGURE 10: CARPENTER AVENUE REDESIGN CONCEPTUAL ILLUSTRATIONS
connect the City’s northern and southern neighborhoods. It would also create room for a center turn lane, which would increase the safety for motorists turning on to one of the east-west cross streets from the Avenue. Removing two vehicle lanes could also moderate traffic speeds on the road, which would increase the corridor’s appeal as a place for visitors to bike, walk, and spend time at local businesses.

Appropriate places for cyclists to park their bikes when they arrive at their destination is another important piece of cycling infrastructure. While downtown Iron Mountain has some new bike racks, the City could encourage more through the Zoning Ordinance. Other Michigan communities have zoning provisions that mandate permanent bicycle parking be provided on private property proportionally with the number of vehicle parking spaces. Such a provision could boost bicycling in the community as properties are redeveloped.

Complete Street elements vary by place. Appropriate features for a given location are based on context and streets’ existing layout. Increasing crosswalks’ visibility, improving pedestrian- and bike-friendly features, and adding vegetation could be a strong start in downtown. In 2010, statewide Complete Streets legislation passed in Michigan that requires MDOT to consider multi-modal users with new road constructions, and the City could likewise consider a resolution for new developments or public infrastructure projects to reflect Complete Streets elements.

Advocacy groups such as Smart Growth America have increased public awareness of how streets in the United States are overwhelmingly oriented toward automobile travel. The alternative, advocates argue, is “Complete Streets,” roads designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities, in addition to motorists. The design elements are not necessarily time-consuming or costly for communities to implement - most are small infrastructure pieces such as vegetation, crosswalks, or lighting that make bicycling and walking down a street more inviting.

Complete Streets

Advocacy groups such as Smart Growth America have increased public awareness of how streets in the United States are overwhelmingly oriented toward automobile travel. The alternative, advocates argue, is “Complete Streets,” roads designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities, in addition to motorists. The design elements are not necessarily time-consuming or costly for communities to implement — most are small infrastructure pieces such as vegetation, crosswalks, or lighting that make bicycling and walking down a street more inviting.

Complete Street elements vary by place. Appropriate features for a given location are based on context and streets’ existing layout. Increasing crosswalks’ visibility, improving pedestrian- and bike-friendly features, and adding vegetation could be a strong start in downtown. In 2010, statewide Complete Streets legislation passed in Michigan that requires MDOT to consider multi-modal users with new road constructions, and the City could likewise consider a resolution for new developments or public infrastructure projects to reflect Complete Streets elements.

Advocacy groups such as Smart Growth America have increased public awareness of how streets in the United States are overwhelmingly oriented toward automobile travel. The alternative, advocates argue, is “Complete Streets,” roads designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities, in addition to motorists. The design elements are not necessarily time-consuming or costly for communities to implement — most are small infrastructure pieces such as vegetation, crosswalks, or lighting that make bicycling and walking down a street more inviting.

Complete Street elements vary by place. Appropriate features for a given location are based on context and streets’ existing layout. Increasing crosswalks’ visibility, improving pedestrian- and bike-friendly features, and adding vegetation could be a strong start in downtown. In 2010, statewide Complete Streets legislation passed in Michigan that requires MDOT to consider multi-modal users with new road constructions, and the City could likewise consider a resolution for new developments or public infrastructure projects to reflect Complete Streets elements.

Advocacy groups such as Smart Growth America have increased public awareness of how streets in the United States are overwhelmingly oriented toward automobile travel. The alternative, advocates argue, is “Complete Streets,” roads designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities, in addition to motorists. The design elements are not necessarily time-consuming or costly for communities to implement — most are small infrastructure pieces such as vegetation, crosswalks, or lighting that make bicycling and walking down a street more inviting.

Complete Street elements vary by place. Appropriate features for a given location are based on context and streets’ existing layout. Increasing crosswalks’ visibility, improving pedestrian- and bike-friendly features, and adding vegetation could be a strong start in downtown. In 2010, statewide Complete Streets legislation passed in Michigan that requires MDOT to consider multi-modal users with new road constructions, and the City could likewise consider a resolution for new developments or public infrastructure projects to reflect Complete Streets elements.
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

With the Central Upper Peninsula’s low population density, the service is particularly poor, and in 2016, the region’s stakeholders cited the issue as a major economic inhibitor. Iron Mountain’s only public transit is the Dickinson-Iron Community Services Agency, which provides demand-response bus service to elderly and disabled residents in Dickinson and Iron Counties. This leaves large segments of the community without reliable public transportation. When made available for diverse users, transit can lower households’ expenses by providing low-cost alternatives to the car. The Center for Neighborhood Technology’s online mapping tool estimates that Iron Mountain households spend over 27% of their monthly income on transportation costs on average. Meanwhile, other residents simply can’t drive or choose not to own a car. The costs from these individuals, whose mobility is severely limited in the absence of transit, are borne by the community - often family, friends, and neighbors. The City should work with neighboring communities and Dickinson County to explore the feasibility of a comprehensive transit and match the service type with local needs.

RAIL

The railroad played an instrumental role in Iron Mountain’s early history and continues to support the City’s employers today. The City is positioned at the junction of two major railroad lines. Railroad track owned by Canadian National Rail facilitates connections with Escanaba, Sault Saint Marie, and Canada to the City’s east, while Escanaba & Lake Superior Railroad facilitate connections to its north and south. Iron Mountain typically receives around one train per day, which transports products for local businesses.

FORD AIRPORT

Ford Airport is a regional-serving facility located roughly one mile west of the City of Iron Mountain in Breitung Township. The facility, which encompasses 720 acres and has two paved runways, serves as one of the Upper Peninsula’s busiest air cargo and package freight facilities. Commercial passenger service to Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport and Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport is also available throughout the week.

47% of survey respondents disagreed that they could easily find another way to shop or dine out if their vehicle broke down.
SOURCES

1. Interview with Scott Thomas, Public Works Supervisor 10/15/2019
4. Interview with Scott Thomas, Public Works Supervisor 10/15/2019
11. American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2013-2017. DP03
15. MDOT. Traffic Volumes Map. https://lrs.state.mi.us/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1a8bf6b2681d483ca9090ebec5d105ff
16. Central Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Commission. 2016 CEDS. Pg. 25
19. Interview with Scott Thomas, Public Works Supervisor 10/15/2019
Benches help create Complete Streets.

Existing "bike lanes" along Merritt Avenue.
Economic Development

Following the general employment pattern in Michigan, Iron Mountain’s manufacturing and construction sectors, which have traditionally anchored the economy, have lost jobs in recent years, while its healthcare and professional service sectors have grown. In terms of having a destination or a core within the City, residents resoundingly envisioned downtown as a vibrant, walkable, and business-friendly district. The blocks east of Stephenson Avenue have experienced the most reinvestment recently, and a new zoning category with increased building heights, reduced setbacks, and uniform architectural requirements could be created to build the momentum. These zoning changes would encourage the redevelopment that fits the district’s historic character and encourages visitors to walk and shop. Portions of commercial land are “vacant” - parcels that do not have a structure - and present a reinvestment opportunity. A large share of the vacant parcels, and many of those with blighted structures, are along Carpenter Avenue and US-2. The City should target these areas for redevelopment, considering their location on high visibility roads, and the clean slate offered by the vacant land.
In 2016, the Central Upper Peninsula's regional planning agency published a report that highlighted the area's barriers to and opportunities for economic vitality. Among the major challenges are the lower wages offered throughout the region, expensive and inefficient broadband and utilities, and a mismatch between workforce training and firms’ talent needs. Perhaps the most pressing issue, however, is the need to retain young professionals by investing in downtowns and offering appealing settings for these individuals to spend time. This section first examines the City of Iron Mountain's economy in the context of Dickinson County. It then describes the City's recent initiatives to promote growth and suggests ways to build on these strategies, in keeping with the region's strategies.

DICKINSON COUNTY ECONOMY

Although Iron Mountain’s economy was originally centered on the iron mining industry, this business waned as natural resources were depleted, and by the mid-1900s, manufacturing, healthcare, and construction replaced it as the major local employers. The table “Dickinson County Employment by Sector” shows the number of employees by sector between 2006 and 2016. The County’s total number of jobs declined by about 3% in that timeframe to about 12,500 jobs in 2016. Employment in both construction and manufacturing shrank by about 10%, which continued trends in recent decades - manufacturing employment leveled off in the 1990s, while construction began a precipitous decline in that decade. Health care and social assistance added about 400 jobs between 2006 and 2016, while professional, scientific, and technical services grew more rapidly than any other sector. These trends also continued historical patterns; the number of “service” jobs in the County grew for four consecutive decades beginning in the 1970s.¹

These local trends reflect national patterns as the US economy has shifted from producing commodities to creating knowledge and providing services in recent years. Employment in resource-intensive sectors such as manufacturing, coined “old” sectors by economists, have declined as manufacturing firms have automated production or moved jobs out of the US. Meanwhile, “new economy” sectors, which leverage human capital and knowledge more than natural resources, and include healthcare, education, and professional services, have grown. The graph “Old & New Economies in Dickinson County” groups the County’s sectors into “new” and “old” categories and shows that the former has grown larger than the latter since the Great Recession, reflecting the national trend. Because “new economy” jobs are less likely to be outsourced and can provide flexible options with remote working, it is viewed as a safer economic trajectory. Therefore, it becomes in the City’s best interest to invest in infrastructure needed to foster the development of knowledge- and service-based jobs.

