

City of Ironwood

U.S. Highway 2 Visual Enhancement

Planning Team Meeting

Monday, April 7

Current Conditions

Sidewalks

- The system is terrible
- Where there are sidewalks, they are narrow
- Sand covers them during plowing
- They are in bad shape
- Snow is an issue

Curb design

- Snow plowing damages the curbs
- We tried some 'rolled curbs' and some business owners complained
- Snow/winter conditions are a huge factor and impact our curbs, sidewalks and roads

Signage

- Too many
- Neon or no lighting
- Size is an issue
- Billboards are an issue
- The colors are everything in the rainbow
- Some have borders others don't
- Some have wood frames others have metal frames
- We don't have any 'recognition' signs (example – sports' teams accomplishments)
- We don't have any cultural identity
- Our ordinance doesn't exactly solve the sign issue
- We let things go
- Many of the signs are grandfathered in

Power Lines

- Distracting
- Visual blockage
- Not a clean look
- 'carnival look

Lighting

- Ugly
- Inadequate
- Only on one side of the road in places
- Tied to power poles
- Yellow lights
- No outlets on poles for decorative lighting

Access

- Too close together
- Too many curb cuts
- Not obvious where the entrance is to get downtown

Entrances

- Not very attractive

- Not well defined that we are the entrance to the state as well as to our community
- Blight

- Not always enforced
- Lack the resources to enforce
- Don't always get legal support
- Comment is that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'
- Vacant lots
- Absentee owners – grass isn't cut
- Tall grass is present even where property owners are in the area

Desired Conditions

- A complete citywide sidewalk system with buried power lines and rolled curbs
- Decorative lighting used in the downtown carried to the highway (with power outlets and banner brackets)
- Spaces designated for flower plantings
- Combination of paver bricks and grass
- Landscaped entrances
- Uniform designed signage that is tied to our culture/heritage

Bridge Between Current Conditions and Desired Conditions

- Apply for highway enhancement federal funds
- Work with MDOT and the power companies to make sure that plans dovetail
- Replace the water main
- Work with MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corp) and the Welcome Centers
- Put some focus on the Montreal River corridor
- Implement sign design (maybe a contest) with themed signs that speak to our roots (mining, logging and tourism)
- We are a 'gateway community' to Michigan, Ottawa National Forest and the western U.P. and Lake Superior
- Review our sign ordinance
 - Make sure that we have an ordinance to do away with the billboards in the city
- Begin some public education
 - Solutions for employee parking
 - Publicize what we were doing
 - Show some before/after
- Beautification efforts need to be a partnership among civic groups and business owners
- Identify snow storage areas
- Explore elevated walkways in the downtown area