“Believe” wall, 2013, by the Power of Words Project.
### TABLE 12: EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR IN DICKINSON COUNTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>New / Old Economy</th>
<th>Paid Employees</th>
<th>% change 2006-2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>2,325</td>
<td>2,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>2,208</td>
<td>1,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,142</td>
<td>1,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>1,894</td>
<td>1,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, &amp; recreation and accommodation &amp; food services</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,182</td>
<td>1,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, &amp; technical services, and administrative &amp; support</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental &amp; leasing</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: County Business Patterns

### TABLE 13: MAJOR DICKINSON COUNTY EMPLOYERS IN IRON MOUNTAIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Name</th>
<th>Industry Type</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manufacturing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Control</td>
<td>Relay and control panel manufacturer</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss Snowplow</td>
<td>Snow and ice removal manufacturer</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grede Foundry</td>
<td>Iron castings manufacturer</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJ Electric</td>
<td>Construction company</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champion Inc.</td>
<td>Construction company</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Shore Systems</td>
<td>Marine equipment manufacturer</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar G. Johnson Veterans Affairs Medical Center</td>
<td>VA Hospital</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickinson County Healthcare System</td>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCI Systems, Inc.</td>
<td>Mapping, permitting, and design services</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dickinson Area Economic Development Alliance
Despite the County's overall job loss since 2006, the area economy remains relatively diverse. Major local employers and their number of employees in 2019 are shown in the table “Iron Mountain Employers.” Old economy firms in manufacturing and construction are located in the City's northern industrial park, while the City's major employers that could be categorized within the new economy are the two hospitals in the community's south. The area's diversity of production and service types are good indicators of economic resiliency - should there be a shock to any sector, the other sectors can help buoy the economy to mitigate a downturn.

**CITY OF IRON MOUNTAIN ECONOMY**

This section inventories the City of Iron Mountain’s economy across three metrics:

- Commuting patterns (daily influx to City)
- The sectors residents work in (their occupations)
- Local retail spending patterns (how they spend their money)

**Commuting Patterns - How Many Workers Commute into and out of the City?**

The US Census Bureau hosts an online application that estimates commuting in numbers, which are shown in Iron Mountain in the commuting patterns graphic. With its concentration of manufacturing and healthcare employers, the City is an employment hub within the area. Over 6,000 workers commute into the City boundary from outside daily, while about 1,800 residents leave the City daily to get to their job. The difference between the workers traveling into the community for work and those leaving is about 4,000, which means that the work-related population increases by over half its residential population. Only a small number of Iron Mountain
residents, about 1,420 individuals, live and work in the community proper. The influx of daily workers is a positive indicator for businesses in retail, dining, or entertainment who can benefit from potential clientele.

Resident Employment - What Sectors Do Iron Mountain Residents Work In?

This section inventories the jobs that Iron Mountain residents hold, regardless of whether they work in the City proper. With the community’s large share of retirees, labor force participation, defined as the share of residents employed or able to work, is around 53.0%, which is low compared with 61.2% statewide. The table “Iron Mountain Residents - Occupation” shows that around 2,975 residents were employed as of 2017. Manufacturing comprises a considerable share of their jobs - nearly one-quarter of workers, or around 650 individuals, were employed in the sector, which is a larger share than in Kingsford (13%) or in Breitung Township (8.9%). Another quarter of employed Iron Mountain residents, more than 800 individuals, worked in educational services and healthcare, which made it the single largest sector. Education and healthcare constituted a similar percentage of residents’ work in Kingsford (26.6%), Breitung Township (32.2%), and the City of Norway (35.8%).

Retail Markets - How Do Residents Spend Their Money?

ESRI proprietary software estimates the gap between local supply and demand across these categories, which is shown in the graph “Commercial Leakage & Surplus.” Surplus markets attract consumers from outside of the City's boundaries. Conversely, “leakage”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resident labor force</th>
<th>Iron Mountain Residents</th>
<th>% Difference IM from Michigan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of residents in labor force</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of residents in labor force</td>
<td>3,202</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor force unemployment rate</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of employed residents</td>
<td>2,975</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of residents employed by industry</th>
<th>Iron Mountain Residents</th>
<th>% Difference IM from Michigan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational services, and health care and social assistance</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services, except public administration</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>+32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and industries not classified</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Fact Finder - ACS 5-year estimates

markets occur when businesses lose revenue because residents leave the City for the products.

The graph “Commercial Leakage and Surplus” shows that miscellaneous store retailers, which includes florists, used merchandise stores, and health and personal care stores such as pharmacies, are among the community’s surplus markets. General merchandise comprised the single largest surplus market, accumulating nearly $25 million in excess of residents’ spending suggesting that discount retail and variety stores are prominent retailers in Iron Mountain.

While convenience retail has an important role in accommodating modest incomes, an abundance of it presents drawbacks. Namely, national chains leverage their scale to offer lower prices and divert spending that might otherwise support local businesses or full-service grocery stores. Large chains are also known to have “lean labor” models, meaning that they hire few workers, and to construct impermanent buildings that could impair land values in the long run.

Another large share of Iron Mountain businesses (15%) was classified as automotive-serving establishments such
as motor vehicle & parts dealers and gasoline stations. Abundant automotive businesses sited at inappropriate locations can cause harm. Specifically, these businesses can segment otherwise inviting pedestrian environments and degrade areas rich in entertainment, food service, and retail uses. Further, these establishments can damage the appeal of nearby uses with visual clutter and noise if enforcement keeps them from doing so. The City could consider removing automotive service establishments as a permitted use in its central business district east of Stephenson Avenue.

Meanwhile, the City had few grocery stores, representing a major leakage market. This suggests that residents’ spending could support more of these establishments, which visioning session participants reaffirmed by answering “Whole foods market co-op” and “basic big box: Target, Whole Foods” when asked what the future should look like. Considering this, and that grocery stores are already permitted in its commercial zoning, the City can market sites for these businesses. The community should also be aware, however, that new chain retailers could compete with and divert spending from local establishments. The City should strive for a balance between making space for new chain businesses and supporting local ones. Meanwhile, clothing stores and beer, wine, and liquor stores were also leakage markets. The graph “Retail & Service Preferences” shows that residents would frequent food and beverage and clothing stores if new ones located in the community. Most survey respondents (78%) replied that business recruitment should constitute a top priority downtown.

**ECONOMIC STRATEGIES**

This section describes the City of Iron Mountain’s strategies for economic vitality. Strategies were determined with input from local leaders and residents at the community visioning workshop,
in conjunction with recommendations from the Central Upper Peninsula’s regional planning commission. Although traditional economic development planning focuses on the development and redevelopment of commercial properties, the strategies branch out into other related topics such as design and workforce development. Broadly, the strategies fall within two categories:

» Strategies for Downtown and Carpenter Avenue
» Workforce Strategies

**Strategies for Downtown**

The health of downtowns in Upper Peninsula communities has long-term and community-wide implications; inviting and vibrant commercial districts are a key quality of life issue that young workers with skills prioritize when deciding where

**FIGURE 14: RETAIL & SERVICE PREFERENCES**

What type of service/retail would you like to see downtown and how often would you frequent a new business in each type?

Source: Iron Mountain Community Survey, 2019-2020
to live. Accordingly, communities need to invest in central business districts to stem the loss of the youth, who function as an economic cornerstone.\textsuperscript{5}

One attribute of vibrant commercial areas is business concentrated at high densities; retail, dining, and entertainment all thrive on proximity to one another. In 2020, most downtown properties fall under the “General Business District” designation, which allows all types of commercial uses to locate anywhere within it.\textsuperscript{6} While the City has a successful array of restaurants and stores, the result of the zoning is that businesses are spread thin across downtown. The need to focus retail, dining, and entertainment necessitates another zoning district. The City could designate the blocks east of Stephenson Avenue under a new “Central Business District” designation, which could be differentiated from the current zone in terms of dimensional standards and allowable uses.

That said, Iron Mountain’s downtown already has many assets needed for vibrancy. Commercial uses encompass a large expanse of land -- around 20 full blocks between Fleshiem Street and D Street in the north and south, respectively, and Iron Mountain Street and Carpenter Avenue in the east and west. While this entire area is within the Downtown Development Authority’s (DDA) district, the roughly six blocks immediately east of Stephenson Avenue, north of C street, and south of Fleshiem Street feel like downtown’s true core. In this center, new local businesses have opened in recent years, and specialized commercial uses including dining, retail, and entertainment are most prominent. The area also features two-floor historic brick structures and relatively wide sidewalks that contribute to an inviting pedestrian atmosphere. Although the district has a good foundation and has seen recent renewal, several attributes impede its success. The strategies for improving downtown fall into the following categories:

» Dimensional standards
» Parking

78\% of survey respondents thought that downtown had improved in the past five years.
» Permitted uses
» Design guidelines
» Stephenson Avenue streetscape
» Create public spaces
» Rehabilitate structures
» Promote new business
» Destination economy & marketing
» DDA & downtown organizations
» Redevelopment sites

**Dimensional Standards**

Dimensional standards could be adjusted depending on their location downtown to increase a patron’s downtown experience. The current zoning requires that buildings conform with other nearby front setbacks or be positioned at least 20 feet from the front lot line, however, the requirement should depend on the street the structure is located on. For instance, on Stephenson Avenue where cars pass quickly, a larger setback could create a pleasant and necessary buffer between pedestrian and vehicle. There, the City should create maximum setbacks, which would reinforce the area’s walkable character and expedite redevelopment. On the side streets, there should be a strict no front setback rule to strengthen the district’s walkability and ensure that new buildings match its historic character. Parcel size also impacts walkability and in downtown, parcels should remain narrow, with little to no space between buildings, to maintain compactness. The City could also consider increasing the height limits downtown to boost density.

**Parking**

Similarly, off-street parking requirements that apply downtown could be modified to enforce parking maximums and not minimums. Based on commercial square footage or facility size, parking formulas have resulted in parking lots that are underused and vacant throughout the day. They have also produced a poor distribution of parking wherein some areas have an abundance and others, particularly the north side of downtown, have an insufficient supply. Replacing these requirements with flexible standards that allow builders to select the “correct” amount of parking would be more efficient. For instance, the standards could specify allowable parking reductions for uses that operate at different times of day, like lodging and commercial office, rather than making builders apply for reductions with the Zoning Board of Appeals. The complexity of parking warrants a separate study to investigate the following:

» The number of spaces
» The percentage of time they are filled vs unfilled (for peak and non-peak hours)
» Consideration of enforced municipal lots for downtown employees
» The effects of charging for parking
» How to better distribute parking
» How to equitably increase spaces where needed and prevent oversized surface lots

In the map “Downtown Parking,” a snapshot of one section of the downtown shows the prevalence of underused parking. Based on this map, the area of the surface parking is nearly equal to building footprints; the former has a footprint of about 448,290 square feet and the latter is 458,074 square feet. Fortunately, most of these lots are in the rear of buildings, but the number of open spaces demonstrates that the parking formulas may be overproducing parking.
Permitted Uses
The uses permitted in the new downtown zoning district could also be adjusted. Although the downtown doesn’t contain many gas stations or auto service stations, these uses would degrade the density of the blocks east of Stephenson if they located there. Automotive uses are permitted under the current zoning, meaning that one could establish in the downtown core. Uses that are loud or incompatible with activity hub should be removed to prevent them in this area. Several participants at Iron Mountain’s visioning workshop expressed support for “mixed-use projects” and so the new zoning should continue to allow residential uses above commercial ground floors, which are already permitted by right. The City could take this a step further and specify mixed commercial and residential structures as a primary purpose of the Central Business District zoning in the designation’s statement of intent.

Design Guidelines
Cities have a lot of control over buildings’ appearances. While zoning ordinances control buildings’ height, lot coverage, and setback, enforcement of more detailed design standards including building materials, architectural traits, first-floor transparencies, and signage locations help create a cohesive look. While some communities worry that the additional regulations will reduce investment, higher standards can also attract development that shows dedication to the community’s well-being in the long run. Most community survey respondents (72%) indicated that design standards should be a top priority downtown. The Zoning Ordinance can also directly enhance the visual qualities of public right of ways, which can play a crucial role in enhancing appearances. For example, the City can also require that new businesses plant street trees and landscaping to enhance the public realm.

The City has made progress with new benches and bike racks downtown and it could build this momentum with street trees, vegetated planters, and street furniture, which could draw visitors and boost patronage. These features could be mixed, as vegetative planters can double as public seating if constructed at the appropriate height.

Stephenson Avenue Streetscape
As the district’s major thoroughfare, several of Stephenson Avenue’s attributes are problematic. For instance, no buffer exists between fast-moving vehicles and the sidewalk, which causes unease for any nonmotorized traveler. Because the road is a federal highway, it falls under the State of Michigan’s jurisdiction and the City has limited ability to affect its design. As a long-term goal, the City should work with the State to close the outermost traffic lane in each direction and reconfigure the space for on-street parking and vegetation. Pedestrians would have a safety layer and merchants could see increased patronage as a result. Assessing whether the four travel lanes are necessary would be another key step. To start, consider that the road handles a similar traffic count to US-31 in the Lower Peninsula, which has only two lanes in renowned downtown Charlevoix and work with MDOT to see if lane reductions are possible.
Well-marked crosswalks are another essential pedestrian safety feature, yet they are missing along Stephenson Avenue, such as at the Hughitt and Brown Street intersections. These side streets host diverse businesses and so pedestrian linkages are needed to promote connections between blocks. Another striking feature is the lighting fixtures, which are positioned at excessive heights and placed inconveniently on sidewalks. The City should scale the lighting to pedestrians and position the features between the sidewalk and the road. In this setting, where fast-moving traffic abuts front entrances, prominent rear building entrances could help pedestrians enter structures safely. Transforming back alleys into useable public space could be one work around until changes to Stephenson Ave are made.

Create Public Spaces

Public spaces that invite visitors to spend time in a place are key components of lively commercial areas. Nearly three-quarters of community survey respondents indicated that a public space should constitute a City-wide priority. Although the characteristics common to great parks and plazas are difficult to define, some leading groups such as the nonprofit Project for Public Spaces have noted some general principles. One point is that they don’t have to be large and costly, communities can achieve success with small improvements to their existing layout. Another is that context is key - the ways in which a public space relates to its surroundings can determine its success. Although Iron Mountain lacks a designated focal point, new businesses such as Brick + Mortar and Organic Grounds Coffeehouse have recently located around the public parking lot between A and Hughitt Streets, which hosts a farmers’ market and community events and has a performance stage.

One option is for the City to convert part of the parking lot to a public plaza. The space’s design could take a variety of configurations, but adding seating, public
art, and greenery, while maintaining enough flexibility to accommodate the farmers market and events would solidify this area as the downtown core. Many of the renovated structures surrounding the lot feature well-designed rear entrances that facilitate access to and from buildings on foot. The City could build on this motif by encouraging new and renovated structures to have similar entrances facing the plaza and rear windows that reinforce buildings’ proportions. Outdoor café seating is another emerging theme and more could be encouraged on properties between structures and the plaza, as space allows. All these design elements would encourage a diverse tenant mix, invite visitors to spend time at businesses, and could be codified in the new central business district zoning. The City and DDA could also continue to work with local artists to commission work for the alley that divides the block, which already features several murals by the Power of Words Project.

**Rehabilitate Structures**

The quality of commercial space is a concern for business owners, as renovations can add substantially to the cost of opening an establishment. With the high commercial vacancy along Stephenson Avenue, many historic buildings are blighted. Fortunately, the DDA administers grants for façade restorations, which have successfully restored structures including the Champion Inc. building. The City also administers tax incentives for commercial property rehabilitation that extend between one and ten years. While some success has been achieved, these programs could be strengthened - survey respondents ranked expanding the façade program as the top DDA priority. Achieving this will depend on expanding the organization’s capacity with new tax revenue sources. Other Upper Peninsula communities have grown their facade programs with grants from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.  

"Hope" wall by the Power of Words Project
Future building restoration should focus on improving first-floor appearances and window space, as many structures have stark front walls.

**Promote New Business**

One stroll down the blocks east of Stephenson Avenue highlights an issue: empty storefronts. Vacancy coupled with limited hours of operation of existing businesses takes away from a vibrant nighttime ambiance. Participants at Iron Mountain’s community visioning workshop saw this as a major area for change. By stating “Progressive Business Attitude” as a collective priority, meaning broadly that the City should take an active role in enhancing the business scene, the residents want to see buildings filled. The City and DDA can assist by identify interested businesses and connecting them to agencies and organizations that offer small business programs, including financing, networking and marketing, and education through MEDC, the Small Business Development Center, or Chamber of Commerce. Over 60 survey respondents stated that they would be interested in starting or expanding a business but are unaware of the resources that could help them.

**Destination Economy & Marketing**

Residents defined a “Destination Economy” as a priority, in other words, that Iron Mountain should increase its desirability as a place to visit. The challenge facing smaller communities is the fragmentation of tourism businesses and their inability to collectively market. For instance, a local hotel or motel

---

**Business Resources**

- **Iron Mountain High School** - Co-op program
- **Bay College** - Business & Social Work Programs
- **Michigan Works** - Employment Agency
- **Dickinson Area Chamber of Commerce** - Networking Events and Marketing
- **Northern Initiatives** - Small business financing
markets to a different audience than a family diner, although the diner may benefit from the hotel’s patrons. The importance of “destination marketing” or the ability to pool resources and market across multiple sectors is, therefore, key for attracting tourists. The City can collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce and business centers to raise awareness of the destination, taking the Pure Michigan campaign as an example. Marketing vacant commercial space to potential tenants is another area where the public sector can step in to boost downtown. The DDA already maintains an online catalog of commercial and residential spaces available to rent. The organization could expand its marketing to businesses in the region that might expand.

**DDA & Downtown Organizations**

Achieving the aforementioned actions hinges on the ability to finance them. The mission to increase the economic vibrancy of downtown Iron Mountain has led to beautification projects funded by fundraising events and raising capital among businesses. The DDA could increase its capacity by creating a tax increment financing district as permitted by state statute, which would allow it to collect the increases in tax revenue from properties in its district. The revenue could be used to finance projects including streetscape renovations, vegetation and street furniture, or the creation of a plaza, all of which entail a substantial capital cost but could catalyze further investment.

Currently, the DDA encompasses dozens of blocks as the map “Downtown Development Authority” shows, however, the organization’s boundary could be consolidated to expedite targeted projects and focus their impact. The map “Historic District” shows the portion of downtown with a concentration of historic structures and independent businesses. The smaller geography could present an advantageous boundary for more visible

The ski jump signs are an example of destination marketing.

---

**What Does the Iron Mountain Community Look Like 10 Years in the Future?**

“Business + Retail + Restaurants + Hospitality Options”

“Attracting visitors to the area to shop, play, stay and dine”

“Become a destination people want to visit”
benefits of façade grants, streetscape projects, and other programming. Several historic district properties generate some of the greatest revenue for their size, which bodes well if the DDA were to establish tax increment financing there. The historic brick structures are one of downtown’s most important assets because they reinforce the district’s unique sense of place. The City could also consider forming a historic commission, as enabled by the State, which would review any proposed development of historic properties, establish guidelines, and thereby provide another layer of protection. The Federal Historic Tax Incentive program encourages investment in historic buildings by providing a 20% income tax credit for restoration projects. A project’s eligibility hinges on the building’s designation on the national register of historic places, and so Iron Mountain could seek the designation for historic portions of downtown that need physical rehabilitation.

Redevelopment Sites

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) administers the Redevelopment Ready Communities® program, which offers a no-cost certification to promote business, investment, and physical redevelopment. To achieve the certification, communities must adhere to a set of best practices that facilitate economic development from the municipal end. These guidelines include training municipal officials and staff members on best practices, streamlining the development review process, and making the Zoning Ordinance user-friendly and accommodating to a variety of appropriate uses. One critical step is to identify sites that the community seeks to redevelop, catalog information on them, including available infrastructure, ownership, and zoning, and then actively market the sites to developers. MEDC recommends that these sites be in high impact areas such as downtowns, high-visibility commercial corridors, and historic neighborhoods. They can include
vacant parcels, underused buildings, surface parking, brownfields, and former industrial sites. The City has determined a list of criteria to select priority redevelopment sites which include the following:

- Public ownership
- Local property owner
- High visibility
- Necessary utilities are available
- Zoning that allows for the desired uses
- Doesn’t require environmental remediation
- Exterior conditions
- Historic or functionally obsolete designation
- Stakeholder input

These criteria are organized into a scoring scheme so that the City can compare the desirability of sites to one another. This framework provides a method to select and market sites in the future. In 2020, the City’s top three priority sites include the properties listed in the table “Priority Redevelopment Sites” and their vision for redevelopment.

### Carpenter Avenue Corridor

The stretch of Carpenter Avenue between D Street and the City’s southern border presents a unique opportunity for redevelopment. The existing land use map shows that some properties in the district do not have structures, and this “clean slate” could make their redevelopment less costly and hence more favorable. Other properties exhibit blight and must be renovated or replaced. Still, elsewhere in the district, structures are not suited to their current use - several properties are constructed with single-family homes that have become occupied by office and personal service uses. On these properties, denser housing and mixed-use buildings would be a better fit.

**Transitional Zoning**

Many properties along Carpenter are larger than those downtown and can accommodate different development and commercial tenants. For instance, the larger lots could allow a greater mix of commercial and residential uses than would be practical on the small parcels downtown. The City should create a “Transitional” zoning designation to promote a mixed-use environment in the corridor. With the area’s location near neighborhoods, the zoning should allow the neighborhood-serving commercial uses currently allowed in the B-1 zoning, which includes personal service and foodservice establishments. The area would also be an ideal location for multifamily housing, and so the zoning should specify duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and second-floor residential as by-right uses. The current 20-foot front should be retained to provide an adequate buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic on Carpenter Avenue.

### Corridor Improvement Authority

Carpenter Avenue has not been a hot spot for redevelopment in recent years, however, beautification and streetscaping projects could be a step forward by laying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>115 S Stephenson Ave.</td>
<td>Former Fontana’s supper club</td>
<td>Mixed-use housing and commercial uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115 E Ludington St.</td>
<td>Former A-Ok services and parts center</td>
<td>Updated commercial use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 Block of W. Hughitt St.</td>
<td>Central school</td>
<td>Mixed use housing and community services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the groundwork for investment. State statute allows municipalities to create corridor improvement authorities (CIAs) to encourage economic development within defined geographies. CIAs are similar to DDAs in that they collect and use property tax revenue growth in their geography, however they function along linear roadways rather than historic downtowns. If the City were to consolidate the DDA district, it could create a CIA along Carpenter Avenue to separately administer and support capital projects specific for the corridor. Once created, the CIA should prioritize capital projects specific to this corridor. These efforts could attract investment through projects that create a contiguous walkable environment. As a prerequisite, the proposed CIA district must support a mix of uses and multifamily housing through the City’s transitional zoning district.19

**Workforce Strategies**

Workforce strategies are best discussed at a regional level as is done in CUPPAD’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. At the local level, cities are the engine of economic growth and should align its strategies under the regional framework. The talent gap is a prevalent issue that is best addressed through investment in educational programs that prepare young workers to fill jobs in the region.20 Fortunately, Iron Mountain already has strong technical education resources. The schools have a guidance counselor that provides career resources to students and the cooperative education program, which places students in local internships.21 Communities and educational institutions make for greater partners for exploring state and federal grants to grow these programs.22 The Dickinson Area Intermediate School District recently established a facility in Kingsford that offers coursework in welding, marketing, automotive technologies, and electrical and mechanical systems.23 Bay College offers certifications in robotics and construction.24 Other community colleges have acquired grants through the Expanding Community College Apprenticeships initiative to grow these programs.25 Despite the Upper Peninsula and nation’s long-term decline in manufacturing, there are still jobs in this sector that sometimes go unfilled due to lack of training for such jobs. Iron Mountain could work with these firms and the school system to identify skill gaps and align training programs with their needs.26

Within Iron Mountain’s diverse economy, healthcare and social assistance remains a major economic driver and saw an increase in jobs over the preceding years. With the community’s large share of retirement age and late-career demographics older than 45 years, healthcare will continue to be an ongoing need. The City could communicate with Dickinson County Hospital to determine the facility’s projected employment needs and work with Bay College to adjust healthcare training, including its practical nursing certificate, accordingly. These institutions could work to expand the professional credentials to include specialized medical professions. By supporting these two major sectors, Iron Mountain can maintain a balance of “old” and “new” economy jobs.
SOURCES

2 American Community Survey 5-year estimates 2013-2017. DP03
17 Marquette Downtown Development Authority. DDA Expands Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Program. 04/14/2019. https://downtownmarquette.org/dda-expands-downtown-facade-improvement-grant-program/
25 Grand Rapids Community College. GRCC receives national grant initiative to increase registered apprenticeship opportunities. 08/06/2019. https://www.grcc.edu/communications/press15
A look at permits for new construction and tax revenue generated per acre shows hotspots for development in Iron Mountain: established neighborhoods and renovated buildings downtown. With that in mind, new zoning designations are proposed that offer more “transitional” space to expand neighborhood-friendly businesses, mixed-uses, and different housing formats to create more flexibility in the City’s development patterns. The purpose of these proposed zoning changes is to permit greater housing variety and to permit small commercial businesses in closer proximity to neighborhoods to provide the convenience of reaching goods and services by foot.
Land use is the heart of community planning because its noticeable impacts on residents’ daily lives. Land use planning is best combined with demographic projections and community input so that the City can reconcile growth trajectories and community expectations. Since its founding, Iron Mountain has developed in predictable patterns based on its social and economic characteristics. Because the City was deeply invested in mining in the 19th century, much of its development had to evade geographic (topography) and manmade (mines) features, making large swaths of the City undevelopable. Fortunately, some of the City was built before the advent of automobiles, leaving intense uses rightfully clustered along major thoroughfares and older neighborhoods following a traditional grid pattern (as opposed to the subdivision style development built post-World War II).

The first plat map from 1879 created a grid street network starting in the present city core bounded by Merritt Avenue on the West, Flesheim Street to the north, Hughitt on the south, and Iron Mountain Street. Further development was brought on by the mines and the infrastructure to support them. The mines brought with it the development of two railroad lines that remain bordered by commercial uses. The 1879 plat map established the first part of Stephenson Avenue along the east side of the railroad and later extended to cut through the central and southern sides of the City, creating a major thoroughfare that connected the City to the Upper Peninsula but divided the City in half. Stephenson Avenue became a commercial corridor, and within a year (from 1880 to 1881), the City sprang up overnight with the success of mining.

The Ford Boom sparked more downtown development resulting in the long-standing and beloved Braumart Theater with architecture reflective of that era. Development on Stephenson and Carpenter also flourished during this decade, prompting the challenge of two parallel commercial corridors that still compete for development and City resources as development has stagnated. As the mining industry declined, the City repurposed the mine pits by creating the east and west Chapin ponds along US-2. Primary modes of transportation shifted to highways, and Stephenson Avenue expanded to four lanes in 1948 (through Chapin ponds). Photos from
the 1950s and 1960s are evidence that the City Council retained parallel parking for four blocks of US-2 (changed to parallel parking), but few accommodations were made for sidewalks in the name of efficient vehicular throughput. US-2 continues to be an obstacle in the effort to build a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly atmosphere.

The middle to the end of the 20th Century saw sprawling land-use patterns dominate, a problem decades in the making. In this era, land use patterns generally have larger building footprints on larger lots, more parking, deeper setbacks, and are therefore pushed to the periphery of the City. This is seen in the housing development where new housing construction is 2.5 times the size on average coupled with an aversion to mixed uses and higher density housing. This pattern is also evident in commercial development, where smaller niche stores are consolidated into massive stores like Walmart. Ironically, “modern” urbanization is an invitation to embrace our ancestor’s preferences for compactness and walkability.

Each parcel in the City is classified by the City Assessor into one of five classes (but only four are discussed), and each category is then broken down by its status as “vacant” or “improved” (except for exempt uses):

» Residential
» Commercial
» Industrial
» Exempt

**FACT: TAX REVENUE**

Gridded neighborhoods with smaller lots and older homes generate more tax revenue per acre than larger, higher-value homes built on large lots at the City’s periphery.
the traditional neighborhoods generate up to 200% more tax revenue than the City average. This is a testament to the financial power of density, and that cities should consider the true cost of peripheral residential development in terms of maintaining extended infrastructure and services in comparison to the return on tax revenue.

Outer & Inner Westside, Doctor Park, and Ford Addition Neighborhoods

» The largest quadrant, by the number of residential properties, is west of M-95 and south of 4th Street.

» This area of the City is characterized by smaller lots, making it one of the densest residential areas.

Future Land Use Map

Displays the community’s agreed upon development pattern, a visual guide to future growth. It should serve as the basis for updating the Zoning Map. It is essential that the Planning Commission commit to this map to produce consistent outcomes in subsequent planning stages.

The Northside and Lake Antoine Neighborhoods

» The second-largest quadrant is east of Highway-2 and north of 4th Street.

» Most of the lakefront property is located in this quadrant. The residential parcels in this area of the City are 0.5 acres on average.

» 11.5% of the residential properties in this quadrant are vacant.

Eastside Neighborhoods

» The third-largest quadrant is located east of Highway-2 and South of 4th street.

» This quadrant is relatively undeveloped, with 54.5% of the total residential land classified as vacant residential likely stemming from varied topography, which makes it difficult to develop the land.

» The lots in this quadrant are relatively consistent with the rest of the City at 0.54 acres on average per residential property.

The Tall Pines and Lehman Neighborhoods

» The final and smallest quadrant is north of 4th Street and west of Highway-2.

» The quadrant is characterized by large parcels and low density.

» The property values in this quadrant are the highest in the City, about 168% higher than the City average.

» Despite these properties’ values, these residential properties generate the lowest tax revenue on a per-acre basis.
MAP 18: NEIGHBORHOODS

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR
Because these properties are further away from the municipal services, such as fire stations and water service, it is likely more expensive to serve these properties compared to denser residential properties closer to the core.

**COMMERCIAL**

Following residential, commercial is the second-largest land use. Most commercial properties are located along US-2 and M-95. Smaller parcels are located near the center of the City representing a downtown style of business development compared to the larger commercial footprints located on the northern and southern parts of the corridors. Currently, there are 150 vacant commercial properties in the City of various sizes, which equals 37% of the total commercial land. There is room for growth in business activity without annexing land or dedicated more land to commercial classifications.

**EXEMPT**

Exempt property is any property that is not taxed. This includes governmental property, public schools and colleges, religious institutions and charities, and non-profits. 15.7% of the total land within the City is tax-exempt, a substantial portion that does not collect revenue for the general fund. As the county seat, most of the exempt land in Iron Mountain is county or city government property. Despite not generating any tax revenue on these properties, governmental and other exempt property are essential for the function of Iron Mountain and serve as important institutions for the residents.

**INDUSTRIAL**

The industrial properties are almost exclusively located at the northern end of the City between the railroad and Lake Antoine. The industrial area is mixed with mutually beneficial commercial uses. There is vacant industrial land adjacent to improved parcels providing sufficient space for any expansion of industry at the northern edge of Iron Mountain. However, its proximity to Lake Antoine and some residential uses warrants updating performance, landscaping, and buffering standards.

**NEW CONSTRUCTION**

Analyzing spatial and temporal patterns of development provides valuable insight into what land uses of the City are experiencing investment and growth. The graph “New Construction Permits Issued” illustrates the number of new construction permits issued between 2010 and 2019. Given the small sample size of permits issued annually, no definitive conclusions can be extrapolated. The residential and commercial permits have generally moved in the same direction as the two uses are often correlated. Depending on the size of a new commercial enterprise and the number of jobs created, the need for residential development will be influenced proportionally. In that sense, commercial uses are one driver in demand for housing, and as such, when residential and commercial uses are in an upswing, planning efforts should consider them in unison.

The two maps, “Construction Permits – Residential” and “Construction Permits – Commercial & Industrial” illustrate two features: where new development is taking place and where vacant land exists. The “Construction Permits – Residential” map shows four distinct areas of vacant land, only two of which are feasible for development. The vacant land along the northern boundary of the City and the outer eastside neighborhood could become extensions of existing neighborhoods. The first of the two areas that are unlikely to be developed
is along Kramer Road on the western side of the City. This land is owned by the Keweenaw Land Association Limited, a sustainable forestry company, and currently serves an agricultural purpose. The second area is located in the eastern part of the City and is likely undeveloped due to its topography.

The hotspot for commercial permits is along US-2 – in the City’s original core. Over the last decade, a mini resurgence has hit the downtown with new permits for smaller compact buildings clustered in a relatively small radius. This trend can be self-reinforcing as investment begets more investment when it is concentrated on visible corridors. This area boasts some of the highest tax-generating power in the City and warrants public investment and promotion to leverage the potential of this momentum to catch on and scale-up. While there were no new industrial permits issued between 2009-2019, industrial permits for applications for additions, alterations, or repairs were issued, indicating investment into existing industrial facilities over expansion.

“Loyal to Local” sign.
MAP 19: CONSTRUCTION PERMITS - RESIDENTIAL

Density of Residential Construction Permits

Most Dense
Least Dense

Residential Vacant Land

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR.
MAP 20: CONSTRUCTION PERMITS - COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL

Density of Construction Permits

Most Dense

Least Dense

Commercial Vacant

Industrial Vacant

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR

0 1,500 3,000 Feet
Preserve

Preserve recognizes the neighborhoods’ architectural, site, and public realm quality. The “preserve” strategy is focused on maintaining that quality, although minor updates to structures and public infrastructure are not excluded. Local policies should be targeted toward maintenance, stabilization of the neighborhoods, and in some instances, preservation of buildings with unique architectural and historic character. This also includes the preservation of natural features.

Redevelop

Redevelop acknowledges that the underlying fabric of the neighborhood is intact but there are instances of blight, vacant, or abandoned properties, poorly-maintained rental properties, and visual degradation of public spaces. The “redevelop” strategy is focused on reinvestment, targeted code enforcement, redevelopment of deteriorated properties, and selective infill with new construction.

Transform

Transform call for a large-scale shift in the appearance and function of an area with the intention of a dramatic change in use, design, and accessibility. The “transform” strategy calls for a strong public-private partnership and the utilization of available public financing tools, such as tax increment financing, brownfield redevelopment, tax abatements, and capital improvements.

Contain

The type of development that falls into “contain” is out of step with the City’s vision. It is not necessarily harmful but does not further other Master Plan goals such and should therefore not be encouraged to sprawl beyond its current footprint.

Preserve, Redevelop, Transform, Contain

Based on field observation, neighborhood tours, the assessor’s land use classifications, and visioning for future development, areas on the map were labeled one of the following: preserve, redevelop, transform, or contain. In one instance, two of these strategies apply. For example, there is a historic district that encompasses many of the City’s older buildings that sit side by side with structures built in a different era with few regulations. This is represented by the purple boundaries on the “Planning Focus Areas” map. This creates a disjointed overall appearance that warrants a dual approach: preserve the historic buildings and redevelop concentrations of blighted buildings (that do not qualify as historic). The category “contain” is applied to housing developments that are sparse and sprawling. The area of focus should create denser and walkable neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

The Connection to Future Land Use

The map “Planning Areas of Focus” is the basis for creating a Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Once areas of the City are classified based on the preserve-redevelop-transform spectrum, the FLUM can explain possible changes to the Zoning Ordinance for implementation.

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) identifies generalized preferred future land uses in the City. It is a general framework, a land-use visualization of intended future uses, that guide land use and policy decisions within the City over the next 15-20 years. It should drive changes to the Zoning Ordinance and inform development review decisions. In the FLUM, preferred locations for future development types are displayed, allowing the community to identify where certain land uses should expand or contract without committing it to by
MAP 22: FUTURE LAND USE

FUTURE LAND USE

Data Sources: Michigan Open Data Portal, City of Iron Mountain, Wisconsin DNR
law. If Iron Mountain finds that it is not consulting the FLUM in that way, then the map should be re-evaluated and updated to reflect the development desires of the community.

THE ZONING PLAN

The purpose of a zoning plan is to take note of areas where the zoning ordinance no longer matches the future land use map so that appropriate changes should be made to align the two. Iron Mountain regulates by a traditional use-based zoning ordinance, but as can be seen on the FLUM, there is an interest to expand mixed-uses. The table “Future Land Use Categories” explains the intent of each future land use category and ties it to its current corresponding zoning district. The purpose of showing both in one table is to convey the type of change needed to move towards future land use patterns.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CHANGES IN THE FLUM

The changes in the Future Land Use map describes a future where density is higher along major corridors and dissipates as it moves into the neighborhoods. The Future Land Use categories embrace density for all of the advantages it brings: higher tax revenue per acre to the City, a greater variety of building types and price points, greater accessibility by nonmotorized users (youth and the elderly), and enhanced vibrancy and foot traffic for business owners. With those benefits in mind, the land use categories make some key changes to the current Zoning Ordinance:

» Filling in traditional neighborhoods.
» Creating a transition zone that permits mixed-uses along corridors. This zone would remove cumulative zoning so that single-family homes are not permitted; instead, higher-density housing is permitted along with lower intensity commercial uses like offices and business that would service local patrons. Uses that are considered neighborhood-friendly do not keep hours outside of a conventional workday, nor attract high traffic volumes, produce excessive noise, or negatively impact its neighbors.
» An age in place zone would bring essential services and persons in need closer together by permitting the Veteran’s Hospital to use some of its land to build housing for the disabled or frequent users of their services.
» Creating a separate downtown zone that can be tailored to the type of ambiance expected in an urban core. In this district, historic buildings are a point of interest and meant to be preserved. Access, circulation, and landscaping are scaled to a compact setting and contribute to the pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly environment. Less inviting
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Zone</th>
<th>Description of Proposed Zone</th>
<th>Examples of Use*</th>
<th>Corresponding Current Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Residential</td>
<td>This district maintains established neighborhoods on a grid system but expands housing types to include duplexes.</td>
<td>Single-family home, duplex, complementary uses like parks</td>
<td>R-1 and R-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional -Residential &amp; Business</td>
<td>This district creates a transitional district that permits higher density housing between commercial corridors and quieter neighborhoods. The district could also host offices and compatible neighborhood-friendly businesses.</td>
<td>triplexes, quadplexes, smaller multiplex buildings, office space, professional and personal services</td>
<td>New (includes parts of R-3), OS, B-1, parts of B-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age in Place</td>
<td>This zone would permit mixed housing and medical services on the same site to allow persons with heavy reliance on such facilities to live in closer proximity.</td>
<td>Hospital, medical clinics, assisted living</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Core</td>
<td>As a separate business district, this district would focus on entertainment, retail, and dining with stricter guidelines for design and nonmotorized features than other commercial districts; this area is opportune for mixed-use development.</td>
<td>Restaurants, bars, small breweries and distilleries, theaters, retail, mixed-uses</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Corridor</td>
<td>This district is primarily dedicated to convenience-style shopping that serves customers in automobiles. Efforts should still be made to improve accessibility for nonmotorized users and to create uniformity and beauty along the corridor. Denser residential units such as second stories units or attached units to the principal commercial structure are permitted.</td>
<td>Drive-thrus, strip malls, big box stores</td>
<td>B-1, B-2, OS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Industrial -Commercial</td>
<td>This district could also serve as a mixed-use district that is primarily used for light industrial uses, but also permits some portion of buildings to sell products produced there, and provide live/ Workspaces for employees.</td>
<td>Small manufacturers, laboratories, packaging, breweries, distilleries</td>
<td>I-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy industry</td>
<td>This district provides an exclusive space for heavy industry with larger buffers from incompatible uses.</td>
<td>Chemical processing, foundries, metal stamping</td>
<td>I-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space and Recreation</td>
<td>This district provides for permanent open space, designed to remain undeveloped and low intensity for public and private recreational uses.</td>
<td>Conservation areas, parks, golf courses</td>
<td>O-R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterbody overlay</td>
<td>This overlay would be superimposed upon parcels within a certain radius from Lake Antoine to include additional regulations to protect the lake’s water quality.</td>
<td>Would apply to different uses</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* not an exhaustive list of uses
uses that require a sprawling building footprint and extensive parking should be removed from this zone. Relative to other commercial and industrial areas, parking should be kept at a minimum and positioned in the rear of the building stock.

» Other efforts were made to create more space for housing and mixed-use areas. For example, in the Light Industrial-Commercial district, live/workspaces that are attached to or accessory to the principal use would be permitted. The purpose is to allow business owners or employees to live onsite to ease any financial stress from owners or to make the commute easier for workers.

» The Waterbody Overlay is an additional set of regulations that would apply to parcels within 200 feet of Lake Antoine to protect water quality. Some of these regulations would include limitations on impervious surfaces, setbacks from the water, buffers, restrictions on hazardous materials for industrial or commercial uses, septic tank regulations, or water retention standards.4

OTHER ZONING ISSUES

» Aside from strictly land use changes, other areas of the zoning ordinance can be updated to improve the appearance and function of new development.

» Landscaping – due to the high volumes of precipitation that fall annually, the City should boost the amount of space dedicated to landscaping with a focus on aesthetics, native and salt-tolerant species that can absorb water and snowmelt and provide greater space for keeping piles of snow.

» Onsite stormwater regulation standards to reduce run-off

» Flexible parking standards that distribute and right-size parking spaces

» Density bonuses on major corridors to incentivize market-rate housing

SOURCES


NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL

This district maintains established neighborhoods on a grid system but expands housing types to include duplexes and triplexes. The lots are large enough to accommodate appropriate side yard setbacks with a driveway and off-street parking. Lots that are used for duplexes and triplexes may be larger in order to accommodate off-street parking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Uses</th>
<th>Single-family home, duplex, triplexes, and complementary uses like parks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>4 - 6 dwellings per acre. Front yard setbacks adjusted to neighborhood and historic development pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Form</td>
<td>1-2 story structures. Attached and detached garages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area</td>
<td>Preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Action Strategy</td>
<td>Maintenance. Utilization of incentives such as the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone and CDBG home improvement loans / grants. Use Rental Inspection Program and blight enforcement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding Zoning District</td>
<td>R-1 and R-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This district is a transitional zone between higher density commercial from the downtown and the neighborhood residential zone. It permits higher density housing closer to Carpenter Avenue. It co-hosts offices and other neighborhood-friendly businesses to put residents in more convenient proximity to goods and services. Neighborhood-friendly businesses would primarily serve local patrons, keep conventional hours, and would not produce excessive traffic or noise, nor adversely affect nearby residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Uses</th>
<th>Small multiplex residential buildings, office space, professional and personal services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>~8-10 residential/commercial units per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Form</td>
<td>1-2 story structures, when structures have mixed-uses, commercial is on the ground floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area</td>
<td>Redevelop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Action Strategy</td>
<td>Update the Zoning Ordinance to blend compatible residential and commercial uses, with a focus on improvements to pedestrian features, landscaping, parking, and design standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding Zoning District</td>
<td>Includes parts of R-3, OS, B-1, and B-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AGE IN PLACE

An age in place zone permits mixed housing options and medical services on the same site to all persons with heavy reliance on such services to live in closer proximity. In an effort to keep our senior citizens living and thriving in Iron Mountain, more space would be allotted to serving their needs. The range in housing styles allows more independence for able-bodied seniors and smaller units with healthcare provision for those that may need it as they age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Uses</th>
<th>Mixed housing formats, medical services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>Range depending on unit - independent housing: similar to Neighborhood Residential, assisted living: Transitional or denser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Form</td>
<td>Duplexes, multiplex residential buildings adjacent to medical care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area</td>
<td>Redevelop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Action Strategy</td>
<td>Work with the hospital to create a new zone that permits mixed-use specifically applied to helping the elderly age in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding Zoning District</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The downtown core should be a separate zone from the large business district. This zone would focus on uses dedicated to entertainment, retail, and dining so that it remains the activity hub for the City. There would also be a greater emphasis on design standards that showcase its historic beauty and add architectural interest to new builds. The district is opportune for mixed-use, improvements to nonmotorized amenities and parking standards, and investment in public spaces to make it a walkable destination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Uses</th>
<th>Restaurants, bars, theatres, experience-based retail, mixed uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>24 units per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Form</td>
<td>2-4 stories of mixed historic and modern architecture, where uses are mixed in one structure, commercial is on the ground floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area</td>
<td>Preserve and Redevelop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Action Strategy</td>
<td>Create a distinct downtown district and update the zoning standards. Preserve historic architecture and features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding Zoning District</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This district is primarily dedicated to convenience-style shopping that serves patrons in automobiles. Efforts should still be made to improve accessibility for nonmotorized users and to create uniformity and beauty along the corridor. Residential units that are attached to principal commercial structures are permitted. Landscaping requirements that improve stormwater management and provide additional space for snow removal should be included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Uses</th>
<th>Drive-thrus, big box stores, auto repair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>8-9 units per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Form</td>
<td>1-2 story commercial structure ideally with side or rear parking, front landscaping and uniform setbacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area</td>
<td>Redevelop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Action Strategy</td>
<td>Update the Zoning Ordinance to include stronger landscaping, flexible parking standards, and design standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding Zoning District</td>
<td>B-1, B-2, OS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This district could provide a mix of uses. The primary uses would be light industrial but a small portion of the building could be commercial so that products produced on site could be sold in a retail area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Uses</th>
<th>Small manufacturers, packaging, warehousing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>Up to 4 structures per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Form</td>
<td>A maximum height of 40 feet with setback and buffering requirements to make them less visible from thoroughfares and other districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Action Strategy</td>
<td>Improve landscaping and onsite water retention standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding Zoning District</td>
<td>I-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HEAVY INDUSTRY

This district remains exclusively for heavy industry. Large spatial or landscaping buffers provide distance between heavy industry and incompatible uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Suggested Uses</strong></th>
<th>Chemical processing, laboratories, foundries, metal stamping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Density</strong></td>
<td>Up to 3 structures per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure Form</strong></td>
<td>A maximum height of 40 feet with setback and buffering requirements to make them less visible from thoroughfares and other districts, greater setbacks are imposed when close to water body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Area</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Action Strategy</strong></td>
<td>Improve landscaping and onsite water retention standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corresponding Zoning District</strong></td>
<td>I-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This district provides for permanent open space, designed to remain undeveloped or low-intensity for the public and private recreational uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Uses</th>
<th>Conservation areas, parks, golf courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Form</td>
<td>Established natural areas and sparse residential areas that are surrounded by nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Area</td>
<td>Preserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Action Strategy</td>
<td>Limit development on these sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding Zoning District</td>
<td>O-R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The culmination of the master planning process is when the goals and objectives form the foundation of an action plan - a “one-stop-shop” to document the City's desired action strategies. The actions are derived from community engagement, an inventory of existing conditions, and meetings with commission, boards, and staff and are then reconciled with the City's capacity to implement. The action statements are divided by theme, but each action is attached to a responsible party, partners, a timeframe for completion, and some co-benefits of completing that action. The action plan starts with the vision statement, a broad community-backed statement that defines the desired direction Iron Mountain wants to take over the next ten years. This statement forms the cornerstone of the goals, objectives, and actions.
CO-BENEFITS

While the actions are folded into a broader framework, each action can achieve more than just the category it is assigned. Most of the actions under “Housing” are working towards providing high-quality housing for all residents, but other benefits are accrued in the process. For example, strategies to build housing helps to retain families and a workforce, fill out neighborhoods and achieve more significant equity for specific demographics such as low-income, young professionals, and senior citizens. The “co-benefits” column is not an exhaustive list, but the icons indicate likely positive spillover to broader areas of focus:

» Expanding infrastructure to improve public health
» Strengthening neighborhoods
» Accommodating the local workforces’ needs outside of employment
» Expanding access to businesses
» Enforcing policies with more equitable outcomes
» Minimizing adverse impacts on the environment
» Family retention

VISIONING SESSION

The vision statement is based on public input garnered at an interactive community workshop held in October 2019. Around 32 members of the public, including residents, public officials, and business owners, attended the workshop at the Izzo-Mariucci center. Attendees participated in a variety of group exercises that invited them to define the community’s priorities and build consensus around a collective vision for the City to use as a reference for decision-making.

Residents at the session sat in groups around circular tables, each group with five to six participants. The groups were
then asked a series of questions regarding the City's successes and shortcomings and asked to brainstorm and record responses to each item. After the groups created a list of responses together, each group member-voted individually for their top answer to each question. After the visioning session, the responses were analyzed and grouped into categories to capture the major themes that emerged; the individual votes for each response were totaled as were the number of times a response was mentioned across the different groups. Analyzing the results determined the most frequently recorded responses.

**PERCEPTION OF IRON MOUNTAIN NOW**

Participants were asked to use one word or phrase to describe how Iron Mountain looks in the present, and the common responses grouped by category, are shown in the word cloud below. Some positive themes were present - several of groups’ brainstorming responses, including “low unemployment,” “new businesses,” and “growing,” allude to a view of the community as generally improving. Meanwhile, many other responses, such as “potential” and “opportunity in neighborhoods and with businesses,” suggest there are untapped assets in the City waiting to be adequately capitalized. Conversely, other responses, including a “lack of retail” options, “stagnant industry,” and “fiscal challenges” suggest an array of interrelated economic challenges. Another common theme among groups was the presence of physical blight and degraded building conditions; several groups offered answers such as “blight” and “worn-out, tired & dated appearance” to describe Iron Mountain’s current state.

**PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE**

The final question, “What does the City of Iron Mountain look like in 10 years?” invited participants to define priorities for the community’s future. The groups verbally shared their top three brainstormed responses to the entire room. Each group’s top picks were recorded on a sheet of paper at the front of the room, and once the list was compiled, individual participants voted on their top three from the collective priorities. The three most-chosen collective priorities reflect the desire to fully realize downtown’s potential, as shown in the table “Collective Priorities.” The response “pedestrian & patron-first downtown” suggests that the district’s physical character should be shaped to increase its appeal for walking and shopping. The second most popular answer, “progressive business attitude,” suggests a need for the City to increase its involvement in the local business scene. Services were another big category. Priorities to become “eco-friendly” and “consolidation of municipal services with neighboring jurisdictions” both received many votes and taken together, point to a desire to become greener and to cooperate with the adjacent municipality.
to share services. Further down the list, other responses indicate a need to diversify the housing and improve its quality, and while these received fewer final votes, they still constitute priorities.

**Community Survey**

The vision statement reflects results from the community survey. The survey was administered online as a 33-question questionnaire and was made available to the public between November 2019 and April 2020. The survey garnered 306 responses total, although not all the respondents are Iron Mountain residents, the survey-takers rely on the City in some way. The survey gauged residents’ views on specific issues, especially those related to housing and the economy. The survey results are incorporated throughout the report and in the action strategies section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collective Priorities</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian &amp; patron-first downtown</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive business attitude</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidation of municipal services with neighboring jurisdictions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher design standards + enforcement</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-friendly</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic + cultural diversity + welcoming attitude</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination economy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing middle housing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable healthcare system</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in industry + wealth</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve housing conditions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-route truck traffic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing affordability</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Community visioning session.*
**ACTIONS**

**Housing Variety**

Visioning session participants highlighted the need for diversified housing variety (“Missing Middle” housing), as a collective priority. Most of Iron Mountain’s housing was built in single-family detached formats, however, preferences have since shifted toward various smaller options, exposing the mismatch between supply and demand. Over half of survey respondents (52%) answered that they would support a new triplex or quadplex structure in their neighborhood. Some even indicated that they support them on the same block as their house, provided it were correctly maintained and aesthetically consistent with the surroundings. The Zoning Ordinance can play a pivotal role in diversifying housing. For example, single-family detached homes could be removed from multi-family zones to ensure that multi-family formats have designated areas where other uses will not infringe. The growing market for compact and moderately priced housing could also be accommodated in single-family neighborhoods by permitting two- or three-family homes. As residents age, their housing preferences change, as indicated in the survey, residents will be looking for easy-to-maintain units in the next 10 years.

Meanwhile, second-floor residential units should be added in the commercial districts where it is not currently allowed, as this format can accommodate diverse mobility needs and lifestyles while coexisting in proximity to employment. In commercial areas, rehabilitation is often needed to make the existing units livable. The City should, therefore, inventory existing units’ conditions to determine those that need to be refurbished.

There are several second-floor residential opportunities downtown.  

Existing multifamily opportunities in Iron Mountain.
### HOUSING VARIETY: To foster a more diverse housing stock that meets the community's needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives &amp; Actions</th>
<th>Lead Party</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Co-benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remove cumulative zoning that permits single-family homes in multi-family districts</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider permitting two-family and three-family homes on vacant parcels in single-family neighborhoods</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update the Zoning Ordinance to allow the use of an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) for single-family homes</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute housing density bonuses on major thoroughfares</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council, developers</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permit live-work spaces in commercial and industrial zones</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a transition zone along M-95 that permits neighborhood-friendly businesses and mixed-housing formats</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory upper-floor residential opportunities downtown to determine how many potential units could be converted and incentivize a program to encourage their conversion</td>
<td>DDA, Planning Commission</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the benefits of factory-built housing and identify vacant residential land where it could be installed</td>
<td>Planner, City Manager, Planning Commission</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with the hospital to provide assisted living on their property</td>
<td>Planner, City Manager</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Housing Quality

Improved housing quality was another collective priority. Many residential properties lost value as Iron Mountain’s population and the economy declined over the preceding decade, leading to degraded housing conditions. To address the issue, the City has an ordinance that requires rental units to have basic amenities and be minimally maintained. The vast majority, around 80% of survey respondents, either agreed or strongly agreed that the ordinance should be strengthened to boost the quality of units. The City could add aesthetic and cleanliness standards to the provisions. Enforcement is also a challenge, and so the City has developed an online portal for residents to submit enforcement requests, but “offenders” do not necessarily have the capital to make improvements. Although housing revitalization is largely market-driven, Iron Mountain needs to incentivize investment in housing conditions, for example, through a low-interest loan program or greater utilization of the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone. Inadequate housing limits the local workforce and tax base, and so programs to improve housing quality would likely have pervasive impacts.

Blighted properties affect housing quality in the City
**HOUSING QUALITY: To ensure that housing is of high quality to stabilize neighborhoods and attract new residents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives &amp; Actions</th>
<th>Lead Party</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Co-benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improve the rental housing code enforcement</strong></td>
<td>Planning Commission; City Manager</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update the rental inspection ordinance with provisions to ensure units’ exterior appearance and functionality for its tenants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote existing channels for residents to submit blight enforcement requests online and update</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>Enforcement officer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seek and develop resources to revitalize housing</strong></td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>Housing subcommittee</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory and maintain an online database of blighted housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek state and federal grants to improve blighted housing</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>USDA, MSHDA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater utilization and expansion of the Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (NEZ).</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>State Legislators</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
nonmotorized infrastructure also needs major expansion if people are to walk and bike safely. Survey respondents indicated that improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should be the top priority for the City to implement (86%). This sentiment is bolstered by the 43% who do not feel safe from traffic when walking or bicycling in the City, and the low ratings they gave for neighborhood roads and sidewalk quality. Forming connections between different areas of the City should be a central consideration in planning nonmotorized improvements, as residential neighborhoods and commercial districts contain common locations that people travel to.

**ACTIONS**

**Circulation & Transportation**

Iron Mountain should focus on transportation improvements that diversify the range of travel options. With the region’s population loss, the major thoroughfares M-95 and US-2 accommodate smaller traffic volumes today than they were designed for. Although it will involve time-consuming coordination with MDOT, the City should seek to right-size these roadways, as reducing vehicle lanes and speeds would increase the appeal of the downtown and Carpenter Avenue areas. The community’s nonmotorized infrastructure also needs major expansion if people are to walk and bike safely. Survey respondents indicated that improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should be the top priority for the City to implement (86%). This sentiment is bolstered by the 43% who do not feel safe from traffic when walking or bicycling in the City, and the low ratings they gave for neighborhood roads and sidewalk quality. Forming connections between different areas of the City should be a central consideration in planning nonmotorized improvements, as residential neighborhoods and commercial districts contain common locations that people travel to.

There is a prime opportunity to right-size US-2 and make it more pedestrian-friendly.

Many streets in Iron Mountain lack sidewalks.
CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION: To create a diverse and well-maintained transportation system that encourages mobility for all users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives &amp; Actions</th>
<th>Lead Party</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Co-benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improve road conditions and downsize capacities where appropriate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with MDOT to reduce the vehicle lanes on US-2 and Carpenter Avenue</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>MDOT, City Manager, City Council</td>
<td>5+ years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate the installation of bike lanes with road improvements</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>City Council, City Manager</td>
<td>5+ years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train the DPW to use PASER ratings for roads and sidewalks and prioritize those in poor condition in the Capital Improvement Program</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promote a connected network of automobile alternatives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with the school district to apply for Safe Routes to School grants</td>
<td>Planner, School District</td>
<td>State of Michigan</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory downtown and neighborhoods sidewalk networks and document where gaps exist and crosswalks are missing</td>
<td>DDA, City Manager</td>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update the Zoning Ordinance to require new development to install paved sidewalks and bicycle parking.</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt a complete streets policy to ensure streets are inviting for pedestrians and cyclists</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess the feasibility of a demand-response transit system.</td>
<td>City Manger, City Council</td>
<td>Dickinson County, neighboring communities</td>
<td>5+ years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once the appropriate regulations are in place, beautification projects are needed to spur investment in the district. Expanding the financial capacity for capital projects is a major concern. In the long-run, the DDA should institute tax increment financing, which would allow it to collect future increases in tax revenue from the properties in its district. Once the revenue source is established, the organization should create a plan to prioritize beautification projects, such as enhanced pedestrian crossings, greening projects, and the installation of public plazas. Community survey respondents indicated that enhancing existing building appearances should be a top DDA priority, and tax increment financing could be used to expand the façade grant program. Targeting façade program funds to the highest concentration of historic structures would increase its impact and visibility. An often overlooked, but valuable program is the Historic Investment Tax Credit (HITC) which provides a 20% tax credit on the rehabilitation costs on a certified historic building. The HITC is a voluntary program but requires the building to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many communities have their entire downtown listed on the National Register in order for property owners to access this tax incentive.

Aside from growing local businesses, the City can entice new ones to the area. Over three quarters (78%) of survey respondents indicated that the recruitment of businesses to fill the service and retail gaps should constitute a major priority for the City. Iron Mountain’s retail leakage report shows that local businesses miss out on residents’ spending on clothing, specialty food, and grocery products. The City can partner with the Chamber and DDA to disperse these findings and market available commercial space. The retail leakage report should also be shared with the Chamber of Commerce and other agencies so that existing businesses can match their products with demand.

**ACTIONS**

**Downtown & Commercial Districts**

If growing downtown’s vibrancy is a community priority, then promoting appropriate built patterns in the district is an excellent first step to accomplish that goal. The Planning Commission will be responsible for zoning changes that increase allowable building densities, require high-quality architecture, and permit appropriately scaled commercial and residential uses in the district. The changes would encourage new and renovated structures downtown to complement the district’s historic and walkable character. Meanwhile, parking regulations, a long-standing topic in Iron Mountain, should be comprehensively addressed through a parking study. Considering that Iron Mountain has ample underutilized parking, the City could shift its minimum off-street requirements toward standards that allow property owners and developers to select the appropriate amount based on their tenants’ needs. Eliminating unnecessarily large parking areas would also further the community’s top collective priority, a pedestrian-first downtown.

Back entrances to businesses on the Downtown Plaza.
DOWNTOWN & COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS: To further the vibrancy and walkability of commercial settings, especially downtown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives &amp; Actions</th>
<th>Lead Party</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Co-benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support redevelopment, architectural quality, &amp; pedestrian-friendliness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a downtown zone with design and dimensional standards that ensure desirable</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="graph" /> <img src="image2.png" alt="sustainability" /> <img src="image3.png" alt="pedestrian" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redevelopment and compactness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a transitional zone along Carpenter Avenue to support a mix of residential</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="graph" /> <img src="image2.png" alt="sustainability" /> <img src="image3.png" alt="pedestrian" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and commercial uses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake a parking study to understand parking needs and potential solutions</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>DDA, City Council</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="graph" /> <img src="image2.png" alt="sustainability" /> <img src="image3.png" alt="pedestrian" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize and market redevelopment sites using the established criteria in the</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>DDA, City Council</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="graph" /> <img src="image2.png" alt="sustainability" /> <img src="image3.png" alt="pedestrian" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>master plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expand organizational capacities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish tax increment financing and create a downtown plan to prioritize projects</td>
<td>DDA</td>
<td>Business owners</td>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="graph" /> <img src="image2.png" alt="sustainability" /> <img src="image3.png" alt="pedestrian" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand the façade grant program and target funds in one area</td>
<td>DDA</td>
<td>Business owners</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="graph" /> <img src="image2.png" alt="sustainability" /> <img src="image3.png" alt="pedestrian" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake the inventory of historic buildings and application for a National Register District</td>
<td>DDA</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="graph" /> <img src="image2.png" alt="sustainability" /> <img src="image3.png" alt="pedestrian" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTIONS

Business & Economy

The City and its partners can also engage in various non-land-based strategies to improve the local economy. Survey respondents (29%) agreed or agreed strongly with a statement: that they would be interested in starting or expanding an independent business of their own but are unaware of the local resources that are available to help them do so. Fortunately, the Iron Mountain area has numerous organizations that support small businesses with marketing, networking, workforce retention, and access to capital, and other services. These resources should be compiled in one place and made readily available for new local startups and existing businesses seeking to refine their practices. Untrained business owners can inhibit their own success. So if the DDA expanded its capacity, it could use the new resources to help entrepreneurs access training such as business plan and pro forma writing. State-level organizations such as the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Michigan Small Business Development Center are essential partners.

Residents also defined a “destination economy” as a major priority in the visioning session. There are several avenues the community could take to boost tourism and achieve that goal. The City should work with the Chamber of Commerce to engage in place marketing to promote the diverse amenities, including lodging, business, and recreation the area offers together as a complete package to visitors.

There are several opportunities to fill vacant storefronts.

There are many thriving local businesses in Iron Mountain.
BUSINESS & ECONOMY: To promote diverse local businesses and industry and grow the community as a destination in the Upper Peninsula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives &amp; Actions</th>
<th>Lead Party</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Co-benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grow and promote local business and industry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a list of resources that provide business assistance and supportive services. Hold regular events and training to increase current and potential entrepreneurs’ awareness of them.</td>
<td>DDA</td>
<td>MEDC, Michigan SBDC</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Graph" /> <img src="image2.png" alt="People" /> <img src="image3.png" alt="People" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate ESRI's retail leakage report to help businesses match products and services with demand</td>
<td>DDA</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>&lt;1 year</td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Graph" /> <img src="image5.png" alt="People" /> <img src="image6.png" alt="People" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory and prioritize vacant commercial and industrial properties and target marketing strategies to businesses that could fill a regional gap in goods or services</td>
<td>Planner</td>
<td>City Manager, MEDC</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Graph" /> <img src="image8.png" alt="People" /> <img src="image9.png" alt="People" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey local manufacturing and healthcare employers to determine workforce needs; communicate job openings to educational providers</td>
<td>Dickinson Area Economic Development Alliance</td>
<td>Major employers, Bay College, Intermediate School District</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td><img src="image10.png" alt="Graph" /> <img src="image11.png" alt="People" /> <img src="image12.png" alt="People" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expand organizational capacities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in a “place marketing campaign.” Collectively market businesses in conjunction with local recreation and entertainment</td>
<td>DDA, Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Neighboring communities</td>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td><img src="image13.png" alt="Graph" /> <img src="image14.png" alt="People" /> <img src="image15.png" alt="People" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a hotel feasibility study</td>
<td>DDA</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td><img src="image16.png" alt="Graph" /> <img src="image17.png" alt="People" /> <img src="image18.png" alt="People" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a tourism map that highlights places to go and events to attend</td>
<td>DDA</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td><img src="image19.png" alt="Graph" /> <img src="image20.png" alt="People" /> <img src="image21.png" alt="People" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTION

Community Infrastructure

Residents expressed “eco-friendliness” as a collective priority and the City can implement a range of new infrastructure projects to achieve this goal. Heavy precipitation has flooded waterways and caused damage to private property on several occasions, making stormwater management an essential component of the priority. Fully separating the stormwater and sewer systems would eliminate challenges to the capacity of the wastewater system, and should be a long-term goal for the Department of Public Works and City administration. Green infrastructure such as rain gardens and retention basins can also be encouraged on public and private property to lessen the stormwater quantity that the public sewer and storm sewer systems handle, potentially saving costs. The City’s environmental efforts could also extend to encouraging renewable energy installations. A zoning amendment to allow wind and solar systems on private property would enable residents to live green while lowering their energy costs.
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE: To control flooding, protect the environment, and achieve scale of economies by consolidating services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives &amp; Actions</th>
<th>Lead Party</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Co-benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control flooding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully separate the stormwater and wastewater systems</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>5+ years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize flood mitigation techniques in flood-prone areas (use the &quot;Anticipated Flooding&quot; map)</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate homeowners on how to mitigate their contribution to flooding on their property</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>Planner, homeowners</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop environmentally-friendly infrastructure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the provision of curbside recycling and composting</td>
<td>DPW, City Manager</td>
<td>Neighboring communities</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update the zoning to allow solar and wind systems as accessory structures</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install recycling bins in commercial districts</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass a resolution to hold Zero Waste events that are sponsored by the City</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council, DDA</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explore partnerships to consolidate services and provide high-speed communications</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the feasibility of further consolidating fire, police, and schools with neighbors</td>
<td>City Manager, School District</td>
<td>Neighboring communities</td>
<td>5+ years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore partnerships with neighboring communities to bring new internet service to the City</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
<td>Neighboring communities, providers</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update the zoning ordinance to comply with the small cell wireless legislation</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/global" alt="Global Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus" alt="Plus Icon" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTION

Environment

Protecting the community’s waterways and wetlands is another central priority, considering the natural habitat, recreational resources, and unique scenic qualities are features of pride in the region. Stormwater runoff threatens the integrity of these systems because it changes water temperatures and pollutes water bodies. To address the problem, the Planning Commission can mandate complete on-site stormwater retention through new zoning provisions, which would require property owners to manage runoff with rain gardens, retention basins, or other techniques. The Zoning Ordinance could also be updated to limit the expanse of impervious surfaces, which often contribute to rapid runoff rates. While some cities fear that these additional regulations can deter development, they can save money in the long run by decreasing the risk of damage to structures and lowering insurance rates. In urban areas, trees provide numerous ecosystem, public health, and aesthetic benefits, and nearly three-quarters of community survey respondents indicated that landscaping and tree canopy coverage should be a City-wide priority. Older trees and shrubs, as opposed to newly planted ones, tend to provide more benefits because of their maturity. The Planning Commission can take the lead with the initiative to encourage the preservation of existing vegetation and trees on private property when development occurs, and the City administration can apportion funds to plant trees in the public rights-of-way along streets.

The City’s tree canopy is an important asset.
### ENVIRONMENT: To preserve the community’s natural water bodies and expand the tree canopy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives &amp; Actions</th>
<th>Lead Party</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Co-benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protect the community’s wetlands, lakes, and trees</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/green.png" alt="Green Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus.png" alt="Plus Benefits" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update the Zoning Ordinance to require on-site stormwater management in the Waterbody Overlay</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/green.png" alt="Green Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus.png" alt="Plus Benefits" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create stormwater fees based on the amount of contiguous paved surfaces for commercial and industrial parcels</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/green.png" alt="Green Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus.png" alt="Plus Benefits" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect floodplains and wetlands from future development with greater protection than the state requirements.</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/green.png" alt="Green Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus.png" alt="Plus Benefits" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appoint City liaisons to the Superior Watershed Partnership, Dickinson Conservation District, and Lake Antoine Association</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>Environmental organizations</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/green.png" alt="Green Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus.png" alt="Plus Benefits" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Expand the community’s tree canopy and native vegetation coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives &amp; Actions</th>
<th>Lead Party</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Co-benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a tree preservation ordinance</td>
<td>Tree Board</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/green.png" alt="Green Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus.png" alt="Plus Benefits" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require that all landscaping features native species for new development</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/green.png" alt="Green Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus.png" alt="Plus Benefits" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand the tree canopy in public land and rights-of-way. Use the tree canopy map as a guide and aim for 40% coverage city-wide.</td>
<td>City Manager, City Council</td>
<td>Tree Board</td>
<td>5+ years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/green.png" alt="Green Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus.png" alt="Plus Benefits" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize green infrastructure based on the “Green Infrastructure Placement” map</td>
<td>DPW</td>
<td>Tree Board</td>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/green.png" alt="Green Benefits" /> <img src="https://example.com/plus.png" alt="Plus Benefits" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>